ATRIPLEX LITTORALIS BY THE WAY

During searches for roadside Cakile maritima we have come up with a number of records for another coastal species, Atriplex littoralis. The accompanying map (page 12, produced using DMAP, the final version being printed from a PostScript file by Alan Morton) shows the distribution of these records together with others that have come to our attention in the literature, or else reported to us by fellow road verge enthusiasts.

From these sightings it appears that A. littoralis has undergone a considerable spread along inland roadides since it was reported in the early 1980s from a few sites in north-eastern England and one in South Yorkshire (Scott, 1985). As was the case with Parnassia dioica, the spread of A. littoralis has been particularly noticeable along the A1 in eastern England.

We are collating records of inland A. littoralis and would be pleased to hear from members who may have seen it in their travels. When A. littoralis occurs en masse it is easily spotted and it is certainly one of the more straightforward species to identify in this sometimes difficult genus (Taschereau, 1985). However, as Scott (1985) pointed out, roadside A. littoralis populations can frequently suffer from heavy snail gall infestations and they can then be dismissed as something else such as Polygonum aviculare or small Atriplex patula - especially when glimpsed from the side window of a fast-moving car.

Please send any reports to Stephen Bungard at the address below giving 10km square, road number and year(s) seen. Details of any cases where the spread of A. littoralis has been monitored over several years would be especially welcome. Postage will, of course, be refunded.

References


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Map showing distribution of Atriplex littoralis along inland roadides, produced by DMAP