

***Peripsocus consobrinus* Pearman, 1951 (Psoc.: Peripsocidae) in Scotland**

The identification characters of *Peripsocus consobrinus* were based on the single female holotype collected by J. V. Pearman at Brockley Combe, Somerset in 1930. The main features are:

1. Forewings with darker marks within cells, particularly the apical cells (Fig. 1).
2. The apical lobe of the subgenital plate short and truncated. The pigmented arms that normally form a distinct V shape in *Peripsocus* species are reduced to wedge shaped remnants (Fig. 2).

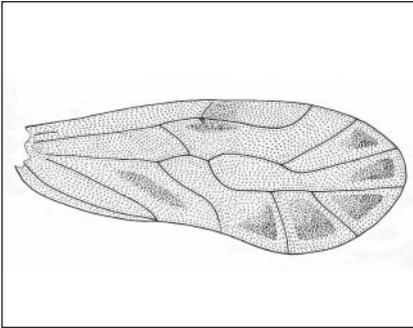
The variability of these characters has remained unknown for many years since no further specimens of the species were found.

The species accounts in New (1974. *Handbooks for the identification of British Insects* 1 (7): 1-102) give the impression that *P. consobrinus* is the only *Peripsocus* species having the distinctively marked forewings. Consequently, when the author found a female *Peripsocus* specimen with a very similar wing pattern at Coalbrookdale, Shropshire on 3.viii.2004 it was initially considered as a potential second specimen. However, the features of the subgenital plate were clearly that of *P. didymus* and the identification as this latter species was confirmed by Charles Lienhard (Geneva Natural History Museum). He also mentioned that Roesler (1939. Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Copeognathenfauna Deutschlands. *Zoologischer Anzeiger* 125(7/8): 157-176) had observed this aberrant wing pattern and it was noted in the original description of *P. didymus*: ‘... bisweilen in den Aussenzellen des Vorderflügels zwischen der Radialgabel und den Aesten der Media schwärzliche Keilflecke.’

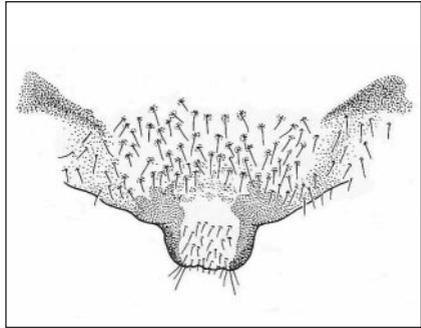
On 23.viii.2007, I collected several *Peripsocus* specimens from a Sitka Spruce plantation near Auchindrain, Argyll, Scotland (O.S. grid reference NN 033035). These were mainly of *P. didymus* and *P. subfasciatus*, but one female specimen had a subgenital plate that closely matched that of *P. consobrinus* (Fig. 3). The forewings of this specimen, however, were unmarked. During a second visit to the location on 2.ix.2007, a second female specimen with a similar subgenital plate was found and again the forewings were unmarked. This individual differed slightly from the first since the wedge-shaped pigmented area was twice as long on one side than the other (Fig. 4).

It was noticeable that a significant number (seven) of the twenty-two female *P. didymus* specimens collected during the two visits had dark-marked wings (e.g., Fig. 5).

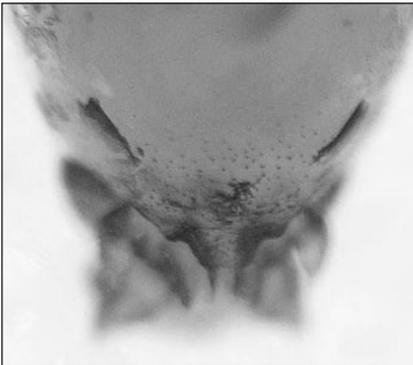
There are two potential interpretations of these findings. Either the dark-marked forewing pattern is, on its own, insufficient to distinguish *P. consobrinus*, but the characteristics of the subgenital plate are. If this interpretation is correct then the two Auchindrain specimens are of *P. consobrinus*. Alternatively, the close similarity between the dark-marked forewings of the Brockley Combe *P. consobrinus* specimen and some individuals of *P. didymus* is not a coincidence, but is due to ‘*P. consobrinus*’ being a form of *P. didymus* with an aberrant subgenital plate. If this interpretation is correct then the two specimens are of *P. didymus*.



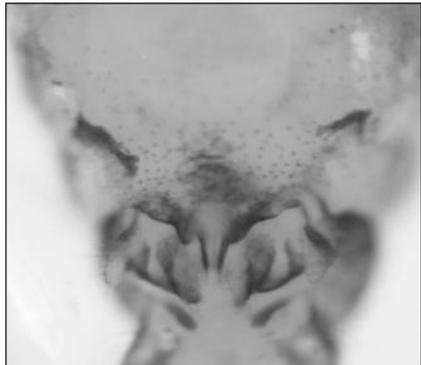
**Figure 1.** *P. consobrinus* forewing.



**Figure 2.** *P. consobrinus* subgenital plate.



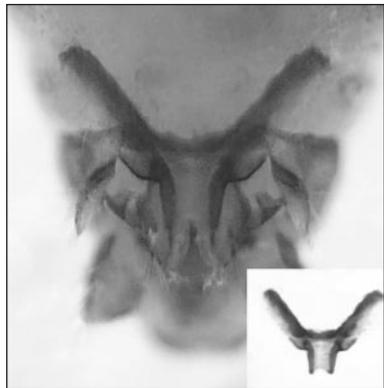
**Figure 3.** *P. consobrinus* subgenital plate.



**Figure 4.** *P. consobrinus* subgenital plate.



**Figure 5.** *P. didymus* with dark wing marks.



**Figure 6.** *P. didymus* subgenital plate.

Both specimens were sent to C. Lienhard who considered that the first interpretation was the correct one. He commented that in all the material of *P. didymus* from Europe that he has seen the variability of the pigmentation of the subgenital plate is very low. Although apparently somewhat irregular the much reduced pigmentation as shown by the two Auchindrain specimens appears to be typical of *P. consobrinus*. The truncated apical lobe of the subgenital plates of the Auchindrain specimens is also very similar to that of the original Brockley Combe specimen and significantly different from that of *P. didymus* (Fig. 6).

The details of the location where the Auchindrain specimens were caught may help other recorders to find further examples of *P. consobrinus*. The collecting spot was chosen mainly because there was a space to park which was off the main road (the A83 five miles west of Inveraray) and close to the edge of a plantation. This parking area coincided with a small overgrown and shaded ride into the plantation which in this area consisted solely of Sitka Spruce. The trees along the edge of the plantation were generally healthy and well grown and few psocid specimens were found by beating the branches. On the other hand the trees at the start of the ride had more straggly branches with fewer needles and these were far more productive. Common species were *Peripsocus didymus*, *P. subfasciatus*, *Philotarsus parviceps* and *P. picicornis*; uncommon/scarce species were *Enderleinella obsoleta*, *Valenzuela burmeisteri*, *Amphigerontia bifasciata*, *Metylophorus nebulosus* and *Peripsocus consobrinus*.

I would like to thank Charles Lienhard (Geneva Natural History Museum) for his advice on the identification of the various specimens and permission to use illustrations. I am also grateful for the help of Richard Lyszkowski and Keith Bland (Entomology Department, National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh) in preparing photographs and interpreting the findings. Figures of the holotype *Peripsocus consobrinus* female according to Lienhard (1998. *Psocoptères euro-méditerranéens. Faune de France* **83**, 1-517). Photographs taken by the author.— R. (BOB) E. SAVILLE, 20 Downfield Place, Edinburgh EH11 2EL (Email: bob@lothianwildlife.co.uk).

---

---

## SUBSCRIBER NOTE

### Information requested on Gatekeeper Butterfly

I am researching the interesting European distribution of the extra-spotted form of the Gatekeeper Butterfly *Pyronia tithonus* L. ab. *excessa* Tutt. This aberration shows additional spotting below the forewing apical spot on both surfaces and sometimes on the upper surface of the hind wings also. I have some important gaps to fill and would be very pleased to hear from anyone who has experience of the species in Sardinia, Switzerland, North western France and Southern Ireland.— RUPERT BARRINGTON, 18 Codrington Road, Bishopston, Bristol BS7 8ET (E-mail: rupert\_barrington@hotmail.com).