Dinarda maerkelii

JOHN BINGHAM

Dinarda maerkelii Kiesenwetter, 1843. Staphylinidae, Coleoptera. A Rove Beetle.

This attractive red and black Rove Beetle is a myrmecophilous species associated with the Wood Ant, *Formica rufa*. Annoyingly I can find very little further information on this species.

We know it was first (?) recorded from Wyre Forest by Blatch in 1879 and then by Collingwood in 1957 near Button Oak, but recent records appear to be limited to the occasional sighting and WFSG meetings. At one such meeting at Eymore Wood on 10th September 2022 when Brett Westwood found several beetles on a conifer log pile with a Wood Ant nest. Then on 20th March 2024 I found one beetle on a Sallow, *Salix sp*. tree frequented by Wood Ants at Hurst Coppice in Wyre. A large Wood Ant nest was close by but despite looking carefully, no beetles were seen on the nest. On a visit to Pound Green Common on 3rd October, 2024 Rosemary Winnall found a beetle on the surface of a small Wood Ant nest. The last records were 2nd October 2024 at the WFSG meeting looking for Shining Guest Ants, *Formicoxenus nitidulus*. A single beetle was found along the water pipetrack at Longdon Wood. On the same day I checked some small Wood Ant nests along the water pipetrack near to Button Oak and found one nest where at least eight beetles were active on the surface.

These recent observations could be the most records made for this species even nationally and certainly makes the forest an important site for *Dinarda maerkelii*. There are only 22 records on the NBN Database (NBN 2024 a and b).

The beetle is likely to be present where the greatest concentration of Wood Ants occurs in the forest (Figures 1 and 2). Late autumn appears to be a good time of year to look for the beetle and also for the Shining Guest Ant, so I would suggest this might be a worthwhile project the WFSG to focus on for a few weeks next year. Hopefully we could get a clearer picture of the distribution and numbers for this charismatic beetle and the Shining Guest Ant in the forest.

References.

NBN Web page

Dinarda marerkii (2024a) https://species.nbnatlas.org/species/NHMSYS0021419829#tab_mapView Accessed 22nd November 2024

NBN Database

Dinarda maerkelii (2024b) Https://species.nbnatlas.org/species/NHMSYS0021419829#tab_recordsView Accessed 22nd November 2024



Dinarda maerkelii, John Bingham

Wyre Forest Study Group

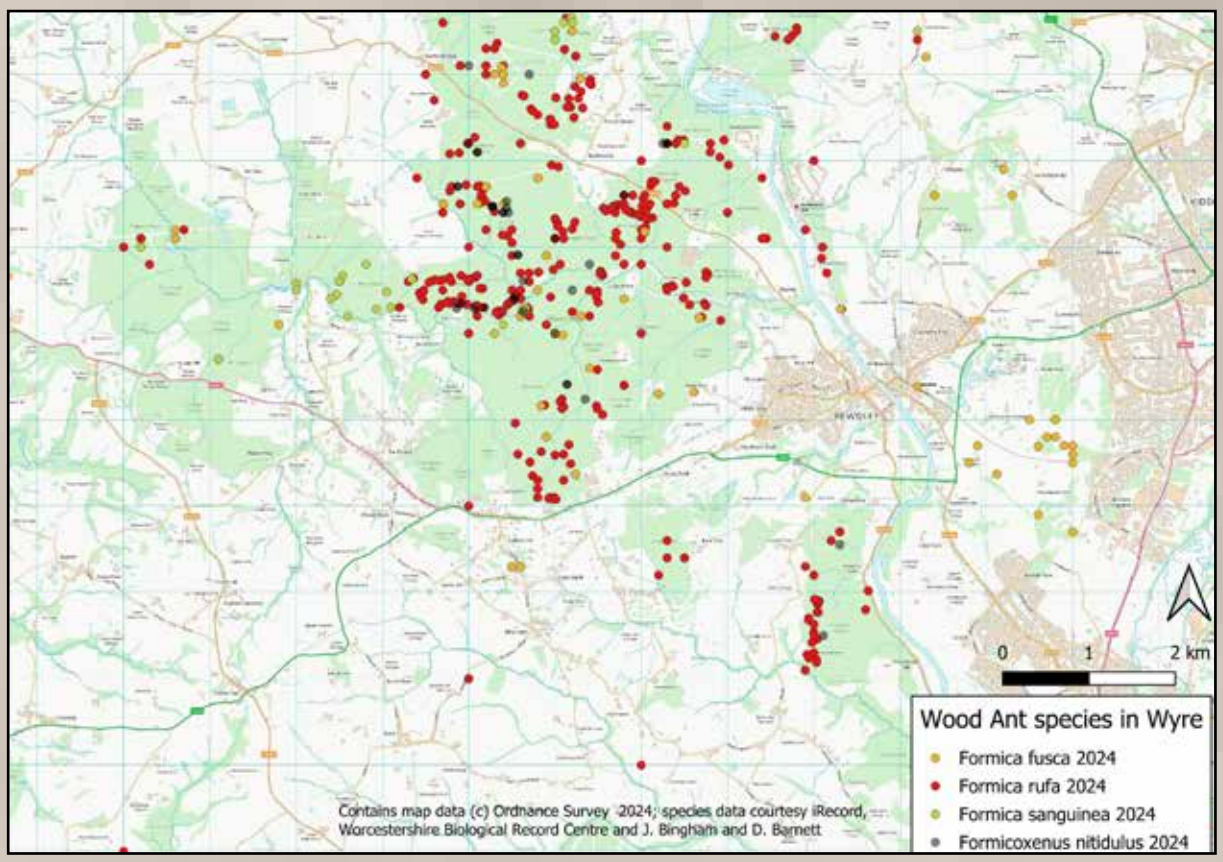


Figure 1. Map showing locations of records of four Wood Ant species, in Wyre, to 2024.

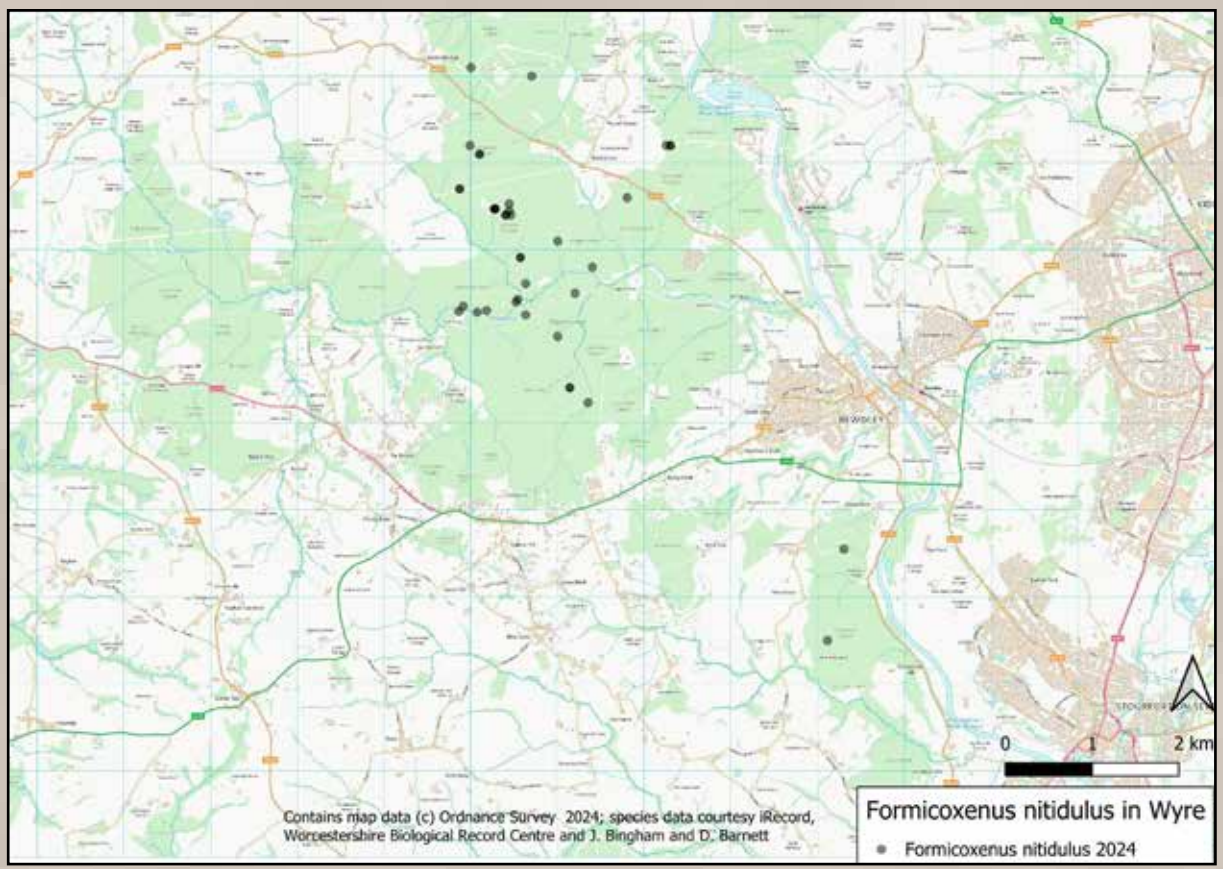


Figure 2. Map showing locations of records of *Formicoxenus nitidulus* in Wyre to 2024.