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# Invertebrate of the Month

## March 2007



### **Pie-dish beetles**

#### **Coleoptera – (subfamily Tenebrioninae; Tribe Heleini)**

Although the beetle family Tenebrionidae is globally widespread, pie-dish beetles are exclusive to Australia. They are mainly found in South Australia and Western Australia and inhabit sclerophyll forest and arid regions. There are two known genera: *Helea* (pictured on the left) and *Pterohelaeus* (pictured on the right). Both genera have strong Gondwanan affinities. *Helea* spp have their external wing coverings (elytra) fused and are flightless, the genus *Pterohelaeus* has both winged and flightless species. Adults forage on the ground mainly at night, moving quickly on long legs. Some species return to the same resting-place at dawn, often using mammal burrows to shelter in. Other species are commonly found under pieces of wood, leaf litter, logs or stones. Some species in the genus *Pterohelaeus* are found under the loose bark of living and dead eucalypts. The adults are most active during the hottest months of the year. Pie-dish beetles mainly feed on decaying vegetation.