

Cosnard's Net-winged Beetle
Erotides cosnardi – a Wye Gorge speciality

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Cosnard's net-winged beetle

- A saproxylic beetle recently assessed in GB as “Endangered”
- Only two populations known in GB, but poorly understood
- Species Recovery Trust has been leading on conservation action



Photo by Lewis Thompson

British distribution

- Up until 2017 barely a dozen specimens known
- Wye Gorge
 - Originally discovered 'near Monmouth' in 1944
 - Cadora Wood, Glos. in 2002
 - Little Doward, Heref. in 2004 & 2015
- Arundel Forest, West Sussex
 - 1969, 1984, 2008 & 2016
- Gibside & Derwent Valley, Co Durham
 - 1894 museum specimen but only discovered in 2017



Ecology

- “confined to old forests where it is found in trunk cavities of ancient beech trees” (Speight, 1990)
- Larvae develop in cavities within white-rotten heartwood
- Adult stage early May to mid June
 - Only available 6 to 8 weeks each year
- Fly in hot sunshine
- Not attracted to blossom.



Beetle photographed on sawn stump in May 2017

2017 Gloucestershire survey



Adults spotted on recently sawn stump
on edge of Highbury Wood NNR

- Exploration of old beech stands drew a blank
- Fortuitously spotted on a cut stump of goat willow
 - Had been cut that spring
 - Note white-rotten core
 - Highbury Wood NNR

Observations



- Up to 7 male beetles observed on this single stump over period 31st May to 14th June 2017
- Note
 - Alert antennae
 - Body stance
 - More or less stationary for prolonged periods
 - Apparently ignoring other individuals on stump
 - but keeping separate

What was going on?



- No observations of:
 - Young adults emerging from the heart-rot
 - No egg-laying behaviour
 - No flight activity
- But mating observed on three occasions in evening
- Clearly using the cut stump as an assembly point for pairing
 - Lekking?!

Plans for 2018 – expanding field survey

- Gloucestershire
 - Species Recovery Trust
 - Gloucestershire Environmental Trust
 - Gloucestershire Naturalists Society
- Herefordshire, etc
 - Buglife HLF project
- Monmouthshire
 - NRW project on saproxylics of Welsh part of Wye Valley Woodlands SAC



2018 studies – Highbury Wood

- Is the Highbury Wood stump still suitable?
- Follow-up survey work has found no further beetles
 - Stump only suitable for one season?



The goat willow stump the following winter

2018 trial – habitat creation



- Field trial
 - Network of freshly cut beech stumps in two FC areas on edge of Forest of Dean, near original 'Monmouth' site
 - Can we attract adults on demand?
 - These stumps not ideal as proved difficult to find comparable trees
 - Monitored during May-June 2018
 - No sign of any beetles
 - Possibly too closed in

2018 coincidentally



- Woodland Trust H&S works along Chepstow to Monmouth road
- Effectively glades cut in sycamore areas
- Fresh cut sycamore stumps available
 - including one with white rot and another hollow
- No sign of *cosnardi* but being used by sap beetles and rare hoverflies

2018 Surveys



- Little Doward, Herefs
 - Only GB site where the beetle has been seen in more than one year
- 3 male beetles behaving exactly as seen in 2017 but on one occasion only
- On beech trunk section, not a stump
 - Unsuitable larval habitat?





Conclusions?

- We still know very little about this rare beetle
- But we know a little more about adult behaviour
 - Even if we don't really understand it!
 - We now know the sort of places to look.
- Still no knowledge of larval habitat
- Much still to do.