

***Apamea syriaca* OSTHELDER, 1933 – a noctuid moth new to the Polish fauna (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae)**

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**ABSTRACT.** The first records of *Apamea syriaca* OSTHELDER, 1933 from Poland are given. The species was found in the south-eastern part of the country.

**KEY WORDS:** Noctuidae, new record, Poland, *Apamea syriaca*.

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Genus *Apamea* OCHSENHEIMER, 1816, comprising approximately 150 species, is found primarily in the Holarctic Region, out of which there are approx. 90 species in the Palearctic. A total of 28 species of the analyzed genus are found in Europe, among which 17 were previously reported in Poland (BUSZKO & NOWACKI 2000; FIBIGER & HACKER, 2005; NOWACKI & FIBIGER 1996, ZILLI et al., 2005).

*Apamea syriaca* OSTHELDER, 1933 (syn. *tallosi* KOVACS et VARGA) is one of the 10 European species belonging to the monoglypha species-complex. For a long time it was considered to constitute one species with *Apamea sicula* (TURATI 1909; NOWACKI 1998). Such an opinion resulted from a considerable similarity in external appearance of both species at a certain simultaneous individual variation within this group. Detailed studies on the morphology of imagines and the structure and functionality of genital organs in both species, as well as their biology and distribution made it possible to restore the species status of *Apamea syriaca* OSTHELDER (ZILLI et al., 2005).

Both above mentioned species are very similar to *Apamea monoglypha* (HUFN.), commonly found throughout Europe.

In the discussed species (Figs 1, 2), the wing span is 44 - 48 mm, while in *A. monoglypha* (Figs 3, 4) it is 48 – 52 mm. Wing colouration in both species is similar, although in *A. monoglypha* it is more varied, ranging from light brown to dark brown, with a more distinct marking of spots and stripes.

Also in the structure of male and female genitalia the difference between both species are difficult to discern. Morphology of the above mentioned organs was presented by ZILLI et al. (2005). Organs in males are very similar. There is a certain difference only in the appearance of everted vesica. Also the organs of females are similar. A slight difference is found in the structure of bursa copulatrix.

Although the discussed species differ in their distribution in Europe, they occur rather sympatrically. *Apamea monoglypha*, which is a Eurasiatic species, is commonly found throughout Europe, except for areas located above the Arctic Circle. In contrast, *A. syriaca* is a species with Holo-Mediterranean distribution, found in Europe from Spain through southern France, Italy, Switzerland, southern Austria, the southern Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, all the Balkan states up to southern Ukraine in the east (ZILLI et al., 2005). At present *A. syriaca* is also found in south-eastern Poland:

- Roztocze, Góra Wieprzecka - Kąty II near Zamość, 4 July 2006 1 ex., 6 July 2006 3 exx., J. NOWACKI leg.

- Roztocze, Dziewcza Góra - Niedzieliska near Szczepieszyn, 6 July 2006 2 exx. J. NOWACKI leg.

*Apamea syriaca* is a species preferring steppe habitats and xerothermic swards in areas with limestone substratum. However, in these habitats *A. monoglypha* is also found in Poland. The caterpillar, similarly as in *A. monoglypha*, is polyphagous feeding on roots of different grass species.

A rather marked difference between both species is the period of the emergence of imagines. The flight of *A. syriaca* imagines lasts from the end of May to the beginning of July, whereas in *A. monoglypha* it is from mid-June to the beginning of August. Thus in the period when in the environment both species may be found at the same time, *A. monoglypha* specimens are very fresh, whereas those of *A. syriaca* are usually worn (Figs 1, 2, 3, 4).



**Fig. 1.** *Apamea syriaca* OSTHELDER – Poland, Roztocze, Dziewcza Góra – Niedzieliska near Szczebrzeszyn, 6 July 2006, leg. J. NOWACKI.



**Fig. 2.** *Apamea syriaca* OSTHELDER – Poland, Roztocze, Góra Wieprzecka – Kąty II near Zamość, 6 July 2006, leg. J. NOWACKI.



**Fig. 3.** *Apamea monoglypha* (HUFN.) – Poland, Roztocze, Dziewcza Góra – Niedzieliska near Szczepieszyn, 6 July 2006, leg J. NOWACKI.



**Fig. 4.** *Apamea monoglypha* (HUFN.) - Poland, Roztocze, Dziewcza Góra – Niedzieliska near Szczepieszyn, 6 July 2006, leg J. NOWACKI.

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