

**Second record for the Forest Silver-stiletto fly *Pandivirilia melaleuca* (Loew, 1847) (Diptera -Therevidae) at Carpenter's Farm in southwest Worcestershire**

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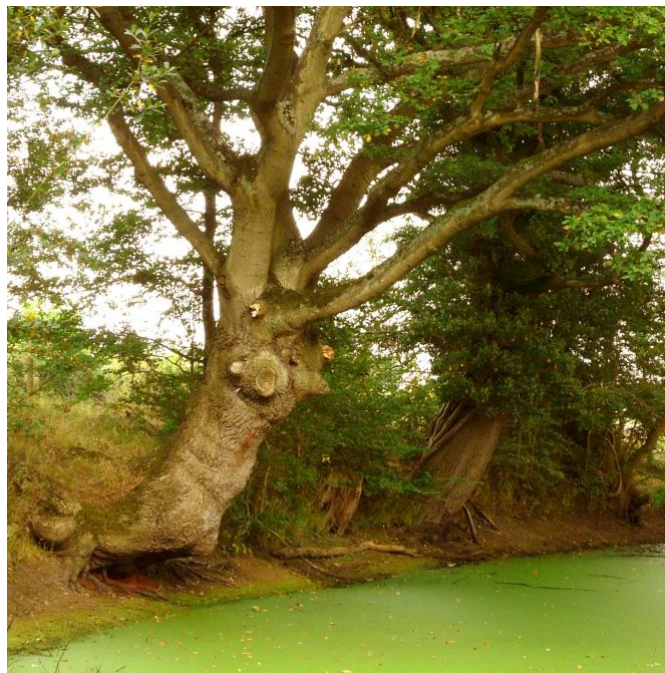
A single record of an unusual insect at a given site might be a chance finding of a temporary visitor rather than an indication of local residency. A second record in ensuing years provides more reliable evidence that the species is breeding locally. So it is worth reporting a second record for the RDB1 designated fly *Pandivirilia melaleuca* (Loew, 1847) Forest Silver-stiletto (Diptera, Therevidae) at Carpenter's Farm near Berrow (SO777339, VC37). The first record for the fly was in July 2013 when I found a female of this species indoors in my timber-framed converted-cowshed dwelling (Skirrow 2014). On 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015, as it was approaching midnight, I found another female of this species that had settled beneath a bench light in a small laboratory in the same building (01). It had probably entered through a nearby outside doorway which had been left open. It was a warm humid night and I was attending to insects collected from a light trap that I was running elsewhere on the farm. The fly was released after it had been photographed.



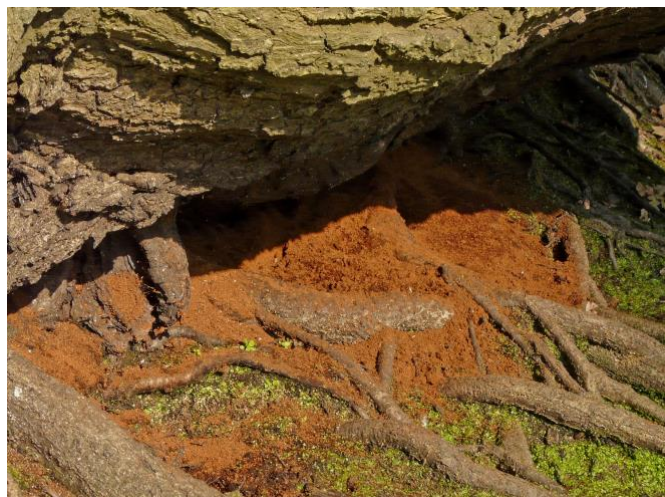
01. Female *Pandivirilia melaleuca* photographed before release in June 2015. Martin Skirrow.

*P. melaleuca* larvae have been found in the decaying heartwood of oak, ash and pear (Alexander, 2002, 2007). At the time the first fly was identified, I was not aware of any hollow oaks on the farm, but an old hollow pear tree about 100 metres from the dwelling was thought to be a possible breeding site for the fly. Consequently, an interception trap was hung strategically against the tree and sampled periodically between 11<sup>th</sup> July and 21<sup>st</sup> October 2014. Although samples contained insects of interest, no therevid flies were found. However, early this year (2015) it was found that an old lapsed pollard oak, growing at the edge of a pond about 200 metres away from the dwelling, was hollow (02). Powdery red rot had accumulated beneath the base of the trunk where it leaned over the bank of the pond (03) and it was evident that part of the base had recently collapsed. The only access to the interior of the tree from above appeared to be a hole where a branch had been lost (04). This tree is clearly a contender for a breeding site for the fly. Unfortunately access to relevant parts of the tree is difficult and I have not yet worked out how satisfactory sampling can be done.

Another possible breeding site is a big pile of rotting wood remaining from timber cut 13 years ago, when grossly overgrown hedgerows were being reduced and dead elms cleared on the farm. Over the ensuing years most of the wood was burnt in domestic stoves, but much still remains half-buried and rotting. This pile is only 15 metres from the dwelling in which the flies were found. Investigations continue.



02. Hollow oak, potential breeding site for *P. melaleuca*. Martin Skirrow



03. Red rot beneath the hollow oak shown in 02. Martin Skirrow



04. Hole probably connecting to interior of oak shown in 02. Martin Skirrow

## References

- Alexander, K.N.A. 2002. The invertebrates of living and decaying timber in Britain and Ireland: a provisional annotated checklist. *English Nature Research Project 467*. English Nature Peterborough.
- Alexander, K.N.A. 2007. *Pandivirilia melaleuca* (Loew) (Diptera, Therevidae) confirmed as a Gloucestershire species. *Dipterists Digest* 14:87-89.
- Skirrow, M.B. 2014. *Pandivirilia* (Leow [sic]) Forest Silver-stiletto fly (Diptera: Therevidae) in Southwest Worcestershire. *Worcestershire Record* 36:16-17.

## Images

01. Female *Pandivirilia melaleuca* photographed before release in June 2015. Martin Skirrow
02. Hollow oak, potential breeding site for *P. melaleuca*. Martin Skirrow
03. Red rot beneath the hollow oak shown in 02. Martin Skirrow
04. Hole probably connecting to interior of oak shown in 02. Martin Skirrow