

## **Coprophagus Beetles (Scarabaeidae: Coleoptera) of Buxa Tiger Reserve, West Bengal, India**

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**Abstract :** Scarab beetles composing the family Scarabaeidae is one of the largest families in the order Coleoptera. The family is comprised of 11 subfamilies. Of these, the subfamily Scarabaeinae includes 13 tribes globally. Indian species are however considered within 2 tribes Scarabaeini and Coprini. Scarab beetles under this subfamily also known as Coprophagus beetles play an indispensable role in forestry and agriculture. Both adults and larvae of these beetles do a remarkable job of carrying excrement into the soil thus enriching the soil to a great extent. Eastern and North Eastern states of India are heavily rich in diversity of organisms as this region exhibits the tropical rain forests of the eastern Himalayas, which exhibits one of the 18 biodiversity hotspots of the world and one of the three of India. Buxa Tiger Reserve located in Dooars between latitudes 26°30" to 26°55" North & longitudes 89°20" to 89°35" East is one such fine example of rain forests of the eastern Himalayas. Despite this, the subfamily is poorly known, particularly from this part of the globe and demands serious revisionary studies. It is with this background; the attempt is being made to assess the Scarabaeinae fauna of the forest. Both extensive and intensive surveys were conducted in different beats under different ranges of Buxa Tiger Reserve. For collection sweep nets, bush beating and collection in inverted umbrella, hand picking techniques were used. Several pit fall traps were laid in the collection localities of the Reserve to trap ground dwelling scarabs. Dung of various animals was also examined to make collections. In the evening hours UV light, trap was used to collect nocturnal beetles. The collected samples were studied under Stereozoom Binocular Microscopes Zeiss SV6, SV11 and Olympus SZ 30. The faunistic investigation of the forest revealed in the recognition of 19 species under 6 genera distributed over 2 tribes. Of these *Heliocopris tyrannus* Thomson, 1859 was recorded new from the Country, while *Catharsius javanus* Lansberge, 1886, *Copris corpulentus* Gillet, 1910, *C. doriae* Harold, 1877 and *C. sarpedon* Harold, 1868 from the state. 4 species are recorded as endemic to India. The forest is dominated by the members of the Genus *Onthophagus*, of which *Onthophagus (Colobonthophagus) dama* (Fabricius, 1798) is represented by highest number of individuals. Their seasonal distribution is most during Premonsoon followed by Monsoon and Postmonsoon. Zoogeographically all the recorded species are of oriental distribution.

**Keywords :** buxa tiger reserve, diversity, India, new records, scarabaeinae, scarabaeidae

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