Beetles (Coleoptera) of Peru: A Survey of the Families. 
Cucujidae, Laemophloeidae, Silvanidae, Passandridae (Cucujoidea)

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Recognition: The “cucujid” group of lower cucujoid families was for a long time considered to be one large family, composed of the four following families, plus several tenebrionoid genera (e.g., Hemipeplus of the Mycteridae and Inopeplus of the Salpingidae) that share the dorsoventrally flattened body form. By the mid-20th Century the composite nature of the family was beginning to be widely recognized and by the end of the century the dismantling of it had been completed, although the position of the Old World family Propalticidae is still under discussion.

Most members of these four families share a dorsoventrally compressed body form, feed on fungi, and are associated with a substrate of dead plant material (bark, wood, dead leaves, leaf litter). One family, Passandridae, has secondarily evolved to be larval ectoparasitoids of other wood-inhabiting insects, and several genera of that family and of the Laemophloeidae have evolved a subcylindrical body form and are found in the galleries of wood-boring Coleoptera (Thomas, 1993).

Cucujidae Latreille, 1802

Diversity in Peru: 1 genus, 3 species. The world fauna consists of 57 species in 4 genera; 1 genus, 3 species species are known from South America.

Recognition: These are commonly called “flat bark beetles” because of the dorsoventral compression of the adult body (Thomas and Leschen, 2010b). In addition to the greatly flattened body, adult South American cucujids are characterized by their bright color (orange and black, or red and metallic blue); possession of rather short antennae without a distinct club; head larger than pronotum with prominent temples; large, prominent mandibles (very large and bizarre in male Palaestes Perty, 1830); small, transverse pronotum with irregular lateral margin and sharply, anteriorly projecting front angles; open procoxal cavities with exposed trochantin; elytra with or without stria; tarsal formula 5-5-4 in males, 5-5-5 in females; male genitalia curved, without a flagellum, and resting on its side in abdomen. Length 10–15 mm.

Habitat: Adults and larvae live under bark, where they appear to be predaceous. Sharp (1899: 505) wrote of Palaestes: “Mr. Champion informs me that these insects are chiefly found between the thin crevices of freshly split sappy timber, and they are often to be seen on the wing in forest clearings.”

Notes: The following list of Cucujidae of Peru is derived from Blackwelder (1945). Blackwelder (1945) listed “Peru” for the distribution of Palaestes nigriceps Waterhouse, 1880, but this was a mistake since the type locality is cited as “Chiguinda,” which is in Ecuador.

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