



Butterfly  
Conservation



factsheet



Suitable habitat  
on a steep cliff side

# Bordered Gothic

*Heliophobus reticulata*

## Conservation status

Priority Species in UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

The name *Heliophobus* means 'sun-fearing', referring to the nocturnal behaviour of the species. The name *reticulata* comes from *reticulatus*, meaning 'net-like', which refers to the markings on the forewings. Two sub-species are found in Great Britain, the paler form *H. reticulata hibernica*, which is found in the extreme south of Ireland, and *H. reticulata marginosa*, with recent records from very few sites in Kent and Dorset and formerly well established on the Brecks of East Anglia. The latter subspecies was historically widely recorded in England and Wales.

## Foodplants

Larvae have not been found in the wild, so the larval foodplant is not known with any certainty. Possibilities from observations of larvae reared in captivity include Bladder Campion *Silene vulgaris*, Knotgrass *Polygonum aviculare* and Soapwort *Saponaria officinalis*. The adults nectar at flowers such as Red Valerian *Centranthus ruber*, Campions *Silene* spp., Viper's-bugloss *Echium vulgare* and Wood Sage *Teucrium scorodonia*.

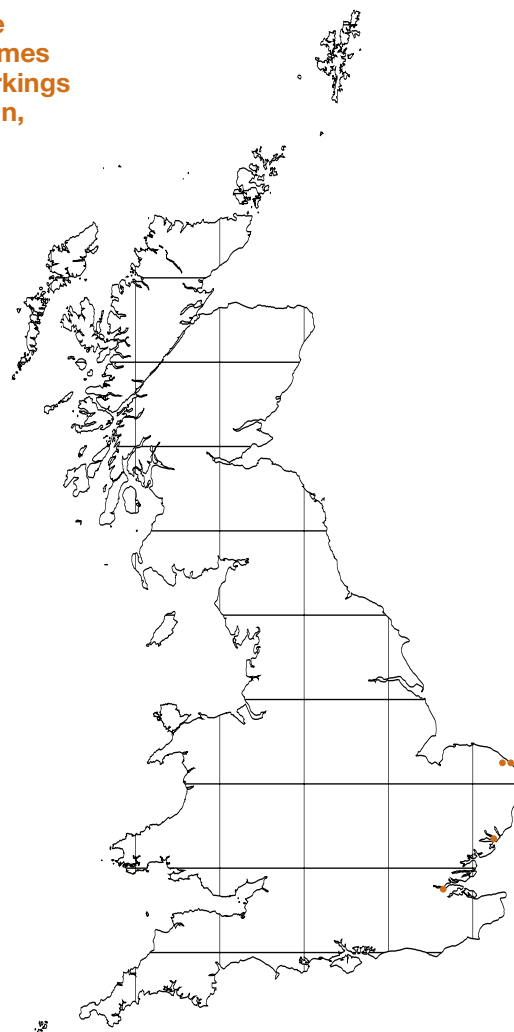
## Habitat

The species is associated with open sunny locations on nutrient poor, often calcareous, soils. Sites include chalk downland, limestone grassland, Breck grassland, sea cliffs, embankments, quarries and brownfield sites, these frequently being areas of disturbed ground.

## Life cycle

The species is single-brooded. The eggs are laid in June and July, with the larvae developing through July and August. The species overwinters as a pupa, in a cocoon formed in the soil. The adults fly at night from late May to early July.

- Larval record 1999 to 2004
- Adult record 1999 to 2004



	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Egg						■	■					
Larva						■	■	■				
Pupa	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Adult						■	■					

## Habitat management for the Bordered Gothic

The ecological requirements of this species, and the reasons for its rapid decline, are poorly understood. There is an urgent need for research into this species' ecology. Consequently, habitat management recommendations cannot be made with any certainty.

### In broad terms, suitable management probably includes:

- ◆ Maintaining an annual continuity of open areas that receive full sunlight and create micro-climatic 'hot spots' that support a variety of nectar plants and potential foodplants, such as Campions, Soapwort, Wood Sage etc.
- ◆ This may be achieved through regular ground disturbance over parts of the site where the species is known to occur.

### How to survey/monitor

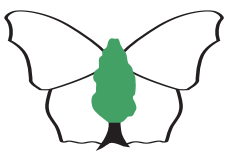
The best methods are searching for adults on flower-heads of plants such as Red Valerian after dark, sugaring and light-trapping for adults. Care must be taken identifying this species as it can be confused with the superficially similar Feathered Gothic *Tholera decimalis* and the Gothic *Naenia typica*.

Please contact Butterfly Conservation if the species is suspected to be present on a site.



above Bordered Gothic larva

below Suitable habitat in an old quarry site



**Butterfly  
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats

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