

The larval foodplant of *Colias caucasica balcanica* (Rebel, 1901) in Bulgaria (Lepidoptera : Pieridae)

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Samenvatting. De voedselplant van *Colias caucasica balcanica* (Rebel, 1901) in Bulgarije (Lepidoptera : Pieridae)

In het Rila-gebergte werden drie wijfjes *Colias caucasica balcanica* (Rebel, 1901) geobserveerd terwijl ze eitjes afzetten op de bovenkant van de bladeren van *Chamaecytisus absinthioides* (Janka, 1872). Zowel de vlinder als de plant zijn endemisch in de Balkan.

Résumé. La plante nourricière de *Colias caucasica balcanica* (Rebel, 1901) en Bulgarie (Lepidoptera : Pieridae)

Trois femelles de *Colias caucasica balcanica* (Rebel, 1901) ont été observées dans les Monts Rila alors qu'elles déposaient des oeufs au dessus des feuilles de *Chamaecytisus absinthioides* (Janka, 1872). Le papillon, ainsi que la plante, sont tous deux des endémiques des Balkans.

Key words : *Colias caucasica balcanica* - *Chamaecytisus absinthioides* - foodplant - Bulgaria.

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Colias caucasica balcanica (Rebel, 1901) is a subspecies endemic to the Balkans. Vulnerable, the butterfly is protected in Bulgaria. The natural larval host-plants and early stages have been unknown until now. In consequence of its similarity to *Colias myrmidone* (Esper, [1781]) and the nominal *Colias caucasica caucasica* Staudinger, 1781 the taxonomic status is unstable. Therefore, any records concerning its biology are expected to throw light on this question.

During the excursion in Rila Mts (Ravna Place, at about 1900-2000 m above sea level) on 19th July 1993 (in the early afternoon: at about 12.30 to 14.00 local time) three females of *Colias caucasica balcanica* were seen ovipositing on the leaves of low bushes, which belong to the species *Chamaecytisus absinthioides* (family Papilionaceae) (Abadjiev 1992). Later the identification of the food plant was confirmed at the Herbarium of Sofia University. The females of *Colias caucasica balcanica* lay their eggs singly on the upper surface of the leaves.

The plant, *Chamaecytisus absinthioides* (Janka, 1872), is a Balkan endemic, distributed in high Bulgarian mountains: Osogovo, Belasitsa, Slavyanka, Pirin, Rila and Rhodopi from 500-2500 m (Kuzmanov 1976). In the neighbouring countries it is known from N Greece and the former SE Yugoslavia. The distribution of the plant in Bulgaria is similar to the known range of *C. caucasica balcanica* (e.g. Osogovo, Rila, Rhodopi) (Abadjiev

1992). It occurs in forests and bushes, mainly in communities of *Pinus sylvestris*, *P. leucodermis*, *P. peuce*, *P. mugo* and *Picea abies*, frequently in thin forests, meadows and also in the subalpine belt.

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References

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