

# First occurrence of *Oligomerus ptilinoides* (Coleoptera: Ptinidae) in domestic premises in the UK

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**Figure 1** *O. ptilinoides* from a loft of a domestic property in Kent, during August 2020 (© Jonathan Binge, Killgerm Chemicals Ltd).

## Introduction

In 2020 the Mediterranean furniture beetle, *Oligomerus ptilinoides* (Wollaston, 1854), was identified in two domestic properties in the UK. These records are believed to represent the first identifications of *O. ptilinoides*, in the UK, outside of the museum and cultural heritage sector. These findings add to an existing UK record of *O. ptilinoides* at Hampton Court Palace from 2015, which has since been eradicated. The beetles were found in alder plywood flooring and a hazel branch from a storeroom and were eradicated in 2018 by freezing and removal of affected items (Higgs *et al.* 2019). No previous reports of *O. ptilinoides* are known from domestic premises in the UK.

## Methods

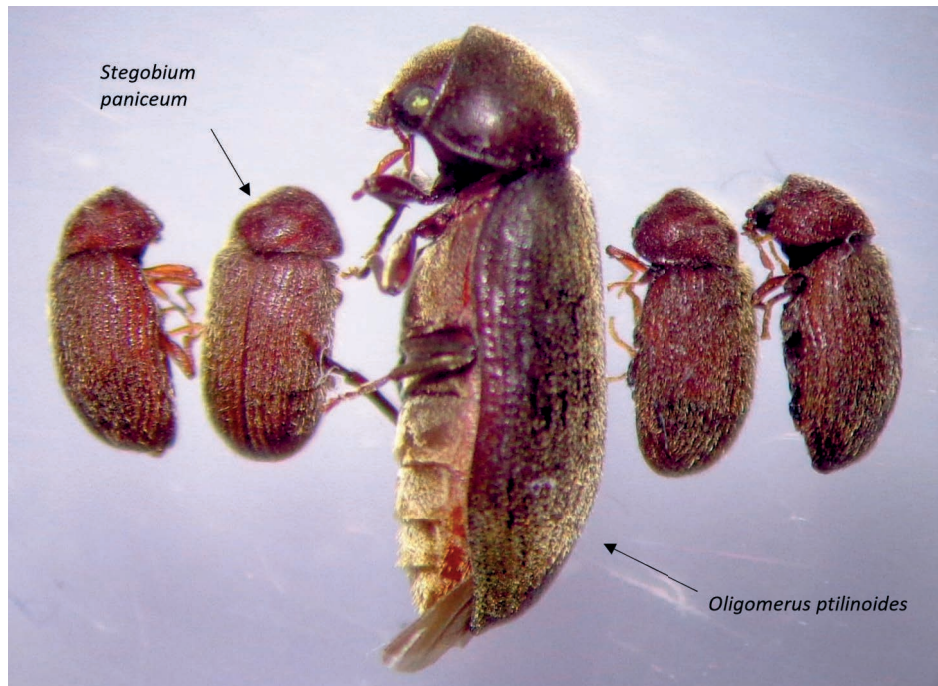
Samples were submitted by public health pest control operators to the insect identification service at Killgerm Chemicals Ltd. They were identified by Killgerm entomologist Jonathan Binge via microscopy and dichotomous key (Zahradník 2013) with assistance from David Pinniger (DBP Entomology Ltd) and Darren Mann (Oxford University Museum of Natural History).

## Results

The first identification of *O. ptilinoides* was in late June 2020 from the first-floor bedroom of a domestic premises in Cranleigh, Surrey, where two adult beetles and flight holes were noted in a wooden bedframe. A further incidence of activity was reported in a loft of a domestic property in Kent during August 2020, with approximately 37 adult beetles found (Fig. 1).

## Discussion

The potential for misidentification of *O. ptilinoides* is noted due to superficial similarities with *Stegobium paniceum* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *Anobium punctatum* De Geer, 1774. However, at up to 7.5 mm, *O. ptilinoides* is larger (Fig. 2). Identification features include



**Figure 2** *O. ptilinoides* and *S. paniceum* (© Jonathan Binge, Killgerm Chemicals Ltd).

antennae of 11 antennomeres with the terminal three elongate. Eyes have sparse, long, erect hairs. The pronotum is convex with no central elevation like *A. punctatum*. Exit holes are circular and 1.3–3 mm in diameter in comparison to *A. punctatum*, which are 1.5–2 mm, and *Xestobium rufovillosum* (De Geer, 1774) at 3 mm. Frass is peanut-shaped and circular in diameter. Adults fly from early March to September which is when sightings may be made.

*O. ptilinoides* develops in dead wood of broad-leaved trees such as lime (*Tilia* spp.), poplar (*Populus* spp.) and oak (*Quercus* spp.). It develops in timbers with moisture contents of 11–16%, which includes hardwoods and well-seasoned softwoods. It is also recorded in pallets and crates. Extensive damage can be caused to furniture, statues, wooden art, easel painting stretchers, paints on wood and roof timbers. Control measures involve the removal and treatment of affected items with a suitable woodworm fluid insecticide, thermal humidity chambers and freezing. Cultural heritage institutions and public health pest control operators are alerted to these findings,

requested to seek appropriate identification, and encouraged to exercise vigilance.

## References

- Higgs, S., Harris, K. and Gilchrist, R. 2019. '*Oligomerus ptilinoides*, the discovery of a new Anobid woodborer in the UK'. Available at: [https://www.raa.se/app/uploads/2019/06/Oligomerus-ptilinoides\\_Higgs\\_Harris\\_Gilchrist.pdf](https://www.raa.se/app/uploads/2019/06/Oligomerus-ptilinoides_Higgs_Harris_Gilchrist.pdf) (accessed 9 July 2020).
- Zahradník, P. 2013. *Beetles of the Family Ptinidae of Central Europe*. Zoological Keys. Prague: Academia.

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