

Mendip Hills
National
Landscape



Champion Species Fact Sheet

Black Oil Beetle
Meloe proscarabeus



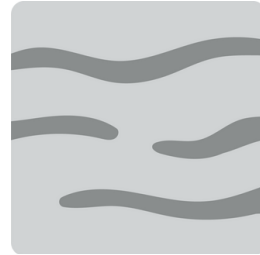
mendiphills-nl.org.uk/caring/nature-recovery-plan

Why a Champion Species?

- It is a prime indicator of a flower-rich and healthy ecosystem as it is a parasite of solitary mining bees and so can only be found where the associated species are in abundance.
- S41 Threatened Species.
- Quirky and under recorded!

Preferred habitat

- Flower-rich meadows.
- Bare ground in grasslands / heathlands.
- Woodland edge.



Best time to see

- Easiest to spot in early spring when both adult and larvae are active. The adults can be found trundling through meadows and woodland edges.
- Larvae found on yellow flowers, particularly celandine and dandelion (two of the early flowering yellow flower species) as the larvae, called triungulins, gather there to await their unwitting victims!

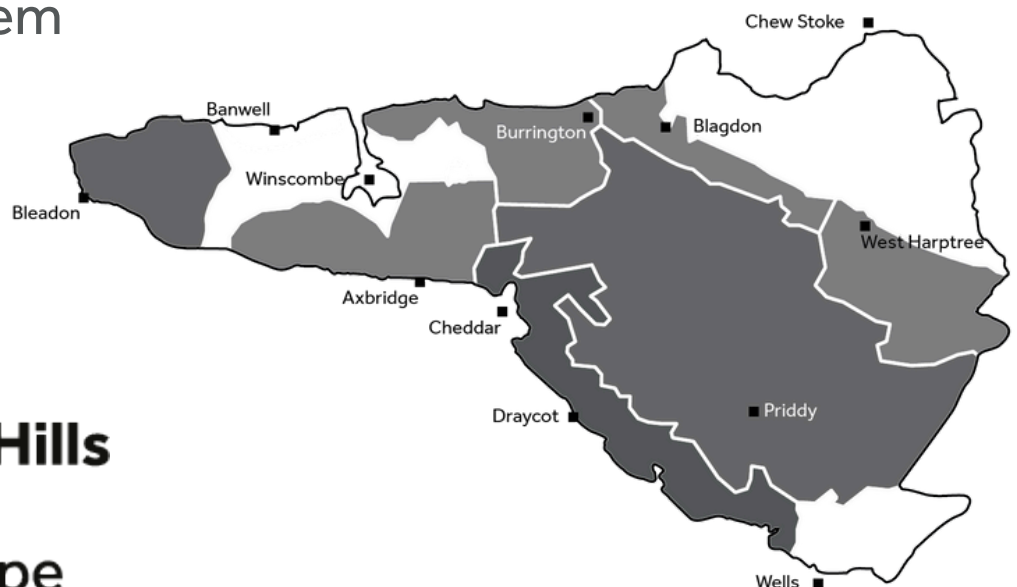
Points of interest

- Parasite with a fascinating life cycle: the larvae emerge from their eggs, which were laid in clutches of up to 1,000 eggs. These tiny things, no more than 1-2mm in length, climb up onto the flowers and wait there. When a solitary mining bee comes along to collect nectar and pollen from the flower, the larvae grab on and hitch a ride back to the solitary bee's nest. Once there, the triungulin drops off and waits for the bee to complete its nest. The triungulin then proceeds to eat the contents of the nest, including the developing bee larvae!

Key threats

- Loss of habitat and pollinators.
- Intensive farming practices, land development, and the use of herbicides and pesticides.

Where to find them



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