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Presence of *Adelpha seriphia barcanti* Willmott in Venezuela, and notes on other species of the genus (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae)

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Abstract

Costa M, Costa C. 2006. Presence of *Adelpha seriphia barcanti* Willmott in Venezuela, and notes on other species of the genus (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae). Entomotropica 21(1): 65-68.

The presence of *Adelpha seriphia barcanti* (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae) in Venezuela is confirmed for the first time with the capture of four specimens in the south-eastern Turimiquire massif (Estado Monagas, Venezuela). The distribution of *A. s. barcanti*, previously known only from Trinidad, is now extended to the mainland. The presence of *Adelpha irmina irmina* in the Turimiquire massif is reported for the first time, and the presence of *Adelpha serpa celerio*, previously known from a single specimen, is confirmed.

Additional key words: Butterfly, faunistics, Monagas, Turimiquire.

Resumen

Costa M, Costa C. 2006. Presencia de *Adelpha seriphia barcanti* Willmott en Venezuela, y notas sobre otras especies del género (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae). Entomotropica 21(1): 65-68.

La presencia de *Adelpha seriphia barcanti* (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae) en Venezuela se confirma por primera vez: se describe la captura de cuatro ejemplares del macizo del Turimiquire (Estado Monagas, Venezuela). La distribución de *A. s. barcanti*, previamente conocida sólo de Trinidad, se extiende ahora al continente. Para el Turimiquire, se reporta también por primera vez la presencia de *Adelpha irmina irmina*, y se confirma la presencia de *Adelpha serpa celerio*, previamente conocida por un solo ejemplar.

Palabras clave adicionales: Faunística, mariposa, Monagas, Turimiquire.

According to recent literature (Neild 1996, Willmott 2003), *Adelpha seriphia* is found in Venezuela as two subspecies: *Adelpha seriphia seriphia* (C & R Felder, 1867), in the Cordillera de la Costa, and *Adelpha seriphia pione* Godman & Salvin, 1884, in the Cordillera de Mérida and the Tamá range. The species is also present on the nearby island of Trinidad (Barcant 1970), and that population was recently described as subspecies *Adelpha seriphia barcanti* (Willmott, 2003).

The nominate subspecies is found at an elevation of 1000-2200 m, in montane forest, and is rather scarce, as opposed to the sympatric *Adelpha alala alala,* which is very common in the same habitat.

Both Neild and Willmott suggest the possibility of the presence of *Adelpha seriphia seriphia* in the Turimiquire massif (Estado Monagas). The latter is located in the north-eastern portion of Venezuela, and is geographically isolated from the main coastal range (Cordillera de la Costa and Cordillera del Interior). In spite of its importance from a biogeographical point of view, it is one of the less known areas of endemism in Venezuela (Viloria & Camacho 1999), primarily because the few patches of intact rainy forest at high elevation are very difficult to reach.

During 2004 and 2005 we made seven brief expeditions to the Turimiquire. However, only on

Figure 1. Recto and verso of *Adelpha seriphia barcanti* male

one occasion (July 2005), under suitable weather conditions, could we reach the top of Cerro Quiriquire, located west of San Antonio (Estado Monagas), locally known as Cerro Piedra de Moler. A telecommunication tower is located on top of Cerro Quiriquire; a dirt service road, beginning at the nearby town of San Antonio, allows access to an excellent patch of rainy forest at 1850 m. The very top of the Cerro Quiriquire, however, has a certain degree of human intervention: some small buildings, the tower, and an oil-powered generating plant, constantly working and producing acoustic and chemical contamination.

Upon reaching the top of the mountain (lat 10° 06' 10" N, long 63° 48' 52" W), we had the good fortune to collect four specimens of *A. seriphia*, which did not correspond to the nominate subspecies, and were identified as belonging to subspecies *barcanti*. The specimens were collected with conventional entomological nets, at about midday, while they were flying around some trees, and perching on the highest leaves, about 6-7 meters above the ground, as soon as the sun was hidden by clouds. All specimens were males, with forewing length 27-29 mm (see figure 1). The specimens are deposited in MIZA (2 specimens), FLMNH (1 specimen), and MCCV (1 sp.) collections.

The presence of *Adelpha seriphia barcanti* in the high areas of the Turimiquire massif suggests the possibility of its presence on the highest elevations of the Península de Paria (Estado Sucre, Venezuela), located between the Turimiquire and Trinidad. A distribution map for the species and its subspecies in Venezuela is shown on figure 2.

On the seven expeditions we did not see any *Adelpha alala alala* (Hewitson, 1847), despite being more common than *A. seriphia* in the neighbouring Cordillera de la Costa, although it is to be noted that *A. alala alala* is not reported from Trinidad either. On the other hand, we found that the Turimiquire species of the genus *Adelpha* include *Adelpha irmina irmina* (Doubleday, [1848]) and *Adelpha serpa celerio* (H. W. Bates, 1864). It is worth noting that these two common species, as in the case of *Adelpha alala alala*, have not been reported from Trinidad.

Adelpha irmina irmina represents a new record for the Turimiquire range. Elsewhere in Venezuela this species is common in montane forest habitat, mostly between 1000 and 1600 m, in the Tamá and Perijá ranges, the Cordilleras de Mérida and de la Costa, and even the Pantepui (south-eastern Venezuela). The capture of four specimens (two of each sex) in the San Antonio area, between 1200 and 1500 m, extends the known distribution of this species to the Turimiquire range.

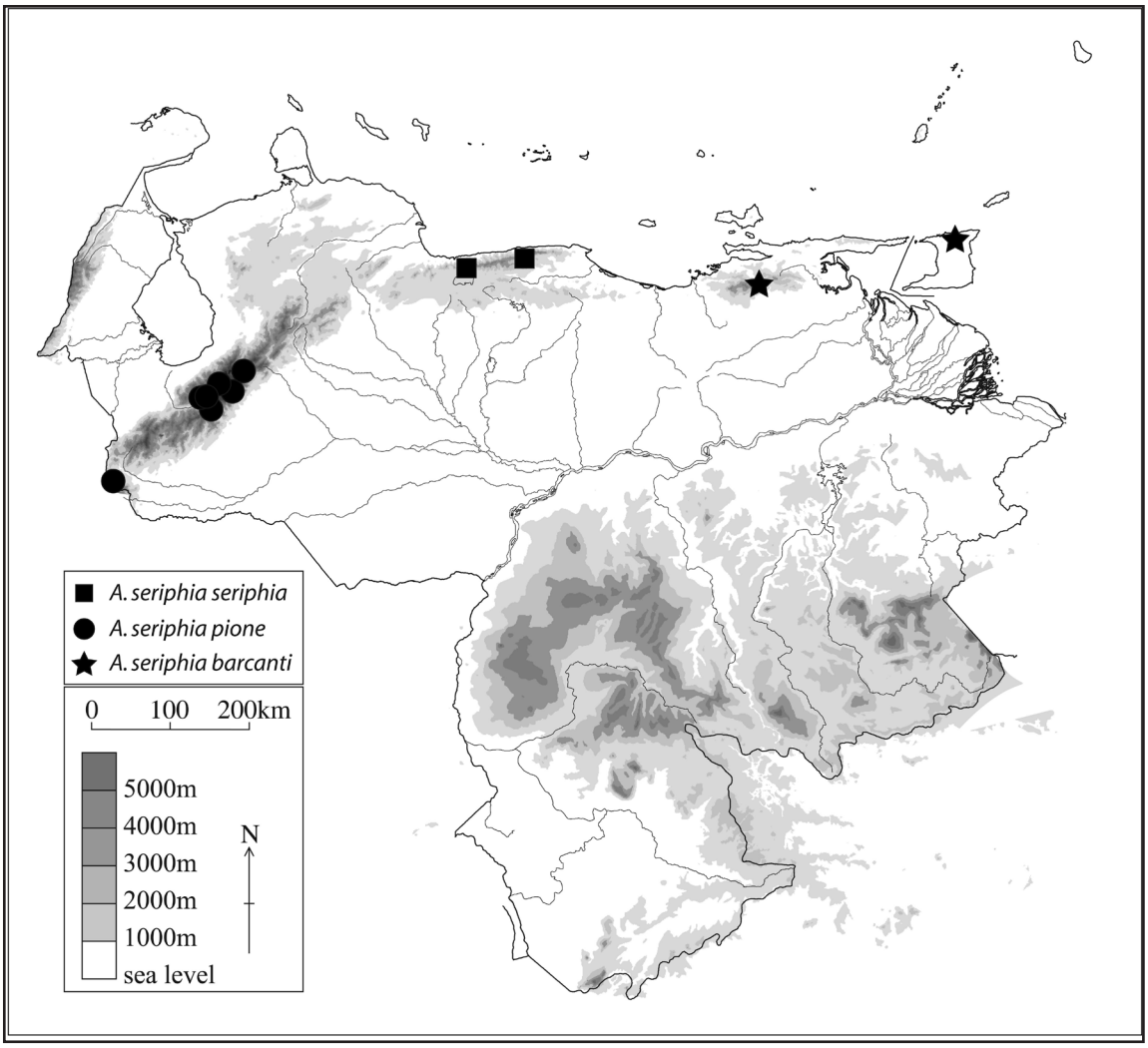

Figure 2. Distribution of the subspecies of *Adelpha seriphia* in Venezuela.

The distribution of *Adelpha serpa celerio* in Venezuela included the Turimiquire (Neild 1996), but until now only one female had been captured (near Los Altos de Santa Fe, on the north-western slope of the range), and is currently deposited in the Skinner collection (Neild, pers. comm.). Six specimens (four males and two females) were collected, and many more were observed, in three different expeditions to the Cerro Quiriquire, in March, July and August 2005, in a coffee plantation surrounded by primary forest, between 1200 and 1500 m, thus confirming the presence of this species in the Turimiquire massif.

Acronyms

MIZA: Museo del Instituto de Zoología Agrícola, Maracay, Venezuela.

FLMNH: Florida Museum of Natural History.

MCCV: Mauro Costa collection, Caracas, Venezuela.

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