



# THE OTTAWA NATURALIST.

---

VOL. XVII.

OTTAWA, JUNE, 1903.

No. 3.

---

## THE BEETLES OF AN OREGON BEACH.

By H. F. WICKHAM, Iowa City, Iowa, U.S.

If one looks through the annals of Entomology, he will find the sea coast of Oregon rarely mentioned. If now he will turn to a map, he will see the reason, for the railroads seem to have avoided the district to a remarkable extent, so that it is not to be reached with the same ease as corresponding regions in the other Pacific States. In fact, there are only two ports on the entire Oregon coast that are connected with the great north and south trunk line—namely Astoria, at the south of the Columbia, which has rail connections with Portland, and Yaquina, on a bay of the same name, about 100 miles farther south, reached from Corvallis or Albany by a line through the intervening mountains.

While Yaquina Bay is not of much importance to the world at large, it has nevertheless quite an extended reputation in Oregon, on account of the fine beach at Newport, a small village which owes its prosperity to attractions as a summer resort. The ride from Albany takes several hours, though the distance to be travelled is but about a hundred miles. However, the trip is a pleasant one, the hill scenery being pretty, if not exactly grand. Unfortunately, much of the original coniferous forest has been burnt off along the line, though there is enough left to show that the growth must have been a heavy one. Live oaks are a prominent feature of the flora, and in places form considerable groves.

At the head of the bay lies Toledo, too far from the beach to answer as headquarters for one intending to collect, for the shores in the immediate vicinity are extremely muddy and uninviting.



The bluffs approach them closely, and the intervening flats are largely salt marsh. A few miles farther down is Yaquina, once a thriving seaport, but now a very poor community. This is the terminus of the railroad, and, as it is not far from the open coast and furnishes fair accommodations, I made it my stopping place. The village lies mostly on a narrow mud flat, nearly all of the houses being built on piles, so that during high tide the occupants can look out of their windows into the water, while at low tide they have a vista of mud spread before their eyes.

In the immediate vicinity of Yaquina are ranges of hills, covered with a growth of coniferous and other timber, badly damaged from fires. Of the fauna of this district it is not my intention to write, since it partakes of the ordinary nature of such locations on the north coast. The beach proper is near Newport, which lies at the south of the bay, and can be reached from Yaquina by a steamboat, making daily trips, or by a walk of a few miles along the shore when the tide permits. My general plan was to go over on the steamer and walk back, as this gave me a longer day than I could get in any other way. The beaches are several miles in length and are backed by great bluffs which come within a few rods of the water's edge, their faces precipitous for the most part, except where the drifting sand has modified the contour. The highlands back from the bluffs are extremely sandy and covered with a growth of dense scrub, with open patches here and there. In the distance are groves of conifers.

A number of small springs ooze from the face of the bluffs and trickle for some distance over the sands at the base. Many species of beetles favor just such spots, which offer, in consequence, a fine field for the collector. *Cicindela oregona* runs and flies about these damp sands, in company with one of the forms of *Bembidium littorale*. By overturning small pieces of wood and other rubbish, I took quite a series of *Omophron ovale*, *Bembidium transversale* and *Nebria diversa*, the last named being a rather uncommon species in collections and differing by its curious pale color from most of our other *Nebriæ*. Where the water had spread out a good deal, I found a rather large *Dyschirius* in some abundance, either running about in the sunshine or burrowing under the sand among the runways of *Bledius ornatus*. I saw on



one occasion a *Bembidium littorale* carrying off a *Dyschirius* and a *Bledius*, but did not succeed in finding out whether the Carabidæ had hold of the Staphylinid or whether the *Bledius* had been seized by the *Dyschirius* which in its turn had been attacked by the *Bembidium*. I think the former alternative the more likely, as the soft tissues of *Bledius* render it especially liable to the attacks of stronger beetles, and in some spots, where it occurred in thousands, the *Dyschirius* might be seen preying on it extensively.

Where the beach was simply moist rather than wet, one might get nice series of *Phycocætes testaceus* under logs, in company with *Elassoptes marinus*. Both of these weevils are commonly found in colonies where they occur at all, the former, however, being perhaps more partial to the shelter of bunches of cast-up seaweed. These masses of algæ also served as refuge for numbers of *Cercyon fimbriatum*, *Cafius canescens* and *Saprinus bigemmus*. Back in the dry sand dunes, one might sit and scoop out the side of a hillock, and, as the grains sifted down, out would fall the Tenebrionidæ that frequent them—the common forms being *Cælus ciliatus*, *Phalergia globosa* and a species of *Eleodes*. *Sinodendron rugosum* and *Ceruchus striatus* were dug from beneath half-buried logs.

When the wind is in the right quarter, the collector may always find some good things cast up by the waves ; but, as these are usually species of at least fairly strong flight, I was surprised to find drowned specimens of *Omus dejeanii* and *O. audouinii* at the water's edge. A number of *Buprestis langii* were thrown ashore, but one had to get them quickly if it were intended to make use of them for the cabinet, as the bodies were immediately attacked by small crustaceans and soon reduced to mere shells. *Leptura tibialis* and *L. matthewsii* were occasionally noticed flying over the beaches, but I could not ascertain whence they came. *Cicindela bellissima* was quite abundant, chiefly on the very fine dry drifted sand close to the base of the bluffs, and, being only moderately shy, was readily captured by working up from leeward. I find a pair of *Copidita quadrimaculata* among my collections from this vicinity, but there seems to be no record in my notes as to the circumstance of capture. However, I have found the same insect in great numbers at San Francisco, under pieces



of wood, paper, cloth or other rubbish, just far enough from the beach to keep dry.

The ocean face of the bluffs was quite steep in most places, but where it could be readily ascended I made a search for beetles, without finding a large number of species. The best insect I managed to get, was a small one—*Adranes taylori*, a blind Pselaphid, of which I took a few in the galleries of a small ant. Fortunately, I happened on the breeding season, for the beetles were paired, walking unconcernedly among their hosts, who did not molest them in any way. This genus has only recently been found on Vancouver Island by Rev. Geo. W. Taylor, after whom the species has been named.

Looking at the collections with reference to those made at other places, one can readily see that they are in general much the same as might be formed at any point on the coast from San Francisco northward, though a number of the beetles extend their range south to the extreme limit of the United States. Still there are some that would be noteworthy captures anywhere, and it is always worth while to record the habitats of such forms, when they can be ascertained. As far as present knowledge goes, *Cicindela beilissima* is not found at any other point, and the attention of collectors who have the opportunity of visiting the country on either side of Yaquina Bay, should be turned to the task of determining the real range of this species.

---

#### MAP OF THE OTTAWA DISTRICT.

---

We are pleased to announce that at a recent meeting of the Council it was decided to reduce the price of the Map of Ottawa to the members of the Club. This valuable map, which will be of the greatest service to working naturalists for plotting the occurrence and distribution of species in all branches of natural history, may now be obtained from the Treasurer at the low price of 5 cents a copy for members of the Club, which is almost at cost price, and by those who are not members of the Club at 10 cents a copy.



Wickham, H. F. 1903. "The Beetles of an Oregon Beach." *The Ottawa naturalist* 17(3), 49–52.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/28109>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/369125>

**Holding Institution**

MBLWHOI Library

**Sponsored by**

MBLWHOI Library

**Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: NOT\_IN\_COPYRIGHT

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.