

# *Asiraca clavicornis* (Fabricius, 1794) (Homoptera, Delphacidae, Asiracinae) a new planthopper to northern Europe found in Norway

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The first confirmed records of *Asiraca clavicornis* (Fabricius, 1794) from northern Europe are reported from Telemark in Norway. Several specimens were recorded among herbs and grasses in a south faced dry slope held open by slides and rock outcrops. The characteristic species is the only member of the subfamily Asciracinae in Europe.

Key words: *Asiraca clavicornis*, Hemiptera, Homoptera, Delphacidae, Asiracinae, Norway.

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## Introduction

The Delphacidae are the largest family of planthoppers (Fulgoromorpha) in Europe with about 250 species (Holzinger et al. 2003) of which 90 species are confirmed from Northern Europe (Söderman et al. 2009). This family is subdivided into four subfamilies: Asiracinae, Kelisiinae, Sternocraninae, and Delphacinae. *Asiraca clavicornis* (Fabricius, 1794) belong to the Asiracinae which is the most basal subgroup with mostly tropical species, and only one species in Europe (Holzinger et al. 2003).

*Asiraca clavicornis* is widespread in southern and central Europe where it is found in sunny, moderately dry to dry, usually disturbed sites (Nickel 2003). From northern Europe *A. clavicornis* is only reported from Latvia (Grimmerthal 1846). However, this report is considered as a misidentification by Vilblaste (1974). In the catalogues of Auchenorrhyncha of northern Europe (Söderman et al. 2009), and Europe (Nast 1987), the record from Latvia is considered unreliable.

## The records

Here, the first confirmed records of *Asiraca clavicornis* from northern Europe are presented. The species was found quite numerous by sweep netting in the field layer at Heggenes in Telemark county in Norway by three different occasions. The hilly topography of Telemark causes extremely warm microclimate in the south faced slopes at summertime. In this locality natural soil slides and rock outcrops keep the area open and sun exposed. Combined with calcareous soil types such localities are characterized as hot spots for invertebrates this region (Ødegaard et al. 2006). For instance, several species of beetles are reported as new to Norway from this site (Ødegaard & Ligaard 2000). Record data of *Asiraca clavicornis*: TEI, Seljord: Heggenes (EIS 17) UTM 32V E487711 N6586122, 11 May 2009, 2 June 2009 (numerous); UTM 32V E487827 N6589107, 18 May 2010 (numerous), leg. F. Ødegaard.



**FIGURE 1.** Male of *Asiraca clavicornis* (Fabricius, 1794) from Seljord, Telemark in Norway. Photo: Arnstein Staverløkk, NINA.

## Discussion

*A. clavicornis* is easily recognized by the large size (3.6–3.8 mm in male and 4.3–5.0 mm in female), the long antennae and the strongly flattened fore legs (Biedermann & Niedringhaus 2004) (Fig. 1). The fact that the species was found in two different years in large numbers at several incidents, indicates that a stable population exist at the site. However, it is not known whether these records represent a relict population, a recent introduction or a result from natural colonization due to for instance climate change. It is striking that such a conspicuous species should be overlooked until now. On the other hand, the hoppers (Auchenorrhyncha) are poorly studied in Norway.

Most species of Delphacidae are oligophagous or monophagous sapsuckers on monocots of Cyperaceae and Poaceae. The host plants for *A. clavicornis* are not known, but it is believed to be polyphagous (Holzinger et al. 2003). A thorough study of *A. clavicornis* at the locality in Telemark

should be performed in the future in order to reveal the host plants.

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