

Insect Life on the Western Arctic Coast of America

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Introduction

The territory covered by the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-18 stretches from Wrangell island (about latitude 71 degrees north, longitude 15 degrees west) off Siberia to the new land found north of the Canadian Arctic archipelago (about latitude 80 degrees north, longitude 100 degrees west).

Much of this area, however, was passed only on ship or during sledge-expeditions, and from some localities no collections of insects or plants were made.

The expedition was divided into a northern and a southern party, the northern exploring principally the Arctic ocean and Canadian Arctic archipelago, while the southern investigated the continental coast. Owing to the unfortunate loss of the naturalist of the northern party—Mr. James Murray, with the "Karluk," off Wrangell island, in 1914, the collections made up to then by that party were lost, but the few specimens collected later have a considerable value, owing to the high latitude in which they were found.

Reports on all the entomological specimens appear in this volume. Rearing experiments were made with more than a hundred various insects, etc., but owing to the difficulties incident to a trip of this description, only a quarter of the experiments were successful.

Investigations were made at:

Teller, Alaska (July-August, 1913).

Camden bay, Alaska (September, 1913 to July, 1914).

Demaree point, Alaska (May, 1914).

Herschel island, Yukon (July, 1914 and August, 1916).

Peninsula south of Dolphin and Union strait, Northwest Territories (August, 1914 to July, 1916).

Lower part of Coppermine river, Northwest Territories (February, 1915).

Some insects were collected in Alaska at Nome, Latouche and Ketelikan; and at Cape Bathurst, Victoria island and Coronation Gulf, Northwest Territories.

In the present article the natural conditions and the insect life in these localities are described, but descriptive geographical details are omitted. With this series of reports is included a list of flowering plants, by Theo. Holm and the late J. M. Macoun, and vegetation is, therefore, referred to only when it affects insect life.² The region where the forest insects were found lies in the transition zone between the arctic and the subarctic, on the boundary of the barren grounds, and at some distance from the coast; but it is included in this report because the forest insects are described in the report on Coleoptera.

To this report are added data regarding insect life on some of the islands in the Canadian Arctic archipelago, and a comparison is made between these insects and those of Greenland.

¹The report as originally submitted by the author has been considerably cut down and has been recast into impersonal form to conform to the other reports of the series.

²See map of Western Arctic Coast of America, Fig. 1, p. 41k.

³Specific plant identifications in the present paper are from collections determined by Macoun and Holm. (See Vol. V, Part A, Vascular Plants.)