



Trichoptera from the Great Falls and Turkey Run units of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, Fairfax Co., Virginia, USA

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Abstract

A 3-year effort to collect and identify caddisflies (Trichoptera) along 2 sections of the Potomac River was undertaken at the request of the National Park Service. A variety of techniques including Malaise traps, light traps, and hand netting resulted in the collection of 105 species belonging to 17 families and 38 genera. Fifty-seven species or 54% were deemed rare, 20 species or 19% were common and 28 species or 27% were abundant. Comments are made on 7 species of special interest. An addendum lists 6 additional species collected during the 4th year's survey.

Key words: Trichoptera, caddisflies, Great Falls, Turkey Run

Introduction

In 2005 the park naturalist, Brent W. Steury of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, National Park Service, approached the entomologists at the National Museum of Natural History with a proposal to provide funding for a 3-year survey of various insect groups at certain sections of the Parkway. Five of us agreed to survey for our research groups along 2 sections of the Parkway, viz. Great Falls (GF) and Turkey Run (TR).

The Parkway lies on the southwestern rim of the Potomac River in northern Virginia and runs for 25 miles (40 km) between the Beltway (the highway that encircles Washington at a radius of about 16 km) at the western end and Mt. Vernon, George Washington's home, at the southern end. Four and a half air miles (7.2 km) beyond the western end of the Parkway lies Great Falls Park, also administered by the same agency. The Parkway follows a sharp escarpment, known as the Palisades, along the southern side of the river west from Washington, with Great Falls and the Mather Gorge just downriver, marking the western end of the canyon the river has cut through the bedrock.

Methods and materials

Collections were made using a variety of methods: Malaise traps, light traps, ultraviolet light at a sheet, and hand netting. Specimens taken in the Malaise traps went directly into alcohol, but those collected by the other methods were killed dry with "excess" numbers being put into alcohol.

Three Townes-style Malaise traps (Townes 1962) were operated at each park unit, for 2006 only from May 4 until November 9, but for longer periods in 2007 (13 March–28 November), and 2008