

**First Record of the Flightless Carrion Beetle, *Necrophilus pettitii* Horn, in New England
(Coleoptera: Agyrtidae)**

The flightless carrion beetle (*Necrophilus pettitii* Horn, 1880) is the only member of the family Agyrtidae (Newton 1997) found in eastern North America (Peck 2001). In summarizing the known distribution of *N. pettitii*, Peck (1981) included New York, Ontario, and Michigan south to Alabama, Georgia, and northern Florida. The species is believed to be a deep litter and soil scavenger (Peck 1990). It is typically collected in forested habitats with dung and carrion baits or pit traps (Peck 1981). Many records come from cave entrances and the species has been collected most frequently in high-elevation forests of the southern Appalachians during the summer months (Peck 1981).

On July 15, 2000, a single specimen of *N. pettitii* was collected in a non-baited pitfall trap in Bristol, Vermont as part of a survey of surface-active terrestrial invertebrates for the Colby Hill Ecological Project—a biodiversity inventory and monitoring project on 680 acres of private conservation land on the western slope of the Green Mountains. The specimen was found near the Bristol/Lincoln town boundary (44°09.537' N, 73°01.719' W) at an elevation of approximately 1200 ft. (365m) in a rich northern hardwood forest characterized by numerous parallel seeps that produce a broadly corrugated terrain on a moderately well-drained slope with northern aspect. This ecosystem type is one of several rich, seepy northern hardwood forest types that appear to be common in the northern Green Mountains particularly on north and east slopes (Lapin and Engstrom 1999). The specimen was deposited at the Zadock Thompson Natural History Collection at the University of Vermont.

The closest previously known records of *N. pettitii* are from two locations in southern New York state: Cooks Falls, Sullivan County in September, 1926 (Peck 1981); and Armonk, Westchester County in 1974 (Pirone 1974). The present collection site is more than 200 miles

north of either of the southern New York locations and therefore represents a considerable northeastern extension of the range of the species. The significance of this extension is even more marked when one considers that *N. pettitii* is flightless. The finding suggests that the species may also occupy other suitable habitat from southern New York to north central Vermont. Locations that hold considerable promise for future documentation of *N. pettitii* in New England include the Taconic Mountains and southern Green Mountains of Vermont and the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts and Connecticut.

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Mark A. Ward, *Ecological Consultant, 28 Poor Farm Road, Bristol, ME 04539, U.S.A.*

Jeffrey M. Collins, *Ecological Extension Service, Massachusetts Audubon Society, 208 South Great Road, Lincoln, MA 01773, U.S.A. and Susan M. Morgan,* *Vermont Institute of Natural Science, 2723 Church Hill Rd. Woodstock, VT 05091, U.S.A.*