

Guides to British Beetles

8. *Elaphrus* Peacock Beetles and *Blethisa* Ground Beetles (Coleoptera; Carabidae)



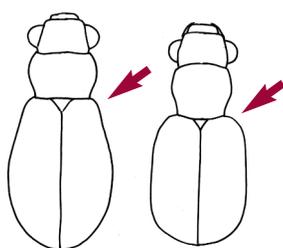
These distinctive beetles have large round pits on the elytra containing violet or blue eye-spots. *Blethisa* lacks these eye-spots but is in a closely related genus. All are diurnal and may be found running on mud in wetland habitats. This guide will enable identification of the four *Elaphrus* and single *Blethisa* found in Britain.

Elaphrus lapponicus Northern Peacock

Separated from the following species by the **shape of the elytra** (see diagrams). The **pits on the elytra are much shallower** than in other species. **Dull matt upper surface** except shiny mirrors. Varies in colour from black, copper, reddish purple, green or blue. **Legs are black with metallic reflection.** Head about as wide as pronotum. Much flatter in appearance than the next two species. Hind-wings present and capable of flight.



8.5 - 10 mm



lapponicus *cupreus*
The elytra are narrower at the base and longer than in the other species.



Elaphrus lapponicus Northern Peacock

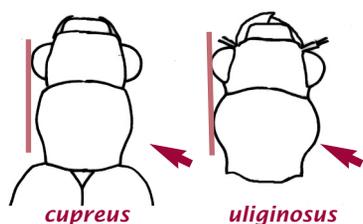
A scarce and local species found in sphagnum bogs and mossy flushes in upland areas of Scotland. There are old records from the Lake District.

Elaphrus cupreus Copper Peacock

Similar to *uliginosus* but separated by the **shape of the pronotum which is distinctly narrower than the head**. The legs have **pale tibiae**. **Tarsi metallic blue**. Coppery-green upperparts. Elytra shiny with violet coloured pits. Hind-wings present, flies readily.



8 - 9.5 mm



cupreus *uliginosus*
The sides of the pronotum are less rounded than *uliginosus*. The head is wider than the pronotum in *cupreus*.



Elaphrus cupreus Copper Peacock

A common species found throughout Britain in wet habitats such as bogs, edges of pools and streams.

Elaphrus uliginosus Fen Peacock

Similar to *cupreus* but separated by the **shape of the pronotum which is distinctly rounded at the sides, front and base**. The legs are all **dark** with a metallic reflection. Coppery-green upperparts. Elytra shiny with violet coloured pits. Hind-wings present.



8.5 - 10 mm



Elaphrus uliginosus Fen Peacock

A scarce species found on bare mud in fens and bogs in southern England, Wales and Scotland.

Elaphrus riparius Green-socks Peacock

Separated from the other species by its smaller size. The **matt green elytra with contrasting shiny mirrors. Tibiae pale. Tarsi metallic green.**



6.5 - 8 mm

A common species found throughout Britain though it is most common in the south. Runs on bare mud in marshes, ponds and riverbanks.



Elaphrus riparius Green-socks Peacock

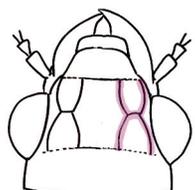
Blethisa multipunctata The Many-dimpled

A distinctive species with **rows of deep pits on the 3rd and 5th elytral intervals.** It may be confused with *Pelophila borealis* but can be separated by the **structure of the furrows on the head** (unique amongst British ground beetles) and the shape of the pronotum. Hind-wings present, capable of flight.



10 - 13.5 mm

A scarce species which occurs in scattered localities throughout Britain. Occurs in marshes and on the margins of lakes and ponds, where there are fluctuating water levels. It will frequently hide underwater when disturbed.



Head with furrow shape highlighted.



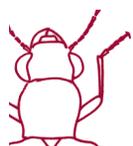
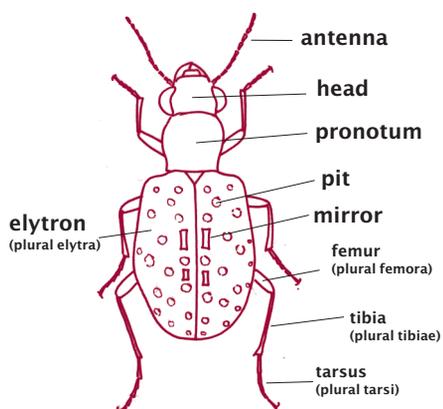
Blethisa multipunctata The Many-dimpled



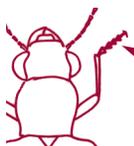
Blethisa multipunctata
The Many-dimpled



Pelophila borealis
Ten-lined Dimple-back



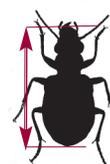
female
all tarsal
segments the
same width



male
first 4 (3 in *riparius*)
segments of tarsi
wider than 4th and
5th.



Elytron lifted to reveal
folded hind-wing



length (mm)

Recommended books on British ground beetles

Martin Luff (2007). *The Carabidae (ground beetles) of Britain and Ireland, Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects, Vol.4, Part 2 (2nd Edition)*. St. Albans: Royal Entomological Society ISBN 978 090154 686 9

The essential guide to the identification of all the British species.

Martin Luff (1998). *Provisional atlas of the ground beetles (Coleoptera, Carabidae) of Britain*. Huntingdon, Biological Records Centre ISBN 1 870393 41 4

Distribution maps of all the British species. An excellent aid when attempting to identify ground beetles.

Thanks to Mark Telfer for his comments and for providing the English names.