

## *Glocianus punctiger* (Sahlberg, 1835) (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) common in Soldotna

by Matt Bowser<sup>1</sup>



Figure 1: Larvae of *Glocianus punctiger* in inflorescence of *T. officinale*, June 10, 2015 (<http://www.inaturalist.org/observations/1620773>).

*Glocianus punctiger* (Sahlberg, 1835), an exotic weevil of Palearctic origin, has been known in Alaska from two specimens in the University of Alaska Museum Entomology collection: UAM:Ento:24180 from Fairbanks and UAM:Ento:113229 from Anchorage. These specimens, identified by C. W. O'Brien, are the basis of the Alaska record of *G. punctiger* in Bousquet et al. (2013). Larvae of *G. punctiger* feed on floral and seed tissues of common dandelions (*Taraxacum officinale* F.H. Wigg.), also exotic to Alaska.

On June 10–11, 2015, I observed larvae in inflorescences of *T. officinale* at two localities in Soldotna. The larvae were quite common in inflorescences when seeds were matur-

ing, after the petals had fallen and before the inflorescences reopened to release the wind-dispersed seeds. From the back lawn of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge's headquarters building (60.465°N, 151.073°W) on June 11 I collected a handful of inflorescences at the seed maturation stage and placed them in a jar of water, arranging them so that the flowers were positioned over a plate. The larvae had dropped out of the flowers onto the plate by June 15. I placed the larvae in a jar of soil, where they quickly burrowed into the substrate. Twelve adults had eclosed between July 2 and July 6. These specimens now reside in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge's entomology collection (KNWR:Ento:10799–KNWR:Ento:10810).



Figure 2: *Glocianus punctiger* specimen KNWR:Ento:10806, lateral view.

It is unlikely that the presence of *G. punctiger* in Alaska will meaningfully reduce the spread and persistence of common dandelions. The abundance of *G. punctiger* tends to be lower at high latitudes than at lower latitudes (Verhoeven and Biere, 2013). Even where *G. punctiger* is more abundant, the larvae consume only a small proportion of the plants' total seed production (McAvoy et al., 1983; Honek and Martinkova, 2005). Adults also consume dandelion foliage, but they cause little damage (McAvoy et al., 1983). With exceptions of the aphid *Myzus persicae* (Sulzer, 1776) and the slug *Deroceras reticulatum* (O. F. Müller, 1774), most of the other known herbivores of *T. officinale* listed by Stewart-Wade et al. (2002) appear to be absent from Alaska.

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I wonder if *G. punctiger* is breeding in any of Alaska's native dandelion species. In particular, I would like to know if horned dandelions (*Taraxacum ceratophorum* (Ledeb.) DC.) are affected. This species has seldom been collected on the lowlands of the western Kenai Peninsula. I know of only three records: a dot on the map in the Niskiski area in Hultén (1968), one specimen in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge's herbarium from Skilak Lake collected in 1951 (KNWR:Herb:573), and a specimen held by the Pratt Museum in Homer with label data as follows:

**Locality** AK; Kenai Borough; Ninilchik; 1200 Rd., 18 mile  
**Date** 7/15/96  
**Habitat** area above and adjacent to muskeg, abundant microrelief  
**Associated Species** *Cladina stellaris*, *Vaccinium caespitosum*, *Pleurozium schreberi*  
**Collected By** Chris Reidy

If *T. ceratophorum* should be a species of conservation concern here, then it seems likely that genetic assimilation by *T. officinale* (see Brock, 2004) would be more of a threat to this species than seed consumption by *G. punctiger*. Still, I would like to know if *G. punctiger* feeds on *T. ceratophorum* or any of Alaska's other *Taraxacum* species.

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Figure 3: Larva of *G. punctiger* in inflorescence of *T. officinale*, June 11, 2015 (<http://www.inaturalist.org/observations/1620902>).