

Scutellista caerulea (Fonscolombe, 1832) (Hymenoptera: Pteromalidae), new to New Zealand for the second time!

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Abstract

In 1921, *Scutellista caerulea* was imported and released in Nelson, New Zealand, for the biological control of pest scale insects. It was thought to have failed to establish, and is therefore currently considered to be absent from the New Zealand fauna. On 17 April 2013, a live specimen was captured in the wild in Auckland.

Keywords

Scutellista caerulea, Hymenoptera, Pteromalidae, New Zealand, Auckland, biological control, scale insects, NZOR

Introduction

In 1921, *Scutellista caerulea* (Fonscolombe, 1832) was released in Nelson, New Zealand, for biological control of pest scale insects, but apparently failed to establish (Dumbleton 1936, as *S. cyanea*). It is not considered to be present in New Zealand, and is not listed on the New Zealand Organisms Register (NZOR). However, on 17 April 2013, I captured a single live female in the wild, in the grounds of the Tamaki Campus of the University of Auckland (see Fig. 1). The species is so distinctive that it cannot be confused with any other, even within the genus *Scutellista*.

Taxon treatment

Scutellista caerulea (Fonscolombe, 1832)

Nomenclature

Scutellista cyanea Motschulsky, 1859

Material

- a. country: New Zealand; verbatimLocality: Tamaki Campus of University of Auckland; verbatimLatitude: 36.8816119078S; verbatimLongitude: 174.8531936109E; eventDate: 17 April 2013; individualCount: 1; sex: female; recordedBy: Stephen Thorpe; institutionCode: Auckland Museum; occurrenceID: 933D6312-5891-5F19-849B-C0BD90FE70EC

Description

The specimen was identified using Bouček (1988), and references listed therein. I recommend that *S. caerulea* be added to the New Zealand Organisms Register (NZOR) as exotic, present in the wild. It is unclear if the new specimen represents a descendant of the original stock released in Nelson in 1921, or a new incursion from overseas. The balance of evidence favours the latter hypothesis, since Auckland is far from Nelson, and the species has not been seen in N.Z. for nearly a century.

References

- Bouček Z (1988) Australasian Chalcidoidea (Hymenoptera). A biosystematic revision of genera of fourteen families, with a reclassification of species. C.A.B. International, Wallingford, UK., 832 pp. [ISBN 0-85198-607-2]
- Dumbleton LJ (1936) The biological control of fruit pests in New Zealand. New Zealand journal of science and technology 18 (7): 588-592.



Figure 1.
Scutellista caerulea, adult female in lateral view (length about 2 mm)