

Nerienne radiata Walckenaer 1841 (*N. marginata* C.L.Kock) ROSEMARY WINNALL

During a Study Group field meeting at the Great Bog on 9th July 2009, Mick Blythe swept a spider that none of us had seen before (see photo below). This was identified by John Partridge as *Nerienne radiata* which has Notable status and a rather unusual national distribution, previously thought to be restricted to the conifer forests of western Scotland.

This species is a member of the family Linyphiidae. It is a sheetweb spider and the adults are found in June and July. It weaves a dome of fine silk about a meter off the ground, under which it hangs to lie in wait for its prey (see illustration in Roberts).

Mike Taylor (from Lye Head, near Bewdley at that time) wrote up his find of this species in the British Arachnological Society Newsletter no. 54 in 1989. When it was still called *Linyphia marginata*.

"In July 1987, during a survey of the spider fauna of the Wyre Forest, I discovered a female of Linyphia (Nerienne) marginata in Longdon Orchard (Nat Grid Ref. SO744773). This has been confirmed as the first English record of this species; the few previous British records were all from Scotland."

"L. marginata has subsequently been found at a number of sites in the Forest, and seems to occur particularly in managed clearings within the oak, where a scrub vegetation of birch saplings and Calluna grows."

Records on the Worcestershire Biological Records centre database show that Mike Taylor recorded it from:-

- Rock Coppice (SO763736) 1987
- Bowcastle Farm (SO768751) 1987
- Dowles meadows (SO777763) 1987
- Shelfeld Coppice (SO753764) 1/8/99
- Great Bog (SO747762) 1/8/99

However, records from the same source indicate that it was found earlier than that in Wyre:-

- Peter Merrett 1980 Widespread and frequent in Wyre
- Colin Plant 1984 – Chamberline SO763770

The only recent records are one female found by John Partridge on 2/7/2001 at SO751748 in New Parks, Mick Blythe's record in 2009, and then one found by myself in the Dowles Valley just west of the meadows at SO753767 on 18/6/2011 (see photo). Both our Study Group records have been from moist shady areas, which is quite a different habitat to that described by Mike Taylor. More habitat information is required!

Although the Wyre Forest was for some time thought to be the only site for this spider outside Scotland, it has recently been found elsewhere as seen on the nbn gateway, and documented by Ian Dawson in his article 'Nerienne radiata in Cambridgeshire and Sussex' in Spider Recording Scheme News No. 72, March 2012 (British Arachnological Society).

Mike Taylor's footnote to his 1989 article, suggests that introduction cannot be ruled out:

"Footnote: Doug Cowden tells me that the Scotch Argus butterflies which have been caught in Wyre Forest have probably been brought in with conifer seedlings from Scotland and this may also be the source of the L. marginata. If this is so, then the species have certainly spread to other areas of the Forest which are remote from conifers."

Thanks to John Partridge who alerted me to Mike Taylor's article and for identifying our spiders.

REFERENCES

- Roberts, M.J. (1996) Collins FieldGuide to Spiders of Britain and Northern Europe. Collins
- British Arachnological Society Newsletter no. 54 in 1989



Nerienne radiata Great Bog, 9 July 2009 Rosemary Winnall



Nerienne radiata Dowles, 18 June 2011 Rosemary Winnall