

# "Do it with Dung"

FROM THE MOUNTAINS  
TO THE MURRAY

## NEWSLETTER

Issue 2: April 2009

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### 110 monitors and counting!

Sixteen beetle monitoring and identification workshops have been held across the North East and Corowa Shire, resulting in 110 people volunteering to monitor dung beetle activity on their properties. This has been an outstanding result and we welcome our most recent volunteers to the project. As we enter the cooler months, we have seen a marked decline in dung beetle activity across the region. Many sites are returning nil results as summer beetle activity draws to a close. It can be disappointing to find an empty trap, but these results are valuable and contribute to our understanding of what is happening (or not happening!) in your area. The main message is to keep setting those traps.

### 90,000 *Geotrupes spiniger* beetles released

In March, 90 colonies of *G. spiniger* were released across the region. The aim is to increase Autumn dung beetle activity. The distribution of these beetles was a major logistical operation and many thanks are extended to everyone who helped get the beetles out (often on very short notice!).

#### SPINIGER FACT FILE:

##### ADULT LIFE SPAN:

about six months

##### LENGTH:

20-25mm

##### FLIGHT TIME:

Dusk and dawn

##### ACTIVITY PERIOD:

Autumn – early Winter – early Spring

##### NESTING HABITS:

Generally deeper than 20cm – sausage-shaped brood balls containing one egg each.

##### EGG LAYING:

Depending on temperature about 10 eggs per week. One generation per year

##### Information source:

Tyndale-Biscoe, M., 1990, *Common Dung Beetles in Pastures of south-eastern Australia*, CSIRO Australia.

This book can be purchased from CSIRO Publishing

<http://www.publish.csiro.au/nid/18/pid/43.htm>

\$29.95 (web special - usually \$54.95) plus postage



### Around the traps – Monitoring highlights

#### Catch of the day!



Site 22:  
Rosewhite Vic.  
28/2/09  
Approx:  
600 *taurus*  
400 *fulvus*  
  
15/3 result  
No beetles!

Site 75: Benambra, 13/3/09 183 *fulvus*, 119 *binodis*

#### *Onitis aygulus* trapped in March (a sample)



Site 4: Rennie NSW  
30/3/09, 8 *aygulus*

Site 11: Corowa NSW  
9/3/09, 53 *aygulus*

Site 67: Hansonville Vic.  
28/3/09, 24 *aygulus*

#### *Onitis alexis* trapped in March (a sample)



Site 26: Bruarong Vic  
14/3/09, 26 *alexis*

Site 49: Wooragee Vic  
12/3/09, 18 *alexis*

Site 52: Talgarno Vic.  
11/3/09, 6 *alexis*

Site 102: Mitta Mitta Vic  
23/3/09, 11 *alexis*

#### Most unusual catch: *Onthophagus pentacanthus*

This is a native species that has been found at three sites in the Sringhurst, Byawatha region. It is similar in size to *Bubus bison* (13-19mm) and is expected to be active during Autumn and Winter. This species is also known to process sheep dung. It has an upright horn on the head, and four horns on the midsection. Quite a fearsome looking creature.



## WORKSHOPS & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

### Efarmer training

Efarmer is a web-based mapping program which will enable you to directly upload your monitoring results. It is also a great farm planning tool which gives you access to numerous data layers including aerial photography, property boundaries, public land areas and environmental data. Workshops have been held in Corowa and Talgarno. Upcoming training sessions are:

#### Corryong CEC

Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April, 9.30am – 3.30pm

#### Benambra Neighbourhood House

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April, 9.00am – 3.00pm

#### Tallangatta (venue to be advised)

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April, 9.30am – 3.30pm

#### Yackandandah Community Education Network

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May, 9.30am – 3.30pm

#### Beechworth Neighbourhood Centre

Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May, 9.30am – 3.30pm

**Lunch will be provided at all sessions**

**Bookings are essential**, as personalised logins and passwords need to be established prior to the workshops. There are also limited spaces at each training venue.

To secure your place, please contact Belinda on 02 6027 5294 or email [abanas@bigpond.com](mailto:abanas@bigpond.com) at least three working days prior to the workshop date.

### Parasite Management Workshop “Know your Parasite Enemy”

This is an opportunity to learn about worm lifecycles and how faecal egg counting (FEC) can be a useful tool in developing effective worm management strategies in sheep, cattle & horses.

Treating animals unnecessarily can be costly and can contribute to the selection of worms for drench resistance. Some treatments can have a negative impact on beneficial species such as dung beetles.

The presenter is **Dr Grant Richards**. Grant is a veterinarian with many years experience dealing with parasites. He operates a parasite diagnostic laboratory which provides egg counting and culturing services.

#### Yackandandah Public Hall

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May, 7.30 – 9.30pm

#### Moyhu Hall

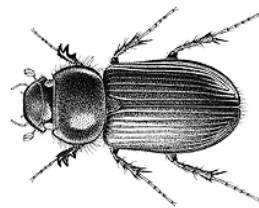
Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> May, 7.30 – 9.30pm

#### Tallangatta Hall

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June, 7.30 – 9.30pm

To secure your place, please contact Belinda on 02 6027 5294 or email [abanas@bigpond.com](mailto:abanas@bigpond.com) at least two working days prior to the workshop date.

## What's this beetle in my trap?



**Colour:** Black, dark brown

**Length:** 10-11mm

**Features:** long fine legs

It could be the blackheaded pasture cockchafer: *Aphodius tasmaniae*



**Adult and larvae of *Aphodius tasmaniae***

This is a pest species (native) that has been found in a number of traps. The cockchafer grubs feed on humus in the soil until the autumn rains soften the ground and promote pasture growth. Grubs then tunnel to the surface, and come out at night, often in response to heavy dew or rain. They collect fresh pasture leaves which they drag into their tunnels for consumption during the day.

Information & image source: DPI Victoria

For more information see DPI Agnote AG1364

“The Blackheaded Pasture Cockchafer”

[www.dpi.vic.gov.au](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au) (put Agnote title into “search”)

### Reminder: Steering Committee Meeting

The next meeting is to be held on:

**Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May**

10am – 12noon (followed by lunch)

North East CMA Office, Footmark Court Wodonga

For catering purposes could you please RSVP Belinda by Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April.

### Upcoming monitoring weeks



Weeks commencing:

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April**

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May**

**Species to be on the look out for:**

*Bubas bison* and *Onthophagus australis*



CARING  
FOR  
OUR  
COUNTRY

The “Do it with Dung – from the Mountains to the Murray” Project is funded by “Caring for our Country”, managed by Kiewa Catchment Landcare Group and supported by

regional Landcare Groups. The project also receives direction from a voluntary steering committee.