**CARRION BEETLES**

**ORDER**: COLEOPTERA (*koleos*=sheath, *pteryx*=wing, refers to hardened front wings which cover membranous hind pair)

**Family**: Silphidae

**IMPORTANCE** Scavengers. Important in decomposing organic matter and recycling nutrients within food chain. Some prey on caterpillars and maggots. Two species in Canada are phytophagous and may be pests of root crops.

**DISTRIBUTION** Worldwide (mainly northern hemisphere): 250 spp.

* North America: 46 spp.
* Canada: 27 spp. (36,87,135)

**BIOLOGY** Eggs laid beneath buried carcasses or in underground galleries to provide larvae with regurgitated food supply. Follow smell of dead animals. Holometabolous development (complete metamorphosis: larvae do not resemble adults, 4 life stages include egg, larva, pupa and adult).

**FOOD SOURCE** Adults: mainly carrion, also fly larvae in carcasses. Larvae: dead vertebrates, snails, caterpillars, plants.

**SEASONAL OCCURRENCE** (Adults):

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**MONITORING**
Methods - Bait trap, light trap, pitfall trap, visual examination of dead animals.
Habitats - Adults: on carrion and vegetation (living or dead), in fungi and ant nests, near dung and rotting fungi, in damp shaded woodlands.

**CONSERVATION**
Pesticide Use - Apply pesticides only as a last resort.

**RECOMMENDED READINGS**: 87, 135
CARRION BEETLES

DESCRIPTION

Adults 10-35 mm. Large, slightly flattened, dull or shiny, black or brown with red, yellow or orange bands or spots, head with bulging eyes, strong curved mandibles, and short, clubbed antennae. Wing covers broad toward the rear, sometimes exposing several abdominal segments, strong, spiny legs (Fig. 117).

Immatures Broad, flattened, heavily-sclerotized larvae.

Figure 117 - Carrion beetles.