

A letter from Ireland. Some Carabidae found in Co. Limerick.

Alan Brown

Editor's note. Readers may remember the interesting articles on beetles in the Kidderminster area written several years ago by Alan Brown. He moved to Ireland in 2014 but kept in contact with Worcestershire Recorders and has sent us this article.

Hi everyone, I moved to County Limerick, Ireland, in late 2014. The climate here is very different to the UK, much cooler and lots of rain which means that a lot of species of Carabidae are 'missing' but there is a decent assemblage of the wetland species and these are more common than they are with you in Worcestershire.

So after settling in I set about recording these species. As no previous survey had been done in this County I knew that I would find some very different species compared to the Kidderminster sandlands of Worcestershire, a prospect I found quite exciting. The rich peat soil also promised some species unique to that kind of marsh habitat which leads me to some great finds in my survey. But other species like *Amara* and *Harpalus* are very uncommon or absent altogether, restricted to the sand dune systems further south of me; the nearest suitable dune systems being in County Kerry.

However, on the good side there are plenty of ponds and lakes in my area for me to survey. I love looking over these new locations at night with a decent headband torch and I also used pitfall traps at some sites. (Also if you are lucky you will pick up the loud chirping of the Large Marsh Grasshopper at the same time),

But I will stick to the Carabidae I found, all of which were new County recordings for Ireland. My having made contact with Professor Roy Anderson beforehand was handy for the more difficult identifications. Of course I was still in contact with John Meiklejohn in Worcestershire during my survey until his untimely passing. He was always a great help to me during this survey as he was during my surveys in Worcestershire not so long ago.

Here are my important finds.

Chlaenius tristis: (Carabidae) (01) May-July, first found 15th May 2015. I remember talking to John Meiklejohn the evening I was going to look for Carabids at a nearby marsh - he wanted me to get a picture of *Carabus clathratus*. I was unable to find that species, but I mentioned to him that I was also going to look for a rarer species *Chlaenius tristis* and I found one in amongst a bunch of its cousin species, the more colourful *Chlaenius nigricornis*, in thick reed vegetation. This species seems to prefer thickly vegetated marshes, and that was definitely the case here. I have found it at three sites to date. In the UK it is currently found at one site on the Llyn Peninsula in Wales, so a very good find in Ireland where it has been recorded at one other site on the Burren.



01. *Chlaenius tristis*. Alan Brown.

Pterostichus aterrimus: (Carabidae), (02) May 2016. A search at a large lake turned up this gem, which seems to prefer rank vegetation on the fringes of large water bodies on bare patches of very soft peat soil. This species has recently been rediscovered at Wicken Fen in the UK but has always been rare wherever it is found. Here there are about six recent records, so rather local.



02. *Pterostichus aterrimus*. Alan Brown

Panagaeus cruxmajor: (Carabidae), May-July. First found July 31st 2015, has turned up at two sites so far. They seem to prefer areas of marshes that flood during the winter, leaving very soft, wet peat soil with detritus in the summer when the water level recedes, usually under reeds and litter. Rare in the UK, but more common here, only found in Counties, Donegal, Clare, and Limerick on the west coastal areas in Ireland, but may be unrecorded in other Counties. When I was doing a survey in Worcestershire, I thought this might be the one that would turn up there, maybe lurking in some marsh, but I didn't find it.



03. *Panagaeus cruxmajor*. Alan Brown.

Agonum lugens: (Carabidae) (04), found on May 25th 2021. I had decided to survey a small pond in shaded patch of woodland and took a break, watching some *Agonum fuliginosum* scuttling on some bare peat near the waterline when a fourth individual appeared alongside them. It was bigger and lacked a shine and I knew immediately that it could be *A. lugens*. Confirmed by Roy Anderson this species seems to be absent in the UK, but here in Ireland it is restricted to shaded, silty lake and river margins in Counties Donegal, Clare and now Limerick.



04. *Agonum lugens*. Alan Brown.

Badister collaris: (Carabidae). (05). My best find May-July. First found May 20th, 2016. Restricted to shaded ponds, both seasonal and permanent and well-vegetated areas of marshes. I have found this species at two sites to date, unlike its sister species *Badister dialatus*, which I've found in more open, unshaded areas of ponds and lakes. I got some good help from Roy Anderson identifying these. In the UK *B. collaris* seems to be restricted to the South-east, but in Ireland it is probably present in more areas in the East and West.



05. *Badister collaris*. Alan Brown

Other species worth noting in my area are *Blethisa multipunctata*, *Batenus livens*, *Donacia aquatica*, and many others. My survey is always ongoing.

Acknowledgements

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