



SHORT COMMUNICATION

**First record of *Deroplax silphoides*
from the West Bank – Palestine****ELIAS NABIL HANDAL****Palestine Museum of Natural History, Bethlehem University, Bethlehem, Palestine***ABSTRACT**

This is the first report of *Deroplax silphoides* (Thunberg, 1783) (Heteroptera: Scutelleridae) in the Palestinian Territories. This species was recorded by a survey conducted by the Palestine Museum of Natural History. *D. silphoides* is known as a pest of ornamental plants. It is considered as an invasive species and its distribution and damage potential should be further studied.

KEYWORDS: *Deroplax silphoides*, invasive species, Palestine, Scutelleridae, West Bank.

The Family Scutelleridae includes 80 genera and around 500 described species (Tsai et al. 2011), with 24 species from historic Palestine (Linnavuori 1960, 1961 and 1973; Göllner-Scheiding 2006).

***Deroplax silphoides* (Thunberg, 1783)**

During a survey on the Heteropteran fauna of the Palestinian Territories, that was conducted by the Palestine Museum of Natural History, a specimen of *Deroplax silphoides* (Thunberg, 1783) was collected from a backyard garden in Beit Sahour in Bethlehem district, south of Jerusalem (N: 31° 42' 16.5342", E: 35° 13' 11.3838"). The specimen was deposited at the Palestine Museum of Natural History (PMNH5260, ♀, 14.x.2014).

Identification of the specimen was undertaken by the author following the key of Czaja (2007). The specimen was 12.3 mm in length and 7.9 mm in width (Fig. 1). The adult dorsally has two rows of black blotches on each side. The egg is oval in

shape, light green in color and covered by red spots (Novoselsky et al. 2015).

Deroplax silphoides is an Afrotropical species, with its range of distribution extending from South Africa to Somalia, and from Ethiopia to Senegal (Schouteden 1903, Göllner-Scheiding 2006). It is present in Saudi Arabia but its distribution there is little known (El-Hawagry et al. 2013). Recently, Novoselsky et al. (2015) reported this species from three localities along the Naqab Desert, Israel.

This is considered as an invasive pest of ornamental plants (Leston 1953). Additionally, it is considered as a potential pest for wheat in the Middle East, South Europe and North Africa and a potential biological control agent for devil's weed *Tribulus terrestris* L. (Zygophyllaceae) (Scott 1990). This invasive species may have reached the Palestinian territories via transport of ornamental plants or vegetables from the Naqab region.

This record in the West Bank increases the distribution range of this species into

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Mediterranean habitats. Further, more extensive surveys in the West Bank may reveal additional records and give

information on its distribution, host plants and damage.

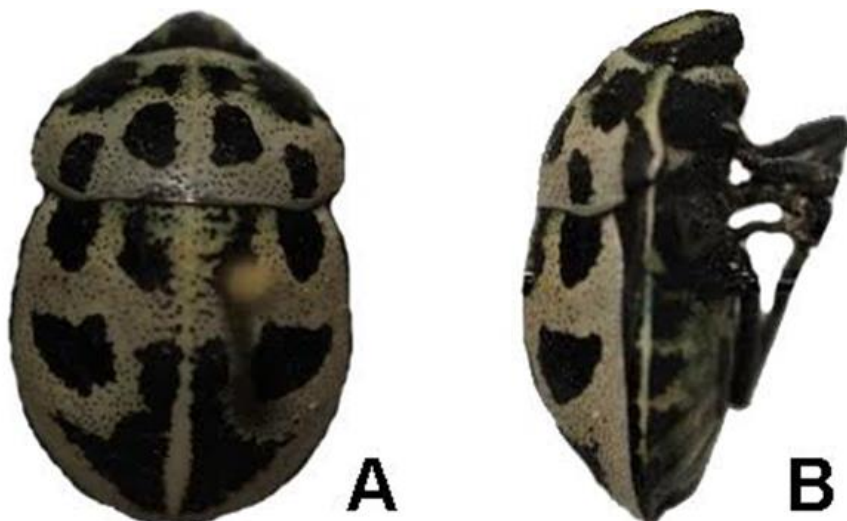


FIG. 1: Female of *Deroplax silphoides*. A: Dorsal view, B: Lateral view.

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Πρώτη καταγραφή του *Deroplax silphoides* στην Παλαιστίνη

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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Το *Deroplax silphoides* (Thunberg, 1783) (Heteroptera: Scutelleridae) καταγράφηκε για πρώτη φορά στα Παλαιστινιακά εδάφη κατά την διάρκεια δειγματοληψιών που διεξήχθησαν από το Μουσείο Φυσικής Ιστορίας της Παλαιστίνης. Το έντομο αυτό θεωρείται εχθρός των καλλωπιστικών φυτών. Περαιτέρω προσπάθειες θα πρέπει να λάβουν χώρα για την καταγραφή της εξάπλωσής του, των φυτών-ξενιστών του και της ζημιάς που πιθανώς να προκαλεί.