

## DISTRIBUTIONAL ODDITIES

by J. W. TILDEN

One of the fascinating things about insect collecting is the occasional occurrence of specimens far outside of the usual range of their species. Sometimes these lead to a realization that the species actually is present and breeding, though perhaps locally and in small numbers. At other times, single specimens and no others are located to go with them. These represent unsolved riddles as to how they may have gotten to their place of capture.

Some of these interesting specimens come from solicitous friends who are not themselves collectors. So when someone calls me and tells me he has a strange 'bug' I generally listen and offer to examine the prize. Often enough it is a very common or usual insect. Once in a blue moon it is a real prize.

In 1932, a chemist who had accompanied me on several field trips sent me an odd-looking skipper that he had taken near Modesto, Stanislaus County, Calif. This proved to be a female of *Ochlodes yuma*, the first evidence of the now well-known fact that this species, formerly so rare in collections, is endemic to the valleys of California. Since then more evidence has accumulated, and we know that the species is widely distributed in California but had been previously overlooked.

In 1941, GEORGE S. MANSFIELD, now a captain in the United States Marines, but at that time a student of mammals, brought me a skipper that he had taken at light in downtown San Jose, Calif. This was the first record known to me of the occurrence of *Leroda eufala* in Santa Clara County, and the only one so far taken at light. To this day, the species is not common locally. But it seems worth noting that *Leroda eufala* has appeared, apparently rather recently, in the Bay region and among the sand dunes of the San Joaquin-Sacramento Delta Region. It now occurs there in large numbers, but I can find no early records of its occurrence there. Discussion of this matter with other collectors leads me to hazard a guess that this apparent recent extension of range may be due at least in part to the greatly increased abundance of Bermuda Grass (*Cynodon dactylon* (L.)), a favorite food plant of this species.

It was GEORGE also who presented me with a lone specimen of *Speyeria* from near his home in Atascadero, San Luis Obispo County, which has been determined by PAUL GREY as *S. coronis*, the only known record of this species from that area. Since MANSFIELD was a noted collector of beetles and published several notes on these insects, as well as being the discoverer of a new species of the scarab genus *Pleocomma*, his dates and localities are above suspicion.

Other instances of this sort of thing make red letter days on a lepidopterist's calendar. On the campus of Stanford University, in the general vicinity of the old nursery, there is a row of *Eucalyptus* trees. While collecting

there in 1947, I was surprised to find several specimens of *Battus philenor hirsuta*. This butterfly occurs commonly in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, across the San Francisco Bay, where its food plant, *Aristolochia*, is common. It is however almost completely absent from San Mateo, Santa Cruz and Santa Clara Counties, as is its food plant. Search of the area at Stanford revealed a plant of *Aristolochia*, probably a cultivated specimen. The swallowtails had found this lone plant, at some distance from the regular habitat of the species.

Recently, numerous specimens of *Agraulis vanillae incarnata* have appeared in student collections at San Jose State College, all taken by students living in San Mateo County. Most of these specimens had been taken in Redwood City. When questioned, the students said they had taken the butterflies in peoples' back yards, and that the insects were quite common. Further questioning led to the information that in each case ornamental plantings of *Passiflora* were present. This is an exceedingly interesting record. The captures have now extended over a period of three years, from 1955 to 1957. It will be enlightening to see what effect the extremely wet winter of 1957-1958 may have on this population. The most northern breeding records previously known to me are from near Santa Barbara.

The most inexplicable of such odd records presents at present no tangible solution of any kind. In June, 1955, a neighbor boy brought me an insect which he had taken while visiting his grandmother in Sebastopol. I was amazed to see an apparently normal female of *Urbanus dorantes rauterbergi*. The antennæ were missing and one tail was bent, but in other respects it was intact. It has been found flying around in an orchard near the house. There seems to be no very good explanation of how it came to be there. That it was taken there seems completely verified. The boy's parents told me that they had never visited the normal range of the species. The boy was so surprised upon taking this unusual bug that he brought it to his parents at once to show it to them, and they remembered the incident vividly. It is possible to invoke the old standby, that it came there as a pupa in the packing material of a box or crate from more southern climes.

Such incidents might be extended indefinitely. I am sure that you all have had such experiences. So when some person calls and says that he has a strange "bug" for you, it doesn't take long to look and it may prove to be a very interesting find — even if the boy next door brings it to you in a can.

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