

"Do it with Dung"

FROM THE MOUNTAINS
TO THE MURRAY

<http://northeast.landcarevic.net.au/dungbeetle>

NEWSLETTER

Issue 11: May 2010

From the results in to date, nine species were trapped (seven introduced and two native), during April. As monitoring will finish at the end of May, it would be most appreciated if you could send in any results that you have, so that they can be included in the final report and species maps.

Around the traps: (selected April results): –

Bubas bison

Site 84	42 bison	30/4	Kergunyah
Site 17	36 bison	29/4	Springhurst
Site 14	12 bison	18/4	Byawatha
Site 19	9 bison	28/4	Chiltern Valley
Site 39	8 bison	14/4	Lucyvale

Euoniticellus fulvus

Site 14	18 fulvus	5/4	Byawatha
Site 17	11 fulvus	29/4	Springhurst
Site 102	6 fulvus	27/4	Tallangatta Sth
Site 80	2 fulvus	6/4	Benambra

Euoniticellus pallipes

Site 8	36 pallipes	25/4	Corowa
Site 14	26 pallipes	5/4	Byawatha
Site 17	9 pallipes	12/4	Springhurst
Site 21	6 pallipes	15/4	Springhurst

Onitis alexis

Site 53	21 alexis	1/4	Talgarno
Site 19	4 alexis	15/4	Chiltern Valley
Site 84	2 alexis	14/4	Kergunyah
Site 85	2 alexis	18/4	Bowmans Forest

Onitis aygulus

Site 8	14 aygulus	15/4	Corowa
Site 8	10 aygulus	24/4	Corowa
Site 53	3 aygulus	1/4	Talgarno

***Onthophagus australis* (native beetle)**

Site 84	18 australis	14/4	Kergunyah
Site 39	15 australis	29/4	Lucyvale
Site 19	6 australis	28/4	Chiltern Valley

Onthophagus binodis

Site 14	21 binodis	5/4	Byawatha
Site 102	20 binodis	15/4	Tallangatta Sth

***Onthophagus pentacanthus* (native beetle)**

Site 19	1 pentacanthus	29/4	Chiltern Valley
Site 8	1 pentacanthus	24/4	Corowa

Onthophagus taurus

Site 17	10 taurus	29/4	Springhurst
Site 21	4 taurus	15/4	Springhurst
Site 72	3 taurus	15/4	Meadow Creek

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Beetles observed swarming around lights

In early April, large numbers of beetles (up to 100) were observed swarming around outside lights on a property near Springhurst. The beetles were identified as the introduced species, *Onitis aygulus*.



Onitis aygulus

Length: 20-25mm

Colour: metallic brown, mid-section dark brown – sometimes with green sheen

Males have a double spur on hind leg femur

Flys to fresh pads at dusk and dawn

The beetle's front legs were strongly serrated, suggesting that these were newly emerged beetles (older beetles have worn smooth front legs). Monitoring results indicate that this species emerges in November/December. The expected development time from egg to adult is around three months in summer, so it is likely that *O. aygulus* has two generations per year in our area. To date, this species has been largely trapped in lower rainfall areas, and is the most abundant introduced species in the Corowa region.

Mites on beetles:



In the past month, a number of people have observed clusters of small brownish-red creatures on the backs and undersides of dung beetles.

From the available information, these are phoretic mites, and use dung beetles to hitch a ride from dung pad to dung pad. The mites feed on fly eggs and larvae, and are considered beneficial. The mites are very small (around 1mm in length and width) and have eight legs.

Bubas bison Reminder

Just another reminder, if you had *B.bison* released on your property last year, please ensure that you have cattle on or near your release site, so that newly emerged beetles will have a food source.

Onitis caffer trials

As part of the project, we are running a number of species trials to assess the suitability of potential introductions. *Onitis caffer* (temperate strain) is present in limited locations in WA, and could be a suitable introduction to our region. The purpose of the *O.caffera* trials are two-fold;

1. to determine whether this species will breed successfully in our area
2. to determine whether it will assist in filling the current Spring Gap

In May 2009, a number of *O.caffera* tents were set up at Lucyvale, Kergunyah and Bruarong. Initial results showed that they were active into early Winter and showed intermittent activity up until early Spring. The activity period of the next generation will be of particular interest.

O. caffer, soil cores were set up by Chips Boucher at Lucyvale. Initial results have been mixed, with only a small number of brood balls present (8-12 from 2 pairs of beetles), and up to 50% of brood balls showing larval mortality. As of 16/5/10, we have had no beetle emergences, however inspection of brood balls has revealed fully formed beetles. We are expecting beetles to emerge in the tents in the coming weeks.



Fully formed and viable *Onitis caffer* beetle in opened brood ball

28/4/10

Photo:
Tom Croft

Mystery beetle identified!



Many thanks to Ian Proctor, Dr Marina Tyndale-Biscoe, Dr Keith Wardhaugh and Dr Tom Weir, who assisted in

identifying our mystery beetle (and came up with the same ID!).

It is: *Dasygnathus trituberculatus*, a native scarab pasture beetle that is quite common in south eastern Australia.

Bubas Bison harvesting demonstration

Here is an opportunity to participate in a harvesting demonstration. The target species is *Bubas bison*.

Thursday 27th May

4.30pm – 7.30pm (includes BBQ tea)

387 Hellhole Creek Rd., Kergunyah Vic

(Weather permitting)

4.30pm View *Bubas bison* activity in the field
Prepare & set traps

6.00pm BBQ tea

6.30pm Bring in traps, clean and sort beetles

The demonstration will be cancelled if it is raining. It is important to remember, that there is no guarantee that we will catch any beetles. Whilst this species is currently very active, there are many variables (wind, rain, temperature) that can reduce beetle activity and trap catches.

For catering purposes, please RSVP to Belinda by **Tuesday 25th May**

Phone: 02 6027 5294

e-mail: abanas@bigpond.com

Dung Beetle Identification Workshop

Bright Adult Education Centre

9 Railway Ave., Bright

Wednesday 16th June

7.15pm – 9.15pm

This is an opportunity to learn about:

- the benefits provided by dung beetles,
- how to make your own trap and
- how to identify the most common species.

Final monitoring week:

The end is near!

FINAL MONITORING WEEK:

WEEK OF 23rd MAY

Next Steering Committee Meeting:

Our final meeting will be on: **Friday 18th June**

10.00am – 11.30am (followed by lunch)

North East CMA Office, Footmark Court, Wodonga

Please RSVP to Belinda by Wed. 16th June



The "Do it with Dung – from the Mountains to the Murray" Project is funded by "Caring for our Country", managed by Kiewa Catchment Landcare Groups and supported by Ovens Landcare Network, regional Landcare Groups, DPI and NECMA. The project receives direction from a voluntary steering committee.



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