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MYELOBIA SMERINTHA (HÜBNER, 1821) (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: CRAMBIDAE) ALSO OCCURS IN PARAGUAY

MYELOBIA SMERINTHA (HÜBNER, 1821) (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: CRAMBIDAE) TAMBIÉN SE ENCUENTRA EN PARAGUAY

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Abstract.- The giant Crambid moth *Myelobia smerintha* (Hübner, 1821) is a distinctive species that is widespread in the Neotropics, but has apparently never been reported previously for Paraguay. Specimens and a photograph record from Itapúa department are documented here to confirm the presence of the species in the country.

Keywords: Bambusa, Guadua, *Itapúa,*

Resumen.- El Crambido gigante *Myelobia smerintha* (Hübner, 1821) es una especie muy distintiva y con distribución amplia en la region Neotropical, pero aparentemente nunca antes ha sido reportado en Paraguay. Se confirma su presencia en el país con ejemplares y un registro fotográfico del departamento Itapúa.

Keywords: Bambusa, Guadua, *Itapúa,*

Amongst the largest of the Crambid moths, larvae of *Myelobia smerintha* (Hübner, 1821) (Lepidopterae: Crambinae) are borers of stem internodes of *Guadua* spp. and *Bambusa* spp. bamboos (Poaceae) (Neto & Ramos-Elorduy, 2006; Landry *et al.*, 2015). Recently the species has also been documented as using sugarcane as a developmental host, increasing the economic importance of this moth as a potential pest species (Sandoval Cáceres *et al.*, 2017).

The species has a potentially wide distribution, but I have been able to find previously published records only from Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico and Brazil (Hübner, 1821; Dyar, 1917; Hampson, 1917; von Ihering, 1917; Bleszynski, 1967; Passoa, 1985; Miller *et al.*, 2012; Landry *et al.*, 2015; Sandoval-Cáceres *et al.*, 2017), with additional unpublished specimen records from Argentina (Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales) and Guatemala (Research Collection of Jason Dombroskie) (BOLD Systems online 2019). Given its potential as a pest species and the economic importance of understanding its range and phenology, I here formally document the presence of this species in Paraguay.

Two specimens (CZPLT 5740, CZPLT 5741) were collected at Estancia Nueva Gambach, Itapúa department (26º 38' 16.3'' S, 55 39' 51.4'' W) on 12 September 2018 representing the first documented occurrence of this species in Paraguay. Specimens are housed in the Colección Entomológica de Para La Tierra, Pilar, Paraguay (CZPLT). It had also been previously photographed in an urban garden in the city of Encarnación, Itapúa department (27º 21' 04.3'' S, 55 51' 42.4'' W) on 23 August 2009 (Fig 1) but was not collected.

Von Ihering (1917) reported emergence of this moth in late September and early October in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro states, Brazil, noting that the species can in certain years be extremely abundant. Based on the limited data available from Paraguay it seems that similar patterns of phenology may apply. The

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Figure 1. Female of *Myelobia smerintha* from Encarnación, Itapúa department on 23 August 2009.

presence of the species in Paraguay is to be expected as the larvae are consumed by the indigenous peoples of Pirajuí (Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil) close to the Paraguayan border (Vera & Brand, 2012). Secondhand reports suggest that the species is also possibly consumed in the vicinity of Cerro Memby, Concepción department, Paraguay, which would indicate a potentially wide distribution in the Oriental region of the country (Vera & Brand, 2012).

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