

A FURTHER EXTENSION OF THE RANGE OF MYRMICA SCHENKI, EMERY.

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D. P. Walls (6) recently recorded the occurrence of the rare ant *Myrmica schenki*, Emery, at Portmarnock, Co. Dublin. This species, which is found locally throughout the Palaearctic and Nearctic regions north of 40° North Latitude, had previously been recorded from only four stations in these islands; of these, three are located in Ireland—viz., Maherabeg, Co. Wicklow (4), Kilcarray Bridge and by the River Slaney near Kildavin, Co. Carlow (5)—the fourth station, the only British one, is at Sully, Glamorgan (1). Another hitherto unrecorded station is in the demesne at Glengarriff, West Cork, where A. W. Stelfox, to whom I am indebted for permission to publish it, swept a female in July 1935. Thus all the stations in this country occurred in the South and East, it was therefore of interest to find that the ant occurred also in the West of Ireland at Roundstone, Co. Galway, which is the most westerly record for Europe (9° 50' W. long.) and also together with the Portmarnock one appears to be the most northerly (I have however been unable to check some references). In 1944 on 14th July at Roundstone I found a worker *schrenki* foraging on the surface of a narrow road, but despite a careful search the location of the nest could not be found. I was greatly surprised when a few minutes later my brother Angus handed me another worker of this species picked up running about among worker *Formica fusca*, L., on bare rock in damp peaty ground some 200 yards away. A search here also failed to locate the nest. Thenceforth a careful search was made for nests in the area around Roundstone and later some workers were seen foraging at an altitude of 200 feet on Errisbeg Mountain. A diligent search revealed a nest about 100 yards away. It is of course extremely unlikely that the workers seen came from this nest for the maximum foraging distance for the allied species *Myrmica scabrinodis*, Nyl., is 20 feet, giving a feeding territory of 140 square yards [W. Pickles (2)]; were the foraging distance 100 yards the feeding territory would exceed 7 acres, which seems hardly likely since the population would not be more than three or four thousand (2).

The nest was quite different from that at Portmarnock which Mr Walls kindly showed me on 3rd September 1942, and which fitted the

description of those at Kildavin and at Sully. The colonies in the latter locality were described as being "all situated in the slope of a small bank and not under stones . . . the entrance being a small round hole, much as is made by the smaller bees (*Halictus*, etc.)." The Roundstone nest was beneath a flat stone bedded in moist peaty soil and under which there was also a colony of *Acanthomyops* (*Chthonolasius*) *flavus*, F., whose members attacked the *schenki* when I lifted the stone. Present in the nest were numbers of workers and larvae of all sizes as well as some worker pupae. No queen was seen nor were there any winged forms although most *Myrmica* colonies in the neighbourhood had numbers of them on that date. A specimen has been donated to the National Museum in Dublin.

Some weeks later on 4th August, at Lough Ine, West Cork, some 15 miles from Glengarriff, I picked a winged female of this species off Professor L. P. Renouf's arm. This specimen was taking part in the "swarming" of ants which took place on several different days in that locality, for during the previous days a number of flights of various ants were seen. This represents the first published swarming date for the species in these islands. [A. W. Stelfox, however, took males and winged females at the entrance to a subterranean nest at Kildavin on 9th August 1929 (5)] Another female was taken flying in the same area on 15th August. Despite a vigorous search no nests were found but workers were found at the water's edge at the point marked S15 on Professor Renouf's Map III (3). It is hoped to revisit both localities this season.

See *British Ants*, 1927, 2nd Edition, pp. 150-152.

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- (3) Renouf, Louis. "Preliminary Work of a New Biological Station (Lough Ine, Co. Cork, I.F.S.)." *Journ. Ecol.*, 1931, xix, 410.
- (4) Stelfox, A. W. "A List of the Hymenoptera Aculeata (*Sensu lato*) of Ireland." *Proc. Roy. Irish Acad.*, 1927, xxxvii, 341.
- (5) — "Some Recent Records for Irish Aculeate Hymenoptera." *Ent. Mon. Mag.*, 1933, lxix, 52.
- (6) Walls, Desmond P. "Notes on Discoveries of Species in New Localities." *Ent. Rec.*, 1943, lv, 50.