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The aquatic Heteroptera (Insecta: Hemiptera) of the “Foreste Casentinesi, Monte Falterona e Campigna” National Park (Central Italy)

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Abstract

We provide the first checklist of the aquatic Heteroptera of the “Foreste Casentinesi, M. Falterona e Campigna” National Park, located on the Apennines between Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna. We list 31 species, representing the 28% of the aquatic Hemiptera present in Italy. We summarize data on Gerromorpha (14 spp.), Nepomorpha (13 spp.) and water-dependent Leptopodomorpha (4 spp.) of this protected area, reporting for each species all sampling data.

Key words: Heteroptera, Gerromorpha, Nepomorpha, Leptopodomorpha, wetlands, protected area, checklist, Italy

Introduction

The infraorders Gerromorpha, Nepomorpha and Leptopodomorpha represent a significant component of the world’s freshwater animal biota. Most of the species inhabit freshwater or marine biotopes and they are labelled as “aquatic Heteroptera” by Polhemus & Polhemus (2008). Only a small proportion is not water dependent, sometimes with strictly terrestrial and xerothermic features (mostly in Leptopodomorpha) (Polhemus & Polhemus 2008).

Their systematic knowledge is quite good in Italy, but some taxonomic problems still exist. More studies are needed, especially in central and southern regions, which are the less investigated areas (cf. Bacchi & Rizzotti Vlach 2007; Carapezza & Faraci 2007).

The “Foreste Casentinesi, Monte Falterona e Campigna” National Park is a protected area of about 36,843 ha located on the Apennines between two regions (Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna) (Fig. 1). It was established in 1990 and includes one of the most high-quality forest area in Europe with a variety of animal and plant species of great scientific interest. Despite being a protected area, only few contributions are available on Heteroptera (cf. Cianferoni *et al.* 2009a; Terzani *et al.* 2012), with none specific to aquatic taxa.

To fill this gap, this study aims at both compiling the first critical checklist of aquatic Heteroptera (Gerromorpha, Nepomorpha and Leptopodomorpha) in the National Park and investigating their distribution in this area.

Material and methods

Here, we consider only heteropteran freshwater species excluding taxa inhabiting terrestrial habitats (families Leptopodidae and Saldidae *partim*) and we refer to them simply as “aquatic Heteroptera”. Freshwater taxa are included (Polhemus & Polhemus 2008) in two different categories of insects: “real aquatic species” (Gerromorpha and Nepomorpha) and “water dependent species” (Leptopodomorpha).