

Wyre Forest Study Group

Ground Beetles along the Banks of the River Severn 2010 (Coleoptera: Carabidae)

ALAN BROWN

Throughout the ages the River Severn has always been a very important habitat for Carabids, not just because of the clay banks, bare sand patches and shingle banks, but also because these features are in close proximity to water. For many species of Carabid, the preservation of this habitat is essential for their survival. In recent times however, these species have had to cope with many threats such as pollution, increased human activity, predators like rats and the invasion of introduced plant species like Himalayan Balsam. Yet despite these new problems there is still a great diversity of Carabid species to be found along the banks of the River Severn.

For two weeks in July I conducted a Carabid survey along the riverside, covering a stretch from Trimpley Reservoir to Blackstone Rock. Using a night hunting technique with the aid of a headband torch, I scoured the bare, exposed sand and shingle banks during a period when the river was at its lowest, and I made some important finds. It was a truly amazing experience to see Carabids as few people have ever seen them, actively hunting and co-existing on open ground at night.

I cannot describe in detail every ground beetle species that I recorded during those two weeks, so I have chosen a few of the most interesting finds. In all there were 39 species recorded of which 20 were Bembidion species (see full list below). This was not bad for a two week survey and hopefully there are still some more to find!

Blemus discus (Fabricius, 1792)

Notable B, Length 5mm



Blemus discus

Alan Brown

This species is widespread but rather local in England and Wales, and absent in Scotland. It is an autumn breeder with adults being found from mid July onwards. It can be found mostly under leaf litter or stones close to the water, normally on silty ground alongside streams and rivers. I also found this one next to a stream at Puxton Marsh. New site record.

Trechoblemus micros (Herbst, 1784)

Local Length 4.5mm



Trechoblemus micros

Alan Brown

This species has a widespread but scattered distribution throughout the British Isles. I found two of these in a bare, clay riverbank cavity close to water, but they can also be found in damp grassland. It is a spring/summer breeder but adults can be found at any time of the year. A first county record.

Bembidion bipunctatum (Linnaeus, 1761)

Notable B, Length 4.7mm



Bembidion bipunctatum

Alan Brown

This species is primarily a northern species with a few records in southern England. It is a macropterous spring breeding species. It lives amongst gravel or shingle banks near water, often alongside *Bembidion punctulatum*, but can be distinguished from that species by the two large, foveate punctures on each elytron. A new county record.

Bembidion quadripustulatum Audinet-Serville, 1821.

Notable B, Length 4mm



Bembidion quadripustulatum

Alan Brown

Most of the recent records for this species are coming from the west Midlands and eastern Wales. It lives on damp bare sand or mud at the margins of running or standing water. This is the third county record. It is a winged spring breeder which can be found until August. This was found in mid July on damp, bare sand.

Bembidion obliquum Sturm, 1825.

Notable B, Length 4mm



This is primarily an eastern species found only in England and extremely local in the west. I found this one on the bare muddy margin of a pond alongside the river, but suspect that it will also be found on similar ground along the river itself. It is a winged spring breeder, but this one was found in late July. A first county record.

Bembidion prasinum (Duftschmid, 1812)

Local Length 5.2mm

This species is found mainly in Scotland, northern England and Wales. A spring breeder, I found one on shingle alongside the river in damp conditions. It flies readily, as I found out and is usually an upland species.

Chlaenius nigricornis (Fabricius, 1787)

Notable B, Length 11mm



Although widespread in southern England and Wales, most recent records have been from the west of the country. It is normally found in marshes (Puxton Marsh) and other damp places near water. I found two of these on a bare, muddy area of a shingle bank along with a number of *Chlaenius vestitus*. It is a winged spring breeder. New site record

Platyderus depressus (Audinet-Serville, 1821)

Notable B, Length 7mm



This species is found only in southern England and very local in the west Midlands. It is mainly an autumn breeder although I have also seen them pairing up in early April. It is normally found in open sandy grassland areas, but I have found a good number of these underneath litter and grass tussocks on river sandbanks. New site record.

Amara praetermissa (Sahlberg, C.R., 1827)

Notable B, Length 7mm



This species is widespread but rather local in England, Scotland and Wales. It is a winged autumn breeder usually found on sandy heaths (Devil's Spittleful and Hartlebury Common). I was surprised to find four of these on a bare area of a river sandbank, perhaps migrants from the heathland colonies. New site record.

Dyschirius politus (Dejean, 1825)

Local Length 4mm



This is widespread, but local in England, Scotland and Wales, mainly coastal. I found a big colony of these on bare, clay riverbanks and on sandy areas of shingle banks near water. It is associated with *Bledius* species. It is a macropterous spring/summer breeder and without doubt the strangest Carabid I have seen to date. New site record.

I would just like to thank John Meiklejohn for his time and help during my survey.

Carabid species found during the two week survey:

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| Bembidion illigeri | Trechoblemus micros |
| Bembidion articulatum | Blemus discus |
| Bembidion varium | Amara praetermissa |
| Bembidion bipunctatum | Chlaenius nigricornis |
| B. quadripustulatum | Chlaenius vestitus |
| B. quadriguttatum | Elaphrus cupreus |
| Bembidion lunulatum | Elaphrus riparius |
| Bembidion femoratum | Platyderus depressus |
| Bembidion bruxellense | Pterostichus vernalis |
| Bembidion tetracolum | Pterostichus nigrita |
| Bembidion prasinum | Pterostichus niger |
| Bembidion tibiale | Agonum thoreyi |
| Bembidion atrocoeruleum | Agonum marginatum |
| Bembidion decorum | Agonum gracile |
| Bembidion guttula | Clivina fossor |
| Bembidion obliquum | Clivina collaris |
| Bembidion punctulatum | Dyschirius politus |
| Bembidion biguttatum | Asaphidium flavipes |
| Bembidion properans | Paranchus albipes |
| Bembidion lampros | |



River Severn near Trimpley

Rosemary Winnall