



Earth Week 2020

Celebrate Beetles that are Native to Rhode Island



The rare American burying beetle is Rhode Island's state insect! Visit Audubon at Home / Earth Week for more information about this amazing creature.



Did you know that there are more than 350,000 different kind of beetles in the world? There are 134 different kinds of beetles in Rhode Island. They come in many colors, shapes and sizes. Many beetles are beneficial as they help to control populations of problem insects, and act as decomposers as well as pollinators in our gardens.

Look for beetles in your own backyard!

Beetles might be found on plants, under logs or on the bark of a tree. Please be gentle if you handle one and always put it back where you found it...that's their HABITAT or home.

When you find a beetle, notice the shape and color.

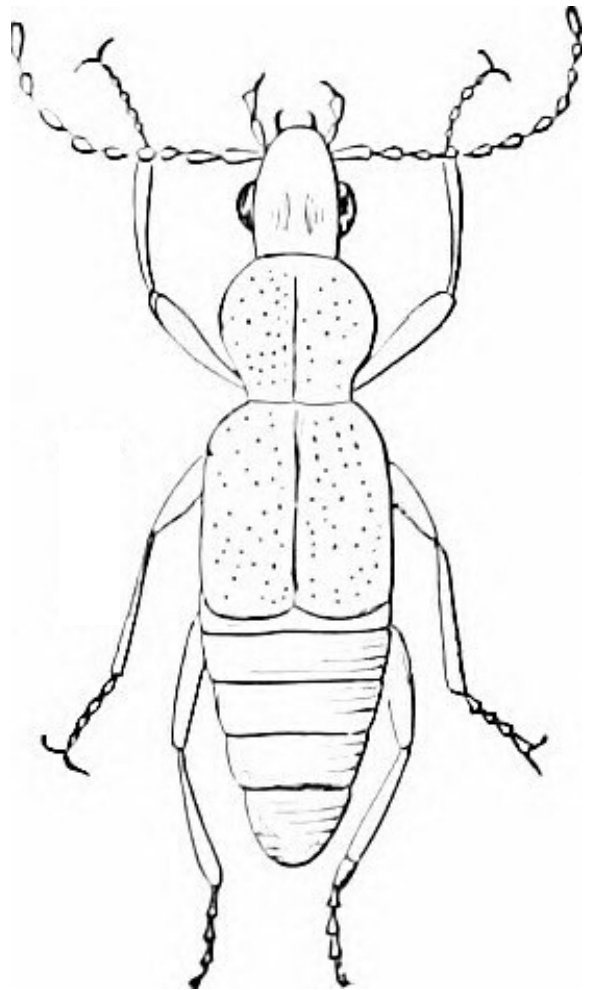
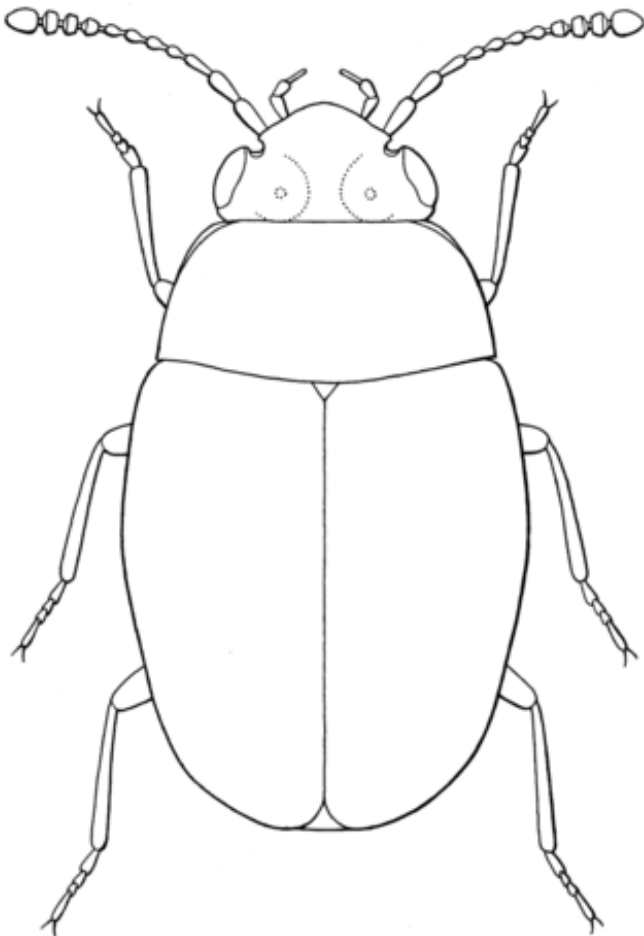
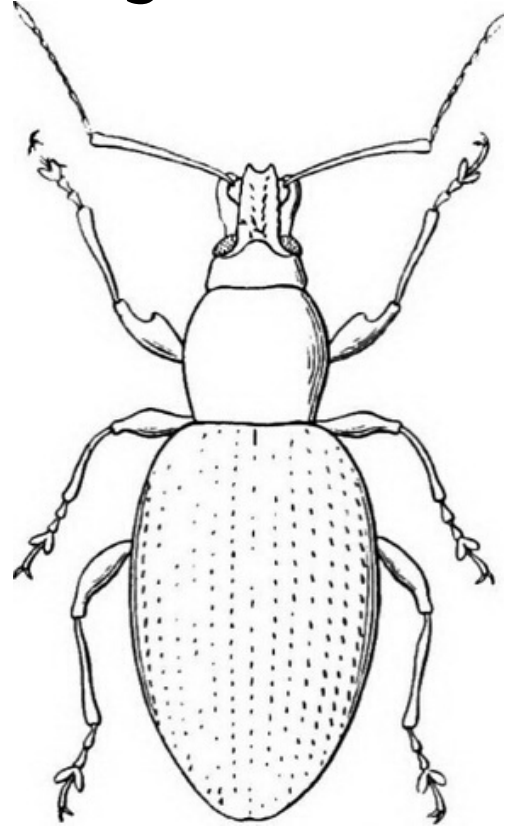
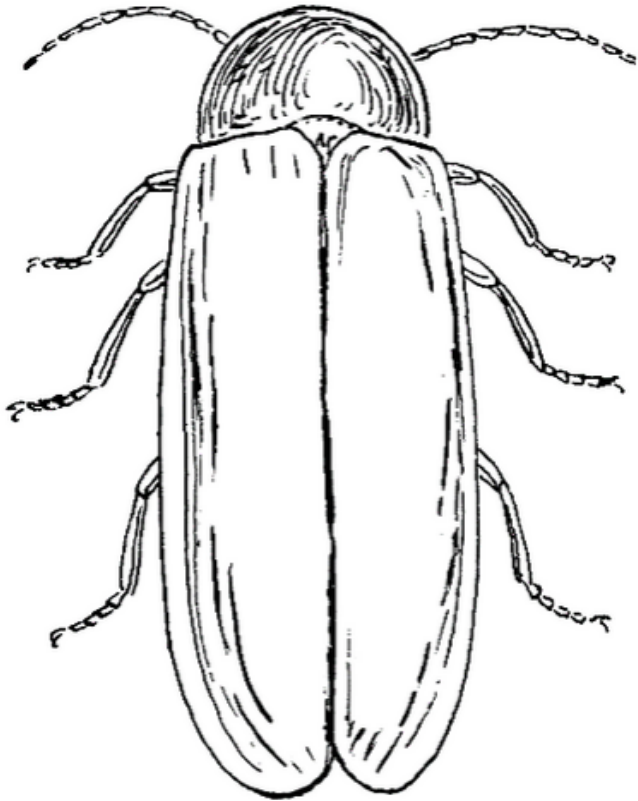
- Is it dull or shiny?
- How many legs does it have?
- Can you find the antennae?

Draw and color a beetle that you found in the box below





Beetle Coloring Sheet





The American Burying Beetle- RI's State Insect



This rare beetle, listed as a Federally Endangered species, is found in only a few places in the United States and Rhode Island is one. According to the RI Department of State, it was officially made our state insect on July 14, 2015. Historically, it was found in 35 states, and besides RI, currently has populations in Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Kansas, and Arkansas. Other states with plans in effect to re-establish populations are Ohio and Massachusetts.

The Audubon Society of RI maintains critical habitat for the ABB on our **Lewis Dickens Farm Wildlife Refuge** on Block Island. They are also found on Block Island on neighboring protected land owned by The Nature Conservancy. To find out more about our wildlife refuge go to this link: <https://asri.org/hike/wildliferefuges/lewis-dickens-farm.html>

The American Burying Beetle, *Nicrophorus americanus*, is a carrion beetle that feeds off of dead animal remains. In the food web, they have an important niche as decomposers, recycling nutrients from the carcass back into the soil. This role, makes them essential in maintaining healthy biological systems.

Additionally, in Rhode Island there are many species of tiger beetles, also a type of carrion beetle, that are listed as either State Threatened, State Concerned, or State Historical. You can see the list of species of beetles, insects and all other RI listed rare animals through RI Department of Environmental Management's link: http://www.rinhs.org/wp-content/uploads/ri_rare_animals_2006.pdf

The recovery of the American Burying Beetle in Rhode Island as well as nationwide, is headed by the work of the Roger Williams Park Zoo and the Conservation Programs Director Lou Perrotti. The RWPZ is the headquarters for the species survival plan (SSP) of the American Burying Beetle. Check out this link to find out more about the zoo's critical role in re-establishing this rare beetle back into healthy status in RI and the United States.

<https://www.rwpzoo.org/conservation-local/american-burying-beetle>