On biology and ecology of *Uresiphita limbalis* (Lepidoptera: Pyralidae) in Israel

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Abstract. In Israel *Uresiphita limbalis* Denis & Schiffermüller (Lepidoptera: Pyralidae) feeds on Papilionaceae bushes – the indigenous *Retama raetam*, *Spartium junceum*, *Anagyris foeteda* and the introduced *Cytisus canariensis* – and causes damage mainly to *S. junceum* raised in nurseries and to *C. canariensis*. Under optimal conditions of temperature (24–28°C) and food (young shoots of *S. junceum*), the average durations of the incubation of eggs, and the larval, prepupal and pupal stages are 3.5, 18, 2 and 8 days, respectively (seven successive generations were bred). The insect develops: in spring and autumn mainly along the Coastal Plain and the northern Negev; in summer in the mountains; and in winter in the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea areas.

Kurzfassung. *Uresiphita limbalis* Denis & Schiffermüller (Lepidoptera: Pyralidae) ernährt sich in Israel von Papilionaceen-Sträuchern – nämlich von den einheimischen Arten *Retama raetam*, *Spartium junceum* und *Anagyris foeteda,* und von der eingeführten Art *Cytisus canariensis* – und verursacht Schäden vor allem an *S. junceum*, der in Baumschulen gezüchtet wird, und an *C. canariensis*. Unter optimalen Temperatur- und Nahrungsbedingungen (24–28°C, Vorhandensein junger Triebe von *S. junceum*) dauert die Eientwicklung, die Larvalphase, die Präpupalphase sowie die Puppenphase 3,5, 18, 2 bzw. 8 Tage (Ergebnisse der Zucht von sieben aufeinanderfolgenden Generationen). Die Art entwickelt sich im Frühjahr und Herbst hauptsächlich in der Küstenebene und in der nördlichen Negev, im Sommer in den Bergen, und im Winter am See von Galiläa und am Toten Meer.

Key words. *Uresiphita limbalis,* Pyralidae, Lepidoptera, *Retama raetam*, *Spartium junceum*, *Anagyris foetida*, *Cytisus canariensis*, Israel.

Introduction

Uresiphita limbalis Dennis and Schiffermüller, 1775 (Lepidoptera: Pyralidae) is a vagrant species that develops on Papilionaceae (Fabaceae), growing spontaneously or planted for their profusely produced yellow or white flowers (Fig. 1). It has an Irano-Turanian distribution and is known in central and southern Europe, northern and central Africa and west and central Asia (LOZOVOY 1965, PALMONI 1969). It belongs to the fauna of Turkey (KOCAK & SEVEN 1999), is known as a pest of *Genista* in Italy (ANONYMOUS 2003), and has been found on lucerne in south-western Turkmenia (KRASILNIKOVA 1981) and on *Sophora alopecuroides* (Leguminosae), a noxious weed of pastures in Kazakhstan (MARIKOVSKII & IVANNIKOV 1976). The migrating moths have been caught as far afield as northern Wales (MORGAN 1971) although the species does not belong to the fauna of the UK.

In the temperate regions of Europe, two generations develop during the year: the first from May to July and the second from July to May, with a hibernating pupal stage (LOZOVOY 1965, KHOTKO & MOLHENOVA 1974, SCHUETZE 1931). In some parts of Germany only one generation develops, adults being recorded in June and larvae in July-August (ECKSTEIN 1933).

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