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Bombus (*Subterraneobombus*) *distinguendus* Morawitz, 1869 (Hymenoptera: Apidae: Bombini) in Slovakia – historical and recent findings

Bombus (*Subterraneobombus*) *distinguendus* Morawitz, 1869 (Hymenoptera: Apidae: Bombini) na území Slovenska – historické a súčasné nálezy

Peter ŠIMA[1)] & Vladimír SMETANA[2)]

[1)] Koppert s.r.o., Komárňanská cesta 13, SK–940 53 Nové Zámky, Slovakia;
e-mail: psima@koppert.sk
[2)] Tekovské múzeum, Sv. Michala 40, SK–934 69 Levice, Slovakia;
e-mail: vladimir.smetana@muzeumlevice.sk

Apidae, *Bombus distinguendus*, historical findings, distribution, Slovakia

Abstract. A summary of historical and recent records of *Bombus distinguendus* Morawitz, 1869 from the territory of Slovakia is presented in chronological order and information about the general distribution, biology and ecology is provided in this article. The species' confirmed occurrence from a historical locality after a century is discussed here. The authors give a distribution map of this species in Slovakia.

INTRODUCTION

The bumblebee fauna of Slovakia currently comprises 37 species (Straka et al. 2007, Šima & Smetana 2012). Bumblebee species with broader ecological valence, and the ability to resist unfavourable abiotic and biotic factors, have maintained stable, albeit often local, populations. Some species are new for the bumblebee coenoses of Slovakia, and have been observed further expanding their distributional range (e.g. Smetana & Šima 2005, Šima & Smetana 2009, Šima & Smetana 2012). A few bumblebee taxa, such as *Bombus pomorum* (Panzer, 1805) and *B. subterraneus* (Linnaeus, 1758) were considered widespread and common about thirty years ago, but in recent years have been in rapid decline. However, a number of species from the check-list have been rare since the early years of hymenopterological research in Slovakia (= end of the 19th century). *Bombus distinguendus* Morawitz, 1869 is one of these rare species, which has been recorded sporadically, and from only a few localities. Due to its rarity, any new record of *B. distinguendus* is of great value. The aim of our contribution is to summarize all data about the presence and distribution of *B. distinguendus* in the territory of Slovakia and provide general information about the biology and ecology of this species. The resulting summary of information would form a good base for future studies and assessments, and for practical nature conservation.

Bombus distinguendus belongs to a group of Holarctic bumblebees. It is distributed from Ireland through Northern and Central Europe, Northern Asia (Russia) to North-western North America (Alaska). Its southernmost border of distribution in Europe is in France, Italy and Romania. In the area of Central Europe it is known from Germany, Switzerland, Austria (Gokcezade et al. 2015), Czech Republic (May 1959, Přidal & Komzáková 2009), Poland

(Banaszak 1993, Dylewska 1996), Slovakia (Smetana 1994, Pavelka & Smetana 2000) and West Hungary (Móczár 1957, Józan 2011), where it is a rare or very rare species. In Northern Europe and Asia it is considered widespread, but not abundant (Williams et al. 2014). According to our experience and available literature sources, *B. distinguendus* is a species with preferences for colder, moist and mainly open habitats situated at altitude of 0–800 m a.s.l., at least in Central Europe (Móczár 1957, Dylewska 1996, Gokcezade et al. 2015). In some regions of the northern parts of Europe (Kola Peninsula) it prefers ruderal habitats, and could not be found in undisturbed natural ecosystems (Potapov et al. 2015). Ecological profiling of *B. distinguendus* is somewhat controversial. Several authors agree that this species belongs to the euryoecic/eurytopic hylophilous ecological type of bumblebee (Pittioni & Schmidt 1942, Móczár 1953a, Dylewska 1957). However, there are also opinions that *B. distinguendus* belong to the group of eremophylous stenotopic species (Přidal 2005). This bumblebee is polylectic, and has been observed foraging on about 80 plant species (Dylewska 1996). Its food plants include e.g. *Trifolium pratense*, *Trifolium repens*, *Lotus corniculatus*, *Vicia cracca*, *Anthyllis vulneraria*, *Chamaerion angustifolium*, *Eryngium maritinum*, *Salvia pratensis*, *Lonicera xylosteum*, *Rhinanthus minor*, *Allium* sp., *Rubus fruticosus* agg., *Centaurea nigra*, *Carduus* sp. and others (Knechtel 1955, Alford 1975, Benton 2006). In North America it was observed on *Aconitum maximum*, *Geranium erianthum*, *Lupinus nootkatensis* (Williams & Thomas 2005). *Bombus distinguendus* is a pocket maker, nesting underground, and the colonies can produce up to 120 individuals (Banaszak 1993, Pawlikowski 1996, Benton 2006). Colonies of *B. distinguendus* are parasitized by two cuckoo bumblebee species in Central Europe, *B. campestris* (Panzer, 1801) and *B. barbutellus* (Kirby, 1802) (Pittioni & Schmidt 1942, Pavelka & Smetana 2000, Ban-Calefariu & Sárospataki 2007, Mazalová et al. 2009). Parasitic species attacking the North American populations are not known (Williams et al. 2014).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Recently collected/observed bumblebees were determined using appropriate literature (Pavelka & Smetana 2000, Intoppa et al. 2009). Each record, historical or recent, includes these data (if available): locality name, number of the faunistic code of the Central European mapping grid system (Ehrendorfer & Hamann 1965), date of observation or collection, number of specimens observed or collected, sex (female(s) = ♀ (♀♀), male(s) = ♂ (♂♂) or worker(s)) of the specimens listed, a short description of the collection/observation site, altitude, plant species on which the specimen was observed/collected, name of the collector (leg.), observer (obs.), determinator (det.), revisor (rev.) and deposition of the collected specimen(s) (PS = P. Šima, Nové Zámky, Slovakia; LTM = Tekovské múzeum in Levice, Levice, Slovakia, HNHM = Hungarian Natural History Museum (Hungary, Budapest)). Specimens of *B. distinguendus* deposited in the collection of NMPC (National Museum, Prague, Czech Republic) were revised by Jan Macek.

Literature sources are cited for all the published records. On the basis of available information, a distribution map of *B. distinguendus* was produced (Fig. 1).

RESULTS

Bombus (*Subterraneobombus*) *distinguendus* Morawitz, 1869

Historical records from the territory of Slovakia: *Podtatranská brázda*: Oravice (6784), details not available, Mocsáry (1900); Orava district, Méhelij leg., no other details available, Móczár (1953b); same locality, 1 ♀ (HNHM), Mocsáry det. no other details found on the specimen's labels, Smetana & Šima rev. ***Podtatranská kotlina:*** Lučivná (6986), details not

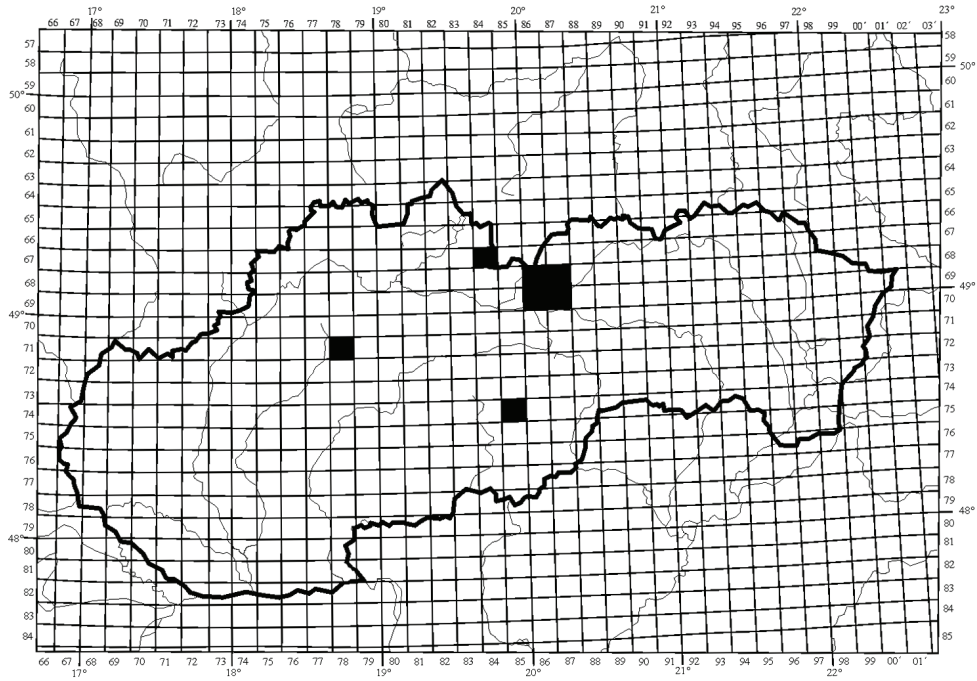


Fig. 1. Distribution map of *Bombus distinguendus* Morawitz, 1869 in Slovakia.
Obr. 1. Mapa rozšírenia *Bombus distinguendus* Morawitz, 1869 na území Slovenska.

available, (Mocsáry 1900); same locality, Szabó-Patay leg., no other details available, Móczár (1953b); Vyšné Hágy (6886), Méhelij leg., no other details available (Móczár 1953b); same locality, 2 ♂♂ (HNHM), no other details found on the specimen's labels, Smetana & Šima rev.; Starý Smokovec (6887), details not available (Móczár 1953b); same locality, 1 ♂ (HNHM), det. Mocsáry no other details found on the specimen's labels, Smetana & Šima rev. ***Revúcka vrchovina:*** Hnúšťa (7485), Szabó-Patay leg., no other details available (Móczár 1953b).

Recent records: ***Turčianska kotlina*****:** 1 worker (LTM), Dubové (7178), 22.vii.1992, specimen collected in open landscape with fragments of wetlands around fish-farming ponds, 500 m a.s.l., a worker foraged on *Trifolium pratense*, Smetana leg. et det. (Smetana 1994). ***Podtatranská kotlina:*** 1 worker (PS), Svit (6987), 13.vii.2014, Motorest Bôrik – parking place at the D1 highway in the vicinity of alluvial areas of the Poprad river (Fig. 2), 748 m a.s.l., the specimen foraged pollen and nectar on *Symphytum officinale* (Fig. 3), Šima leg. & det.; 3 workers, same locality and date, specimens foraged pollen and nectar on *Symphytum officinale*, Šima obs. et det.; 1 worker, same locality, 16.vii. 2014, worker foraging on *Symphytum officinale*, Šima obs. et det.

The collection of NMPC did not include even one single specimen of *B. distinguendus* from Slovakia.

DISCUSSION

As discussed above, there are only a few reports available about the presence of *B. distinguendus* in Slovakia. The majority of the available data come from the northern parts of the country. First inputs were published by Mocsáry (1900), however, the author mentioned only two localities. The "Oravicza, comitatus Árva", which is the current Oravice village, and the "Balneum Lucsivna, comitatus Szepes", current Lučivná village. The first locality lies in a geomorphologically and topographically diverse area. Since we do not know the exact collection site, it is possible that the specimen was collected in the vicinity of Oravice village, in different geomorphological units such as Skorušinské vrchy or Tatra Mountains. In addition to the previously published localities, three new collection sites were mentioned later by Móczár (1953b). Two of them are from Podtatranská kotlina geomorphological unit (Vyšné Hágy and Starý Smokovec) and one comes from Revúcka vrchovina (Hnúšťa). It cannot be excluded that the specimen from the locality Hnúšťa was collected in Stolické vrchy mountain range. Altogether four specimens collected in the territory of Slovakia are deposited in the bumblebee collection of the Hungarian Natural History Museum in Budapest. Most probably, these specimens are those both Mocsáry and Móczár were writing about in their faunistic articles. Unfortunately, the labels pinned under these dry specimens did not contain any additional information except the collection site and the surname of the determiner. Several decades after Móczárs's publication, Smetana collected one worker of *B. distinguendus* in 1992 around fish-farming ponds in the vicinity of Dubové village (Smetana 1994). Lastly, in 2014, the presence of *B. distinguendus* in Slovakia was confirmed again from the adjacent area of Svit town. Interestingly, this last finding comes from a locality, which is only 3 kilometres from a historical collection site. Thus, we may consider our finding as a confirmation of this species from the same locality after more than 117 years. We may do so especially when we consider the locality "Balneum Lucsivna" in a broader sense. Repeated confirmation after such a long time could be explained by the fact that in the time between the first record and the recent one, no systematic bumblebee-focused research took place in the area. The locality and its surroundings have changed during the 20th century, but apparently not in a way that would have led to eradication of *B. distinguendus* populations from the site. Since this bumblebee species has been recorded from only 8 localities to date, and is known from only a few specimens, it allow us to categorise this species as very rare in Slovakia. Its unfavourable status has also been recognized at European level, and *B. distinguendus* was listed in the IUCN Red List of European bees as a vulnerable (VU) species (Nieto et al. 2014). Without any doubt, this species deserves more attention and appropriate protection.

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Fig. 2. Locality for *Bombus distinguendus* Morawitz, 1869 in the vicinity of Svit town. Photographed by Peter Šima on 13.vii.2014.
Obr. 2. Miesto nálezu druhu *Bombus distinguendus* Morawitz, 1869 neďaleko mesta Svit. Fotografiu vyhotovil Peter Šima dňa 13. júla 2014.



Fig. 3. A worker of *Bombus distinguendus* Morawitz, 1869 collecting pollen from *Symphytum officinale*. Photographed by Peter Šima on 13.vii.2014.
Obr. 3. Robotnica *Bombus distinguendus* Morawitz, 1869 pri zbere peľu na *Symphytum officinale*. Fotografiu vyhotovil Peter Šima dňa 13. júla 2014.

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SÚHRN

Fauna čmeľov Slovenska zahŕňa v súčasnosti 37 druhov (Straka et al. 2007, Šima & Smetana 2012). Medzi najvzácnejšie druhy nepochybne patrí aj *Bombus distinguendus* Morawitz, 1869. Jedná sa o druh s holarktickým rozšírením. V areáli svojho výskytu je považovaný za rozšírený, avšak nikde nie je hojný (Williams et al. 2014). Vyskytuje sa od Írska cez severnú a strednú Európu, severnú Áziu (Rusko) až po Aljašku. Južnú hranicu jeho rozšírenia tvorí územie južného Francúzska, Talianska a Rumunska. Vo všetkých oblastiach strednej Európy patrí medzi vzácne až veľmi vzácne čmele. Na základe literárnych údajov, ako aj našich vlastných pozorovaní, patrí *B. distinguendus* k eurytopným hylofilným druhom čmeľov. V priestore strednej Európy obľubuje predovšetkým chladnejšie a vlhkejšie lokality otvoreného charakteru, ležiace v nadmorskej výške od 0 – 800 m n.m. (Móczár 1957, Gokcezade et al. 2015, Dylewska 1996). Ide o polylektický druh, ktorý bol pozorovaný pri zbere potravy na viac ako 80 rastlinných druhoch (Dylewska 1996). Medzi troficky najvýznamnejšie rastliny patria napr. *Trifolium pratense*, *Trifolium repens*, *Lotus corniculatus*, *Vicia cracca*, *Anthyllis vulneraria*, *Epilobium angustifolium*, *Eryngium maritinum*, *Salvia pratensis*, *Lonicera xylosteum*, *Rhinanthus minor*, *Allium* sp., *Centaurea nigra*, *Carduus* sp. (Knechtel 1955, Benton 2006). V západnej časti Severnej Ameriky sú to *Aconitum maximum*, *Geranium erianthum*, *Lupinus nootkatensis* (Williams & Thomas 2005). *Bombus distinguendus* patrí medzi druhy tvoriace tzv. kapsy (pocket makers), hniezdi v podzemných dutinách a jeho kolónie sú relatívne malé, dosahujú početnosť do 120 jedincov (Banaszak 1993, Pawlikowski 1996, Benton 2006). Medzi sociálnych parazitov tohto druhu patria v oblasti strednej Európy *B. campestris* a *B. barbutellus* (Pittioni & Schmidt 1942, Mazalová et al. 2009, Pavelka & Smetana 2000, Ban-Calefariu & Sárospataki 2007). Prvé dva údaje o výskyte *B. distinguendus* z územia Slovenska publikoval Mocsáry (1900) z lokality Oravice a z kúpeľov v Lučivnej. Neskôr, v roku 1953, k už spomínaným lokalitám pripisuje Móczár ďalšie tri lokality. Dve z nich sú situované v Podtatranskej Kotline (Vyšné Hágy, Starý Smokovec) a jedna v Revúckej vrchovine (Hnúšťa). V zbierke Maďarského prírodovedného múzea v Budapešti sú uložené 4 exempláre *B. distinguendus*, ktoré boli odchytené na území Slovenska. I keď lokalitné štítky

deponovaných exemplárov neobsahujú okrem názvov lokalít a priezviska určovateľa žiadne iné informácie, s najväčšou pravdepodobnosťou sa jedná o jedince, ktoré spomínajú vo svojich faunistických prácach Mocsáry a Móczár. Ďalší údaj o náleze jedinca *B. distinguendus* z okolia obce Dubové (Turčianskej kotlina) publikoval Smetana (1994). V roku 2014 sa nám podarilo zaznamenať celkovo 5 robotníc tohto druhu na prekvapujúcom mieste, ktorým bolo odpočívadlo pri motoreste Bôrik neďaleko obce Svit. Zaujímavosťou nie je iba kuriózne miesto výskytu druhu, ale aj skutočnosť, že tieto nálezy pochádzajú z miesta, ktoré je vzdialené len asi 3 kilometre od historickej lokality „Balneum Lucsivna". V prípade, že chápeme označenie lokality „Balneum Lucsivna" v širšom poňatí, jedná sa o potvrdenie prítomnosti tohto vzácneho druhu z rovnakej lokality po 117 rokoch. Zdá sa, že prírodné pomery v okolí Svitu a Lučivnej sa za vyše storočie trvajúce obdobie nezmenili do takej miery, aby populácie tohto čmeľa vymizli. *B. distinguendus* bol za celé obdobie hymenopterologického výskumu na území Slovenska zistený z 8 lokalít a to len v niekoľkých exemplároch. Z tohto dôvodu považujeme tento druh za veľmi vzácny prvok našej entomofauny, ktorý si zasluhuje viac pozornosti aj zo strany zložiek ochrany prírody.