The drifter that came in from the cold: First record of *Sthereus ptinoides* (E.F.Germar, 1823) (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) in Europe

Fróðskaparrit 71 (2025): 168-172

Fjakkarin, sum kom inn úr kuldanum: Fyrsta skráseting av *Sthereus ptinoides* (E.F. Germar, 1823) (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) frá Evropa

Agnes-Katharina Kreiling[1], Leivur Janus Hansen[2] & Jan Pedersen[3]

Abstract

The weevil *Sthereus ptinoides* is reported as a new record for the Faroe Islands as well as Europe. The species develops in sea-water soaked driftwood and is apparently distributed from far-east Russia to Europe in logs drifting in the ocean currents.

Úrtak

Í hesi greinini verður boðað frá fyrstu skráseting av rekatrantinum *Sthereus ptinoides*, bæði í Føroyum og í Evropa. Hetta klukkuslagið mennist í vatndruknaðum rekaviði, sum helst er komið til Føroya úr eystara parti av Russlandi.

Keywords: Weevil, Faroe Islands, beetle, driftwood.
Leitorð: Trantklukka, Føroyar, klukka, rekaviður.

[1] Department of Terrestrial Zoology, Faroe Islands National Museum, Faroe Islands. E-mail: agnes@savn.fo. Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5378-2331
[2] Department of Terrestrial Zoology, Faroe Islands National Museum, Faroe Islands. E-mail: janus@savn.fo. Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8054-2333
[3] Natural History Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen, Denmark. E-mail: japedersen@snm.ku.dk

The weevil species *Sthereus ptinoides* (E.F.Germar, 1823) (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) is newly recorded for the Faroe Islands. To our knowledge, this also represents the first record of this species in Europe. In the Faroe Islands, the species has so far been found only three times. Two specimens are located in the entomological collection of the Faroe Islands National Museum (FINM), collected on 24.07.2009 in Tórshavn, Streymoy by William Simonsen (FINM 20610) and on 23.07.2017 in Sandavágur, Vágar by the second author (FINM 20609) (Fig. 1). A third specimen, collected on 05.08.2001 in Nólsoy by Jens-Kjeld Jensen is located in the Natural History Museum of Denmark (NHMD 1787234).

Sthereus ptinoides is a Holarctic species with its main distribution on both the Asian and American shores of the North Pacific, e.g, the Aleutian Islands, Kamchatka and Sakhalin Island including Sakha Republic and Magadan Oblast (Legalov 2020). It has also been recorded on the Atlantic side of Canada (New Brunswick and Nova Scotia) (Webster et al. 2012). The beetles live in and feed on driftwood in the tidal zone which has been softened by long or frequent submergence in sea water (Dokuchaev and Korotyaev 2018). Larvae and pupae develop in tunnels in the softened wood and adults can be observed on the underside of driftwood between May and September. Since driftwood as the substrate and food source of the beetle is a stable resource and not limited to a growing season, the beetles do not show reproductive and developmental phenology but are active as soon as the mean air temperature is above freezing (Dokuchaev and Korotyaev 2018). Larval development does, however, require regular soaking in sea water.

The three specimens found in the Faroes must have originated from driftwood sources in Siberia. This is possible given that the river Lena drains large parts of the Russian Far East, including parts of Sakha Republic and Magadan Oblast, and this river has been shown to be a source of driftwood to the Faroes (Hellmann et al. 2015). The journey from Siberia, however, requires a minimum of 4-6 years according to Hellmann et al. (2015). However, the maximum buyancy time for driftwood at sea is up to 18 months (Häggblom 1982) and driftwood which has been at sea for longer than this will have been transported while frozen in sea ice (Hellmann et al. 2015). This frozen period could facilitate *Sthereus ptinoides* survival in a dormant state, either as eggs, larvae or overwintering adults.

Once the driftwood has washed ashore in the Faroes and the air temperature permits, the beetle can become active. Mean summer temperatures are slightly lower in the Faroes than in the beetle's native regions (e.g., 11.2°C in the warmest month August (Cappelen and Drost Jensen 2021) versus up to 12.7°C in August in the Ola marshes in Russia (Dokuchaev and Korotyaev 2018)) but overall, mean, maximum and minimum temperatures during the summer months are very similar. Thus, *Sthereus ptinoides* should be able to develop and reproduce in the Faroes, given that a suitable driftwood piece remains in the tidal zone.

Based on the ocean currents, occurences of the species on the northern shores of Great Britain would be possible. We did, however, not find any European records of the species in online data repositories (GBIF, NBN) and colleagues in the UK had no records to report either (Garth Foster, personal communication). We also enquired with colleagues in Iceland, where the species had not been recorded (Matthías Alfreðsson, personal communication). Shortly after, however, the species did indeed turn up in Iceland: Two specimens of *Sthereus ptinoides* were collected by Björn Hjaltason on 28.04.2025 under wood close to the sea at Hvalfjarðareyri, western Iceland (Fig. 2). The species can thus without doubt be expected to show up on Atlantic shores elsewhere in Europe.

Figure 1: The *Sthereus ptinoides* specimen which was found at the beach in Sandavágur (Vágar) on 23.07.2017. Photo: Agnes-Katharina Kreiling

Figure 2: The Icelandic record of *Sthereus ptinoides* from Hvalfjarðareyri. Photo: Björn Hjaltason

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to Björn Hjaltason for permission to use his photo of the Icelandic specimen.

References:

Cappelen, John, and C Drost Jensen. 2021. 'Climatological Standard Normals 1991-2020 – Faroe Islands'. DMI Report 21-13. Danish Meteorological Institute. www.dmi.dk/publikationer.

Dokuchaev, N. E., and B. A. Korotyaev. 2018. 'The Bionomics of the Weevil *Sthereus ptinoides* (Germar, 1824) (Coleoptera, Curculionidae) in the Northern Sea of Okhotsk Area'. *Entomological Review* 98 (9): 1159–64. https://doi.org/10.1134/S0013873818090014.

Häggblom, A. 1982. Driftwood in Svalbard as an Indicator of Sea Ice Conditions. Geografiska Annaler. Series A, Physical Geography Vol. 64, No. 1/2 (1982), pp. 81-94. https://doi.org/10.2307/520496

Hellmann, Lena, Willy Tegel, Alexander V. Kirdyanov, Ólafur Eggertsson, Jan Esper, Leonid Agafonov, Anatoly N. Nikolaev, et al. 2015. 'Timber Logging in Central Siberia Is the Main Source for Recent Arctic Driftwood'. *Arctic,*

Antarctic, and Alpine Research 47 (3): 449–60. https://doi.org/10.1657/AAAR0014-063.

Legalov, Andrei A. 2020. 'Revised Checklist of Weevils (Coleoptera: Curculionoidea Excluding Scolytidae and Platypodidae) from Siberia and the Russian Far East'. *Acta Biologica Sibirica* 6 (November):437–549. https://doi.org/10.3897/abs.6.e59314.

Webster, Reginald, Robert Anderson, Jon Sweeney, and Ian DeMerchant. 2012. 'New Coleoptera Records from New Brunswick, Canada: Anthribidae, Brentidae, Dryophthoridae, Brachyceridae, and Curculionidae, with Additions to the Fauna of Quebec, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island'. *ZooKeys* 179 (April):349–406. https://doi.org/10.3897/zookeys.179.2626.