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Haplophthalmus danicus (ISOPODA, ONISCIDEA) IN JIU GORGE NATIONAL PARK, ROMANIA

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ABSTRACT. *In the spring of the year 2015, we found in Jiu Gorge National Park, Romania, the terrestrial isopod species Haplophthalmus danicus. As a consequence of this finding, the number of terrestrial isopod species recorded in this protected area, raised from 14 to 15. H. danicus was encountered in a wet area situated near Jiu River, but also in the vicinity of a forest district.*

KEY WORDS: *terrestrial isopods, habitats, species number, protected area.*

Haplophthalmus danicus is a terrestrial isopod that has a large distribution range in Europe, being also introduced in other continents (see in: Schmalfuss 2003). Similar to Europe, in Romania *H. danicus* was mentioned in different regions of the country (Radu 1983, Giurgincă 2006, Ferenţi et al. 2012, 2013a,b, Ianc & Ferenţi 2014), where it is considered to be more widespread (Giurgincă 2006). In Romania, *H. danicus* was recorded both in natural habitats (Ferenţi et al. 2012, 2013a, Ianc & Ferenţi 2014), as well as in human modified habitats, like localities (Giurgincă 2006, Bodin et al. 2013, Ferenţi et al. 2015), or thermal habitats (Ferenţi et al. 2013b). Nevertheless in each situation the species was found in wet habitats (e.g. Giurgică 2006, Ferenţi et al. 2012, 2013a, 2015). Even if the terrestrial isopods from Jiu Gorge National Park have recently been studied, *H. danicus* was not mentioned in the Park (Tomescu et al. 2011).

Following the new investigations dedicated to Jiu Gorge National Park fauna, in the spring of the year 2015 we identified the species *H. danicus* in the Park. The terrestrial isopods were collected directly by hand. As a result of our finding, the species number of terrestrial isopods confirmed to be present in the national park raised from 14 to 15. In Jiu Gorge National Park *H. danicus* was encountered in two locations, both situated in Meri region. Both locations with *H. danicus* are situated in the southern and lower sector of the Jiu Gorge, at an altitude of approximately 350 m. Thus, we encountered the species near the forest district from Meri, under some logs, which kept the moisture. In the second case, the species was observed in a wet area with alders and beeches situated in the vicinity of Jiu River, near to the confluence of Bratcu stream in Jiu River. Both habitats have a high humidity, like other habitats of this species (Giurgică 2006, Ferenţi et al. 2012, 2013a, 2015). In the same time, both habitats were situated in forested areas, generally covered by beech forests, but in the second case also by alders. In the first habitats we collected seven individuals, and in the wet area close to Jiu River we encountered four *H. danicus* individuals.

Taking into consideration *H. danicus* large distribution range (see in: Schmalfuss 2003), alongside its records from Romania (Radu 1983, Giurgincă 2006, Ferenţi et al. 2012, 2013a,b, Ianc & Ferenţi 2014), the presence of this species on Jiu Gorge is not a surprise. Moreover, because this species was identified in other mountain regions (Ianc & Ferenţi 2014), it is probably present in other favorable habitats from the Park. Nevertheless, the identification of a new native species in a protected area is important, proving the existence of a rich biodiversity. In the same time, it underlines the importance of the wet areas for the region's biodiversity. Lately, but not the last, this finding show that there is still a need for studies upon the terrestrial isopods from Jiu Gorge National Park, but also from the entire Oltenia region, where recently were observed particularities in the distribution of this group (Ferenţi & Covaciu-Marcov 2014).

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