

## Incubating Lumpy Bracket *Trametes gibbosa* (Pers.) Fr. Polyporales

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The Wyre Forest Study Group has a Records Room in the Community Wyre Forest Discovery Centre at Callow Hill, thanks to Forestry England and Grow With Wyre (the Heritage Lottery funded project). When possible various members of the WFSG committee meet there on a Friday morning to exchange news and views and to develop future projects.

One morning in the autumn of 2019 Mick Blythe and Rosemary Winnall noticed that there was an interesting bracket fungus growing on the cut beech stump outside the window (GR SO74877405) and decided to take a closer look. The Lumpy Bracket *Trametes gibbosa* was already mature and of particular note was the amount of frass present around the brackets (Figs. 1 and 2).

On 27th September 2019 we each collected a few pieces of the fungus with care so as not to damage any



Fig. 1. Lumpy Bracket *Trametes gibbosa* on dead Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) stump, Wyre Forest Discovery Centre, 27th September 2019  
Rosemary Winnall



Fig. 2. Lumpy Bracket *Trametes gibbosa* with insect frass, 27th September 2019  
Rosemary Winnall

larvae living within (Fig. 3). At home the samples were incubated over the next 2 months at room temperature in a mosquito breeder (Fig. 4) in which specimens were collected in 15% aq monopropylene glycol. On removal specimens were placed in 70% aq isopropanol alcohol to await identification.

Most of the insects that emerged were flies, but in

addition there were several micromoths, beetles, thrips and a parasitic hymenopteran. The following flies were identified by Mick Blythe:

- 6 *Hirtodrosophila confusa* (Drosophilidae). This was the first species to emerge. It is a large amber-coloured *Drosophila* particularly associated with fungi. It has been previously recorded from a very large number of fungal species including *T. gibbosa* (Beuk and Pitkin, rev Peter Chandler). The normal flight period is April to October.
- 5 *Drosophila busckii* (Drosophilidae). This is a small pretty *Drosophila* species with dark bands dorsally and laterally on its thorax. It has been recorded from a wide range of decaying materials and bred from a range of fungi (agarics, boletes, polypores etc.), especially after they have started to decay. Adults are recorded from March to November.
- 54 Black Fungus Gnats (Sciaridae). These are small black midges found in a variety of fungal habitats, including (notoriously) the compost for house plants. There are currently 267 species recorded from the UK.
- 1 moth fly *Psychoda albipennis* (Psychodidae). This is a common moth fly; almost ubiquitous. It is recorded from various dungs, fungi, willow rot, rotting vegetables, drains and mud flats. (Withers, 1989).
- 7 *Apteromyia claviventris* (Sphaeroceridae). This is a rather uncommon species found in a variety of damp shady habitats such as woodland, caves and cellars, small mammal burrows etc. It has been recorded as breeding in fungi. Adults are found throughout the year.
- 7 *Fannia* sp. (Fanniidae). The "lesser house flies".

Dr Tony Simpson identified the 5 micromoths as *Morophaga choragella* (Fig. 5). This is a rather uncommon species and the normal flight period is June-August. The larvae are found burrowing in bracket fungi particularly *Piptoporus betulinus* and perhaps sometimes in dead wood. John Bingham identified the beetles that emerged as two male *Cis bilamellatus* with the distinctive flat plates on their heads. This species, originally from Australasia, was first recorded in southeast England in January 1884. It is now found across much of the UK and has been recorded breeding in several different species of bracket fungi. It cannot survive very cold winters, so populations fluctuate. The 2 thrips (Thysanoptera) and one parasitic hymenopteran are still to be identified.

Thanks are due to Tony Simpson for identifying the moths, to Oliver Wadsworth for use of his photograph, and to John Bingham for identifying the beetle.

### References

- Chandler, P. *The British Isles species of Drosophilidae*. <https://www.bioinfo.org.uk/html/b161466.htm>
- Withers, P. (1989) Moth Flies, Diptera: Psychodidae. *Dipterists Digest (First series)*, 4: 1-83. <http://www.thewcg.org.uk/Ciidae/0607.htm>.

