

Cornwall Moth Group

Incidence of the Six-belted Clearwing - *Bembecia ichneumoniformis* (D.&S.) in Cornwall.

Perhaps it is true to say that the occurrence of this **Nb** moth in Cornwall was thought to be "widespread but local on grassy slopes." (*The Moths & Butterflies of Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly* - Smith 1997). This observation was taken from records of the moth seen at Penzance and extracted from the Victoria County History records. No specific date was given but they were probably from the early part of the last century or sometime in the late 1800's. No moths have ever been recorded since as far as I know, except an isolated one taken at Tregantle (VC2) on the 20th August 1974 by R. J. Heckford and one at Kynance Cove (VC1) on the 9th July 1997 by Mark Tunmore.

Barry Henwood (Devon Moth Group) was kind enough to send me his summer 2003 records from Chapel Porth and reported the incidence of one adult *B.ichneumoniformis* to pheromone lure on the 6th July 2003. He suggested that this moth is probably far more widespread and common than records indicate and that members of the Cornwall Moth Group may care to use the pheromone lure 'API' to survey this moth during the forthcoming season. It was with great interest that a number of us took up his suggestion last summer with surprising results that will surely modify our understanding of the distribution and abundance of this moth in Cornwall. The results follow, the most descriptive of which were reported by Justin Evans which are included first. May I apologise to those of you who may have reported this moth at other times but not in direct response to an appeal for records on our Yahoo Groups moth web site. If this is so, please send your latest records in order that this report may be updated.

Reports from Justin Evans (2005):

4th July 2005 - 11am
Bosigran Castle, Nr. Rosemergy, North Penwith SW416371
Two locations tried in small patches of Kidney Vetch
'API' lure
Negative response

4th July 2005 - 12 noon
Pendeen Watch to Portheras Cove area, North Penwith SW380359
'API' lure
Five locations tried along the coast in patches of Bird's-foot Trefoil and Kidney Vetch
Negative response

9th July 2005 - 3pm
Reskajeage Downs, North of Tehidy SW628433
'API' lure
Three locations tried along coast in patches of Bird's-foot Trefoil
Negative response

9th July 2005 - 4pm
Gear Sands, Nr. Perranporth SW773553
'API' lure
Three locations tried in patches of Bird's-foot Trefoil
All positive - one Six-belted C/wing to lure within 1-2mins each time and potted on arrival. Although lure left out for approx. 6-7mins each time, no further c/wings attracted. [Each c/wing was kept potted while trying the next location, so definitely three individuals]. Photo taken of potted specimen (see below).

11th July 2005 - 3pm

Bassett's Cove, North of Tehidy SW636440

'API' lure

Four locations tried along coast in patches of Kidney Vetch and Bird's-foot Trefoil

Negative response

16th July 2005 - 1pm

Hayle Towans SW578398

'API' lure

Three locations tried in small patches of Bird's-foot Trefoil

Two positive responses - one Six-belted C/wing to lure within 2min. and was potted on arrival. A further two arrived within 1-2 mins. At second site one Six-belted C/wing arrived within 1min. Lure left out for approx. 10mins each time.

One negative response - although area of Bird's-foot Trefoil looked OK it was in a more windy location than other two sites [but no more windy than Gear Sands].

Conclusions.

From my own observations this year, it appears that there may be a correlation between food-plant abundance and the presence of Six-belted C/wing. However, it's not the correlation I would have suspected! i.e. the sites with the smaller amounts of foodplants are where I found them. Hayle Towans, in particular, has very 'scrappy' looking areas of Bird's-foot trefoil but proved to be quite successful. Whereas Bassett's Cove has large slopes of both Bird's-foot trefoil and Kidney Vetch but proved unsuccessful. This is the total opposite food-plant/species presence correlation that I found with Thrift C/wing. Although I located this at a number of sites around the coast this year, I found it more often at sites with large amounts of Thrift. As for Yellow-legged C/wing, I tried at seven different locations in/around oaks and Sweet Chestnuts within Tehidy Country Park but all proved negative - one to work on next year! – Justin Evans.

Reports from Leon Truscott (2005):

Species	Vernacular	Date	Site	Grid Ref	Qty	Method	Remarks
Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	09-Jul-05	Penlee Reserve	SX437493	4	Daytime	NMN/Day
Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	10-Jul-05	Penlee Reserve	SX437493	5	Daytime	
Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	01-Aug-05	Penlee Reserve	SX437493	3	Daytime	
Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	07-Aug-05	Penlee Reserve	SX437493	1	Daytime	
Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	08-Aug-05	Tregantle	SX385528	2	Daytime	
Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	10-Aug-05	Penlee Reserve	SX437493	2	Daytime	

It is good to see that Tregantle still supports the occurrence of this moth as per the record by R. J. Heckford in 1974.

Report by Phil Boggis (2005):

Malcolm Lee kindly donated a 3 year old 'API' pheromone which was kept in the freezer for much of the time in a sealed rubber bung which was pierced on the day of use and then re-sealed immediately after use. The site at Spit Beach near Par in south Cornwall had large expanses of Bird's-foot Trefoil. The day was rather blustery but quite warm and this probably aided the dispersal of the pheromone although the specimens struggled somewhat in the wind to reach the lure. Both specimens came to the lure during the mid afternoon.

Taxon	Vernacular	Site	Gridref	Quantity	Date	Method	Comment
Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	Spit Beach - Par	SX07352 4	2	21 Jul 2005	Pheromone Lure	Weather: sunny periods moderate NW wind. Temp. 23 deg. C.

Report from Chris Haes (2005):

Chris reported to Malcolm Lee that a Six-belted Clearwing was seen by him at Nanterrow Farm, near Gwithian (SW592414) on the afternoon of the 11th July 2005. He observed it for about 20 seconds whilst it was nectaring on Scabious.

Report from Dave Allan (2005):

Dave Allan reports that he saw at least 20 specimens over a wide ranging area at Penlee Reserve on the 16th July 2005 attracted to his 'API' pheromone lure.

Addendum - 2006 season

My thanks to Leon Truscott who has been busy this season (2006) and has added some more records to those of 2005. His observations and comments are as follows:

B&F no.	Taxon	Vernacular	Date	Site	Grid Ref.	Number s	Notes
382	Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	28-Jun- 06	Penlee Res	SX4349	3	
382	Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	28-Jun- 06	Penlee	SX4348	1	
382	Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	07-Jul-06	Penlee Res	SX4349	12	
382	Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	15-Jul-06	Tregantle	SX3852	1	
382	Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	15-Jul-06	Withnoe Cliff	SX4051	1	
382	Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	17-Jul-06	Seaton	SX3054	15	
382	Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	21-Jul-06	Polhawn Cove	SX4249	9	
382	Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	22nd- Jul-06	Southdown Quarry near Millbrook	SX43752 8	5	Inland Site
382	Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	25-Jul-06	Talland Bay	SX2251	5	
382	Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	30-Jul-06	Tregantle	SX3753	1	
382	Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	30-Jul-06	Tregantle	SX3853	2	
382	Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	04-Aug- 06	Lansallos	SX1651	1	
382	Bembecia ichneumoniformis	Six-belted Clearwing	13-Aug- 06	Penlee Res	SX4349	1	

Leon writes:

"I arrived at Talland Bay (SX2251) Tuesday 25th July at 11am to look for Six-belted Clearwings. I walked eastwards along the coast path, but found very little Bird's-foot Trefoil. After about 300 metres I

realised I had left the pheromone lure in the car! I decided to return to the car, not to collect the lure, but to give up and move on as the site was rather unpromising.

As I got to about 50m from the car park, I happened to look down and saw about four Six-belted Clearwings flying around a tiny clump of Bird's-foot Trefoil. On closer inspection I saw another, brighter individual at rest in the grass and trefoil. This looked like a female, and sure enough, one of the males was soon in cop. with her.

I managed to take a couple of record shots, one of the female and one of the pair, but they soon disappeared from the scene. It was the first time I had managed to find this species without the use of a pheromone lure.”



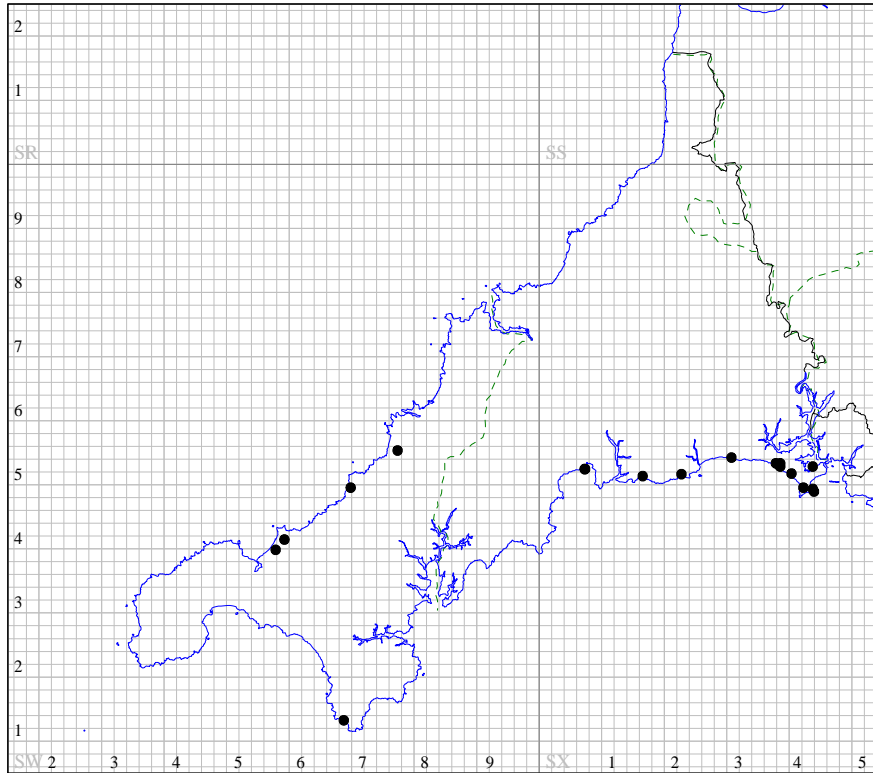
**Six-belted Clearwing (*Bembecia ichneumoniformis*),
Talland Bay, 25th July 2006. Photo © L. Truscott**

Report from Phil Boggis & Lee Slaughter (2006)

Code	Vernacular	Site	Grid ref.	Vice County	Quantity	Date	Method
0382	Six-belted Clearwing	Spit Beach, Par	SX072524	2	5	18 Jul 2006	Pheromone lure

Mapping:

0382 Six-belted Clearwing (*Bembecia ichneumoniformis*)



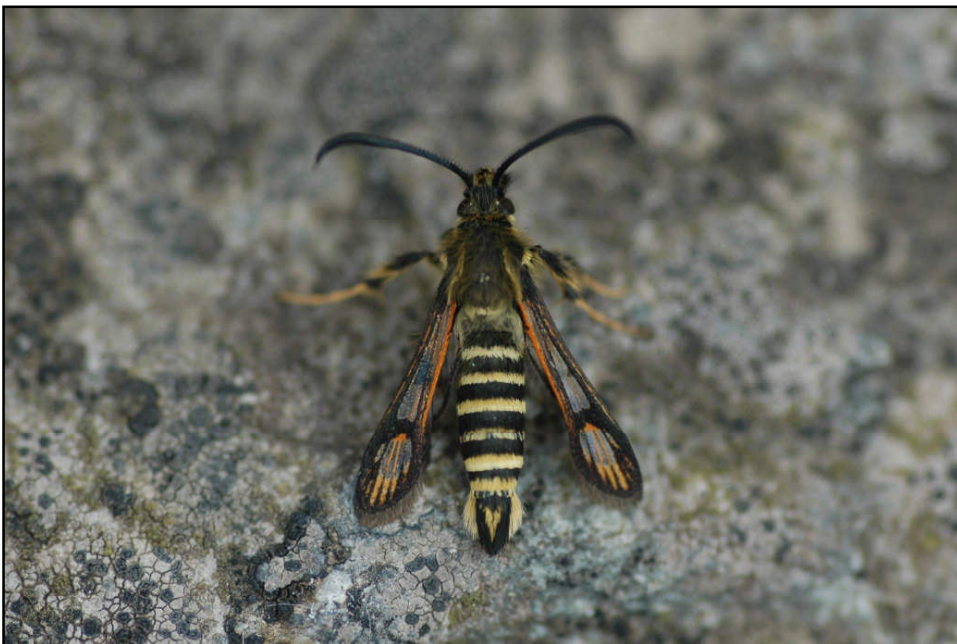
Conclusions.

As suspected *Bembecia ichneumoniformis* has been found all around the coastal fringes of Cornwall and even in those areas so far surveyed with negative results, there is every reason to suppose that with further searches, this moth will yet be found. These results from scattered localities over two seasons bode well for future success and I welcome renewed efforts in the coming years.

The pheromone lures which when mixed in various ways will attract most if not all of the British *Sesiidae* and can be obtained from information contained in the following Internet link: http://www.bioquip.net/BIOTA_PHEROMONESV2.pdf The pheromones are by no means cheap but will last several seasons if kept sealed and stored in a freezer immediately after use.

My thanks go to J. Evans, L.Truscott, M. Tunmore, Barry Henwood, R. J. Heckford, Chris Haes and Dave Allan for their records.

Finally, I include some photographs taken by myself, Leon Truscott and Justin Evans.



**Six-belted Clearwing -
Bembecia ichneumoniformis
(D&S) Penlee Battery,
Cornwall - 6th July 2005.
Photo © L. Truscott.**



Six-belted Clearwing - *Bembecia ichneumoniformis* (D&S) Spit Beach, Par, Cornwall - 21st July 2005. Photo © P.H. Boggis.



Six-belted Clearwing - *Bembecia ichneumoniformis* (D&S) Gear Sands, Perranporth, Cornwall - 9th July 2005. Photo © J. Evans.

~ Phil Boggis – 20th January 2006, revised August 2006.

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