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Aegithus clavicornis (Linnaeus) (Coleoptera: Erotylidae)
in the Dominican Republic

Sardis Medrano-Cabral

Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Agropecuarias y Forestales (IDIAF)
C/ Rafael Augusto Sánchez no. 89
Ens. Evaristo Morales
Santo Domingo, D.N., República Dominicana

Ruth H. Bastardo

Instituto de Investigaciones Botánicas y Zoológicas (IIBZ)
Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo (UASD)
Zona Universitaria, Santo Domingo, D.N., República Dominicana

Paul E. Skelley

Florida State Collection of Arthropods
Florida Department of Agriculture - DPI1911 SW 34th St., P. O. Box 147100
Gainesville, FL 32614-7100, USA

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Sardis Medrano-Cabral

Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Agropecuarias y Forestales (IDIAF)
C/Rafael Augusto Sánchez no. 89
Ens. Evaristo Morales
Santo Domingo, D.N., República Dominicana

Ruth H. Bastardo

Instituto de Investigaciones Botánicas y Zoológicas (IIBZ)
Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo (UASD)
Zona Universitaria, Santo Domingo, D.N., República Dominicana

Paul E. Skelley

Florida State Collection of Arthropods
Florida Department of Agriculture - DPI
1911 SW 34th St., P. O. Box 147100
Gainesville, FL 32614-7100, USA

Abstract. Establishment of fungus beetles (Coleoptera: Erotylidae) in new isolated countries is rare. We report *Aegithus clavicornis* (Linnaeus) for the first time from the Dominican Republic, representing the first true record for this genus from the Greater Antilles.

Introduction

Pleasing fungus beetles (Erotylidae: Erotylinae) are well-known beetles that feed on basidiomycete fungi; for example, bracket fungi that grow on dead wood. With the exception of a few species that are known stored-product pests (Savary 1995), introduction and establishment of these beetles into new isolated countries are rare. However, we recently discovered one such occurrence and herein document it.

Within the Erotylidae, members of *Aegithus* Fabricius can be recognized by their large, globose body shape. Within the genus, *Aegithus clavicornis* (Linnaeus) is readily distinguished its hemispherical black body with orangish-red elytra and abdomen (similar looking species have a black abdomen). *Aegithus clavicornis* is widespread in tropical America from Mexico to Argentina. Because of their larger body size (length = 10.5-13.0 mm) and bright colors, specimens are easily seen and frequently collected. Larvae of *A. clavicornis* have been described by Teixeira and Casari (1998).

In the West Indies, *A. clavicornis* has been found only on Grenada (Gorham 1898, Leng and Mutchler 1914, Woodruff et al. 1998), where we suspect it occurs naturally. An old record for *A. clavicornis* from Dominica (Leng and Mutchler 1917) is probably based on a misidentification of *Iphichlus suturalis* (Lacordaire). No specimen of *A. clavicornis* has been examined from any West Indian island other than Grenada nor could Leng and Mutchler's material be located at the U. S. National Museum of Natural History (T. Nuhn, pers. comm.), where the specimens were reportedly deposited. Thus, *A. clavicornis* is previously unknown from the Greater Antilles and most of the Lesser Antilles.

Recently, specimens of *A. clavicornis* were collected at two localities in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic with the following label data: Los Alcarrizos, Santo Domingo Prov. Centro de Tecnologías Agrícolas (CENTA), La Isabela, 18°32'26.2"N, 069°59'34.8"W, 6 m, 23-VI-2008 [1 ex., CENTA]; Engombe, Santo Domingo Prov., 18°27.069'N, 69°59.895'W, 79 m, 21.XI.2007, R. Bastardo, G. de los Santos, E. Montero [1 ex., IIBZ]; Urb. Don Gregorio, Pantoja, Santo Domingo, 18°31.566'N, 70°00.432'W, 41 m, 18.X.2008, R. Bastardo [1 ex., IIBZ]. These specimens represent a **New Country and Island Record**. These localities are near densely populated areas. Figure 1 shows the specimens listed just prior to collection on the host, *Earliella scabrosa* (Persoon) Gilbertson and Ryvardeen (Polyporaceae), a shelf fungus with a cosmopolitan distribution.

Collecting efforts in Hispaniola have increased over the past 30 years. Yet, these represent the first known specimens of an *Aegithus* from Hispaniola. Being previously unknown and recently collected in



Figure 1. *Aegithus clavicornis* (Linnaeus) on *Earliella scabrosa* (Persoon) Gilbertson and Ryvarden.

populated areas suggests a recent arrival. Such dispersal and establishment could have happened naturally, but it is more likely that the beetles were brought from the mainland on shipments of unprocessed wood or through some other human-aided transportation.

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