CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD & AGRICULTURE

California Pest Rating Proposal

Aleurotrachelus atratus Hempel: A whitefly

Hemiptera: Aleyrodidae

Current Rating: Q

Proposed Rating: A

Comment Period: 01/29/2026 - 03/15/2026

Initiating Event:

This whitefly is occasionally intercepted on palms, typically from Texas and Florida. It has not been through the pest rating system. Therefore, a pest rating proposal is needed.

History & Status:

Background: *Aleurotrachelus atratus* appears to mostly be limited to palms (Arecaceae). Reported hosts include: **Arecaceae:** *Adonidia merrillii*, *Cocos nucifera*, *Dictyosperma album*, *Dypsis lutescens*, *Phoenix roebelenii*; **Rutaceae:** *Citrus* (a few immatures reported on citrus in Comoros, Africa, which casts doubt on this as a true host) (Borowiec et al., 2010; Madushani and Sirisena, 2024; Selvaraj et al., 2019). This whitefly appears to prefer pinnate (as opposed to fan) palms. It was not found on *Washingtonia filifera* or *Phoenix dactylifera* by Borowiec et al. (2010), although only two and three trees were surveyed by them of these species, respectively (Borowiec et al., 2010).
Evans (2007) reports that this whitefly has been intercepted with other (non-palm) plants (e.g., *Solanum melongena*), but lack of reports of impacts to plants other than palms casts doubt on the potential for this whitefly to have significant impacts on plants other than palms.

High densities (more than 60% of leaflet covered by nymphs) of *A. atratus* on coconut palm are reported to cause chlorosis and drying of leaflets and deposits of honeydew (Selvaraj et al., 2019).

Infestations of this whitefly are reported to decrease yield of coconut by 55% in Comoros (Borowiec et al., 2008).

Worldwide Distribution: **Africa:** Comoros, Mozambique, Réunion, Senegal; **Asia:** India, Sri Lanka; **North America:** United States (Florida) (Borowiec et al., 2008; Borowiec et al., 2010; Gokulakrishnaa, 2025; Hodges and Evans, 2005; Kityo et al., 2017; Madushani and Sirisena, 2024; Muniappan et al., 2012).

Official Control: *Aleurotrachelus atratus* is not known to be under official control.

California Distribution: *Aleurotrachelus atratrus* is not known to be established in California.

California Interceptions: *Aleurotrachelus atratus* is occasionally intercepted on palms, for example, from Texas and Florida (California Department of Food and Agriculture).

The risk *Aleurotrachelus atratus* poses to California is evaluated below.

Consequences of Introduction:

1) **Climate/Host Interaction:** Palms are grown widely in California. The reported distribution of this whitefly suggests it may require warmer climates. Therefore, it receives a **Low (1)** in this category.

   – Low (1) Not likely to establish in California; or likely to establish in very limited areas.

   – Medium (2) may be able to establish in a larger but limited part of California.

   – High (3) likely to establish a widespread distribution in California.

2) **Known Pest Host Range:** Although primarily a pest of palms, reports suggest that this whitefly may be polyphagous. Therefore, it receives a **High (3)** in this category.

– Low (1) has a very limited host range.

– Medium (2) has a moderate host range.

– High (3) has a wide host range.

3) **Pest Reproductive and Dispersal Potential:** *Aleurotrachelus atratus* can be moved with infested plant material. Therefore, it receives a **Medium (2)** in this category.

– Low (1) does not have high reproductive or dispersal potential.

– Medium (2) has either high reproductive or dispersal potential.

– High (3) has both high reproduction and dispersal potential.

4) **Economic Impact**. Palms are important ornamental plants in California. Reports indicate that dense infestations can significantly impact palms. Date palms may not be at risk; Borowiec et al. (2010) did not find *A*. *atratus* on three *Phoenix dactylifera* surveyed by them in Comoros. Therefore, it receives a **Medium (2)** in this category.

Economic Impact: A, B

A. The pest could lower crop yield.

B. The pest could lower crop value (includes increasing crop production costs).

C. The pest could trigger the loss of markets (includes quarantines).

D. The pest could negatively change normal cultural practices.

E. The pest can vector, or is vectored, by another pestiferous organism.

F. The organism is injurious or poisonous to agriculturally important animals.

G. The organism can interfere with the delivery or supply of water for agricultural uses.

Economic Impact Score: Medium

– Low (1) causes 0 or 1 of these impacts.

– Medium (2) causes 2 of these impacts.

– High (3) causes 3 or more of these impacts.

5) **Environmental Impact**. This whitefly could impact ornamental palm plantings and trigger treatments in California. Based on a very limited survey (two trees) by Borowiec et al. (2010), the only native California palm, *Washingtonia filifera*, does not appear to be susceptible to this whitefly. Therefore, this whitefly receives a **High (3)** in this category.

Environmental Impact: D, E

A. The pest could have a significant environmental impact such as lowering biodiversity, disrupting natural communities, or changing ecosystem processes.

B. The pest could directly affect threatened or endangered species.

C. The pest could impact threatened or endangered species by disrupting critical habitats.

D. The pest could trigger additional official or private treatment programs.

E. The pest significantly impacts cultural practices, home/urban gardening or ornamental plantings.

Environmental Impact Score: High (3)

– Low (1) causes none of the above to occur.

– Medium (2) causes one of the above to occur.

– High (3) causes two or more of the above to occur.

Consequences of Introduction to California for *Aleurotrachelus atratus*: Medium (11)

Add up the total score and include it here.

–Low = 5-8 points
–Medium = 9-12 points
–High = 13-15 points

6) **Post Entry Distribution and Survey Information:** *Aleurotrachelus atratus* is not known to be established in California. It receives a **Not established (0)** in this category.

–Not established (0) Pest never detected in California, or known only from incursions.

–Low (-1) Pest has a localized distribution in California, or is established in one suitable climate/host area (region).

–Medium (-2) Pest is widespread in California but not fully established in the endangered area, or pest established in two contiguous suitable climate/host areas.

–High (-3) Pest has fully established in the endangered area, or pest is reported in more than two contiguous or non-contiguous suitable climate/host areas.

Final Score:

7) The final score is the consequences of introduction score minus the post entry distribution and survey information score: Medium (11)

Uncertainty:

There is uncertainty regarding the host range of this whitefly. It is possible that palms are the only hosts able to support development of this species and the other plant associations reported (e.g., citrus) may represent wayward nymphs that would not have been able to complete development on these plants. The known distribution of this whitefly suggests a tropical climate may be a requirement.

Conclusion and Rating Justification:

Aleurotrachelus atratus is a pest of palm trees and it is reported to have economic impacts. It is not known to be present in California. For these reasons, an “A” rating is justified.

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References:

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California Department of Food and Agriculture. Pest and Damage Record Database. Accessed January 9, 2026:
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Responsible Party:

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***Comment Period: 01/29/2026 - 03/15/2026**

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***NOTE:**

You must be registered and logged in to post a comment. If you have registered and have not received the registration confirmation, please contact us at permits[@]cdfa.ca.gov.

Comment Format:

- Comments should refer to the appropriate California Pest Rating Proposal Form subsection(s) being commented on, as shown below.

Example Comment:
Consequences of Introduction: 1. Climate/Host Interaction: [Your comment that relates to "Climate/Host Interaction" here.]

- Posted comments will not be able to be viewed immediately.

- Comments may not be posted if they:

Contain inappropriate language which is not germane to the pest rating proposal;
Contains defamatory, false, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, pornographic, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, discriminatory or illegal material;
Violates agency regulations prohibiting sexual harassment or other forms of discrimination;
Violates agency regulations prohibiting workplace violence, including threats.

- Comments may be edited prior to posting to ensure they are entirely germane.

- Posted comments shall be those which have been approved in content and posted to the website to be viewed, not just submitted.

Proposed Pest Rating: A