

***Rhyzobius lophanthae* (Blaisdell, 1892) (Coleoptera, Coccinellidae) reaches Worcestershire.**

Paul F. Whitehead  
 Moor Leys, Little Comberton, Pershore, Worcestershire, WR10  
 3EH. Email: paul@thewhiteheads.eu  
 All images © Paul Whitehead.

In its unusually checkered documentary record the coccinellid *Rhyzobius lophanthae* (Blaisdell, 1892) has been placed in both the genera *Scymnus* and *Lindorus*. Described from California by Blaisdell it was only later understood to be a native of the Antipodes. *Rhyzobius lophanthae* was introduced to the British fauna by Booth (2000) on the basis of a Surrey example found on 1 April 1999 and is one of a number of species of Australian coccinellids now making their way north in Britain during the present phase of climatic warming. It and related species have been introduced widely for the control of scale insects (Pope, 1981).

The 2016 Worcestershire records demonstrate a significant westward spread and an association with coniferous trees. The first example (01) was found in urban Pershore (SO94) on the bigeneric hybrid conifer x *Cuprocyparis leylandii* (A.B. Jackson & Dallimore) on 26 August 2016 with the second at rural Little Comberton (SO93) on *Thuya plicata* Donn ex D. Don on 15 September 2016. Further records in similar contexts will no doubt follow.



01. *Rhyzobius lophanthae*, urban Pershore, Worcestershire, 26 August 2016. Paul Whitehead.

The distinctive aeneous sheen and conspicuous long dark setae on the elytra of *R. lophanthae* make identification simple although Fig. 1 does not show these features with great clarity. The rather rotund shape, distinct tumidity and evident pilosity readily separate *R. lophanthae* from *Rhyzobius litura* (F., 1787) although some of the darker morphs of *R. litura* may appear similar at first sight. The untrained eye may initially seek to establish a passing resemblance of imagines with some byrrhids, e.g. *Simplocaria* spp., but this will soon be dismissed on closer examination.

Another Australian coccinellid, *Rhyzobius forestieri* (Mulsant, 1853) was recently introduced to the British fauna by Barclay (2014). Whilst resembling *R. lophanthae* this species is duller, blacker and the elytral pubescence is more strongly tessellated. If present climatic trends continue *R. forestieri* is also likely to appear in Worcestershire.

**References**

Barclay, M.V.L., 2014. *Rhyzobius forestieri* (Mulsant, 1853) (Coccinellidae) an Australian ladybird new to Britain from the Wildlife Garden of the Natural History Museum, London. *The Coleopterist* 23:81-83).

Blaisdell, F.E. 1892. A new species of Coleoptera from California. *Entomological News* 3:51.

Booth R.G. In: Hodge, P.J. 2000. 1999 Annual Exhibition. Imperial College, London SW7 - 27 November 1999. Coleoptera. *British Journal of Entomology and Natural History* 13:172-182.

Pope, R.D., 1981. '*Rhyzobius ventralis*' (Coleoptera: Coccinellidae) its constituent species and their taxonomic and historical roles in biological control. *Bulletin of Entomological Research* 71:19-31.

**Image**

01. *Rhyzobius lophanthae*, urban Pershore, Worcestershire, 26 August 2016. Paul Whitehead.