

THE DISTRIBUTION OF ANTS IN
NORTH-WEST SCOTLAND

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(Received 5th January 1951)

SHORT visits to areas in Sutherland and Ross-shire have been made in successive years and the ants noted. Most time has been spent in the west, in particular within the area whose extreme points are marked by Lairg, Kylescuc, Ullapool and Garve. Many of the records have already been noted elsewhere,¹ the following being a somewhat more expanded account. Of the species noted, a few are uncommon and one a rarity, but the most are such as are readily found in any of the southern counties of the British Isles or in the forests and moors of Perthshire, Easternness and Aberdeen. The nomenclature used follows that of Donisthorpe.²

The commonest ants in the area are *Formica fusca* and *Myrmica rubra* L. (= *ruginodis* N.). These are widespread and have been found in all localities in East and West Sutherland and East and West Ross. *M. rubra* is probably the more widespread and may be found in wetter situations than *F. fusca*. *M. rubra* is the only ant recorded to date from Caithness, the Shetlands and St. Kilda³ and is common on Canna.⁴ Here A. J. Haddow reports that all specimens examined on Canna had the typical long epinotal spines of *M. rubra* and although some workers had indistinct striae between the spines none approached *M. laevinodis* N. in type. This is similar to the writer's experience in Ross-shire and Sutherland where hundreds of colonies of *M. rubra* have been seen and workers examined from each, but all were more or less typical *M. rubra*, no *M. laevinodis* having been seen. *M. laevinodis*, however, is recorded from West Ross.³

Gradations between *M. rubra* and *M. sulcinodis* N. have been seen at Elphin, West Sutherland and Coigach, West Ross, which may be referred to *M. rubra* v. *sulcinodo-ruginodis* E. and