

(Keyserling). In southern California, Davis and Russell (1969) reported commensalism between *R. californicus* (Van Duzee) [cited as *R. moerens* (Reuter)—see Henry, 1984] and a solitary funnel-web or agelenid spider, *Hololena curta* (McCook). The bugs were observed feeding on entrapped insects or on plant material in the webs. Until Henry's (1984) revision of *Ranzovius*, all North American records of this presumed Neotropical group (Slater, 1974) were referred to *moerens*, and in the U.S. the genus was thought to occur only in Arizona, California, Florida, and Texas (e.g., Knight, 1968; Slater and Baranowski, 1978).

In 1979 the collection of *Ranzovius* from webs of *Anelosimus studiosus* (Hentz) in central Virginia (by JPM) prompted additional collecting in the eastern U.S. and observations on life history. In 1981, L. N. Sorkin (American Museum of Natural History, New York) and D. Faber (University of Wisconsin, Madison) collected what proved to be a different species from webs of an agelenid spider at Knoxville, Tennessee. Specimens from theridiid and agelenid webs were sent to T. J. Henry, mirid specialist with the Systematic Entomology Laboratory, USDA, Washington, D.C. His discovery that material from the eastern U.S. was not conspecific with that from California led to a revision of the genus (Henry, 1984). Described as new were *R. contubernalis* Henry, a species recorded from Connecticut south to Florida and west to Arizona, and *R. agelenopsis* Henry from Tennessee.

We summarize here our observations on seasonal history and habits of *R. contubernalis* in the eastern U.S. and describe the fifth-instar nymph. The habits of *R. agelenopsis* are briefly noted. We also speculate on the ecological and behavioral conditions that may have led to the evolution of spider commensalism in *Ranzovius*.

METHODS

Biological information was obtained from populations of *Ranzovius contubernalis* studied in ornamental plantings during 1979–80 at Steeles Tavern, Virginia (by JPM); 1981–83 at the U.S. National Arboretum, Washington, D.C. (by AGW and T. J. Henry); and 1982–83 at Staunton, Virginia and Charlotte, North Carolina (by AGW). The seasonal history reported for *R. contubernalis* thus is a composite based on the periodic sampling of populations at Washington from late May through October, Steeles Tavern from early June to mid-September, Staunton from late May to early September, and Charlotte from early April to early November. On each sample date, either the relative proportion of nymphs to adults was estimated in the field and the nymphal populations “rough-sorted” into early and late instars, or a sample (usually at least 5 individuals) was collected and the stages recorded after examination under a binocular microscope. Feeding habits and behavior were observed at all study sites and, to a limited extent, in the laboratory (mainly by JPM). The field notes on *R. agelenopsis* are based on collections at Knoxville, Tennessee, in early August 1981 (by D. Faber and L. N. Sorkin), mid-July 1982 (by AGW), and late July 1983 (by R. E. Kelly and G. L. Miller).

HABITAT PREFERENCES

Plant associations.—With the exception of a collection from native red-cedar, *Juniperus virginiana* L., we found *Ranzovius contubernalis* only in ornamental plantings: shrubs and hedges in the home landscape, in landscaped plantings of