

Government and Palm Industries CRB Task Force

Press Release 1/2018

Know your enemy

Everyone knows that the coconut rhinoceros beetle has arrived in Solomon Islands; that it has caused severe damage in Honiara and along the coast east and west; and that it has now been recorded in North Malaita, Savo and Ngela. Everyone also knows it attacks most palms but so far seems to prefer coconut and oil palm causing severe damage, loss of yield and in many cases palm death. Most people also know that it lays its eggs in rotting palms or other rotting plant material such as coconut husks, compost, sawdust and chicken manure. But many people do not know what it looks like and often confuse it with similar local beetles that are much less damaging and have different feeding and breeding habits. Here is a picture of your enemy and pictures of other beetles that mostly are not your enemy.

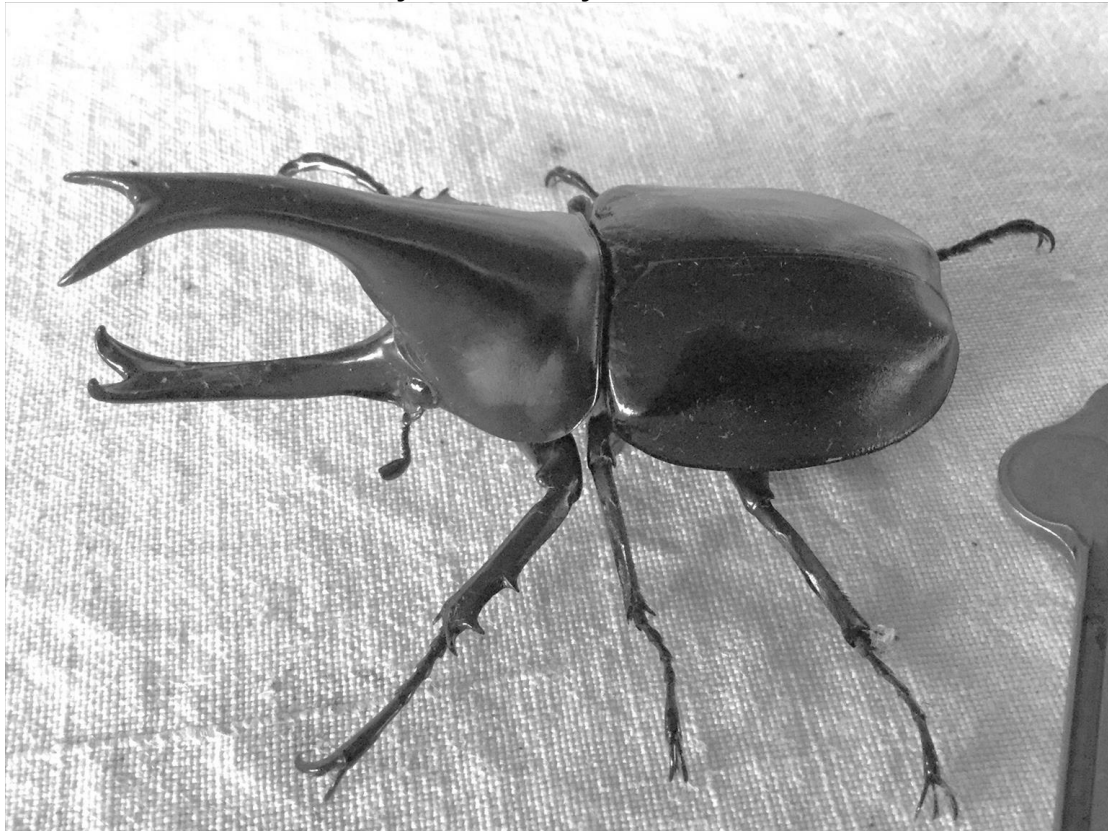
This is your enemy the coconut rhinoceros beetle, *Oryctes rhinoceros*, notice a single horn on the head and a scoop (not horns) behind. The female has a slightly smaller horn than the male otherwise they look similar.



<http://potokito-myshot.blogspot.com> ©2012

These beetles are black and 3-5 cms long (usually about 4cms), they fly to light in the evening and early morning. This beetle should be killed whenever found.

These beetles are NOT your enemy:



Elephant beetle, *Xylotrupes spp.*, feeds on flame trees. There are at least three species of this beetle in Solomon Islands with varying horn sizes in the male, the female has no horns.



Melanesian coconut beetle, *Scapanes australis*. Notice the two clear horns behind the head, the horns can be of various sizes. This beetle has always been in Solomon Islands and attacks young coconuts after forest has been cleared. This is

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a male, the female has no horns on the back and a tiny double horn on the head only.



The Rhino beetle, *Trichogompus fairmairei*. Little is known about this beetle but it has always been in Solomon Islands, notice the multiple horns behind the head. The female has no horns.

Black beetles that look similar to these but are **less than 3 cms** long are usually a pest of taro or similar crops or seedling palms. They are not usually pests of palms more than one year old. These are called *Papuana* spp. and there are more than 10 kinds in Solomon Islands.

The young of all the above beetles look very similar, they are short and fat and lay in the shape of a letter 'C', the only difference that can easily be seen is size



and that varies with age, species and food supply. They are found in or under rotting vegetation and can all be killed whenever found or better still fed to the chickens or pigs.

Please report to Agriculture Extension or Biosecurity immediately you see coconut rhinoceros beetles or their damage for the first time in your place. If possible collect the adult and bring it with you.