

Research on staphylinid beetles of the wetlands in the Aspromontano massif

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The Aspromonte massif, due to the peculiar geographical location and to the several geological and climatic features, is widely recognized as a very interesting biodiversity hotspot. In this area, located at the extreme Southern portion of the Apennines, the biodiversity knowledges are increasing continuously. In the district of the Aspromonte National Park many wetland areas with several different features occur, such as small water courses, ponds, swamps, ecc. Among those with highest biodiversity richness, rarest, and often affected by environmental changes, the Sphagnum bogs, the montane water courses, and the riparian lands inhabited by the fern *Woodwardia radicans* must be considered. The primary role played by the wetland areas in the biodiversity conservation is widely recognized even by several recommendations, laws, and international agreements, all aimed to their protection. They play a primary role in the ecosystems as water regulators of the continental outflow, of the territory hydraulic regime and of the waters quality. This study represents the first contribution to the knowledge of the staphylinids beetles inhabiting the wetlands areas of the Aspromonte National Park. This study has been carried out using different monitoring and sampling techniques, aimed to collect the species living in several microhabitats. The main goal was studying biodiversity (community structure and its relative abundance of species) and to highlight even the characteristic species living in the several wetland areas occurring in the high differentiated environmental district of the Park. Staphylinid beetles, due to their high number of species known for the Italian fauna and to the high capability of inhabiting several macro and microhabitats, from the sea level to the high altitude alpine belts, are very suitable if used as bioindicators, mostly in a very high differentiated environmental district as the Aspromonte massif. The distributional models, the endemic species, and the relevant faunistic and biogeographical data emerging from this study emphasize and confirm the relevance of the montane wetland areas as biodiversity reserves in the Mediterranean basin.

KEY WORDS: Coleoptera, Staphylinidae, Aspromonte, wetlands.