

A new solitary bee is found at Ford Moss.

When Duncan Hutt took Berwick Wildlife Group on a tour of Ford Moss Reserve, an exciting find was an "aggregation" of mining bees, busy outside their nest holes in a sunny bank. These were almost certainly *Colletes succinctus* (there is no English name). They have distinctive bands of pale dense hairs on the abdomen, and feed mainly on heather flowers.

They don't form colonies like honey and bumble bees and have no workers. After mating the females dig holes with several cells, each of which is provisioned with a semi-liquid store of pollen and nectar. An egg is stuck to the roof of each cell. The eggs hatch, the larvae consume the stored food and overwinter, the pupae then develop and finally the adults emerge in late summer and the cycle begins again.



Although recorded widely as far north as Cumbria, and in the last few years in the Scottish Highlands, there are apparently no records of this bee in Northumberland. It is not clear whether there has been a recent increase in numbers of bees or, perhaps more likely, just in keen observers. Either way it is splendid to find this species thriving in one of the Trust's reserves.

Fiona, September 2007.