Occurrence of *Altica cyanea* (Weber), a Possible Biocontrol Agent for Weeds in Rice Fields

R. C. Jhala, Z. P. Patel and A. H. Shah

Department of Entomology, N. M. College of Agriculture, GAU, Navsari Campus, Navsari-396 450

Altica (*Haltica*) *cyanea* (Weber), a chrysomelid commonly known as steel blue beetle was noticed feeding on weeds particularly *Spermacoce hispida* L. (Rubiaceae). *Ludwigia parviflora* Roxb. (Onagraceae) and *Ammania bacccifera* L. (Lythraceae) growing in rice fields of south Gujarat. The younger weed plants were preferred and the larvae were also observed feeding on weeds. A survey carried out in the paddy fields of Gujarat Agricultural University Farm at Navsari during October, 1984 indicated that on an average 54.40, 19.00 and 17.40 adults per plant were found feeding on *S.hispida*, L. *parvifiora* and *A. baccifera* respectively indicating its preference to these weeds in decreasing order. The weeds were found completely defoliated. Although the beetles were found resting on the rice plants, none of the rice plants was observed to be damaged indicating the specificity of the beetle to these weeds. Because of the considerable potential of this beetle feeding on the above mentioned weeds, it can be explored for the possible biological control of weeds in rice fields in south Gujarat and as such further studies on it are urged.

A. cyanea has also been reported feeding on *L. parviflora* at Cuttack in Orissa (Dubey, 1981), on *Ludwigia* spp. in Indonesia (Mangoendihardjo and Soerjani, 1979) and on *A. baccifera* in Delhi (Garg and Sethi, 1983). In south Gujarat too, *A. cyanea* can be taken advantage of for the biocontrol of weeds in paddy fields.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors are thankful to Dr. M. L. Cox, Commonwealth Institute of Entomology, London for the identification of beetle.

(*Received on 20th March, 1986*)

REFERENCES

Dubey, A. N. (1981). Biological control of weeds in rice. *Tropical Pest Management*, **27** (1): 143-144.

Garg, A. K. and G. R. Sethi (1983). Incidence of blue beetles on rice crop in Delhi. *Bull Ent.*, **24** (2): 95-98.

Mangoendihardjo, S. and M. Soerjani (1979). Weed management through biological control in Indonesia. 323-337. Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.