

The identity of the Gisborne Cockroach (Blattodea)

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Specimens of the Gisborne cockroach received at the Auckland Plant Diagnostic Station, during the past year, were found not to fit the description given by Mackerras (1968a) for *Platyzosteria* (*Melanozosteria*) *soror* Brunner. This was the name ascribed to specimens of the Gisborne cockroach by Mr P. M. Johns and recorded in a paper by Perrott (1970). Although superficially similar to *P. soror*, the recently received specimens are members of the genus *Drymaplaneta*. Mackerras (1967) gives detailed notes on the differentiation of *Drymaplaneta* spp. from *Platyzosteria* spp. Using keys in Mackerras (1968b) the cockroaches were identified as *Drymaplaneta semivitta* (Walker).

A specimen collected by Mr P. Rosa, Rentokil, Auckland, on 9 January 1974 from goods transported from Tauranga to Auckland was forwarded to the British Museum (Natural History). They confirmed that it was *Drymaplaneta semivitta* (Walker). Specimens labelled as *Platyzosteria* (*Melanozosteria*) *soror* in the collection of Entomology Division, D.S.I.R., Auckland, including those referred to by Perrott (1970), were then checked and all were found to be consistent with Mackerras' (1968b) description of *Drymaplaneta semivitta*.

D. semivitta has a limited distribution and according to Mackerras (1968b) it is apparently confined to the south-western part of Western Australia. Johns (1966) records *Melanozosteria* (= *Drymaplaneta*) *semivitta* in New Zealand as a species which frequently recurs on timber shipments from Australia. The earliest specimen of *Drymaplaneta semivitta* held in Entomology Division's collection dates from 28 May 1954 and was collected by the Department of Agriculture in Tauranga. Localities of other specimens in this collection and the Auckland Plant Diagnostic Station's collection are Gisborne, Kawerau, Ruatoria, Tauranga and Auckland. Specimens of the Gisborne cockroach labelled as *P. (M.) soror* in the collections of Forest Research Institute, Rotorua (R. Zondag, pers. com.) and the Plant Diagnostic Station, Levin (D. Manson, pers. com.) were collected from Kawerau, Lake Rotoiti, Gisborne and Morere. *D. semivitta* is known to be established in Gisborne and environs (see Perrott, 1970) and recent collections in private dwellings in the suburb of Pakuranga have revealed that it is now established in Auckland. Although specimens have been recorded from Tauranga, Kawerau, Lake Rotoiti and Ruatoria it is not known whether the species is actually established in these localities.

Mackerras (1968b) gives no information as to the habits or behaviour of *D. semivitta*, but does mention that it breeds readily in captivity. She makes no mention of it being a domestic species in Western Australia. However, in New Zealand, notably Gisborne and Auckland, it does enter houses and for this reason may be regarded as a nuisance species.

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