

## Weevils on Windmill Hill

Oliver Wadsworth

On 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022 I paid a visit to Windmill Hill ostensibly to search for the beautiful, metallic green Apioniid weevil *Pseudoprotapion astragali* (01) associated with the Wild Liquorice *Astragalus glycyphyllos* that grows freely at this site. The weevil was found easily by gently shaking the vegetation over an old lunch box lid. As four or five individuals were found on the first couple of plants inspected, it would appear that this insect is doing well on the site.



01. *Pseudoprotapion astragali* Windmill Hill 14.07.22.  
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With my time at the site short, I decided to try some other random areas of vegetation just to see what turned up. Two other species of weevil were found, the first being *Holotrichapion ononis* (02) which feeds on restharrow *Ononis* and is considered widespread and common over much of the UK. I was not surprised to find it at Windmill Hill with so much of its foodplant present. The other weevil turned out to be *Pseudorchestes pratensis* which appears to be rather scarce and local. Mark Gurney, who has produced the indispensable identification guides to the Weevils of the UK and also helps to run the national weevil recording scheme, confirmed my identification and that he knew of no prior records from Worcestershire. I have since found one record from 'West Malvern, Worcestershire' dated 1908. This is a specimen held at the Oxford Museum of Natural History, collected by P. Harwood. Darren Mann at the museum has kindly checked the label and Harwood's notebooks, but no more precise location is given. The record also appears in *Coleoptera of Herefordshire* (Tomlin 1949) so it may well have been within that Vice County. The weevil is known from our neighbouring counties so it is likely that it has been present in Worcestershire all along.



02. *Holotrichapion ononis* Windmill Hill 15.07.22.  
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03. *Pseudorchestes pratensis* Windmill Hill 14.07.22.  
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The closest occurrence I can find is in Warwickshire, where *Beetles of Warwickshire* (Lane *et al.* 2008) shows modern records from SP15 and SP16. As this insect is very small (c.2.5mm), it is perhaps not surprising that it is seldom recorded. The larvae however, feed on knapweeds *Centaurea* in the summer, mining the leaves and creating conspicuous black blotches. I have not been able to search for these at Windmill Hill as yet, but they will certainly be worth looking out for next year, there and at other sites where the host plants are common.

### Acknowledgements

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### References

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### Images

01. *Pseudoprotapion astragali* Windmill Hill 14.07.22.  
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