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FIRST RECORDS OF A HOLARCTIC ORB-WEAVING SPIDER (*ARANEUS SAEVUS* [L.KOCH]) IN VIRGINIA. — A large, dark-colored species of its genus, *Araneus saevus* is widespread but uncommon in the western Palearctic region, in fact it was not described until 1872, from specimens taken in the Dolomites near Bolzano, Italy. The species also occurs in North America from Newfoundland to Alaska, and was described by J. H. Emerton under two new species names: *Epeira solitaria* (from Massachusetts) and *Epeira nigra* (from Alberta), and under the former name was treated in Kaston's "Spiders of Connecticut" (1948). That these names might apply to *saevus* was first suggested by Wiehle (1963) and more recently confirmed by Levi (1971).

That author's treatment of the species as it occurs in North America provided numerous excellent illustrations and a spot map based on material examined by him. This map portrayed a classical "boreal" range extending entirely across Canada and southward into New England and down the Rocky Mountains into Utah and Colorado. The southernmost locality plotted for eastern United States appears to be in extreme eastern Pennsylvania.

By contrast with other members of its genus, *saevus* seems to be much less frequently collected, perhaps it is more arboreal than its close relatives. It is therefore not surprising that it has not been recorded from farther south in the Appalachians, nor that in fact it does occur in these mountains. Recently pitfall trapping for terrestrial arthropods in the Blue Ridge physiographic province in Virginia has obtained *saevus* at two localities: **Warren Co.**; Smithsonian Conservation and Research Center, 4 miles southeast of Front Royal, from pitfall open all winter and cleared 15 March 1994, rich mesic woods near small stream (VMNH 2). **Amherst Co.**: pitfall site on east side Tarjacket Ridge, off FS 1167, 21 October 1997, rich oak woods with fern understory at 3500 ft. (VMNH 1).

VMNH also has an immature female, determined as *saevus* by H. W. Levi (after publication of his monograph) from West Virginia: **Raleigh Co.** Grandview State Park, 21 May 1966, W. A. Shear leg. et don. This locality is almost exactly due west of that in Amherst Co., Va. Collectively these records extend the known range of *saevus* about 330 mi./530 km southwest of Levi's southernmost station, and permit the assumption that the species may occur as far as western North Carolina and/or eastern Kentucky at higher elevations.

The three adults from Virginia are piceous black, without evident banding on the carapace or white

ventral abdominal markings. The tibiae and metatarsi of legs 3 and 4 have a well-defined broad basal orange band. The largest specimen is 18.5 mm in length, and was obviously larger prior to the abdomen being shrunken by preservation. This is distinctly larger than the maximum of 17 mm cited by Levi, and may indicate a trend for size increase southward.

#### Literature Cited

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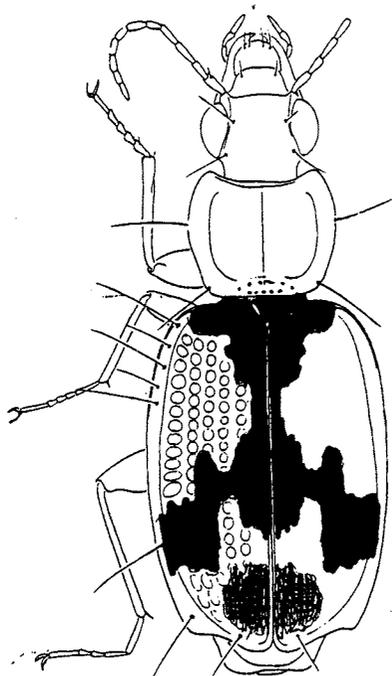
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*PHLOEOXENA SIGNATA* (DEJEAN), ANOTHER SOUTHERN GROUND BEETLE DISCOVERED IN VIRGINIA (COLEOPTERA: CARABIDAE). — The recent catalogue of North American ground beetles (Bousquet & Laroche, 1993) accounted a total of 446 species of Carabidae for Virginia, some of them on the basis of unpublished data from museum specimens. Papers by Davidson (1995) and Anderson et al. (1995) added seven and five more species respectively, giving a current total of 458. That an approach to closure of the list may be near cannot be asserted, however, since a substantial number of still unlisted species are at hand in the VMNH collection, and the presence of still others - known from nearby states - cannot be doubted. A total of near 500 resident species seems entirely probable.

On 3 July 1997, in company with C. S. Hobson (VDNH/DCR), I collected insects in the densely wooded floodplain of the Hyco River, just downstream from the US 501 bridge in southern Halifax County. During this activity, removal of loose bark from a standing tree disclosed a very agile small beetle which was captured as much by its apparent complicity as by any skill on my part. Inspection on the site suggested it

to be a species of the large genus *Lebia*, an impression which carried over into (and severely impeded) the first attempts at identification. Eventually, by recourse to the fine generic revision by Ball (1975) I was able to establish the species to be *Phloeoxena signata* (Dejean), the northernmost member of a predominantly Neotropical genus.



The species was described as *Coptodera signata* by Count Dejean in 1825, from a specimen with no closer locality than "Georgia." Not long afterward (1848) J. L. LeConte redescribed the species, again from Georgia material, under the name *Coptodera collaris*. In 1869, Baron Chaudoir transferred *signata* into his new genus *Phloeoxena* at the same time synonymizing *collaris* under *signata*, and describing a very similar species from Panama as *P. maculicollis*. In 1883, Henry Bates added another new species, *P. hoegi* from Guatemala, and in 1915 C. W. Leng proposed the subspecific name *P. signata nigripennis* for Florida specimens with mostly dark elytra. Having restudied most of the available material of this genus, Dr. Ball (1975:213) concluded that all of the names mentioned above were based on a single variable species, and so established an extensive geographic range for *signata*: North Carolina to Florida and southward through Middle America as far as Panama.

Ball examined specimens from Southern Pines, N. C., a locality already cited by Brimley (1938:31). This appears to be northernmost point at which the species has been recorded. However, the insect collection at

North Carolina State University contains four specimens taken at Raleigh, N. C., about 75 km northeast of Southern Pines, and likewise on the Fall Line.

Upon making the identification of the Halifax Co. specimen, I was able to match it quickly with another such beetle residing among the undetermined carabid material at VMNH. This individual was collected by me *ca* 6 miles northeast of Mineral, Louisa Co., Virginia, on 7 July 1975 (unfortunately without notation about habitat). This locality extends the known range of *signata* 360 km (260 mi) northeast of Southern Pines. While this distance is trivial *vis-à-vis* the enormous range of the species, it is significant in the sense of extending the northern periphery of a tropical beetle. It also emphasizes the superficiality of current knowledge of the Virginia insect fauna.

Chaudoir's selection of a generic name for these pretty carabids was auspicious. *Phloeoxena* is a composite of two Greek words meaning "bark guest", because all of the species live under loose bark. I think that *signata*, at least in Virginia, may be partial to the bark of standing trees, because I have peeled bark from fallen trunks for decades, looking for aradid bugs, without ever finding a *Phloeoxena*.

Ball (1975: 218-220) analyzed geographic variation in the coloration of *signata*. Curiously, the elytral pattern of the two Virginia specimens (see figure) are somewhat more similar to those depicted by Ball (Fig. 111) from Oaxaca than from North Carolina. Dr. Ball already remarked "The most interesting aspect of the color pattern is its change in detail." But so long as most of the few known localities for the species are represented by one or a few specimens only, the extent of local variation remains largely unknown, rendering speculation futile.

Search through the NCSU collection was facilitated by Robert L. Blinn, collections manager. Prof. George E. Ball reviewed an early draft of the manuscript.

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