

# Back from the Brink – Species summary

## Tormentil Mining Bee

BftB project: IP01 Dorset's Heathland Heart

Project lead organisation: Plantlife

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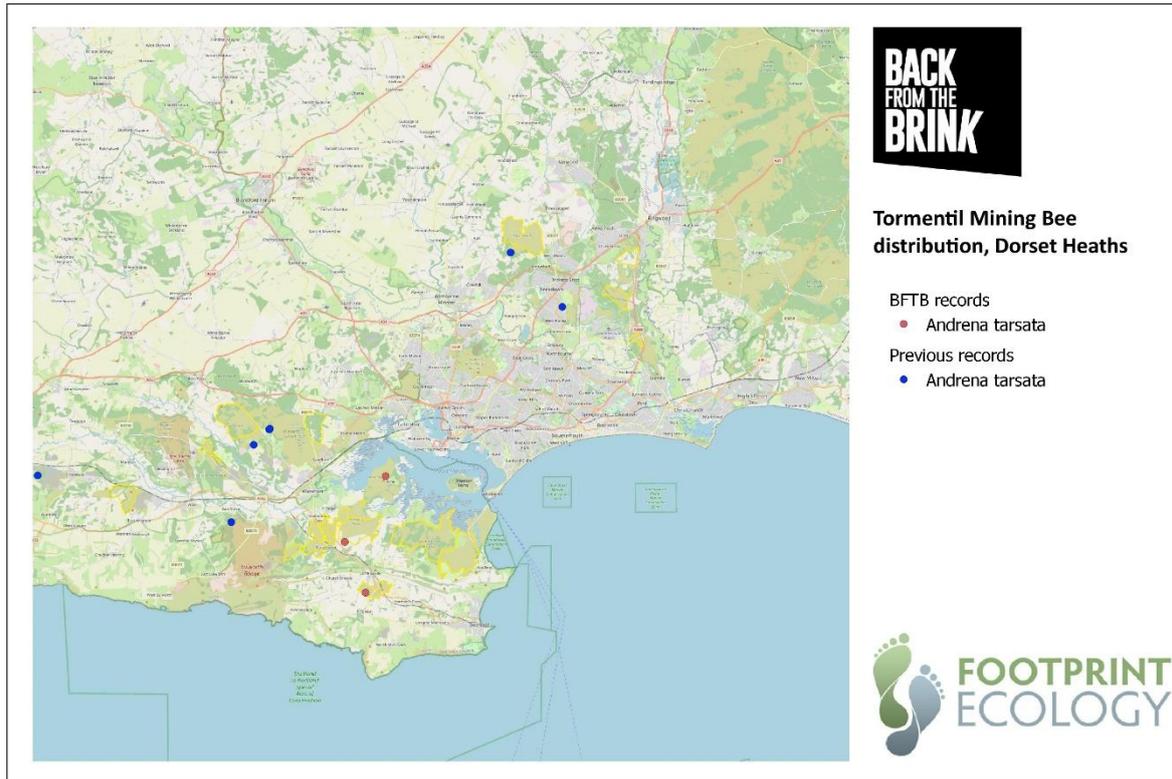
Species name – common & scientific	Tormentil Mining Bee – <i>Andrena tarsata</i>
Photograph	 <p>© S. Rae_Flickr (CC BY 2.0) / Back from the Brink</p>
Taxon group	Insect - Hymenoptera
Conservation status	NERC S41, Nationally Scarce
UK distribution	Once widespread, it has become scarce in many areas, and remains common only very locally with strongholds in Yorkshire, Cornwall, Devon and Dorset.
Habitat associations	Favours acidic habitats such as lowland and upland heathland, moors, acid grasslands, rush pastures, and heathy woodland rides and glades, frequenting areas with large stands of Tormentil within 250m of nest sites. Also known from brownfield sites with base-poor rocks or soils and sometimes gardens in the Scottish Highlands where Shrubby Cinquefoil grows. Needs sunlit and sheltered areas: nest burrows are in light, bare or sparsely vegetated, sunny, south-facing soils, typically on a low bank or bare path.

<b>BftB work carried out:</b>	
<b>Survey &amp; Monitoring</b>	<p>A professional survey was commissioned (2019) of 5 sites (Hartland Moor, Wareham Forest, Bloxworth Heath, Hyde bog, Uddens Plantation, Whitesheet Plantation). All either had previous records or were considered to have suitable microhabitat.</p> <p>15 scrapes created as part of BFTB on Corfe Common (which had anecdotal records of the species) were monitored by expert volunteers (2019 and 2020).</p> <p>The species was also looked out for during a BFTB commissioned survey for Broken-banded Wasp Hoverfly <i>Chrysotoxum occumaculatum</i> (2021)</p>
<b>Sites habitat management works</b>	<p>Over 300 sandy scrapes with south facing banks were created across 8 sites – some of these were in reasonably close proximity to Tormentil and would provide suitable habitat should the species disperse to these areas.</p> <p>16 scrapes were created on a site with previous anecdotal records and plenty of Tormentil, specifically for this species.</p>
<b>Links made with other taxa / conservation work?</b>	<p>This habitat management was carried out to benefit a suite of invertebrates associated with bare, sandy ground within a heathland context (including BFTB species such as Heath Beefly and Heath Tiger Beetle and other species such as the Nationally Scarce <i>Ammophila pubescens</i> plus BFTB species Sand Lizard</p>
<b>Wider engagement &amp; advocacy activities?</b>	<p>Information about the species, its requirements and the microhabitat creation work carried out as part of the project was disseminated through a BFTB workshop and the local National Trust volunteer conference plus a talk to Dorset Recorders and an Important Invertebrate Areas workshop run by Buglife. Information on the measures carried out with recommendations for future management were supplied to the land managers via a handover pack.</p>
<b>BftB results obtained:</b>	
<b>Recorded Distribution (in BftB focal areas)</b>	<p>Between 2018-2021, the species was recorded from Corfe Common, Hartland Moor and Arne by BFTB. In 2021 the species was also recorded from the Lulworth Ranges by Dorset Environmental Records Centre staff.</p> <p>There are previous (post 1990) records from Wareham Forest, the Lulworth Ranges, Udden's Plantation and Parley Heath and anecdotal records from Corfe Common. There is one historic record from West Knighton Heath (19<sup>th</sup> Century). It was not re-found in Wareham Forest or Udden's Plantation, Parley Heath was not surveyed.</p>
<b>Recorded Abundance of species populations</b>	<p>Single individuals were recorded at each location where Tormentil Mining Bee was found during the project period. It is considered that the population is likely to be more abundant than indicated by these results, which are partly a reflection of the difficulty of monitoring the species. However, this bee clearly remains scarce in Dorset.</p>
<b>Other results documented?</b>	<p>One record was from a BFTB scrape, indicating that the microhabitat created as part of the project was suitable for the species.</p>
<b>Species Recovery Curve progress made</b>	<p>1 - 6 Recovery solutions trialled (<i>partially</i>). Over 300 bare ground scrapes have been put in on 8 sites, 16 of which were specifically targeted at this species and showed (limited) success. However, the scrapes have revegetated rapidly, and further work will be needed if a population increase is to be achieved.</p>

**Recommendations for future work:-**

Ongoing bare ground creation will be necessary to support populations of Tormentil Mining Bee and should include the creation of south-facing banks for nesting and be located close to areas with abundant Tormentil for foraging.

The scarcity and widely dispersed nature of records makes targeted surveying challenging. Instead, the best approach is probably to continue to promote awareness of the species and include it in any invertebrate surveys being carried out across the Dorset Heaths.



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Map 1: Distribution of Tormentil Mining Bee in the Dorset Heaths (2021 DERC record in the Lulworth Ranges not included – data held by DERC).