

LYSATHIA

(*Lysathia n.sp.*)

A natural enemy of **PARROT'S FEATHER/WATERDUISENBLAAR**
(*Myriophyllum aquaticum*) in South Africa

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DOSSIERS ON BIOLOGICAL CONTROL AGENTS AVAILABLE TO AID ALIEN PLANT CONTROL

DESCRIPTION

The 3.8mm long adults are metallic green with yellow legs, the tibiae and tarsi dark brown to black. First instar larvae are yellowish brown later instars black. Larvae are 1-8 mm long. Pupae are dark brown.

LIFE CYCLE

Females deposit eggs on leaves near the growth tip, either grouped or singly. The yellow eggs are covered in a layer of fine white waxy powder and hatch in 3 - 6 days. The four larval instars are completed in 14-18 days and the pupal stage in 3-6 days. A generation is completed in 23 to 26 days during summer.

FEEDING DAMAGE

Both adults and larvae feed on the leaflets of parrot's feather resulting in defoliation, and die back of the emergent shoots.

EFFECT ON PARROT'S FEATHER

Extensive feeding damage leads to defoliation and die back of emergent plant parts. Adult beetles migrate to new feeding areas and the plants can recover by sending out lateral shoots, which are then again attacked by *Lysathia n.sp.* Continual stress by the beetle retards the unlimited growth of the weed and over 3-4 years the plants become smaller. There is a resurgence of new plant growth after winter, which in turn is again severely damaged by the increasing number of weevils after winter from November through out especially the summer months.



Lysathia larva



Lysathia adult



Healthy Parrot's Feather



Parrot's Feather showing advanced damage caused by the Lysathia beetle



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