



Britain's Endemic Invertebrates



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Horrid Ground-weaver (*Nothophantes horridus*) © Tom Thomson

Executive Summary

This report brings together the information on **twenty invertebrate species** which are **endemic to Great Britain**. As such, we have an international responsibility to safeguard these species for future generations.

Worryingly, many of these species are under threat. Two species, the dance fly *Poecilobothrus majesticus* and Ivell's Sea Anemone (*Edwardsia ivelli*) are already thought to be globally Extinct. Of the remaining endemic species, nine are threatened with global extinction and two are globally Near Threatened.

Terrestrial species appear to be at greater risk of extinction than freshwater species, but urgent action is required across the board to ensure that these endemic species have sustainable populations to reduce their risk of global extinction.

Sites with populations of these endemic species are included in the identification of [Important Invertebrate Areas \(IIAs\)](#) – nationally or internationally significant places for the conservation of invertebrates and the habitats upon which they rely.

Extinction is forever. There is no turning back. The UK has an international responsibility to prevent the extinction of these endemic species. It is vitally important that these species, and the special places that call them home, are protected from harm and managed in the right way to protect and enhance their wildlife riches.

“
Half of Britain's endemic invertebrate species are threatened with global extinction.
”

Citation:

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Lundy Island © Garth Jones (CC-BY-SA)

Introduction

There are over **40,000** terrestrial and freshwater **invertebrate species** known from Great Britain.

They range in size from tiny nematodes and mites, to much larger creatures like White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) and Freshwater Pearl Mussels (*Margaritifera margaritifera*).

Invertebrates can be found in a huge variety of habitats from coastal lagoons in the East of England to the highest mountain tops in Scotland; from the depths of Loch Ness to sand dunes in Cardigan Bay in Wales.

Some of these species are found nowhere else in the world. These are known as **endemic species** - and they are the crown jewels of our biodiversity. They are species that we have an international responsibility to look after, to ensure that future generations can enjoy them.

This report presents global Red List assessments for all endemic terrestrial and freshwater invertebrate species known from Great Britain. These assessments highlight the threats and urgent conservation action required to restore sustainable populations of these species to reduce the risk of their global extinction in the future.



Endemic species are **the crown jewels of our biodiversity**. They are species that we have an international responsibility to look after, to ensure that future generations can enjoy them.

Methodology

The status assessments presented here were undertaken using the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) criteria (IUCN 2012) and the most recent set of guidelines for their application (IUCN 2022).

The initial task was to compile a definitive list of endemic species. In the context of these assessments, endemic species are those that are only found in Great Britain (i.e. England, Scotland and Wales). Previous lists compiled by Natural England (Andy Brown, pers. comm.) were supplemented with information from national experts. This resulted in a list of 20 species (Appendix 1). The reasons for exclusion of species previously considered to be endemic are noted in Appendix 2. Only full species were included - endemic subspecies were not assessed. The caddisfly *Rhyacophila septentrionis* was not assessed. This species has recently been confirmed as a British endemic (Valladolid et al. 2022) however it is not known whether records from the UK refer to this species or *R. fasciata* (Ian Wallace pers. comm.).

Information for each species was gathered from a variety of sources. Distribution data was obtained from the relevant national recording scheme, national experts and from museum collections. The Extent of Occurrence (EEO) and Area of Occurrence (AOO) were calculated according to the IUCN guidelines. For terrestrial species the EEO and AOO were calculated using the Geospatial Conservation Assessment Tool (GeoCAT) (Bachman et al. 2011) and for freshwater species the IUCN Fresh Water Mapping Application (IUCN, 2019).

The full comprehensive assessments for all species are published on the IUCN Red List (www.iucnredlist.org). These assessments classify each species into a threat category (IUCN 2022). The relationship between these categories is shown in Figure 1.

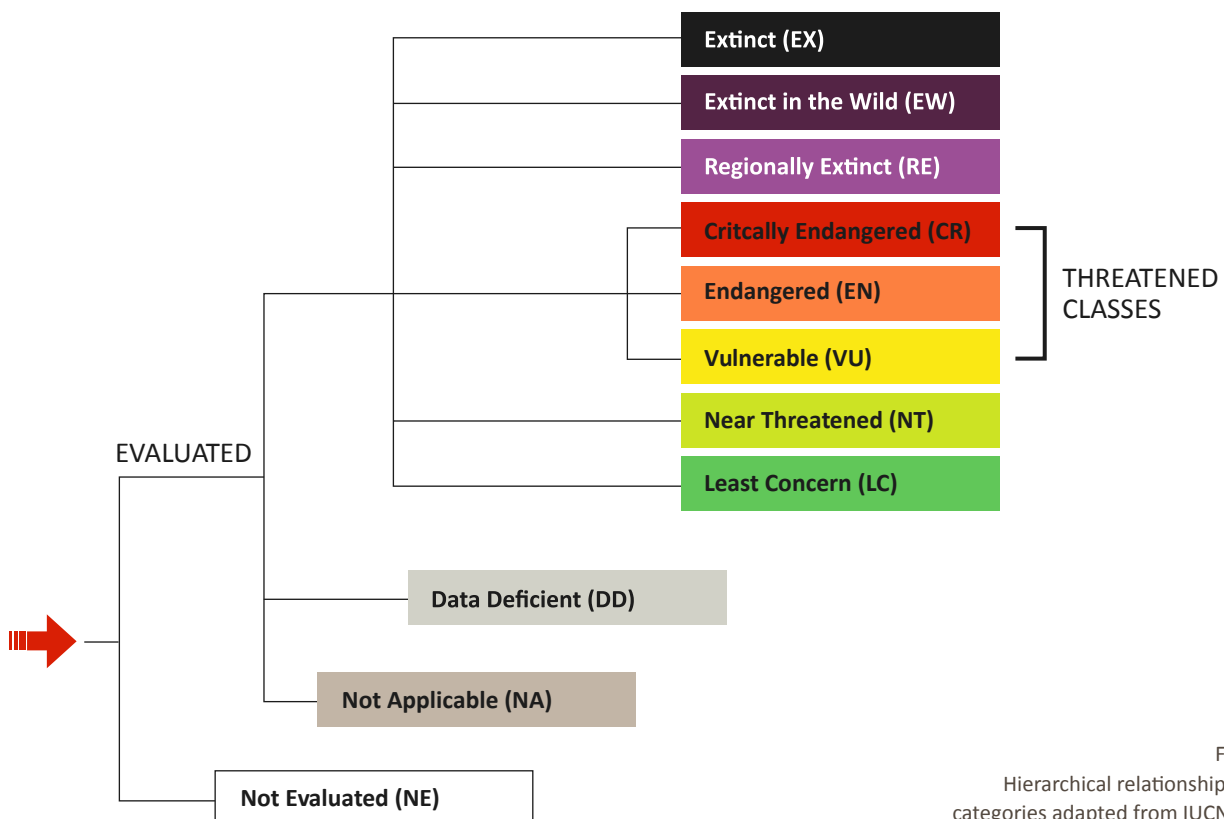


Figure 1. Hierarchical relationships of the categories adapted from IUCN (2001)

EN

Turk's Earth Centipede

Nothogeophilus turki



Freshwater Bay © Stephen McKay (CC-BY-SA)

Distribution and habitat

Turk's Earth Centipede is recorded only from the Isles of Scilly and the Isle of Wight.

Surveys are needed on the Isles of Scilly at the original sites on St. Mary's and Tresco, to understand the current distribution of the species. Intensive survey work in recent years has failed to find the centipede on the Isle of Wight.

It appears to be a coastal species, but it has been collected up to 500 m inland at one location on St Mary's, Isles of Scilly where it occurred in deciduous woodland along the banks of a stream. Coastal sites have included estuaries and soft rock cliffs. It has been found in soil and leaf litter and under stones.

Threats

One site at Newport Docks, Isle of Wight was developed as a car park. As a coastal species the habitat of Turk's Earth Centipede is under threat from development and marine pollution events at all locations. Human disturbance resulting from leisure activities, and sea level rise may also damage habitats.

Conservation status

Endangered (EN)



NT

British False Flat-backed Millipede

Anthogona britannica



Distribution and habitat

The British False Flat-backed Millipede is restricted to coastal areas of South Devon.

It was first collected at Slapton Ley and has since been found in just ten further locations across four adjacent hectads in the Dartmouth area. It is known from sea cliffs, grassland, vegetated shingle and deciduous woodland. Most specimens have been found in leaf litter under Ivy and deciduous trees. All adults have been found during winter months and the millipede probably has an annual life cycle.

Threats

Coastal sites are at risk from human disturbance and new leisure developments. Even protected vegetated shingle habitats such as Slapton Ley are vulnerable to damage from severe weather such as storm surges and marine pollution e.g. oil spills. There are no specific threats known at the locations not directly on the coast but increasing pressure on Local Authorities to identify further land for residential development may affect those sites.



Conservation status

Near Threatened (NT)

NT

Celtic Woodlouse

Metatrichoniscoides celticus



© Steve Gregory

Distribution and habitat

Confirmed records of the Celtic Woodlouse are from South Wales, Anglesey, and Bristol.

It is primarily a coastal animal found just above the supralittoral zone on rocky, calcareous shores. It is usually found under stones deeply embedded in the damp, humus-rich soil of sparsely vegetated erosion banks where it occurs in association with other Trichoniscid woodlice. However, the Celtic Woodlouse has also been recorded from a disused limestone quarry 7 km inland and at an altitude of 170 m. Here the animals were in damp, stony soil.

Threats

Marine pollution generally, as well as specific pollution events (e.g. oil spills, chemical spills), could potentially threaten the survival of this species. Human disturbance from coastal protection and development projects pose other potentially serious threats. Although some degree of coastal erosion is essential in maintaining habitat, extreme weather events have the potential to destroy large proportions of existing habitat in a very short time.

Conservation status

Near Threatened (NT)



EX

a dance-fly

Poecilobothrus majesticus

Distribution and habitat

The only reported occurrence of this species is from Walton-on-the-Naze, Essex, England in 1907.

In the absence of other records for over 100 years this species is now thought to be extinct.

Conservation status

Extinct (EX)



DD

an anthomyzid fly

Reliquantha variipes



Oxwich Wood © Niffanton (CC-BY-SA)

Distribution and habitat

Reliquantha variipes has been recorded from three locations: Oxwich Woods, Wales; Dagnam Park, and Oxford, England.

It has been collected from woodland habitats however the precise habitat preferences are unknown.

Conservation status

Data Deficient (DD)



EN

Fonseca's Seed Fly

Botanophila fonsecai



© Natural History Museum

Distribution and habitat

Fonseca's Seed Fly is believed to be restricted to four localities along the north east coast of Scotland.

It occurs from Dornoch Point on the north shore of the Dornoch Firth northwards to as far as Coul Links, an extensive dune area to the south of Loch Fleet. It is known for certain to occur along 8.1 km of coastline. It is thought to be closely associated with Common Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), sow-thistles (*Sonchus* spp.) and the sand dune systems found in this area.

Threats

The type locality at Dornoch Sands is under pressure from trampling caused by recreational activity in the dune grasslands. The north of its range at Coul Links is currently threatened by development for a golf course and associated infrastructure. The nature of this coastline means that the habitat of this species is under threat from storm events causing erosion of the dunes and loss of habitat for this species.

Conservation status

Endangered (EN)





a crane fly

Molophilus pusillus

Distribution and habitat

Molophilus pusillus has a widespread distribution across England, Scotland and Wales, where it can be found beside sandy streams and rivers.

Conservation status

Least Concern (LC)





a fungus gnat

Creaghubhia mallochorum



Creag Dhubh © John S. Ross (CC-BY-SA)

Distribution and habitat

This species is only known from two areas in the Scottish Highlands: Creag Dhubh, near Newtonmore, Easternness and two sites on the Mar Lodge Estate, Aberdeenshire (Dubh Ghleann and Upper Quoich).

These sites are all located in Caledonian pine forest and the original discovery was from under loose Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) bark.

Threats

The clearance of native woodland for intensive forestry or agriculture is likely to threaten this species. Removal of dead wood and old or decayed trees which may support suitable fungi would also be detrimental to this species. Woodlands should be maintained in a natural state, retaining any old trees and dead wood, ensuring the continuity of these habitats in the future. Over-grazing by deer should be avoided.

Conservation status

Vulnerable (V)





Horrid Ground-weaver

Nothophantes horridus



© Tom Thomson

Distribution and habitat

The Horrid Ground-weaver is a money spider which has been found in or adjacent to limestone quarries. It is known from four sites, all within a small area of Plymouth, in South West England.

One of the four known sites has been lost to development, another has recently been threatened by an application to build houses on the site, and a third was threatened by the construction of a cycle way.

This spider is the only member of the genus *Nothophantes* and the species was only recently described (Merrett & Stevens, 1995). With so few known sites to look at it is difficult to define its exact habitat requirements. From information gathered so far it appears to favour rocks or leaf litter lying on sparsely vegetated or bare ground in shaded and open areas. All sites have a generally southerly aspect which may be of importance for this winter active species (Walters, 2017)



Threats

The location of the known sites for this species mean that it is under threat from urban development.

Conservation status

Critically Endangered (CR)



Newbery's Rove Beetle

Thinobius newberyi

Distribution and habitat

Newbery's Rove Beetle has a localised distribution in northern and western Britain.

This species lives on shingle bars that contain a significant element of sand or fine gravel along high-energy rivers.

Threats

Flow regulation can lead to the moderation of flow events resulting in less sediment movement. Whilst flood events will redistribute some of these riverine sediments, exposed features such as bars and beaches are becoming less mobile, and becoming more vegetated, resulting in a decline in suitable habitat for Newbery's Rove Beetle. Trampling by livestock, in particular cattle, can also reduce the suitability of the habitat for this species. Removal of sediments, whether as part of flood alleviation works, or for aggregate supply, could further lead to declines in suitable habitat. Finally, non-native species such as Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) alter the vegetation along riverbanks, and can lead to siltation, and shading of exposed sediments where this beetle lives.

Conservation status

Vulnerable (V)





a rove beetle

Halobrecta princeps

Distribution and habitat

There are historical records of this species from Cornwall and the Isle of Wight.

The only modern record is from near Faversham in Kent. This species has been recorded from coastal areas where it has been found in seaweed on the shore, under large stones lying on shingle, and in crevices at the base of coastal cliffs

Threats

It is likely to be threatened by cliff stabilisation schemes and coastal developments such as sea defences.

Conservation status

Critically Endangered (CR)





Lundy Cabbage Flea Beetle

Psylliodes luridipennis



© Roger Key

Distribution and habitat

This leaf beetle is endemic to Lundy Island in the South West of England where it is found on maritime cliffs, rocky habitats and coastal shingle associated with Lundy Cabbage (*Coincya wrightii*) (also a Lundy Island endemic).

It is thought that larvae probably occur during the winter on or mining the roots of the foodplant and develop in petioles, midribs and stems. Adults feed on the leaves of the same plant and have been recorded in April and from June to August.

Threats

The sole food plant is threatened by grazing (rabbits and possibly goats, sheep and deer), tourist pressure (e.g. trampling and erosion), and invasive *Rhododendron ponticum*.

Conservation status

Critically Endangered (CR)





Caledonian Planthopper

Cixius caledonicus

Distribution and habitat

The Caledonian Planthopper is known from only two locations: Heriot Water and Edinburgh, both in Scotland.

There have been no confirmed records for at least 70 years suggesting that this species may be extinct. However, there is a possibility that further survey work may discover an unknown population of this species.

Conservation status

Critically Endangered (CR)





Widewater Lagoon © Simon Carey (CC-BY-SA)



Ivell's Sea Anemone

Edwardsia ivelli

Distribution and habitat

Ivell's Sea Anemone is a non-migratory burrowing anemone which lives in brackish water lagoons. It is known from a single location, Widewater Lagoon, Sussex.

Historically, water quality was poor in the lagoon where this species occurred, however, it is now much improved. Nevertheless, there are no records after 1983 suggesting that this species may be extinct. However, there is a possibility that future survey work may discover a surviving population of this species.

Conservation status

Critically Endangered (CR)





© Natural History Museum

Manx Shearwater Flea

Ceratophyllus fionnus

Distribution and habitat

The Manx Shearwater Flea is associated with nest burrows of the Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*) on the island of Rum, Scotland.

This island holds one of the largest colonies of Manx Shearwater in the world, estimated to be one fifth of the world population, however the population on Rum is thought to be in decline and, as an ecto-parasite, this means that the population of the Manx Shearwater Flea will also be in decline.

The Manx Shearwater Flea is known from a single high-altitude site in Manx Shearwater nest burrows on the mountain of Hallival. As an ecto-parasite this species is dependent on a continued population of its host species.



Threats

The Manx Shearwater on Rum is threatened by predation of eggs and chicks by non-native Brown Rats (*Rattus norvegicus*).

Conservation status

Critically Endangered (CR)



© Andy Lewington

British Cave Shrimp

Niphargellus glenniei

Distribution and habitat

The British Cave Shrimp is an eyeless freshwater shrimp known only from subterranean habitats in Devon and Cornwall.

The species is found in groundwater aquifers ranging in character from Devonian limestone to the acidic granites of Dartmoor and West Cornwall, with other records in igneous tuff (Ilfracombe area) and to a lesser extent, slate and other strata.

Threats

There are no immediate threats to this species, however, over-abstraction or pollution of the groundwater is likely to be detrimental.

Conservation status

Least Concern (LC)





© Paul Kennedy

Orange-striped Stonefly

Perlodes mortoni

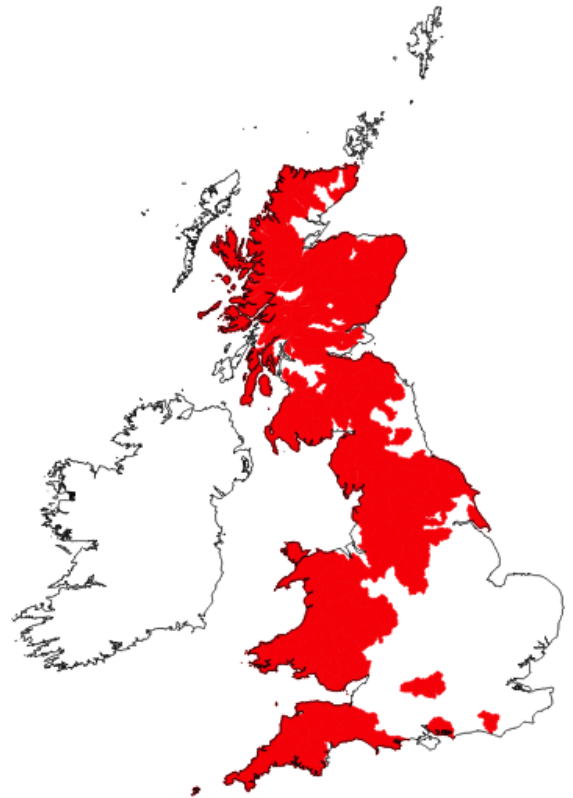
Distribution and habitat

The Orange-striped Stonefly is a widespread species found in clean, fast-flowing rivers and streams throughout Great Britain.

There is no evidence of any decline in the range of this species.

Conservation status

Least Concern (LC)



LC

Northern February Red Stonefly

Brachyptera putata



© Craig Macadam

Distribution and habitat

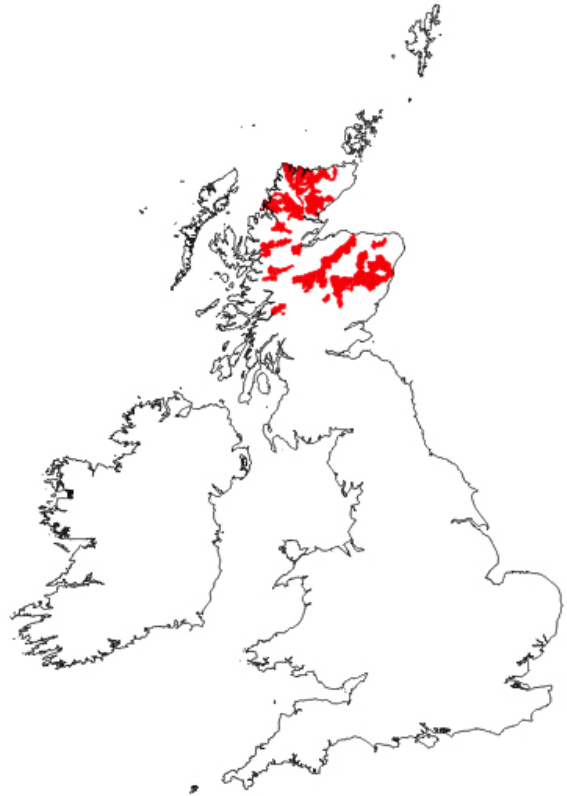
The Northern February Red Stonefly has its stronghold in Scotland, particularly North East Scotland and the Highlands, where it lives in larger fast-flowing rivers.

Outside of Scotland, this species has only ever been found in two areas – the River Usk in Wales and the Wye near Hereford; however, there are no modern records from these rivers.

Threats

Any operations that affect the bed material such as dredging, channel modifications or gravel removal could damage the habitat and should be avoided. Recent adverse weather leading to extensive flooding in the Spey and Dee catchments has caused significant disturbance to the habitat of this species. Further work is required to understand the impact of these events on this species.

In lowland areas the riverbanks are sometimes unprotected from livestock on more heavily grazed pasture. The resulting disturbance of the riverbed, together with the potential eutrophication or pollution of the water, may lead to a deterioration of the habitat. Water pollution from waste water treatment works, agriculture and industry, together with abstraction of water for industrial or domestic water supply could also be detrimental to this species.



Conservation status

Least Concern (LC)



Chater's Bristletail

Dilta chateri



© Marco Weites

Distribution and habitat

Chater's Bristletail is common and widespread in Mid and South Wales, and has also been recorded in Somerset, England.

There is no evidence of decline in the range of this species.

Conservation status

Least Concern (LC)





a dung beetle

Psammoporus insularis



© Darren J. Mann

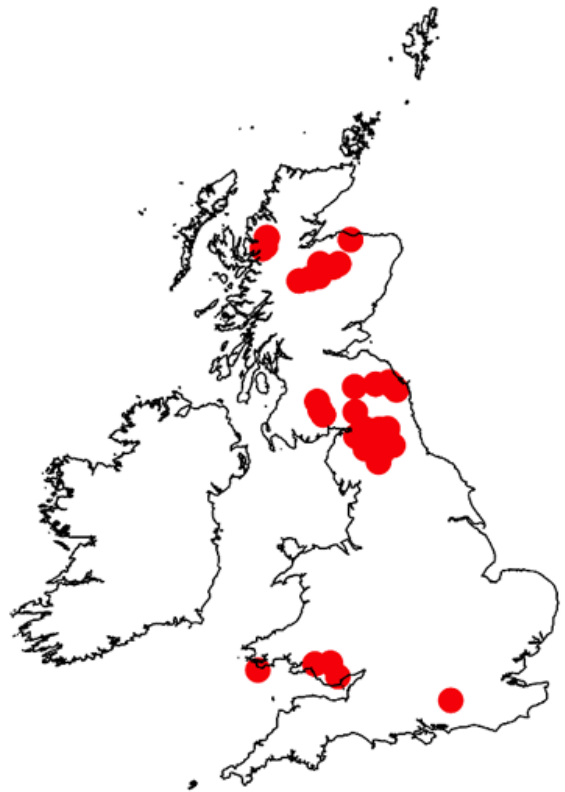
Distribution and habitat

The dung beetle *Psammoporus insularis* is a widespread species found on exposed riverine sediments (ERS) in England, Wales and Scotland.

Whilst the extent of ERS in the UK is thought to be declining there is no evidence of decline in the range of this species.

Conservation status

Least Concern (LC)





Acknowledgements

Dornoch Sands © Craig Macadam

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Table 1 - Endemic species considered in this report

Major Group	English Name	Scientific name	Global Status ¹
Centipedes	Turk's Earth Centipede	<i>Nothogeophilus turki</i>	EN
Cnidarian	Ivells' sea anemone	<i>Edwardsia ivelli</i>	CR (PE)
Crustaceans	British Cave Shrimp	<i>Niphargellus glenniei</i>	LC
Millipedes	British false-flatback millipede	<i>Anthogona britannica</i>	NT
True flies	Fonseca's seed fly	<i>Botanophila fonsecai</i>	EN
True flies	A crane fly	<i>Molophilus pusillus</i>	LC
True flies	A dolichopid fly	<i>Poecilobothrus majesticus</i>	EX
True flies	An anthomyzid fly	<i>Reliquantha variipes</i>	DD
Flea	Manx shearwater flea	<i>Ceratophyllus fionnus</i>	CR
Bugs	Caledonian planthopper	<i>Cixius caledonicus</i>	CR (PE)
Woodlice	Celtic woodlouse	<i>Metatrichoniscoides celticus</i>	NT
Leaf Beetle	Lundy cabbage flea beetle	<i>Psylliodes luridipennis</i>	CR
Rove Beetle	A rove beetle	<i>Halobrecta princeps</i>	CR
Rove Beetle	Newbery's rove beetle	<i>Thinobius newberyi</i>	VU
Spiders	Horrid Ground-weaver	<i>Nothopantes horridus</i>	CR
Stoneflies	Northern February Red	<i>Brachyptera putata</i>	LC
Stoneflies	Orange-striped Stonefly	<i>Perlodes mortoni</i>	LC
True flies	A fungus gnat	<i>Creaghubhia mallochorum</i>	VU
Bristletails	Chater's bristletail	<i>Dilta chateri</i>	LC
Dung beetles	A dung beetle	<i>Psammoporus insularis</i>	LC

¹ Full assessments can be accessed by searching for the species on the IUCN Red List website (www.iucnredlist.org).

Appendix 2 - UK species previously considered endemic in the UK

Major Group	English Name	Scientific name	Notes	Reference
Cnidarian	Brackish Hydroid	<i>Pachycordyle navis</i>	Found in Widewater Lagoon, Sussex. This species is now synonymised with <i>Pachycordyle michaeli</i>	Calder (2012)
Diptera	A dance fly	<i>Stilpon sublunatus</i>	No longer considered endemic as there are records from Belgium, Germany and Norway	Grootaert et al. (1997)
Hymenoptera	A parasitoid wasp	<i>Earinus transversus</i>	No longer considered endemic as there are records from Hungary and Serbia	G. Broad pers. comm.
Hymenoptera	A parasitoid wasp	<i>Omphale erugata</i>	A parasitoid Chalcid of gall midges, recently described species confined to Britain, but likely to be recorded elsewhere.	G. Broad pers. comm.
Moth	A Gelichelid Moth	<i>Psamathocrita argentella</i>	No longer considered an endemic as there are records from France, Hungary and Italy	S. Palmer pers. comm.
Nemertean	Jenning's Ribbon-worm	<i>Prostoma jenningsi</i>	Known only from a pond at Croxton, Lancashire. No longer considered endemic as conspecific with <i>Prostoma eilhardi</i> and <i>P. graecense</i>	Quigg et al. (2020)
Pseudoscorpion	Kew's Chthonid	<i>Epihippochthonius kewi</i>	No longer considered endemic as there are records from Denmark	Gerald Legg pers. comm.
Rove Beetle	A rove beetle	<i>Atheta ellimani</i>	No longer considered endemic as conspecific with <i>Atheta corvina</i>	Benick (1970)
Rove Beetle	A rove beetle	<i>Eudectus whitei</i>	No longer considered endemic as there are records from Novaya Zemlya and north west Taimyr, Russia	Makarov et al. (2018)
Rove Beetle	A rove beetle	<i>Meotica anglica</i>	Known to occur widely on river gravels and shingles in western and northern Britain. This species is now synonymised with <i>M. moczarskii</i>	Assing & Vogel (2019)
Rove Beetle	A rove beetle	<i>Thecturota williamsi</i>	Now considered to be a synonym of <i>Thecturota tenuissima</i>	Brunke et al. (2021)
Moth	Heckford's pygmy moth	<i>Ectoedemia heckfordi</i>	No longer considered to be endemic as there are records from Austria	Huemer & Hebert (2015)
Diptera	Winterbourne blackfly	<i>Metacnephia amphora</i>	No longer considered to be endemic as there are records from France	Adler (2021)



Redford Quarry, Plymouth where the Horrid Ground-weaver (*Nothopantes horridus*) has been found. Left image © Rupert Goddard; Right © John Walters

Front cover photo Orange-striped Stonefly (*Perlodes mortoni*) © Paul Kennedy

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