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Having thought that 1995 was not a particularly good season for hoverflies, I now realise that it was not as bad as its successor. Several prominent Dipterists Forum members have commented to me bemoaning the scarcity of syrphids throughout most of the 1996 season, and this was certainly my experience also. I can recall a day in June, about 6 hours of which I spent at an ideal site (Windsor Forest) in seemingly ideal weather conditions, when I saw only about 20 hoverfly specimens, comprising 11 species, the most interesting of which was *Brachypalpoides lenta*. I was struck not so much by the species that I did find as the number of common species that I did not see at all during the course of the day; there was no sign of any *Platycheirus*, *Melanostoma*, *Eupeodes* (*Metasyrphus*), *Eristalis* or *Syritta pipiens*.

With effect from this issue I am introducing a regular item entitled: "**interesting recent records**". Contributions to this will be welcome; such records should of course still be submitted to the recording scheme in the normal way.

So far nobody has submitted a logo for this newsletter, as requested in the last issue. So if you were holding back because you thought there would be too many other entries, please reconsider!

Copy for **Hoverfly Newsletter No. 24** should be sent to me: **David Iliff, Green Willows, Station Road, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Glos, GL52 4HN**, to reach me by 21 June 1997.

CONTENTS

THE DISTRIBUTION OF *HELOPHILUS TRIVITTATUS* IN SCOTLAND

Kenneth R Watt
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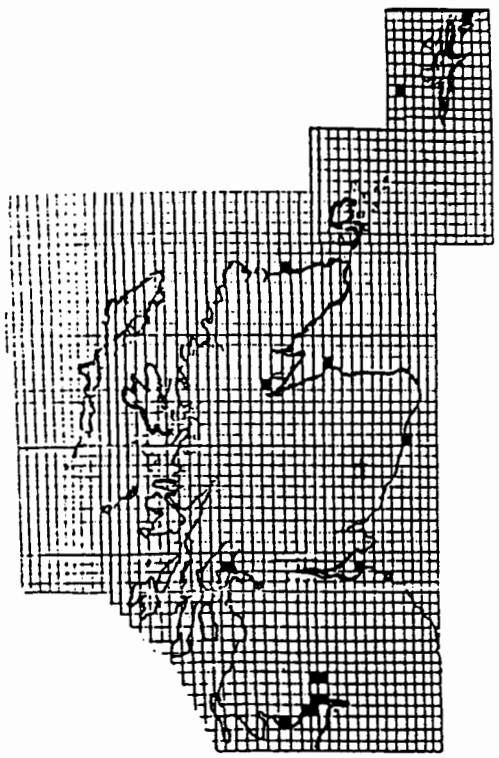
In response to Mike Pennington's article on *Helophilus trivittatus* in Shetland (**Hoverfly Newsletter No. 21**), I list below the present records of this large handsome hoverfly in Scotland, along with its distribution. It has so far been taken in 17 10km squares plus an interesting record from an oil rig in the North Sea. A number of typical migratory hoverflies have been taken from off oil rigs, presumably having originated from Scandinavia. This record is evidence that this species does travel long distances in search of suitable habitats. Whether it is truly migratory or just exhibiting itinerancy is open to question.



HT 93 (9__3__)	VC112	___m.	1994.07.06	F.Ratter	SSI. Foula
HP 60 (6__0__)	VC112	___m.	1995.08.18	M.Pennington	SSI. Unst, Sandwick coastal on *Cirsium vulgare*
NC 76 (70_61_)	VC108	050m.	1873.08.__	W.A.Vice	SHCD. Betty Hill (1r)(SN.1873.WAV)
NH 55 (52_50_)	VC106	015m.	1981.06.13	R.E.Waugh	SHR&CD. Muir of Ord 1m
NH 55 (50_52_)	VC106	015m.	1981.06.13	R.E.Waugh	SHR&CD. Muir of Or, Urray Ho. gdn, on Hogweed 1m
NJ 17 (1__7__)	VC 95	040m.	1966.__.__	R.M.Payne	SGMD. Covesea (fr)
NJ 90 (95_08_)	VC 92	010m.	18__.06-07	J.Mearns	SGACD. Aberdeen Links coastal, grsld (1r) SN.1901.JM
NS 18 (15_82_)	VC 98	015m.	1903.07.07	R.Henderson	SSA&BD. Holy L. rivermouth, coastal (f) TNHSG.1904.RH
NS 18 (15_81_)	VC 98	015m.	1905.07.12	R.Henderson	SSA&BD. Holy L. (f) TNHSG.1906.RH
NS 18 (15_83_)	VC 98	015m.	1903.07.22	R.Henderson	SSA&BD. Holy L.(head of) (f) (cat.Hunterian Mus.)
NS 46 (47_65_)	VC 76	015m.	1985.06.14	G.A.Collins	SSRD. Paisley Bog (fr)
NT 48 (46_80_)	VC 82	010m.	1872.07.27	G.H.Verrall	SLELD. Aberlady Bay coastal (1r) (SN.1873.GHV)
NT 77 (79_70_)	VC 81	060m.	1843.__.__	Hardy	SBBD. Pease Bridge wdld, gorge (1r) (SN.1903.PEG)
NX 64 (653477)	VC 73	040m.	1986.06.20	I.D.Wallace	SD&GSD. Senwick Marsh (fr)
NX 85 (89_54_)	VC 73	045m.	1946.08.30	A.B.Duncan	SD&GSD. Colvend (fr)
NX 95 (91_55_)	VC 73	005m.	1946.08.30	A.B.Duncan	SD&GND. Southwick coastal, wdld (1f) (NMS)
NX 95 (97_54_)	VC 73	010m.	1980.06.28	A.B.Duncan	SD&GND. Southerness coastal 2m1f (NMS)
NX 96 (99_68_)	VC 72	010m.	1980.06.14	A.B.Duncan	SD&GND. Glencaple coastal, estuary 1f (NMS)
NX 96 (96_82_)	VC 72	015m.	1975.07.31	A.B.Duncan	SD&GND. Bellholm, Kirkmahoe (fr)
NX 98 (9__8__)	VC 72	105m.	1975.07.31	A.B.Duncan	SD&GND. Newlands wdld (fr)
NX 98 (96_84_)	VC 72	060m.	1986.07.27	A.B.Duncan	SD&GND. Castlehill wdld, loch, 1f (NMS)
NY 06 (02_65_)	VC 72	002m.	1980.08.01	A.B.Duncan	SD&GND. Caerlaverock NNR coastal, saltmarsh (fr)
NY 06 (02_65_)	VC 72	015m.	1986.08.03	I.MacGowan	SD&GND. Caerlaverock Cas. wdld (d) on Hogweed 1m (NMS)
NY 08 (08_86_)	VC 72	075m.	1980.06.14	A.B.Duncan	SD&GA&ED. Corncockle wdld, quarry, wdld edge 1m (NMS)
SA 08		050m.	1982.06.__	C.Frost	North Sea Forties (BF), Delta Platform 1f

MALLOTA ON HORSE CHESTNUT?

Daniel Hackett
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On 9 July I was visiting Tottenham Cemetery in North London (TQ 332912) and, having an interest in saproxylic insects, was checking out some of the older trees. I came across a horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum)* in which one of the three main branches starting at about 3m up had fallen, revealing some heart rot and fluid-exuding wood. The main trunk was cankered and had epicormic leafy growths, as well as encrustations of salts and sap, as one sees on this species quite commonly. Half expecting to see *Brachyopa* - to be checked as *insensilis* (see **Hoverfly Newsletter No, 16**) - I in fact spotted *Mallota cimbiciformis*, at first resting briefly on the lower leaves at eye level, then on the rotten wound area, and finally coming down again to give me a good view of its densely pubescent thoracic dorsum and swollen hind femora.

Having captured *Mallota* at Totteridge Fields, Barnet, in 1994 (shown at BENHS exhibition 1994) and again in 1995 at Gunnersbury Triangle, Chiswick (BENHS 1995), I am 95% certain this was the insect I was looking at. Of course, I had no net! When I returned, fully equipped, later in the day, the weather had cooled and there was no sign of my original quarry, though I did capture *Myathropa florea* (which is sufficiently different not to have been confused with *Mallota)* investigating the rot. I could find no hoverfly larvae or pupae. I have requested that the tree be preserved, and I shall be returning soon to complete this observation if possible.

Mallota is noted as breeding in wet rot-holes high in trees, and its distribution in the London area has been reported. Perhaps drawing attention to old horse chestnut trees as possible feeding or breeding sites could help track down this elusive insect and clarify its status and biology.

ON FINDING (OR NOT!) EARLY SPRING SPECIES

David Iliff
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In this article, I am not so much providing information to readers as seeking your help and advice. Many of you, I am sure, have steadily built up collections of British hoverfly species which you have taken. Although I catch some hoverflies where I need to for species identification, my collection is in the form of photographs, but in building up such a collection, I am of course subject to the same difficulties in finding elusive species as are those who collect in the conventional way.

My photograph collection is somewhat deficient in those species that have a relatively short early spring flight period, such as *Cheilosia grossa*, *Cheilosia albipila, Melangyna quadrimaculata, Melangyna lasiophthalma*, *Platycheirus ambiguus*, *Platycheirus discimanus* and the impressive *Criorhina ranunculi*. I suspect other collectors have the same problem finding these species, and that they may well come to the conclusion that the solution is simply to get out into the field earlier in the year. This year I made a determined effort to do just that, even scheduling some holiday time to coincide with the usual flowering time of plant species known to attract early hoverflies. With hindsight, my choice of year to do this was injudicious to say the least (see page 1)! One problem with getting into the field early in the year is that you still need good weather, and warm and sunny days are few and far between in some years in March and April. But even good conditions do not necessarily yield dividends. This year I examined large areas of sunlit blackthorn blossom, much of it near the edges of woodland, and found few hoverflies, and among those that I did find, common year-round species, such as *Eristalis pertinax* and *Platycheirus albimanus* predominated. The presence of the latter can be particularly frustrating because of its superficial similarity to two of the scarce early hoverflies, *P. discimanus* and *P. ambiguus*.

Apart from *P. discimanus* and *M. quadrimaculata*, I have at least managed to obtain a few photographs of the listed species, but finding them has been difficult, and I would like to do better! I have seen *C. ranunculi* on only three occasions; on two of these the insect was too high in the tree or bush (sallow on one occasion, blackthorn on the other) for me to get close enough to photograph it. However I did succeed in obtaining a single photograph of a female (of the red-tailed form) on blackthorn blossom in 1995.

It would appear that apart from *M. lasiophthalma*, which can be fairly common in the early part of the season, and possibly also the two *Cheilosia* species, the hoverflies concerned are genuinely scarce even during their early flight period. However any tips from readers on successful techniques for finding these species would be most welcome!

CHALCOSYRPHUS EUNOTUS FEMALE IN DORSET

Ted and Dave Levy
9, Chilton Grove, Yeovil, Somerset, BA21 4AN

Bill Dean took a pair of *Chalcosyrphus eunotus* at Bracketts Coppice, a Dorset Trust reserve on 8 May 1987 (Editor's note: this considerably predates my sighting of a female in Gloucestershire in 1995, as reported in **Hoverfly Newsletter No. 21**). They were taken sitting on leaves in dappled sunlight alongside a small stream. We have visited the site on several occasions since, but have not seen the fly again.

Bill has now emigrated to Canada, and has donated his collection to the Hope Dept. at Oxford. However he has allowed us to keep the *C. eunotus* pair.

HOVERFLIES IN CORNWALL, 1996

Leon Truscott
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We are continuing to record and map hoverflies under the auspices of our two natural history clubs based in East and North Cornwall. All our records are forwarded to the Cornwall Biological Records Unit. Although a quiet year, 1996 did produce a few noteworthy records:

Brachypalpus laphriformis: a male on 12 May 1996 near Shevlock. Only the second Cornish record, following one found by Steven Falk in 1989.

Chrysotoxum elegans: one found on a visit to Penhale army camp on 18 August. This species continues to be found at various coastal habitats in Cornwall, especially in August.

Melangyna guttata: one found by Rod Belringer on 11 May at Hellescott Bridge; appears to be the first Cornish record.

Merodon equestris (probable): following previous records in 1994, another found on St. Mary's in the Isles of Scilly on 12 October, identified by Rod Belringer and myself as a male of the variety *narcissi.* Although the possibility of other species (*M. clavipes*?) cannot be entirely discounted, this individual showed all the characteristics of *M. equestris*.

Parhelophilus frutetorum: found at Seaton on 19 July, probably the first record for East Cornwall, seemingly only *P. versicolor* having previously been found.

Volucella inflata: found on 19 July in a wood near Torpoint for the third year in a row. There are records for only three other sites in Cornwall.

Volucella zonaria: found on several occasions between 7 July and 8 September at Torpoint and Cremyll. This species seems to be well established in the extreme southeast corner of Cornwall, having been noted for four years in a row.

MALLOCH SOCIETY NEWS

Kenneth R Watt
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On 23 November the Malloch Society for Scottish Dipterists held its 9th annual general meeting and dinner. Although Alan Stubbs could not attend as hoped, Graham Rotheray gave an interesting talk about clusiids and lonchaeids collected during the saproxylic field meetings, Iain Macgowan brought us up to date on the Scottish

meeting and dinner. Although Alan Stubbs could not attend as hoped, Graham Rotheray gave an interesting talk about clusiids and lonchaeids collected during the saproxylic field meetings, Iain Macgowan brought us up to date on the Scottish pinewood saproxylic flies and Keith Bland informed us about some new British agromyzid flies he has taken. Afterwards 17 people enjoyed the annual dinner at which Geoff Hancock was presented with the Society's DOTY award for his contribution to the study of Scottish Diptera. During the coming year the society will again be active in the field with its continuation of looking at the Scottish woodland fauna and also in its ongoing search for that extremely elusive pinewood hoverfly, *Blera fallax*.

HOVERFLIES OF ASCENSION ISLAND

David Iliff
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I have had the good fortune to have made two visits, in August 1990 and August 1996, to Ascension Island. The first was a one-day visit, but on the second occasion I was able to spend almost a week on the island. Needless to say, when time was available, I spent some of it searching for the local hoverfly fauna.

Ascension is a volcanic island and most of the land is semi-desert, covered in shale, which nevertheless supports a large variety of flowering plants, most introduced either deliberately or accidentally, but some native, including an endemic *Euphorbia*. Near to the centre of the island is the highest peak, Green Mountain (860m), which contrasts dramatically with the rest of the island, its upper slopes being covered in lush green vegetation, owing to a much higher annual rainfall (about 5 times that of the rest of the island).

Over the years many naturalists have visited Ascension and have recorded and listed the island's fauna and flora; these have included entomologists and experts in other invertebrate groups, and as a result valuable checklists are available. The arthropod list includes some endemic spiders. Although Ascension is almost equidistant from the African and American continents, the African species greatly outnumber those from America, though an American species of paper wasp, *Polistes fuscatus*, is especially common.

I did not have the benefit of seeing the lists until after my return from my second visit, thus on both occasions I had no foreknowledge of the island's hoverflies, I subsequently identified those which I found by comparing them with specimens in the Natural History Museum's collection..

In both years I found two hoverfly species, *Ischiodon aegyptius* and *Eumerus obliquus*, in reasonable numbers. *I. aegyptius* (of which I only saw males), looks rather like a *Sphaerophoria*, but is considered to be closely related to *Xanthogramma* (at one time it was included in that genus). It appeared to be the commonest syrphid on the island,

of the British species of *Eumerus*: it has conspicuous long white marginal bristles on the scutellum, and the bands of white hairs on the tergites are continuous rather than divided into spots. Both species are common in Africa.

I also saw, on Green Mountain, a few examples of *Eristalis tenax*. It is interesting to note, in view of the fact that this species is of course a honey bee mimic, that there are no honey bees on the island, although attempts have been made to introduce them in the past. I later discovered, on examining the records, that I had seen three out of the four known hoverfly species on the Ascension list (the fourth species is *Eristalinus aeneus)*.

Perhaps one of the biggest puzzles of the Ascension insect records is that, to date, there is only a single aphid record; *I. aegyptius* and two of the ladybirds which are also common on the island are known aphid feeders in Africa. The single record dates from 1892, and reports an unidentified aphid, on the endemic *Euphorbia*, which is described as possible prey for a ladybird or "a syrphid near to *Xanthogramma"* (presumably *I. aegyptius*).

THE BEHAVIOUR OF MALE *XANTHOGRAMMA CITROFASCIATUM*

Andrew Grayson
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On several occasions between 1992 and 1994 I visited an area of scrubby unimproved grassland immediately above Dick Wood, near Rievaulx, North East Yorkshire (44 56-84-). Here in a small south-facing sheltered slope where the soil is shallow, and short green grasses grow sparsely between patches of crumbling limestone, *Xanthogramma citrofasciatum*, a rare fly in Yorkshire, occurs on the area of scrubby unimproved grassland during May, and is especially frequent along the south-facing sheltered slope. Just before noon on 9 May 1993, I netted what I presumed were a male and female *X. citrofasciatum* in copula; however they both proved to be males. The male which was trying to initiate a copulation would not readily release the other male which was obviously trying to escape, but was unable to do so, even a number of seconds after being netted.

YORKSHIRE HOVERFLIES: AN APPEAL FOR RECORDS

Andrew Grayson
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I have been working on a status and distribution book covering Yorkshire hoverflies for the past 18 months, and plan to publish before the year 2000. If readers have any Syrphidae records from VCs 61-5 that have not been sent to Roger Morris or Stuart Ball, would they please forward these to them in order that they may be taken into account.

VOLUCELLA: A REVIEW OF A NEW HOVERFLY NEWSLETTER

Hoverfly Newsletter No. 22 included an announcement about the publication of **Volucella**, a new German newsletter about hoverflies. I have just obtained a copy of Volume 2. **Volucella,** which is edited by Dieter Doczal and Ulrich Schmid, publishes original papers, review articles and short notes on taxonomy, determination, ecology and distribution of Palearctic Syrphidae. It is similar in format to **Dipterists Digest**, but deals exclusively with hoverflies and runs to many more pages (the current issue has 132).

Volucella accepts articles in German or English, each having a short summary in the other language; the current edition has three English articles. Subjects covered include *Brachyopa insensilis* (two articles), *Cheilosia* (three papers describing food plants and egg-laying behaviour), *Mallota cimbiciformis*, *Eumerus* (description of two new species) and *Myolepta*. One article is entitled "Save *Episyrphus balteatus*!"; it is not suggesting that this abundant hoverfly is suddenly heading for Red Data Book status, but is an argument against a proposed change of name for the species. There is also an extensive list of recent literature on hoverflies.

The publication is beautifully produced and has a wealth of fascinating papers. It is highly recommended to all who wish to extend their knowledge of syrphids beyond the British fauna.

Volucella may be obtained from Ulrich Schmid, Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde (Schloss Rosenstein), Rosenstein 1, D-70191, Stuttgart. Annual subscription is DM 25, (plus DM 4 for postage and packing)

INTERESTING RECENT RECORDS

From Ted and Dave Levy;

from Somerset and Avon:

Criorhina ranunculi; Ashton Court; 5 May 1996

Megasyrphus annulipes; Lords Wood 8 May 1996
Cockroad Wood 30 July 1996

Epistrophe diaphana; Shapwick 4 July 1996
West Hay 6 July 1996

Platycheirus ambiguus; Lords Wood 8 May 1996

Eupeodes latilunulatus; West Hay 4 July 1996

Parasyrphus malinellus; Stantonbury Hill 14 May 1996

Sphaerophoria ruppellii; Hambridge 28 September 1996

Xanthogramma citrofasciatum; Kingsdon Wood 21 May 1996

Lejogaster splendida; Shapwick 6 July 1996

Myolepta luteola; Loxley Wood 18 June 1996

Eumerus ornatus; Goblins Combe 22 June 1996

Neocnemodon pubescens; Kingsdon Wood 27 April 1996

Arctophila superabiens; Minehead 18 September 1996

Xylota tarda; Cleaves Wood 28 May 1996

Xylota coeruleiventris; Friary Wood 27 June 1996

from Dorset:

Platycheirus ambiguus; Bracketts Coppice 9 May 1996

Callicera aenea; Broadstone 27/28 August 1996 (photographed by Andrew Philpotts; identification confirmed by Ted and Dave Levy)

From Matthew Oates (Gloucestershire):

Arctophila superabiens; Strawberry Banks, Oakridge 14 September 1996

Volucella inflata; Wetmoor 6 July 1996
Rough Banks, The Camp 7 July 1996

RECENT LITERATURE

Barr, B. 1996 *Mallota cimbiciformis* (Diptera, Syrphidae) in Lanarkshire *Dipterist Digest* **3** (1): 4

Barr, B. 1996 *Cheilosia chrysocoma* (Diptera, Syrphidae) in Argyll *Dipterist Digest* **3** (1): 48

Carpaneto, G.M. & Taglianti, A.V. 1994 A case of intestinal myiasis due to *Eristalinus taeniops* in Italy (Diptera, Syrphidae). *Boll. Assoc. Rom. Entomol.* **49**(3-4): 119-126 Italian (English; Italian sum.)
myiasis; *Eristalinus taeniops*; Italy; Diptera; Syrphidae

Castella, E. & Speight, M.C.D. 1996 Knowledge representation using fuzzy coded variables: An example based on the use of Syrphidae (Insecta, Diptera) in the assessment of riverine wetlands. *Ecol. Model.* **85**(1): 13-25
Syrphidae; Diptera; rivers; ecosystem analysis; France; fuzzy loci; environmental monitoring; aquatic insects; wetlands; France, Loire R.; France, Allier R.; ecosystem management; ecosystems

Dussaix, C. 1996 *Callicera spinolae* (Diptera, Syrphidae) reared in France *Dipterist Digest* **3** (1): 44

Hickman, J.M.; Loevei, G.L. & Wratten, S.D. 1995 Pollen feeding by adults of the hoverfly *Melanostoma fasciatum* (Diptera: Syrphidae). *N.Z. J. Zool.* **22**(4): 387-392
feeding behavior; pollen; *Melanostoma fasciatum*; New Zealand; Diptera; Syrphidae

Ito, Y.; Tanaka, S.; Yukawa, J. & Tsuji, K. 1995 Factors affecting the proportion of soldiers in eusocial bamboo aphid, *Pseudoregma bambucicola*, colonies. *Ethol. Ecol.* E 7(4): 335-345
Pseudoregma bambuciola; Aphididae; Homoptera; Japan; soldiers; colonial characteristics; Syrphidae; Diptera; parasitism

Li, Qingxi & Liu, Yanliang 1995 Notes on the genus *Tigridemyia* Bigot with the description of a new species from China (Diptera: Syrphidae). *Entomol. Sin.* **2**(4): 316-320 English (Chinese; English sum.)
taxonomic revision; new species; *Tigridemyia*; China; Diptera; Syrphidae

Ottenheim, M.M.; Waller, G.E. & Holloway, G.J. 1995 The influence of the development rates of immature stages of *Eristalis arbustorum* (Diptera; Syrphidae) on adult abdominal colour pattern. *Physiol. Entomol.* **20**(4): 343-348
immature stages; development; adults; coloration; *Eristalis arbustorum*; Diptera; Syrphidae

Sheppard, A.W.; Aeschlimann, J. P.; Sagliocco, J.L. & Vitou, J. 1995 Below-ground herbivory in *Carduus nutans* (Asteraceae) and the potential for biological control. *Biocontrol Sci. Technol.* **5**(3): 261-270
Carduus nutans; biological control; weed control; *Cheilosia corydon*; *Hadroplontus trimaculatus*; Curculionidae; Coleoptera; Syrphidae; Diptera; herbivory; roots

Stuke, J-H 1996 *Helophilus affinis* new to the British Isles (Diptera, Syrphidae) *Dipterist Digest* **3** (1): 45-46

Verlinden, L. 1995 *Sphaerophoria bankowskae* Goeldlin, 1989 (Dipt., Syrphidae): First description of the female: Some recent records of the *Sphaerophoria interrupta* (Fabr.) group from the Alpine Region. *Bull. Ann. Soc. R. Belge Entomol.* **130**(3): 271-276 English (English; Dutch sum.)
A first description is given of the female of *Sphaerophoria bankowskae* Goeldlin (Diptera, Syrphidae), followed by a number of spring records of several species of the *Sphaerophoria interrupta* Fabr. group from diverse regions in the Alps.

Verlinden, L. 1995 Additional records of *Cheilosia orthotricha* Vujic & Claussen, 1994 (Diptera, Syrphidae) from Belgium and the Alps. *Bull. Ann. Soc. R. Belge Entomol.* **130**(2): 227-228
geographical distribution; Belgium; Diptera; Syrphidae

White, A.J.; Wratten, S.D.; Berry, N.A. & Weigmann, U. 1995 Habitat manipulation to enhance biological control of Brassica pests by hover flies (Diptera: Syrphidae). *J. Econ. Entomol.* **88**(5): 1171-1176
habitat; biological control; pests; Brassica; New Zealand; Aphididae; Homoptera; Lepidoptera; Diptera; Syrphidae

Wnuk, A. & Gut, B. 1994 The attractiveness of wild Umbelliferae flowers to aphidophagus Syrphidae (Dipt.). *Pol. Pismo Entomol.* **63**(1-2): 197-206 Polish (English sum.)
509 aphidophagous syrphids were collected from flowers of 8 wild umbellifers. 25 aphidophagous species were identified, the following being the most abundant: *Syrphus vitripennis* Meig., *Episyrphus cintellus* (Zett.), *Sphaerophoria menthastri* (L.), *Sphaerophori scripta* (L.). Flowers of *Conium maculatum* and *Aegropodium podagraria* were the most attractive for adults.