

***Rhynchophorus ferrugineus* (Olivier, 1791) was in Western Sahara in 1960 (Coleoptera: Dryophthoridae)**

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The presence in North Africa of the widespread pest known as the red palm weevil, *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus* (Olivier, 1791) has been currently considered as recent. This pest has been reported from Egypt in 1992, Libya in 2009, Tunisia in 2011, Morocco in 2008 and the Canary Islands in 2005 (EPPO, 2015). Algeria has been declared until now free from the pest. However, Faleiro et al. (2012) considered remarkable that the Maghreb area were free from the pest until 2008 being surrounded by countries with earlier attacks, like Spain, given the fact of the quick spread of these animals.

The data here presented support that the pest has been in the area since a much earlier date, but that there has been a failure in detecting its presence. I have studied one male and two females, collected by Mr Alfonso Segura, a military medical assistant of the Spanish army in Smara, Western Sahara (then Spanish Sahara) on 20-IV-[19]60. These specimens were sent to Mr Emilio Esteban, a

close collaborator of the Entomology Collection of the MNCN, Madrid. They are conserved in Mr Esteban's collection, and I warmly thank him for his kindness allowing me their study.

Its presence in this area at such an early date remains unexplained. It could only have been brought by trade of infested young palms or dates. This 1960 date antecedes the first known detection of the species beyond its natural limits in the United Arab Emirates in 1985 (Faleiro et al., 2012).

References: EPPO. 2015. <https://gd.eppo.int/taxon/RHYCFE/distribution> (retrieved on 26 October 2015). • FALEIRO, J.R., A. BEN ABDALLAH, M. EL-BELLAJ, A.M. AL AJLAN & A. OIHABI 2012. Threat of the red palm weevil, *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus* (Olivier) to date palm plantations in North Africa. *Arab Journal of Plant Protection*, **30**: 274-280.