

Formica Lugubris

A new County record

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This is a short note to record the occurrence of *Formica lugubris* Zett (formerly included in *F. rufa*) in South East Limerick.

F. lugubris, the large wood ant, is actively encouraged in some continental European forests because of its role in the control of certain insect pests. Its distribution in Ireland is very restricted, probably due to the rapid deforestation over the past three or four centuries. It may now be on the increase as a result of recent progress in reforestation.

Two active nests have been located in Compartments 25776-e and 25778-R Galtee Forest, near the Tipperary border. (National grid reference R88 18). The first nest was located in November 1972 and the second discovered by forest workmen in March 1973. These two nests are 80 metres apart. It is quite probable that more nests may exist in this locality which is mainly pole and thicket stage conifer plantations with open replanted areas.

Stelfox (1927) quotes records of its occurrence in SK,² NK, WA, SG, WI, and AR (possibly introduced). O'Rourke (1950) notes the following locations: SK, NK, WA, WX, SG, WI (extinct), AR (doubtful), NT and ST. Collingwood 1958 records the following locations; ST and SG, he was unsuccessful in finding any nests in SK, though they have recently been found there. (Breen).

REFERENCES

- Stelfox, A.W., 1927. "A list of the Hymenoptera Aculeata of Ireland." *Proc. R. Ir. Acad.*, 37B 201—355.
O'Rourke, F.J., 1950. The distribution and General Ecology of the Irish Formicidae. *Proc. R. Ir. Acad.* 52B, 383—410.
Collingwood, C.A., 1958. A survey of Irish Formicidae. *Proc. R. Ir. Acad.* 59B, 213-219.
Breen J., 1973, personal communication.

1. Forest and Wildlife Service; respectively District Inspector, Cahir, Co. Tipperary, and Forester in Charge, Galtee State Forest.
2. The letter symbols used are those agreed upon by a committee of the British Association 1912 as follows:

SK	South Kerry	WI	Wicklow
NK	North Kerry	AR	Armagh
WA	Waterford	NT	North Tipperary
WX	Wexford	ST	South Tipperary
SG	South Galway		