

An initial, brief note on the discovery of *Hyloniscus riparius* (C. Koch, 1838) in VC37 Worcestershire, a new species of woodlice to the UK.

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On 12th April 2022 while searching under flood debris at Haines Meadows, Wick adjacent to the river Avon (01), I noticed many small, fast-moving, deep purple woodlice. They were similar to *Trichoniscus pusillus* agg. but something about them wasn't quite right, so I managed to catch two or three and took them for closer inspection.



01. Flood debris left as habitat at Haines Meadows. Gary Farmer.

I photographed the woodlice (02) and keyed them through using the Field Studies Council AIDGAP key (Hopkins 1991). The closest species I could key them to was *Oritoniscus flavus* but the key gave the distribution for Britain and Ireland as "SE Ireland only". The more recent Woodlice and Waterlice Atlas (Gregory 2009) shows the concentration of records still to be in South-East Ireland but also mentions a location near Llanelli in Wales, but no additional British localities. Further searching for information led me to the British Myriapod & Isopod Group (BMIG) website with a link to a paper giving a detailed account of its occurrence in Scotland (Maguire 2020). The species was obviously more widespread than originally thought, so could it have gone undetected in English river valleys? However the images shown in the paper and on the website did not look quite like 'my' woodlice but I could find no alternative identification. The following day (13th April) I searched the river bank on the opposite side of the Avon at Lower Moor and found more of the same species under scattered flood debris.



02. One of the mystery woodlice from Haines Meadows, Wick. 12.04.22. Later identified as *Hyloniscus riparius*. Gary Farmer.

On 14th April 2022 I sent the following Email to Steve Gregory (National Isopod Recording Scheme organiser): "I found several small, deep purple woodlice under flood debris adjacent to the river Avon in Worcestershire. They have a single ommatidium and tapered flagellum leading me to *Oritoniscus flavus*. The habitat and ability to move VERY quickly back this up, but distribution suggests not. I should appreciate your comments."

I received the following response from Steve Gregory that evening: "This certainly looks very plausible. I assume they were relatively large. *Hyloniscus riparius* is another widespread European possibility that should be expected in the UK anytime soon [Bilton 1993]. As always, male specimen (which tend to be smaller and darker) needed to confirm identification. Either way this looks like a key discovery."

A site meeting was arranged for 22nd April and four BMIG members joined me at Haines Meadows to search for this little woodlice. It didn't take long before the fast-moving species was located (03 & 04), and it soon became obvious that they were very well established with several individuals present under many pieces of flood debris. Specimens were taken and the species was confirmed by Steve Gregory as *Hyloniscus riparius*, the first UK record and a species certainly worth searching for along river banks in the county. A more detailed report will appear in the BMIG Autumn 2022 Newsletter after which a formal report will be published in the BMIG Bulletin in 2023.



03. *Hyloniscus riparius* at Haines Meadows 22.04.22. Gary Farmer.



04. *Hyloniscus riparius* at Haines Meadows 22.04.22. Gary Farmer.

References

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 Maguire, W. 2020. The distribution of *Oritoniscus flavus* (Budde-lund, 1906) in VC83 Midlothian (Isopoda: Oniscidea: Trichoniscidae) *Bulletin of the British Myriapod & Isopod Group*. 32:59-64.
 BMIG Website Available at: <https://www.bmig.org.uk> [Accessed 21.09.22].

Images

01. Flood debris left as habitat at Haines Meadows. Gary Farmer.
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