



Oil beetle survey results 2011

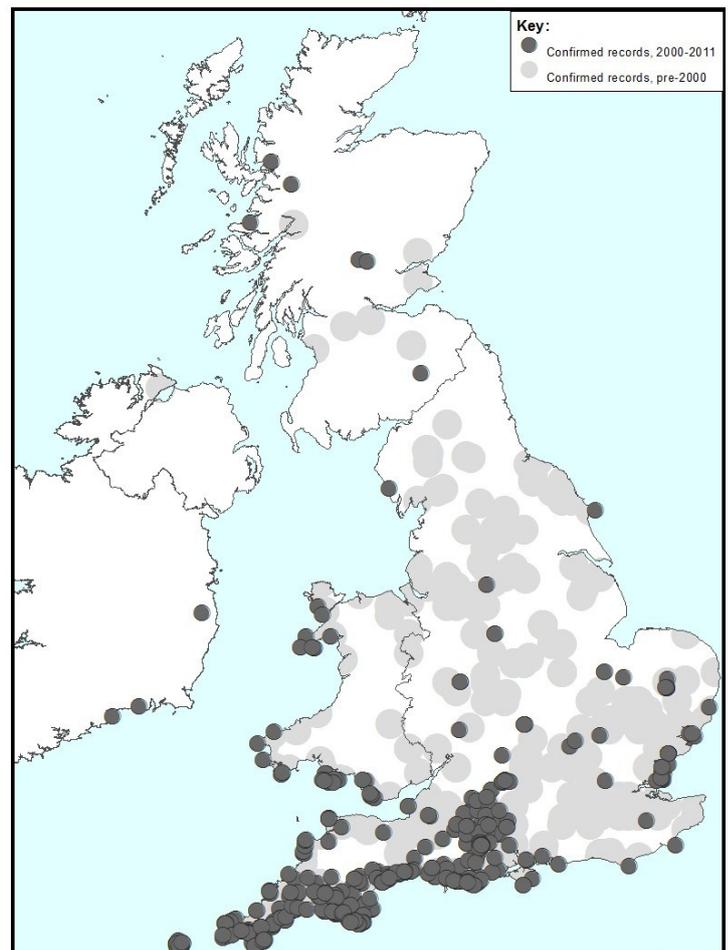
Thank you to everyone who took the time to send in oil beetle records last year. We were very pleased with the number of people who got involved, and were able to add over **a thousand new records** to our database. We were also impressed by the quality of the records received. Of the 909 records sent in via our website, over 600 could be verified from the photograph and, of these, only 20 were not oil beetles!

The data you collected allowed us to reassess the distribution of oil beetles in the UK by comparing your data to historic data collated by the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. We can now show that British oil beetles do appear to be in decline, with most of the losses being from the east of the country. The information that you have helped us to gather is essential for our work to conserve these amazing beetles and helped us to write new [species management guidance for oil beetles](#).

The Black oil beetle (*Meloe proscarabaeus*)

The Black oil beetle is thought to be the UK's most common oil beetle with widespread historic records in England. There are also records from the Welsh coast and a few scattered records in Scotland.

The new data show that the Black oil beetle has all but disappeared from northern England, the Midlands and the south east of England however, local populations are still found in Suffolk and Essex. Even in the South-West, its current stronghold, the population appears to have declined with decreases in Somerset and Gloucestershire. Records are only numerous in Devon, Cornwall, Dorset, Wiltshire and the far west of Hampshire.



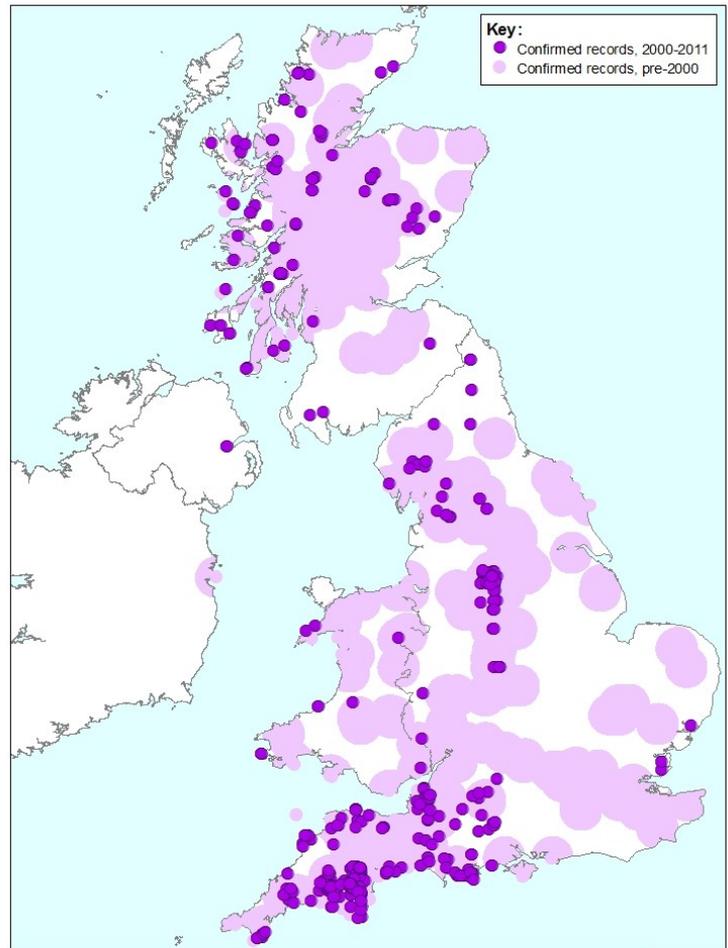
Black oil beetle distribution from Historic and 2011 survey data

The Violet oil beetle (*Meloe violaceus*)

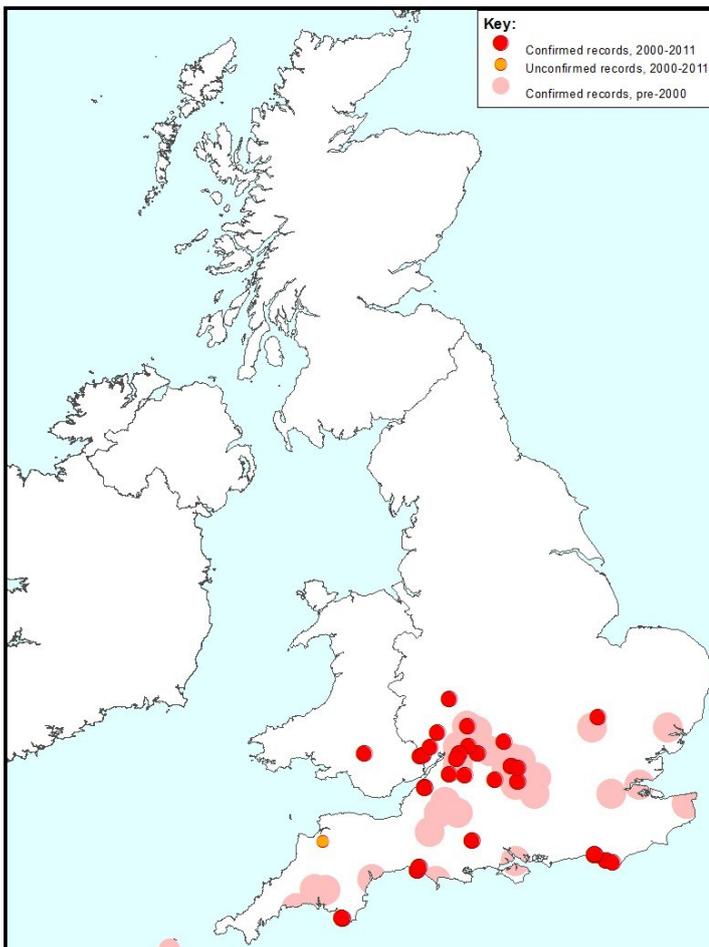
The Violet oil beetle is predominantly a northern and western species with historic records showing a wide distribution across England, Scotland and South Wales.

Recent records show an almost complete disappearance from the east of England. The only exceptions are a single site each in Suffolk and Essex. In the south, and through much of the Midlands, the species has declined. The only remaining hotspots are in the South-West, Derbyshire and Cumbria.

There are few recent records from Wales and the species appears to have declined in Scotland, particularly from the southern-central area and from the east coast.



Violet oil beetle distribution from Historic and 2011 survey data



Rugged oil beetle distribution from Historic and 2011 survey data



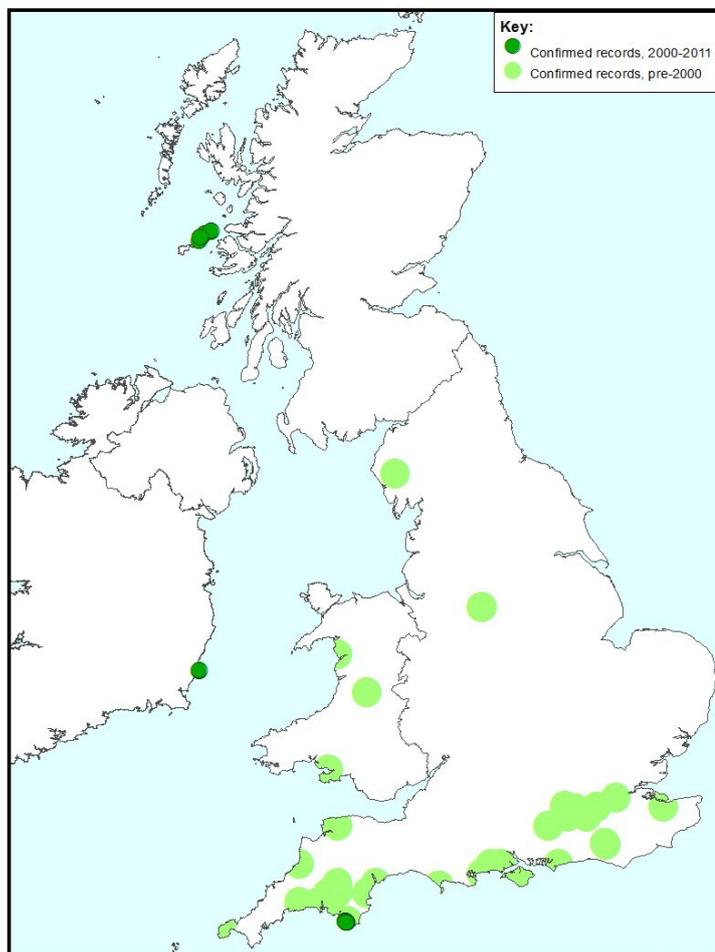
The Rugged oil beetle (*Meloe rugosus*) (Autumn emergence)

The Rugged oil beetle has always had a scattered distribution with historic records across much of southern England. The species has declined or been lost in the South-East and through much of the South-West with just a few recent records from these areas.

In contrast to the declines in some areas, however, the species has recently been discovered in Herefordshire, Monmouthshire and Powys. The main stronghold is around Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire. It is difficult to judge whether this species is in decline or not as it may have been under recorded in the past.

The Short-necked oil beetle (*Meloe brevicollis*)

Historically recorded across the south of England, in Cumbria, Derbyshire and in Wales, but the last record for over 50 years was in 1951. The species was rediscovered in south Devon in 2006 and on Coll in west Scotland three years later. These two sites are still the only known sites on which this species occurs in the UK (there is a third site on the east coast of Ireland).



Short-necked oil beetle distribution
from Historic and 2011 survey data



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