

Note: Clearwing Moths in my garden Summer 2021.

I have been running a Moth Trap in our garden since we moved here in February 2000, and I have always taken an interest in any other wildlife that happens to turn up there. At the beginning of this year my garden moth list stood at 672 but I had never seen any species of Clearwing Moths in the garden. I had tried pheromone lures several years ago but without much luck, with 1 Emperor Moth my only success. This year I planned a more serious attempt and purchased a pheromone trap. However, studying the Moth Atlas wasn't very encouraging. It showed that only Yellow-legged Clearwing (*S. vespiformis*) and Large Red-belted Clearwing (*S. culiciformis*) had been recorded in the 10km square but, with no Birch trees or woodland closer than 1.25km, I was not building up my hopes. The garden is small but surrounded by other gardens. The garden behind has some old fruit trees which made me think that Red-belted Clearwing (*S. myopaeformis*) might give the best chance for a garden record.

On 2nd July 2021 I finally got round to trying the trap with the VES lure, checking it every 30 to 40 minutes. Much to my surprise, after an hour or so, there were 4 Orange-tailed Clearwings (*S. andrenaeformis*) inside. On 4th July I tried the FOR lure. By late afternoon I was about to give up when a Red-tipped Clearwing (*S. formicaeformis*) appeared. On 7th July the TIP lure, again in the late afternoon, produced a Currant Clearwing (*S. tipuliformis*). On the 11th the CUL lure attracted a Red-belted Clearwing and on the 13th the VES lure, which was attracting Orange-tailed Clearwings regularly, also produced a Yellow-legged Clearwing. During the period from the 2nd to 27th July I recorded 39 Orange-tailed Clearwings, 3 Red-belted, 2 Yellow-legged and 1 each of Red-tipped and Currant Clearwing.

So having added 5 species of Clearwing Moth to my garden list in a not especially favourable location, the obvious conclusion is that these species must be much more widespread than previous records indicate. With the increased interest in the use of lures it seems likely that the distribution of Clearwing Moths is likely to be heavily revised.

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Reference: Atlas of Britain and Ireland's Larger Moths by Zoe Randle et al.