

The Woodlouse *Haplophthalmus danicus* in flood debris near Fladbury, Worcestershire

Gary Farmer

Haplophthalmus danicus is a small white to buff woodlouse reaching no more than 4mm in length (01). It has obvious ridges running along its dorsal surface and its eyes consist of a single black ocellus (Gregory 2009). It is associated with damp habitats including floodplains and compost heaps. Its distribution is concentrated in south east England with a scattering of coastal records further north and a cluster of records around the Severn estuary reaching into south west Worcestershire (NBN Atlas).



(01) *Haplophthalmus danicus* 17.04.20 Mikes Meadow. G. Farmer.

In April 2020 I found this species in two adjacent meadows near Fladbury. Their small size and pale colour resemble *Trichoniscus pygmaeus* at first glance but unlike *Trichoniscus* this species is very slow moving which would make them easy to overlook especially in compost and other matted vegetation. When viewed with magnification the longitudinal ridges become obvious (02).

This is certainly another Isopod worth searching for further north in the county, in floodplains, wet woodlands and even compost/dung heaps.



(02) *Haplophthalmus danicus* 15.05.20 Mill Bank. G. Farmer

There are two other species of *Haplophthalmus* in Britain with more pronounced ridges and two prominent projections “close to the mid-line on the dorsal surface of third segment of pleon” (Hopkin 1991). Whilst reviewing my images for this article I noticed one of the individuals had these characters (03) making it either *H. mengei* or

H. montivagus. The critical features require examination of a specimen which I do not have so I can not be sure which species this is.



03. *Haplophthalmus mengii* or *montivagus* ?? Showing projections. 15.05.20 Mill Bank. G. Farmer.

References

Gregory, S. 2009. *Woodlice and Waterlice (Isopoda: Oniscidea & Asellota) in Britain and Ireland*. FSC Publications, Shrewsbury.
Hopkin, S. 1991. A Key to the Woodlice of Britain and Ireland. *Field Studies* 7:599-650. Field Studies Council, Shrewsbury.
NBN Atlas page.
https://records.nbnatlas.org/occurrences/search?q=lsid:NBNSYS0000008546#tab_mapView. [Accessed 20.08.2020]

Images

01 *Haplophthalmus danicus* 17.04.20 Mikes Meadow. G. Farmer
02 *Haplophthalmus danicus* 15.05.20 Mill Bank. G. Farmer
03. *Haplophthalmus mengii* or *montivagus* ?? Showing projections. 15.05.20. Mill Bank. G. Farmer.