

**MANGO PULP WEEVIL [*STERNOCHETUS FRIGIDUS*
(FABR.)] (CURCULIONIDAE, COLEOPTERA)
FOUND IN PALAWAN¹**

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The mango pulp weevil, *Sternochetus frigidus* (Fabr.), was found for the first time in southern Palawan in May-June, 1987, in Barangay Marangas, Bataraza town and in Barangays Aribungus and Pangubilian, Brooke's Point town. (Fig. 1).

The 25 specimens collected from various locations were placed in a small vial with alcohol by Mr. Pedrito Sison, Agriculture and Fisheries Technician, Agriculture Department, Narra Town, Southern Palawan, from mango pulp in May-June, 1987. These months are considered the peak for mango season in Palawan. No specimens were noted from the seeds. The number of pulp weevil specimens collected by Mr. Sison were as follows: 13 from a Chinese variety, a known weevil host, 6 from Pico; 4 from Mampalang, and 2 from a nearby Carabao variety. It would have been ideal had Mr. Sison submitted the specimens in separate vials instead of placing the 25 specimens together in a vial and indicated the areas and mango sources to serve as reference for future survey.

In the second week of August, 1987, one of us (R.G. Basio), together with the FAO entomologist, collected some 60 mango pulp weevils from foliage and underneath vegetation of three Mampalang trees in the isolated coastal Barangay Tacduan, town of Inagawan, about 26 Km south of Puerto Princesa proper. Not a single weevil was retrieved from fruits harvested from the same tree which we brought back and opened in Manila.

Two taxonomists from the University of the Philippines Los Baños, Dr. V.P. Gapud and Dr. Clare R. Baltazar, confirmed the identity of the weevils as *Sternochetus frigidus*. Dr. Baltazar said: "This insect was reported in Borneo and your collection is the first report of its presence in the Philippines." Similar confirmation was made by weevil authorities at the U.S. National Museum, Washington, D.C., USA.

If additional studies can be carried out in Palawan, notably during peaks of flowering and fruiting seasons no doubt, more intriguing but noteworthy findings can be unearthed.

¹ Paper based on the study "Nationwide Ecological Survey of the Mango Seed Weevil" conducted under the auspices of the Technical Cooperation Program (TCP), Department of Agriculture, Manila and supported in part by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). United Nations, Rome, Italy.

One comforting feature of the Palawan findings is the pulp weevil's apparent spotty distribution, meaning it has not yet penetrated larger areas of the island province. The weevil infestation is concentrated in the coastal areas, in abandoned, isolated, wild native varieties, therefore, its control (chemical) can still be carried out effectively. As of September, 1987, its presence has not yet been established in areas of Puerto Princesa, up to the towns of Roxas, Taytay, El Nido, Cuyo, Coron, Culion, Salvacion, including the Busuanga Group and Calauit Island.

Interviews revealed that there is an unrestricted flow of commodities between southern Palawan and Borneo (a known native area of pulp weevil). It takes only 8 hours to reach Borneo by boat. Bataraza is also the location of the Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Company and the Philippine-Japan Shipping Company which regularly transport nickel ore to other countries. It is through this route and trade activities that the establishment of the pulp weevil can be attributed.

This country-wide survey concluded in 1987, showed that the mango seed weevil, *Sternochaetus mangiferae* (Fabr.), is not present in the Philippines. Therefore, mango can be exported to the USA and other foreign markets.



Figure 1. Dorsal view of the mango pulp weevil (*Sternochaetus frigidus* (Fabr.)), collected in Bgy. Tacduan, town of Inagawan, Puerto Princesa, August 9, 1987.