Lichens of the arid region of David Gareji, Georgia (South Caucasus)

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The arid region of David Gareji, Georgia, is located on the Iori Upland in the southeastern part of the country, in the central part of the South Caucasus. The vegetation of the study area is dominated by steppe with patches of semi-desert communities, but hemixerophilous ‘shiblyak’ scrub occurs in relatively small areas. To date, the lichen flora of the David Gareji region has received little attention. The present study recorded 93 species in 38 genera and 17 families, including six species new for Georgia: Aspicilia grossheimii, Diplotomma nivale, Lecidella carpathica, Lobothallia praeradiosa, Melanelia disjuncta and Melanelixia huei.

Key words: Iori Upland, lichen diversity, new records, South Caucasus, steppe.

Introduction

The investigation of Georgia’s lichen flora started in the early 19th century, and although more than 700 lichen species have been recorded since then, many regions still lack coverage. Thus, there are obvious gaps in the distribution data (Inashvili & Batsatsashvili 2010). This paper aims at filling one of these gaps, in particular for the David Gareji region. Only 14 species had been recorded by Chelidze (1967) from there.

Methods

Lichen samples were collected from four localities in the David Garejdi region in 2008–2012 and identified according to Tomin (1956), Thomson (1963), Kopaczewska et al. (1971), Oxner et al. (1974), Blum et al. (1975), Kopaczewska et al. (1977), Kondratyuk et al.

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