

UPDATE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF *PARAGONATAS DIVERGENS* (HEMIPTERA: RHYPAROCHROMIDAE) IN FLORIDA

THOMAS T. DOBBS¹ AND THOMAS J. HENRY²

¹Miami Plant Inspection Station, United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine, P.O. Box 660520, Miami, FL 33266

²Systematic Entomology Laboratory, United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service c/o National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, P.O. Box 37012, MRC-168, Washington, DC 20560-7012

Dobbs & Brambila (2004) gave the first verified report of *Paragonatas divergens* (Distant) (Hemiptera: Rhyparochromidae) from the United States based on a single female swept from roadside vegetation in southwestern Florida in 2003 (Fig. 1). They provided a brief description of the species, demonstrated the morphological differences between *P. divergens* and its sister species, *P. costaricensis* (Distant), and related some of the basic biology as reported in the literature. Since then, extensive collecting in South Florida by several heteropterists has not yielded additional specimens of this species that is widespread in the Neotropics from Mexico to South America and the West Indies (Dobbs & Brambila 2004).

While conducting field surveys in 2007, we examined the personal collection of Vincent Golia

Jr., which contains extensive material from South Florida. During this visit we located 5 specimens of *P. divergens*, all of which predate the record of Dobbs & Brambila (2004).

Label data for the 5 Florida specimens in the Golia collection are as follows: FL: Monroe Co., Key Largo, Hwy 905, Jan. 25, 1991, V. Golia, mercury vapor light (1 female); FL: Palm Beach Co., Delray Beach, Country Lake (on Military Trail), Feb. 28, 1992, V. Golia, mercury vapor light (1 female); FL: Palm Beach Co., same locality, May 26, 1995, V. Golia (1 female); FL: Palm Beach Co., same locality, Mar. 27, 1997, V. Golia (1 female); FL: Palm Beach Co., same locality, Aug. 12, 1997, V. Golia (1 male). The last 2 specimens are now deposited in the National Museum of Natural History (USNM).



Fig. 1. *Paragonatas divergens*, adult female, dorsal aspect.



Fig. 2. *Paragonatas divergens*, adult female, lateral aspect.

The earliest record from the Golia collection, Jan 25, 1991, from a light trap on Key Largo, predates the previous earliest known collection in Florida by 12 years. In addition, based on these new records, *P. divergens* is reported for the first time from Monroe and Palm Beach counties in Florida. *Paragonatas divergens* has been in Florida for at least 16 years and evidently is well established throughout the southern peninsula, although in apparently low numbers.

The authors express appreciation to Vincent Golia, Jr., Delray Beach, FL, for allowing us to examine his collection, and to V. Golia, Jr., and A. G. Wheeler, Jr. (Clemson University), for companionship in the field during the same trip. A. G. Wheeler, Jr., and C. F. Brodel (USDA-APHIS-PPQ, Miami, FL) kindly reviewed the manuscript.

SUMMARY

Five specimens of *Paragonatas divergens* (Distant) were located in the personal collection of Vincent Golia, Jr., all of which predate the previous earliest confirmed record: May 16, 2003 (Dobbs & Brambila 2004). Golia's collection dates range from Jan 25, 1991 to Apr 12, 1997. *Paragonatas divergens* is reported from Monroe and Palm Beach counties for the first time.

REFERENCES CITED

- DOBBS, T. T., AND J. BRAMBILA. 2004. *Paragonatas divergens* (Hemiptera: Rhyparochromidae): First confirmed record for Florida and the United States. Florida Entomol. 87: 591-592.