

Survey for New Forest Cicada, 2017

1.1 Summary

A one day survey to search for the presence of pre-emergence turrets for the New Forest Cicada (*Cicadetta montana*) was to be undertaken during June 2017.

Due to optimal weather conditions for adult song (and surveyor availability), three days were actually spent searching for pre-emergence turrets, oviposition scars and singing adults.

Areas searched were those which had previously been identified by the surveyor as being suitable for the species.

Only two of the search areas are now considered to be suitable for the species in regards habitat type and size of area covered.

No cicada pre-emergence turrets, oviposition scars or adults were recorded.

Recommendations for further survey are presented.

1.2 Introduction

The New Forest Cicada has always had a limited distribution within the New Forest, Hampshire. No confirmed sightings of the species have been made since the early 1990s, despite extensive searches during the period 1996-2014. Survey for the species involve searches for pre-emergence turrets in early spring, searches for singing and active adults during the flight period of late May-early July, and searches for evidence of oviposition during the same period and into early autumn.

A one-day contract was presented to the surveyor to search primarily for pre-emergence turrets within known historical cicada areas in the New Forest. In the end, three days were committed to the searches in light of a run of suitable weather for adult song and activity. Areas surveyed were those which had been identified in previous surveys as being suitable for the species, and therefore most likely to yield results.

Unfortunately, many of the areas identified previously are now unsuitable for the species and only two areas were identified as being prime habitat for the species. It was within these areas that the bulk of the time available was spent.

1.3 Areas Surveyed

Areas surveyed were those that had previously been identified as being suitable for the species:

1.3.1 Salisbury Trench (central grid ref SU2514), this includes the Gibbet Wood area where the cicada maintained a stronghold, albeit somewhat artificially from the late 1960s until the early 1990s. This area has largely been unsuitable for the species since the late 1990s and little attention was paid to it during this survey. One small area within the Coppice of Linwood (at approximately SU252141) is still relatively suitable and a short period of time was spent searching for adults here, due to extensive Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) growth no searches were made for pre-emergence turrets.

1.3.2. Kings Garn Gutter (central grid ref SU2513), this area is adjacent to Salisbury Trench and previously contained large areas of suitable-looking habitat. Most of this area is now unsuitable for the species and after a walk around the entire Inclosure only the entire length of the eastern boundary of the Inclosure looked promising and was searched for the species.

1.3.3. Raven's Nest Inclosure (grid ref SU255148), this area, again adjacent to Salisbury Trench contains a large area of clear-fell/replant. Since my last visit in 2015, when much of the area was becoming overgrown with Birch (*Betula pendula*) saplings, there has been extensive clearance of this regrowth, making the area wholly suitable for the species again. A considerable amount of time was spent searching this area.

1.3.4. Long Beech Inclosure (grid ref SU253126), a large area of recent (in the past fifteen years) clear-fell

with scattered scrub and natural regeneration, but not enclosed against forest livestock. This area has all the attributes of a suitable habitat for the species and like the previous area, a considerable amount of time was spent here, particularly searching for adults.

1.3.5 Brockishill Inclosure (central grid ref SU3010), this area is some distance from Salisbury Trench, but previously held suitable areas of habitat, and was the location of a burst of possible song in 2001. All of the rides in this area which had previously been identified as being suitable for the species are now too closed-in and have become unsuitable.

1.4 Survey Dates

Surveys were undertaken on 13th, 20th and 21st June.

1.5 Recommendations for further survey

Funding permitted, further survey during 2018 should be undertaken at sites 1.3.1 (Coppice of Linwood), 1.3.2 (Kings Garn Gutter eastern boundary), 1.3.3 (Ravens Nest Inclosure) and 1.3.4 (Long Beech Inclosure) as identified above. Priority should be made in areas 1.3.3 and 1.3.4. Searches could also be made in the Denny Wood (SU3305) and Matley Wood (SU3307) areas where the species was recorded, but no breeding site ever found during the 1970s.

Searches in early spring (late March/early April) could be made for pre-emergence turrets and during the flight period (late May-early July) for singing/active adults. Searches for oviposition scars could be made during the flight period and as late as September.

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