



Butterfly  
Conservation

# Pale Shining Brown

*Polia bombycina*

## Conservation status

Priority Species in UK Biodiversity Action Plan.



- Larval record 1999 to 2004
- Adult record 1999 to 2004

The English name of this medium/large species refers to the gloss on the forewings and the general coloration. The species name '*bombycina*' comes from *bombycinus*, meaning silken, which again refers to the shiny forewings. This moth was formerly widely recorded in southern and eastern England. There are very few recent records, most of these coming from a small number of sites in south Wiltshire. The continental form has occasionally been recorded in this country, presumed to be immigrants.

## Foodplants

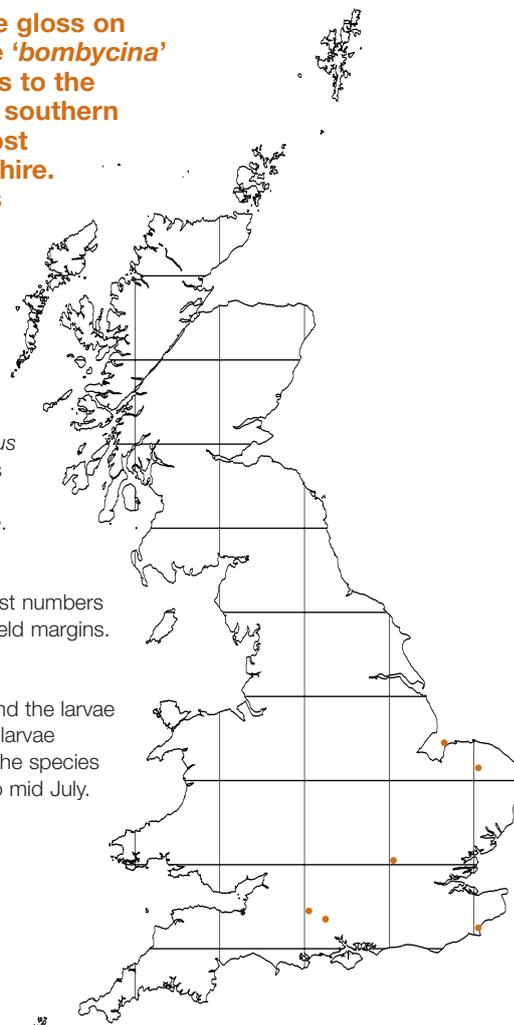
Little is known about the ecology of this species in the wild. The larva almost certainly overwinters, possibly completing its growth on the buds and leaves of deciduous trees and shrubs. A range of foodplants are accepted in captivity and may or may not be used in the wild. They include sow-thistle *Sonchus* spp., Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, Common Restharrow *Ononis repens*, Grey Willow *Salix atrocinerea*, White Willow *S. alba*, docks *Rumex* spp., Common Broom *Cytisus scoparius* and Bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*. The adult visits flowers, specific records including Wood Sage *Teucrium scorodonia*, White Campion *Silene alba*, Bladder Campion *S. vulgaris*, woundwort *Stachys* spp. and Viper's Bugloss *Echium vulgare*.

## Habitat

The moth usually occurs on light calcareous soils, both chalk and limestone. Largest numbers have been found on scrubby downland and the moth has also been found along field margins.

## Life cycle

The moth is single-brooded and flies at night. The eggs are laid in June and July and the larvae occur from July onwards. The precise timing of the early stages is not known. The larvae probably hibernate over the winter before completing development in about May. The species pupates below ground from about May to June, with adults flying from mid June to mid July.



	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Egg						■	■					
Larva	■	■	■	■	?		■	■	■	■	■	■
Pupa					?	■						
Adult						■	■					

## Habitat management for the Pale Shining Brown

The ecology of this species is poorly understood and requires further research. It seems to be primarily associated with downland with scattered scrub. Its range of foodplants suggests it may require scrub or scrub-edge conditions and possibly some ground disturbance.

- ◆ Where the species is found, management should aim to retain a continuity of the habitat types and structures present. Management should also ensure that plenty of suitable nectaring sources are present.
- ◆ Scrub control should only be done cautiously and on rotation, retaining a varied age structure.

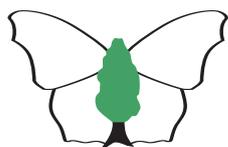
**Please contact Butterfly Conservation if the species is suspected to be present on a site.**

### How to survey/monitor

Adults will come to a light-trap and have been found by searching flowers by torchlight after dark.



**right** Typical downland habitat with suitable nectar sources



**Butterfly Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats

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