



First record of a pygmy backswimmer (Hemiptera: Heteroptera: Pleidae) from Micronesia

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Pygmy backswimmers, pleids, can be common in aquatic habitats with stagnant or slow-moving water that is rich in vegetation. They are small bugs, usually less than 3.5 mm in length and confine themselves to the vegetation in which they hide and where they prey on mosquito larvae and other small arthropods (Schuh and Slater 1995). The family is represented by 37 species in three genera: *Plea*, confined to the Old World; *Neoplea* confined to the New World; and *Paraplea*, the largest and most widely distributed genus (Schuh and Slater 1995).

No species of Pleidae has been recorded from Micronesia. Five species are recorded from Malesia (Chen et al. 2005), two of which are widely distributed. Three species of *Paraplea* occur in Australia (Hawking et al. 2006) and a single species; *Neoplea apopkana* (Drake and Chapman), has been introduced into Hawaii (Polhemus 1996).

Extensive collecting in aquatic systems on Guam has provided the first records of a pleid from any of the Micronesian Islands. A series of slightly over 50 *Paraplea puella* (Barber) were collected from an Asan River outflow in Asan Village (13°28.372'N 144°42.993'E) on 17 and 22 June 2006. The site of collection was a series of pond-like depressions that probably flooded during periods of heavy rainfall. During these periods, water flows to the sea. At the time of collection, the connection between these ponds and the sea was not complete. The area in which the pleids were collected had a substantial amount of submergent aquatic vegetation, whereas they were not collected near the shoreline, which was free of vegetation. All specimens were collected by hand-sorting through the vegetation. Based on the number of specimens collected, the species was well-established, at least at this site.

Paraplea puella was described from Puerto Rico (Barber 1923) and is known from the southeastern and south-central United States as well as from Mexico, Central America, and the West Indies (Polhemus 1988). How this species arrived in Guam is open to conjecture. However, such islands, especially those like Guam that are major areas of military, business, and tourist movement, are subject to introduction by numerous invasive species. Jansson and Meyer-Rochow (1990) made reference to a small corixid (Heteroptera: Corixidae) that is native to India and Southeast Asia that was found in an aquarium in New Zealand; and Polhemus and Rutter (1997) commented that the same species had made its way to Florida. It is not difficult to imagine this *Paraplea puella* arriving on Guam with aquatic plants destined for an aquarium or the aquaculture trade.

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