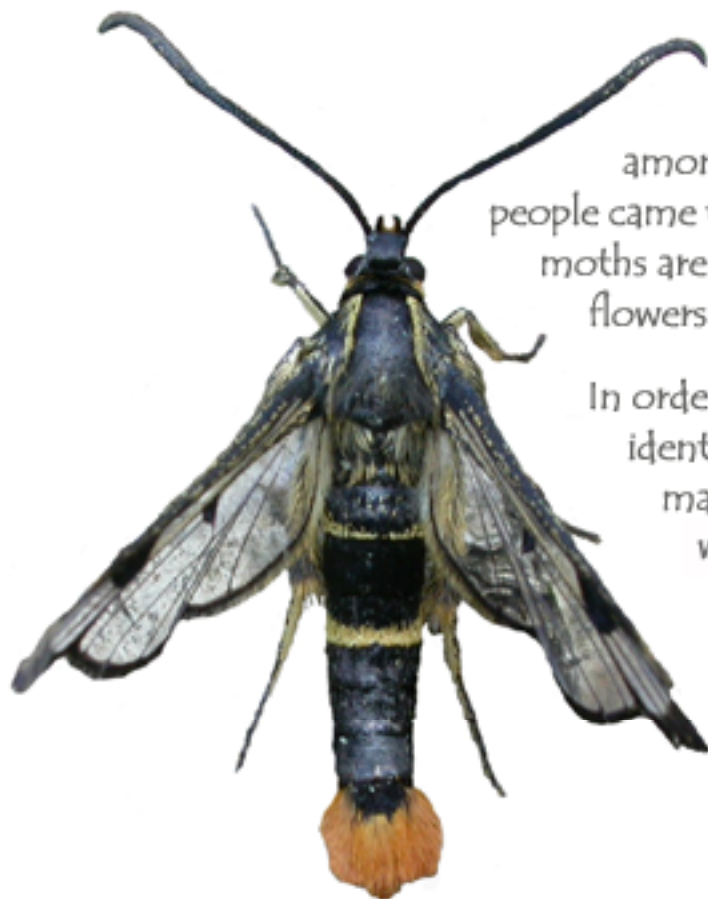


Insect Fact Sheet

The Welsh Clearwing

This rare day flying moth was only discovered at Sherwood Forest as recently as 2008. At the time, the Welsh Clearwing was previously thought to occur at a scattering of sites in Wales, Scotland and just one site in England, at Cannock Chase in Staffordshire.



The moth's discovery by Sherwood Forest Ranger Gary Joynt, caused great excitement among local moth enthusiasts and in 2009, many people came to try and see it for themselves. But clearwing moths are virtually impossible to see, as they rarely visit flowers and are fast fliers.

In order to see any clearwing moth, an artificial scent identical to that of the female is used to attract the males. The males respond well and often appear within minutes.



Chrysalis
or pupa



Female Welsh Clearwing moths lay their eggs on the bark of Silver Birch trees and the caterpillar spends all its life, feeding under the bark. In Spring it makes an exit hole before changing into a chrysalis. When the adult moth emerges, the chrysalis can be found sticking out of the tree trunk. Old Silver Birch trees are favoured by egg laying females and certain trees within Sherwood Forest, are covered with old exit holes.

Having this nationally rare moth at Sherwood Forest, has helped to highlight the site's importance through its diversity of species, but it is not the only clearwing moth that Sherwood has. The forest has a good population of Yellow-legged Clearwing, whose caterpillar feeds under the bark of Oak trees and the Large Red-belted Clearwing that lays its eggs on Silver Birch stumps.

