

Longhorn Beetle Survey 2006 Keith Balmer

It was after catching a dose of "60th Anniversary fever" in early May that I decided to launch a survey for longhorn beetles (*Cerambycidae*) a group of generally large, distinctive and attractive beetles to which I'd been introduced the year before on a Wildlife Trust Workshop.

Knowing only a little about the group I drafted an article drawing on various sources and asked Brian Eversham, Conservation Director of the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough Wildlife Trust to review it, which he kindly did. After incorporating his suggestions the article was turned into a web page on the BNHS website and an on-line form added for record submission. The survey was announced on the BNHS newsgroup on 16th May and in an anniversary newsletter to society members by David Withers shortly after.

Vital to the success of the survey would be correct identification, so Brian kindly made available his key to our local species which was emailed to those that asked for a copy, together with an article by Brian on dead-wood beetles.

A gallery of images was included on the website as many species can be identified on sight. From just ten species at the start of the season the gallery grew to twenty by its end, the additional images generously supplied by Bernard Nau, Vince Lea, Stephen Plummer, Stephen Williams and John O'Sullivan. (A couple of Vince's images were of species that were not seen in Bedfordshire during the survey period but might be found in the county). I also added a few more images of my own.

After a wet start to the survey in late May the fine weather of June and July was ideal for seeking out the beetles along woodland rides and wood edges where all the nectar sources were closely examined and foliage beaten. The news that I was beating into a cat-litter tray (unused) raised a few smiles, but I can recommend it as an effective technique and I now often carry one in my rucksack!

It was requested that all records be reported before the end of September. Those received by this date were collated and copies sent to Brian and to the national *Cerambycidae* recorder Martin Rejzek for verification. Photographs of several of the rarer species encountered were also made available to them, allowing these to be verified with certainty. It is difficult to verify records without being familiar with the identification skills of the individual observers and Brian noted that *Pseudovadonia livida*, *Alosterna tabacicolor* and male *Stenurella melanura* are rather similar in appearance and therefore provide an opportunity for misidentification by inexperienced observers, though he expressed no concerns about any particular record.

Martin later verified a second batch of records that were submitted during the winter.

The survey's findings:

PRIONINAE

***Prionus coriarius*, Tanner Beetle** (Nationally Notable A)

With a body length of up to about 45mm this is a massive chunky looking black beetle with serrated antennae. One was spotted on a windowsill of the Avocet building at The Lodge by Andy Hay on 15/8 and determined by Ian Dawson. There were further sightings there over the following days and John O'Sullivan photographed one on 17/8, noting that he could see it from a distance of 50 metres. (Ian reported that he had previously recorded it at The Lodge in 1996, 2000 and 2004).

LEPTURINAE

Rhagium bifasciatum

A large dark species attractively marked with two diagonal pale cream stripes across each elytron (wing-case) separated by a large red spot. Only one was reported, by Andy and Melissa Banthorpe, sitting on a leaf in Stockgrove Country Park on 2/6.

Stenocorus meridianus

A large and therefore noticeable beetle that comes in brown and black forms with elytra (wing-cases) that taper towards the rear. It was seen in ones and twos, usually on dog rose, hogweed and privet flowers, but also noted once on cock's-foot and beaten from oak.

Grammoptera ruficornis

A small thin dark species seen to have reddish antennae when examined closely. The most abundant species seen, commonly found in large numbers on nectar sources such as hawthorn, dogwood, dog rose, hogweed and meadowsweet. It wasn't always practical to record all beetles present due to their abundance. Although so common, it was reported by only three people, possibly overlooked due to its small size.

Leptura quadrifasciata

A large dark beetle with four light panels across each elytron. Reported from only one location (Duck End Nature Reserve) by Stephen Plummer, who noted it on brambles, hogweed and meadowsweet over a five-day period in early July.

Stictoleptura rubra

A large chunky species that shows sexual dimorphism – the male has a black pronotum and light brown/yellow elytra; the female has a red pronotum and elytra. A male was seen in Maulden Wood on 18/7 and one of each sex on teasel in Chicksands Wood on 25/7, all three by myself. Checks of local and national records have so far revealed no prior county records. This species used to be rare but has since extended its range away from the Brecks.

Alosterna tabacicolor

A smallish beetle with black head and pronotum and light brown/yellow elytra. This species was reported only once, from King's Wood Heath and Reach, on 6/6 by Mark Gurney. He found it to be abundant on flowers of wood spurge.

Pseudovadonia livida

Another smallish species with black head and pronotum and light brown/yellow elytra. Often encountered on hogweed and ox-eye daisy at a range of sites. Several mating pairs were noted.

Rutpela maculata

A large species with yellow elytra carrying variable black markings. This is a widespread and common species and was noticed by many flying along woodland rides or feeding on nectar sources such as hogweed, dog rose and bramble.

Stenurella melanura

This is another species that show sexual dimorphism – the male's elytra are mostly brown/yellow, but the female's are red with black tips and a black stripe down the elytral suture (where the wing-cases meet). Only two were reported; a female on ox-eye daisy at Maulden Heath on 12/6 by Stephen Plummer, and another female in King's Wood Heath and Reach on 8/7 by myself.

SPONDYLIDINAE

Arhopalus rusticus

A large brown beetle up to 30mm long that is active at night. Stephen Plummer was asked to remove one that was flying around his son's bedroom in Ampthill on the evening of 26/6. Singles were also light trapped in Stephen Williams' Goldington garden on four separate nights during July (dates not supplied).

CERAMBYCINAE

Molorchus minor

An unusual looking beetle with swollen femora (thighs) and very short elytra that leave much of the abdomen and wings exposed. Each elytron carries a white line. The only records came from Chicksands Wood (NE) where it was beaten from hawthorn and observed on privet flowers.

***Glaphyra umbellatarum* (Nationally Notable A)**

A species similar in appearance to *Molorchus minor* but lacking the white elytral line. One was found on hogweed just outside Swineshead Wood on 20/6 by myself. Checks of local and national records have so far revealed no prior county records. National records show it to have been recorded from near Grafham, which is not too far from this Bedfordshire location.

***Aromia moschata*, Musk Beetle (Nationally Notable B)**

A large impressive beetle with a metallic green or blue sheen and very long antennae. One was found in a bird ringing net at Willington Pits on 23/7 by Stephen Blain, Mark Thomas and Andy Plumb, Stephen describing it as a "spectacular beast". A second was reported to the Wildlife Trust by Lara Curtayne who found it on her Pertenhall doorstep on 8/8. She believed it to be a male from the length of the antennae.

***Clytus arietis*, Wasp Beetle**

This is a medium-sized black beetle with yellow bands that suggest its common name. It was always found alone, seemingly sunbathing on low foliage such as brambles, but was twice beaten from hawthorn and once noted on flowers of buckthorn.

***Anaglyptus mysticus* (Nationally Notable B)**

A small but distinctive species variably patterned with red, black and fawn. Nationally this species is uncommon but it seems to be more abundant in our area. It was beaten from hawthorn and field maple and also spotted sitting on a nettle leaf.

LAMIINAE

Agapanthia villosoviridescens

A large and attractive species with beautiful blue-black banded antennae and a body covered with golden hairs. This was a species I particularly wanted to see but couldn't find until David Withers reported three from DENR on 7/6 sitting on hemp agrimony leaves, where I subsequently saw nine. At Warren Villas Richard Lawrence found two on a thistle leaf, a third then flying in to join them. Stephen Williams also reported it from Coronation Pit.

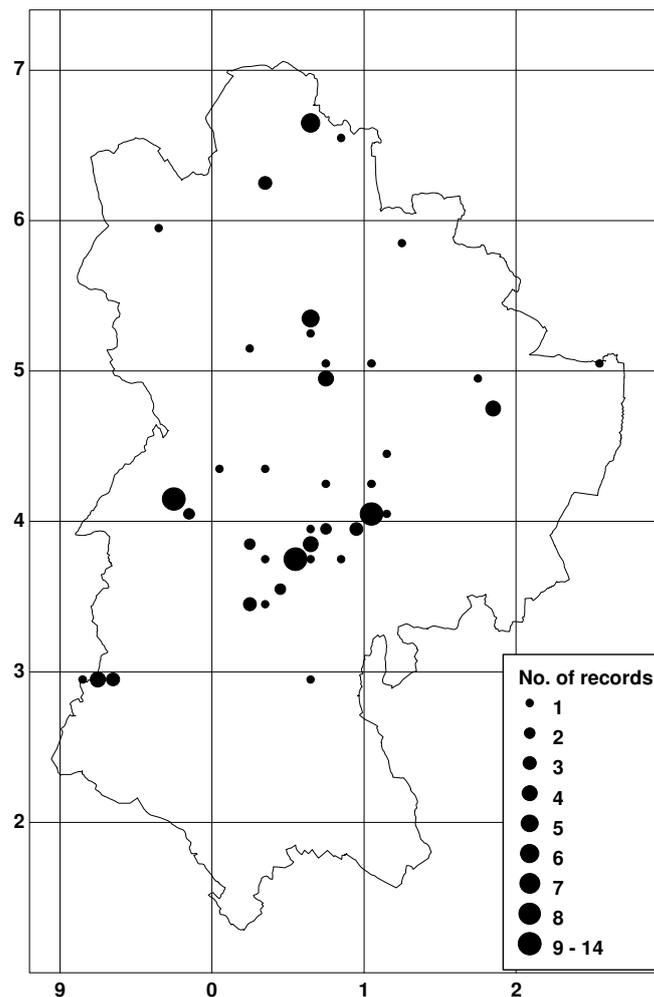
Pogonocherus hispidulus

A small beetle with 5-6mm body length and patterned with brown and grey. The elytra appear to be clipped off at the end, leaving a small spike on the outer edge (mucronate). There is also a small spike on each elytron where the tips of the elytra meet and a tuft of hairs on the scutellum. Only one was reported, by Colin Carpenter, on 10/5 at the Bedfordshire County Council Tree Nursery in Clophill.

Pogonocherus hispidus

This species is very similar in appearance (and name) to *P.hispidulus* and close examination is required to distinguish them. This species doesn't have the spike where the elytra meet or the tuft of hairs on the scutellum. Only one was noted, sitting on a nettle leaf in King's Wood Heath and Reach on 6/6 by Mark Gurney.

Distribution of Records



The following table summarizes the sites from which longhorn beetles were reported. SiteCode is referenced by the Summary of Records table.

All observations were recorded with a 1km resolution, or better.

Summary of Sites

Site	1km sqr	SiteCode
Ampthill Park (W)	TL0238	AP:W
Ampthill (SE)	TL0337	A:SE
Bromham Lake LNR	TL0251	BL
Chicksands Wood (NE)	TL1040	CW:NE
Chicksands Wood (SW)	TL0939	CW:SW
Clophill, Tree Nursery	TL0837	CTN
Coronation Pit (NE)	TL0343	CP:NE
Duck End Nature Reserve	TL0537	DENR
Flitwick (SE)	TL0334	F:SE
Flitwick Moor (NW)	TL0435	FM:NW
Flitwick Wood	TL0234	FW
Goldington	TL0750	G
Green End	TL0637	GE
Honeydon road verge	TL1258	HRV
Keysoepark Wood (outside edge)	TL0362	KPW
King's Wood, Heath & Reach (SE)	SP9329	KWHR:SE
King's Wood, Heath & Reach (SW)	SP9229	KWHR:SW
Marston Moretaine	SP9840	MM
Marston Thrift (SE)	SP9741	MT:SE
Maulden Heath	TL0638	MH
Maulden Wood (NE)	TL0739	MW:NE
Maulden Wood (NW)	TL0639	MW:NW
Maulden Wood (SW)	TL0638	MW:SW
Mowsbury Hill LNR	TL0653	MoH
Odell, Yelow Farm	SP9659	OYF
Old Warden Tunnel	TL1144	OWT
Pertenhall	TL0865	P
Potton Wood (NE)	TL2550	PoW:NE
Priory Country Park (NE)	TL0749	PCP:NE
Putnoe Wood	TL0652	PuW
Randalls Farm	TL0043	RF
Rowney Warren (W)	TL1140	RW:W
Sandhouse Lane NR	SP9329	SL
Sandy Pinnacle	TL1749	SP
Sharpenhoe Clappers	TL0629	SC
Stockgrove Country Park	SP9129	SCP
Swineshead Wood (SE)	TL0666	SW:SE
The Lodge (SW)	TL1847	TL
Warren Villas NR	TL1847	WV
Warden Great Wood (SW)	TL1042	WGW:SW
Willington Pits (E)	TL1050	WP:E
Wilstead Wood	TL0742	WW

Summary of Records

Species	Records*	Adults*	1km sqrs	First date	Last date	Maximum record for each site SiteCode(Quantity,Date,Observer)
<i>Prionus coriarius</i>	2	2	1	15/08/06	17/08/06	TL:SW(1,15/8,AH&IKD)
<i>Rhagium bifasciatum</i>	1	1	1	02/06/06	02/06/06	SCP(1,2/6,AB&MB)
<i>Stenocorus meridianus</i>	10	14	8	21/05/06	05/07/06	AP:W(1,12/6,SP), CW:NE(3,24/6,KB), KPW(1,20/6,KB), MT:SE(1,11/6,PC), MW:NE(2,5/7,KB), MoH(1,21/5,KB), SW:SE(2,20/6,KB), WV(1,16/6,RL)
<i>Grammoptera ruficornis</i>	19	282	13	16/05/06	08/07/06	CW:NE(73,24/6,KB), CW:SW(12,24/6,KB), FM:NW(#,4/6,KB), KPW(20,20/6,KB), KWHR:SE(1,8/7,KB), MT:SE(10,13/6,KB), MW:SW(8,20/5,KB), MoH(10,21/5,KB), FW(3,25/6,KB), PCP:NE(1,25/5,KB), PuW(9,8/6,KB), SW:SE(60,20/6,KB), WW(8,13/6,KB)
<i>Leptura quadrfasciata</i>	3	5	1	04/07/06	08/07/06	DENR(2,4/7&7/7,SP)
<i>Stictoleptura rubra</i>	2	3	2	18/07/06	25/07/06	MW:NW(1,18/7,KB), CW:NE(2,25/7,KB)
<i>Alosterna tabacicolor</i>	1	#	1	06/06/06	06/06/06	KWHR:SW(#,6/6,MG)
<i>Pseudovadonia livida</i>	9	30	8	08/06/06	08/07/06	BL(2,24/6,HG), CW:NE(1,24/6,KB), DENR(2,8/7,SP), FW(12,25/6,KB), MM(3,17/6,KB), MoH(1,8/6,KB), SC(5,20/6,HG), SW:SE(3,20/6,KB)
<i>Rutpela maculata</i>	18	45	15	11/06/06	24/07/06	CW:NE(18,24/6,KB), CW:SW(6,24/6,KB), DENR(1,5/7,SP), FW(2,25/6,KB), KPW(1,20/6,KB), KWHR:SE(2,8/7,KB), KWHR:SW(2,8/7,KB), MM(1,17/6,KB), MT:SE(1,11/6,PC), MH(1,13/6,JP), MW:NE(1,5/7,KB), OYF(#,11/7,HAS), PoW:NE(1,28/6,IW), SW:SE(5,20/6,KB), WGW:SW(1,15/7,KB)
<i>Stenurella melanura</i>	2	2	2	12/06/06	08/07/06	KWHR:SW(1,8/7,KB), MH(1,12/6,SP)
<i>Arhopalus rusticus</i>	2	5	2	29/06/06	??/07/06	A:SE(1,29/6,SP), G(1,??/7,SW)
<i>Molorchus minor</i>	2	3	1	27/05/06	24/06/06	CW:NE(2,27/5,KB)
<i>Glaphyra umbellatarum</i>	1	1	1	20/06/06	20/06/06	SW:SE(1,20/6,KB)
<i>Aromia moschata</i>	2	2	2	23/07/06	08/08/06	WP:E(1,23/7,SCB&MT&AP), P(1,8/8,LC)
<i>Clytus arietis</i>	14	14	13	12/05/06	24/06/06	AP:W(1,23/5,SP), CW:SW(1,24/6,KB), F:SE(1,4/6,CC), FM:NW(1,4/6,KB), GE(1,12/5,SBr), HRV(1,1/6,MG), MT:SE(1,13/6,KB), MW:SW(1,20/5,KB), OWT(1,28/5,KB), PCP:NE(1,25/5,KB), RF(1,18/6,CC), RW:W(1,23/5,KB), SL(1,2/6,AB&MB)
<i>Anaglyptus mysticus</i>	6	15	6	20/05/06	06/06/06	CW:NE(4,27/5,KB), DENR(1,20/5,AB&MB&SP), MoH(2,21/5,KB), MT:SE(4,2/6,PC), PCP:NE(1,25/5,KB), SP(3,6/6,RL)
<i>Agapanthia villosviridescens</i>	6	20	3	23/05/06	23/06/06	CP:NE(2,23/5,SW), DENR(9,11/6,KB), WV(3,16/6,RL)
<i>Pogonocherus hispidulus</i>	1	1	1	10/05/06	10/05/06	CTN(1,10/5,CC)
<i>Pogonocherus hispidus</i>	1	1	1	06/06/06	06/06/06	KWHR:SW(1,6/6,MG)

* May possibly include multiple reports of the same individual(s). # - = Not counted

Notes:

Scientific names and classifications of *Cerambycidae* have confusingly endured frequent changes. For this report taxonomic information was taken from <http://www.coleopterist.org.uk/cerambycidae-list.htm> which was derived from REJZEK, M. 2004. Check-list of Cerambycidae (Col.) of the British Isles. *Entomologist's Mon. Mag.* **140**: 51-57.

National status is taken from JNCC's spreadsheet of "Conservation Designations for UK Taxa", dated 30th August 2005, downloaded from <http://www.jncc.org.uk/> on 2nd September 2006.

Acknowledgements:

I am grateful to Brian Eversham for his assistance throughout in reviewing drafts, identifying specimens from photographs, reviewing the records and for making his identification key available.

My thanks also go to Martin Rejzek for identifying specimens from photographs, supplying copies of national records and for reviewing the records.

I am also grateful to the following people for supplying their records and apologise if anyone has been inadvertently omitted:

A.Banthorpe (AB), M.Banthorpe (MB), S.C.Blain (SCB), S.Brooke (SBr), C.Carpenter (CC), P.Cook (PC), L.Curtayne (LC), I.K.Dawson (IKD), H.Griffiths (HG), M.Gurney (MG), A.Hay (AH), R.Lawrence (RL), B.Nau (BN), J.O'Sullivan (JOS), J.Pitts (JP), A.Plumb (AP), S.Plummer (SP), H.A.Smith (HAS), M.Thomas (MT), S.Williams (SW), D.Withers (DW), I.Woiwod (IW).

KB in the above report refers to myself.

It was rewarding to witness the enthusiasm with which people were looking for and reporting this group of beetles that had been unfamiliar to many and I am very pleased to have been associated with this survey. Thank you to all that took part.

Copies of the 102 records produced by the survey have been sent to the Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Recording and Monitoring Centre (BRMC).

Concluding thought:

A number of species that probably occur within the county were not found during the survey, and others may have been under-recorded because of the field techniques deployed and the locations searched. Research into the known behaviour and habitat requirements of individual species would likely suggest additional survey locations and techniques and be rewarded by further discoveries. It is hoped that this will occur in future seasons.

Keith Balmer, 21st February 2007