

**Original research paper**

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**A REVIEW OF FALSE DARKLING BEETLES  
(COLEOPTERA: MELANDRYIDAE)  
OF THE KALININGRAD REGION (RUSSIA)**

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**Abstract**

This paper presents the first faunistic review of species composition of the family Melandryidae in the Kaliningrad region. An annotated checklist (18 spp., 10 genera), including faunistic data, is given. *Orchesia luteipalpis* is recorded for Central European territories of Russia for the first time.

**Key words:** Tenebrionoidea, fauna, south-eastern Baltic Region, distribution, list

**INTRODUCTION**

Anthropogenic disturbances in woodland ecosystems (first at all, an antropocentric forest and park management as well as fragmentation of forest cover) are known to have a significant negative impact on biodiversity, especially on insects which are dependent on wood decay, dead and over-matured trees. Several false darkling beetles are among such saproxylic and mycetophagous insects which are particularly threatened due to habitat loss, resulted from the clearing of woodlands from dead wood, logging and decline of veteran trees throughout the landscape. Imagines of false darkling beetles are mostly crepuscular and nocturnal, usually occurring on logs, twigs and tree trunks infested by bracket fungi, and are not known to form any aggregations. The appropriate habitat decline, specialization to particular ecological niches, cryptic life style, and small-sized populations makes the family Melandryidae insufficiently studied and sometimes “forgotten” group. For example: species of this family were not included in European Red List of saproxylic beetles (Nieto and Alexander 2010). Melandryid species are present in some state Red Data Books, e.g.: Poland (Kubisz 2004) and Russia (Nikitsky and Sobolev 2021) and included in the list of beetles of primeval forest of Central Europe (Eckelt et al. 2018).

The Kaliningrad Region (KR) is the westernmost Russian semi-enclaved area, comprised by 13,300 square kilometers and situated on the territory of the northern part of the former Eastern Prussia. Currently, the catalogue of Coleoptera for this area and adjacent regions does not exist, and the most comprehensive list of beetles of the region that has appeared so far is “Verzeichnis der Käfer Preußens”, published in the second half of the 20th century (Bercio and Folwaczny 1979). The species collected before 1945 were summarized in that catalogue. In total, 19 melandryids are listed for the former Eastern Prussia by Bercio and Folwaczny (1979) and finding localities of 10 species only are situated in area covered by the present-day KR. The updated list of Melandryidae is absent, however several faunal reports from the KR (Alekseev and Nikitsky 2008, Alekseev and Bukejs 2010, 2017; Alekseev and Shapoval 2011, 2016, Alekseev et al. 2012, 2021, Alekseev 2014) include fragmentary information on this group of beetles.

Currently, the family Melandryidae is represented by approximately 60 genera and 420 described species distributed worldwide (Nikitsky and Pollock 2010). The fauna of the family Melandryidae is well documented in neighboring Poland and Lithuania (Kubisz et al. 2010, Kubisz et al. 2014, Tamutis et al. 2019), but not in the KR. The main goal of current paper is to summarize the available distribution data on false darkling beetles' fauna for the KR.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

Specimens used in this study were mostly collected by the author during his field research trips carried out between 1989-2021, mainly in the central and western parts of the KR. Beetles were collected with a variety of methods: by hand on fruiting bodies of the bracket fungi; under the dead bark; by the pitfall traps situated around old living trees and laying logs; by sifting of rotten wood; by using the entomological net and the Malaise, window and light traps.

The annotated list was compiled by using of published literature sources and the author's private collection. The following information is given for each species: (1) scientific name, (2) references to bibliographic sources when a species is indicated for the KR fauna, (3) brief data from the label, (4) generalized distribution in the KR and (5) ecological and frequency comments. The administrative districts of the KR are mapped (Fig. 1) and abbreviated in the following way: Bagr. – Bagrationovskiy, Balt. – Baltiyskiy, Chern. – Cherniakhovskiy, Gur. – Gur'evskiy and Kaliningrad city, Gus. – Gusevskiy, Gvard. – Gvardeyskiy, Krasn. – Krasnoznamenskiy, Nem. – Nemanskiy, Nest. – Nesterovskiy, Oz. – Ozerskiy, Pol. – Polesskiy, Pravd. – Pravdinskiy, Slav. – Slavskiy, Svet. – Svetlogorskiy, Zel. – Zelenogradskiy. If the locality is cited according to Lentz (1879) or Bercio & Folwaczny (1979), the district name is followed by the German name of this locality in parentheses “()”.

The majority of specimens were identified based on the standard European identification key (Kaszab 1969). The key of Nikitsky and Saito (2014) was used for distinguishing representatives of the genus *Zilora*.



Figure 1. Schematic map of the administrative division of the KR into districts: Bagr. – Bagrationovskiy, Chern. – Chernyakhovskiy, Gur. – Gur’evskiy and Kaliningrad city, Gus. – Gusevskiy, Gvard. – Gvardeyskiy, Krasn. – Krasnoznamenskiy, Nem. – Nemanskiy, Nest. – Nesterovskiy, Oz. – Ozerskiy, Pol. – Polesskiy, Pravd. – Pravdinskiy, Slav. – Slavskiy, Svet. – Svetlogorskiy, Zel. – Zelenogradskiy

## RESULTS

Representatives of two subfamilies (Osphryinae and Melandryinae) and eight tribes (Conopalpini, Dircaeini, Hypulini, Melandryini, Orchesiini, Serropalpini, Xylitini, and Zilorini) were found in the KR. An annotated list of the KR Melandryidae was compiled and presented below.

Family Melandryidae Leach, 1815  
Subfamily Melandryinae Leach, 1815  
Tribe Dircaeini Kirby, 1837

### 1. *Abdera (Caridua) affinis* (Paykull, 1799)

**Local references:** Alekseev et al. (2021).

**Material examined:** 2 km NW Kaliningrad, 3 exx, the bracket fungi (*Inonotus* sp.) on dead standing common alder, 03/05/2020; 14 km of the Curonian Spit, 1 ex, Malaise trap in mixed forest, 15/06/2020.

**KR:** Gur., Zel.

**Comments:** Sporadically distributed species registered in two localities in the KR.

### 2. *Abdera (Caridua) flexuosa* (Paykull, 1799)

**Local references:** Lentz (1879); Bercio and Folwaczny (1979); Alekseev and Bukejs (2010).

**Material examined:** Otradnoe environs, 1 ex., on vegetation in humid *Alnetum aegopodiosum* forest, cliff of Baltic Sea coast 09/06/2009; 1 km W Kaliningrad, 3 exx, bracket fungi (*Inonotus* sp.) on dead standing common alder, 03/05/2020 [together with *A. affinis*].

**KR:** Gur. (Wilkie), Svet. (Warnicken), Zel. (Cobjeiten); Gur., Svet.

**Comments:** Sporadically distributed species registered in two localities in the KR.

### 3. *Wanachia triguttata* (Gyllenhal, 1810)

**Local references:** Bercio and Folwaczny (1979).

**KR:** Pravid. (Zehlaubbruch).

**Comments:** Not collected in research time, known from single historical report.

Tribe Hypulini Seidlitz, 1875

### 4. *Hypulus bifasciatus* (Fabricius, 1792)

**Local references:** Lentz (1879); Bercio and Folwaczny (1979); Alekseev and Bukejs (2017).

**Material examined:** Mechnikov environs, 1 ex., pitfall trap in *Fageto-Quercetum* forest, 11–25/05/2016; ibidem, 1 ex., pitfall trap in a hollow of an old beech, 23/05–20/06/2017; ibidem, 1 ex., 07/05–06/06/2018; Otradnoe, 1 ex., pitfall trap between deciduous trees on cliff, 03/05–02/06/2019; ibidem, 1 ex., 02/06–02/07/2019; Maiskii environs, 1 ex., pitfall traps in forest edge, 13/06–02/07/2019; 2 km NW Kaliningrad, 2 exx., pitfall trap near old common alder, 07/05–16/06/2019; ibidem, 1 ex., near old oak, 30/04–23/05/2020; 3 km S Novomoskovskoe, 2 exx., pitfall trap near old beech, 14/05–16/06/2020.

**KR:** Gur. (Königsberg, Forst Fritzen, Dammhof), Svetl. (Georgenswalde); Bagr., Balt., Gur., Svetl.

**Comments:** Sporadically distributed species occurs in the western part of the KR at the north-eastern periphery of main distribution range. Stable local populations associated with old stands of deciduous trees, particularly beech and common alder.

### 5. *Hypulus quercinus* (Quensel, 1790)

**Local references:** Lentz (1879); Bercio and Folwaczny (1979).

**Material examined:** 8 km NE Cherniakhovsk, 2 exx., on oak, edge of mixed forest, 01/05/1998; 2 km NW Kaliningrad, 9 exx., pitfall traps near old oaks, 07/05–29/06/2019.

**KR:** Gvard. (Wehlau); Bagr., Chern., Gur., Svetl.

**Comments:** Widely distributed species associated with old *Quercus robur* trees.

Tribe Melandryini Leach, 1815

### 6. *Melandrya (Paramelandrya) dubia* (Schaller, 1783)

**Local references:** Lentz (1879); Bercio and Folwaczny (1979).

**Material examined:** 2 km W Kolosovka, 1 ex., birch stump, forest edge, 02/05/2001; 5 km S Ozerki, 1 ex., on bracket fungi on birch, Zehlau bog, 21/05/2007; 2 km S Novomoskovskoe, 2 exx., pitfall traps in beech forest, 19/05–08/06/2009; environs of the railway station “1312 km”, 1 ex., on beech, forest edge, 21/05/2013.

**KR:** Pol. (Labiau), Svetl. (Warnicken); Bagr., Chern., Gur., Gvard., Pravid., Zel.

**Comments:** Widely distributed but rare forest species, associated with *Betula*, *Quercus*, *Fagus*.

### 7. *Melandrya (Melandrya) barbata* (Fabricius, 1787)

**Local references:** Alekseev et al. (2021).

**Material examined:** 1 km SW Cherniakhovsk, 1 ex., edge of *Querceto-Tilietum* forest, 31/05/2021.

**KR:** Chern.

**Comments:** Rare and very locally distributed species, associated with veteran oaks and included in the Red Data Book of Russia ((Nikitsky and Sobolev 2021).

#### **8. *Phryganophilus (Phryganophilus) auritus* Motschulsky, 1845**

**Local references:** Lentz (1879); Bercio and Folwaczny (1979); Alekseev and Nikitsky (2008).

**Material examined:** Svetlogorsk environs, 1 ex., Baltic Sea coast, 06/06/2004.

**KR:** Gvard. (Forst von Klein Nuhr Krs. Wehlau); Svetl.

**Comments:** Very local and rare species in the KR, known from the single locality.

### Tribe Orchesiini Mulsant, 1856

#### **9. *Orchesia (Clinocara) fasciata* (Illiger, 1798)**

**Local references:** Lentz (1879); Bercio and Folwaczny (1979); Alekseev and Bukejs (2017).

**Material examined:** 2 km NE Kostrovo, 1 ex., edge of a mixed forest, pitfall trap near an oak, 20/06-05/07/2016; 3 km S Medovoe, 1 ex., forest edge, on dead standing lime tree, 26/06/2021.

**KR:** Chern. (Insterburg), Gur. (Friedrichstein, Wilkie), Svetl. (Warnicken); Bagr., Zel.

**Comments:** Sporadically distributed species.

#### **10. *Orchesia (Clinocara) minor* Walker, 1837**

**Local references:** Alekseev and Bukejs (2010).

**Material examined:** environs of the railway station "1312 km", 1 ex., sweeping of bushes in beech forest at the lakeside, 02/05/2009.

**KR:** Bagr.

**Comments:** Species known from single locality in the KR.

#### **11. *Orchesia (Clinocara) undulata* Kraatz, 1853**

**Local references:** Alekseev et al. (2012); Alekseev (2014).

**Material examined:** 6 km NE of Cherniakhovsk, 1 ex., sweeping on forest edge, 25/06/1996; Pereslavskoe, 2 exx., under dead bark, mixed forest, 23/04/2007; 2 km N Chkalovsk (Kaliningrad), 1 ex., under dead bark of oak in a clearing area, 02/05/2008; 1 km E Ladushkin, 1 ex., window trap at the margin of a mixed forest, 09-30/08/2010; Pavlovo environs, 1 ex., window trap, 06/07-12/08/2015; NO Ladushkin, 1 ex., mixed forest, 14/04/2015; Mechnikov environs, 1 ex., pitfall trap near old oak in deciduous forest, 02/07-09/08/2017; Otradnoe, 1 ex., pitfall traps in old deciduous park near Baltic Sea, 07/08-04/09/2019; 2 km W Kaliningrad, 1 ex., pitfall trap in oak forest, 18-30/04/2020; Otradnoe environs, 2 exx., on trunk of common alder, Baltic Sea cliff, 14/07/2021.

**KR:** Bagr., Balt., Chern., Gur., Svetl., Zel.

**Comments:** Widely distributed and common species in present time, occurring in different types of forests and parks of the KR. It was not reported from the former East Prussia. The species is probably non-native for the region recent invader, not sensitive to current human activity, and polyphagous on deciduous trees of different age.

**12. *Orchesia (Orchesia) micans* (Panzer, 1793)**

**Local references:** Lentz (1879); Bercio and Folwaczny (1979).

**Material examined:** Cherniakhovsk, 2 exx., reared from bracket fungus on oak, 21/05/1994; Riabinovka environs, 1 ex., pitfall trap near old oak, forest edge, 02/05/2001; Zehlau bog, 1 ex., bracket fungi on birch, 21/05/2007; environs of the railway station “1312 km”, 1 ex., window trap on forest edge, 23/08-21/09/2009; 4 km NE Zele-nogradsk, 1 ex., mixed forest, 13/06/2012; environs of the railway station “1312 km”, 1 ex., under bark of dead deciduous tree, 15/07/2015; Mechnikov environs, 1 ex., pitfall traps in deciduous forest, 04-23/05/2017; 2 km NE Kostrovo, 1 ex., pitfall trap on forest edge, 20/08-12/09/2017; 1 NW Kaliningrad, 1 ex., reared from the pupa collected under bark of dead standing oak, 23/05/2020.

**KR:** Gur. (Wilkie, Dammhof), Svetl. (Rauschen); Bagr., Balt., Chern., Gur., Gvard., Pravd., Svetl., Zel.

**Comments:** Widely distributed and comparatively common species in the KR associated with bracket fungi.

**13. *Orchesia (Orchestera) luteipalpis* Mulsant et Guillebeau, 1857**

**Local references:** Reported from the KR for the first time. The species has been mentioned (Bercio and Folwaczny 1979) from present-day Polish territory of the former Eastern Prussia (Neustadt/Wejherowo) only.

**Material examined:** Otradnoe, 1 ex., pitfall traps between deciduous trees on the Baltic Sea cliff, 03/05-02/06/2019; ibidem, 1 ex., 10-18/07/2019.

**KR:** Svetl.

**Comments:** Species known from single locality in the KR, probably occurring in the northern coastal area of the Sambian peninsula at the north-eastern periphery of main distribution range.

## Tribe Serropalpini Latreille, 1829

**14. *Serropalpus (Serropalpus) barbatus* (Schaller, 1783)**

**Local references:** Lentz (1879); Bercio and Folwaczny (1979); Alekseev and Shapoval (2011, 2016); Alekseev (2014).

**Material examined:** 23 km of the Curonian Spit, 1 ex., the light trap on pine forest edge, 15/08/2009; ibidem, 1 ex., 06/08/2011.

**KR:** Bagr. (Heiligenbeil), Gur. (Königsberg), Nem. (Tilsit), Zel. (Loppöhhnen); Chern., Krasn., Zel.

**Comments:** Widely distributed species associated with coniferous trees, sometimes numerous in the light-trap samplings (Alekseev and Shapoval 2016).

## Tribe Xylitini C.G. Thomson, 1864

**15. *Xylita laevigata* (Hellenius, 1786)**

**Local references:** Lentz (1879); Bercio and Folwaczny (1979); Alekseev et al. (2021).

**Material examined:** Kremnevo environs, 3 exx., under bark of dead standing pine, 24/03/2020; ibidem, 1 ex., the window trap in mixed forest, 20/05-09/06/2020.

**KR:** Gur. (Caporner Heide, Königsberg, Wilkie, Vierbrüderkrug), Gvard. (Wehlau), Zel. (Medenauer Wald); Gur., Zel.

**Comments:** This species associated with the pines and collected in single locality, however the wider distribution in the KR is supposed.

Tribe Zilorini Desbrochers des Loges, 1900

**16. *Zilora elongata* J. R. Sahlberg, 1881**

**Local references:** Alekseev et al. (2021).

**Material examined:** Kremnevo environs, 1 ex., under the bark of dead standing pine infected by *Trichaptum* sp., 24/03/2020.

**KR:** Zel.

**Comments:** Species known from single locality in the KR, it is associated with conifers.

**17. *Zilora obscura* (Fabricius, 1794)**

**Local references:** Alekseev et al. (2021).

**Material examined:** 3 km NE Zelenogradsk, 1 ex., on the dead laying pine, at the edge of sphagnous bog Svinoe [Schwendlund], 21/05/2020.

**KR:** Zel.

**Comments:** This species known from single locality in the KR, it is associated with conifers.

Subfamily Osphyinae Mulsant, 1856

**18. *Conopalpus testaceus* (Olivier, 1790)**

**Local references:** Alekseev et al. (2012).

**Material examined:** Maiski settlement, 1 ex., sweeping near the oaks at the margin of a mixed forest, 29/06/2011.

**KR:** Svetl.

**Comments:** This species is associated with oak species is known from single locality in the KR. Probably occurring in the KR is at the north-eastern periphery of main distribution range.

## DISCUSSION

At present, 18 species of the family Melandryidae are known for the KR and are included in this list. Seventeen species were registered for the KR between 1989-2021, and one species (*Wanachia triguttata*) is cited according to historical report of Bercio and Folwaczny (1979), which needs to be further confirmed.

Some melandryid species are registered in neighboring countries: Poland (Kubisz et al. 2014, Marczak et al. 2018), Lithuania (Tamutis et al. 2019), Latvia (Telnov 2004), and Belarus (Alexandrovitch et al. 1996, Tsinkevich 2017, Solodovnikov 2019, Nikitsky 2020). It is probable that they will be found in the KR. There are eleven such probable members:

- (1) *Dircaea australis* Fairmaire, 1856: reported from Poland and Lithuania;
- (2) *D. quadriguttata* (Paykull, 1798): reported from Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Belarus;
- (3) *Phloiotrya* (s. str.) *rufipes* (Gyllenhal, 1810): reported from Latvia, Belarus, and Poland;
- (4) *P.* (s. str.) *subtilis* (Reitter, 1897): reported from Lithuania and Belarus;
- (5) *Wanachia triguttata* (Gyllenhal, 1810): reported from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Belarus;
- (6) *Melandrya caraboides* (Linnaeus, 1761): reported from Poland and Latvia;
- (7) *Phryganophilus ruficollis* (Fabricius, 1798): reported from Poland, Latvia and Belarus;
- (8) *Orchesia* (s. str.) *fusiformis* Solsky, 1871: reported from Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Belarus;
- (9) *Dolotarsus lividus* (Sahlberg, 1833): reported from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Belarus;
- (10) *Zilora ferruginea* (Paykull, 1798): reported from Poland, Latvia and Belarus;
- (11) *Osphya bipunctata* (Fabricius, 1775): reported from Poland.

Three species: *Hypulus bifasciatus*, *Orchesia luteipalpis*, and *Conopalpus testaceus* occur in KR closely to the north-eastern or northern periphery of main distribution range (Nikitsky 2020). One of them (*Orchesia luteipalpis*) could be added to the fauna of the Central European Russian territories (“CT”) in the next editions of Catalogue of Palaearctic Coleoptera.

Some species of melandryid can be considered as rare in KR and in the whole south-eastern Baltic Region. The most widely distributed and comparatively frequent in KR are *Orchesia micans*, *O. undulata*, *Serropalpus barbatus*, *Melandrya dubia*, and *Hypulus quercinus*. Two species can be listed as threatened: (1) *Melandrya barbata*, included in Red Data Book of Russia (Nikitsky and Sobolev 2021) and (2) *Phryganophilus auritus*, listed among of 168 umbrella species for primeval forests in Central Europe (Eckelt et al. 2018). Regional bionomy and stability of populations for other four melandryid species actually known from singletons only (*Zilora elongata*, *Z. obscura*, *Conopalpus testaceus*, and *Orchesia minor*) need to be studied before any further conclusions about possible conservation ranks and needs.

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PRZEGLĄD RODZINY ŚNIADKOWATYCH  
(COLEOPTERA: MELANDRYIDAE)  
Z OBWODU KALININGRADZKIEGO (ROSJA)

**Streszczenie**

W pracy przedstawiono pierwszy faunistyczny przegląd składu gatunkowego rodziny Melandryidae w obwodzie kaliningradzkim. Podano adnotowany wykaz gatunków z uwagami (18 spp., 10 rodzajów), w tym dane dotyczące rozmieszczenia i ekologii. Gatunek *Orchesia luteipalpis* został po raz pierwszy wykazany dla środkowoeuropejskich terytoriów Rosji.