

***Aphodius pedellus* (De Geer), not *Aphodius fimetarius* (Linnaeus): correction to *Dung-dwelling beetles at a farm in southwest Worcestershire* (Skirrow, 2017).**

Martin B Skirrow

A collection of dung beetles conforming to the species *Aphodius fimetarius* (Linnaeus, 1758), mostly from Britain (including the Wyre Forest), were recently shown to consist of two distinct karyotypes (Wilson, 2001). When Wilson examined original specimens of the taxon from the collections of Linnaeus and De Geer, he found morphological representatives of both karyotypes. De Geer named his beetles *Scarabaeus* [now *Aphodius*] *pedellus* (De Geer, 1774), but as Linnaeus was the first to describe the group, his name took precedence. Now that two species have been recognised within the taxon, De Geer's name, as the oldest synonym for *A. fimetarius*, is the valid name for the second species: *Aphodius pedellus*.

When I identified the dung beetles described in my article *Dung-dwelling beetles at a farm in southwest Worcestershire* (Skirrow, 2017) I used the keys in Jessop's RES Handbook, which did not of course include *A. pedellus* (Jessop, 1986). Five beetles (4 male, 1 female), all found in cow dung, keyed out as *A. fimetarius*. When Darren Mann spoke at the Worcestershire Recorders 2019 annual meeting, he drew attention to this recent splitting of *A. fimetarius* into two species, so my specimens needed to be re-examined to see which they were. Differentiation of the two on morphological grounds requires experience, access to voucher specimens, and usually dissection of male genitalia. Darren Mann kindly offered to examine them, and they all turned out to be *A. pedellus*. Given the currently known distribution of *A. pedellus*, this was not unexpected (Wilson's Wyre Forest specimens were also *A. pedellus*).

In this case it was not possible to differentiate these two species from even reasonably detailed photographs, which emphasises the importance of retaining voucher specimens for insects that have had to be killed for identification.

#### Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Darren Mann for identifying the beetles — and for his lecture that prompted the identifications.

#### References

- Jessop, L. 1986. Dung beetles and chafers — Coleoptera: Scarabaeoidea. *Handbooks for the study of British Insects* 5 (11): Royal Entomological Society, London.
- Skirrow, M.B. 2017. Dung-dwelling beetles at a farm in southwest Worcestershire. *Worcestershire Record* 43:26–30.
- Wilson, C.R. 2001. *Aphodius pedellus* (De Geer) a species distinct from *A. fimetarius* (Linnaeus) (Coleoptera: Aphodiidae). *Tijdschrift voor Entomologie* 144:37–143.