

New Data on the Distribution and Ecology of *Rhagiosoma madagascariense* (Heyden, 1877) (Coleoptera, Chrysomelidae: Sagrinae)

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Abstract—*Rhagiosoma madagascariense* (Heyden, 1877) is recorded for the first time from the former Toliara Province in Southwestern Madagascar. Description of the habitat and photographs of the live and collection specimens are presented.

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Fig. 1. *Rhagiosoma madagascariense* (Heyd.), male (© K.V. Markarov).

During the expedition to Madagascar as part of the Makay Natural Project organized by the association “Naturevolution” in early 2011, *Rhagiosoma madagascariense* (Heyden, 1877) (Fig. 1), a poorly known species of the primitive leaf-beetle subfamily Sagrinae, strikingly similar to the members of the well-known cerambycid genus *Rhagium* F., was recorded for the first time in the former Toliara Province (the Makay Massif). The beetles were collected in a dry forest dominated by *Cordia mixa* L. (Boraginaceae) near Mangoky River (Fig. 2). The soil in the forest was covered with a thick layer of leaf litter with the fruits of *C. mixa* (Fig. 3). During the day, the beetles were occasionally found on the forest undergrowth (Figs. 4, 5), but with the onset of twilight and at night they appeared in mass and actively moved, probably attracted by the light in the camp. Many individuals climbed over the expeditioners’ legs and clothes (Gnezdilov, 2015).

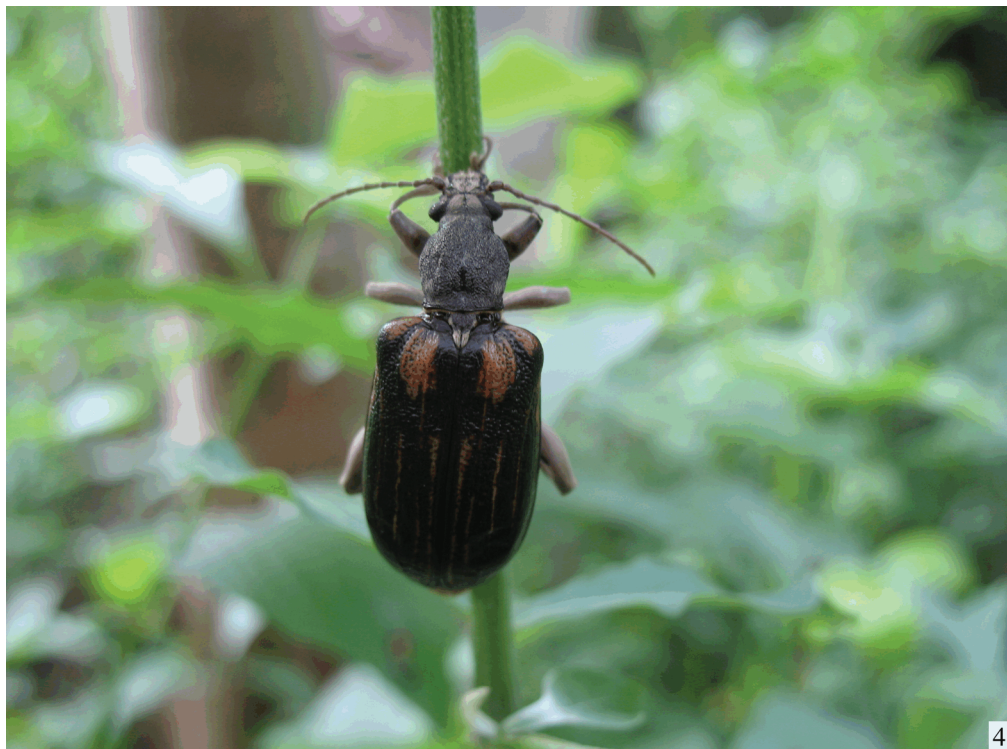
The occurrence of a very primitive chrysomelid in great numbers in a secondary habitat dominated by an introduced (and often cultivated) tree gives rise to a hope for preservation of this and other relict species or those with a very limited distribution in the refuges of a type supposedly sharply different from those native to them.



Fig. 2. Dry forest with *Cordia mixa* L. (© V.M. Gnezdilov).



Fig. 3. Soil in the forest with leaf litter and the fruits of *Cordia mixa* L. (© V.M. Gnezdilov).



Figs. 4, 5. *Rhagiosoma madagascariense* (Heyd.) females in the forest (© V.M. Gnezdilov).

This is the first record of *Rh. madagascariense* from Southwestern Madagascar. The species was known only from Antsiranana Province in the northern part of Madagascar (Sekerka, 2007). The identification is based on the illustrations in the paper of Sekerka (2007); no material from other parts of Madagascar has been examined.

The examined specimens are deposited in the Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, Russia.

Family **CHRYSOMELIDAE**

Subfamily **Sagrinae**

Rhagiosoma madagascariense (Heyden, 1877)
(Figs. 1, 4, 5)

Material. 5 ♂, 1 ♀, **Madagascar, Toliara Province**, Massif du Makay, forêt d'Ambalamanga Sud, 157 m, 21°40.493'S, 44°59.603'E, 17–18.I.2011 (V.M. Gnezdilov).

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This article was originally submitted by the authors in English and is first published here.

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