AUBURNDALE SCRUB SCARAB BEETLE
Polyphylla starkae

Order: Coleoptera
Family: Scarabaeidae
FNAI Ranks: G1/S1
U.S. Status: none
FL Status: none

Description: Males have black to reddish brown bodies with patches of golden hairs and have a mottled appearance and females are reddish brown and have almost no hairs (Skelley 2009).

Similar Species: This species might be confused with *Polyphylla gracilis*, but that species has a broad lateral stripe on its elytra and is not known to occur as far south as *P. starkae*.

Habitat: This species is only known from scrub habitat.

Seasonal Occurrence: Males are active from April to early May.

Florida Distribution: This species is only known to be reproducing in one very small locality in Auburndale, although a single male was found in between Haines City and Poinciana, with both localities being in Polk County.

Range-wide Distribution: This species is only known from Polk County, Florida.

Conservation Status: This species is only known to be reproducing in a very small patch of scrub habitat on the Winter Haven Ridge in Florida, USA, despite surveys in similar habitat in surrounding areas, although a single male was found ca. 25 km away. It appears to require open, well-managed scrub, which is very scarce in the surrounding area due to development, agriculture, mining, and lack of management.

Protection and Management: Occurrences should be managed for open scrub habitat.

References: Skelley 2009

male (© DT Almquist)

flightless female (© DT Almquist)