

Back from the Brink – Species summary

Bearded False Darkling Beetle

BftB project: IP02 Ancients of the Future

Project lead organisation: Buglife

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Species name – common & scientific	Bearded false darkling beetle (<i>Melandrya barbata</i>)
Photograph	 <p>© Borris Loboda / Back from the Brink</p>
Taxon group	Invertebrate-Coleoptera (Melandryidae)
Conservation status	It is classified as Near Threatened on the European Red List of Saproxyllic Beetles (2010). It is a Red Data Book species in Britain.
UK distribution	The last known record was from the New Forest in 1992, but it was also previously known from Hampshire and Surrey.
Habitat associations	We know little about the species, the larvae have not been observed in the UK, although adults have been observed on Oak, and on standing and fallen Beech trees and piled timber. In Europe larvae have been reported in Beech branches and Aspen trunks, in both cases as fallen deadwood in shaded situations. A further record concerns an adult found which emerged after pupation in an Oak branch that was 10-15 cm diameter, that had recently fallen from the canopy. Almost all other elements of their life cycle are unknown, leaving significant gaps in our understanding of the species autoecology.
BftB results obtained:	
Species Recovery Curve progress made	This species remains at 2 . It has no historic records on Ancients of the Future project sites, with the most recent UK record from available data, as far back as 1992. As with other species, however, the score of 2 reflects rarity, the need to fully understand the species' autecology and the long-term nature of managing habitats for them. There are enormous gaps in our understanding of their ecology or even their habitat associations, only that there is likely a problem with habitat continuity as a result of the age structure of trees on its sites.