

First record of *Phloeotribus liminaris* (Harris) in Western Palearctic Region (Coleoptera Scolytidae)

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Abstract

In the course of on tree health researches carried out since 2003 in the forest ecosystem of Ticino Regional Park (Lombardia – northern Italy), galleries with adults of a *Phloeotribus* species were detected on trees of *Prunus serotina*. Those specimens were identified as *Ph. liminaris* (Harris) which is native to nearctic oriental regions. Subsequently, it was recognised as new to the old continent.

Ph. liminaris was collected from riparian stands of *Quercus robur*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Populus nigra*, *Salix alba* and *Pinus sylvestris* often mixed with *Robinia pseudoacacia* and *Ailanthus altissima*. The American black cherry trees attacked by *Ph. Liminaris* aged 25 to 45 showed trunk diameters of 10 to 25 cm at man breast. On trees healthy only in appearance many exploitations of trunks by that scolytid beetle were observed with adults overwintering inside galleries bored in the phloem. The reproductive gallery pattern of *Ph. liminaris* as observed on died trees previously attacked by that bark borer resembles that one of the nearest related European *Ph. scarabaeoides* and includes a short chamber with two maternal transverse tunnels bored in the sapwood. The so far known centre of infestation of Ticino Park is the first record of *Ph. liminaris* outside its native range. Given that in the U.S. this bark beetle is reported as very harmful to its host plants such as the wild black cherry and many other *Prunus* species i.e. peach, *Ph. liminaris* can be regarded as a potential new pest also to our country especially in the *Prunus* orchards of northern Italy.