



Just discovered, but already endangered? New beetle species found in Japan

Researchers at Kyushu University and Ehime University, in collaboration with a researcher from the United Kingdom, have described a new beetle species in Japan, marking the first time that an insect of the genus *Airaphilus* has been found on the island country. The researchers named the new species *Airaphilus abei* sp. nov. after Dr. Azuma Abe, who collected four of the five known samples in 1992 at Kokeyachi bog in Aomori Prefecture.

Marshy places have previously been recorded as one of the habitats for some members of the genus *Airaphilus* found in Europe, so the researchers believe that the new species may depend on the bog environment.

Unfortunately, the Kokeyachi bog and its adjacent wetlands have begun to dry out and are undergoing a transition to grassland. These factors, together with the beetle's apparently limited distribution and possibly restricted mobility because of a lack of hind wings, suggests that, at least in this locality, the new species may be endangered.

Takahiro Yoshida, first author on the paper reporting the findings in *Acta Entomologica Musei Nationalis Pragae* and postdoctoral fellow at Kyushu University's Faculty of Agriculture at the time of the study, has visited the wetlands in search of living individuals.

"Despite our efforts, we have yet to find living specimens," says Yoshida, who is now with the Entomological Laboratory at Ehime University's Faculty of Agriculture, "suggesting that this species may already be extinct."

"Extinction of a species means the loss of one of nature's treasures, so it is important to take care of the natural environment for conservation of biodiversity," he continues.

For more information about this research, see "Discovery of the genus *Airaphilus* (Coleoptera: Silvanidae) in Japan, with a description of a potentially endangered new species," Takahiro Yoshida, David G. H. Halstead, and Toshiya Hirowatari, *Acta Entomologica Musei Nationalis Pragae* (2019), <https://doi.org/10.2478/aemnp-2019-0018>



Fig. 1. Images of *Airaphilus abei* sp. nov. The scale bar (right) represents 1.0 mm.

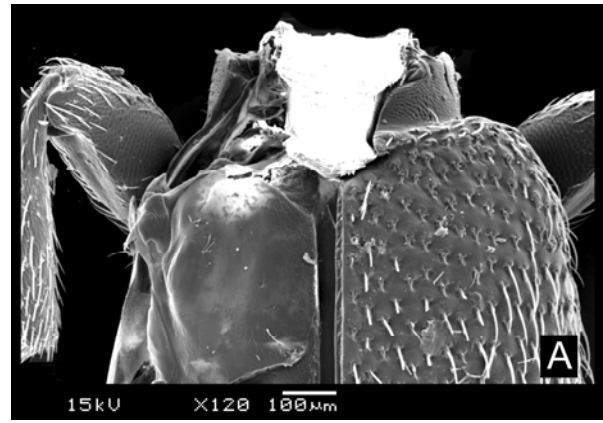


Fig. 2. A scanning electron microscope image of a thorax from which the left elytron (fore wing) was removed, showing the lack of a hind wing.

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