CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD & AGRICULTURE

California Pest Rating Proposal

Physorhinus fusculus Champion: Agave wireworm

Coleoptera: Elateridae

Current Rating: Q

Proposed Rating: A

Comment Period: 06/11/2026 through 07/26/2026

Initiating Event:

The larvae of *Physorhinus fusculus* were recently reported to live in agave stems. Agave is an important ornamental plant in California and it is growing in importance as a crop here as well, and this beetle is a potential agave pest. Therefore, a pest rating proposal is needed.

History & Status:

Background: Larvae of *Physorhinus fusculus* were reported in stems of *Agave americana*. Some of these larvae were successfully reared to adults in this material, indicating that the agave stem is suitable food (Martínez-Luque et al., 2026). Details were not provided regarding the condition of these plants, for example, if they were dead. However, the larvae were found with larvae and adults of *Scyphophorus acupunctatus* (agave weevil). It is therefore possible that *P. fusculus* is a secondary invader taking advantage of tissue damage by the weevil. *Physorhinus fusculus* adults were also collected associated with *Agave bovicornuta*.

Worldwide Distribution: **North America:** Mexico, United States (New Mexico) (Fall and Cockerell, 1907; Martínez-Luque et al., 2026).

There are research-grade citizen scientist reports on iNaturalist from Arizona and New Mexico (iNaturalist).

Official Control: *Physorhinus fusculus* is not known to be under official control.

California Distribution: *Physorhinus fusculus* is not known to be present in California.

California Interceptions: *Physorhinus fusculus* has not been intercepted in California.

The risk *Physorhinus fusculus* poses to California is evaluated below.

Consequences of Introduction:

1) **Climate/Host Interaction:** *Physorhinus fusculus* is only reported to feed on *Agave* species. This genus includes many species (including the known host A. americana) grown as ornamentals in California. Several species are native to California. It may only be able to live in the desert areas. Therefore, it receives a **Medium (2)** 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:** *Physorhinus fusculus* is only known to feed on *Agave*. Therefore, it receives a **Low (1)** 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:** *Physorhinus fusculus* can fly. 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:** *Physorhinus fusculus* is reported to feed on agave. This beetle could become a pest of ornamental and crop agave. 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:** *Physorhinus fusculus* could impact agave plantings. Therefore, it receives a **Medium (2)** in this category.

Environmental Impact: 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: Medium

– 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 *Physorhinus fusculus*: Medium (9)

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:** *Physorhinus fusculus* is not known to be present 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 (9)

Uncertainty:

There is high uncertainty regarding the pest significance of *Physorhinus fusculus* on healthy agave plants. The larvae found in *Agave americana* were associated with agave weevil. *Physorhinus fusculus* could be a secondary invader.

Conclusion and Rating Justification:

Physorhinus fusculus is a click beetle that is a potential pest of agave, an important ornamental and growing crop in California. It is not known to be established in the state. For these reasons, an "A" rating is justified.

References:

Fall, H. C., and Cockerell, T. D. A. 1907. The Coleoptera of New Mexico. Transactions of the American Entomological Society 33:145-272.

iNaturalist. Accessed May 18, 2026: https://www.inaturalist.org/

Martínez-Luque, E. O., Niño-Maldonado, S., Gómez-Moreno, V. D., Clark, S. M., and Reyes-Muñoz, J. L. 2026. Description of the larvae and pupae of *Physorhinus fusculus*: Redescription of the male genitalia and the first report of Mexican agave as a host. Southwestern Entomologist 51:245-263.

Responsible Party:

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***Comment Period: 06/11/2026 through 07/26/2026**

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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