



Belted Beauty

Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Species English Name (Scientific name)

BELTED BEAUTY (LYCIA ZONARIA BRITANNICA)

Associated Habitat Action Plans:

Coastal sand dune



Ecology

Appearance

Adult male belted beauty moths are winged and can be found during spring flying in both day and night. Females however cannot fly as their wings are too small (only 2mm) and are only able to crawl very short distances during their adult life.

Habitat

In Britain the belted beauty is confined to coastal grasslands. In England the populations occur in early successional sparsely grassed sand dunes rather than the more grassy dunes favoured by the Welsh and some of the Scottish populations.

Food

In Lancashire it is believed that the caterpillars eat mainly birds foot trefoil and kidney vetch preferring the flowers to the leaves. Other plants used in the North-West England are plantains, clovers, yarrow, burnet rose and creeping willow. The caterpillars burrow into soft, dry sand in summer to pupate and emerge the following year. Some caterpillars are thought to delay emergence for a further year if weather conditions are not suitable.



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Life Style

- * The males are usually on wing in March and April and probably use scent to find females.
- * The females then lay the eggs on a variety of different plants.
- * It is believed that the caterpillars emerge and begin to feed in May and June.

Current status

The belted beauty is very localised, being confined to the West coast of Scotland and the coasts of North Wales and North West England. In Britain there are two sub-species, with the Welsh and English populations known as *L. z. britannica*, and the Scottish populations known as *L.z. atlantica*. Scottish populations are widespread in the Hebrides and on the Ardnamurchan peninsula on the Scottish mainland. *L.zonaria britannica* is found on the Wirral peninsula, Sunderland Point, Lancashire and at Morfa Conwy, Caernarvonshire. Historically the moth was also recorded in the Sefton Coast, Flintshire and Glamorgan. The English and Welsh populations have declined due to the loss of habitat.

On the North Wirral shore (the only confirmed English site) the numbers of adults have declined over the post 20 years due to habitat destruction at Derby Pool following a severe storm and habitat destruction at Meols. Since 1994 recording has shown the number to be more or less static. The habitat is within the North Wirral Coastal Park.

In Great Britain the subspecies *Lycia zonaria britannica* is classified as RARE. It is a national priority species on the short list for biodiversity conservation.

Threats

- * Successional change in vegetation.
- * Land development (golf courses, car parking, etc).
- * Trampling pressure from increased access to sensitive dune systems.
- * Low dispersal ability precludes the re-colonisation of fragmented areas of suitable habitat.
- * Enrichment of sites through dog excrement.
- * Horse riding and motorbike use within the Park.

How are we helping to conserve the Belted Beauty in the Cheshire region?

- * Butterfly Conservation, Wirral Ranger Service and Ranger Service Volunteers undertake annual monitoring.



* Butterfly Conservation carries out captive breeding.

Objectives, targets and actions

The objectives, targets and actions to help conserve the belted beauty in the Cheshire region can be found on the [Biodiversity Action Reporting System \(BARS\)](#) along with full details of our progress so far.

How to find out more about the Belted Beauty

Butterfly Conservation Action for Threatened Moths Project - www.butterflyconservation.org

UK Moths - <http://ukmoths.org.uk/show.php?bf=1928>

UK BAP for Belted Beauty - www.ukbap.org.uk/UKPlans.aspx?ID=430

Contact details

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References and Glossary

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