

Taxonomic note on *Sarata tephrella* Ragonot (Lepidoptera: Pyraloidea: Pyralidae: Phycitinae)

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Abstract

The female of *Sarata tephrella* Ragonot is described for the first time. Variation in males and females is illustrated and discussed. Photos of the habitat are presented, and the larval host is postulated.

Key words: Phycitinae, Pyralidae, Pyraloidea, *Sarata tephrella*, taxonomy, Wyoming

Introduction

Sarata tephrella was described by Ragonot in 1893 from a single male from “Washington Territory” with the type deposited in the Muséum National d’Histoire Naturelle, Paris, France. Heinrich (1956) provided a re-description of the holotype and illustrated the male genitalia. Neunzig (2003) briefly discussed the taxon and illustrated a male from Fremont Co., Colorado.

In Albany Co., WY, males of *Sarata tephrella* are the first pyralids to appear at lights in the early spring; we have never seen females at light. In UV-light traps during the past several years at our respective homes in Albany Co., WY and four other sites, we have taken a series of male moths that match the description of *tephrella*. Diurnal collecting in a nearby area on 30 March–4 April 2004 yielded series of both males and females. Although males apparently travel some distance to UV light, the area where we found both sexes during the day is restricted to about 2 ha., and there is a patch of *Artemisia tridentata* var. *wyomingensis* (Beetle & Young) (Asteraceae) growing within a widely distributed stand of *A. nova* A. Nels. The moths were restricted to the north-facing bank of a broad gully. The