

Rare Invertebrates in the Cairngorms

A tale of treasure hunting...

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Why the Cairngorms?



The Cairngorms National Park is a unique and special place supporting a wide range of invertebrates. The last stronghold for increasing numbers of invertebrate species that are becoming rare or extinct elsewhere in Britain.

‘Rare Invertebrates in the Cairngorms’ aims to improve the conservation fortunes of six very rare insect species in the Cairngorms National Park. These are six of the UK's rarest insect species and the Cairngorms National Park is an important stronghold for all of them.



A group of people are hiking through a forest of tall, slender pine trees. The hikers are wearing backpacks and outdoor gear, and the forest floor is covered in low-lying vegetation. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking up at the towering trees.

RIC Goals

1. Increasing awareness

2. Improving our understanding

3. Improving habitat management

4. Forming good relationships with landowners

Volunteers- training- recorders



Northern Silver Stiletto Fly

(Spiriverpa lunulata)



Progress

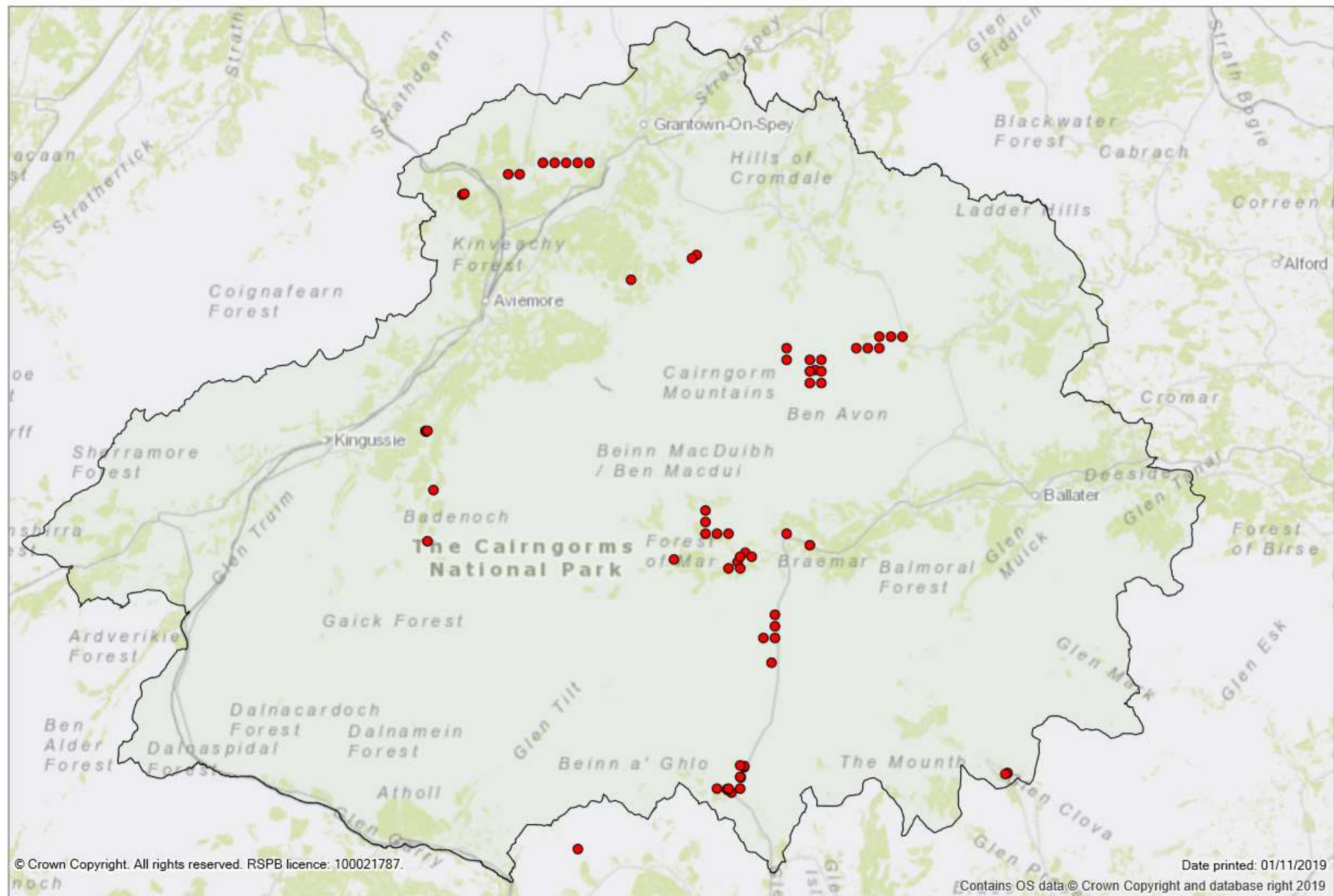


- Surveys in Strathspey, Deeside, Perthshire, Angus Glens- informed by drone work
- Found in five new sites, rediscovered at one site

Progress

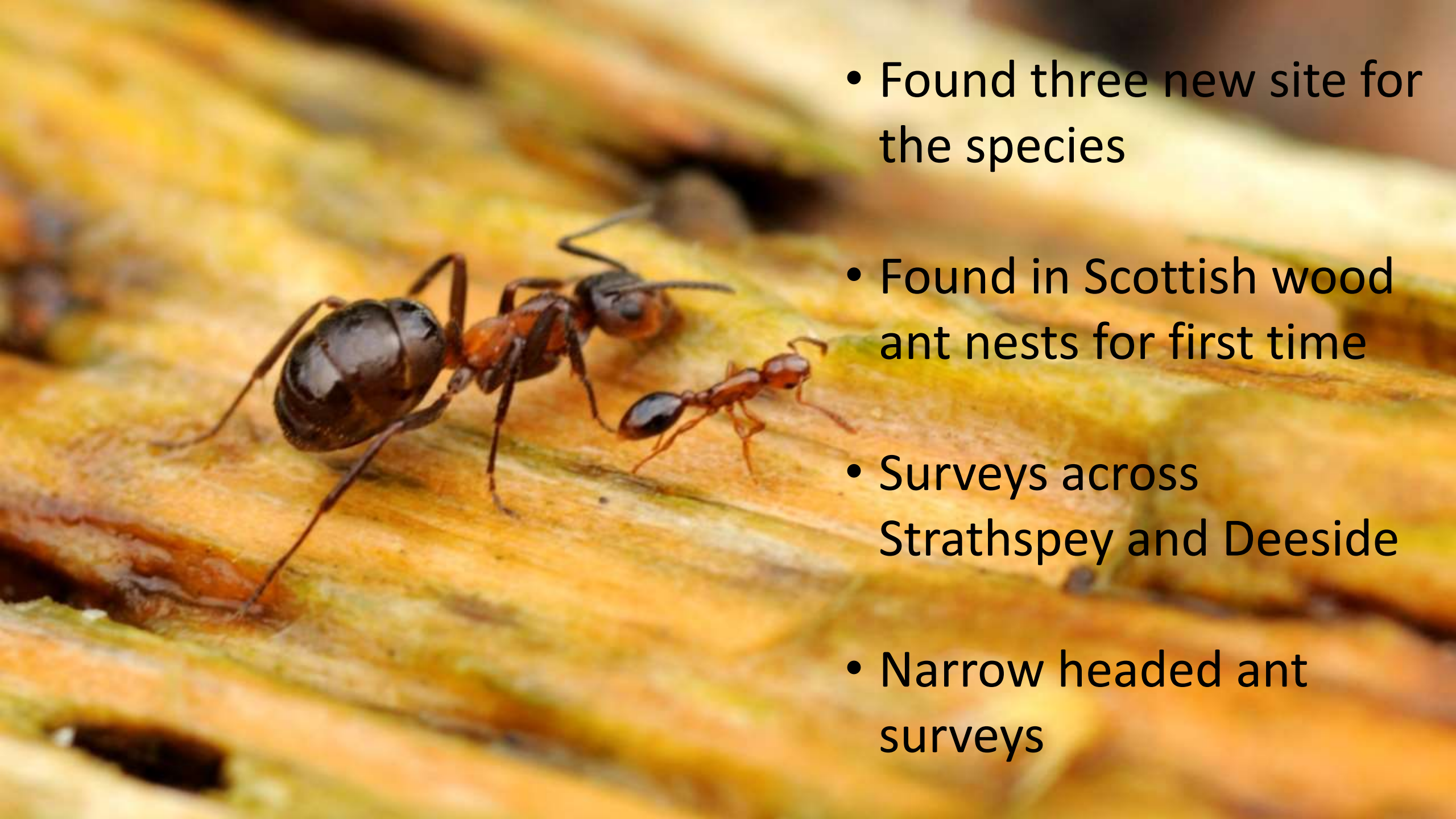


- Volunteer behavioural observations
- Advocacy and land owner engagement with Dalmunzie Estate and Glen Feshie



Shining Guest Ant (*Formicoxenus nitidulus*)





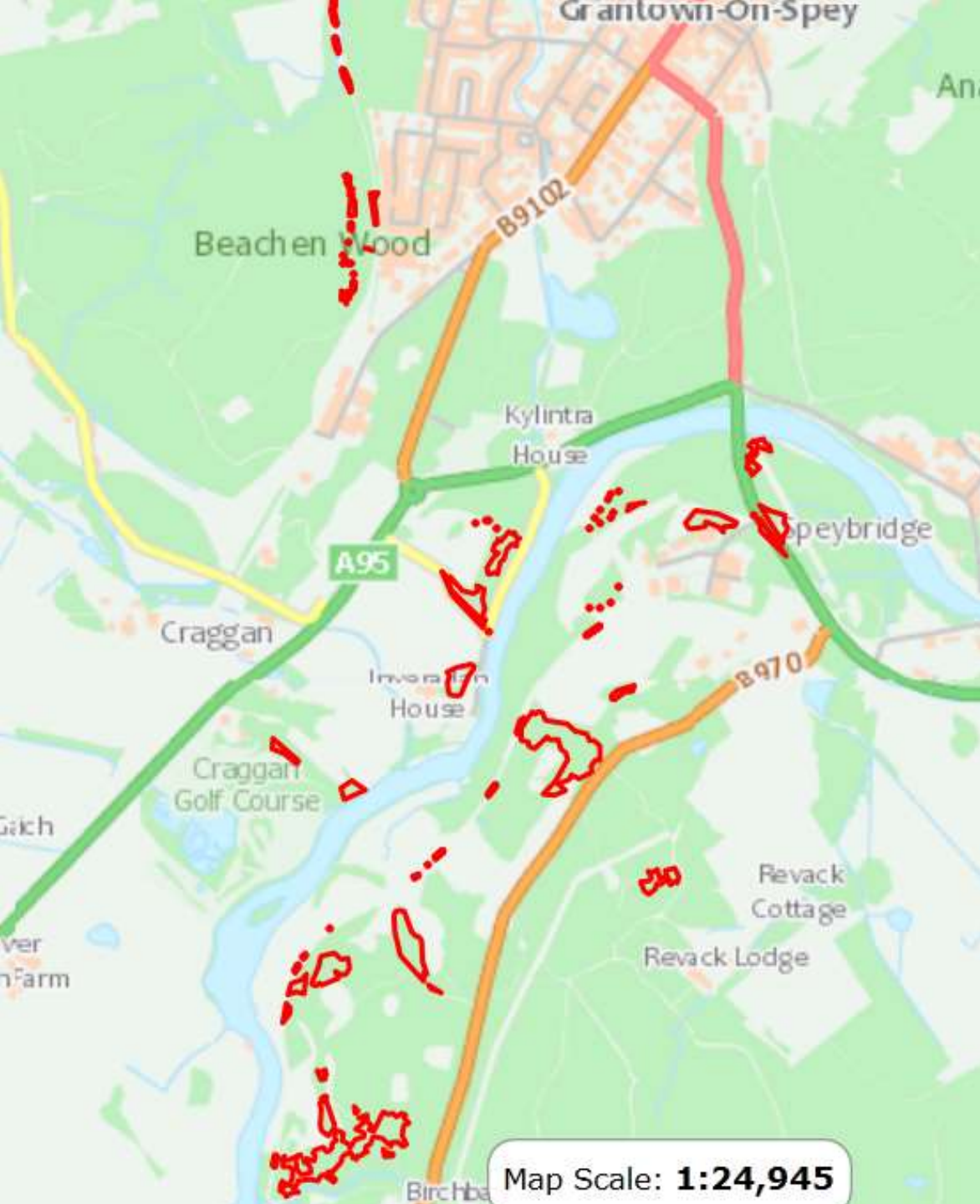
- Found three new site for the species
- Found in Scottish wood ant nests for first time
- Surveys across Strathspey and Deeside
- Narrow headed ant surveys



Dark Bordered Beauty

(*Epione vespertaria*)





Progress

- Habitat surveys and mapping





- Moth trapping in 2019 – 8 teams
- SNH research internship



Management- working with landowners to protection of aspen suckers



Small scabious mining bee

(*Andrena marginata*)

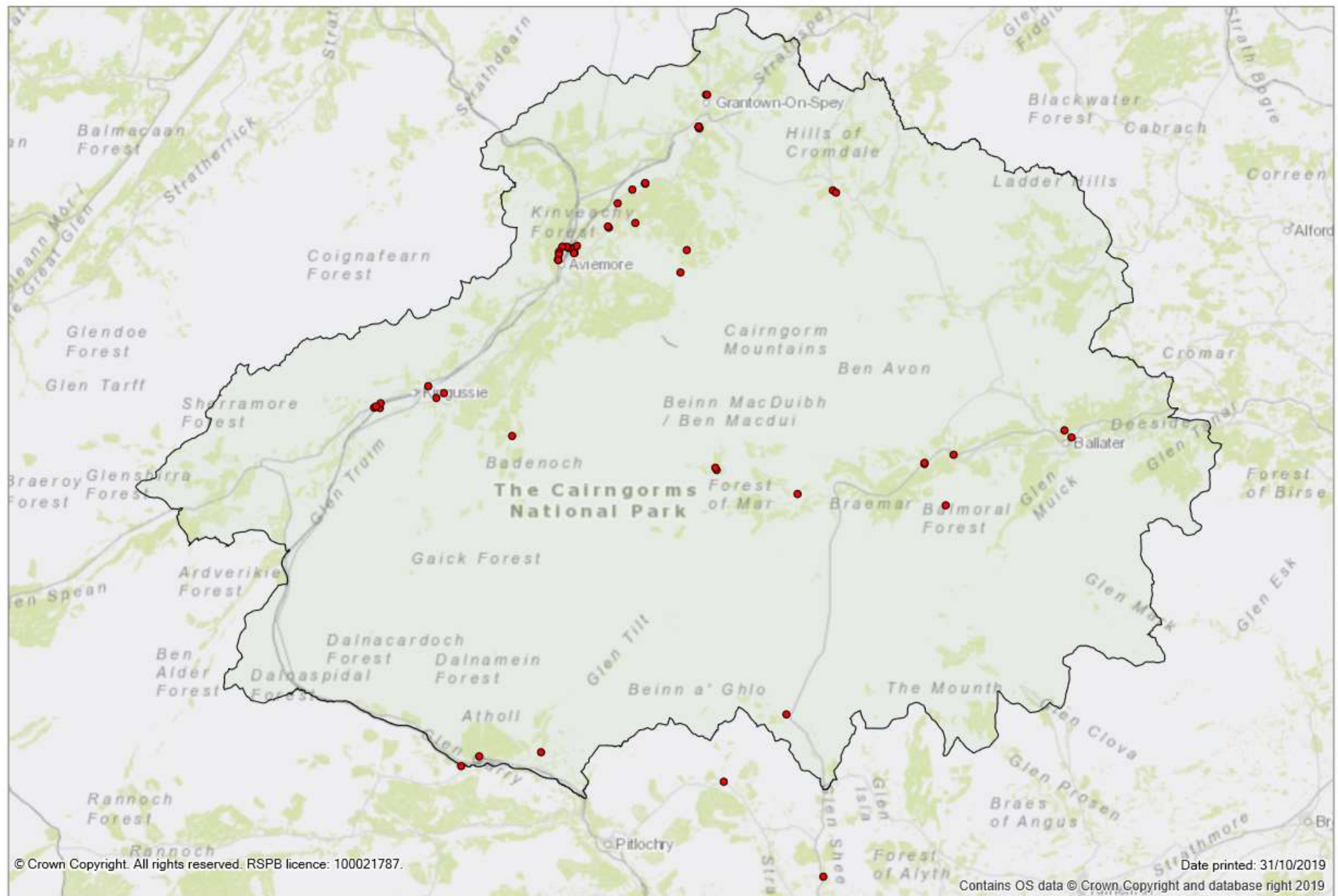




- Ten new sites between 2017-2019
- Behavioural observations
- Integrating needs into new developments

Small scabious mining bee





Kentish Glory (*Endromis versicolora*)

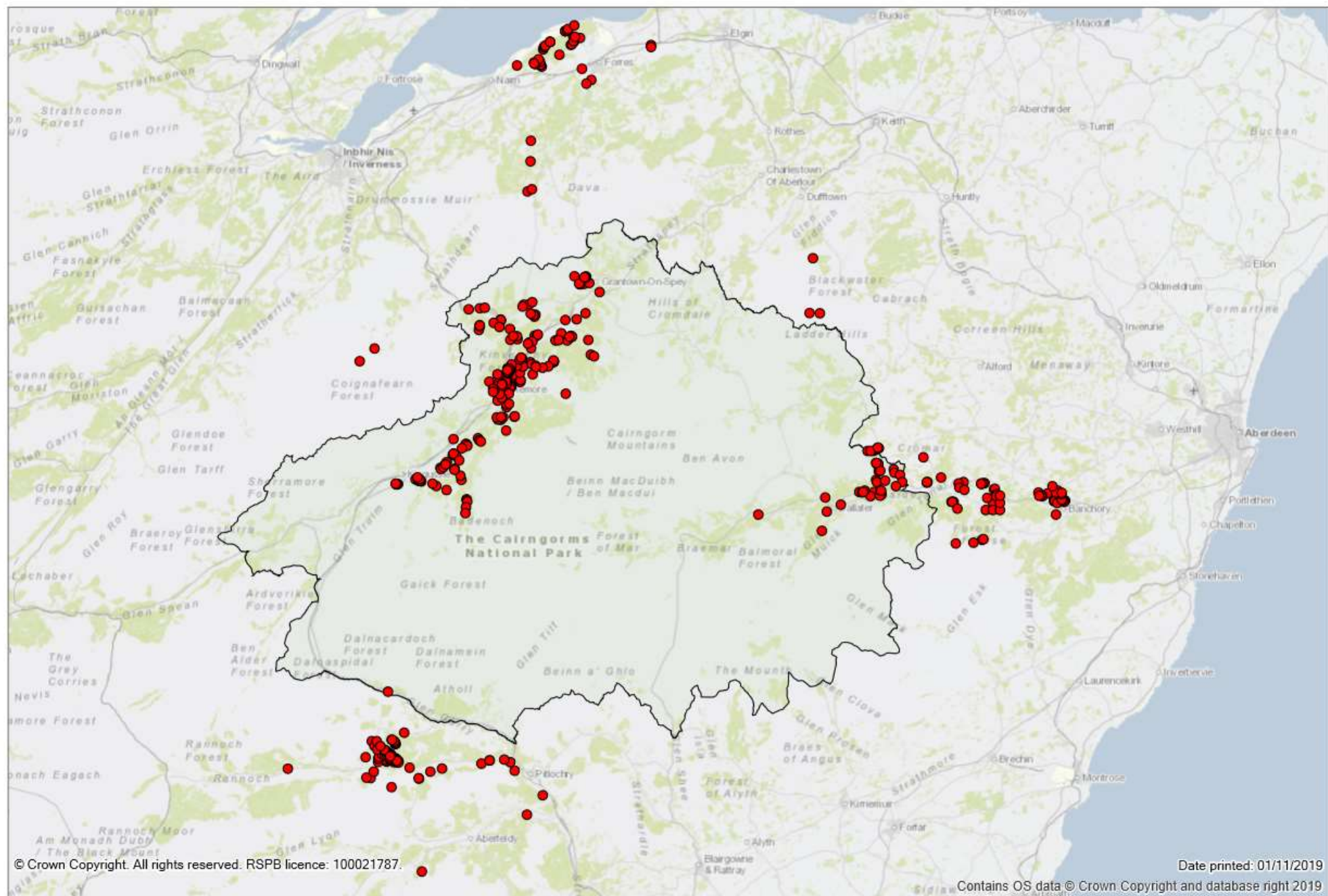


Progress

Pheromone trials:

- Nearly 40 participants
- Nearly 89 new 1km squares
- 3 new 10km squares





Pine Hoverfly

(*Blera fallax*)



Pine Hoverfly

(*Blera fallax*)



- Stump creation
- Larval surveys across 5 sites
- Poster challenge
- Steven Falk
- Sweden
- Captive rearing



Captive rearing at Highland Wildlife Park



Engaging the public

The Highland treasure hunter

Join **Gabrielle Flinn**, Project Officer for Rare Invertebrates in the Cairngorms, on a Highland hunt for some of the UK's rarest insects.

Since 2017 I, and a small battalion of volunteers, have been searching for six of the UK's rarest species – with the hope of conserving them. These six are: the Northern silver silene fly, Kentish glory moth, pine hoverfly, shining guest ant, dark bordered beauty moth and small scabious mining bee.

The Cairngorms is like no other place in the UK. Home to the only subarctic ecosystems in the UK, with the largest fragments of ancient pine forest left, the highest and lowest recorded temperatures in the country, and four of the highest mountains (known as Munros in Scotland if over 3,000 feet). It is because of these unique characteristics that rare and specialised wildlife make a home here.

Whether it be pursuing shimmering-silver flies in the dramatic Glen Feshie, luring bright orange moths with pheromones or trekking through the ancient Caledonian pine forests, the partnership Rare Invertebrates in the Cairngorms project (RIC) is putting insects centre stage within the UK's largest National Park.

One of the greatest aspects of being an entomologist is the privilege of still being able to discover – something which is crucial in this large area of Scotland – and we have made many discoveries during the first two years of the project.

Despite insects being the dirtiest life form on the planet, they remain highly under-investigated. One of the first thrills I experienced was finding the nest of a small scabious mining bee. While surveying for the species in August 2017 I, and two volunteers, found what we believed to be a nest hole of a mining bee. We staked out the nest and, much to our delight, a small bee with a red tail soon landed close by, paused just long enough to be identified, and flew quickly into its nest to offload its forage.

In 2018, nearly 40 volunteers were involved in surveys for Kentish glory moths in the moth being new 1km squares. Other than the small scabious mining bee in seven new sites and the shining guest ant in the new rivers. We also secured Scotland's pine hoverfly larva collaboration with Swedish Norden's Ark, for a new bee programme at the Highland We hope to reinforce the project. Critically Endangered species form has not been seen in it for nearly seven years.

The project was also nominated for an ENRD European



Clickwise from top: scabious mining bee; Kentish glory moth; pine hoverfly; shining guest ant; dark bordered beauty moth.

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RIC-Cast



Legacy.....Cairngorms Rare Invertebrates Champions & RIC2



Thank you!

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