

First record of *Acanalonia conica* (Issidae) in Italy

Vera D'Urso¹ & Marco Uliana²

¹Dipartimento di Biologia Animale "Marcello La Greca", University of Catania, Italy

²Via S. Daniele, 835020 - Rosara di Codevigo (PD), Italy

Over 60 species, widespread from North to South America, belong to the genus *Acanalonia* Spinola, 1839. *Acanalonia conica* (Say, 1830) is widespread in the United States from Florida to Texas, and from Connecticut to Nebraska. The general shape is similar to a flatid but it can be easily distinguished in the lack of the parallel veins along the costal margin and of the granules at the base of the fore wings. It is a green species, about 1 cm long, laterally compressed, with long subrectangular fore wings having a network of veins. *A. conica* differs from the other species of the genus in the shape of the vertex, that is strongly protruded beyond the compound eyes in a conical angle; it also differs in the shape of the male pygofer and aedeagus and of the female 8th abdominal sternite.

A. conica is a polyphagous species on spontaneous and cultivated trees and shrubs, some of which have an economic importance (e.g. *Vitis*). Eggs are laid separately inside the woody tissue. The pre-imaginal stages have a typical hump-backed shape and are brown. They are covered with long waxy filaments and, like the adults, produce abundant honeydew. This species is univoltine and the eggs overwinter; adults are present in Illinois from July to September (Wilson & McPherson, 1980a, 1981).

In the Nearctic Region, *A. conica* often lives associated with three flatid species that show a similar geonomy: *Metcalfa pruinosa* (Say), *Anormenis chloris* (Melichar), and *Ormenis venusta* (Melichar) (Wilson & McPherson, 1980b, Freud & Wilson, 1995, Wilson & Lucchi, 2000, 2001).

A. conica was collected for the first time in Europe, in Venetia (Italy), province of Padua, in June 2003. The highest number of specimens collected was attracted by a UV lamp, other specimens were collected on *Buddleia davidii*, and few on other plants. Adults were present at least until the end of July. Many rests of *A. conica* are found together with those of *M. pruinosa* in hazel wood litter.

The record of *A. conica* from Italy is very significant because this species could be an important pest in Europe like *M. pruinosa* is. The latter species has not a great economic importance in its original region due to the low number of specimens. In Europe, it shows very large populations on spontaneous and

cultivated plants causing serious damage by sucking a great amount of lymph and by producing a large quantity of wax and honeydew.

M. pruinosa, also appeared for the first time (1979) in Europe, in Venetia (province of Treviso); then it spread rapidly throughout Italy and some other European countries. *A. conica* seems to follow in *M. pruinosa*'s steps. Therefore it is important to prevent immediately repeated introductions from the U.S.A. and also limit its diffusion through biological control.

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