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First record of *Myrrha octodecimguttata* (Coleoptera: Coccinellidae) and *Epuraea ocularis* (Coleoptera: Nitidulidae) from Israel

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Abstract

Myrrha octodecimguttata (Linnaeus, 1758) and *Epuraea ocularis* Fairmaire, 1849 are recorded from Israel for the first time, both species collected in Shoham Forest.

Key words: Coleoptera, Coccinellidae, Nitidulidae, Israel, introduced, new record

Shoham Forest is a small park planted by *Keren Kayemet LeIsrael* (KKL-JNF), an organization responsible for most of the planted forest in Israel. It is located on a low hill originally covered by typical batha vegetation at the meeting point of three geographical areas in Israel: the Central Coastal Plain, Samaria, and the Judean Foothills. We placed light traps in Shoham Forest on several occasions during the spring and summer of 2011 and collected a few interesting species. A few species were found for the first time in that region, thus extending their known distributional range within Israel. Two species were entirely new to the Israeli fauna.

Myrrha octodecimguttata (Linnaeus, 1758) (Coleoptera: Coccinellidae)

Material: Israel, Shoham, 31°59'51.35", 34°57'28.04". 16.V.2011, leg. O. Rittner. Additional specimen was photographed in Jerusalem on 30.vii.2007.

Remarks: *M. octodecimguttata* is known from Europe, North West Africa and in the Middle East from Turkey and Syria (Kovar 2007). It is a specialized predator of pine tree aphids (Adriaens *et al.* 2008). Pine forests cover 39.9% (386 square kilometer) of all forests in Israel (KKL-JNF 2011). Since *M. octodecimguttata* is a natural enemy of the conifer aphid *Cinara maritima* (Dufour, 1833) (Hemiptera: Aphididae) (Núñez-Pérez & Tizado 1996), it is considered a biological control agent in pine forests.

In Israel, *C. maritima* is an aphid known from the Golan Heights, Samaria, Coastal Plain and Judean Hills. Its known hosts in Israel are *Pinus canariensis*, *Pinus pinaster*, *Pinus pinea* and *Pinus radiata* (Pinaceae) (Swirski & Amitai 1999).

We cannot state whether *M. octodecimguttata* is a newly introduced species or a local one that was previously unnoticed. Additional study is required in order to learn its distributional range in Israel and its role in the pine tree forest biota.

Epuraea ocularis (Fairmaire, 1849) (Coleoptera: Nitidulidae)

Material: Israel, Shoham, 31°59'51.35", 34°57'28.04", 1.IV.2011, leg. A. Nir.

Remarks: *E. ocularis* is a small beetle, detritivorous of mycophagous and dry or damaged fruits (Denux & Zagatti 2010). It is native to tropical Asia, but since its introduction to Europe in 1900, it has rapidly invaded many other places and today is considered a cosmopolitan species. It is known from throughout Europe (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey), Africa (Canary Islands), Asia (India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan)