NAT. CROAT. | VOL. 35 | No 1 | 175-184 | ZAGREB | July 31, 2026

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original scientific paper/izvorni znanstveni rad
DOI 10.20302/NC.2026.35.14

MOTHS AND BUTTERFLIES (LEPIDOPTERA) FOUND ON MLJET ISLAND – RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH CONDUCTED IN 2012 AND CURRENT STATE OF KNOWLEDGE

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Kazimierczak, J.: Moths and butterflies (Lepidoptera) found on Mljet Island (Croatia) – results of the research conducted in 2012 and current state of knowledge. Nat. Croat., Vol. 35, No. 1, 175-184, 2026, Zagreb.

This study presents 77 new species of Lepidoptera for Mljet, recorded on the island in July 2012, bringing the total number of documented species to 121 from 19 families. The research was conducted in the central part of the island. *Oxyptilus laetus* (Zeller, 1847) from the family *Pterophoridae* is recorded in Croatia here for the first time in nearly 90 years.

Key words: Lepidoptera, Mljet, Croatia, Dalmatia, *Oxyptilus laetus*

Kazimierczak, J.: Noćni i danji leptiri (Lepidoptera) nađeni na otoku Mljetu (Hrvatska) – rezultati istraživanja iz 2012. i ukupno dosadašnje stanje. Nat. Croat., Vol. 35, No. 1, 175-184, 2026, Zagreb.

Ovaj rad donosi 77 novih vrsta leptira za Mljet, zabilježenih na otoku u srpnju 2012., čime je ukupan broj dokumentiranih vrsta porastao na 121 vrtsu iz 19 porodica. Istraživanje je provedeno u središnjem dijelu otoka. Vrsta *Oxyptilus laetus* (Zeller, 1847) iz porodice Pterophoridae zabilježena je ovdje za Hrvatsku prvi put nakon gotovo 90 godina.

Ključne riječi: Lepidoptera, Mljet, Hrvatska, Dalmacija, *Oxyptilus laetus*

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the first research on *Lepidoptera* conducted by the author in 2006 (Kazimierczak, 2009), 44 species were recorded in the area of Mljet National Park which covers the western part of the island. The study conducted in 2012 focused on the central part of the island with particular emphasis on moths.

The central part of Mljet is predominantly covered by Aleppo pine *Pinetum halepensis* forest and Evergreen oak *Orno-Qurcetum Ilicis* forest with all its degradation stages. Due to its extensive forest cover (72% of the total area), unlike other Adriatic islands, Mljet is an exceptionally interesting subject of scientific research (Popijač *et al*., 2022). There are several brackish lakes (blatinas) in that part of Mljet. Blatinas are a very unique natural phenomenon among all Adriatic karst islands. These karst marsh-like lakes are situated next to a ponor which is connected to the sea through unexplored karst conduits. The salinity in these lakes varies between 1.9% and 48.2% (Borović *et al*., 2019).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research conducted in July 2012 took place mainly in Babino Polje (1) (42º44′20.07″N 17º32′3.06″E) and two other sites located near the brackish lakes (blatinas) in Sobra (2) (42º44′3.44″N 17º36′0.71″E) and Blato (3) (42º45′45.26″N 17º28′13.15″E). An additional site was located at a previously studied location, close to the Sutmiholjska beach (4) (42º44′29.95″N 17º29′59.33″E). All studied sites were located outside the boundaries of the National Park Mljet. Moths were attracted using 500 W, 250 W self-ballasted mercury vapor lamps and 25W ultraviolet lamp. Additionally, moths and butterflies were observed using an entomological net or photographed. Taxonomic determination was based on morphological analysis. Genitalia were examined in case of: *Leptidea sinapis* (Linnaeus, 1758); *Eilema caniola* (Hübner, 1808); *Bryopsis muralis* (Forster, 1771); *Pseudacrobasis tergestella* Ragonot, 1901; *Aethes margarotana* (Duponchel, 1836); *Aethes williana* (Brahm, 1791); *Crocidosema plebejana* Zeller, 1847; *Phycita roborella* (Denis & Schiffermüller, 1775); *Acrobasis sodalella* Zeller, 1848; *Denticera divisella* (Duponchel, 1842); *Zebeeba falsalis* (Herrich-Schäffer, 1839); *Pelosia obtusa* (Herrich-Schäffer, 1852); *Metasia ophialis* (Treitschke, 1829); *Gymnoscelis rufifasciata* (Haworth, 1809) and *Oxyptilus laetus* (Zeller, 1847). Nomenclature and systematic order follows those used in the checklist of European Lepidoptera (Karsholt & Razowski, 1996).

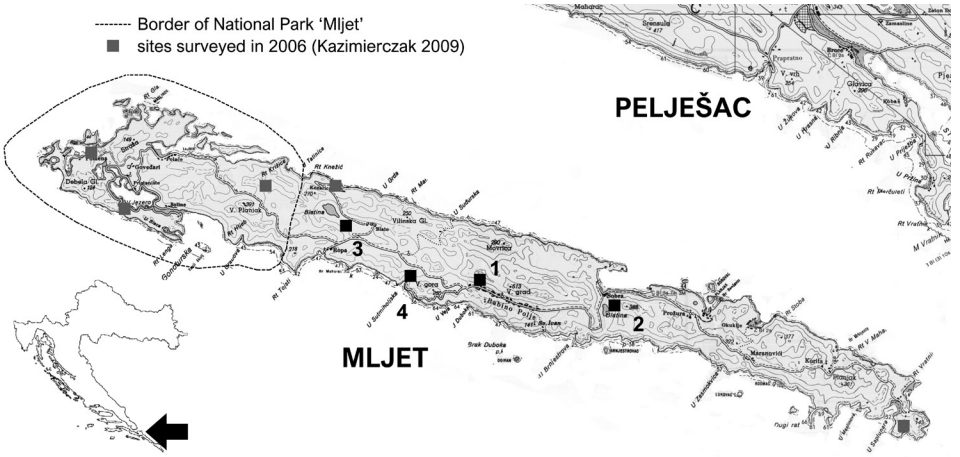

Fig. 1. Site localities: **1)** Babino Polje, a village and rocky trails nearby; **2)** Blatina near Sobra; **3)** Blato; **4)** Sutmiholjska, sea coast.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As a result of the research conducted in July 2012, 77 new species for Mljet from 19 families of *Lepidoptera* were recorded. This increases the total number to 121 species from 19 families. Including the sites surveyed in 2006, the number of researched sites now stands at nine.

While *Oxyptilus laetus* (Zeller, 1847) had not been recorded in Croatia for nearly 90 years, *Aethes margarotana* (Duponchel, 1836), *Aethes williana* (Brahm, 1791), *Cacoeci-*

morpha pronubana (Hübner, 1799), *Crocidosema plebejana* Zeller, 1847, *Acrobasis sodalella* Zeller, 1848, *Pseudacrobasis tergestella* Ragonot, 1901, *Euchromius bella* (Hübner, 1796), *Idaea albitorquata* (Püngeler, 1909), *Idaea camparia* (Herrich-Schäffer, 1852), *Thalera fimbrialis* (Scopoli, 1763) and *Mythimna languida* (Walker, 1858) are considered to be eleven species from the list that had previously been recorded in Croatia only a few times.

Comparing the number of recorded Lepidoptera species on Mljet with the recently published species list from Šolta – 700 species (Gomboc *et al.*, 2024), Mljet still seems to be insufficiently researched. Further research on the moths and butterflies of Mljet is recommended. The list of species is presented in Tab. 1.

Tab. 1. The list of species found in 2012 and in Kazimierczak (2006).

		2012				Kazimierczak, 2006
		1.	2.	3.	4.	
	Species	**Babino Polje**	**Sobra - Blatina**	**Blato**	**Sutmiholjska**	
	Oecophoridae					
1	*Pleurota aristella* (Linnaeus, 1767)	+		+		
	Cossidae					
2	*Parahypopta caestrum* (Hübner, 1808)	+				
3	*Zeuzera pyrina* (Linnaeus, 1761)	+				
	Tortricidae					
4	*Aethes margarotana* (Duponchel, 1836)			+		
5	*Aethes williana* (Brahm, 1791)	+		+		
6	*Cacoecimorpha pronubana* (Hübner, 1799)	+				
7	*Crocidosema plebejana* Zeller, 1847		+			
	Pterophoridae					
8	*Oxyptilus laetus* (Zeller, 1847)	+				
9	*Emmelina monodactyla* (Linnaeus, 1758)					+
	Pyralidae					
10	*Pyralis regalis* ([Denis & Schiffermüller, 1775])		+	+		+
11	*Hypsopygia fulvocilialis* (Duponchel, 1834)					+
12	*Hypsopygia incarnatalis* (Zeller, 1847)			+		
13	*Stemmatophora honestalis* (Treitschke, 1829)	+	+			
14	*Endotricha flammealis* (Denis & Schiffermüller, 1775)			+		+
15	*Oxybia transversella* (Duponchel, 1836)	+				
16	*Oncocera semirubella* (Scopoli, 1763)					+
17	*Pempelia palumbella* (Denis & Schiffermüller, 1775)		+			
18	*Denticera divisella* (Duponchel, 1842)		+			
19	*Phycita roborella* (Denis & Schiffermüller, 1775)		+			
20	*Acrobasis sodalella* Zeller, 1848	+				
21	*Pseudacrobasis tergestella* Ragonot, 1901			+		
22	*Myelois circumvoluta* (Fourcroy, 1785)	+				
	Crambidae					
23	*Aporodes floralis* (Hübner, 1809)			+		
24	*Pyrausta aurata* (Scopoli, 1763)			+		
25	*Ecpyrrhorrhoe rubiginalis* (Hübner, 1796)			+		
26	*Uresiphita gilvata* (Fabricius, 1794)	+				
27	*Ostrinia nubilalis* (Hübner, 1796)			+		
28	*Udea numeralis* (Hübner, 1796)		+			

		2012				Kazimierczak, 2006
	Species	1. Babino Polje	2. Sobra - Blatina	3. Blato	4. Sutmiholjska	
29	*Metasia ophialis* (Treitschke, 1829)		+			
30	*Palpita vitrealis* (Rossi, 1794)	+	+			+
31	*Nomophila noctuella* (Denis & Schiffermüller, 1775)	+	+	+		
32	*Euchromius bella* (Hübner, 1796)			+		
33	*Chilo phragmitella* (Hübner, 1810)	+				
34	*Ancylolomia palpella* (Denis & Schiffermüller, 1775)					+
	Hesperiidae					
35	*Carcharodus alcea*e (Esper, 1780)	+				
36	*Spialia orbifer* (Hübner, 1823)				+	
	Papilionidae					
37	*Iphiclides podalirius* (Linnaeus, 1758)	+			+	+
38	*Papilio machaon* (Linnaeus, 1758)				+	
	Pieridae					
39	*Leptidea sinapis* (Linnaeus, 1758)	+				+
40	*Pieris brassicae* (Linnaeus, 1758)	+				+
41	*Pieris ergane* (Geyer, 1828)	+				
42	*Pieris rapae* (Linnaeus, 1758)	+				+
43	*Colias croceus* (Geoffroy, 1785)	+				
44	*Gonepteryx cleopatra* (Linnaeus, 1767)	+			+	+
	Lycaenidae					
45	*Lycaena phlaeas* (Linnaeus, 1761)	+				+
46	*Lampides boeticus* (Linnaeus, 1767)					+
47	*Celastrina argiolus* (Linnaeus, 1758)	+			+	+
48	*Aricia agestis* (Denis & Schiffermüller, 1775)	+			+	
49	*Polyommatus bellargus* (Rottemburg, 1775)	+			+	
50	*Polyommatus icarus* (Rottemburg, 1775)					+
	Nymphalidae					
51	*Charaxes jasius* (Linnaeus, 1767)				+	
52	*Argynnis pandora* (Denis & Schiffermüller, 1775)				+	
53	*Vanessa atalanta* (Linnaeus, 1758)	+				+
54	*Vanessa cardui* (Linnaeus, 1758)				+	+
55	*Melitaea didyma* (Esper, 1778)	+			+	
56	*Limenitis reducta* Staudinger, 1901	+			+	+
57	*Pararge aegeria* (Linnaeus, 1758)					+
58	*Lasiommata megera* (Linnaeus, 1767)	+			+	
59	*Coenonympha pamphilus lyllus* (Esper 1805)				+	+
60	*Hipparchia statilinus* (Hufnagel, 1766)	+			+	+
61	*Brintesia circe* (Fabricius, 1775)	+				
	Sphingidae					
62	*Agrius convolvuli* (Linnaeus, 1758)	+				+
63	*Macroglossum stellatarum* (Linnaeus, 1758)	+				+
64	*Hyles livornica* (Esper, 1780)					+
	Drepanidae					
65	*Watsonalla binaria* (Hufnagel, 1767)	+		+		
	Geometridae					
66	*Cyclophora puppillaria* (Hübner, 1799)	+	+	+		+
67	*Scopula imitaria* (Hübner, 1799)					+
68	*Scopula ornata* (Scopoli, 1763)			+		+
69	*Idaea albitorquata* (Püngeler, 1909)	+				
70	*Idaea aversata* (Linnaeus, 1758)					+
71	*Idaea camparia* (Herrich-Schäffer, 1852)	+				
72	*Idaea degeneraria* (Hübner, 1799)		+			
73	*Idaea infirmaria* (Rambur, 1833)			+		
74	*Idaea rusticata* (Denis & Schiffermüller, 1775)	+		+		
75	*Rhodometra sacraria* (Linnaeus, 1767)	+				

		2012				Kazimierczak, 2006
		1.	2.	3.	4.	
	Species	Babino Polje	Sobra - Blatina	Blato	Sutmiholjska	
76	*Nycterosea obstipata* (Fabricius, 1794)		+			
77	*Gymnoscelis rufifasciata* (Haworth, 1809)		+			
78	*Phaiogramma etruscaria* (Zeller, 1849)	+		+		
79	*Eucrostes indigenata* (de Villers, 1789)	+				
80	*Thalera fimbrialis* (Scopoli, 1763)	+		+		
81	*Isturgia arenacearia* (Denis & Schiffermüller, 1775)			+		+
82	*Ascotis selenaria* (Denis & Schiffermüller, 1775)					+
83	*Charissa variegata* (Duponchel, 1830)	+				
84	*Menophra abruptaria* (Thunberg, 1792)		+	+		
	Notodontidae					
85	*Harpyia milhauseri* (Fabricius, 1775)	+				
	Erebidae					
86	*Lymantria dispar* (Linnaeus, 1758)	+	+			+
87	*Pelosia obtusa* (Herrich-Schäffer, 1852)		+			
88	*Eilema caniola* (Hübner, 1808)	+				
89	*Eilema sororcula* (Hufnagel, 1766)			+		
90	*Hypena lividalis* (Hübner, 1796)	+				
91	*Zebeeba falsalis* (Herrich-Schäffer, 1839)		+			
92	*Eublemma ostrina* (Hübner, 1808)	+				
93	*Eublemma parva* (Hübner, 1808)		+			+
94	*Catocala conjuncta* (Esper, 1787)	+				+
95	*Catocala dilecta* (Hübner, 1808)	+				
96	*Catocala nymphaea* (Esper, 1787)	+				
97	*Catocala nymphagoga* (Esper, 1787)	+				
98	*Dysgonia algira* (Linnaeus, 1767)	+		+		+
99	*Zethes insularis* Rambur, 1833	+				
100	*Ophiusa tirhaca* (Cramer, 1777)		+			
	Euteliidae					
101	*Eutelia adulatrix* (Hübner, 1813)	+				
	Nolidae					
102	*Nola chlamitulalis* (Hübner, 1813)					+
	Noctuidae					
103	*Autographa gamma* (Linnaeus, 1758)	+				+
104	*Trichoplusia ni* (Hübner, 1803)		+			+
105	*Acontia trabealis* (Scopoli, 1763)			+		
106	*Phyllophila obliterata* (Rambur, 1833)					+
107	*Aedia funesta* (Esper, 1786)			+		
108	*Aegle semicana* (Esper, 1798)	+		+		
109	*Acronicta psi* (Linnaeus, 1758)	+				
110	*Heliothis peltigera* (Denis & Schiffermüller, 1775)				+	+
111	*Helicoverpa armigera* (Hübner, 1808)					+
112	*Bryopsis muralis* (Forster, 1771)	+				
113	*Pylophaenis sericata* (Esper, 1787)	+				
114	*Mythimna ferrago* (Fabricius, 1787)	+				
115	*Mythimna l-album* (Linnaeus, 1767)		+			
116	*Mythimna languida* (Walker, 1858)	+				
117	*Mythimna vitellina* (Hübner, 1808)					+
118	*Leucania obsoleta* (Hübner, 1803)					+
119	*Noctua janthina* (Denis & Schiffermüller, 1775)		+			
120	*Agrotis ipsilon* (Hufnagel, 1766)					+
121	*Agrotis trux* (Hübner, 1824)	+				

Tortricidae

***Aethes margarotana* (Duponchel, 1836)** – a Western Palaearctic species occurring from British Isles to Armenia, known also from NW Africa. Larvae feed on the stems and roots of *Eryngium maritimum* (Razowski, 2002). One specimen was caught under a light on the side of a dirt road between the village of Blato and Lake Blatina on July 18, 2012. The species is abundant from northern Dalmatia (Gumhalter *et al*., 2023) and was previously recorded in southern Croatia in 2021 on the island of Šolta (Gomboc & Sule, 2022).

***Aethes williana* (Brahm, 1791)** – a Western Palaearctic species occurring from NW Africa and W Europe to Ural Mountains, Kazakhstan, S Siberia, Central Asia, Mongolia and Asia Minor. Larvae feed in stems and roots of *Daucus carota*, *Helichrysum arenarium*, *Helichrysum stoechas*, *Eryngium campestre*, *Eryngium maritimum*, *Ferula* and *Gnaphalium* (Razowski, 2002). Two specimens were caught under a light. One on the side of a dirt road between the village of Blato and Lake Blatina on July 18, 2012, the other one on the western edge of the village of Babino Polje on July 14, 2012. The species is abundant from northern and central Dalmatia (Gumhalter *et al*., 2023) and was previously recorded in southern Croatia in 2021 in Donji Kamenjak (Koren, 2022).

***Cacoecimorpha pronubana* (Hübner, 1799)** – a monobasic genus known from the Western Palaearctic, from the Iberian Peninsula and the British Isles to Asia Minor. Polyphagous larvae have been observed feeding on over 120 species of 20 families (Razowski, 2002). One specimen was caught under a light on the western edge of the village of Babino Polje on July 10, 2012. In Croatia, it has been previously reported from Imotski, Brač and Erslani (Gumhalter *et al*., 2023). In southern Dalmatia, it was recently recorded in 2021 on Šolta (Gomboc & Sule, 2022) and in Donji Kamenjak (Koren, 2022).

***Crocidosema plebejana* Zeller, 1847** – a cosmopolitan species, found in the entire Europe, mainly in the south. Larvae feeding in seeds and sometimes in twigs of *Lavatera*, *Althaea*, *Malva*, *Hibiscus*, *Crataegus* and some other plants (Razowski, 2003). One specimen was caught under a light on the northern edge of Sobra-Blatina on July 12, 2012. The species is abundant in northern and central Dalmatia (Gumhalter *et al*., 2023). In southern Croatia, it was recently recorded in 2021 on Šolta (Gomboc & Sule, 2022).

Pterophoridae

***Oxyptilus laetus* (Zeller, 1847)** – a Southern European species, almost restricted to the Mediterranean area. The species also occurs in North Africa, the Canary Islands, Asia Minor and Iraq. The habitats are dry and hot grasslands and shrubby areas. *Andryale integrifolia* and *Hieracium lanatum* are two species mentioned as a foodplant (Gielis, 1996). However, in the past, *O. laetus* and *O. lantoscanus* were treated as synonyms (Arenberger, 2002), which resulted in a considerably broader geographical range being attributed to the species (Fazekas, 2025). Due to the recent separation of *O. laetus* from *O. lantoscanus* (Nel *et al*., 2023), the author decided to conduct a comparative analysis of the female genitalia of both species. In Croatia, the species was last recorded by Klimesch (Gumhalter *et al*., 2023) in June 1939 in Zaton, Dubrovnik (Klimesch, 1942). One specimen was caught during the day on the western edge of the village of Babino Polje on July 16, 2012.

Pyralidae

***Acrobasis sodalella* Zeller, 1848** – a species widespread across Europe, but locally found in xerothermic habitats around oaks (Slamka, 2022). In Croatia, the species was last recorded in 2001 in Krk (Habeler, 2003a). One specimen was caught under a light on the western edge of the village of Babino Polje on July 10, 2012.

***Pseudacrobasis tergestella* Ragonot, 1901** – the currently known range of the species includes the westernmost and the easternmost regions of the Palaearctic, with a very large disjunction. In 1975, it was described from Europe as *Pseudacrobasis nankingella* Roesler, 1975 and simultaneously recognised as an invasive species in Europe. Only the work of Stefano Scalercio and František Slamka revealed that in reality, it is *Pseudacrobasis tergestella* Ragonot. This species is polyvoltine and feeds on seeds of *Quercus* but adults are also reported to emerge from cones of *Pinus* (Scalercio & Slamka, 2015). One specimen was caught under a light on the side of a dirt road from the village of Blato to Lake Blatina on July 18, 2012. Last recorded in 2023 on Šolta (Gomboc *et al.*, 2024).

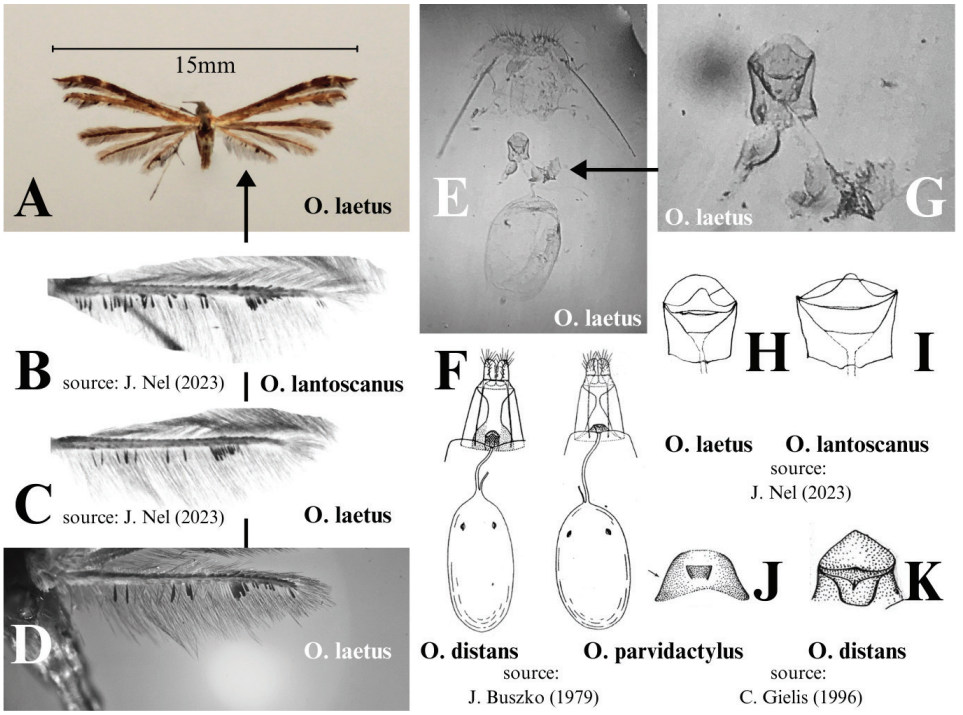

Fig. 2. *Oxyptilus laetus* (Zeller, 1847) diagnosis: **A)** specimen caught on July 16, 2012 in Babino Polje (photo J. Kazimierczak), **B-C)** scale-tooth of the third lobe (photo J. Nel), **D)** scale-tooth of third lobe of *O. laetus* caught on July 16, 2012 in Babino Polje (photo J. Kazimierczak), **E)** genitalia of female caught on July 16, 2012 in Babino Polje (photo J. Kazimierczak), **F)** female genitalia of *O. distans* and *O. parvidactylus* (illustration J. Buszko), **G)** ostium bursae chamber of female caught on July 16, 2012 in Babino Polje (photo J. Kazimierczak), **H-I)** *O. laetus* – *O. lantoscanus* ostium bursae chambers comparison (illustration J. Nel), **J-K)** *O. parvidactylus* – *O. distans* ostium bursae chambers comparison (illustration C. Gielis).

Crambidae

***Euchromius bella* (Hübner, 1796)** – a Mediterranean species, observed in warm, dry to verdant habitats from Morocco to Transcaucasia and Iran (Slamka, 2008). One specimen was caught under a light on the side of a dirt road from the village of Blato to Lake Blatina on July 18, 2012. In Croatia, it was previously recorded in Goveđari, Mljet in 2008 (Gumhalter *et al.*, 2020) and in 2021 on Šolta (Gomboc & Sule, 2022) as well as in Donji Kamenjak (Koren, 2022).

Geometridae

***Idaea albitorquata* (Püngeler, 1909)** – a species found in the eastern part of the Mediterranean basin (Hausmann, 2004). Five specimens were caught under a light on the western edge of the village of Babino Polje, four on July 14, 2012 and one on July 10, 2012. In Croatia, it was recently recorded in 2021 in Donji Kamenjak at the very southern tip of the Istrian Peninsula (Koren, 2022).

***Idaea camparia* (Herrich-Schäffer, 1852)** – a species widely distributed along the Dalmatian coast, recently recorded in 2021 on Šolta (Gomboc & Sule, 2022). Two specimens were caught under a light on the western edge of the village of Babino Polje, one on July 12, 2012 and one on July 10, 2012.

***Thalera fimbrialis* (Scopoli, 1763)** – a species widely distributed from Western Europe to Central Asia (Buszko, 2000). Historically, it has been recorded only from the central and eastern parts of Croatia (Vignjević *et al.*, 2010). In recent years, it was found on Šolta in 2021 (Gomboc & Sule, 2022). Two specimens were caught under a light. One on the side of a dirt road between the village of Blato and Lake Blatina on July 18, 2012, the other one on the western edge of the village of Babino Polje on July 14, 2012.

Noctuidae

***Mythimna languida* (Walker, 1858)** – a palaeotropical-subtropical species known in Europe from the Mediterranean coast with some dispersal inland, has spread as a result of climate change (Beshkov *et al.*, 2021). It was first reported from Croatia in 2001 in Selina, south of Starigrad-Paklenica (Habeler, 2003b). It was last recorded in 2023 on Šolta (Gomboc & Kirichenko, 2024). In recent years, it has been recognised as a new species from Montenegro, where *M. languida* (Walker, 1858) was reported twice near Maljine in 2002 and 2004 (Stojanović & Glavendekić, 2005). Recently, it has been reported as new for Albania in several coastal localities (Beshkov, 2018; Beshkov & Nahirnić, 2019) and Bulgaria (Beshkov *et al.*, 2021). One specimen was caught under a light on the western edge of the village of Babino Polje on July 14, 2012.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Prof. Stoyan Beshkov from National Museum of Natural History, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences for the identification confirmation, Dr Alberto Zilli from Natural History Museum, London and Dr Toni Koren from Association Hyla, Zagreb for their help in searching for literature. Last but not least, I would like to thank František Slamka for his help in identifying the moths of the superfamily Pyraloidea.

Received March 1, 2025

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