DESCRIPTION
The solitary bee *Andrena ruficrus* flies in early spring from March to May and sometimes even into early June. As they are such early fliers the adults are typically observed foraging for pollen on the catkins of Willow (*Salix* species) that flower early in the year. This species of solitary bee nests in areas of sandy bare ground and has been recorded nesting alongside other solitary bees such as *Andrena barbilabris*. They have been recorded in a variety of habitats including scrub and grassland edges, wet heathland and brownfield sites. There are very few records of this species across the UK although it is more common and widespread in Scotland especially in the Highlands where it nests in wet heathland. In Scotland’s Central Belt, *A. ruficrus* is typically recorded nesting at brownfield sites. This species of solitary bee is a UK Red Data Book species.

ACTION REQUIRED
- Secure current sites, particularly brownfield sites where this species occurs with management agreements
- Consider this species in planning applications, especially in those areas where it has been previously recorded from brownfield sites
- Where this species is known to occur, maintain areas of bare ground and early flowering species such as Willow.
- Monitor existing sites and survey for new ones
- Further research is required into the habitat preferences of *A. ruficrus* and conservation management techniques

FURTHER READING

MSP SPECIES CHAMPION
Richard Lyle MSP
Member for: Central Scotland
Party: Scottish National Party