

New host records for *Onychogonia cervini* (Bigot)

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Onychogonia cervini (Bigot, 1881) (Fig. 1) is a large and rare tachinid known from the Alps and the Scandinavian mountains. Its only known host so far has been the rare and locally distributed alpine tiger moth *Holoarctia cervini* (Fallou, 1864) (Lepidoptera: Erebiidae) (Tschorsnig & Herting 1994). During 1998–2002, Juhani Itämies, Eino Erkinaro and Kalevi Heikura collected for research purposes a large number of lepidopteran larvae from various parts of the Finnish Lapland, paying special attention to the yearly fluctuation of larval *Pararctia lapponica* (Thunberg, 1791) (Lepidoptera: Erebiidae) (Itämies *et al.* 2007).

The larvae were collected in August–September and allowed to overwinter to obtain adults in the following spring. A total of three *O. cervini* emerged from the rearings, two from *Pararctia lapponica* and one from *Anarta melanopa* (Thunberg, 1791) (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae). All host larvae were collected from Kaunispää, Inari, Finland (75.91253N, 5.18148E). The host association is interesting, as it indicates that *O. cervini* can utilize several suitable-sized hosts in its environment. However, this might not be so surprising as the members of Goniini produce microtype eggs, which get ingested by the



Figure 1. *Onychogonia cervini* (Bigot), male. A large (12 mm) and conspicuous species, closely resembling dark *Gonia* species in appearance. Photo by M. Mutanen.



Figure 2. A typical *Pararctia lapponica* (Thunberg) habitat in Utsjoki, Finnish Lapland. *Nowickia alpina* (Zetterstedt) can sometimes be hilltopping in numbers in similar locations. Mosquitoes and biting midges add excitement to the hunt. Photo by J. Pohjoismäki.

host making the host selection not as stringent as in species laying their eggs or larvae directly on the host. Therefore it might be possible to obtain the rare *O. cervini* for collections by rearing common alpine noctuid species. Additionally, as the Finnish habitat of dry fellfield-type tundra (Fig. 2) differs from the mountain habitats required by *Holoarctia cervini*, *O. cervini* could possibly be found from a range of open alpine landscapes.

References

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