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## Miscellanea.

### The Entomophagous Behaviour of *Pseudospilophorus plagosus* Boh. (Cetoniidae, Coleopt.).

By W. W. G. BÜTTIKER.

(Received January 13th, 1955.)



Adults of *Pseudospilophorus plagosus* Boh. preying on nymphs and females of Soft Scale (*Coccus hesperidum* L.). Approximately  $1\frac{1}{2} \times$  natural size.  
Photograph Büttiker.

During recent investigations on citrus, the Cetoniid species *Pseudospilophorus plagosus* Boh. has been found to be predacious on Soft Scale (*Coccus hesperidum* L.), in a young orchard near White River (Eastern Transvaal, South Africa), where it made its appearance from October 1953 to March 1954.

The main infestation was in November when up to 27 specimens were found on a single orange tree of approximately 4 years of age. These specimens were only found on Soft Scale infested branches and twigs. Close observation on the spot left no doubt that large numbers of these scales are devoured.

This was confirmed by adults of *P. plagosus* kept under observation in the laboratory. A single female consumed approximately 30 Soft Scale adults and nymphs in 24 hours. Though the Scales were supplied on young tender orange shoots, no vegetable matter was eaten. Red Scales (*Aonidiella aurantii*) were refused by the Cetoniids.

From the observations made, it is still difficult to judge how important this species could be from the ecological point of view. Even when having attained its climax in November, this Cetoniid was not able to cope with the Soft Scale infestation successfully. It is hoped that further observations can be made in the near future.

Dr. W. J. Hall, Director of the Commonwealth Institute of Entomology, London, informs me that the British Museum collection contains specimens of *P. plagosus* Boh. from South Africa and Mozambique. According to Junk (1921), this species has been recorded as far north as the Lake Province of Tanganyika.

Other species in this genus are *P. lugubris* F. with its known distribution in South Africa and Meru district, Kenya, and *P. aurifer* Westw., recorded from West Africa.

However, there are no biological references to this genus available in Junk (1921), nor subsequent to that date. Péringuey (1907) mentions that *Spilophorus* (*Pseudospilophorus*) *lugubris* breeds in the nests of small birds like finches, and the larvae, as well as the adult insects, have been found there feeding together on the bird faeces. It seems likely that the habits are thus similar to *Diplognatha gagates*.

According to information kindly supplied by Dr. W. J. Hall, there are no other records to be found of any Cetoniid species predacious on insects.

Mr. F. J. Stofberg of the Citrus and Subtropical Horticultural Research Station Nelspruit informs me that he has specimens of 9 species of Cetoniids taken on citrus or tung trees, mostly damaging the flowers or taken in bait traps for False Codling Moth, but one specimen, recorded as *Mauselopsis amabilis*, but probably *P. plagosus*, was feeding on sweet exudations from Soft Scale.

#### *Acknowledgements.*

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