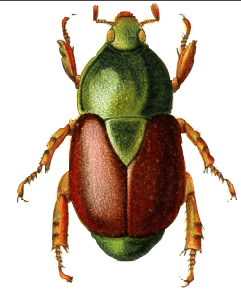


SCARABS



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Book Review:

A Monograph of the Aphodiini Inhabiting the United States and Canada (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae: Aphodiinae)

by Andrew Smith

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Gordon, R. D. and P. E. Skelley. 2007. A monograph of the Aphodiini inhabiting the United States and Canada (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae: Aphodiinae). *Memoirs of the American Entomological Institute* 79: 1-580. ISBN 1-887988-23-0. Price: \$150. Available from the American Entomological Institute.

How many species of *Aphodius* are there in North America? That question was very difficult to answer with any degree of certainty until Robert Gordon and Paul Skelley published this thick tome covering all species of Aphodiini occurring in North America. Gordon had published a key to the eastern species of *Aphodius* back in 1983 but there were still many questions about western species. A monograph of the Aphodiini inhabiting the United States and Canada deals with all of these taxa plus everything else classified in the

tribe Aphodiini. There are 252 species of Aphodiini that occur in North America – the majority of which occur in the Great Plains and west.

I can't get too far into this review before mentioning the current state of affairs with Aphodiini classification. Historically, the vast majority of Aphodiini species were placed in the genus *Aphodius*. Within *Aphodius*, there was a large but haphazard array of poorly defined subgenera. Most of these subgenera were Eurocentric with taxa from the rest of the world shoehorned into whatever group seemed to fit (and many non-European authors simply ignored *Aphodius* subgenera). Then in 2001, three European authors (Dellacasa, Bordat, and Dellacasa) decided to elevate all of the 100+ *Aphodius* subgenera to the generic level. Their reasons for making this monumental change in classification were poorly



Dr. Andrew Smith: President of SOLA, Moderator of the Scarabs Discussion Group, and *Platycoelia* expert.

defined and obscure, but these changes did gain traction with other authors jumping on board in the ensuing years. Aphodiini classification has been quite chaotic over the past seven years with some authors using the new classification and others opting for the more traditional view of *Aphodius* encompassing the vast majority of the tribe. With this monograph on North American Aphodiini, Gordon and Skelley have vaulted the North American species firmly into the former camp recognizing 54 genera (including 20 new genera!). In contrast, back in 2002 when *American Beetles* was published, the North American Aphodiini consisted of only six genera. The change is not simply a wholesale change in rank from subgenus to genus - Gordon and Skelley have actually placed the vast majority of North American species into new generic groupings (new genera and new combinations). The colossal scale of

this classification shift cannot be understated! In the introduction to this volume, the authors skillfully navigate through this classification minefield by giving a carefully crafted and thought-out explanation for their adaptation of the new system (reinforced in *Scarabs* 28: 11-13). After reading their explanation, I found myself somewhat disarmed in looking for ways to rebuke their bold decision to undertake this exercise in super-splitting. Will this new classification system last? Future aphodiine taxonomists will need to ponder and judge this question. My suspicion is that the pendulum will eventually swing back to lumping and some of these genera will disappear. However, I do agree that the old concept of *Aphodius* was far too inclusive and I strongly doubt that we will ever go back to the other extreme of the lumping/splitting spectrum with this group.

As an identification guide, I was thoroughly impressed with this volume! The generic key is very easy to use and the characters used are generally discrete and easily interpreted using a single specimen in most cases. The comprehensive accompanying illustrations are also a tremendous help in successfully navigating through the generic and species keys. I keyed out my entire North American Aphodiini collection and found that I got to the correct genus on the first try almost every time. The species keys are also fairly easy to use although for some it will be necessary to dissect genitalia, etc. Often the

information found in the species treatments will help narrow down possible candidates for some of the more difficult species. The greatest accomplishment of this book may be that it will make species identification of this tribe accessible to all. Anyone with this book and a bit of patience and resolve will have all the tools they need to start identifying their North American aphodines to species.

In addition to the keys, descriptions, and illustrations standard in any thorough taxonomic treatment, this volume contains several value-added sections. Of particular note is the extensive section on the natural history of North American Aphodiini. Most non-experts might be surprised to see that the bulk of the North American native Aphodiini species are not simply generalist dung beetles, but actually have very specific associations with “host” species (mainly mammals). The dependence on these hosts required morphological and behavioral specializations to match the natural history and habitat requirements of the hosts. Host species include tree squirrels, pocket gophers, prairie dogs, ground squirrels, groundhogs, mice, kangaroo rats, pack rats, and even gopher tortoises and ants. Detailed collecting tips are given and include everything from the standard light traps and pitfall traps to more exotic techniques such as burrow scraping and treading. A backhoe is even figured for those who might use a chainsaw to prune the rose bushes.



Our proofreader Jennifer proudly displaying her personal copy of the Gordon and Skelley monograph.

A large number of new names are validated in this book. Some of my favorite names include the genus *Oscarinus* (named after Oscar Cartwright) and the species *Geomyphilus geronimo* (named after the Apache warrior). I suspect that the latter name can also be an exclaimed utterance when these rare beasts are discovered in collections or in the field. I also got a beverage-spraying belly laugh out of the new species name *Irrasinus dumasi* (congeneric with the previously named *Irrasinus stupidus*). *Irrasinus dumasi* was allegedly formed in honor of “Alexandre Dumas, the author of various literary classics such as *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *The Three Musketeers*.” I think that you would have to be a real dumb-ass to believe that story though! Another new genus, *Cryptoscatomaseter* (try fitting that on a little aphodiine-sized det label!) means the “cryptic dung chewer.” *Cryptoscatomaseter* is actually now the largest genus of North American Aphodiini

with 27 species. I did notice that *Oscarinus welderi*, *Ballucus bruneau*, *Dellacasiellus humboldti*, *Xeropsamobeus mohavei*, *Xeropsamobeus padrei*, and *Scabrostomus kerni* were named after the Welder Wildlife Refuge in Texas, Bruneau State Park in Idaho, Humboldt County in Nevada, Mohave County in Arizona, South Padre Island in Texas, and Kern County in California respectively. A more grammatically correct *welderensis*, *brunensis*, *humboldtensis*, etc. would have probably been more appropriate since the “i” ending indicates that it was named after a person rather than a place (even if the places were originally named after people).

It is hard to find anything significant deficiencies in such a detailed and well-written book by two of the leading taxonomists on this group. The over 1,000 illustrations are generally far superior relative to most other comparable works. Most illustrations are superb Automontage and SEM photographs, but there are also numerous genitalia and epipharynx line drawings of varying quality.

As a cataloguer, one complaint

I have is the lack of complete synonymy lists for the adventive Palaearctic species. One can find this information in the recently published scarab volume from the *Catalogue of Palaearctic Coleoptera* series but it would have been nice to see all of the synonymies relevant to North American species within a single reference.

My overall recommendation is that anyone who is reading this newsletter should order a copy of *A monograph of the Aphodiini inhabiting the United States and Canada*. No matter what your opinion is of shattering *Aphodius* into dozens of separate genera, this is a tremendous volume packed with information on each species and this will be the standard for Aphodiini identification for many decades to come. Your library will be seriously inadequate without this book!

Oh, back to the question posed at the beginning of this review – there is now only one species of *Aphodius* occurring in North America (the adventive *Aphodius fimetarius*). George Horn might be rolling in his grave!

Editors' Note: We wanted to add that Paul Skelley was extremely thorough in researching this monograph. He contacted us in hopes of tracking down the elusive Jim Saulnier (pronounced "Soan-yay") who has undoubtedly dug up more woodrat and gopher nests than any living human. The wealth of biological information presented in the book is testament to the fact that Paul succeeded. But what about Jim Saulnier? What is it like to collect with him? To learn more about the man who has successfully dug out and completely dissected and mapped out somewhere between 150 and 170 gopher nests out of at least 300, please see the following article.



Collecting with the Legendary Jim Saulnier

by Editors Rich and Barney



In February, 1992, Rich, Barney and Jim Saulnier traveled to the area of Crucifixion Thorns, Yuha Desert, Imperial County, California, in search of *Aphodius* in gopher burrows. This is the area where Editor Barney studied *Bolbocerastes regalis*, mentioned in *Scarabs* #10, pp. 4-6. A few gopher pushups were found, but none had nest detritus, indicating the nest was nearby. So, we followed our only lead: a foraging tunnel. This tunnel gradually got deeper over a run of about 100 feet!



The starting point of our digging trails off the edge of the photo, far into the distance, and we are only knee deep at this point!



While digging down to the nesting chamber, it is a good idea to stuff a plastic trash bag into the tunnel, as cave ins are unavoidable.



“Rich! I know you are down there somewhere!”



Still only elbow deep, the nest has still not been unearthed.



Rich and Jim taking a break from the digging.



At the level of the nest, Jim carefully examines its contents.



An unfortunate victim of our research.



At the end of a long afternoon, the holes and trenches are filled back in, and *Dellacasiellus glamisensis* has been confirmed as an inquiline in gopher nests.

Winners - Horniest Beetle Contest

by The Editors and The Staff (Sue, Charissa, Yvette, Valerie, Jennifer, Sonja, Anne, Tammy, Cheree and Cindy)

The results of our very first contest are in. Admittedly, this was a tough contest to enter. Who has the time to take hunt down specimens, take a photograph or two, and send it in?

The answer is, not many. But those who did enter were amply awarded for their efforts.

Olivier Décobert, who inspired this contest thing, was the first to enter. For the inspiration, Olivier was awarded not only the autographed portrait of Cheree seen in *Scarabs* #28, but a second *special* prize. Also receiving both prizes was Trond Larsen, who sent in the most beautiful horned scarab; Conrad Gillet, who sent the most bizarre horned scarabs; Ron Cave, whose *Megasoma* photo showed us the other meaning of horny; Brett Ratcliffe, who sent us the photo of The Horniest Scarab Collector and scariest beetle; and Blaine Mathison. The staff settled on Blaine's *Dynastes* image as the absolute horniest beetle.

So, in this contest, everyone was a winner, receiving **two** prizes! What is the *special* prize? Why, it is an autographed 8 x 10 rendition of the image of our curator Cheree you see on this page.

The editors did not want to award this portrait, even as a second prize, but were overruled by The Staff. The reason was that the *Scarabs* logo (the most important component of any portrait) is not visible in this pose.

Thank You! to all who entered. For details of our second contest, kindly see page 22.



The alternate image of Cheree the editors do not like. Why? See text!



Coelosis biloba. Photo submitted by Ron Cave.



Speaking of Ron Cave, this photo of Ron in México was submitted by Brett Ratcliffe. Hands down, this wins the coveted “Horniest Scarab Collector Award.”



Megasoma elephas. Photo submitted by Ron Cave.

The five images on this page are from Olivier Décobert (FRANCE), the man who inspired this contest.



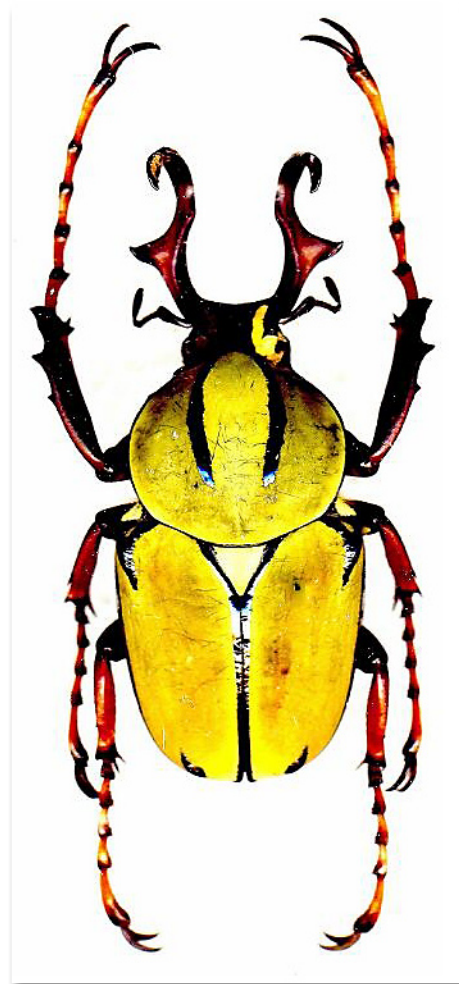
Chalcosoma atlas.



Dynastes neptunus.



Megasoma actaeon.



Dicranocephalus wallichi.



Phanaeus demon.



Trond Larsen submitted these two images of *Coprophanaeus lancifer*, certainly one of the most beautiful horned scarabs.



This image of *Dynastes hercules* was sent by Blaine Mathison. Blaine writes this is "obviously" the horniest scarab. Our staff agreed.

The following 11 photographs were sent in by Conrad Gillet (UNITED KINGDOM). Conrad wishes to thank Harry Taylor of the Natural History Museum Photographic Unit for the fine photographs.



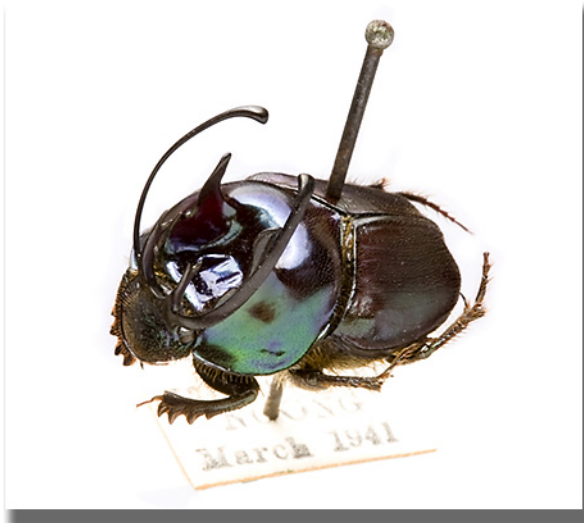
SCARABAEINAE, Onthophagini, *Onthophagus (Proagoderus) gibbiramus* d'Orbigny, 1902.



SCARABAEINAE, Onthophagini, *Onthophagus (Proagoderus) rangifer* Klug, 1855.



SCARABAEINAE, Onthophagini, *Onthophagus (Proagoderus) elgoni* d'Orbigny, 1915.



SCARABAEINAE, Onthophagini, *Onthophagus (Proagoderus) brucei* Reiche, 1847.



SCARABAEINAE, Phanaeini, *Sulcophanaeus velutinus* (Murray, 1856).



TRICHIINAE, *Pantodinus klugi* Burmeister, 1847.



GEOTRUPIDAE, Lethrinae, *Lethrus (Ceratodirus) gladiator* Reitter, 1897.



GEOTRUPIDAE, Geotrupinae, *Typhoeus typhoeoides* Fairmaire, 1852.



BOLBOCERATIDAE, *Elephantomus proboscideus* Schreibers, 1802.



GEOTRUPIDAE, Geotrupinae, *Enoplotrupes sharpi* Jordan & Rothschild, 1893.



DYNASTINAE, Agaocephalini, *Aegopsis curvicornis* Burmeister, 1847.



Brett Ratcliffe sent this image of what is certainly the most terrifying and dangerous horned beetle.



Brett also submitted this photo of one of the major male *Dynastes* in his collection.

Brett Ratcliffe In the News Again

Brett Ratcliffe's new species of rhinoceros beetle, *Megaceras briansaltini* (<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/entomologypapers/92/>), has been selected by the International Institute for Species Exploration at Arizona State University as one of the top 10 species described in 2007. It is the only insect so designated. Rhinoceros beetles are named for the horn-like structures on their heads and *M. briansaltini*'s is unique, because it most closely resembles that of Dim, the blue rhinoceros beetle in the Disney/Pixar animated film, *A Bug's Life*.

"It's a rare instance of nature imitating art," said the institute's Web site (<http://species.asu.edu/topten2008.php>). "The international committee of taxon experts who made the selection of the top 10 from the thousands of species described in calendar year 2007 is helping draw attention to biodiversity, the field of taxonomy, and the importance of natural history museums and botanical gardens in a fun-filled way," says Professor Quentin Wheeler, an entomologist and director of ASU's International Institute for Species Exploration.



In Past Years - XIII 1970-1974

by Henry F. Howden

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Later, in mid July, I left for Australia with a stop in Hawaii. In the Hawaiian Islands there is a single native, endemic Scarabaeoidea which is known only from the island of Kauai. It is *Apterocycles*, a flightless lucanid, only rarely collected in recent years. One reason for my stopover was that I hoped to collect it. So one morning an entomologist from the Bishop Museum and I flew from Honolulu to Kauai, rented a car and drove up Waimea Canyon Road to Kokee State Park at about 3,500 feet. It was reported to be one of the wetter spots on earth. Every time a cloud came over, it drizzled and the most sun we had at any one time was about 20 minutes. The scrub forest consisted mainly of Koa trees, with a fair number of decaying logs on the wet ground. Turning these produced numerous (non-native) mouse nests with many pieces of the lucanid! Four hours of collecting finally yielded a pair of intact lucanids, so the mice hadn't gotten them all. That was then; one wonders how long before the mice get them all? I then spent several days collecting near Honolulu, then flew on to Australia. When I arrived in Sydney, I asked the taxi driver to take me to a hotel that my travel agent had supposedly booked for me, only to be informed that it had burned down two years ago! So I stayed for the first night in an expensive hotel in the center of Sydney. For

a minute I thought I had gone the wrong direction. In front of the hotel was Hyde Park, which was full of English sparrows, starlings, and sea gulls; then I realized that there were no eucalyptus trees in England. Before flying on to Perth in West Australia (WA), I spent half a day at the Australian Museum which was just on the other side of Hyde Park. Then on to Perth where I met Eric Matthews on July 26, 1972. We had arranged to go on a trip to WA for a month before the International Congress of Entomology held that year in Canberra. Eric, who worked in the South Australian Museum, had a museum station wagon and most of the equipment needed for camping. We did require a tent, so we went to the Boy Scout store in Perth and bought a "two man" tent. That done and with enough food for a week, we headed north up the coast. Our first stop was to eat lunch in a small patch of forest. I had my first real introduction to Australia when I heard an awful racket in the bushes that sounded like a very sick burro; it was my first encounter with a kookaburra, sometimes called "the laughing jackass".

We gradually worked our way up the coast and slightly inland. In WA, the southwest and along the coast have a Mediterranean climate, wet during the Australian winter, much drier in the summer. The group of beetles I am most interested in are the geotrupines, and these are mainly



Photo 1: Camping on Peron Peninsula, Western Australia.



Photo 2: Golf course (?) near Kalbarri, WA; if one looks hard, a golfer is just visible in far back.

active when the surface of the ground is damp or wet, not when the first foot or so of soil is dry. In WA, temperature did not seem as important as moisture, since I had a few specimens come to light when frost had formed on the car windshield. Most geotrupines (Bolboceratini in Australia) had to be dug out; fortunately their burrows were easy to see on open ground. Generally they seemed to be most numerous in sandy areas, which was great until one realized that it was easy for the beetles to

dig in sand. The burrows were often 3 or 4 feet deep, some even went deeper! Eric set many pit fall traps baited with kangaroo dung, and between us we had great collecting. Camping (Photo 1) was another matter. Our “two man” tent would hold only one of us and when it rained, which occurred nearly every other day, it leaked. We tried sleeping in the car, but it was too cramped, so we slept under a tarp and were cold most nights. We went as far as the base of the Northwest Cape above Carnarvon before turning back; it was getting dry and time was getting short. On our way back we went out toward the end of the Peron Peninsula and camped. The next morning we found that we were “bogged”=stuck in deep sand. We jacked the car up, stuffed brush underneath, dug the front wheels out, all to no avail. We finally had to use our good tarp to put under the car and by using it several times got to the firmer sandy road. That left us with a leaky tarp as well as a leaky tent! But the northern part of the trip had been really productive. One of our stops was near Kalbarri and there we found out how much some Australians love their golf. We collected in a wet, disturbed area and found a can buried in an open sandy area. At first I wondered who was setting pit-fall traps. Then I saw someone dragging a golf cart in the disturbed area - it represented the local golf course (Photo 2). In the vicinity of Kalbarri and toward the south, Eric took many species of *Onthophagus* and other genera of dung beetles while I collected quantities of Bolboceratini in six genera, almost all by digging.

As we headed back, one thing bothered us. There was a gasoline (petrol) strike in South Australia (SA) and we needed to get back to the Museum in Adelaide, leave the car and fly to Canberra. We were lucky, the strike ended two days before we got to SA, so we made it across the 1000+ miles of dirt road in the Nullarbor (no trees), stopped briefly in the sand dunes at Eucla (Photo 3) and arrived safely and on time in Adelaide. The South Australian Museum in Adelaide is full of historic specimens, especially much of Lea's collection and some cotypes of Blackburn and Macleay. I am still very grateful for the support and help given me by Eric and the Museum.

From Adelaide I flew to Canberra to attend the International Congress, and along the way had a great view of the Snowy Mountains, which are snowy in the Australian winter, with enough snow for skiing, etc. At the airport in Canberra those of us attending the Congress were met and assigned taxis to take us to our residence in the dorms of the Australian National University (ANU). Three of us were placed in one taxi, one of us was a Barron interested in Lepidoptera. He was a rather portly English gentleman and was not used to the informal ways of the Aussie taxi drivers. As we neared the center of Canberra he asked the driver "What building is that, my man?" The driver took offence to the "my man" and when it was repeated several times I could see trouble brewing. So I came up with the thought (one of



Photo 3: Coastal sand dunes at Eucla near western edge of Nullarbor.

my few original ones) that since the Barron didn't know, any name would do. That's the National Library I interjected, and later came up with other names like the French Embassy. The Barron thanked me for the information and I thought the taxi driver was going to give me away, as he was having a hard time not laughing. Later I learned that I was correct on the Library, but nothing else. We arrived safely at our dorm which cost each of us \$95 total for room and most meals, and settled in for a very interesting meeting. For me, meeting a number of entomologists that I had only heard of was one of the highlights of the meeting. Along with that came many different ways of doing things and various points of view. For example, should all holotypes go back to the country of origin? That has still not been settled, although rules to return types have led to restrictions in some countries (not Australia) on taking any specimens out of the country and, in my opinion, has done more harm than good. This type of argument

continued well into the evenings along with the evaporation of quantities of beer!

One day a number of us (Photo 4) were taken to Tidbinbilla, a park near Canberra, where we were introduced to kangaroos and emus and I was able to collect a few aphodiines, *Onthophagus* and one *Cryptodus*. We had a picnic lunch and there was a family with two young boys at a table next to us. They were eating hotdogs in buns, when I saw an emu coming up behind one of the boys. He leaned forward to say something to his mother, holding up his hotdog while looking the other way. Almost too quick to follow, the emu grabbed the hotdog leaving the boy holding the empty bun. The boy looked at his bun and bent forward again to tell his mother that there was no hotdog, when the emu made another grab and there was no bun! The boy realized then that something had taken it, turned around and finally saw the emu.



Photo 4: Group outing to park near Canberra, ACT; Rupert Wenzel on left, Ev Britton second from right, Bob Pope on right, and non-coleopterists.

Much yelling and consternation while the emu calmly walked away. While an emu is perhaps half the size of an ostrich, it is still large and can easily hurt or even kill a person, so it is nothing to fool with. Tame ones are a real bother. All in all we had a great day and a good Congress. On the day of the banquet the weather pulled a fast one by pouring rain, something it was not supposed to do; winter at Canberra is normally dry and cool to cold. There were no problems such as there have been at some other Congresses. I spent several days making notes on the CSIRO collection of Bolboceratini and also spent some time with Ev Britton, who worked at the British Museum in 1963, but later moved to Canberra. During my visit I made a number of new friends, had a wonderful time and left reluctantly for Ottawa on September 1. On the way back I had a four hour lay-over in Fiji and managed to collect several species of scarabs around the airport buildings; there was no security at that time! I came back to the routine of teaching for the rest of the year.

There was one incident among many which kept the teaching from getting dull. During one of my “great” lectures one of my students fell asleep and this was noticed by the 30+ other students. When the class ended my student was still snoring away, so I told the class to leave as silently as possible and told the next class on plant physiology to be quiet and please not wake my sleeping student. This was done and my student was somewhat

surprised to wake up in the middle of the botany class. I had no problems with anyone else going to sleep for the rest of the term!

In the February 1973 study break, often called the “ski week”, Anne and I took a “Theater Tour” to London. At the time, it was definitely the least expensive way to go to England, as both airfare, hotel and some allowance for theater tickets were included. We spent our days working at the British Museum (Natural History) with one day spent at Oxford seeing the Hope collection. We blew all our theater allowance to see Alec Guinness in a well known, but old theater. The seats were narrow and the leg room hardly enough for me to fit into (my height about 6 feet 2 inches). I saw one person that was about six inches taller than me and wondered how he would fit; at intermission I saw that he was in the back row with his seat folded so he was sitting on the end! I was uncomfortable and could only guess at his level of tolerance to pain; I concluded that he must have really wanted to see the play. In addition to our usual entomological work at the Museum, we learned, while having dinner with Eric Classy, that it was not proper to ask for tea at that time; I was told that it was “quite impossible” to obtain at dinner time! When we left England daffodils were just starting to bloom in London and returned to snow in Ottawa.

At the end of April, Milt Campbell of the CNC and I left to go to Santa Marta, Colombia. We had an over-night in Miami and then flew on to



Photo 5: Xeric vegetation near motel at Santa Marta, Colombia.



Photo 6: Forestry Station at 7,000 feet on north slope of Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.

Santa Marta, where we found a motel out of town on the beach near the airport. While there were lots of scrub vegetation nearby (Photo 5), we were told that the week before they had had the first rain in five months! Our black light, run near the motel, produced two scarabs and perhaps ten cerambycids that night. Santa Marta was in the rain shadow of the Sierra Madre de Santa Marta and showed this by having lots of cacti, acacia, etc. By 1 PM it was too hot for us, so we went to town and made arrangements with the forestry people at Inderana

to let us stay for two weeks at the forestry station (Photo 6) on the San Lorenzo Road at 7,000 feet. The town of San Lorenzo was at 3,000 feet with some nearby wet forest, which was very productive on the two occasions when we ran a black light there. On April 30 a supply truck (full of food) took us to the station and told us that we would be picked up in two weeks. Above San Lorenzo the road was restricted to forestry and military



Photo 7: Part of Sierra Nevada near Forestry Station - when it wasn't raining!



Photo 8: *Sphenognathus* sp. blown up to top of narrow ridge, about 8,000 feet on Sierra Nevada; one of many insects on plants at top of ridge.

traffic and vehicles with special permits. Some days nothing drove by. Milt and I looked for good patches of native forest, which were not as common as one would think since forest management seemed to mean planting non-native pines! When we did find a good location we set carrion, dung and fruit traps, as well as a Malaise trap; Milt also spent considerable time sifting leaf litter. Back at the station we also set up three Berlese funnels that Milt had for extraction of litter insects. Traps were visited regularly, but surprised us by yielding mainly species we recognized, or species close to lowland species. Apparently the mountains (Photo 7) were not old enough to have unusual genera evolve. With traps set, we routinely started up the dirt road each morning toward an elevation of about 8,000 feet where there was a level area. We collected along the way and, since the collecting was good on the roadside plants (Photo 8), it usually took us about three hours to get to the level area. Several days after we arrived, by noon or soon thereafter, it would start to rain and rain hard for most of the afternoon. By the time we got back to the station we were usually soaked. Dry clothes were handy, but our wet boots were a problem. We solved this by using one of Milt's funnels as a drier, but not without many grumbles from Milt. We ate with the workers, breakfast at 8 AM, lunch a pick up - usually a sandwich, and "dinner" at 6 PM. The "cook" ate with the rest of us and after the meal swallowed the

largest blue pill I had ever seen. When asked what it was for, he said it was for the amoeba! We could only hope that he washed regularly. The second week the camp ran out of all food except rice; so we had just rice morning, noon and night. Nothing to put on the rice, not even salt. Milt and I both lost a fair bit of weight during our stay that second week. A day before we were due to leave, two Peace Corps workers stopped by and offered us a ride down to Santa Marta; we gladly accepted. We were doubly thankful when we found out that the driver who was to pick us up had an argument with his wife, who then shot him - a so called "Colombian divorce". Back at our motel near the airport, we made arrangements for a car and the next day went to Tayrona Park,

about 21 miles northeast of Santa Marta. The Park (Photo 9) was on the north coast and out of the rain shadow, so collecting in the cut-over coastal scrub was fairly good. The "trade winds" also helped to keep it somewhat cooler, so several days were spent in the area. At night we collected near our motel. The near-by airport was supposed to shut down at 10 PM, but near midnight a number of small planes were heard to take off. One day we asked about this and were told that they were the "illegals" carrying drugs northward. Apparently they paid special airport "fees"; no one bothered them. A day later Milt and I left to return to Ottawa. Some of the results of our trip were written up in *The Coleopterists Bulletin*, volume 28, 1974.



Photo 9: Tayrona Park, north shore, out of the rain shadow that keeps Santa Marta so dry.

Funniest Collecting Experience Contest

by The Editors

Our second contest is on! The rules are the same as listed in *Scarabs* #28 (June, 2008). Send us your funniest collecting experience, even if it is just a paragraph or two. The deadline is October 30, 2008.

The top five entries, as judged by our staff, will receive this autographed, high-quality 8 X 10 of Anne (seen in *Scarabs* #17, November, 2006, and *Scarabs* #28, June, 2008), one of our trap researchers.

Editors' Note: Yes, Conrad's Dialithus magnificans in Scarabs #28 is beautiful and magnificent, but pales in comparison to the breathtaking creature goddess specimen pictured here. Don't forget to enter...getting a signed print of Anne may be easier than you think!

