

Shropshire Earwig Species by David W. Williams

Three species of earwig are found in Shropshire. The below photographs of **males** indicate their relative sizes:



common earwig
Forficula auricularia



Lesne's earwig
Forficula lesnei



lesser earwig
Labia minor

Common Earwig Key Features

Abdomen colour: dark burgundy

Wings: hind wing-tips protrude visibly beyond wing-cases

Forceps (male): broad, flat basal part is much shorter than narrow, curved distal part

Lesne's Earwig Key Features

Abdomen colour: chestnut red/brown

Wings: no visible wing-tips

Forceps (male): broad, flat basal part approx same length as narrow, curved distal part

Lesser Earwig Key Features:

Head: dark / almost black

Wings: hind wing-tips protrude visibly beyond wing-cases

Forceps & tip of abdomen: strongly reddish

Size: much smaller than other species

Females:



Female earwigs resemble males except in the shape of the forceps, which in all species are straight, with incurved tips.

Left: Lesne's earwig. Viewed from this angle, female *F. lesnei* have fatter, more 'barrel-shaped' abdomens than *F. auricularia*. Note the lack of visible wing-tips and bright chestnut colouration.

Right: lesser earwig. Note dark head, visible wing-tips & red forceps

Nymphs:



The key features of nymphs are the very slender forceps & the 'w' shaped wingbuds of later instars.

I believe the left-hand photograph is a common earwig & the right-hand Lesne's earwig, but identifications are uncertain & I would not expect records based on identification of nymphs.