

with plenty of wadding inside another airtight container, such as a wide-mouth polythene jar with a screw top. This should withstand almost any impact or pressure change. It is best to have more than one container of chloroform not only in case of breakage but in case some is lost in any other way.

The chloroform-gun technique has proved its worth many times in my own collecting; indeed, it is sometimes the only way to collect certain insects. For example, we found a blue-flowered shrub some 4m high growing beside a narrow track around the mountainside at Macchu Pijchu; the flowers were being visited by a reddish-brown bumble bee. It was not possible to reach the flowers, not only because of their height but also because it would have been impossible to reach up through or around the rather dense branches without disturbing the bees. Two males and three workers were quite easily secured with a chloroform gun: they proved to be the rarely-collected Bombus handlirschii.

Collecting Report

COLLECTING IN FUERTEVENTURA, CANARY ISLANDS

by

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Our two weeks stay in the Canary Islands over Christmas and the New Year was really a holiday, but as we also collected, a report is in order (to use Arnold Menke's phrase). It was great to have a holiday instead of a car crash. The rains were both heavy and early this season, so that when we arrived the desert was like a garden. We also had the great good luck to be introduced to a German amateur entomologist and his wife, who knew the island quite well. We made several most enjoyable and rewarding trips together. Apart from bees, Pompilidae were easily the most common group of Aculeata, albeit with considerably fewer species than bees or sphecids. Amongst Eumenidae, we took a Delta dimidiatipennis, a genus new to the Canaries; Katamenes nigra, Ancistrocerus keneri, and Euleptochilus fortunatus. An old nest of Delta was found on the stonework above a hearth open to the outside, while the Ancistrocerus was nesting in the ends of some horizontal bamboos forming a shading-screen some 2.5m above the ground. Another interesting capture was the bee Anthrophora alluaudi, which was collected in the past in at least two other localities on the island, at similar altitudes; also on rather high ground in Lanzarote; its foodplant, however (Echium species, Boraginaceae) occurred virtually everywhere. The bee is basically black in these two islands, but occurs in a paler form in, at least, Tenerife, La Palma and Hierro. It remains to be seen whether these are merely colour forms of a Sahelian species; at present they are regarded as endemic to the Canaries. Most of our collecting was done on the south-east coast of Jandia, the large southern peninsula of Fuerteventura. Apart from Hymenoptera, we collected some exciting-looking caterpillars. They were about 6cm long, and white with black and orange spots. They were, of course, very easy to see on their foodplant, Dipcadi serotinum (Liliaceae). This looks very like a brown-flowered Bluebell growing in the desert. A few weeks after being collected, these larvae produced the beautiful noctuid moth Polytela cliens, another new record for the Canary Islands. This species, as also many of the Hymenoptera, is basically Sahelian. Since many show marked differences from the Saharan forms (some people call them "subspecies"), they may well have been there ever since the easternmost islands drifted away from the Ifni Gap in West Africa a few years ago (geologically speaking).

We later heard that about a week after we left the island a violent storm had caused a flash flood in the barranco (=wadi) near where we had stayed, and changed the face of the coast. We had collected there just in time....

