INLAND OCCURRENCES OF HELIOTROPIUM CURASSAVICUM

B. L. BURTT

Heliotropium curassavicum L. (Boraginaceae) is a well-known plant of sandy shores and salt marshes. Believed to be native to the Atlantic coast of tropical America and the Caribbean region, it is now rather widespread throughout the tropical and subtropical coasts of both hemispheres. Recently it has been reported inland in Rajasthan, India, by Hingorani & Gaur (Indian Forester, 91 (5), 293: 1965).

The Rajasthan locality is Kuchaman, 27°10′ N, 74°54′ E and about 370 miles from the nearest coast: it was collected here in July 1959. As the inland spread of this species may be of interest it seems desirable to record its occurrence in the Peshawar district of north west Pakistan, 34° N, 71°40′ E and 670 miles from the sea. Here it is well established on low lying ground near the Kabul river, even on the river bank itself. Under intense insolation the bank of a fresh-water river can be saline, due to the constant evaporation of water leaving salt to accumulate at the surface. In one locality *Suaeda fruticosa* Forsk., another halophyte, was growing nearby and there is no doubt that where *Heliotropium curassavicum* was growing near Peshawar the habitat was always saline. On the other hand its distribution (it was only seen in 3 places) was much less than that of the saline habitats, or even of *Suaeda*. Whether this indicates fairly recent immigration remains to be seen.

Heliotropium curassavicum is a bushy herb about a foot high. The flowers are white or with the faintest flush of blue; the glaucous blue-green leaves turn first brown and then black in the press more quickly than any other plant I know.

NW PAKISTAN: Peshawar, 8 miles out on the Charsadda road, bank of Kabul river, 18 iv 1958, *Burtt* B. 570; a little further on, near Shahalam bridge, in old arable land, 6 vii 1958, *Burtt* B. 967; also seen on sandy roadside near Gulozai, between Peshawar and Kabul river. Specimens are at Edinburgh and at Pakistan Forest Research Institute, Peshawar.