

Scottish Wood Ant

Description

This is the only species of mound-forming wood ant present in Northern Ireland and it is restricted to a single site. The large nest mounds are an impressive sight, up to a meter in height and home to thousands of workers.

It is a large red and black ant up to 10mm in length. The thorax and the underside of the head are red, the top of the head and abdomen are black.



Male ants and new queens are produced in early summer and mating flights occur in July.

New mounds may be created by groups of queens and worker from an established mound. The worker ants forage widely from the nest and are said to feed mainly on honeydew and the stick, sweet secretion of sap-sucking aphids.

Distribution

The Scottish wood ant has the most restricted distribution of any ant in Ireland. It is rare in Northern Ireland, confined to a single population, which is the only one in the whole of Ireland. The Scottish wood ant can be found in Annaghgarriff Wood at Peatlands Park (north Armagh); nest mounds exist close to the main path through the wood.

Action

UK Species Action Plan which was published in 1999.

Annaghgarriff Wood, where the species is found, is a National Nature Reserve and part of Peatlands Park SAC and ASSI Implementation of the Northern Ireland habitat action plans for Mixed Ashwoods and Oakwoods.

Further Information

<http://www.habitas.org.uk/priority/species.asp?item=9373>

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