

## FIRST RELIABLE RECORD OF *MECINUS CIRCULATUS* (COLEOPTERA: CURCULIONIDAE) FROM SLOVAKIA

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**Abstract:** *Mecinus circulatus* (Marsham, 1802) is for the first time reliably reported from Slovakia. The species was found in southern Slovakia, Cerová vrchovina highlands.

**Key words:** *Mecinus circulatus*, Coleoptera, Curculionidae, faunistics, Slovakia, Cerová vrchovina.

### INTRODUCTION

According to the latest checklist of Curculionoidea of Czech and Slovak Republic (BENEDIKT 2010), there are nine native species of *Mecinus* known from Slovakia. *Mecinus circulatus* was formerly reported for Slovakia by LACO (1929) from “Bolešov-Piechov”, a locality in mountainous terrain in Váh valley. No documenting specimen of this report exists, and no other specimens of *M. circulatus* from Slovakia were found and published. Despite this, some authors, for example SMRECZYŃSKI (1976) or STREJČEK (1993) mention Slovakia in its distribution. The first author also includes Hungary as a country of the species distribution. On the contrary, a most recent list of Hungarian weevils by PODLUSSÁNY (1996) does not quote this species. It is evident that the above distributional data are either based on misidentifications or subsequent citations of those data. Therefore, BENEDIKT (2010) summarizes the above data on the distribution of *M. circulatus* and concludes that “The occurrence of the Ponto-Mediterranean species *M. circulatus* must also remain unconfirmed for Slovakia, and it is also very improbable here due to the absence of the species in Hungary...”.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

Within the project of general faunistic weevil research of the Cerová vrchovina Protected Landscape Area (PLA) and its surroundings, I have visited localities also outside PLA. The collecting site lies very close (about 500 m) to the PLA border. Locality (Figure 1): Gemerský Jablonec env., 250 m a. s. l., N 48°11'56" E 19°59'40". The locality is characterized by ruderal to semi-primeval steppe phytocoenoses on loess to sandstone bedrock supporting a very species-rich annual and perennial vegetation. One of predominant perennials is *Plantago lanceolata* L. I have visited this place in 2014 nine times. During the vegetation season (March–October), sweeping was always used as one of collecting methods. The material collected was examined using stereomicroscope (Intraco Micro NSZ-810) and *M. circulatus* was photographed by high resolution camera (Canon EOS 50D) and macro zoom lens (Canon MP-E 65 mm).

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Mecinus circulatus* (Marsham, 1802) (Figure 2) – material examined: Gemerský Jablonec env., 10. 6. 2014, 1 ♀, 3.1 mm long without rostrum, leg., det. et coll. Michael Košťál.

*M. circulatus* is relatively common species in southern Europe, especially in its western part, reaching



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**Figure 1.** Collecting site of *Mecinus circulatus* near Gemerský Jablonec, Slovakia.

northwards to the United Kingdom (terra typica). It is known also from Algeria. The only country in Asia, where the species was recorded is Cyprus (CALDARA 2013). According to the same author, *M. circulatus* was recorded neither from Hungary nor Romania. S. Benedikt (pers. comm.) saw some recent reliably documented specimens from Hungary. These finds in Hungary, as well the present Slovak record may indicate a recent spreading of *M. circulatus* to the north as is obvious with many other thermophilous weevil species in recent years (BENEDIKT 2010).

**Biology:** The development of *M. circulatus* in *Plantago lanceolata* L. was described by HOFFMANN (1958). This corresponds well to the high abundance of the plant at the collecting site. The specimen was gained by general sweeping together with 28 specimens of *Mecinus pascuorum* (Gyllenhal, 1813), 4 specimens of *M. labilis* (Herbst, 1795) and 1 ♀ of *M. pyraster* (Herbst, 1796). The host plant of all last three accompanying species is *P. lanceolata* too (CALDARA & FOGATO 2013).

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**Figure 2.** *Mecinus circulatus* ♀, not to scale.

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