

Shrankia balneorum (ALPHÉRAKY, 1880) (Lepidoptera, Erebidae) - The first records for Romania

Cosmin O. MANCI, Cristian SITAR & László RÁKOSY

Summary: Three individuals of *Shrankia balneorum* (ALPHÉRAKY, 1880) are reported for the first time in the Romanian fauna. The three specimens were collected from Stanca village, Iasi country, north-eastern Romania. Photos of the adults as well information about the biology and the distribution of the species are given.

Keywords: *Shrankia balneorum*, Lepidoptera, Erebidae, Romania

Introduction

The genus *Shrankia* HÜBNER, 1828 covers a huge area in the Northern hemisphere, the Oriental and Australasiatic regions. In Europe 3 species are known *Shrankia balneorum* (ALPHÉRAKY, 1880), *S. taenialis* (HÜBNER, [1809]) și *S. costaestrigalis* (STEPHENS, 1834) (FIBIGER *et al.* 2010) and a fourth species *S. intermedialis* REID, 1972 is considered by FIBIGEL *et al.* 2010 as an interspecific hybrid of *S. costaestrigalis* and *S. taenialis*. From Romania two species were known *S. taenialis* și *S. costaestrigalis*, both being relatively rarely recorded from Romania (RÁKOSY *et al.* 2003, RÁKOSY 1996). The subspecies *S. balneorum bosporella* BUDASHKIN & KLYUCHKO, 1990 was synonymised with the nominotypical ssp. *balneorum* by FIBIGER *et al.* 2010.

The occurrence of *S. balneorum* in the South-Eastern parts (Dobrodja region) of the country was suspected, but it had not been proven yet.

Material

The first two individuals (both males) (Fig. 1) from Romania were collected on 18th of September 2015 from the Stâncă village (N47.0698, E27.8038), Iași county, at 50 m altitude (leg. C. Mancî). A third male was collected on 5th of October 2017 from the same locality (leg. C. Mancî). The three specimens were lured using a fluorescent Hg vapour lamp of 160 W and are deposited in the collection of Cristian Sitar (Cluj-Napoca, Romania).

The habitat in the area corresponds to a traditional low-intensity agricultural mosaic landscape, characterized by the occurrence of steppe-like area (grazed

or not) with grassy vegetation or high-salinity areas with specific halophytic vegetation (high density of *Tripolium pannonicum* and other salt loving species like undetermined *Limonium* sp.), shrubs, patches of forests and extensively cultivated patches (Fig. 2).

The area of the village Stanca was already known through some interesting and rare Lepidoptera species in Romania (MANCI *et al.* 2015, MANCI *et al.* 2016).

Diagnosis

The species is relatively similar with *S. costaestrigalis* but is normally much darker and the post medial line in anterior wings is on a different angle (Fig. 3). Worn specimens may need a study of genital structures for a proper identification (FIBIGER *et al.* 2010).

Biology and ecology

S. balneorum has a preference for more humid habitats from stepic regions. It was collected in areas with rocky gorges, valleys, small streams and forest edges where the species flies from July to October. This species can be attracted at light or with sugar baits (FIBIGER *et al.* 2010). The early stages and the larval foodplants are little known. According to the latest information, the caterpillar lives on *Tripolium pannonicum*, *T. vulgare* and *Limonium meyeri* (BUDASHKIN & SAVCHUK 2010, SAVCHUK & KAJGORODOVA 2013). In captivity, the caterpillars accept also *Mentha longifolia* (BUDASHKIN & SAVCHUK 2010). Pupation occurs at the end of October and cocoon hangs via a silk line on host plants (BUDASHKIN & SAVCHUK 2010). Several attempts to find the larvae



Fig. 1. The first specimen of *Schrankia balneorum* from Romania collected at Stâncea (Iași) on 18th September 2015 (leg. C.O. MANCI).

in the Stâncea village area have proved unsuccessful, suggesting that the larvae might have more nocturnal habits.

Distribution

This Ponto-Caspian species is known in Europe from the Crimea and the southern Urals (Fig. 4). There are several other observations from Ukraine and European Russia but these are in need of reconfirmation (FIBIGER *et al.* 2010). Outside Europe it is known from Turkey, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan (in the Caucasus Mountains where the species was originally described) but also more to the south and east in Region Kopet Dagh between Iran and Turkmenistan and south of Ural Mountains (ALPHÉRAKY 1879, FIBIGER *et al.* 2010, PEKARSKY 2012 and NUPPONEN & FIBIGER 2011).



Fig. 2. The habitat of *Schrankia balneorum* in Stâncea (Romania).

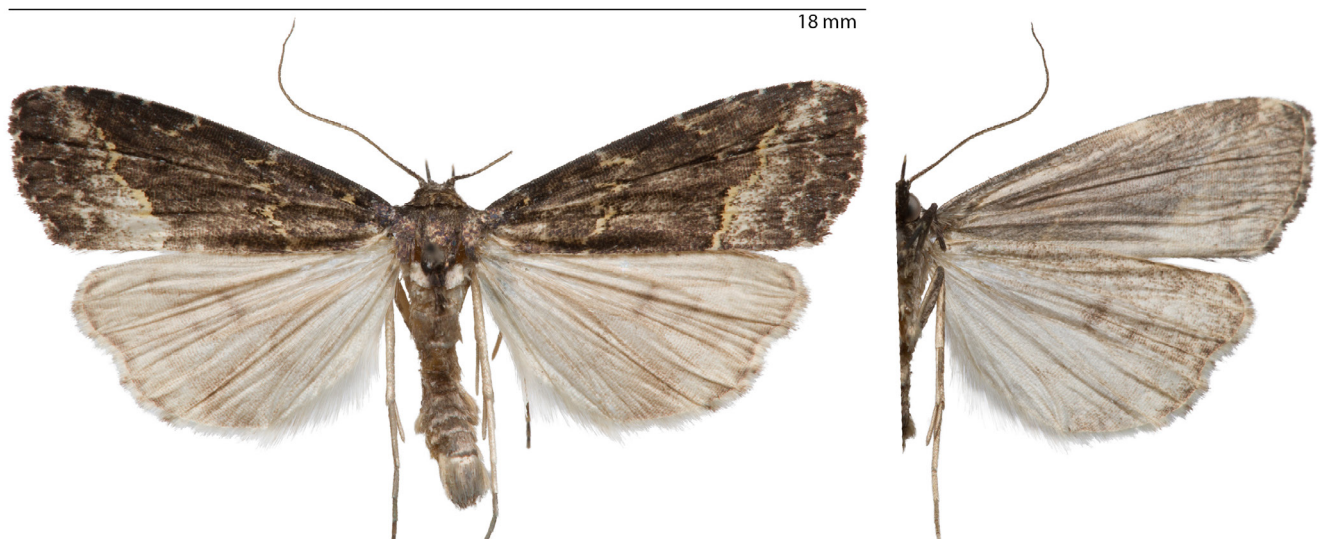


Fig. 3. *Schrankia balneorum* - dorsal and ventral view of mounted specimen, Stâncea (Romania), 18th September 2015 (leg. C.O. MANCI).



Fig. 4. Distribution map of *Schrankia balneorum* in Europe (after FIBIGER *et al.* 2010, modified and supplemented).

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Cosmin-Ovidiu MANCI
Oceanographic Research and Marine
Environment Protection Society
Oceanic-Club, Decebal 41,
Constanta, Romania
E-mail: cosminom@gmail.com

Cristian SITAR
Zoological Museum
Babeş-Bolyai University, Clinicilor 5-7
Cluj-Napoca, Romania
E-mail: cristiansitar@yahoo.com

László RÁKOSY
Department of Taxonomy and Ecology
Babeş-Bolyai University, Clinicilor 5-7
Cluj-Napoca, Romania
E-mail: laszlorakosy@ubbcluj.ro

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