

A Case of True Albinism in a Lepidopterous Insect (*Orrhodia vaccinii* L.)

By

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In the autumn 1921 the common moth *Orrhodia vaccinii* L. was extremely plentiful at a certain locality near Holte, some ten miles north of Copenhagen. Being at that time special interested in studying the different aberrations of this very variable moth I often visited the above mentioned locality.

On September 29th of this year I examined, as usual, each *vaccinii* which had come to the sugar, when my attention was attracted by a specimen which was somewhat alike *ab. mixta* Stdgr. but still paler than any I had seen before.

The most strange, however, was that the eyes were not black but nearly colourless, a fact I observed as soon as I had got the cyanide bottle over it. I was somewhat afraid that the exterior of the eyes might change after death but this has only been the case to a rather slight degree. At present, after the expiration of six years, the colour seems to will remain buff or very light ochreous.

As the pigment in an insect's eye is arranged as sheaths around the ommatidia and is of importance to the sight, the mentioned specimen must have seen rather badly. The moth, however, showed quite a normal behaviour, which is easily explained by the fact that moths are

trusting the antennal olfactory sense much more than their organs of sight.

Investigations in the literature will prove that the usual published cases of „albinism“ are merely based upon the colour of the scales, irrespective of the colour of any other pigmented part of the body — but the well known fact that many variable moths are often found very light coloured cannot in my opinion justly be regarded as albinism.

The present case, however, where the eyes have proved to be almost colourless, coincident with the otherwise bright appearance of the moth seems to tend to the fact of a case of true albinism, and as this must be of rare occurrence in Lepidoptera I have found it worth mentioning.

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