

***Oxythyrea funesta* (Poda, 1761) (Scarabaeidae, Cetoniinae) recorded at Martley, Worcestershire.**

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A single specimen of the scarab beetle *Oxythyrea funesta* was photographed (01) on a flower of ox-eye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare* at Martley churchyard on 12.vi, 2017. The identification was kindly confirmed from the image *via* email by P. F. Whitehead.



01. *Oxythyrea funesta* on ox-eye daisy at Martley on 12.vi.2017. © K.McGee.

Although this distinctive beetle is often abundant throughout large areas of the Palaearctic it has never been considered as a native British species but non-established introductions have occurred sporadically (Barclay & Notton, 2015). However, records from the UK have become more frequent in recent years and this is probably the first record for Worcestershire. *O. funesta* is considered a pest in the horticultural industry across many parts of Europe because adults feed on all parts of a wide variety of cultivated flowers, not just on the pollen and nectar. The larvae feed on the roots of a wide variety of shrubs and flowers. Adults can be long-lived and found from April to September (Barclay & Notton, 2015).

A majority of the most recent UK records have been from the south London region, this is thought to be due to favourable climatic factors and the increasing importation of large quantities of potted shrubs and plants into large suburban garden centres from the continent that may contain larvae and pupae of *O. funesta* (Barclay & Notton, 2015). It is possible that small local populations may now persist, for example one adult was collected from thistle flowers in Lewisham on 20.vii.2014 (Barclay & Notton, 2015). Interestingly, there is a farm near Martley that deals in the importation and re-distribution of large potted olive trees from southern Europe.

I have found this species to be generally common in northern Italy where they sit conspicuously in the centre of Asteraceae flowers in open sunny situations.

References

Barclay, V. L. & Notton, D. G. 2015. *Oxythyrea funesta* (Poda) (Scarabaeidae) in London, and a summary of recent and historical British records of this species. *The Coleopterist* 24(2): 113-116.

Image

01. *Oxythyrea funesta* on ox-eye daisy at Martley on 12.vi.2017. K.McGee.