

# Pytho kolwensis

**Description:** *Pytho kolwensis* is a black beetle 11 to 18 mm in length. It has two clear depressions in its pronotum. The elytra have longitudinal grooves, and the body becomes broader towards the rear. The larvae are large, flat and dirty grey-brown in colour. The larvae have three pairs of visible legs and characteristic chitinised terminal appendices.

**Life cycle:** *Pytho kolwensis* lays its eggs in bark beetle tunnels on fallen spruces in May or June. The larval stage lasts for four to six years. Fully grown larvae pupate under the bark in late July or early August. The pupal stage takes two to three weeks. The adult spends the winter under the bark.

**Food:** Phloem and cambium layers of a tree.

**Tree species:** Spruce.

**Decaying wood type:** Spruce logs on the ground. Preferably sturdy trees that have died three to four years ago whose trunks have snapped or which have fallen with a root stock. At least part of the trunk is suspended. The species does not attack living trees or damage timber.

**Habitats:** Spruce-dominated spruce-pine mires and thin-peated spruce mires. Mainly old mires with plenty of decaying wood but also spruce forests in mineral soils that contain spruce logs with different degrees of decay.

**Distribution:** *Pytho kolwensis* is a species of the boreal zone. Occurs rarely in the area extending from North Karelia to southern parts of Lapland and on a few sites in Central Finland.

**Status:** Vulnerable.

**Status under legislation:** A species under strict protection, listed in EU Habitats Directive Annexes II and IV.



## Recommendations for habitat management on forestry land

- Retaining decaying spruce logs (diameter at breast height over 15 cm) in connection with fellings and when harvesting damaged trees. The spruces can be trees that have died more than a year ago, in which case the risk of forest damage caused by insects can be avoided. Under the Forest Damages Prevention Act, at most 10 cubic metres per hectare of damaged spruces with a butt diameter of over 10 cm may be left in the forest.
- Preserving the surroundings of streams and rivulets. Many sites in the vicinity of streams or rivulets suitable for *Pytho kolwensis* are included in the habitats of special importance referred to in section 10 of the Forest Act. In this case, it is important to preserve on the site trees that, when they die, will produce habitats for saproxylic species. Sites with a deteriorated ecological status may also be left to develop towards a more natural state and, in the future, form habitats suitable for the species.
- Restoration of drained wooded spruce mires by blocking and damming ditches.



*Pytho kolwensis* favours sturdy spruce logs with a root stock. (Photo Mervi Laaksonen/Metsähallitus)

*Pytho kolwensis* larvae are large, grey-brown and flat. The terminal appendices are typical of this species. (Photo Mervi Laaksonen/Metsähallitus)



### Further information:

Mattila, J. 2017. Korpikolva (*Pytho kolwensis* Sahlberg, 1833) – In: Nieminen, M. & Ahola, A. (eds.), Euroopan unionin luontodirektiivin liitteen IV lajien (pl. lepakot) esittelyt. Suomen ympäristö 1/2017, pp. 112–115.