

***Laemostenus terricola* (Herbst, 1784) (Col: Carabidae) at Hartlebury Common.**

Kevin McGee.

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A single specimen of *Laemostenus terricola* (Herbst, 1784) was collected on 13.03.2020 at Hartlebury Common Local Nature Reserve & SSSI, Worcestershire. Grid Ref: SO 819708.

Shortly before the lockdown enforced by the Coronavirus pandemic I was able to visit Hartlebury Common during one of the first spells of fine settled weather of 2020. During a general search for invertebrates by turning suitable logs and stones I collected a large unfamiliar carabid. The beetle attempted to escape rapidly so I chose to collect it immediately rather than attempt photography and run the risk of losing it. Later microscopic observation using identification keys in Luff (2007) confirmed the specimen as *L. terricola* and represents my first record.

There are six previous records held on the Worcestershire Biological Records Centre database with the most recent also being from Hartlebury Common (Alan Brown in 2010). Alan also found one at nearby Springfield Park (SO836781) in 2009. There are three records from Wychbury Hill (also near Kidderminster) by K A Moseley between 1978 – 80, and a record from John Meiklejohn in 1951 at Worcester Training College in St. Johns, Worcester (now part of Worcester University Campus).

National distribution maps indicate that *L. terricola* is widely distributed throughout much of the British Isles but is generally localised and somewhat scarce (NBN Atlas, 2020). This is possibly because it is associated with mammalian burrows where it hides by day before hunting nocturnally. A study of the species in Germany suggests that *L. terricola* is significantly linked to burrows of rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* and the maximum period of activity by mature beetles is during August and September (Gruttke, 1994). There is a population of rabbits at Hartlebury Common and the specimen I collected lies close to areas containing burrows and evidence of grazing in the form of recent droppings. It would be worthwhile investigating beneath suitable refugia in the vicinity of extensive and active rabbit warrens elsewhere in the county (but especially on the sandy soils around Kidderminster) to establish further populations of this species.



01. *Laemostenus terricola*. Collected at Hartlebury Common on 13.03.2020. K.McGee.

Acknowledgements

With grateful thanks to Harry Green for explaining the abbreviations on the 1951 record by John Meiklejohn, and to Simon Wood for supplying records held by WBRC.

References

- Gruttke, H. 1994. Investigations on the ecology of *Laemostenus terricola* (Coleoptera, Carabidae) in an agricultural landscape. *Carabid Beetles: Ecology and Evolution* pp 145–151
- Luff, M. L. 2007. *The Carabidae (ground beetles) of Britain and Ireland*. Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects Vol. 4 Part 2 (2nd Ed). Field Studies Council.

Images

01. *Laemostenus terricola*. Collected at Hartlebury Common on 13.03.2020. .K.McGee.