

***Ampedus rufipennis* (Stephens, 1830 (Col: Elateridae) at Shakenhurst.**

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A single fresh female *Ampedus rufipennis* was collected from a large section of a recently cut up horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* log at the Shakenhurst Estate (SO674731) during warm sunny weather on 18.05.2020. The specimen was delivered to P.F.Whitehead who kindly confirmed the identification. A second individual was observed on the same log a few days later on 27.05.2020 and presumed to be the same species (01, 02)..



01. *Ampedus rufipennis* female on the remains of a large cut up horse chestnut trunk at Shakenhurst on 18.05.2020. K.McGee.



02. The remains of a cut up Horse Chestnut trunk at Shakenhurst where *A. rufipennis* was collected on 18.05.2020. K.McGee.

A.rufipennis is a rare click beetle with a conservation status of RDB2 Vulnerable and on the Biodiversity Action Plan UK list of Priority Species. The NBN Atlas has eight-nine records with most being from areas containing a high proportion of open grown veteran trees in pasture woodlands including Windsor Great Park, Moccas Park in Herefordshire, and Bredon Hill. However, there are likely to be further records than those mapped on the NBN Atlas website, for example, I have also recorded *A. rufipennis* (all confirmed by P.F. Whitehead) from a large fallen oak at Mill Rough, Drakes Broughton (SO917482) on 06.06.2004, and from inside large logs of fallen old ash trees in linear belts of semi-ancient woodland remnants at Caddicroft Farm, Drakes Broughton (SO925471) during winter periods: 22.10.2006, 18.11.2008, and 20.01.2009. None of these records feature on the NBN Atlas.

A. rufipennis is known to breed inside substantial pieces of fallen rotting timber with a preference for beech, but will also utilise elm, birch, ash, oak, and sycamore. It has also recently been shown to use horse chestnut (P.F.Whitehead, *pers.comm*). Adults are most active in May and June.

The horse chestnut logs where the beetle was found were moved to the edge of a small copse alongside an area of grassland used for occasional autumn/winter grazing by sheep and cattle following a crop of hay. The logs originated from an old open-grown horse chestnut that was planted as an aesthetic feature along with other broad-leaved trees (mainly pedunculate oak, but also common lime and ash) within the expansive grasslands approaching the eastern aspect of Shakenhurst Hall. The horse chestnut was cut down following its death in 2018.



03. A typical view of the open grown trees on the extensive grassland at the eastern aspect of Shakenhurst Hall. 16.10.2016. K.McGee.

A. rufipennis is one of several *Ampedus* species with red or reddish elytra appearing very similar and consequently difficult to identify. All are also associated with dead and diseased wood and are best looked for in areas containing large pieces of lying timber such as old wood pastures on land that has undergone little change historically. Any red click beetle found should, wherever possible, be collected and sent for identification to an experienced coleopterist. All *Ampedus* species are uncommon or rare and there is still much to learn about their precise distribution.

Acknowledgements

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References

Hyman, P.S. & Parsons, M.S. 1992. *A review of the scarce and threatened Coleoptera of Great Britain, Part 1*. The UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee. Peterborough.
NBN Atlas *Species search* [on-line] <http://www.nbnatlas.org/> [Accessed 31.10.2021]

Images

- 01. *Ampedus rufipennis* female on the remains of a large cut up horse chestnut trunk at Shakenhurst on 18.05.2020. K.McGee.
- 02. The remains of a cut up horse chestnut trunk at Shakenhurst where *A. rufipennis* was collected on 18.05.2020. K.McGee.
- 03. A typical view of the open grown trees on the extensive grassland at the eastern aspect of Shakenhurst Hall. 18.05.2020. K.McGee.