

# BEETLES of GUERNSEY

by Mark P. Lawlor



*Volume 3 : Tenebrionidae*  
*Darkling beetles*



***Phylan gibbus***  
(7 to 9 mm)



***Opatrum sabulosum***  
(6.75 to 9 mm)



***Cteniopus sulphureus***  
(6 to 9 mm)



***Phaleria cadaverina***  
(5 to 7.5 mm)



***Crypticus quisquilius***  
(4.5 to 7 mm)



***Isomira murina***  
(4.5 to 6 mm)



## Tenebrionidae

The Tenebrionidae are quite a variable family in appearance. A few species are very common locally and familiar to most people with an interest in natural history. There are few characteristics that clearly distinguish these beetles from other families but their tarsal-segment pattern is 5-5-4, and their antennae have 11 segments. They are mostly omnivorous but some species specialise. The 'mealworms' that are often used to feed pets are the larvae of this family. Locally, many species prefer dry, sandy habitats.

### Checklist :

a) species recorded since 1990:

***Lagria hirta***  
***Tenebrio molitor***  
***Phylan gibbus***  
***Opatrum sabulosum***  
***Nalassus laevioctostriatus***  
***Hymenalia rufipes***  
***Isomira murina***  
***Cteniopus sulphureus***  
***Crypticus quisquilius***  
***Phaleria cadaverina***

b) species listed during 20th Century prior to 1990 but not since:  
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c) species recorded by Luff in 1893-1907:

***Tenebrio obscurus***  
***Tribolium confusum***  
***Gnathocerus cornutus***  
***Melanimon tibialis***  
***Blaps lethifera***  
***Blaps mucronata***

d) additional species only listed in 1862 and not since:

***Blaps mortisaga***  
***Pseudocistela ceramboides***

### *Notes on the checklist:*

Section a) shows the species that have recorded on the island's insect database since 1990. This publication is concentrating on these species. These records are presumed to be reliable although the identification of many species is very difficult so some errors are inevitably going to be present.

Section b) shows species that have been listed during the 20th century as occurring on Guernsey but not since 1990. It is very difficult to ascertain the reliability of some of these records without further investigation, but equally there are no particular reasons to doubt most of these records.

Section c) shows the species reliably recorded by Luff from the late 19th/early 20th century. Luff was a respected Victorian entomologist and all his identifications are presumed correct using the knowledge available at that time.

Section d) shows species that were listed in Ansted & Latham's 1862 list of fauna of Guernsey but not since. This publication has been shown to contain errors in some areas. Most of the species listed were not authenticated and many lists were passed on second hand. Local naturalists always presume this list to be somewhat unreliable.

# *Phylan gibbus*

length 7.0 to 9.0 mm

All dark in colour

front tarsal segments rather broad

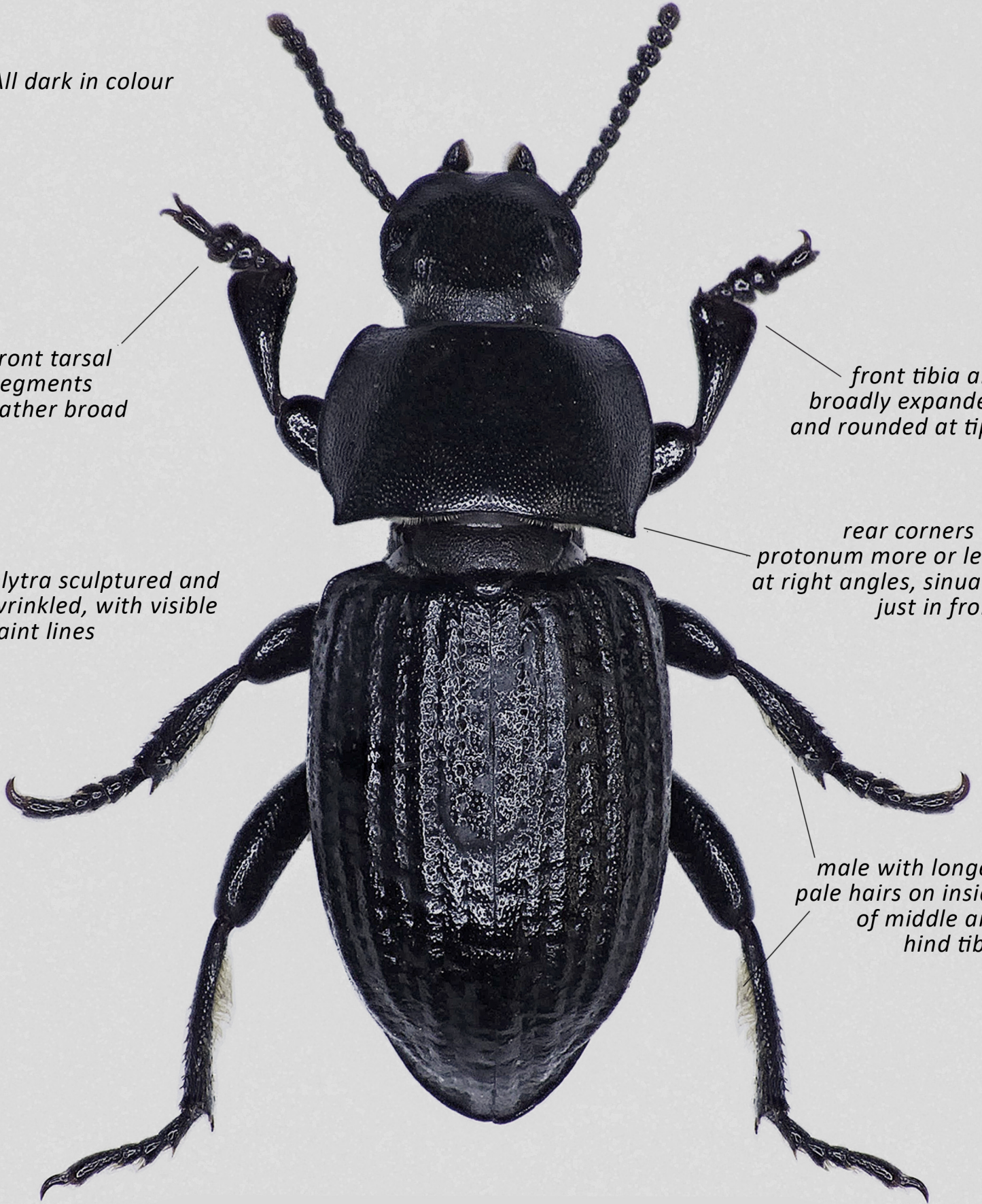
elytra sculptured and wrinkled, with visible faint lines

front tibia are broadly expanded and rounded at tips

rear corners of pronotum more or less at right angles, sinuate just in front

male with longer, pale hairs on inside of middle and hind tibia

a coastal species found in sandy areas





# *Opatrum sabulosum*

length 6.75 to 9.0 mm

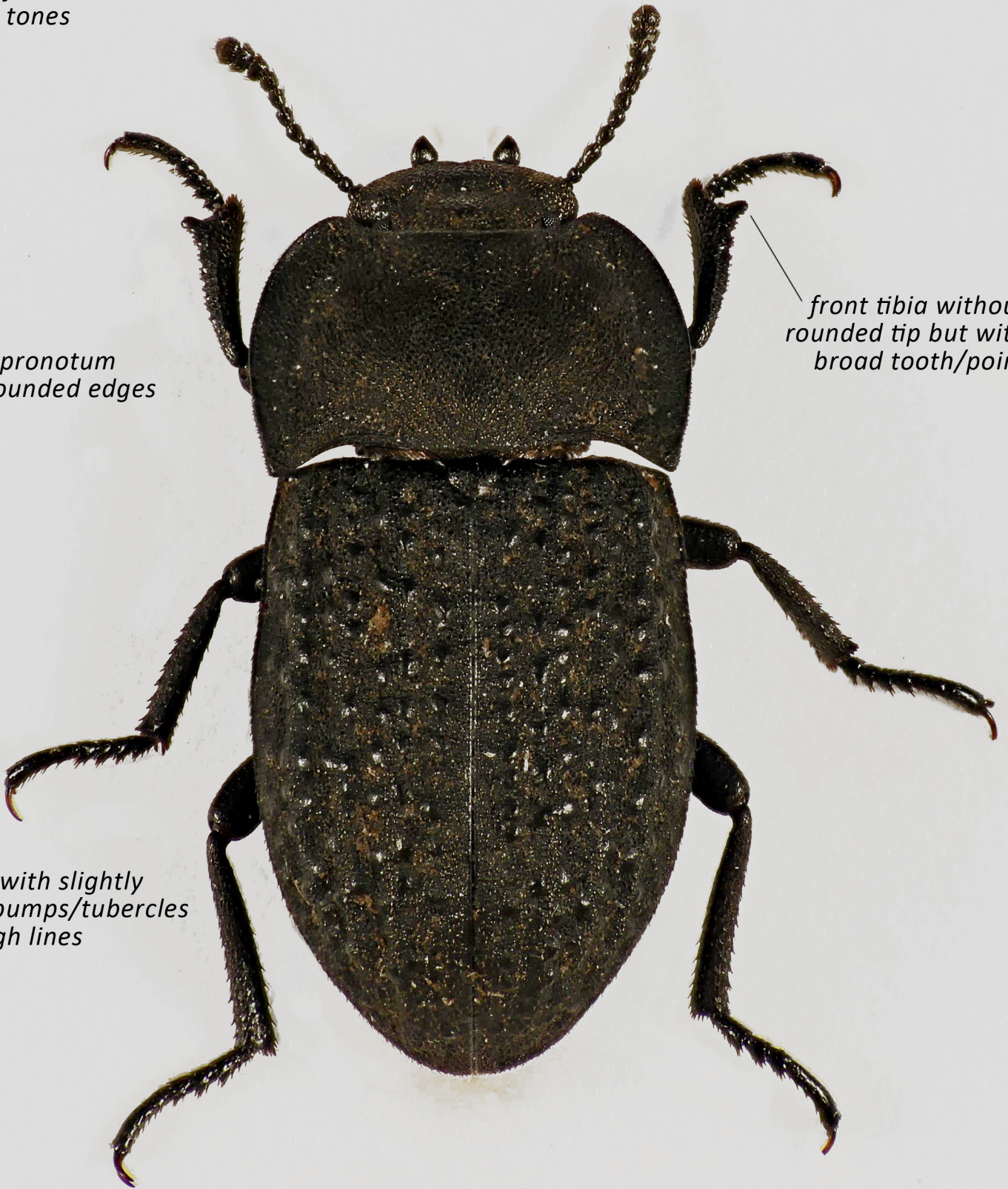
Colour dull black,  
with a few dark  
brown tones

broad pronotum  
with rounded edges

front tibia without  
rounded tip but with  
broad tooth/point

elytra with slightly  
shiny bumps/tubercles  
in rough lines

prefers sand dunes  
and other sandy areas





# *Isomira murina*

length 4.5 to 6.0 mm

*Colour of pronotum and elytra varies from mid-brown to almost blackish*

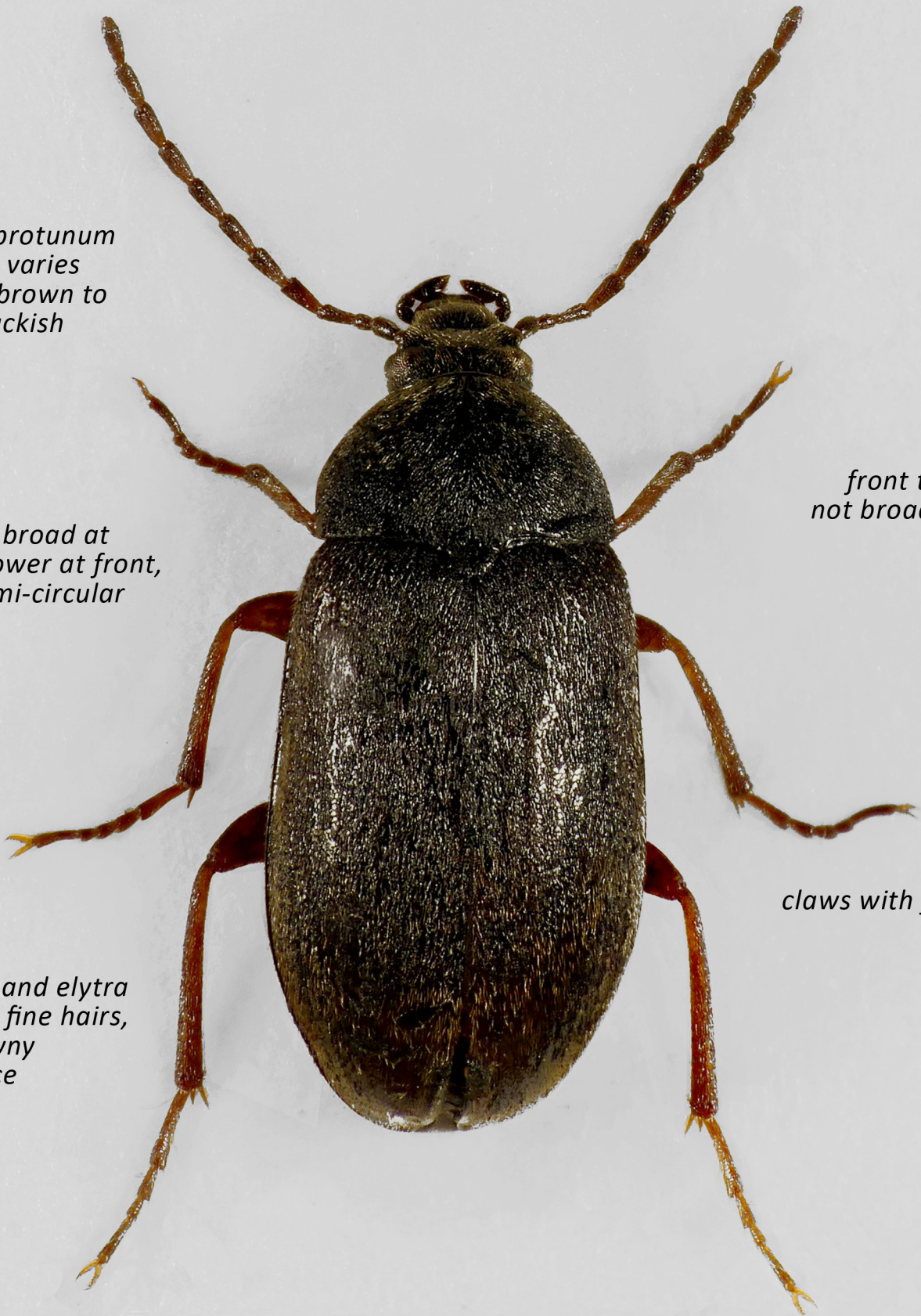
*pronotum broad at rear, narrower at front, almost semi-circular*

*pronotum and elytra covered in fine hairs, giving downy appearance*

*front tibia does not broaden at tip*

*claws with fine teeth*

*does not especially favour coastal areas compared to other species, often seen at flowers in daytime*





# *Cteniopus sulphureus*

length 6.0 to 9.0 mm

also known as 'Sulphur Beetle'

all yellow in colour,  
palest on elytra, can  
be slightly orange  
on other parts

elytra with clear  
striae in life



adults easily found feeding on flowers,  
especially coastally, sometimes  
in large numbers



# *Crypticus quisquilius*

length 4.5 to 7.0 mm

*final section of maxillary  
palps very expanded in male*

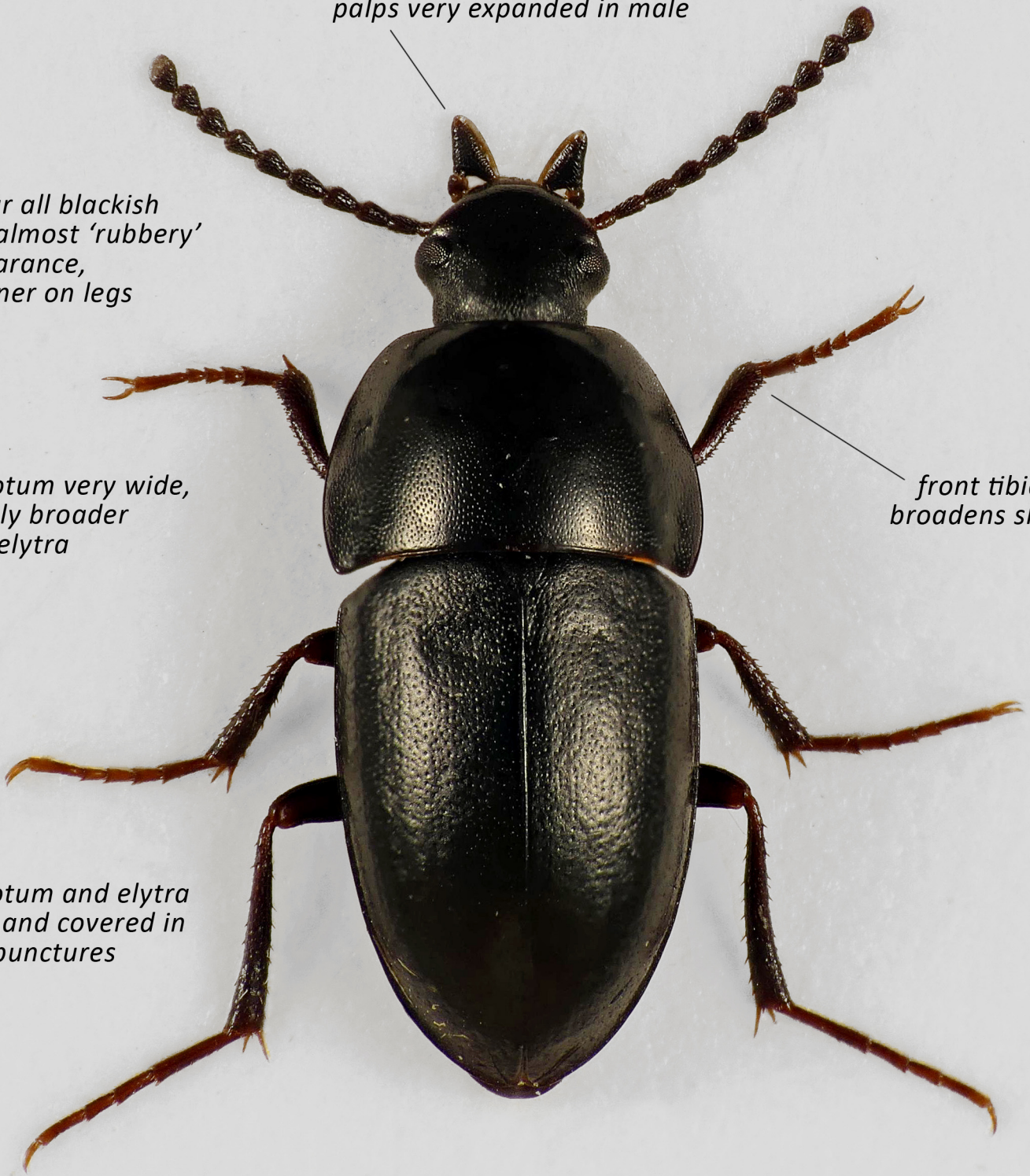
*Colour all blackish  
with almost 'rubbery'  
appearance,  
brownier on legs*

*pronotum very wide,  
slightly broader  
than elytra*

*front tibia only  
broadens slightly  
at tip*

*pronotum and elytra  
shiny and covered in  
fine punctures*

*generally coastal, especially sandy  
areas, seems to be common  
on the cliff paths*





# *Phaleria cadaverina*

length 5.0 to 7.5 mm

*pale orange-brown species, often with a variable dark patch on elytra (none on this individual)*



*front tibia are broadly expanded at tips*

*a coastal species restricted to sand dunes and sandy beaches*



## *Lagria hirta*

(length 7 to 9mm)

A very common species and very unlike the other species of this family. It has a black head and a narrow black pronotum. The most distinctive feature however is the very hairy, brown elytra.



## *Tenebrio molitor*

(length 12 to 17.5mm)

This is the 'Mealworm Beetle' that is used to feed insect-eating pets. There are few island records but it can be a pest of stored food and is usually associated with buildings. It is larger than the previous species and more elongated. It is usually dark brown in colour.

## *Nalassus laevioctostriatus*

(length 6.5 to 12mm)

Appears to be relatively common and widespread in the island, usually spending the daytime under bark, coming out at night to walk the trunks searching for food. A shiny, dark brown species with clear striae down the elytra, with a bronzy metallic sheen, can be mistaken for a ground beetle (*Carabidae*).

## *Hymenalia rufipes*

(length 8 to 9mm)

A non-British species with just one record from Guernsey - at Jaonneuse in 1999. Most similar in general appearance to *Isomira murina* but larger.