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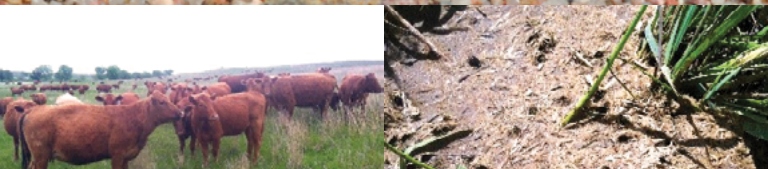
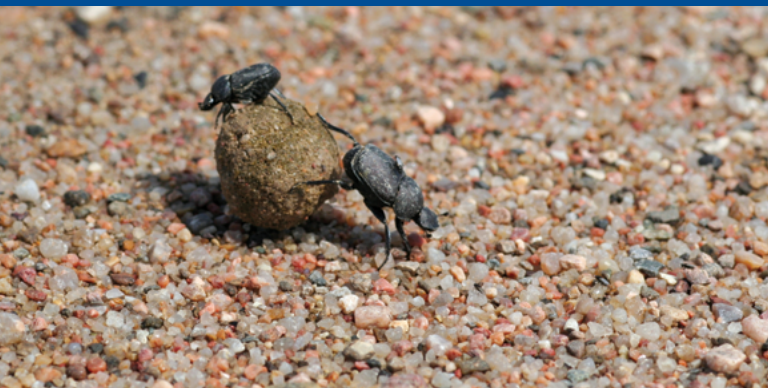


An identification guide to common Dung Beetles of South Dakota

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Dwellers

Aphodiinae

- Very small – most less than ½ inch long
- Elongate or oval body shape
- Color variable: primarily black, brown, or red, being either solid, bi-colored, or mottled
- Mouthparts usually concealed beneath the head
- Horns absent, some with bumps or similar protrusions on the head
- Minimal difference in appearance between males and females



Tunnelers

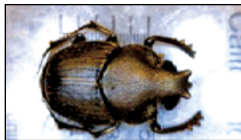
Coprini

- Less than $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long
- Body usually elongate, robust, and convex
- Color mostly black
- Horns or similar protrusions often present on or near head
- Males with more pronounced features than that of females



Onthophagini

- Typically up to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long, but some larger
- Oval, convex body shape
- Color can be black, brown or metallic green
- Males usually with one or more large horns located on or near the head
- Females with horns either reduced or absent



Phanaeini (Rainbow scarabs)

- Large – approximately 1 inch long
- Robust, oval body shape
- Bright metallic colorations, sometimes multi-colored
- Large horns present on males
- Females with horns either reduced or absent



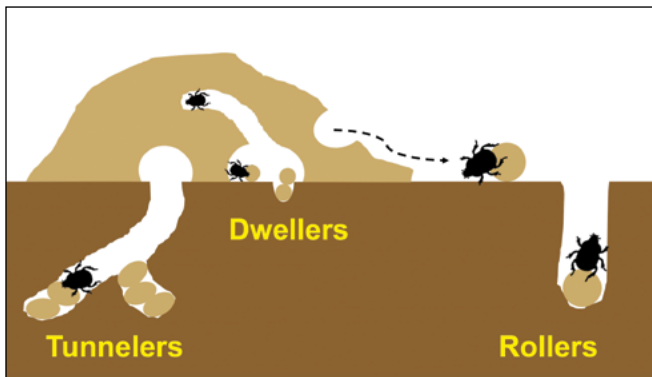
Rollers

Canthonini

- Broad range in sizes, most ½ to 1 inch long
- Round or oval body shape
- Color primarily either black or brown
- Body surface usually smooth or slightly textured
- Very few visual differences exist between males and females
- Both sexes lack horns or other such protrusions



Types of dung beetles



Dwellers live and nest within dung piles. These beetles are generally the smallest of the dung beetles and may be confused with flies at first glance. Dwellers will arrive at fresh dung piles and burrow through them to feed and lay eggs. In doing so, they help to aerate the dung so that it may be weathered and broken down more quickly.

Tunnelers burrow underneath of dung piles and nest in the soil. They work to dig tunnels and form a network of “brood” chambers. Tunnelers then take small balls of dung from the surface and transport it down into the chambers. The beetles lay their eggs inside the dung balls and bury them. This activity helps to integrate dung into the soil to act as fertilizer.

Rollers form balls of dung out of dung piles and roll them away to bury underground. The dung balls may be rolled up to 50 feet away from the original dung source before the beetles dig a hole and bury them. Rollers lay their eggs inside the dung balls where the young will develop. Transporting and burying dung away from dung piles can help to spread dung into the soil evenly over large distances.

Dung beetle facts



- Dung beetles have been found on every continent in the world except Antarctica.
- There are over 6,000 known species of dung beetles.
- Some dung beetles are picky eaters and prefer only specific types of animal dung.
- Most dung beetles exhibit parental care for their young.
- Dung beetles are extremely territorial and often compete with one another for food and nesting space.
- Dung beetles have a critical role in the function of many ecosystems by speeding up the dung decomposition process and cycling important nutrients into the soil.
- Most dung beetle species do not have common names.

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Photographs

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