

# A NEW DISTRIBUTION RECORD FOR *LAXTA GRANICOLLIS* (SAUSSURE 1862), (BLATTODEA: BLABERIDAE) FROM NORFOLK ISLAND

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## Summary

During a fieldtrip to Norfolk Island in 1996 a small number of cockroaches, representing five species, were collected. Three of these were known to occur on the island (Smithers 1998), however three adult female specimens of *Laxta granicollis* (Saussure 1862) which were also collected, provide a new distribution record for this species. These are lodged in the Australian National Insect Collection, Canberra. The fifth species belongs to the family Blattellidae but was not determined beyond this level.

**Keywords:** *Laxta granicollis*, Norfolk Island, Blaberidae

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The fieldwork on Norfolk Island was not aimed specifically to collect Blattodea but to obtain a wide range of insects for the Norfolk Island Flora and Fauna Society's interpretive display. Numerous collecting methods were employed, but only hand collecting from decaying wood as well as pit and light trapping proved to be gainful for Blattodea specimens. Various household jars and plastic containers with or without baits were used as pit traps, in a variety of habitats. Vinegar, sugar, meat, beer and white wine were used as bait. No toxic preservatives, such as formalin or glycol, were used. Blattodea specimens were collected in wine-baited or un-baited traps and only one common, cosmopolitan species, *Periplaneta americana* (Linnaeus 1785) flew to the ultraviolet fluorescent light at night.

## SPECIMENS COLLECTED

Three adult female specimens of *Laxta granicollis* (Saussure 1862) were collected from a dead and decaying *Hibiscus* sp. stump in an ornamental garden. The specimens were captured at night as they were walking over the surface of the stump. Until now the known distribution of this species was the Murray-Darling basin and South-East coastal areas of the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Victoria (Roach and Rentz 1998). *L. granicollis* is usually active at night but hides in crevices, cracks in timber or under bark during daylight. This behaviour may have led to it being accidentally introduced to Norfolk Island with transport of timber or ornamental plants from Australia.

Two species of Blattidae, *Periplaneta americana* (Linnaeus 1758) and *Methana marginalis* (Saussure 1864), and one species of Blaberidae, *Panesthia*

*cribrata* (Saussure 1864), were collected and are previously recorded from Norfolk Island (Smithers 1998).

Six specimens of an undetermined Blattellidae were also collected. Smithers (1998) records three species of Blattellidae from Norfolk Island, *Blattella germanica* (Linnaeus 1767), a *Carbrunneria* sp. and an *Ectoneura* sp. The specimens collected on this occasion are not *Blattella germanica*, however no keys or descriptive tools exist for separating the subfamilies or genera of the Blattellidae, and we have not determined them beyond family level.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank Mr. David Millar from the Australian Museum who accompanied George Hangay in the field on Norfolk Island. We also thank Mr. J. Spicer-Bell, Mr. E. Mack and to Mr. Jack Mack, residents of Norfolk Island, for providing specimens.

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