



Eulagius acernus Motschulsky, 1845, a Caucasian species naturalized in north-western France (Coleoptera, Mycetophagidae)

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Abstract. – *Eulagius acernus* Motschulsky, 1845 (Coleoptera, Mycetophagidae) is a sapromycetophagous species that was previously only known to be present in the Caucasus and north-eastern Turkey. It has now been discovered for the first time in France in several departments in the north-west of the country. Its presence in some isolated localities, as well as its records in woods and forests from traps or from under bark suggests that this species is established in France. This work presents images of *E. acernus* individuals from France and Georgia, as well as images of holotypes and syntypes of other *Eulagius* species from the same species group, when original descriptions do not include any photos.

Résumé. – *Eulagius acernus* Motschulsky, 1845, une espèce caucasienne établie dans le nord-ouest de la France (Coleoptera, Mycetophagidae). *Eulagius acernus* Motschulsky, 1845, une espèce sapro-mycétophage jusqu'ici connue uniquement du Caucase et du nord-est de la Turquie, est découverte pour la première fois en France, dans plusieurs départements du nord-ouest. Le fait qu'elle soit présente dans plusieurs localités isolées et qu'elle ait été observée dans des bois et des forêts, dans le cadre de piégeages ou en recherche active sous des écorces, montre que cette espèce peut être déjà considérée comme établie en France. Des photos d'individus d'*E. acernus* de France et de Géorgie, ainsi que d'holotypes et de syntypes d'autres espèces d'*Eulagius* du même groupe dont la description originale ne comporte pas de photos, sont présentées.

Keywords. – Alien species, Normandy, Hauts-de-France, saproxylic beetle, mycetophagous,

The genus *Eulagius* Motschulsky, 1845, includes 13 species worldwide, all of which are Palearctic (HÁVA, 2022, 2023b, 2024, 2025a, b). Two distribution patches can be observed within the geographical area occupied by this genus. Nine species are found in Asia, from China and Nepal to the Russian Far East and Japanese Archipelago, while four others occur further west in Iran and the Caucasus (HÁVA, 2022, 2023b, 2024, 2025a, b). Until now, no species of this genus have been recorded in Europe. *Stereophilus filicornis* (Reitter, 1887), previously assigned to *Eulagius*, no longer belongs to it, but rather to the recently erected genus *Stereophilus* Biscaccianti, Audisio & Esser, 2022 (BISCACCANTI *et al.*, 2022).

Eulagius acernus Motschulsky, 1845, is the type species of its genus, widespread in Transcaucasia, the northern Caucasus in Russia, and north-eastern Turkey, but until now only considered limited to that area (HÁVA, 2022). The genus *Eulagius* is divided into two main phyletic groups, one with species with irregular punctuation on elytra, the *E. irregularis* (Reitter, 1888) lineage of which a syntype is illustrated (fig. 12-13), and the other one with regular longitudinal rows of punctures, the *E. acernus* lineage. The species discovered in France (fig. 1) belongs to the latter group, which includes ten species worldwide:

- *Eulagius acernus* Motschulsky, 1845: Transcaucasia: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia; northern Caucasus in Russia; north-western Turkey (HÁVA, 2022, 2023a);
- *E. brendelli* Háva, 2025: Nepal (HÁVA, 2025a);
- *E. dentatus* Nikitsky, 1988: Russian Far East (HÁVA, 2022);
- *E. holzschuhi* Háva, 2024: Hyrcanian Forest in Iran, southern coast of the Caspian Sea (HÁVA, 2024);
- *E. hyrcanicus* Esser, Varandi & Farashian, 2018: Hyrcanian Forest in Iran, southern coast of the Caspian Sea (ESSER *et al.*, 2018);
- *E. lewisi* (Reitter, 1889): Japanese Archipelago, Taiwan (HÁVA, 2022);
- *E. nepalensis* Háva, 2025: Nepal (HÁVA, 2025a);
- *E. rakovici* Háva, 2025: Nepal (HÁVA, 2025b);
- *E. reitteri* (Lewis, 1896): Japanese Archipelago, Russian Far East (HÁVA, 2022);
- *E. schillhammeri* Háva, 2023: China (Hunan) (HÁVA, 2023b).

Since the discovery of *E. acernus* in Normandy (Seine-Maritime) in 2016 by J. Grancher (LMDI, 2025), new records have been added from several neighboring departments. Recent arrivals in the beetle fauna to France are becoming increasingly common, reflecting the general increase in international trade since 1950 (SEEBENS *et al.*, 2017). France has one of the highest numbers of intercepted, invasive or established non-native beetle species among European countries (BENEEN & ROQUES, 2010; COCQUEMPOT & LINDELÖW, 2010; DENUX & ZAGATTI 2010; KIRKENDALL & FACCOLI,

2010; ROY & MIGEON, 2010; SAUVARD *et al.*, 2010; BARNOUIN *et al.*, 2020; SOLDATI *et al.*, 2024). On the Atlantic coast, the ports of Le Havre and La Rochelle are known as the prime points-of-entry for non-native species (BARNOUIN *et al.*, 2020; SOLDATI *et al.*, 2024). Many of these non-native species colonized the surrounding urban parks and forested areas, and then spread into neighboring departments from these main points-of-entry.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Sampling methods. – Most of the studied specimens were collected using flight interception traps installed on dead or decaying trees, such as Polytrap™ or other window-type traps. The remaining specimens were found under stored logs, on wood piles or under the bark of dead deciduous trees. It should also be noted that all these observations were made in forested areas and sometimes in nature protected areas.

Material depositories and acronyms used. – The studied material (type and non-type) is deposited in the following institutional or private collections:

- Natural History Museum (London, United Kingdom) (NHMUK);
- Office National des Forêts, Laboratoire National d'Entomologie Forestière (Quillan, France) (LNEF-ONF);
- Zoological Museum of the Moscow State University (Moscow, Russia) (ZMMU);
- Hungarian Natural History Museum (Budapest, Hungary) (HNHM);
- collection Guillaume Delporte (Ostricourt, France) (GD);
- collection Hervé Brustel (Clermont-le-Fort, France) (HB);
- collection Jean-Hervé Yvinec (Bienville, France) (JHY);
- collection Radosław Plewa (Sekocin Stary, Poland) (RP);
- collection Sébastien Étienne (Sainte-Marguerite-d'Elle, France) (SE).

Preparation of specimens and illustrations. – For imaging, male genitalia (aedeagi) were extracted from the abdomens, cleaned, and mounted together with relevant specimens on transparent cards. As the *Eulagius* aedeagi are very small and not heavily sclerotized, they were mounted in a drop of Eukitt®. Images of specimens and aedeagi were taken using the image acquisition technical platform of the National Forest Entomology Laboratory of the ONF (Quillan, France), with the Entovision multifocus system, with the exception of the image of a female *Eulagius acernus* from France, which was taken with a Canon digital camera EOS 70D, with Laowa 25 mm Ultra Macro, StackShot Macro Rails with Helicon Remote and Focus. Images of labels were taken with a Sony DSC-W7 compact digital camera. The construction of sharp images from multifocal stacks (focus stacking) was carried out with a Cartograph software from Microvision Instruments (Evry, France). The infographic work and plates were made using Adobe Photoshop CC 2018 software.

The distribution map was done with ArcGis Desktop 10.8.1 software from ESRI Inc. (1999-2020).

Labels are quoted *verbatim*. Different lines are separated by a comma; different labels are separated by single slash (/). Authors' comments are given in square brackets.

RESULTS

Type material examined. – As *Eulagius* specimens are rarely found in collections, it was necessary to borrow type specimens for some species not illustrated in the original descriptions. For recently described species, the original descriptions were

used, including colour images of the holotypes and details of certain morphological features. For example, *E. nepalensis* and *E. rakovici*, both from Nepal, have distinct and large testaceous maculae on elytra and therefore appear not related to the species discovered in France.

Eulagius lewisi (Reitter, 1889): we studied the holotype of this species (fig. 8), described on a single specimen from “Suyama” (REITTER, 1889) in the Sagami Bay near Yokohama (Japan) and deposited in NHMUK. It is a female with the following labels (fig. 9): “Type, H. T. (circular, red framed label) / Japan, G. Lewis, 1910-320 / Suyama, 20.IV.-2.IV.80 [1880] / *Atritomus lewisi* m, Unicum / NHMUK 014092818 (label with QR code)”.

Eulagius reitteri (Lewis, 1896) was described from “Suyama in Sagami and Ichiuchi in Higo” (LEWIS, 1896). Suyama is now part of Sagami Bay near Yokohama. Higo is ancient Japanese province that corresponds to present-day Kumamoto Prefecture. Ichiuchi is now Ishiuchi, a mountain and ski resort south of Niigata. A series of syntypes deposited in NHMUK and bearing the labels mentioned below was studied:

- 2 ♂ mounted on the same card, “Type (circular red framed label) / Japan, G. Lewis, 1910-320 / Ichiuchi, 30.IV.-2.V.81 [1881] / *Atritomus Reitteri* Lewis, Type / NHMUK 014092822 (label with QR code)” (fig. 7); one of these syntypes is illustrated (fig. 6).

- 1 ♂ and 1 ♀, “Ichiuchi, 30.IV.-2.V.81 [1881] / Japan, G. Lewis, 1910-320”;

- 1 ♀, “Japan, G. Lewis, 1910-320 / Yuyama, 10.V.-14.V.81 [1881] / ? Larve ci-joint / *Atritomus lewisi* Reitter, det. C. N.”; this last label has been applied more recently and is a misidentification;

- 1 ♂, “Ichiuchi, 30.IV.-2.V.81 [1881] / Japan, G. Lewis, 1910-320 / *Atritomus* n. sp. Reitter / *Atritomus lewisi* var. *reitteri* Lewis, det. J. F. Lawrence 199 / NHMUK 014092817 (label supplemented with a QR code)”.

Eulagius reitteri and *E. lewisi* are very similar but can be distinguished by the following morphological characteristics, at least based on the single type specimen of *E. lewisi* we examined. The last one has stronger and deeper longitudinal rows of punctures on elytra, which are regular up to the apex, whereas rows of punctures are apically blurred and deviated in *E. reitteri*. In addition, *E. lewisi* has a more transverse pronotum, slightly convex on disc, with small, regular lateral denticles. Pronotal disc of *Eulagius reitteri* is very convex, almost gibbous, and distinctly narrowed forward, with coarse lateral denticles, the margin appearing more serrate. Finally, *E. lewisi* has an elongated, subparallel oval body, while *E. reitteri* is elliptical and has significantly longer antennae, with the last five antennomeres larger and more elongated.

Both species are very different from the species found in France. They are smaller, with total body length of 2.5-3.1 mm, compared to 4.1-4.5 mm of length of *E. acernus* and are more strongly convex (fig. 6, 8 *vs* 1-2). They have less strongly deepened elytral striae, slender antennae (also in males) and shorter elytral setae, shorter and stronger transverse pronotum and are distinctly bicolored with head and pronotum being distinctly darker than elytra.

Eulagius dentatus Nikitsky, 1988: we were able to examine an image of the holotype male (fig. 10) bearing the labels as in fig. 11 and deposited in ZMMU. This species differs significantly from *E. acernus* found in France in its largely oval shape with strong denticles on lateral sides of the pronotum, stronger and denser pronotal punctation with punctures separated by less than their diameters, elytral pilosity short and subrecumbent, pronotum trapezoidal with a wide base and lateral margins distinctly converging towards anterior edge.

Eulagius brendelli Háva, 2025: due to its small body of less than 3 mm, short-elliptical shape, very short, wide-based and laterally stronger rounded pronotum, very dense elytral pilosity, and shape of the aedeagus (HÁVA, 2025a), this species differs greatly from the one discovered in France.

Eulagius schillhammeri Háva, 2023: very distinct from the species found in France by its short and very convex body, black appendages, longer antennae with more elongated antennomeres, more confused elytral striae with rows of small punctures, denser elytral pilosity and very different aedeagus (HÁVA, 2023b).

Eulagius holzschuhi and *E. hyrcanicus*, recently described from the Hyrcanian Forest of Iran, are both very similar to *E. acernus*. According to the original descriptions (ESSER *et al.*, 2018; HÁVA, 2024), *E. holzschuhi* differs from the French species in having a strongly transverse scutellar shield, which is subquadrate in the latter, while males of *E. hyrcanicus*, differ from the French specimens in having more compact and thick antennae, and stronger and denser pronotal punctation. The species discovered in France appears more closely related to *E. acernus* than to *E. holzschuhi* or *E. hyrcanicus*.

Indeed, the French specimens correspond very well to a specimen of *E. acernus* from Georgia, Lagodekhi National Park (RP), with which we also made a comparison (fig. 1-2). The shape of aedeagus is rather variable, it is not very sclerotized and subject to deformation during desiccation; median lobe of aedeagus can slide distally to a greater or lesser extent (figs. 3-4). MOTSCHULSKY (1845) stated that this species has a more or less uniformly testaceous to brown colouration, which corresponds to the specimens found in France, whose colouration varies from yellowish brown to piceous brown. *Eulagius acernus* is therefore confirmed as a new genus and species for the French fauna, and we present our recent observations below.

***Eulagius acernus*, observations in France.** – **Eure.** 1 ex., Lyons-la-Forêt, Lyons state forest, Mont du Fresnes biological reserve, 49.3963°N, 1.41119°E, 9.V.2023, Polytrap™ baited with 20% alcohol, S. Etienne (LNEF-ONF). – **Nord.** 1 ex., Ostricourt, bois du Court Digeau, 50.456396°N, 3.047304°E, 19.IV.2023, Polytrap™ baited with 20% alcohol, G. Delporte (LNEF-ONF); 2 ex., *idem*, 3.V.2024 (GD); 1 ex., *idem*, 50.456467°N, 3.048045°E, 2.VI.2022, window trap on dead standing oak with fungi, G. Delporte (GD) (LMDI, 2025). – **Pas-de-Calais.** 2 ex., Beugin, bois Louis and bois d'Epenin, 50.442667°N, 2.501944°E, 19.V.2023, Polytrap™ baited with 20% alcohol, G. Delporte (GD); 2 ex., Merlimont, marais de Balançon, Natura 2000 site, 14.III.2024, D. Facon, dehiscent elm bark (*Ulmus campestris*) (HB); 1 ex., Quiestède, 50.68515°N, 2.33857°E, 30.X.2024, J. H. Yvinec, under the bark of a poplar (JHY). – **Seine-Maritime.** 2 ex., Arelaune-en-Seine, Brotonne state forest, Landes biological reserve, 49.41421°N, 0.80269°E, 10.V.2022, Polytrap™ baited with 20% alcohol, S. Etienne (SE, LNEF-ONF); several individuals, Neufchâtel-en-Bray, N 49.73985°, E 1.44238°, 15.XII.2016, under logs stored in a forest, J. Grancher (LMDI, 2025). – **Somme.** 1 ex., Crécy-en-Ponthieu, Crécy state forest, 50.248817°N, 1.820997°E, 13.V.2024, window trap standing dead beech, J. H. Yvinec (JHY); 1 ex., *idem*, 7.VI.2024 (JHY).

Remarks. – Most of the collected individuals were caught in flight interception traps, while others were found under the bark of dead deciduous trees or under logs in wet forests and in marshy areas. This habitat is widespread in north-western France. In Merlimont, the species was observed under the decaying bark of elm trees (*Ulmus campestris*). Although this should not be immediately considered specific to this species, it appears noteworthy, since also MOTSCHULSKY (1845), in the original description of *E. acernus*, states: "[...] elle vit sous l'écorce des ormes sur les montagnes du Caucase". *Eulagius acernus* is a sapromycetophagous species, like most of the species belonging to the same genus. Apart from possible competition with native mycetophagous species, it does not pose any economic risk.

DISCUSSION

The recent discovery of this Caucasian species in several lowland wet forests in north-western France and in five departments (fig. 5), nearly at the western limits of geographic Europe, may appear rather surprising. Moreover, according to a recent comprehensive synthesis (ABERLENC *et al.*, 2024), most of beetles introduced into France are of American, Oriental or tropical Asian origin, with none of Caucasian origin. Apart from beetles, we can mention the case of *Hierodula transcaucasica* (Brunner von Wattenwyl, 1878) (Mantodea, Mantidae), which is native to Iran and Transcaucasia. It

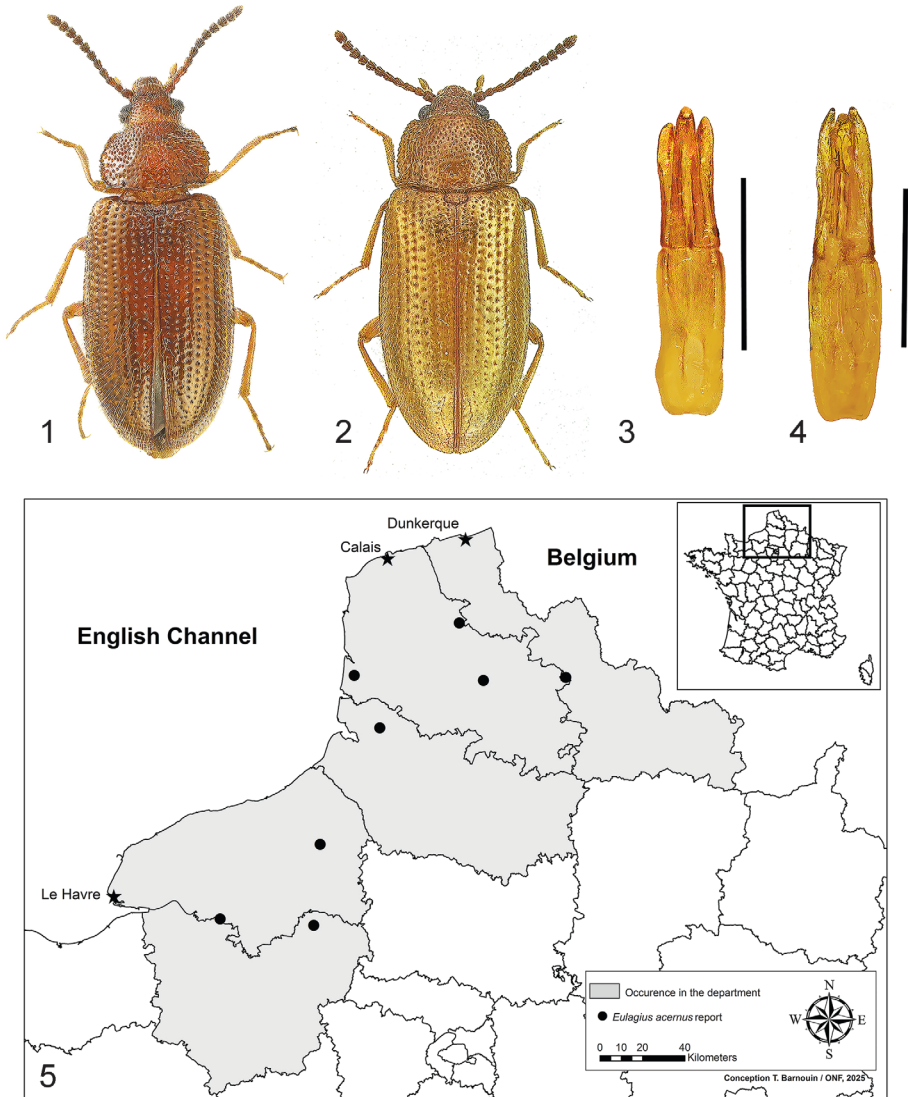


Fig. 1-5. – *Eulagius acernus* Motschulsky. – 1-2, ♀ habitus: 1, from Crécy-en-Ponthieu, Somme, France (4.3 mm); 2, from Lagodekhi National Park, Georgia (4.2 mm). – 3-4, Aedeagi: 3, male specimen from Lyons state forest, Eure, France; 4, male specimen from Ostricourt, Nord, France. Scale bar: 0.5 mm. – 5, Distribution map in north-western France.

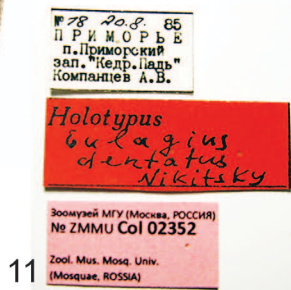


Fig. 6-13. – *Eulagius* spp., type specimens and labels. – 6-7, *E. reitteri* (Lewis), syntype ♂ (NHMUK) (3.1 mm). – 8-9, *E. lewisi* (Reitter), holotype ♀ (NHMUK) (3.2 mm). – 10-11, *E. dentatus* Nikitsky, holotype ♂ (ZMMU). – 12-13, *E. irregularis* (Reitter), syntype ♀ (HNHM).

has been recently introduced into central and southern Europe and was detected in southern France and Corsica only two years ago (MOULIN & ROUARD, 2023).

The main alien beetle point-of-entry into Northwestern France is the port of Le Havre. It seems to be the most likely point-of-entry of *E. acernus* given the locations in Eure and Seine-Maritime (fig. 5). But records from other departments may also originate from other points-of-entry such as the ports of Dunkerque, Calais or Boulogne (fig. 5). In the latter case, the origin is more difficult to pinpoint, since these ports are geographically close to one another and are of minor importance for introduced alien beetles comparatively to Le Havre.

Eulagius are rarely collected or are difficult to find. Two of the authors (FS, DT) searched for *E. acernus* specimens in the very rich collections of the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle (Paris) and the Natural History Museum (London), but without results. However, specimens of this species may be found among the unclassified parts of these collections. Moreover, the following original descriptions are based on a few specimens: *Eulagius lewisi*, 1 ♀ (REITTER, 1889); *E. hyrcanicus*, 2 ♂ and 1 ♀ (ESSER *et al.*, 2018); *E. holzschuhi*, 2 ♀ (HÁVA, 2024); *E. rakovici*, 1 ♀ (HÁVA, 2025b); *E. brendelli*, 1 ♂ and 2 ♀ (HÁVA, 2025a); *E. schillhammeri*, 1 ♂ (HÁVA, 2023b). Therefore, more than fifteen individuals of *E. acernus* were found in France.

Finally, since it has been reported in several locations in Nord and Pas-de-Calais, this species could also be present in Belgium where similar habitats are prevalent, although it has not been found there at present (TROUKENS, 2025).

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