Eriocrania salopiella (Lepidoptera: Eriocraniidae),
new to the Belgian fauna

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Introduction

On 22 May 2009, the Workgroup Belgian Leafminers, consisting that day of Dries De Vreeze, Chris Snyers, and myself, collected some tenanted mines of Eriocrania salopiella Stainton, 1854 on birch (Betula sp.) at Kluisbergen (prov. of East Flanders). This is the first record of this species for the Belgian fauna. Two days later, the species was found again, this time very plentiful in the domain "Kleiputten" at Niel (prov. of Antwerp). The mines still contained young, eating caterpillars. On 06 June, numerous mines were found in the province of East-Flanders, but this time at Lembeke, about 60 km away from the first place.

In 2010, Eriocrania salopiella has spread some more over the country. On 29 May, the workgroup found a few mines at Ploegsteert (prov. of Hainaut) and on 05 June, Chris Steeman found lots of tenanted mines at Nassogne (prov. of Luxembourg). The species is apparently well established in Belgium, because everywhere we found mines, it was always in high numbers. Hitherto, this new Belgian species has been found in four provinces: Antwerp, East-Flanders, Hainaut, and Luxembourg.
Figs. 1–3. Larva of *Eriocrania salopiella* Stainton, 1854. Lembeke (Belgium, East Flanders), 06.vi.2009, leg. Workgroup Leafminers. Fig. 4.– Cut in under epidermis made by the caterpillar just before pupation in the soil. (Photos S. Wullaert). Figs. 5–6.– Vacated leafmines of *Eriocrania salopiella* Stainton, 1854 on *Betula* sp., Kluisbergen (Belgium, East Flanders), 22.v.2009, leg. Workgroup Leafminers. (Photos C. Snyers).
Biology

Mine: Typical for this *Eriocrania*-species is that the egg is never laid far away from the midrib. From there starts a short corridor that is almost completely filled with frass deposited in irregular flakes. The mine then turns into a blotch mine which crosses the mid- and sideribs, in this blot the frass is arranged in long black threads. The caterpillar makes a cut in the under epidermis through which it leaves the mine and pupates in the ground. The caterpillars can be found in May and June. They exclusively live on birch (*Betula* sp.) (Ellis 2009). The next generation appears in April of the following year. The imago has a wing span of 09–12 mm.

Distribution

In the Benelux, the species was hitherto only recorded from the Netherlands (Ellis 2009). In the rest of Europe *E. salopiella* is present in the British Isles, Ireland, Denmark, France, Germany and in all of the Scandinavian countries. It has not been recorded yet from large countries like Italy, Portugal or Spain. In Central and Eastern Europe the species is present in the Czech Republic and in North- and Northwest Russia (Karsholt & van Nieukerken 2010).

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References


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