

## 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.