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OBSERVATIONS ON THE NORTHERNMOST PRESENCE OF XEROTHERMIC
TENEBRIONIDS IN THE REGION FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA

OSSERVAZIONI SULLE PRESENZE PIÙ SETTENTRIONALI DI TENEBRIONIDI
XEROTERMI NELLA REGIONE FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA

Abstract - A description of the main ecological characteristics of the xerothermic areas of the Region Friuli-Venezia Giulia (NE Italy) is given (geology, soils, climate and vegetation). The distribution of the Tenebrionids (Coleoptera Heteromera) present in this area is described, together with notes on their ecology. This Region represents the northernmost point of distribution for some of these species. The threat of disappearance of these species due to environmental degradation is clearly illustrated, pointing out the most dangerous human impacts on the environment in which they live.

Key words: Conservation, Ecology, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Xerothermic Tenebrionids.

Riassunto breve - Vengono elencate le specie xerotermiche di Coleotteri Tenebrionidi e relative località, presenti alle rive del punto più settentrionale del Mar Adriatico, rivestito di una vegetazione del tipo sclerofillo, che può vivere grazie al substrato geologico (calcare), suolo (terra rossa) e clima mesofilo-subumido, con una temperatura media di 11-14°C, precipitazioni annue pari a 900-1.100 mm e un pluviometro (Lang) pari a 64-100. In quest'area protetta dal vento di NE ("bora") raggiungono il loro limite più settentrionale di diffusione i Tenebrionidi *Stenosis intermedia*, *Asida fascicularis*, *Dendarus dalmatinus*, *Gonocephalum pusillum*, *G. pygmaeum*, *Opatrum sabulosum subsp. lucifugum* e *Catomus consentaneus*.

Parole chiave: Conservazione, Ecologia, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Tenebrionidi xerotermici.

Introduction

Among Mediterranean beetles, in all arid and semi-arid communities of the world, Tenebrionids are the most highly represented because of their morpho-physiological adaptations to dry, even extreme, situations. The lapidicolous, often sabulicolous habits, the abundance of wingless species (and higher taxa), the generally slow movements, the frequent nocturnal life, the euryphagous diet (often phytosaprophagous, or even polysaprophagous) perfectly adapt this insect family for living in all "mediterranean" ecosystems in the Old World, in America (sclerophyllous forests of both California and Chile), in South Africa and in Southern Australia.

