

Saprinus georgicus, new to the Australian fauna (Coleoptera: Histeridae)

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Abstract: *Saprinus georgicus* is recorded from Australia for the first time.

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In the collection of the National Natural History Museum in Leiden one male and one female of *Saprinus georgicus* Marseul are present, collected by Baas Becking and Reuter in "Fennelslake" on 24.iii.1936, together with *Saprinus cyaneus* (Fabricius). Probably they originate from Australia, but, as it was impossible to locate "Fennelslake", the presence of this species in Australia could not be proved. A female specimen in my collection originates from Althorpe Island, South Australia, vii.1978, leg. Mrs Lawley, but without a male an indisputable identification is not possible.

Recently this problem could be solved by the examination of additional material. On 16.xi.1994 Mrs M. J. Hielkema-Slappendel found two males and one female of *Saprinus georgicus* in Tarlee, South Australia. Genital examination confirmed the identification. Another male specimen was found among unidentified material from the Museum of Vienna (Austria), with a label: "N. Queensland, 1917/1918".

Saprinus georgicus is very similar to *Saprinus chalcites* (Illiger), and without examination of the male genitalia the identification of these two species is rather tricky. The

presence of *Saprinus chalcites* in Australia was already recorded by Dahlgren (1968). Confusion with *Saprinus georgicus* can be excluded, since Dahlgren did examine the male genitalia.

Saprinus georgicus has a vast distribution area, also including South Europe, Central Europe and Central Asia. *Saprinus chalcites* is distributed in the Mediterranean subregion, Africa, Central Asia, Arabia, Burma and India. Probably both species have been introduced into Australia in the past during the colonisation from Europe. Both species are mainly found under excrements on sandy soil, less commonly under carrion.

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References

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