

NOTES ON HABITS OF TWO BLOODSUCKING BUGS, *TRITOMA*
DISPAR LENT, 1950, AND *ERATYRUS CUSPIDATUS* STÅL, 1859
(HEMIPTERA: REDUVIIDAE)

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Triatoma dispar Lent

In July, 1950, while carrying out studies on arboreal, day-flying, forest mosquitoes on the slopes of Cerro Campana in Panama, we noted the presence of a two-toed sloth, *Choloepus hoffmani*, on a crotch some 65 ft. above the forest floor and about 20 ft. above a platform where we had stationed a mosquito collector. This sloth was reported present on the same crotch during the following month until it was finally captured and bled for yellow fever immunological studies. About a week after the sloth was removed from the crotch, seven fifth-instar triatomine nymphs were captured by the mosquito collector while attempting to feed on him. On the following days additional nymphs were taken and the collector noted that the insects were crawling down from the crotch formerly occupied by the sloth. Close examination of the crotch revealed the presence of five adult triatomines and many nymphs of all stages, some of which were partly engorged.

Subsequently, in November, 1950, at Bijao, on the slopes of Chiriqui volcano, Republic of Panama, three additional nymphs of the same species were taken from a crotch of a tree where a two-toed sloth was resting about 45 ft. above the forest floor. In June, 1958 a single adult female was captured while attempting to feed during the day on a mosquito collector on a 60 foot platform in the Cerro Azul area, about 20 miles east of Panama City.

Dr. Herman Lent of the Instituto Oswaldo Cruz, Brazil, determined one female and two nymphs from our material as *Triatoma dispar* Lent 1950. It is, according to Dr. Lent, the species erroneously reported by Champion (1889) and Usinger (1944) as *Triatoma venosa* Stal.

Evidently *Triatoma dispar* is highly arboreal in habits. The fact that it was found twice associated with *Choloepus hoffmani* may indicate a predilection for this edentate, although its collection at human bait suggests that it may have a wider host range among arboreal mammals.

Eratyrus cuspidatus Stål

This bloodsucking bug is apparently seldom taken, and little is known of its habits. Neiva and Lent (1941) gave the distribution as Colombia, Venezuela and Panama, and Usinger (1944) recorded it only from Panama. Specimens have been found infected with trypanosomes in Venezuela and in Panama (Dunn 1934).

Specimens in the collection at Gorgas Memorial Laboratory, aside from 3 nymphs and 1 adult, the progeny of Dunn's specimen, are all

adults taken attracted to light, as follows: 2 ♂, Barro Colorado Id., C. Z., 25, 27 July 1960; 1 ♂, Madden Dam, C. Z., 20 Apr. 1960; 1 ♀, Almirante, Bocas del Toro Prov., 5 Sept. 1951; 1 ♂, Esquintla, Guatemala, 20 Apr. 1945. This last is smaller and paler than the Panama specimens.

On 30 June 1962, two last-instar nymphs of what were suspected to be *Eratyrus*, were taken in the crevices of a piece of old termite nest and under a small board lying on the concrete floor of the instrument platform of an abandoned artillery-range tower. This tower (one of two on a ridge back of the Caribbean coast in the Fort Sherman reservation, Canal Zone), is an enclosed concrete structure about 80 feet high, surmounted by an observation-instrument platform, roofed over but open on all sides. A small colony of bats, species not determined, had been established for some years in a space just beneath the platform near the hole through the center of the floor which gave access to the instrument emplacement. No bird's nests or evidence of the presence of other animals were noted, and the construction of the tower is such that the only animals likely to make use of its top, and only, room, are bats or birds. The top of the tower rises slightly above the surrounding essentially virgin forest, which was left for concealment when the towers were built.

Through the kind cooperation of Mr. B. S. Holderman, II, M. C., U. S. N., of the Navy unit attached to this laboratory, who fed the nymphs successfully on mice, one of the two nymphs transformed to an adult *Eratyrus cuspidatus* about 10 Aug. 1962. Both specimens are being held alive with the hope that they may be used to establish a colony. Neither specimen was infected with trypanosomes.

REFERENCES

- Champion, G. C., 1899. *Biologia Centrali Americana*, Insecta, Rhynchota, 2:209, Tab. XII, fig. 23.
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- Neiva, A. and Herman Lent, 1941. *Rev. Ent.*, Rio de Janeiro, 12(1-2):88.
- Usinger, R. L., 1944. *The Triatominae of North and Central America and the West Indies and their public health significance*. Public Health Bulletin No. 288, U.S.P.H.S. Washington, D. C., pp. 61-62, Plate IX fig. 1.

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