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SHORT COMMUNICATION

First record of *Sphenophorus placidus vestitus* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae: Dryophthorinae) in Cyprus

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Summary The Nearctic weevil *Sphenophorus placidus vestitus* Chittenden, 1904, an alien pest which is known to infest turfgrasses is reported for the first time on the island of Cyprus. A single specimen was collected from Famagusta (Ammochostos), Protaras in 2012. The species distribution and possible economic impacts are shortly discussed. A checklist for the alien Dryophthorinae of Cyprus is presented.

Additional keywords: alien species, Eastern Mediterranean, island invasions, Rhynchophorini, Sphenophorina

The subfamily Dryophthorinae consists of 1200 species in 152 genera which are widespread throughout the globe and divided in five tribes: Cryptodermatini, Dryophthorini, Orthognathini, Rhynchophorini and Stromboscerini (Oberprieler *et al*., 2014). The tribe Rhynchophorini includes some of the most notorious alien to Europe beetles, attacking woody monocotyledons, such as *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus* (Olivier, 1790) and *Diocalandra frumenti* (Fabricius, 1801) infesting palm-trees, *Scyphophorus acupunctatus* Gyllenhal, 1838 mainly associated with agaves, and representatives of the genus *Sitophilus* Schoenherr, 1838 being common stored product pests (Sauvard *et al*., 2010).

Only six species of the genus *Sphenophorus* Schönherr, 1838 are distributed in the Western Palearctic, namely, *S. abbreviatus* (Fabricius, 1787), *S. meridionalis* (Gyllenhal, 1838), *S. parumpunctatus* (Gyllenhal, 1838), *S. piceus* (Pallas, 1776), *S. striatopunctatus* (Goeze, 1777) and the alien *S. placidus vestitus* (Chittenden, 1904) [=syn. *S. venatus vestitus* (Say, 1832)] (Alonso-Zarazaga *et al*., 2017; Prena, 2018). Up to date, out of these species only three have been found to inhabit Cyprus (*S. abbreviatus*, *S. piceus* and *S. striatopunctatus*) (Alonso-Zarazaga *et al*., 2017).

Native to the Nearctic zoogeographic realm, *S. placidus vestitus* has been accidentally transported outside its native range to the Palearctic, reaching Eastern Palearctic countries such as Iraq, Japan, Korea and Qatar (Aoyagi *et al*., 1990; Yang et al., 2009; Pelletier, 2005; Aletby *et al*., 2015). In the Western Palearctic, the species has been reported in France (including Corsica) (Orousset *et al*., 2008; INPN 2021), Greece (Korotyaev and Apt, 2018), Morocco (Pelletier, 2005; Alonso-Zarazaga and Sánchez-Ruiz, 2009), and Spain (including Canary Islands) (Alonso-Zarazaga and Sánchez-Ruiz, 2009). This is the first record for *S. placidus vestitus* in Cyprus.

A single specimen was collected alive in Cyprus, Famagusta (Ammochostos), Paralimni, Protaras (35.0205 °N, 34.0516 °E), 15.vii.2012, 0 m alt., within 10-20 m from the coast, on the surface of the sea (Fig. 1). The specimen was identified by C. Makris using the identification key of Alonso-Zarazaga and Sánchez-Ruiz (2009) and its identification was later confirmed by Mr G. Kakiopou-

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los. The specimen is deposited in the private collection of C. Makris.

This record constitutes the first report on *S. placidus vestitus* from the island. The circumstances under which the specimen was collected do not permit any identification of host-plants or other ecological parameters. However, as Protaras is a famous touristic resort situated along the coastline which maintains open areas covered by imported turfgrass, the specimen most probably originated from the coast of Protaras. As the main introduction pathway for the species has been related to the import of turfgrasses (Aletby *et al*., 2015), an accidental introduction to the island via the horticultural pathway is hypothesised.

Sphenophorus placidus vestitus has been identified as a major pest of turfgrasses in both its native range and invaded countries, commonly found in golf courses (Hatsukade, 1997; Yang *et al*., 2009; León-García *et al*., 2012) and orchardgrass (Kuhn *et al*., 2013). The distribution of the species within Cyprus, the presence of established populations and any adverse economic impact on the island are currently unknown, as the presented specimen stands out as the sole individual of *S. placidus vestitus* detected on the island. Nevertheless, given the extensive coverage of urban and semi-urban sites in Cyprus with turfgrass (e.g., golf courses, football fields, hotels, municipal parks and other tourist sites), *S. placidus vestitus* could potentially inflict a serious economic burden towards the maintenance of turfgrasses in the tourism industry, such as hotels and sports facilities creating yellow spots due to the drying of lawn (Alonso-Zarazaga and Sánchez-Ruiz, 2009; Aletby *et al*., 2015).

Sphenophorus placidus vestitus raises the number of non-native weevils of the subfamily Dryophthorinae (tribe Rhynchophorini) in Cyprus to 7 species, namely: *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus* (Olivier, 1790) (Kontodimas *et al*., 2006); *Scyphophorus acupunctatus* Gyllenhal, 1838, (Vassilliou and Kitsis, 2015); *Sitophilus granarius* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Georghiou, 1977); *Sitophilus oryzae* Schoenherr, 1838 (Georghiou, 1977); *Sitophilus sculpturatus* (Gyllenhal, 1838) (Georghiou, 1977); *Sitophilus zeamais* Motschulsky, 1855 (Gözüaçık *et al*., 2015); *Sphenophorus venatus vestitus* Chittenden, 1904 (present study).

Figure 1. Habitus of *Sphenophorus placidus vestitus* Chittenden, 1904. Photo C. Makris.

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ΣΥΝΤΟΜΗ ΑΝΑΚΟΙΝΩΣΗ

Πρώτη καταγραφή του *Sphenophorus placidus vestitus* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae: Dryophthorinae) στην Κύπρο

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Περίληψη Το Βορειοαμερικανικό σκαθάρι *Sphenophorus placidus vestitus* Chittenden, 1904, ένα ξενικό έντομο που είναι γνωστό ότι προσβάλλει χλοοτάπητες, αναφέρεται για πρώτη φορά στην Κύπρο. Ένα μοναδικό δείγμα συλλέχθηκε από την Αμμόχωστο, στον Πρωταρά το 2012. Γίνεται αναφορά στη διασπορά του εντόμου και τις πιθανές οικονομικές επιπτώσεις. Παρουσιάζεται μια συνοπτική λίστα με τα ξενικά είδη Dryophthorinae της Κύπρου.

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