

## The Genus *Polistes* in Scandinavia

(Vespidae: Hymenoptera).

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The finding of a *Polistes gallica* (L.) in Copenhagen, prompted this short study on reports of the incidence of the genus *Polistes* in Scandinavia. The species-name *gallica* is used here, although it may be argued that the feminine adjectival ending is not, strictly speaking, correct. Latreille (1805) designated the genus *Polistes* as *P. gallicus*, but there seems to be no good reason for introducing further confusion by departing from the name which the majority of authors have employed. Logically, if not grammatically, the term "gallica" is to some extent defensible: "polistes" signifies "the town-builder", and since it is the female *Polistes* which starts the work of boulding the nest, the feminine ending is not inappropriate.

*Polistes* has been reported in Scandinavia as follows: In Denmark, three *P. gallica* have been found (Aug. 1898, Hillerød; 10th Aug. 1911, Alsø Skov; 19th Sept. 1950, Copenhagen) and one *P. Kohli* Weyrauch (Haderslev); in Finland, two *P. Kohli* (Eriksberg and Syväri, Karelka); in Norway, nine *P. Kohli* (three at Kristiania (Oslo); one at Risør Aay; one at Sundsvold, Aug. 1845; one in Valdres, 1872; three at Drammen, Aug. 1907; and one at A-Agder, 16th July 1952); in Sweden, nine *P. Kohli* (eight with date and location unspecified, and one at Härnösand, 10th Aug. 1942).

*P. Kohli* had previously been referred to as *P. dubius*, but it was later shown (Weyrauch, 1938) that in 1867 Saussure had already described a *dubia* species from the Philippine Islands which was not identical with *P. dubia* Kohl; hence, a change in name was necessary.

It is easy to distinguish between *P. Kohli* and *P. gallica*:

*P. Kohli*: The upper side of the antennae is black as far as the tip. In the male, the clypeus is covered with close, regular hairs having the white, lustrous tint of silk.

*P. gallica*: The antennae are yellow from the third joint to the tip. In the male, the clypeus is covered not only with short silky hairs, but also with longer brown hairs running transversely.

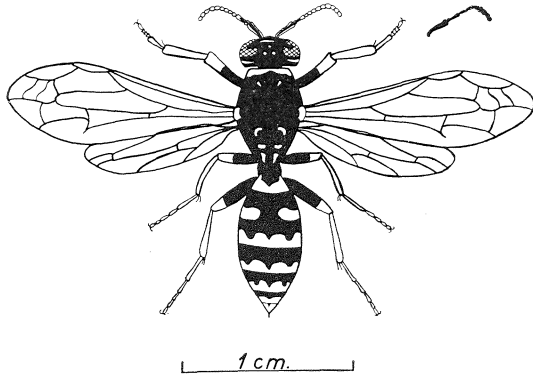


Fig. 1. *Polistes gallica* (L.) ♀; upper right: antenna of *Polistes Kohli* Weyrauch.

Only a single case of nesting by *Polistes* has been observed in Scandinavia. In Sweden, during the years 1901—1904, Adlerz (1904) found several specimens of *Polistes*, which he identified as *P. biglumis*, i. e. the same species as *P. gallica*. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to procure this material for examination, although the animals in question may possibly be the same eight *P. Kohli* referred to above as being of unspecified date and location. In 1904, Adlerz succeeded in discovering a nest in Medelpad, where he was able to watch the nest under construction from the beginning of August until mid-September and to observe and describe the hatching of males and females.

The reports from Scandinavia listed above indicate that *P. gallica* has been found only in Denmark, together with a single *P. Kohli*. In the other Scandinavian countries only *P. Kohli* is reported. This bears out the statement in a paper by Zimmermann (1930) that *P. Kohli* is a mountain species, occurring only in mountainous regions of Europe and thus also in Finland, Norway, and Sweden. *P. gallica* is evidently a lowland species. It is doubtful whether a population of *P. gallica* — however small and sparse — exists at all in Denmark. Those that have been found in this country are almost certainly transported specimens. Thus, for example, two *P. gallica* have been caught in the Bay of Biscay on board a ship bound from Casablanca to Copenhagen.

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