

A recent record of *Ochlerotatus (Rusticoides) rusticus* (Rossi, 1790) (Diptera: Culicidae) in Greece

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Abstract: The presence of *Ochlerotatus (Rusticoides) rusticus* (Rossi, 1790) in Greece was first reported by Pantazis (1935) and Shannon (1935). No further records of the species are known. However, two females were found outside the city of Tripoli in Peloponnese, confirming the current presence of the species in Greece. *Journal of the European Mosquito Control Association* 31: 12-13, 2013

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Introduction

After the eradication of malaria in Greece, in 1974, little attention was paid to Greek mosquito fauna. Samanidou and Darsie (1993a) reviewed in great detail the Greek mosquito fauna and reported in total 53 mosquito species, some of them specifically referred to as “not found” or as “historically referred”. Among these 53 mosquito species, *Aedes aegypti*, which was last recorded in Greece in 1932 by Pantazis, has been incriminated for the dengue fever epidemic in Athens in 1927-1928 that accounted for more than 1500 deaths (Louis, 2012). *Aedes aegypti* populations were proclaimed decimated during the malaria eradication programme (Livadas, 1958). *Ochlerotatus (Rusticoides) rusticus* (Rossi, 1790) was first reported in Greece by Pantazis and Shannon in 1935 but when Samanidou and Darsie reviewed in great detail the Greek mosquito fauna they recorded *Oc. rusticus* as species “without available voucher specimen”.

Material examined

Two adult female specimens were caught outdoors, in a car resting area (37°34'N, 22°25'E) at Mantinea valley, outside Tripoli during an incidental visit. This rural area is surrounded by mountains, and consists of a valley with many vineyards and several sheep and goat stables (elevation 640m above sea level). The closest human settlement is Loukas Village, located 2.8km away from the site where the mosquitoes were captured. Both specimens were caught before dusk on the 29th of April 2012 while trying to feed. No other species were caught and no larval sampling was performed. Identification was confirmed under the dissecting microscope and by available dichotomous keys for Greek mosquitoes (Samanidou-Voyadjoglou & Harbach, 2001, Darsie & Samanidou-Voyadjoglou, 1997).

Discussion

Samanidou and Darsie initially recorded 53 species and shortly added 3 more new species in the list (Samanidou-Voyadjoglou & Darsie, 1993b), announcing that the Greek mosquito fauna has not been extensively studied. *Ochlerotatus (Rusticoides) rusticus* (Rossi, 1790) is widely distributed throughout Europe and the Mediterranean area (Melero-Alcibar & Salom, 2002, Snow & Ramsdale, 1999). It can also be found in North Africa and Asia Minor. It is a large mosquito; a monocyclic snow-melt species which mainly occurs in swampy woodlands with a high level of ground

water. Occasionally it can be found in floodplains (Becker *et al.*, 2010, Sinegre *et al.*, 1967). The location where the specimens were caught is a recently built car-resting area in the middle of Mantinea valley. Larval habitats could possibly exist in the vicinity since *Oc. rusticus* is a weak flier, not expected to fly long distances (Schafer *et al.*, 1997).

Even though the medical importance of *Oc. rusticus* is considered negligible, invasive mosquito species, potential vectors of arboviruses, have been recently recorded from Greece. *Aedes albopictus* and *Culex tritaeniorhynchus* were firstly reported in 2003 from Corfu and Marathon respectively (Samanidou & Harbach, 2003). Since then, *Ae. albopictus* has established a constantly reproductive population in the capital Athens (Giatropoulos *et al.*, 2012a) and it is sporadically reported from western Greece and Peloponnese (Giatropoulos *et al.*, 2012b), whereas *Cx. tritaeniorhynchus* is the most frequent species in rice fields of the Prefecture of Aetoloacarnania (western Greece) (Lytra & Emmanouel, 2011).

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