HOVERFLY NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 19
NOVEMBER 1994

Hoverfly Recording Scheme

Biological Records Centre

All readers will be familiar with common names for certain hoverflies, such as the Drone Fly (*Eristalis tenax*), the Narcissus Fly (*Merodon equestris*) and the Lesser Bulb Flies (*Eumerus sp.*), but I suspect that nearly all of us use the scientific names when referring to these species just as we are obliged to for the majority of species which have no common names. In **Hoverflies of Sheffield and North Derbyshire**, Derek Whiteley introduced us to a few new common names, at least one of which, the Marmalade Fly (*Episyrphus balteatus*) seems to be catching on. But who is familiar with any of the following?

The Two-spotted Forest Edge Hoverfly
The Common Gold Hoverfly
The Common Emerald Hoverfly
The Great Marsh Hoverfly
The Golden-haired Long-abdomen Hoverfly
The White-banded Peat Hoverfly
The Brilliant Hoverfly
The Shining Aphid Hoverfly
The Bumblebee Forest Hoverfly
The Red-haired Ant Hoverfly

All these are translations from the German of common names which Kurt Kormann has applied in systematic fashion to hoverflies in his book **Schwebfliegen Mitteleuropas**. All those listed above belong to species on the British list. For those who wish to work out or guess the species to which these names belong, I have listed their Latin equivalents at the end of the newsletter. Some are much more obvious than others.

I am sure that opinion will be divided as to whether the adoption of vernacular language names for species is a good idea. Of course for very popular groups, such as butterflies, they have been established for many years, and more recently common names have been introduced for some orders or families (eg dragonflies and ladybirds). Undoubtedly the availability of no names other than the scientific ones is a deterrent to some would-be hoverfly enthusiasts; equally, perhaps for some experts there is a certain "snob value" as a result of their subject not being "tainted" by "vulgar" familiar names! And, of course the scientific names are international and standard; at this point I hear some hollow laughs from readers who have had to make extensive amendments to their records as a result of the spate of recent changes in generic and specific names of hoverflies!

It would be fascinating to receive the views of readers on this matter, and include them in future editions of this newsletter. Articles on any other aspect of hoverflies are also, as always, welcome, as are readers' reactions to and comments on any item in the current newsletter. Please let me have these by 1 March 1995; the address is **David Iliff, Green Willows, Station Road, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Gloucester, GL52 4HN**.

CONTENTS

VOLUCELLA ZONARIA IN CORNWALL

Rod Belringer
20 Wakefield Avenue, St Budeaux, Plymouth, PL5 1PU

In **Hoverfly Newsletter No. 15**, Anthony Bainbridge, in his article entitled, "*Volucella zonaria* moves west", reported finding the species in Plymouth in 1991. His article ended with the prediction "Cornwall, here it comes ....."

During 1993, L Truscott and I visited a narrow woodland valley in Torpoint, East Cornwall, where we found this large hoverfly, usually in ones or twos per visit. On one occasion we were sure we had at least three. Bramble flowers appeared to be the main feeding sites, though we did see them on hogweed flowers a few times.

V. zonaria was also seen in two Torpoint gardens, about half a mile apart, and at nearby Cremyll, feeding on Hebe flowers in a car park flowerbed.

This year we have seen *V. zonaria* again in the wooded valley in Torpoint.

(Editor's comment: I note with interest that one of Rod's sightings of *V. zonaria* was in a car park, in view of the correspondence I had with Colin Plant over the occurrence of *Volucella inanis* in car parks; see **Hoverfly Newsletter No. 18**).

WHO KILLED MYATHROPA?

Kenn Watt
"St Elmo" 64 Hilton Drive, Aberdeen AB2 2NP
Tel: 0224 483065

While walking home from work I pass a large Sycamore tree in the college grounds which has a rot hole in its trunk about 2.5 m above ground level, where a branch has broken off some time ago. There is a small opening which is not large enough to put one's hand inside to investigate the contents. Therefore I am used to peering up at it to see if anything has emerged. On this particular day it was raining so I was not hopeful. However I was amazed to see a large tangled mass of *Myathropa* larvae just below the opening. Thinking that they had emerged to pupate I left them and returned the following

day. They were still there. I scooped up the mass and took them back to my lab. There were over 70 larvae - all dead - with half a dozen predaceous Muscid larvae feeding on them. What had caused this catastrophe? Who or what had killed them? Why were they all intertwined? Had the rain downpour drowned them? Not likely since surely they have evolved to survive their rot hole being flooded. Had the Muscids killed them? Again not likely that the Muscids would kill all of them. Has anyone any plausible suggestions to this riddle? Answers to the editor for the next newsletter.

RIVER TAY REED BED SURVEY

Kenn Watt
"St Elmo" 64 Hilton Drive, Aberdeen AB2 2NP
Tel: 0224 483065

As part of the Initiative for Scottish Insects, I have been contracted by Scottish Natural Heritage to survey the invertebrate fauna of the River Tay reed beds between Perth and Dundee. During May to September water traps and pitfall traps were set up at four different sites along the 12 miles of Phragmites reed beds. The traps have still to be analysed fully but initial results are encouraging, indicating a wide variety of species from this monoculture habitat.

During the month of May 1200 specimens of hoverflies were taken. Of the 32 species captured 2 were nationally Notable (*Anasimyia lunulata* and *Platycheirus immarginatus*) and one RDB1 (*Sphaerophoria loewi*). However, in a Scottish context, there were 4 Notable (*Cheilosia vernalis*, *Neoascia meticulosa*, *Platycheirus fulviventris*, *Platycheirus immarginatus*), 1 Status 3 (*Chalcosyrphus nemorum*), 1 Status 2 (*Tropidia scita*) and 2 Status 1 (*Anasimyia lunulata*, *Sphaerophoria loewi*). Of particular interest was the large number (101) of *Tropidia scita* which are most likely breeding in the reed beds.

As there is a management agreement at one of the sites between the local farmer/landowner and SNH it is hoped that the project will indicate which rare species are breeding there and possible suggestions to be made as to how best to conserve the interesting insect fauna of the reed beds.

HOVERFLIES ON FENNEL

Stephen Palmer
The Warren, Hindon Road, Dinton, Wilts, SP3 5EG

On 5 August 1994 I had the opportunity to monitor hoverflies visiting a large fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) plant in a rural garden in Wiltshire (grid ref SU 017312). The surrounding habitat consisted of mature gardens, damp deciduous woodland and a small flooded and long disused clay quarry. My attention was drawn to the fennel plant by the large numbers of *Episyrphus balteatus* present, the species also being seen in large numbers feeding on aphid honeydew on a nearby plum tree and other garden plants. In all, several hundred individuals must have been present. The weather throughout the day was warm, rather muggy and overcast, with occasional sunshine, but the overall lack of sun did not appear to reduce activity. The fennel was inspected approximately every half hour from 8.30 am until 6 pm (I was assisted by one son and one daughter with numerous captures), and hoverflies were identified using a binocular microscope where necessary.

I was able to check the fennel again on subsequent weekends and the following is a list of hoverfly species recorded on the plant between 5 and 21 August:

Melanostoma scalare
Playtcheirus albimanus
Platycheirus peltatus (ss)
Platycheirus scutatus
Pyrophaena granditarsa
Chrysotoxum bicinctum
Dasysyrphus albostriatus
Epistrophe grossulariae
Episyrphus balteatus
Meliscaeva cinctella
Meliscaeva auricollis
Eupeodes corollae
Eupeodes luniger
Scaeva pyrastri
Sphaerophoria scripta
Syrphus ribesii
Syrphus vitripennis
Xanthogramma pedisequum
Cheilosia bergenstammi
Cheilosia pagana
Cheilosa scutellata
Cheilosia soror
Cheilosia proxima
Cheilosia vernalis
Neoascia podagrica
Orthonevra nobilis
Orthonevra splendens
Eristalis pertinax
Myathropa florea
Eumerus tuberculatus
Neocnemodon vitripennis
Pipiza noctiluca
Pipizella varipes
Syritta pipiens

PIPIZELLA MACULIPENNIS IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

David Iliff
Green Willows, Station Road, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Glos. GL52 4HN

The scarce and elusive hoverfly *Pipizella maculipennis* was recorded from Wotton-under-edge in Gloucestershire many years ago by V R Perkins, but until this year the only recent record of this species for the country is that of Ian McLean, who found a female at the now defunct Blaisdon railway nature reserve in July 1980.

On 11 July this year I noticed a small black hoverfly feeding on hogweed flowers in Hay Wood near Dymock, Gloucestershire. Examination of this insect revealed that it was another female *P. maculipennis*, which was identifiable in particular by the very long third antennal segment. The specimen also had black hairs on the axis of tergites 3 and 4 (I can confirm that these hairs are, as the key in **British Hoverflies** states, "hard to see"!); the wings had a faint brown cloud. Nigel Wyatt of the Natural History Museum verified the identification, and the specimen has been placed in the museum's collection.

Records of this species are sparse though widely scattered in Britain. It is perhaps a classic example of a species that is easy to miss, both because it is small and black and because of its close resemblance to the two commoner species of the genus.

XYLOTA SEGNIS ON BUTTERCUPS - NOT SO UNUSUAL, PERHAPS

David Iliff
Green Willows, Station Road, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Glos. GL52 4HN

In **British Hoverflies**, Alan Stubbs quotes a report from Ian McLean of *Xylota segnis* on *Ranunculus* (buttercup) flowers, and describes this as a highly unusual occurrence. Although this species is usually found on foliage, I have found it on buttercup flowers on a number of occasions, and though I would

not describe this as a commonplace event, I have now lost count of the number of such observations I have made. This year I saw two separate specimens of *X. segnis* on buttercups on the same day.

The other *Xylota* species to favour buttercups is the much scarcer *X. coeruleiventris*. In the case of that species the majority of my (comparatively few) sightings have been on buttercup flowers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Malloch Society AGM and Annual Dinner

Perth Museum
Sat. 3rd Dec. 1994
2.00 pm

Provisional Programme:

Graham Rotheray	Canadian Saproxylix Hoverflies
Andy Whittington	South African Diptera
Kenn Watt	Hoverflies of the R. Tay Reed Beds
Alain Maibach	To be announced
Geoff Hancock	Diptera of Trinidad

To be followed by the Annual Dinner in the Salutation Hotel at 8.00 pm when the winner of this year's DOTY AWARD (Scottish Dipterist Of The Year) will be presented. Further information from Kenn Watt - "St Elmo" 64 Hilton Drive, Aberdeen AB2 2NP (Tel. 0224-483065).

Holiday '95

Thinking of visiting Scotland to collect flies next year? Then why not stay with your local dipterist in Grampian - Kenn Watt. "St Elmo" Bed & Breakfast - 64 Hilton Drive, Aberdeen AB2 2NP (Tel. 0224 483065). Reduced rates to visiting dipterists.

Colour Guide to Hoverfly Larvae

Graham Rotheray's Colour Guide to Hoverfly Larvae (Dipterists Digest No. 9) is now available, and can be obtained from **Derek Whiteley, 17 Rustlings Road, Sheffield, S11 7AA**, at a price of £11.95, post free.

RECENT LITERATURE

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Gasparich, G.E., Saillard, C., Clark, E.A., Konai, N., French, F.E., Tully, J.G., Hackett, K.J. & Whitcomb, R.F. 1993. Serologic and genomic relatedness of group VIII and group XVII spiroplasmas and subdivision of Spiroplasma group VIII into subgroups *Int. J. Syst. Bacteriol. (1993) 43(2): 338-341* English.

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Whiteley, D., Garland, S.P. & Hancock, E.G. 1994. A survey of Diptera on South Uist and adjacent Outer Hebridean Islands. *Dipterist Digest (1994) No. 14: 32-43* English.

Winder, L., Hirst, D.J., Carter, N., Wratten, S.D. & Sopp, P.I. 1994. Estimating predation of the grain aphid *Sitobion avenae* by polyphagous predators. *J. Applied Ecology (1994) 31(1): 1-12* English.

K. KORMANN'S HOVERFLY NAMES

(see Page 1)

The Two-spotted Forest Edge Hoverfly	Pipiza noctiluca
The Common Gold Hoverfly	Ferdinandea cuprea
The Common Emerald Hoverfly	Chrysogaster solstitialis*
The Great Marsh Hoverfly	Helophilus trivittatus
The Golden-haired Long-abdomen Hoverfly	Xylota sylvarum
The White-banded Peat Hoverfly	Sericomyia lappona
The Brilliant Hoverfly	Callicera aenea
The Shining Aphid Hoverfly	Parasyrphus annulatus*
The Bumblebee Forest Hoverfly	Volucella bombylans
The Red-haired Ant Hoverfly	Microdon mutabilis

* did anyone correctly identify either of these?

Hoverfly Recording Scheme

Progress report

There has not been much activity in 1994 because Roger Morris started a new job (English Nature's County Officer for Humberside) and Stuart Ball has been heavily committed to work on a new version of Recorder (3.2 - now available!). Never the less the number of records on computer file has continued to grow and now totals 213,816 records from 2,109 10km squares (2,040 in England, Scotland and Wales and 69 in Ireland). Table I shows the sources from which records have been received and the way in which the database has grown. The breakdown of sources (at the end of the table) shows that c.54,500 were received from BRC (these have now been checked against the original cards), c.77,000 have been received in machine readable form from other databases and c.82,000 records have been entered from paper sources - mostly from BRC cards by Roger Morris.

The usual coverage maps show the squares for which there are records in Britain and the number of species recorded from each square.

Table II shows the numbers of records on the database from each decade. It shows that 80% of records date from the 1980s and 1990s. This is good in that these "modern" records are the most significant for conservation use and also for analysis against recent land cover and other data, but suggests that we are not in a position to judge range changes compared with the past. One of the future activities of the scheme will be to trawl older records from museum collections and the literature to improve the historical picture.

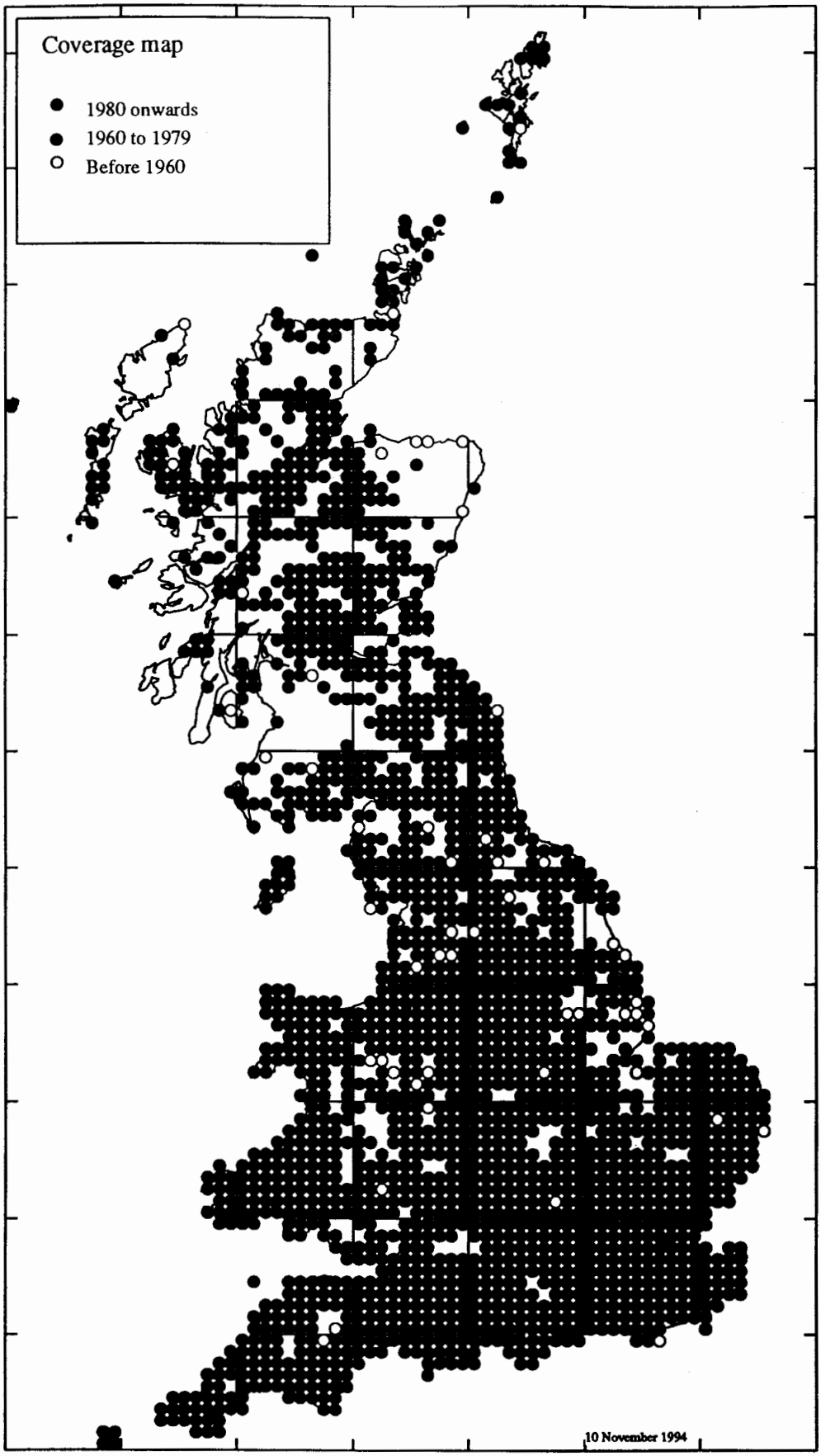
Stuart Ball
10 November, 1994

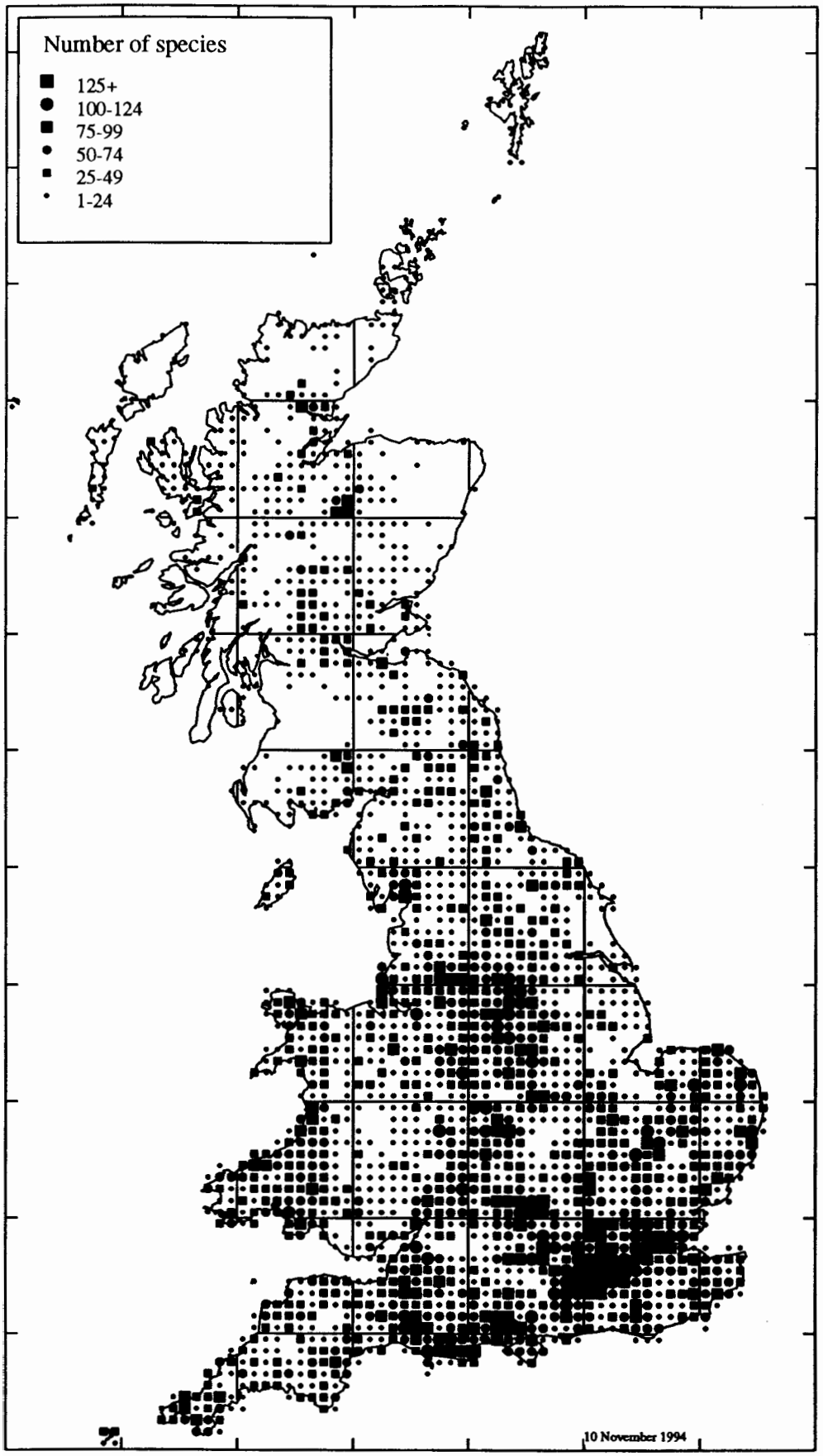
Table I Growth of the database showing the sources of records and the dates they were added to the database.

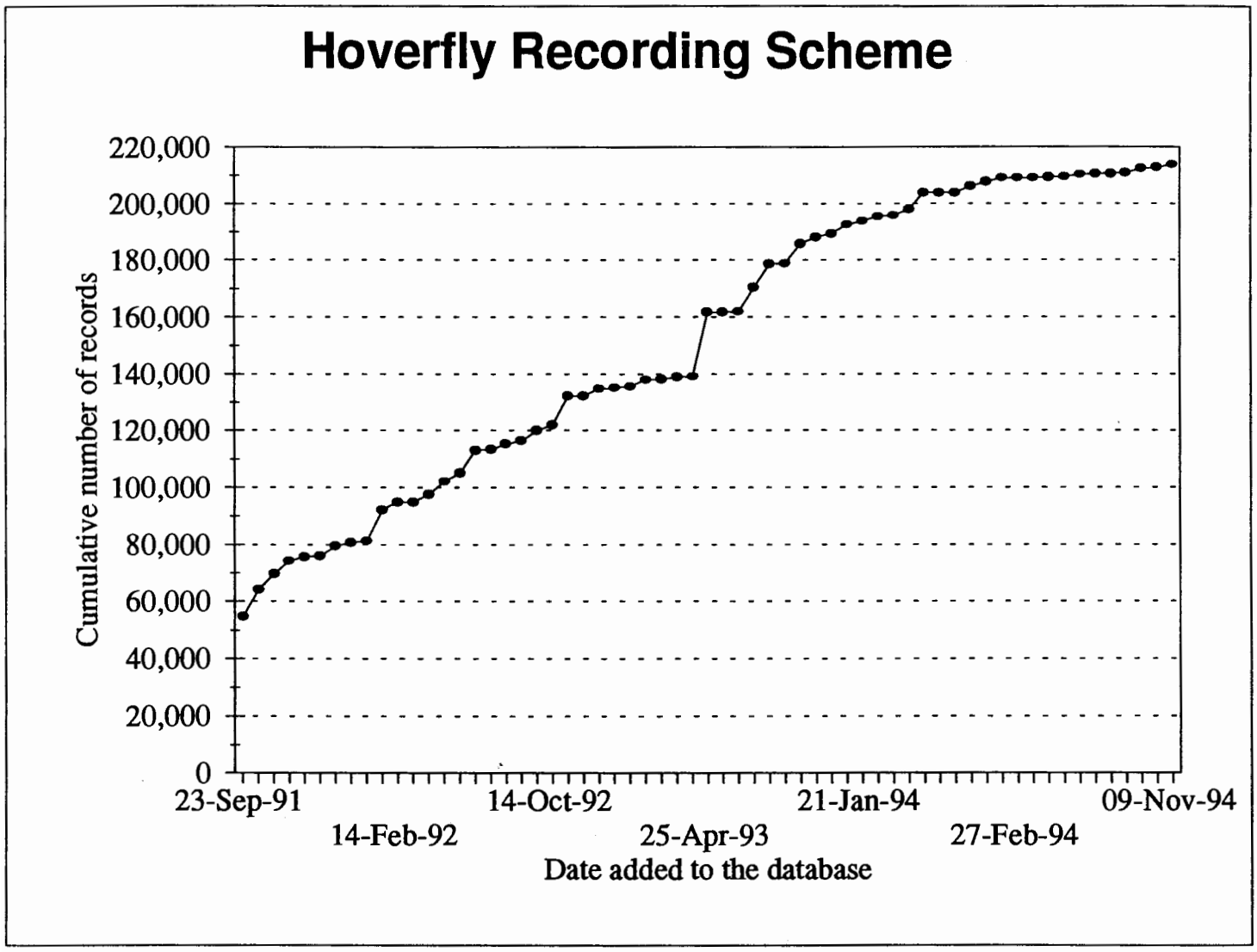
Date	nRecs	Source
23/9/91	54,503	BRC (disk - ASCII)
23/10/91	9,467	RKM Surrey Scheme (Recorder)
23/10/91	5,680	ISR (disk - Arev)
23/10/91	4,436	WPIS (disk - Arev)
23/10/91	1,508	EAFIS (disk - Arev)
23/10/91	340	Dungeness (disk - Arev)
23/10/91	3,432	Dipterists fld mtgs (Recorder)
4/2/92	1,307	From cards by RKM
5/2/92	431	Mike Pugh (disk - dBase)
6/2/92	10,997	Darwin Sumner (disk - dBase)
14/2/92	2,707	SGB (Apple IIe BRP)
15/2/92	100	SGB - Hoy (Apple IIe BRP)
24/2/92	2,567	From cards by RKM
10/3/92	4,482	From cards by RKM
19/3/92	2,990	From cards by RKM
30/3/92	7,950	From cards by RKM
7/4/92	397	M.C.Brian (disk - ASCII)
7/4/92	1,914	From cards by RKM
11/8/92	1,090	Dipterists Stirling (Recorder)
13/8/92	3,535	Adrian Fowles (disk - WP 5.1)
14/10/92	2,183	ISR Lists (disk - Arev)
27/10/92	10,184	From cards by RKM
27/10/92	40	P.Holmes Border mires report
9/11/92	2,413	From cards by RKM
21/11/92	463	From cards by RKM
11/1/93	446	I.Perry (RA33s by SGB)
11/1/93	2,335	From cards by RKM
14/1/93	135	SGB's own records
1/4/93	881	M.C.Brian (disk - ASCII)
24/4/93	110	SGB's own records
25/4/93	22,605	From cards by RKM
30/4/93	103	White(1947) Lincs Diptera
18/5/93	58	E.Thorpe New Mills lists
24/5/93	8,419	Keith Porter (disk- dBase)
2/7/93	8,310	RKM Surrey Scheme (Recorder)
2/7/93	260	From cards by RKM
6/12/93	7,016	From cards by RKM
12/12/93	2,084	From cards by RKM
19/12/93	1,340	From cards by RKM
29/12/93	3,412	From cards by RKM
21/1/94	1,070	From cards by RKM
21/1/94	1,641	RKM Surrey Scheme (Recorder)
29/1/94	359	From cards by RKM
2/2/94	2,194	CBRU (disk - ASCII)
3/2/94	5,847	AES (Recorder)
4/2/94	22	Additional Stirling Records
13/2/94	5	Joss Pain (RA33 by SGB)
23/2/94	2,279	From cards by RKM
26/2/94	1,497	Dipterists Norfolk (Recorder)
27/2/94	1,480	From cards by RKM
27/2/94	145	Mike & Liz Howe (RA33s by SGB)
18/9/94	3	Ken Merrifield (disk - Lotus)
18/9/94	54	SGB's own records
18/9/94	259	M.C.Brian (disk - ASCII)
18/9/94	732	From cards by RKM
18/9/94	232	I.K.Morgan (RA33s by SGB)
8/11/94	86	D.Telfer (RA33s by SGB)
8/11/94	168	P.Beuk (disk - dBase)
8/11/94	1,715	RKM Surrey scheme (Recorder)
8/11/94	281	Flies in Yorks Museum
9/11/94	1,117	Brian Wetton (RA33s by SGB)
Total	213,816	
	54,503	Received from BRC
	77,259	Received on disk
	82,054	Entered from cards and other paper sources

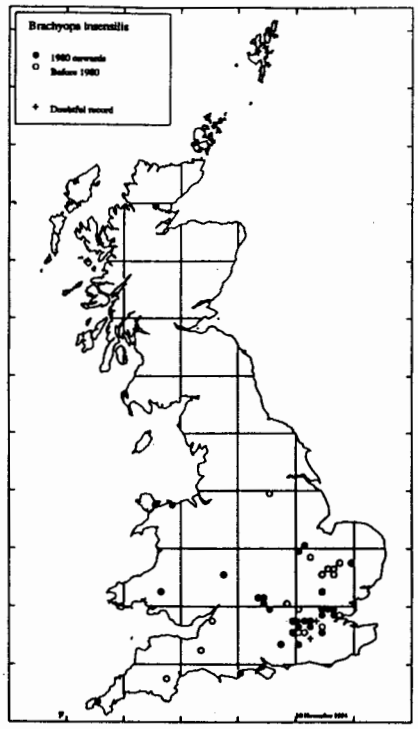
Table II Number and percentage of records on the database for each decade.

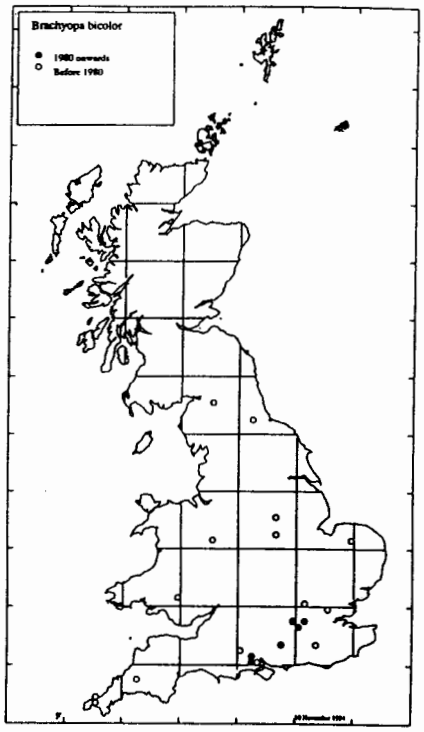
Date	Records	%
undated	1,460	0.68
19th century	45	0.002
1900-1909	936	0.44
1910-1919	482	0.23
1920-1929	2,442	1.14
1930-1939	3,189	1.49
1940-1949	3,143	1.56
1950-1959	2,726	1.27
1960-1969	7,238	3.39
1970-1979	19,981	9.34
1980-1989	126,324	59.08
1990-1994	45,850	21.44
Total	213,816	

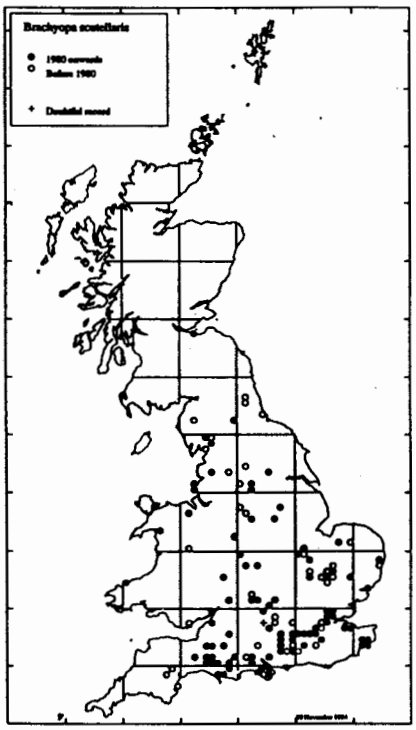

Coverage map
1980 onwards
1960 to 1979
Before 1960
10 November 1994

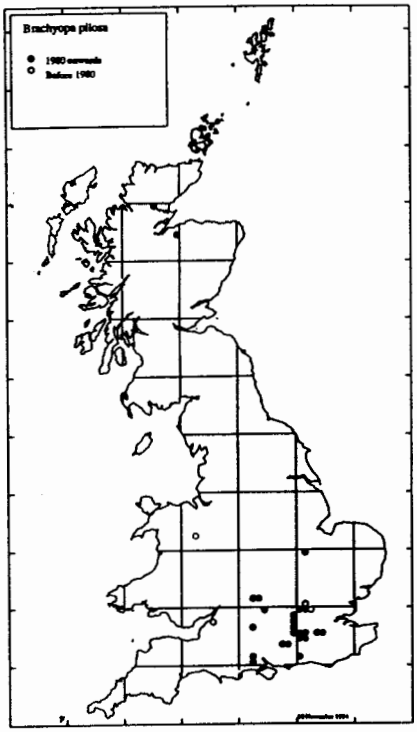

Number of species
125+
100-124
75-99
50-74
25-49
1-24
10 November 1994


Hoverfly Recording Scheme
Cumulative number of records
220,000
200,000
180,000
160,000
140,000
120,000
100,000
80,000
60,000
40,000
20,000
0
23-Sep-91
14-Feb-92
14-Oct-92
25-Apr-93
21-Jan-94
27-Feb-94
09-Nov-94
Date added to the database


Brachyopa insensilis
1980 onwards
Before 1980
Doubtful record


Brachyopa bicolor
1980 onwards
Before 1980


Brachyopa scutellaris
1980 onwards
Before 1980
Doubtful record


Brachyopa pilosa
1980 onwards
Before 1980