

SHORT NOTES

Notes on Recent Observations of Rare Longhorn Beetle *Tragosoma depsarium* (LINNAEUS, 1767) (Coleoptera, Cerambycidae) in the Slītere National Park, Latvia

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The longhorn beetle *Tragosoma depsarium* (Fig. 1) has been recently discovered in the Slītere National park situated in the NW part of Latvia. Initially, numerous fresh exit-holes of *T. depsarium* were found on old barkfree pine logs in a mosaic landscape composed of patches of burned pine-dominated forests and surrounding wetlands. Species identity of exit-holes was verified according to description given by B. Ehnström and R. Axelsson (2002) and beetle fragments found in one exit-hole. In order to obtain more conclusive data on the presence of this nocturnal beetle species in the studied area, a mobile light trap was used during seven nights in July in direct vicinity of previously known logs with exit-holes. One specimen of *T. depsarium* was observed in 12.07.2008. According to current knowledge and data published in Latvian Red Book (Spuris 1998) particularly, this is the first observation of a live specimen of *T. depsarium* in Latvia during the period of the last 80 years.

T. depsarium has a boreal distribution, and during recent decades this saproxylic species depending on large coniferous deadwood (Wikars 2004) has disappeared in Northern Europe from many areas with intense forest management (Ehnström 2007). This is an extremely rare species known only from few recent localities in Latvia (Spuris 1998, Telnov 2004). Furthermore, till now all actual records on *T. depsarium* were related only to the findings of beetle fragments both in place of larval development in old pine logs, and in nest of the European Roller *Coracias garrulous*

(Telnov, Kalniņš 2003), which feeds on large invertebrates. The inventory of woodland key-habitats in Latvia has yielded some further fragmentary data on the distribution of this species, as species-specific exit-holes have been found in several places across all the country (woodland-key habitat database of State Forest Service). However, these inventory data obtained mostly by non-entomologists require further verification. Considering limited distribution, *T. depsarium* has been included in the Data Red Book of Latvia (Spuris 1998) and is also protected according to the national legislation (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers Nr. 396 adopted on November 14, 2000 "List of Specially Protected Species and Species with Exploitation Limits", and Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers Nr. 45 adopted on January 30, 2001 "Establishment, Protection and Management of Micro-reserves"). Furthermore, this species of longhorn beetles has been included also in the list of indicator species of woodland key-habitats and can be considered as typical and characteristic element of old boreal coniferous forests (Ek et al. 2002, Wikars 2004), which are priority protected habitats according to the European Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Kabucis 2004).

Considering rarity and conservation status of *T. depsarium*, there is an urgent need to explore various aspects of ecological requirements of this cerambycid species. Preliminary studies carried out in Slītere

National Park show that *T. depsarium* prefers clearly sun-exposed pine logs situated directly on the ground in dry patches, but inhabits also tree trunks elevated above the ground in wet patches with more dense ground vegetation. Despite of large numbers of fresh exit-holes found in a number of localities in Slītere National Park, there is no data on the presence of *T. depsarium* outside of the strictly protected burned area of Bažu bog. Hopefully, ongoing ecological studies on this rare saproxylic species will provide useful information for its protection in Latvia.

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Figure 1. Imago of *Tragosoma depsarium*, a rare longhorn beetle species depending on large coniferous deadwood (photo: V. Spunĝis).