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Bulletin S.R.B.E./K.B.V.E., 143 (2007) : 22-25

Haplophthalmus montivagus VERHOEFF, 1940 : a new species for Belgium (Isopoda Trichoniscidae)

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Abstract

Haplophthalmus montivagus VERHOEFF, 1940 was observed for the first time in Belgium on the 13th of June 2006. The species was found on slopes along the river Ourthe in Vieuxville and Durbuy. Animals lived under boulders and in rotting wood in deciduous forests with a calcareous soil. The species is difficult to distinguish from *H. mengei* (ZADDACH, 1844) and may therefore have been overlooked in the past. An identification key is given for the three species of *Haplophthalmus* occurring in Belgium. With the observation of *H. montivagus*, the number of terrestrial isopods in Belgium has risen to 34.

Keywords : *Haplophthalmus montivagus*, Isopoda, Belgium.

Samenvatting

Haplophthalmus montivagus VERHOEFF, 1940 werd voor het eerst waargenomen in België op 13 juni 2006. De soort werd aangetroffen op hellingen langs de Ourthe in Vieuxville en Durbuy. De dieren leefden er onder stenen en in rottend hout op kalkhoudende bodem in loofbossen. De soort is moeilijk te onderscheiden van *H. mengei* (ZADDACH, 1844) en is daardoor misschien over het hoofd gezien in het verleden. Een determinatiesleutel werd opgemaakt voor de drie soorten *Haplophthalmus* die

voorkomen in België. Met de waarneming van *H. montivagus* stijgt het aantal soorten landpissebedden in België tot 34.

Résumé

Haplophthalmus montivagus VERHOEFF, 1940 est signalé pour la première fois de Belgique le 13 juin 2006. L'espèce a été trouvée sur les coteaux calcaires de l'Ourthe à Vieuxville et à Durbuy. Les animaux vivaient sur des pierres et dans du bois putréfié dans les forêts feuillues de ces coteaux. L'espèce est difficile à séparer de *H. mengei* (ZADDACH, 1844), raison pour laquelle elle est probablement restée inaperçue dans le passé. Une clé d'identification est donnée pour les trois espèces de *Haplophthalmus* présentes en Belgique. Avec la découverte de *H. montivagus*, le nombre d'isopodes terrestres pour la Belgique est à présent passé à 34.

Introduction

Haplophthalmus montivagus VERHOEFF, 1940 was observed for the first time in Belgium on the 13th of June 2006. The species was found in deciduous forests on slopes along the river Ourthe in Vieuxville (UTM-code FR8085) and Durbuy (UTM-code FR7380). Animals were present under logs in rotting wood laying on the calcareous soil.

In their checklist of the terrestrial isopods, TAVERNIER & WOUTERS (1989) listed 30 species for Belgium. Since then, three species of the family Trichoniscidae were added to the fauna of Belgium: *Hyloniscus riparius* (KOCH, 1838), *Miktoniscus patiencei* VANDEL, 1946 and *Trichoniscoides sarsi* PATIENCE, 1908 (LOCK & VANACKER, 1999; LOCK & DURWAEL, 2000; LOCK, 2001). With the discovery of *H. montivagus*, also of the family Trichoniscidae, the number of terrestrial isopods in Belgium has risen to 34.

Description

The genus *Haplophthalmus* is characterized by shallow longitudinal ridges on the dorsal surface. Their white to pale creamy colored body measures up to 4 mm in length and the eyes consist of one black ocellus. Animals walk slowly when disturbed and are not able to roll into a ball. *H. danicus* BUDDE-LUND, 1880 can be separated from the other two species by the absence of projections on the third pleonite (Fig. 1), which is a clear and reliable character. However, *H. mengei* and *H. montivagus* can only be separated by male sexual characters (Fig. 2). At present, there is no known way to distinguish between females of the latter two species.

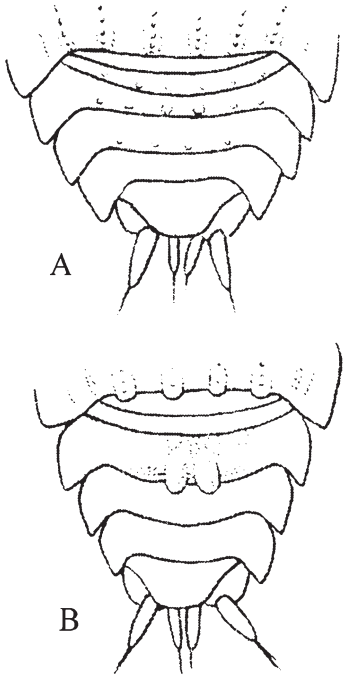

Fig. 1. *Haplophthalmus danicus*: projections on third pleonite feeble or absent (A), *H. mengei* or *H. montivagus*: third pleonite with prominent projections (B) (drawings from Hay WIJNHOVEN, after BERG & WIJNHOVEN, 1997).

Identification key for the three species of *Haplophthalmus* occurring in Belgium

1 Projections close to mid-line on dorsal surface of third pleonite are very feeble or absent (Fig. 1A); male seventh pereiopod with a prominent spur (Fig. 2A) . . . . . *Haplophthalmus danicus* BUDDE-LUND, 1880

- Projections close to mid-line on dorsal surface of third pleonite are prominent (Fig. 1B) . . . 2

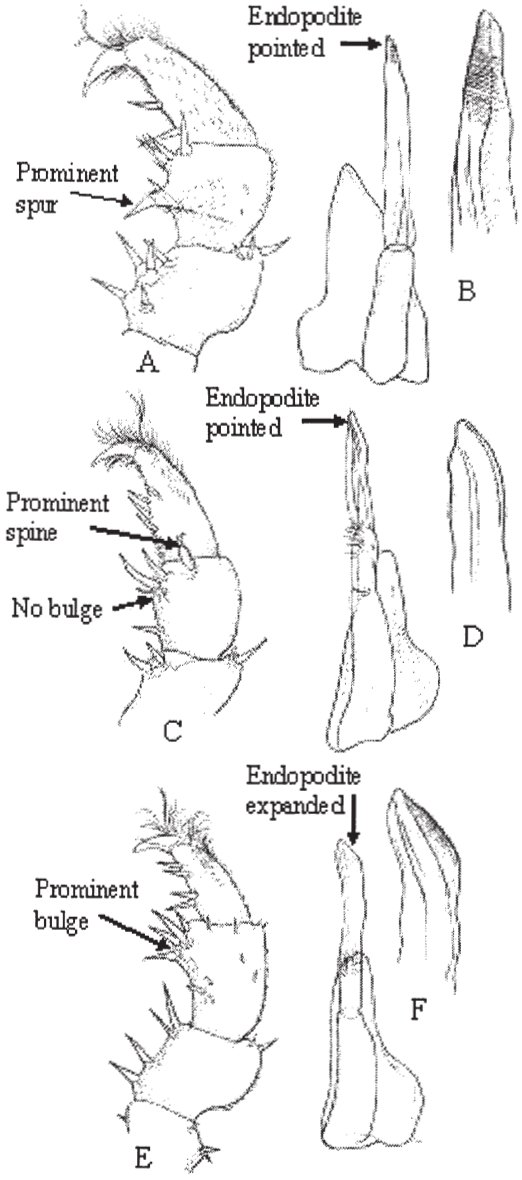

Fig. 2. *Haplophthalmus danicus*, male: tip of seventh pereiopod (A), first pleopod with detail of tip of endopodite (B); *H. mengei*, male: tip of seventh pereiopod (C), first pleopod with detail of tip of endopodite (D); *H. montivagus*, male: tip of seventh pereiopod (E), first pleopod with detail of tip of endopodite (F) (drawings from Hay WIJNHOVEN, after BERG & WIJNHOVEN, 1997).

2 Male seventh pereiopod lacking prominent bulge on carpus but with prominent distal spine on inner face of carpus (Fig. 2C); male endopodite of first pleopod with a tapered tip (Fig. 2D) . . . . . *Haplophthalmus mengei* (ZADDACH, 1844)

- Male seventh pereiopod with prominent bulge on carpus (Fig. 2E); male endopodite of first pleopod with sclerotised subterminal carina and therefore more expanded tip (Fig. 2F) . . . *Haplophthalmus montivagus* VERHOEFF, 1940

Distribution and habitat

H. montivagus has been found in Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Hungary and Poland (GRÜNER, 1966; SHMALFUSS, 2003). In Britain, the species was only discovered in 1987 by examining collections of *H. mengei* in which *H. montivagus* had been hiding for at least 20 years (HOPKIN, 1991).

H. montivagus is a soil dwelling species which is often found under deeply embedded stones or in rotting wood, mainly in ancient woodlands on calcareous soils (HOPKIN, 1991). Animals occur especially in the neighborhood of running water and seem to prefer humid soil covered with beech leaves (GRÜNER, 1966).

Discussion

Based on its distribution in the neighboring countries, BERG & WIJNHOVEN (1997) already indicated that *H. montivagus* could possibly be expected to occur in the eastern part of the Netherlands and Belgium. Till present, the species has not been found in the Netherlands but its discovery in Belgium should encourage Dutch researchers to look for this species.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Matty BERG for checking the identification of *H. montivagus*. I'm also grateful to Hay WIJNHOVEN for the permission to use his drawings.

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Distribution of the Belgian earwigs (Dermaptera)

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Abstract

Seven species of Dermaptera occur in Belgium, three of which are new for the Belgian fauna: *Euborellia moesta* (GENE 1839), *Labidura riparia* (PALLAS 1773) and *Forficula decipiens* GENE 1832. All published records of *Chelidura acanthopygia* (GENE 1832) in Belgium actually belong to the recently described species *C. guentheri* (GALVAGNI 1994). The three remaining species had already been reported previously: *Labia minor* (LINNAEUS 1758), *Apterygida media* (HAGENBACH 1822) and *Forficula auricularia* LINNAEUS 1758. An overview was made of the literature about the Belgian earwigs, a checklist for the species occurring in Belgium is given and distribution maps of all the species are presented.

Keywords : distribution maps, checklist, Belgium.

Samenvatting

In België komen zeven soorten Dermaptera voor waarvan drie soorten nieuw zijn voor de Belgische fauna: *Euborellia moesta* (GENE 1839), *Labidura riparia* (PALLAS 1773) en *Forficula decipiens* GENE 1832. Alle gepubliceerde waarnemingen van *Chelidura acanthopygia* (GENE 1832) in België behoren eigenlijk tot de recent beschreven soort *C. guentheri* (GALVAGNI 1994). De drie overige soorten werden vroeger al gemeld: *Labia minor* (LINNAEUS 1758), *Apterygida media* (HAGENBACH 1822) en *Forficula auricularia* LINNAEUS 1758. Een overzicht werd gemaakt van de literatuur over de Belgische oorwormen, een soortenlijst met de soorten die in België voorkomen wordt gegeven en verspreidingskaartjes voor alle soorten worden gepresenteerd.

Résumé

Sept espèces de Dermaptera sont présentes en Belgique, dont trois sont nouvelles pour sa faune: *Euborellia moesta* (GENE 1839), *Labidura riparia* (PALLAS 1773) et *Forficula decipiens* GENE 1832. Toutes les observations publiées de *Chelidura acanthopygia* (GENE 1832) pour la Belgique concernent en effet l'espèce *C. guentheri* (GALVAGNI 1994) qui a été décrite récemment. Les trois autres espèces ont déjà été répertoriées antérieurement: *Labia minor* (LINNAEUS 1758), *Apterygida media* (HAGENBACH 1822) et *Forficula auricularia* LINNAEUS 1758. La littérature concernant les perce-oreilles de la Belgique est résumée, une liste d'espèces présentes en Belgique est présentée et les cartes de distribution pour toutes les espèces sont figurées.

Introduction

DE SELYS-LONGCHAMPS (1868) already listed four species of Dermaptera for Belgium, however, no additional species were reported since. No recent publications summarizing the knowledge about the Belgian earwigs are available at the moment. The aim of this paper was to fill this gap by presenting an updated

checklist and distribution maps of all the species occurring in Belgium.

Material and methods

A databank with all the observations of earwigs in Belgium was developed, which presently contains 2658 records. Most of the studied material belongs to the collection of the Gembloux Agricultural University and a smaller collection is present in the Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences. In addition, Nobby THYS, Vic NAVEAU, Bruno GOBIN and Maarten JACOBS sent some observations and the Werkgroep Invertebraten Denderstreek (WID) delivered some unidentified earwigs.

All available material was identified according to ALBOUY & CAUSSANEL (1990) (in French). However, *Chelidura guentheri* (GALVAGNI, 1994) was not described at that time and will therefore key out as *C. acanthopygia* (GENE 1832). Species of the genus *Chelidura* can be identified with the key of GALVAGNI (1997) (in Italian). NAVEAU (2004) made a compact identification key in Dutch, however, no drawings are included in this key and *C. guentheri* was not included either.

Results

Literature overview

In his checklist of the Belgian earwigs, cockroaches, crickets and grasshoppers, Wesmael (1838) listed *Forficula auricularia* LINNAEUS 1758 and *Labia minor* (LINNAEUS 1758). The same two species were reported by DE SELYS-LONGCHAMPS (1862). A few years later, DE SELYS-LONGCHAMPS (1868) added *Apterygida media* (HAGENBACH 1822) and *Chelidura acanthopygia* (GENE 1832) to the Belgian fauna and since then, no additional species have been reported for Belgium. All four species were also found in the Sonian Forest by DE BORMANS (1883). The same species were also reported by DE SELYS-LONGCHAMPS (1888), by this time all species were known from several localities. *L. minor*, *F. auricularia* and *A. media* were recorded from Limburg by BAMPS (1889). All four species were again listed for Belgium by DE SELYS-LONGCHAMPS (1899), LAMEERE (1900), BURR (1913) and LESTAGE (1922) and since then, only a few scattered records have been published. MULLER (1936) found *L. minor* on a dung hill in Dalhem and DEHOUSE (1970, 1971) found a gynandromorphous specimen of *F. auricularia* with a male right forceps and a female left forceps. *Chelidura guentheri* (GALVAGNI 1994) was recently described and after checking the historical records of which material was luckily conserved in the collection of the Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences, it was found that all historical records of *C. acanthopygia* actually belonged to this species. GROOTAERT *et al.* (2005) counted 136 and 73 specimens of *F. auricularia* during two tree canopy foggings in the Sonian Forest.

Recorded species

Seven species of earwigs have been found in Belgium. A checklist of the Belgian species is given in Table 1. The distribution of all the species is discussed below.

Table 1. Species list of the Belgian Dermaptera.

Order Dermaptera
Family Anisolabididae
1. *Euborellia moesta* (GENE 1839)
Family Spongiphoridae
2. *Labia minor* (LINNAEUS 1758)
Family Labiduridae
3. *Labidura riparia* (PALLAS 1773)
Family Forficulidae
4. *Chelidura guentheri* (GALVAGNI 1994)
5. *Apterygida media* (HAGENBACH 1822)
6. *Forficula auricularia* LINNAEUS 1758
7. *Forficula decipiens* GENE 1832

Euborellia moesta (GENE 1839)

This species was observed in Macquenoise in 2001 and in Olne in 2003 (Fig. 1A). Both specimens were collected by inexperienced students from the Gembloux Agricultural University (where the material is deposited) and the occurrence of *E. moesta* in Belgium therefore needs confirmation. The limited distribution of this species in Belgium might also suggest that it concerns a recently introduced species. In France, the species occurs in all kind of habitats such as beaches, cultivated areas, gardens and orchards, where it can be found under stones, litter and fallen fruit; especially in warm and humid areas (ALBOUY & CAUSSANEL, 1990).

Labia minor (LINNAEUS 1758)

L. minor is widely distributed in Belgium but not very common (Fig. 1B). It is the only species in Belgium that flies frequently, especially

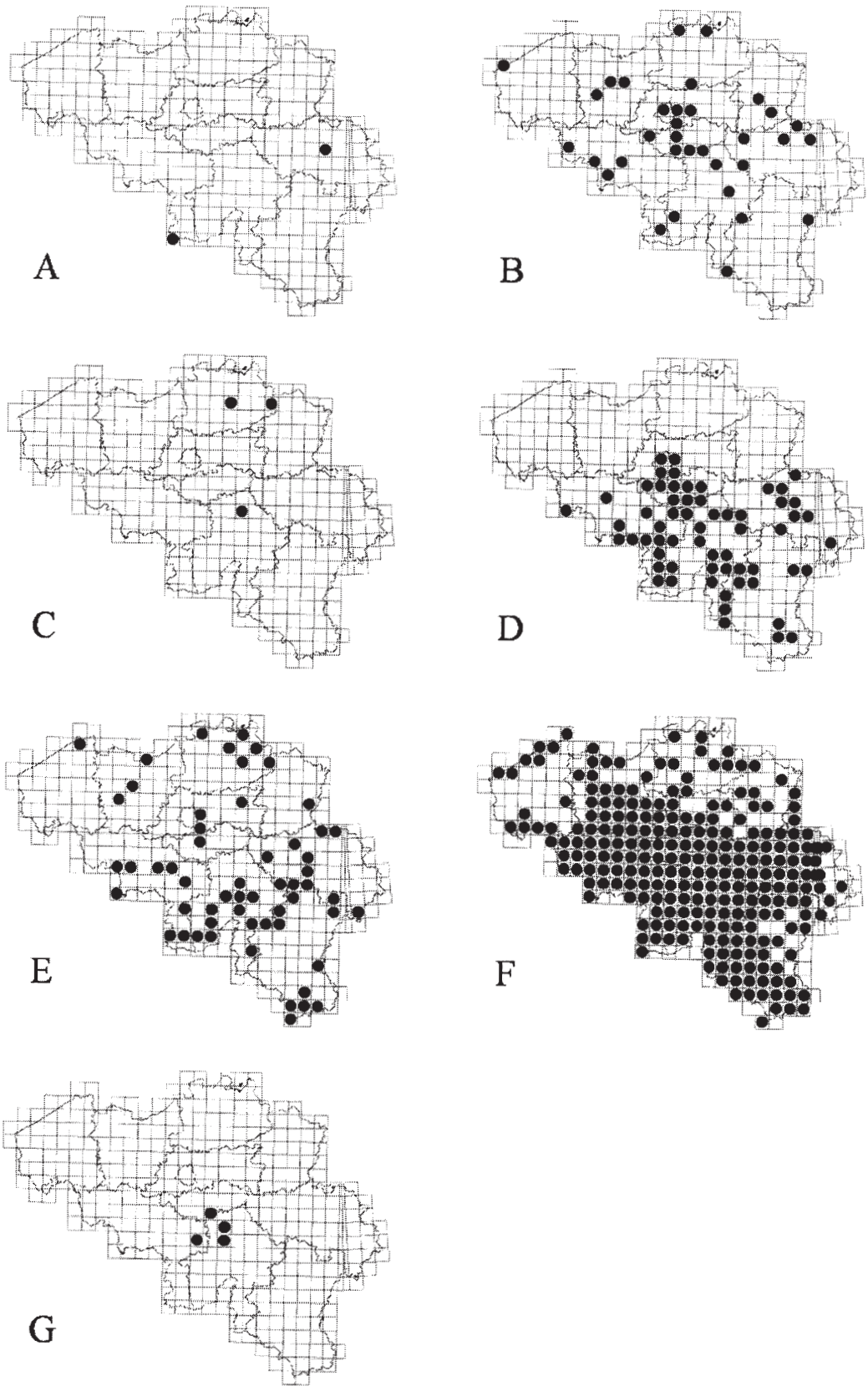

Fig. 1. Distribution maps of the Belgian Dermaptera: *Euborellia moesta* (A), *Labia minor* (B), *Labidura riparia* (C), *Chelidura guentheri* (D), *Apterygida media* (E), *Forficula auricularia* (F) and *Forficula decipiens* (G).

during warm summer evenings. As it is attracted to light, it can sometimes be observed in light traps and in illuminated buidings. The species can be found under stones, in leaf litter, in compost heaps and in dung hills, especially by sifting older parts of horse manure.

Labidura riparia (PALLAS 1773)

Already in 1945, this species was collected in Balen-Wezel by N. LELEUP (7 specimens deposited in the R.B.I.N.S.) and more recently, the species was also found on two other occasions: in 1999, C. ALBERT collected the species in Dassoulx and in 2005, M. JACOBS fotographed the species in Malle along the airstrip (Fig. 1C). Despite the fact that *L. riparia* was correctly identified by N. LELEUP and M. JACOBS, the species has, as far as I know, never been reported for Belgium. The specimen from Dassoulx was recorded by an inexperienced student from the Gembloux Agricultural University (where the specimen is deposited) and therefore, the occurence of *L. riparia* in Wallony needs to be confirmed. The animals have a very specific habitat as they are restricted to loose sand. In Belgium, the species has not yet been found in coastal dunes and river banks but only on inland sand dunes. Animals can be found under stones and logs where they dig tunnels in the sand.

Chelidura guentheri (GALVAGNI 1994)

This species is quite common in the southern part of Belgium (Fig. 1D). *C. guentheri* was recently described from Germany and southern Norway and can be easily distinguished on the basis of the morphology of the male pygidium (GALVAGNI, 1994). As *C. guentheri* was previously not recognised as a separate species, the distribution of *Chelidura acanthopygia* (GENE 1832) is probably overestimated. In the Netherlands for example, all specimens of the genus belong to the species *C. guentheri* while the species also seems to occur in France and Italy (GALVAGNI, 1997). It is essentially a woodland species that lives in litter, under stones and in mosses on tree trunks.

Apterygida media (HAGENBACH 1822)

A. media is fairly common in Belgium (Fig. 1E). The species occurs in forests, hedges, fallowland and brushwood where it lives on trees and bushes, in litter, under bark and under stones (ALBOUY & CAUSSANEL, 1990). It can be easily found by batting overhanging branches.

Forficula auricularia LINNAEUS 1758

This is by far the most common species in Belgium: it occurs almost everywhere and its current distribution only reflects where earwigs were collected (Fig. 1F). Most of the earwigs were collected by students of the Gembloux Agricultural University and therefore, Wallony has been sampled much better. However, the species is probably just as common in Flanders. Gynandromorphous animals were collected in Gembloux, Moha, Sirault, Leuze-en-Hainaut and Sirault and a female with the parasitic nematode *Mermis* species was found in Vierves-sur-Viroin. *F. auricularia* lives in all kind of habitats: forests, gardens, orchards, greenhouses and in houses. It can be found in litter, under bark, in flowers, under stones and logs, under mosses and by batting overhanging branches.

Forficula decipiens GENE 1832

This species has been found in Gembloux in 2000, in Charleroi in 2002, in Fosses-la-Ville and Bossière in 2003 (Fig. 1G). All specimens were collected by inexperienced students from the Gembloux Agricultural University (where the material is deposited) and the occurrence of *F. decipiens* in Belgium therefore needs confirmation. The limited distribution of this species in Belgium might also suggest that this species is a recently introduced species. In France, the species is found in bushes, in flowers, under stones and in gardens (ALBOUY & CAUSSANEL, 1990).

Discussion

The same five species of Dermaptera that are indigenous in the Netherlands (WILLEMSE, 1971; WIERINGA, 1990), were also found in Belgium. In addition, *E. moesta* and *F. decipiens* were also collected in Belgium, however, as no populations of these species were found, it might concern introduced individuals and therefore, their occurrence in Belgium needs to be confirmed. Based on the distribution of the earwigs in the surrounding countries, no further species are expected for the Belgian fauna.

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I would like to thank Jeannine BORTELS for her hospitality and her help during the study of the collection present in the Gembloux Agricultural University. Jérôme CONSTANT and Pol LIMBOURG are acknowledged for their help during the study of the collection in the Royal Belgian Insitute for Natural Sciences in Brussels. I would like to thank Nobby THYS, Vic NAVEAU and Maarten JACOBS for sending some observations of earwigs and the Werkgroep Invertebraten Denderstreek (WID) for delivering some unidentified specimens. Bruno GOBIN is currently making a PhD (Flanders Agricultural research project IWT040667) about the population dynamics of earwigs in orchards and the optimization of the presence of an essential predator and he kindly sent some observations. Jos BRUERS helped with finding some of the literature. I'm grateful to Tim ADRIAENS from the Research Institute for Nature and Forest for plotting the distribution maps. Finely, I would like to thank Roy KLEUKERS and Hendrik DEVRIESE for critically reading the draft version of this manuscript.

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