

Violet click beetle (*Limoniscus violaceus*)

DESCRIPTION



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The Violet click beetle is a beautiful deep blue beetle with a shimmering metallic finish. It is incredibly rare and dependent on ancient tree habitats.

It is only known in Britain from three woods - Windsor Forest, Bredon Hill Worcestershire – which is designated as a Special Area of Conservation for the species, a European level status - and Dixon Wood Gloucestershire.

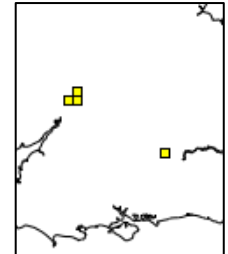
The wireworm larvae grow up in black sodden mulch that forms in decaying Beech and Ash wood in ancient trees; here they feed on a range of other invertebrate larvae. After two years the wireworm transforms into an adult that then visits flowers.

The Violet click beetle is globally endangered and protected by the EU Habitat Directive, Wildlife and Countryside Act and the NERC Act.

It is often found in the same woods as other extremely rare beetles such as the Oak click beetle (*Lacon querceus*) and the Queen's executioner (*Megapenthes lugens*).

CONSERVATION ACTION

The Violet click beetle is completely dependent on the continued presence of rotting heartwood in ancient trees. This is a very rare habitat as it only develops in big trees that are hundreds of years old.



Currently this beetle is stranded on three fragments of ancient habitat, to be sustainable it must thrive in more woods.

The Violet click beetle is a flagship species for a large number of endangered ancient tree inhabitants. The future of this large chunk of biodiversity depends upon all woodland managers encouraging the growth of large trees that are allowed to enter the long, natural process of hollowing out and heartwood decay. On some sites there is little suitable future habitat; without this habitat endangered species will go extinct.

Research is underway to understand the beetle's ecology, make sure there is habitat continuity, and assess options for starting new populations.

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