

Iris Weevil *Mononychus punctumalbum* Herbst, 1784) Curculionidae, Coleoptera new to Worcestershire.

John Bingham & Denise Bingham

On 3rd May 2023 we visited the small Worcestershire Wildlife Trust wetland nature reserve at Bishop's Field near Wolverley, Kidderminster. The site lies in the Stour Valley floodplain and is a wet marshland habitat. The aim of the visit was to see if Emperor Moth *Saturnia pavonia* was present in the area. Using a pheromone lure Denise Bingham found one male moth.

A search for insects was made on some of the wetland plants and a weevil was located and photographed on a flower of Marsh Marigold *Caltha palustris* by John Bingham (01). Later it was identified as *Mononychus punctumalbum* (Duff 2016), very local and listed as Nationally Notable A with c.75 records on the NBN Recording Database (NBN). Records are limited to the Isle of Wight and along coastal regions of South Dorset, South Devon and North Somerset (UK Beetles). There appear to be no records for Worcestershire.

It can be locally abundant on the host plants Stinking Iris *Iris foetidissima* and Yellow Iris *I. pseudacorus*. Although the weevil was found on Marsh Marigold at Bishop's Field, *Iris pseudacorus* is present and assumed to be the host plant. The weevil feeds in the seed-pods and can become damaging to plants (UK beetles). *M. punctumalbum* is the only member of the genus to occur in the UK, it is quite round and 'chunky' about 4-5 mm and is unique in having a single claw to each tarsus.



01. *Mononychus punctumalbum* Bishop's Field 3rd May 2023. John Bingham

Considering Bishop's Field lies in North Worcestershire it must be possible that this weevil is present elsewhere in the County having spread from the south. *Iris foetidissima* appears to be its main host plant, so searching flower heads of the plant may produce results. Some species of garden Iris can also occasionally be hosts.

Thanks to Harry Green for contacting Paul Whitehead who confirmed my identification.

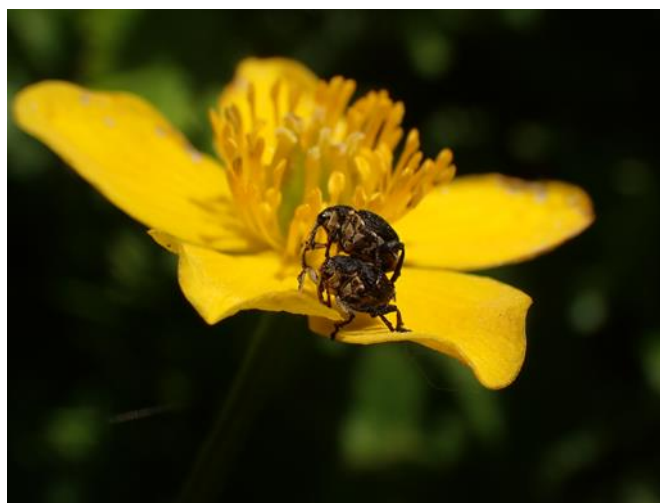
Editor's note (BW):

Following John's discovery of *Mononychus punctumalbum* at Bishop's Field, Brett Westwood visited the site on May 15th 2023 and found nine individuals, five on Yellow Iris flowers (02) and four

visiting Marsh Marigold (03). John's prediction that other sites would be found were also prescient. Brett Westwood saw and photographed one on Yellow Iris at Wilden Marsh on May 23rd.



02. *Mononychus punctumalbum* on Yellow Iris, Bishop's Field 15th May 2023. Brett Westwood.



03. *Mononychus punctumalbum* mating pair on Marsh Marigold, Bishop's Field 15th May 2023. Brett Westwood.

References.

Duff, A.G. 2016 *Beetles of Britain and Ireland*. Vol 4: Cerambycidae to Curculionidae. A. G. Duff (Publishing). UK Beetles. Available at: <https://www.ukbeetles.co.uk/mononychus-punctumalbum> [Accessed 08.05.23]. NBN Database Available at: <https://species.nbnatlas.org/species/NBNSYS0000025339> [Accessed 08.05.23].

Images

01. *Mononychus punctumalbum* Bishop's Field 3rd May 2023. John Bingham.
02. *Mononychus punctumalbum* on Yellow Iris, Bishop's Field 15th May 2023. Brett Westwood.
03. *Mononychus punctumalbum* mating pair on Marsh Marigold, Bishop's Field 15th May 2023. Brett Westwood.