

CISTUS FORESTER MOTH

(*Adscita geryon*)

What is the CISTUS FORESTER MOTH?

The cistus forester is a small, very attractive, metallic green moth that flies during the day, in sunshine. It is attracted to a variety of grassland flowers including thyme, rockrose and trefoils. They are single-brooded, overwintering as larvae and flying in late June and early July. The larval food plant is common rock-rose.

Where are they found in the UK?

The cistus forester moth is rare locally, but is not uncommon in parts of southern England and from the Midlands northwards to Cumbria and County Durham. It is very local in Wales; the Great Orme in North Wales is one well known locality.

Why is the cistus forester moth of CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE?

Currently, the cistus forester moths that are present in the Durham Plan area are on the northern edge of their range in the UK. Data collected in 1992 shows that their distribution within this area is also localised and limited to a few sites. Currently, cistus forester moths in the Plan area are at the northerly limit of their distribution. If temperatures rise, due to climate change, this range may expand.

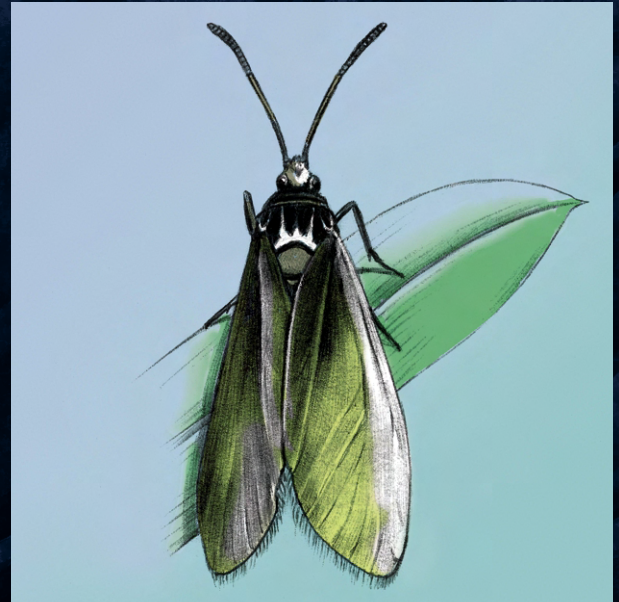
THE CISTUS FORESTER MOTH IN THE DURHAM AREA

How HEALTHY is the local population?

The current status of the cistus forester moth in the Durham area is unknown. An individual moth was seen at Warren House Gill on 12 July 2001.

How much do we know about the cistus forester moth in the DURHAM AREA?

The cistus forester's recorded distribution in the UK extends as far north as Durham and Cumbria. The most recent record of cistus forester moth in the DBAP area was at Horden in summer 2000. Current survey data is needed.



STATUS: *The cistus forester moth is classified as a Nationally Scarce species.*

Other action plans and statements covering issues relevant to the cistus forester moth:-

- (C) COASTAL GRASSLANDS*****
- (C) COASTAL GILLS*****
- (C) LOWLAND MEADOWS AND PASTURES***
- (C) GREEN-WINGED ORCHIDS*****
- (C) MAGNESIAN LIMESTONE GRASSLANDS***

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WHERE has the cistus forester moth been found in the Durham area?

The cistus forester has a very local distribution and is only recorded in the Durham area on Magnesian limestone grassland where common rockrose (*Helianthemum chamaecistus*) grows. It has previously been recorded along the coast between Crimdon Dene and Hawthorn Hive in fair numbers. The only inland site in the Durham area where the cistus forester moth has been recorded is at Sherburn.

Cistus forester moths are at RISK from:

HABITAT LOSS - the species requires species-rich Magnesian limestone grassland. The intensification of agriculture has led to a considerable decline in the areas of unimproved lowland grassland.

LACK OF CURRENT INFORMATION - the numbers and distribution of the cistus forester moth in the Durham area are not currently known. Their dispersal abilities and the impact of geographical isolation of colonies are not well understood.

Cistus forester moths BENEFIT from:

SURVEY DATA - there is a need for an up-to-date baseline survey to establish the current status of the cistus forester moth, followed by a monitoring programme.

INCREASING THE AREA OF MAGNESIAN LIMESTONE GRASSLAND in the Plan area.

ROCKROSE PLANTING SCHEMES - this will increase the availability of the larval food plant.

Important HABITATS for cistus forester moths include:

MAGNESIAN LIMESTONE GRASSLANDS

TARGETS

- 1 Carry out a baseline survey to establish the populations of cistus forester moths in the DBAP area.
(2002)
- 2 Establish a viable population by provision of appropriate habitat and increasing the numbers of larval food plants in the DBAP area.
(ONGOING)
- 3 Once a baseline population is known, set up a monitoring programme.
(ONGOING)
- 4 Raise awareness amongst local people and visitors regarding cistus forester moths.
(ONGOING)

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ACTION PLAN			
ACTION	DATE	Possible PARTNERS	Meets TARGET No.
POLICY AND LEGISLATION			
1. Protect key areas of habitat for the cistus forester moth if they are not already within designated areas.	ONGOING	DCC, EN, EDC, SCC, STMBC	2
SPECIES MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION			
2. Ensure appropriate management of extant areas of Magnesian limestone.	ONGOING	DCC, NT, EN, SCC, STMBC	2
3. Support the creation and management of further Magnesian limestone grassland initiated by Turning the Tide as well as rockrose planting schemes.	ONGOING	NT, DCC, EDC, EN, SCC, STMBC	2
RESEARCH AND MONITORING			
4. Survey the current population to establish baseline data.	2002	DWT, DBAP, Local Moth Recorders, Universities, BC	1
5. Commence a monitoring programme using the data from survey as a baseline.	2003	DWT, DBAP, Local Moth Recorders, Universities, BC	3
6. Observe and record the effects of climate change on the distribution of cistus forester moths. Contribute data to national surveys.	2002	DWT, DBAP, EN, Local Moth Recorders, Universities	3
7. Submit all records to the Local Recording Centre.	ONGOING	All Partners, Local Communities	1, 3
8. Consider translocating cistus forester moths to inland Magnesian limestone grassland sites.	2005	DWT, DBAP, EN, Local Moth Recorders, Universities	2
ADVISORY			
9. Increase general awareness of the cistus forester moth amongst land owners and managers.	2001	DBAP, DCC, EDC, SCC, STMBC	4
COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICITY			
10. Raise general awareness of the cistus forester moth and associated conservation work amongst local people.	2002	CA, DBAP, DCC, EDC, SCC, STMBC	4

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ACTION	DATE	Possible PARTNERS	Meets TARGET No.
COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICITY continued			
11. Prepare publicity information as part of an integrated coastal/marine interpretation package.	2002	CA, DBAP, DCC, EDC, SCC, STMBC	4