

***Hemideina maori* (Pictet & Saussure) (Anostostomatidae: Deinacridinae) established at Andersons Bay, Dunedin**

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Abstract

Hemideina maori (Pictet & Saussure) is recorded established at Andersons Bay, Dunedin. As this is the first lowland, non-island, suburban record for this species, it is likely to have resulted from a recent introduction, probably from the Rock and Pillar Range population. Residents have observed it at Andersons Bay for over 40 years.

Introduction

On 28 July 2003, Mr. R. Grant brought me a live mature female *Hemideina maori* (Fig. 1) found with five others beneath *Iris foetidissima* L. under an exotic hedge on the property of Mr. and Mrs. N. R. and M. M. Borland at 23 Jeffrey St., Andersons Bay. I visited the property and found several individuals. The wetas also occurred on the properties of Mr. B. Dixon of no. 21 Jeffrey St. and the Presbyterian Manse, at no. 17. A total of 61 adult *M. maori* were collected in the area on 30 July 2003. Of these, 57 were released alive and only two specimens were retained for the Otago Museum's collections.

The *H. maori* population at Andersons Bay extended over at least four properties on Jeffrey St., from No. 15 to No. 23. The sections were old and well established, with mature introduced and native trees. *Hemideina maori* were abundant beneath *Phormium tenax* Forster et Forster f., *Corynocarpus laevigatus* Forster et Forster f. and *Pittosporum eugenoides* Cunn. along the boundary fence between sections no. 21 and 23, particularly on property no. 21. Mr. Dixon, owner of no. 21, noted that the wetas had been abundant on his property since his first year there in 1990. *Hemideina maori* was also abundant along the boundary fence shared with the manse (no. 17). In 2002, Mr. Dixon removed some ivy (*Hedera helix* L.) from the fence beside the manse, and found *H. maori* on the wall of the manse itself, at ground level, and also up to a metre above ground level, under ivy growing against the walls of the manse.

The specimen found by Mr. Grant (Fig. 1) was 96 mm long (including the ovipositor) and in coloration and arrangement of spines on the hind tibiae, resembled Rock and

Pillar range specimens. When alive, the abdomen bore bright, alternating, black and yellow transverse bands, with the yellow bands having a few tiny black spots. The thoracic terga were dark brown, the head mid brown, the pro- and mesothoracic legs pale yellow, and the hind tibiae brown.



Figure 1. *Hemideina maori* from 23 Jeffrey St., Andersons Bay, Dunedin. Scale in mm.

Remarks

Most species of *Hemideina* White live on and among trees, in forest. *Hemideina maori* differs in that it lives in treeless, montane areas at all previously known localities. Meads (1990) named *H. maori* “the mountain weta,” and gave its distributional extent as “from ranges near Hamner, Lake Tekapo, to the Rock and Pillar Range.” Gibbs (1998) named it the “mountain stone weta,” and gave its distribution as “the drier rocky mountains of the eastern South Island from Marlborough to Otago.” Gibbs (1998) states that *H. maori* “abandoned its tree galleries millions of years ago”. The present record indicates that *H. maori* can successfully live and breed among trees and other vegetation in a lowland, suburban environment.

In 1981, Dr. G. Bremner brought adult male and female *H. maori* from the Rock and Pillar Range to his home in Mosgiel. These accidentally escaped outside the house and the following year, *H. maori* nymphs were found beside the house. None, however, survived to maturity. The recent discovery of a population of *H. maori* on an island in Lake Wanaka (B. McKinley, Dunedin, *pers. comm.*) indicates that *H. maori* is not exclusively an alpine species. However, the very localised nature of the population at Andersons Bay probably indicates that it originated as little as 40 years ago in a manner similar to that of Dr. Bremner’s accidental introduction of *H. maori* to Mosgiel.

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References

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