

Wyre Forest Study Group

Xiphydria camelus (Linnaeus, 1758) Hymenoptera, Xiphydriidae. Alder Wood-Wasp

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"The Alder Wood-Wasp, and its associated parasitic fauna, is one of the more remarkable entomological treasures of the Forest of Wyre."

So wrote Norman Hickin in his book 'The Natural History of an English Forest' (Hickin 1971).

The Alder Wood-Wasp *Xiphydria camelus* is an uncommon insect with scattered records over most of England but nowhere does it appear to be frequent. The last record for Wyre Forest was in June 2017 by Kevin McGee who also recorded *Aulacus striatus*, the wasp's parasite. (McGee 2017). The wasp parasite is 10mm long and has a red abdomen and may be found in association with the larger Alder Wood-wasp, 10-20mm long.

There are few records of either species from Wyre over the years. Are we overlooking the Alder Wood-wasp as we walk along the Dowles Valley? Are sightings not being noted and duly recorded? We lack information on the current species status and distribution within Wyre.

I can only recall seeing the Alder Wood-wasp once over recent years, that was at Bell Coppice in June 2019, where it was ovipositing on a rotten birch trunk (See photo). Hickin (1971) suggests it is fairly common in Wyre so has it declined over the years? We appear to have suitable habitat to support this species within the forest, the larvae bore into the wood of dying alders and birches in wetland habitats. Perhaps an important 'target' species to bear in mind when out along the forest's brooks and streams in June.

There are three species in the genus present in Britain *Xiphydria camelus*, *X. prolongata* and *X. longicollis*, but only this one species has been noted in Wyre.

Thanks to Gavin Broad for confirming my identification.

References

- Hickin, N.E. 1971. *The Natural History of an English Forest*. Arrow Books.
McGee, K. 2017. *Records of Note from Wyre Forest, 2017*. Review 2017, p. 14-15. Wyre Forest Study Group.



Xiphydria camelus Alder Wood wasp, ovipositing, Wyre Forest

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