

A NEW NORTH AMERICAN RECORD FOR *HALIASPIS NAKAHARAI*
(HEMIPTERA: STERNORRHYNCHA: DIASPIDIDAE)

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While searching for the prey of the newly described scale-feeding beetle *Cybocephalus kathrynae* T. R. Smith (Smith & Cave 2006) on the coastal sand dunes of Bahia Honda State Park, Monroe Co., Florida, we collected a diaspidid scale on seashore dropseed, *Sporobolus virginicus* (L.) Kunth (Poaceae), in a habitat dominated by sea oats, *Uniola paniculata* L (Poaceae) (Fig. 1). The scale was identified as *Haliaspis nakaharai* Howell, which

represents a new North American record for this species. Prior to this record, *H. nakaharai* had only been collected in Puerto Rico and Vieques Island on the same host plant species. Voucher specimens are deposited in the Florida State Collection of Arthropods, Gainesville, FL, and labeled as follows: USA: Florida, Monroe Co., Bahia Honda State Park, N24°39'54"-W81°15'21"; V-14-2005; Trevor Smith & R. D. Cave (E2005-2555-301).



Fig. 1. Collection site at Bahia Honda State Park.

We suspect that *H. nakaharai* may occur throughout the range *S. virginicus*, which is distributed along the coastal areas of the Gulf states and the Caribbean. This grass is very important in maintaining coastal dune habitats. Seashore dropseed has extensive root systems with long rhizomes connecting one grass clump to another, similar to sea oats, which help anchor the dunes. While much of the seashore dropseed at the collection site was infested with *H. nakaharai*, nowhere did we observe any population densities that could be considered anything but slight. Many scales showed indications of predation. On the same scale-infested plants we observed several individuals of the coccinellids *Chilocorus cacti* (L.), *Exochomus childreni childreni* Mulsant, and *Naemia seriata seriata* (Melsheimer). None of the scales appeared to be parasitized.

These scales can be identified with the original illustrations and description (Howell 1978) or keyed with the "Key to species of *Haliaspis* of Puerto Rico" (Colón-Ferrer & Medina-Gaud 1998).

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SUMMARY

Haliaspis nakahari Howell is recorded from North America for the first time. The species was taken in Bahia Honda State Park, Florida, on seashore dropseed, *Sporobolus virginicus* (L.) Kunth.

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