

Twiglet weevils: *Acalles* and *Kyklioacalles*.

Pronotum outlines from above



Kyklioacalles

Acalles

Three small weevils with **round scales** and a pronotum that is pulled over the front of the head like a **hood**. They have rather stocky legs. When they are disturbed and they drop, they adopt a curious posture with their legs held out and together underneath the body, unlike other weevils, which usually pull their legs in to the body. They are associated with dead twigs and leaves, and can usually be found if you beat or shake dense bundles of twigs, especially witches' brooms and epicormic growth where dead leaves and sticks have built up.

Our two *Acalles* have an **hour glass** figure: the pronotum and wing cases are rounded and meet each other at a narrow waist. The pronotum of *Kyklioacalles* is wider at the rear and the beetle has a less constricted waist, lacking the hour glass shape. The difference in shape is emphasised by several prominent **bumps** on the pronotum of *Kyklioacalles*, which appears suddenly widened around the middle, unlike the pronotum of *Acalles*, which has hardly noticeable bumps and more or less evenly rounded sides.

For now, this is an easy group, but it is probably only a matter of time before someone takes a close look at British *Acalles misellus* and discovers one or more of the very similar looking species that are found on the continent. Then things will get difficult.

Acáalles = ugly. An unfair name for a group of adorably cute weevils; *Kyklioacalles* from *kyklios* = circular + *Acalles*, from a circular structure in the aedeagus.

Acalles misellus

2.0-3.0 mm. miséllus = miserable.

Many **erect** paddle scales in tufts and singly on the wing-cases, so the back looks bristly. The tufts have rows of **two or three** paddle scales.



Acalles ptinoides

2.0-3.0 mm. ptinoīdes = like *Ptinus*, the spider beetles.

Unlike the other two species, *ptinoides* has **no** bunches or tufts of erect paddle scales. All the paddle scales are evenly spread and only **slightly raised**, and they are **curved** backwards on the wing-cases and forwards on the pronotum.



Kykliacalles roboris

2.5-3.5 mm. *röboris* = on Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*.

Many erect paddle scales in **dense** tufts on the wing cases and pronotum. The tufts often have **four or more** paddle scales, which are more tightly packed than those of *misellus*. Has less of an hour glass figure than the two *Acalles* because the rear of the pronotum has straighter sides. Prominent **bumps** on the pronotum. On average larger than *Acalles*.



Acalles misellus



Acalles misellus. Hiding and resting posture.



Acalles ptinoides



Acalles ptinoides. Unlike the other two species, *ptinoides* does not have erect paddle scales.



Kyklioacalles roboris. Because of the bumps on the pronotum, this species looks like it is wearing a 17th Century wig.



Kyklioacalles roboris. Note the bumps on the side of the pronotum, which is wider at the rear than in *Acalles*.

All three species are widespread in England and Wales, and they are found as far north as southern Scotland. *Kyklioacalles roboris* is the least common.