

Geotrupes spiniger (Paua Beetle)



Size: up to 25 mm

Characteristic features: This is a large, glossy beetle with a metallic blue/purple surface underneath giving it the name 'Paua Beetle'. Males have slightly longer, narrower forelegs than those of females but this is often difficult to differentiate accurately.

Origin: Native to Europe, British Isles, Mediterranean, Balkans, Ukraine and Middle East to Pakistan.

Export Distribution: Australia, New Zealand.

Expected distribution in New Zealand: North and South Islands

Flight Activity: Dusk and Dawn

Seasonal Activity: Spring-Winter.

Dung preferences: Fresh firm cattle dung and horse manure. This large-bodied beetle prefers larger volume dung necessary for nest building. Large, non-pellet, deposits of sheep dung are also utilised at least for adult feeding.

Nesting behaviour: Adults build nesting galleries at the end of burrows up to 45 cm below the dung pat. Galleries are packed with several large sausage-shaped dung masses, each with one egg.

Life Cycle: Development from egg-adult takes 4-6 months depending on soil temperature. There are two generations a year; eggs laid in spring take 4 months to develop to adults and those laid in late summer and autumn take 6 months to complete development. In mild northern climates, adults appear to be active throughout winter.

Abundance: The number of dung beetles per farm depends on many criteria but most importantly the amount of fresh dung available, and dung quality. Chemical residues from livestock drenches can be detrimental but not critical to dung beetle population growth. Dung beetle friendly drenches are available. An integrated approach using dung beetles and drenches is recommended with an awareness of the side effects chemical residues in drenches can have on dung beetles. For information on dung beetles, drenches and dung beetle management please refer to the NZ dung beetle project website: <http://dungbeetle.org.nz/>.