

This moth has no particular affiliation with woodlands but got its name after the 'Lincoln Green' coloured clothing traditionally worn by foresters. There are three species of Forester moths found in Britain, with this species being the most widely distributed, albeit declining. All three look superficially similar, but this is generally larger than the Cistus Forester *Adscita geryon*, which is associated with Common Rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium*. The Scarce Forester *Jordanita globulariae* is restricted to a few sites in southern England and associated with Common Knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and Greater Knapweed *C. scabiosa*. Antennal characters also help to separate the species.

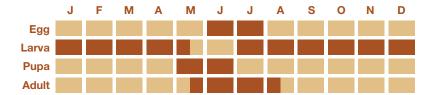
Many colonies have been lost through agricultural intensification and afforestation. Housing development and lack of management leading to scrub invasion are also thought to have led to the loss of colonies of this species.

Foodplants

The larva feeds on Common Sorrel *Rumex acetosa* and Sheep's Sorrel *R. acetosella*, at first mining the leaves, usually on the underside, and then feeding exposed on the lower leaves.

Life cycle

Single-brooded, flying in sunshine and occasionally just before sunset. Typically found in small, discrete colonies and can occur in numbers. The adults nectar on a range of flowers, including Meadow Thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, Marsh Thistle *C. palustre*, Viper's-bugloss *Echium vulgare*, Ragged-Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi* and Field Scabious *Knautia arvensis*, and can be found on flowers even in overcast conditions. The eggs are laid in small batches. Overwinters as a partly grown larva, low down amongst the sward. Pupates in a loosely spun cocoon near the ground, concealed in the vegetation.



Habitat

Frequents chalk downland, limestone grassland, damp grassland, heathland, breckland, sand dunes, and woodland rides and clearings, usually with a good supply of flowering plants. Often found in a longer sward where its preferred foodplant is likely to be Common Sorrel.

Adult record from

2000 onwards

Habitat management for the Forester

This species occurs in a variety of habitats and its precise requirements are poorly understood. However, open conditions are needed, with a good supply of nectar sources within close proximity of the larval foodplant. This is probably best maintained on many grassland sites through grazing, but with a break in summer aiming to retain floristic diversity and ensuring the availability of nectar sources. In the Brecks, ground disturbance through, for example, rotovation has created nectar rich habitats frequented by the adult, with Sheep's Sorrel also appearing in some plots.

How to survey/monitor

The adult can be readily found by day, particularly in sunny conditions. As a consequence these can be counted as part of a traditional butterfly transect, or timed counts could be undertaken to assess how a population is faring. Care should be taken as, despite their iridescent colour, adults can be easily overlooked.





above Forester habitat in Argyll



top Damp grassland habitat for Forester in Dorset
bottom Habitat in the Brecks with nectar plants utilised by the Forester



Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

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Compiled by Mark Parsons, with assistance from Tony Davis & Tom Prescott. The map was produced by Les Hill (Butterfly Conservation). Data were provided from the National Moth Recording Scheme, courtesy of Butterfly Conservation. Map produced by MapMate™ using Digital Map Data © HarperCollins-Bartholomew 2013. Photographs by Sharon Hearle, Mark Parsons & Tom Prescott.

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