

# On the presence of *Proterebia afra* (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae, Satyrinae) on the island of Pag, Croatia

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**Samenvatting.** Over het voorkomen *Proterebia afra* (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae, Satyrinae) op het eiland Pag, Kroatië.

Op 27–28 april 2004 werd *Proterebia afra* (Fabricius, 1787) talrijk waargenomen in het noordwesten van het eiland Pag (Kroatië). Hierdoor wordt de verspreidingsgrens van deze soort verder naar het noordwesten opgeschoven.

**Résumé.** Sur la présence de *Proterebia afra* (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae, Satyrinae) sur l'île de Pag, Croatie.

Les 27 et 28 avril 2004, de nombreux exemplaires de *Proterebia afra* (Fabricius, 1787) furent trouvés dans la partie nord-ouest de l'île de Pag (Croatie). Cette observation élargit l'aire de répartition de cette espèce vers le nord-ouest.

**Key words:** *Proterebia afra* – Croatia – faunistics – new record.

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In the eighties the poor knowledge about the distribution of *Proterebia afra* showed great areal disjunction: the presence of this species was known from a restricted area in Dalmatia and from S Russia, central Asia and Iran (Higgins & Hargreaves 1983). In the past decades the species was additionally found in northern Greece (De Louker & Dils 1987) and Turkey (Hesselbarth *et al.* 1995).

The exact distribution of *P. afra* in Croatia is still unknown; its presence was mentioned for Zadar and Šibenik (Stauder 1919), the Knin area (Hafner 1994), and the island of Korčula (Jakšić 1993). Such distribution is summarized also in two atlases (Jakšić 1988, Kudrna 2002) whereby the presence on Korčula is debatable and not taken into consideration in the Kudrna distribution atlas of European butterflies (2002). The distribution map in the Croatian National Red List of Butterflies and Moths ([www.cro-nen.hr](http://www.cro-nen.hr)) shows the potential distribution of *Proterebia afra* from Zadar (NE) to Dubrovnik (SW).

The species occurs in dry, grassy sparsely bushy slopes, often gentle and undulating, strewn with small rocks. The larval food plant is *Festuca ovina*. The altitude span ranges from 150 to 500 m on Korčula and from 500 to 1100 m in northern Greece (Tolman & Lewington 1997).

In the year 2004, on 27. and 28. of April the species was observed at localities near the ornithological reserve Kolansko blato, between Gajac and the village Kolan on the north-eastern part of the island of Pag, Croatia (44° 31' 30"N 14° 55'E). The island of Pag is not recognized as a potential area of the species distribution ([www.cro-nen.hr](http://www.cro-nen.hr)), therefore this discovery was highly unexpected and has pushed the limits of the known distribution further northwest.



Figure 1: Habitat of *Proterebia afra* on the island of Pag, Croatia (Photo: V. Zakšek).

List of sites where *Proterebia afra* was observed during 2004:

- 27.4., ca. 10 adult males, pastures on plains NW of village Kolan,
- 28.4., more than 20 adults were observed, also several females, sheep grazed pastures S from Gajac, between coast and lake,
- 28.4., more than 20 males were observed, one female, sheep grazed pastures S from bay Rogoza,
- 28.4., ca. 10 adults were observed, open grasslands E from Gajac,
- 28.4., more than 20 males were observed and several females, sheep grazed pastures W from main road Novalja-Pag.

The habitat was similar in all sites; dry, sparsely bushy and rocky grasslands characterised by scattered *Juniperus* sp. bushes as the dominant shrub and tufts of *Festuca* sp. All sites were in the coastal area at low altitudes (10–20 m). The presence at such low altitudes, compared with currently known vertical distribution, can possibly be explained by the northern limit of the species distribution.

The endangerment category of *Proterebia afra* in Croatia is unknown (DD-data deficient). In order to fill the distribution gap between the northern part of the island of Pag and the known sites south of Zadar further investigation of habitat preferences and distribution is necessary. Together with the data

contained in the present paper these finds will improve our knowledge of the endangerment status of the species in Croatia.

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