GOPHER TORTOISE COPRIS BEETLE
Copris gopheri

Order: Coleoptera
Family: Scarabaeidae
FNAI Ranks: G2/S2
U.S. Status: none
FL Status: none

Description: This is a shiny, medium sized (7.5-10 mm)black beetle that might be confused with may other beetle species by laypeople. It may be distinguished from congeners by its impunctate head and nearly impunctate pronotum.

Similar Species: Other species in the genus appear similar, but the impunctate head and nearly impunctate pronotum easily separate this species from congeners.

Habitat: This species is only known from upland habitats in association with gopher tortoise burrows.

Seasonal Occurrence: There are records from early April to early December, with most being from June.

Florida Distribution: This species is only known from the peninsula and mostly the north-central peninsula.

Range-wide Distribution: This species is only known from the Florida peninsula. Most records are in the north-central peninsula from about Gainesville to Tampa and Orlando areas, with a few coastal records in Martin and St. Lucie counties.

Conservation Status: This species is completely reliant upon gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*), burrows and is only known from approximately 20 locations in peninsular Florida. It has not been found associated with gopher tortoises outside of that range, nor in some tortoise occurrences within it, and so appears to be more threatened than the tortoise itself.

Protection and Management: The most appropriate way to manage for this species is to manage for gopher tortoises.

References: Deyrup and Franz 1994, FNAI 2022

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