

First records of the hoverfly *Sphaerophoria shirchan* for Belgium (Diptera Syrphidae)

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Summary

The hoverfly *Sphaerophoria shirchan* Virolvitsh, 1957 is recorded for Belgium for the first time, based on two male specimens collected in the Ardenne region. One male was found in Carlsbourg in 1997, the other was found in Robertville in 2001.

Introduction

Species of the genus *Sphaerophoria* Lapeletier & Serville, 1828 are fairly small (5-12 mm), slenderly built hoverflies with black and yellow abdominal patterns and characteristic yellow markings along the lateral margins of the mesoscutum. Many species can only be identified reliably by examining the male genitalia. In *S. shirchan* Virolvitsh, 1957 the male genitalia are very different from other western palaeartic species, allowing a relatively easy identification. For details see the extensive description by Schmid (1992).

Since its description from eastern Siberia, *Sphaerophoria shirchan* Virolvitsh, 1957 has been found in European Russia, several countries in Eastern and Central Europe, France, and southwestern Germany (Bradescu 1997, Jessat 1998, Schmid 1992, Toth 1992). The European records all date from after 1980, indicating a recent range expansion. In 1997 and 2001, two males of *S. shirchan* were found in Belgium.

Records

The first male was captured on 25.V.1997 in Carlsbourg, Bois du Defoi, UTM: 31UFR5028 (col. E. Branquart). It flew in a flower-rich

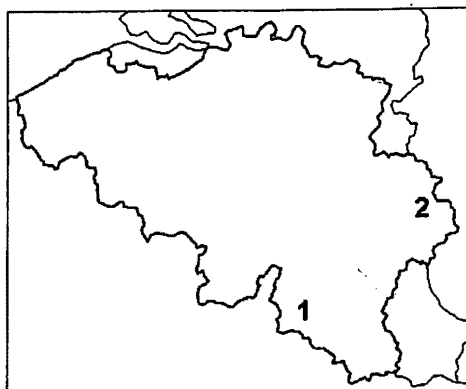


Fig. 1. Indication of the localities where *Sphaerophoria shirchan* was found in Belgium. 1: Carlsbourg (1997); 2: Robertville (2001).

clearing in a beech-spruce forest, the preferred habitat according to Speight (2003). The second male was captured on 29.V.2001 in Robertville, UTM: 31UKA9492 (col. M. Reemer), in a vegetation mainly consisting of young pine trees and *Cytisus*-bushes. Both localities are situated in the Ardenne region (Fig. 1).

These are the first records of *S. shirchan* for Belgium. The species has already been reported from the Belgian Ardennes by Speight (2003), without mentioning any details on locality, date or collector. However, this was based on the same specimen from Carlsbourg as the one reported in this paper (Speight, pers. comm.).

Syrphidologists in Belgium (and possibly the Netherlands) should be aware of the occurrence of this species, which still seems to be spreading west- and northward.

Acknowledgements

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