

Pest Fact sheet No 5

Case-bearing clothes moth

Name Case-bearing clothes moth

Latin name *Tinea pellionella*

Size



Adult 8mm- 10mm long



Larvae 0.5 mm – 10 mm long

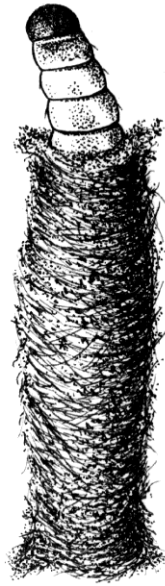
Identification features

Adult



Small moths covered with silver-grey scales. Two darker spots on each wing. Head with a brush of gold hairs and long thin antennae.

Larva



White with an orange-brown head capsule. They live in a silk bag which is open at each end and wider in the middle. They enlarge this as they grow and often include fragments of the fabric they are feeding on.



Some cases can be very colourful, like these examples from an infested flag

Life cycle

Adult moths fly in warm weather and females lay batches of eggs secreted in folds and crevices. When the larvae first hatch they are very small but immediately make a silk case to live in. As they feed and grow, they enlarge the silk case and may include fragments of the fabric they are living on.

They will normally take nearly a year to complete development and when fully grown, will move to the surface of the object they are living on. They stick the bag to the surface and then pupate.

The adult moth emerges in Spring leaving behind the empty silk case with the brown translucent pupal case inside.

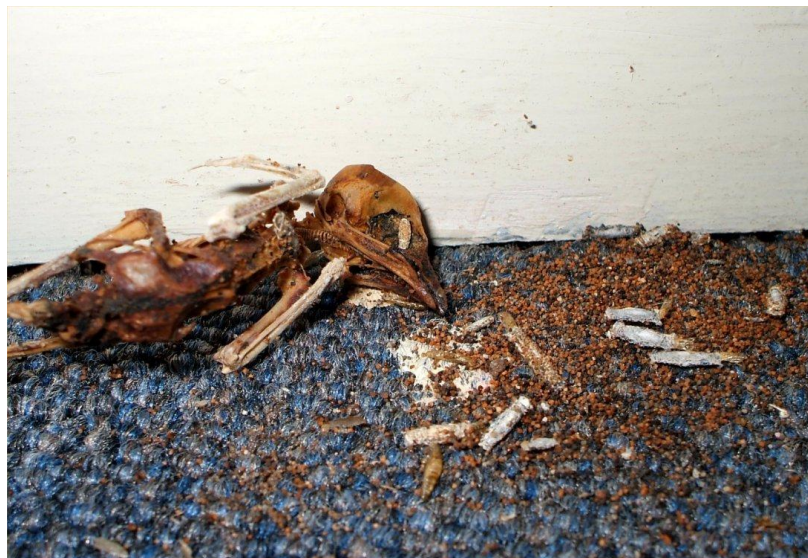
Signs of damage

A mixed infestation on a bird specimen with empty moth cases and the hairy cast skins, or husks of woolly bear larvae, or husks of carpet beetle.

[See fact sheet number 1].



Empty cases and pellets of excreta, called frass, near the remains of a dead bird.



Materials damaged

The larvae will graze on, and make holes in, woolen textiles, animal specimens, fur and feathers.

They will also attack silk textiles, particularly if these are stained with sweat. Clean cotton materials are not normally attacked.

Finding the source

Moths may be visible flying around, but the larvae in their cases will be hidden away in dark and hidden places in folds and crevices. They particularly like layers of wool textiles and undisturbed places under furniture and at the edges of carpets. Full grown larvae will migrate from the infested object to pupate. When the adults emerge, they leave the empty bags behind stuck to the surface.

They prefer damper conditions than webbing clothes moth and are frequently found in natural situations such as birds' nests and animal carcasses. Check unused chimney flues to see if they are blocked by old bird nests or bodies.

Similar species

Webbing clothes moth *Tineola bisselliella* (See pest fact sheet No 4)

White-shouldered house moth *Endrosis sarcitrella*