



New species of ladybird beetle discovered on Kyushu University campus

New beetle discovery on campus marks the first major update to Japanese ladybird classification in 50 years

Fukuoka, Japan—University campuses are often places of learning and discovery, but rarely do researchers find a new species living right on their doorstep. However, that is exactly what happened when a research team from Kyushu University discovered a new species of ladybird beetle, *Parastethorus pinicola*, on a pine tree at Kyushu University's Hakozaki Satellite.

The discovery, published in *Acta Entomologica Musei Nationalis Pragae*, was part of a three-year study that revises the classification of the tribe *Stethorini*—a group of tiny ladybirds known for preying on spider mites—in Japan for the first time in over 50 years.

“I knew that this group of ladybirds often inhabits pine trees. Since there are Japanese black pines growing at the Hakozaki Satellite, I decided to look there, and that is where I found the new species,” explains Ryōta Seki, a PhD student at the Entomological Laboratory, [Graduate School of Bioresource and Bioenvironment Sciences](#) and the first author of the study.

“Normally, insect collectors do not pay much attention to pine trees, which is perhaps why scientists have overlooked this species for so long.”

The new species, named *Parastethorus pinicola*—meaning “pine dweller”—is a minute black beetle. It measures just over one millimeter in length.

“Small black ladybirds like these have not been studied much because they are incredibly difficult to identify,” says Seki. “They are barely larger than a grain of sand, and they all look identical. You cannot tell the species apart without dissecting them and examining their reproductive organs under a microscope. Because of this difficulty, there were many misidentifications in past records.”

To resolve these long-standing classification issues, the team examined approximately 1,700 specimens. In the process, they determined that the common ladybird known in Japan as *Stethorus japonicus* is actually the same species as *Stethorus siphonulus*, which is widely distributed from China to Southeast Asia.

The review also led to the discovery of a second new species from Hokkaido, named *Stethorus takakoae*. Seki dedicated this specific name to his grandmother, Takako Ōtsuki, to honor her steadfast support of his entomological pursuits since childhood.

“Standardizing these names is important because it allows us to share data and research with other countries in Asia,” Seki notes. “It clarifies that this is a widespread species found from the tropics to temperate Japan.”

For Associate Professor [Munetoshi Maruyama](#) of the [Kyushu University Museum](#), who supervised the study, the discovery highlights the importance of looking closer at the world around us.

“People rarely notice such small insects. But as our study showed, even in a city or on a university campus, there are unknown species living right beside us,” says Maruyama. “These

'minor' insects support our ecosystems. I hope this discovery makes people interested in the diverse and fascinating world that exists unnoticed at our feet."

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For more information about this research, see "Review of the genera *Stethorus* and *Parastethorus* from Japan (Coleoptera: Coccinellidae)," Seki Ryōta, Maruyama Munetoshi, *Acta Entomologica Musei Nationalis Pragae*, <https://doi.org/10.37520/aemnp.2025.021>

About Kyushu University

Founded in 1911, [Kyushu University](#) is one of Japan's leading research-oriented institutions of higher education, consistently ranking as one of the top ten Japanese universities in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings and the QS World Rankings. Located in Fukuoka, on the island of Kyushu—the most southwestern of Japan's four main islands—Kyushu U sits in a coastal metropolis frequently ranked among the world's most livable cities and historically known as Japan's gateway to Asia. Its multiple campuses are home to around 19,000 students and 8,000 faculty and staff. Through its [VISION 2030](#), Kyushu U will "drive social change with integrative knowledge." By fusing the spectrum of knowledge, from the humanities and arts to engineering and medical sciences, Kyushu U will strengthen its research in the key areas of decarbonization, medicine and health, and environment and food, to tackle society's most pressing issues.



Researchers discovered a new ladybird beetle species, *Parastethorus pinicola*, on a Japanese black pine at Kyushu University's Hakozaki Satellite. The beetle measures approximately one millimeter in length.

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