HOVERFLY NEWSLETTER **NUMBER 32 AUGUST 2001**

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Have you recorded *C. ranunculi* this year? When making notes in the field in the field I have usually abbreviated the genus to its initial letter, thus when I have found *Criorhina ranunculi* it appears in my diaries as *C. ranunculi.* I shall have to be more careful in future as such an entry could equally be taken to mean *Cheilosia ranunculi*, a newly named species resulting from the split of what we have known as *Cheilosia albitarsis*; the division of the latter into two species was reported by David Gibbs in Hoverfly Newsletter No. 30 (August 2000). In the most recent Dipterists Forum Bulletin Colin Plant reported the renaming by Dieter Doczkal as *Cheilosia ranunculi* of the variety described by Gibbs as form A. In spite of the potential ambiguity that could result if we abbreviate the generic name, *ranunculi* would seem to be a good choice of specific name for the *Cheilosia*, which is much more obviously associated with *Ranunculus* than is the *Criorhina*. Although this may be the only example of such ambiguity in recent years among British Syrphidae, such a situation is not unknown in other groups, and even existed among hoverflies in Verrall's time: *S. nitidicollis* at the beginning of the 20th Century could have meant either *Syrphus nitidicollis* (now *Epistrophe nitidicollis*) or *Sphaerophoria nitidicollis* (now *Sphaerophoria rueppellii*).

I would be interested in hearing how readers have coped with restrictions on access to the countryside resulting from foot and mouth disease. The Gloucestershire Invertebrate Group (GIG) was faced with the situation where all the sites scheduled for 2001 field meetings had been put out of bounds, and as a result substituted an alternative programme, involving sites such as urban parks and gardens, golf courses etc. A surprisingly good range of records, in several orders, has resulted from these field meetings held so far (the hoverfly list included *Chalcosyrphus eunotus*), so much so that the group may continue to visit these alternative sites for the rest of this year even when restrictions on the first choice venues have been removed. Have other readers had similar experiences?

Copy for **Hoverfly Newsletter No. 33** (which is expected to be issued in February 2002) should be sent to me: **David Iliff, Green Willows, Station Road, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Glos, GL52 9HN**, Email **davidiliff@talk21.com** to reach me by 9 December (or it may be handed to me on Dipterists' Day in November).

CONTENTS

RECORDING SCHEME UPDATE

Stuart Ball
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Although a "Provisional Atlas" has been published I can confirm that the National Hoverfly Recording Scheme is still alive and kicking and welcomes your records. The information we would like is:

Species name
Date of observation
Location name
Grid reference (as precise as possible please, preferably 6-figures, e.g. TL 293 978)
Vice-county
Name of the observer
Name of the person who named the specimen (if different from the observer)

Any additional details, like how many were present (of each sex), what they were doing, what flowers were being visited, etc. are very useful and are

especially important for scarcer species and for cases where things like oviposition was observed or larvae/pupae have been found (and reared).

A description of the location (e.g. habitats present on the site and its surroundings) and how the records were made (e.g. field observations, collected in a Malaise trap) are also very useful.

It is important to report ALL species present, not just the "interesting ones" - otherwise we cannot get a realistic picture of the relative frequency of species or of the groupings of species which are normally found together. It is also useful to record each date on which a species is observed - even for common species. This information is needed to build up a picture of flight periods and its variation over the country and between seasons.

Records on paper can be posted to: Roger Morris, 7 Vine Street, Stamford, Lincs, PE9 1QE

Information in computer files can be emailed to: StuartBall@aol.com or posted on disk to: Stuart Ball, 255 Eastfield Road, Peterborough, PE1 4BH. 3.25" floppy disks, Iomega 100 zip-disks or CD-R formats are all acceptable. Recorder export files of NBN data transfer format files are especially welcome.

If we do not know you, we will initially ask to see specimens you have identified or put you in touch with someone experienced in your area who can check out your identifications. As your experience, and our confidence in your identifications, grow there will still be some cases where we will ask for confirmation of identifications. This normally entails getting specimens checked by a suitable expert.

APPARENT ICHNEUMON-LIKE BEHAVIOUR OF *BRACHYPALPOIDES LENTUS*

Patrick Roper
South View, Churchland Lane, Sedlescombe, East Sussex, TN33 0PF

I was pleased and surprised when, on 20 May this year, I spotted a female *Brachypalpoides lentus* in a small 'meadow' area in our East Sussex garden. It was flying erratically and fairly slowly only two or three centimetres above the soil among sparse creeping buttercup and grass. At a distance it resembled a questing ichneumon and the coloration is, of course, very ichneumon-like.

On close examination after capture I noted that it had quite a bit of hawthorn pollen on its underside, but not creeping buttercup pollen. Hawthorn is in flower close by and it must therefore have been attending these blossoms before deciding to scout around close to the soil. It showed no interest in the buttercup flowers while I was watching.

This is the first example I have come across of a species which appears to be rare in both East and West Sussex, and the Sussex Wildlife Trust has no records that I know of (I have not looked in the new BRC Atlas yet). There is plenty of woodland and dead wood in our immediate area, but beech is scarce and I have not previously seen it around local rot-holes or wood piles though I have studied these habitats quite carefully.

Since it feeds at hawthorn flowers and breeds in rotten wood, can anyone suggest why it was casting busily about among low vegetation pretending to be an ichneumon? I thought it might have been looking for water, but there was a perfectly adequate pond between where it was and the hawthorn flowers, so this seems unlikely.

In the following days I looked in the same area and on the hawthorn blossom, but saw no further examples of *B. lentus*. I also had a Malaise trap in place approximately 10 metres from the 'meadow' and, although it attracted a wide range of hoverfly species, *B. lentus* was not among them so it would appear genuinely scarce in the area.

SNIPPETS FROM THE JOURNAL *VOLUCELLA*

Alan Stubbs
181, Broadway, Peterborough, PE1 4DS

This journal is dedicated to European (Palaearctic) hoverflies at the initiative of German specialists. There has been a flourish of enthusiasm for hoverflies in Germany and some other European countries in recent years, with much important new taxonomic work and other studies. Whilst my attention has been focused on polishing the Larger Brachycera book, I have got rather lax in keeping up with the European hoverfly scene. Thus I have only just caught up on volumes 3 (1998) and 4 (1999), by borrowing them from the BENHS Library.

The following notes pick up on some things relevant to Britain.

NOTES ON ***VOLUCELLA* VOL.3** (August 1998)

Cheilosia psilophthalma & praecox

A review of a small group of allied species includes these two GB species.

British Hoverflies; 2000 Update, gives a key to separate these species. Refer also to the Second Supplement p.13 where the superior lobe of the male genitalia is illustrated for *praecox* (and *uviformis).*

The new study illustrates the superior lobe of *psilophthalma,* which resembles *praecox* except that the pointed spine is shorter and obliquely angled inwards.

Claussen, C. & Doczkal, D. Ein neune Art der Gattung *Cheilosia* Meigen, 1822 (Diptera, Syrphidae) aus den zentralalpen. *Volucella* 3: 1-13.

Leucozona lucorum

This species has been split, with the recognition of *nigripila* Mik. Though both species overlap in characters, they strongly polarise into two clusters. Both share similar habitat and flight periods, and in some cases both occur together. They are treated as distinct species rather than variants of a single species.

There are numerous differences but the following key should be sufficient.

- Tergite 4 covered in black hairs (over 90%). *nigripila*

- Tergite 4 covered in mainly white hairs (100 to 70%: in rare instances down to 30% white). *lucorum*

L. nigripila is a Middle European species that is frequent in parts of Germany and occurs in some adjacent countries. (All British material checked so far has been *lucorum*).

Doczkal, D. 1999. *Leucozona lucorurn* (Linnaeus) - a species complex? (Diptera, Syrphidae). *Volucella* 3: 27-49.

NOTES on **VOLUCELLA VOL.4** (December 1999):

Microdon:

Microdon analis (ex. *eggeri)* has been split. A shake out of past names lead to the description of a new species, *miki* Doczkal *&* Schmid.

- Antennal segment 3 twice as long as segment 2. Front tarsi with broad segments (3,4 & 5 broader than wide). *analis*

- Antennal segment 3 three times as long as segment 2. Front tarsi with narrow segments, none wider than long (1,2 & 5 longer than wide). *miki*

The puparium has the anterior respiratory horns very short in *miki* (only as long as basal diameter), twice the length in *analis.*

Doczkal, D. & Schmid, U. 1999. Revision der mitteleuropaischen Arten der Gattung *Microdon* Meigen (Diptera, Syrphidae). *Volucella* 4: 45-68.

Scaeva mecogramma:

This is a very rare migrant to GB. In S.E. Spain larvae were found on olive trees in spring and autumn, predating on psyllids *(Euphyllura olivina,* Aphalaridae) [a few

Meliscaeva auricollis were doing likewise]. Larvae get covered in whitish waxy flakes secreted by the psyllids. The gut contents of adults showed that virtually all the ingested pollen was from *Lobularia maritima* (white flowered, Brassicaceae).

This study also notes *Heringia heringi* larvae in the galls of the psyllid *Trioza alacris* (Triozidae); reddish rolled leaf edges of bay *(Laurus nobilis).*

Rojo, S., Perez-Banon, C. & Marcos-Garcia, M.A. 1999. First observations on the biology of *Scaeva mecogramma* (Bigot, 1860) (Diptera, Syrphidae) and notes on some other syrphids preying on psyllids (Hemiptera, Aphalaridae and Triozidae). *Volucella* 4: 105-111.

Cheilosia impressa:

In Germany, larvae were found feeding on the surface of roots of greater burdock, *Arctium lappa.* First generation larvae were on mature plants. About 75% of larvae continued rapidly to adult, to give a second generation, the rest of the larvae apparently went into diapause, carrying over till the next year. It is assumed that eggs are laid on young plants of *Arctium.*

Schmid, U. 1999. Die Larve von *Cheilosia impressa* Loew, 1840 (Diptera, Syrphidae).
Volucella 4: 113-119.

Temnostoma:

This saproxylic genus does not occur in Britain, but ought to (present in Channel Isles). They are very elusive as adults so knowledge of larval habitat is a good lead. Larvae of *T. bombylans* and *T. vespiforme* (adults are large mimics) were reared from a willow log lying in swampy water (a little studied saproxylic habitat). Emergence was in April, and for the latter species also early May. *Chalcosyphus nemorum* and *Sphegina* were also reared.

Drees, M. 1999. Erfahrungen mit der Aufzucht von *Temnostoma bombylans* (Fabricius, 1805) und *T. vespiforme* (Linnaeus, 1758) aus den Larven (Diptera, Syrphidae). *Volucella* 4: 121-126.

Standard Recording Method:

This is based on time and area, and notes flower visitors. The basic details need translating from German.

Ssymank, A. 1999. Em bewahrter Standard-Erhebungsbogen fur Schwebfleigen und erster Bietrag zur Schwebfleigen-fauna (Diptera, Syrphidae) der Bonner Umgebung. *Volucella* 4: 127-144.

Callicera:

The threat status of various species is tabulated for GB, France and Germany (including some parts of Germany separately). The overall impression is that the genus is pretty threatened.

The entry for GB is incorrect in that our *aenea* has been revised to *aurata,* and *rufa* ought to be given as RDB (the author has cited my 1982 list of primary woodland indicators, re. the Sheffield area, which only covers deciduous woodland fauna). *C. spinolae* is listed as threatened in GB only (it is rare in Europe). It is noted that *C fagesii* has until recently been confused with *rufa.* However, the former is associated with deciduous woodland: especially waterside and alluvial situations (our *rufa* is confined to native pine forest).

Callicera fagesii Guerin-Meneville, 1844 (Diptera, Syrphidae) - new to Germany and a recent record in France. *Volucella* 4: 153-156.

SNIPPETS FROM THE JOURNAL *DIPTERON*

Alan Stubbs
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Volume 3 has been issued for the year 2000 (as parts 1 and 2 separately: total 218 pages). The journal is produced to a very high standard. Price DM 54 (+ DM 5.5 p & p).

This fairly new journal is produced by Christian Kassebeer, one of the new generation syrphid enthusiasts in Germany. Though papers are mainly by Kassebeer, there are contributions by other authors.

Most papers concern Syrphidae, including new species in Europe, Azerbaijan and North Africa, and, reflecting Kassebeer's widening interests, in Madagascar, Reunion, Nearctic, Neotropics and Sub-Saharan Africa. Some papers concern faunal reviews for areas in Europe; one on Greece includes 126 species of which 25 are additions to the fauna of that county; another paper on part of Lower Saxony reviews new data for 135 species; and for an area in middle Sweden 129 species are listed.

Apart from syrphids, there are short papers on Sciaridae, Anisopodidae and Aulacigastridae, plus a detailed review of 57 species of Sciomyzidae & Phaeomyiidae found in the Schleswig-Holstein and Hamburg areas.

New hoverfly species in the Western Palaearctic comprise:-

Brachyopa arunewaldensis sp. nov. Kassebeer from the Grunewald in Berlin. It is allied to *insensilis* but the third antennal segment is much broader and parts of the

pleurae are darkened (metepisternum and metameron = sternopleuron & mesopleuron), among other differences. A key to European species with a bare arista is provided. (pp.7-12).

Brachyopa atlantea sp. nov. Kassebeer was discovered in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco where it breeds in slime flux sap runs on poplar trees. The larva is illustrated. (pp. 141-148)

Parhelophilus crococoronatus sp. nov. Kassebeer. This resembles *frutetorum* but the male process under the hind femur is shorter and has some of the bristles about three times the length of the tubercule (in *frutetorum* the bristles are of fairly uniform length, about one and a half times the length of the tubercule); in the female the dust spots on tergite 3 meet (clearly separated in *frutetorum).* This species has been found in Portugal and SW France. (pp. 1-6).

Up to the present *Dipteron* has contained a useful content of European syrphid papers. To an extent it reflects Kassebeer's extraordinary energy in collecting widely in Europe and beyond. The present volume clears some of the European backlog and reflects his increasing emphasis on the fauna of Africa and more widely. The journal has already established its credentials for high quality of content and production, and will no doubt continue to be of high relevance for hoverfly papers world wide. It remains to be seen where the future balance of European hoverfly content lies. Christian Kassebeer is to be congratulated on this private initiative.

APPARENT RECENT ABUNDANCE OF *RHINGIA ROSTRATA* IN KENT

Laurence Clemons
14 St. John's Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 4NE.

Of the two British species of *Rhingia* i.e *R. campestris* Mg. and *R. rostrata* (L.) the latter is undoubtedbly the less commonly encountered and Falk listed it as Notable in his main species accounts (Falk, S.J. 1991. A review of the scarce and threatened flies of Great Britain (Part 1). *Research and Survey in nature conservation* **31**: 1-142). The recently published provisional atlas of British hoverflies (Ball, S.G. & Morris, K.A. 2000. Provisional atlas of British hoverflies. Biological Records Centre, Huntingdon. 1-167) shows that whilst *R. campestris* has been found throughout the Channel Islands, England, the Isle of Man, Wales and Scotland (including the outer isles*) R. rostrata* is a much more southern species with the bulk of sites being from south-east England and south Wales.

In 1969 P.J. Chandler provided a very good summary of the known records for *R. rostrata* from the county (Chandler, P.J. 1969. The Hover-flies of Kent. *Transactions of the Kent Field Club* **3**: 139-202) and a recent examination of the card-file indexes held at Maidstone Museum and Bentliff Art Gallery, which were maintained by E.G. Philp until his retirement in 1994, revealed just one additional record for the species i.e Luddesdowne (TQ6663), 26.viii.1967, K.C. Side.

My first encounter with the species occurred on 3.vi.1989 when a single female was obtained through general sweeping at Parsonage Wood near Benenden (TQ7932) during very dull and, later, rainy conditions. On 11.ix.1994 I was present when Ian Beavis found, amongst a surfeit of *R. campestris*, a single specimen of *rostrata* on the flowers of Devil's bit scabious *Succisa pratensis* at Chiddingstone Ponds (TQ5147) during a Kent Field Club excursion. The record of this, and of another at Angley Wood, Cranbrook (TQ7636) on 25th September 1994, was given in Beavis, I. 1995. A note on the hoverfly *Rhingia rostrata* (L.). *Bulletin of the Kent Field Club* **40**: 47-48. On 4.v.1995 Dr Beavis again found the fly at Friezland Wood, Tunbridge Wells (TQ5638).

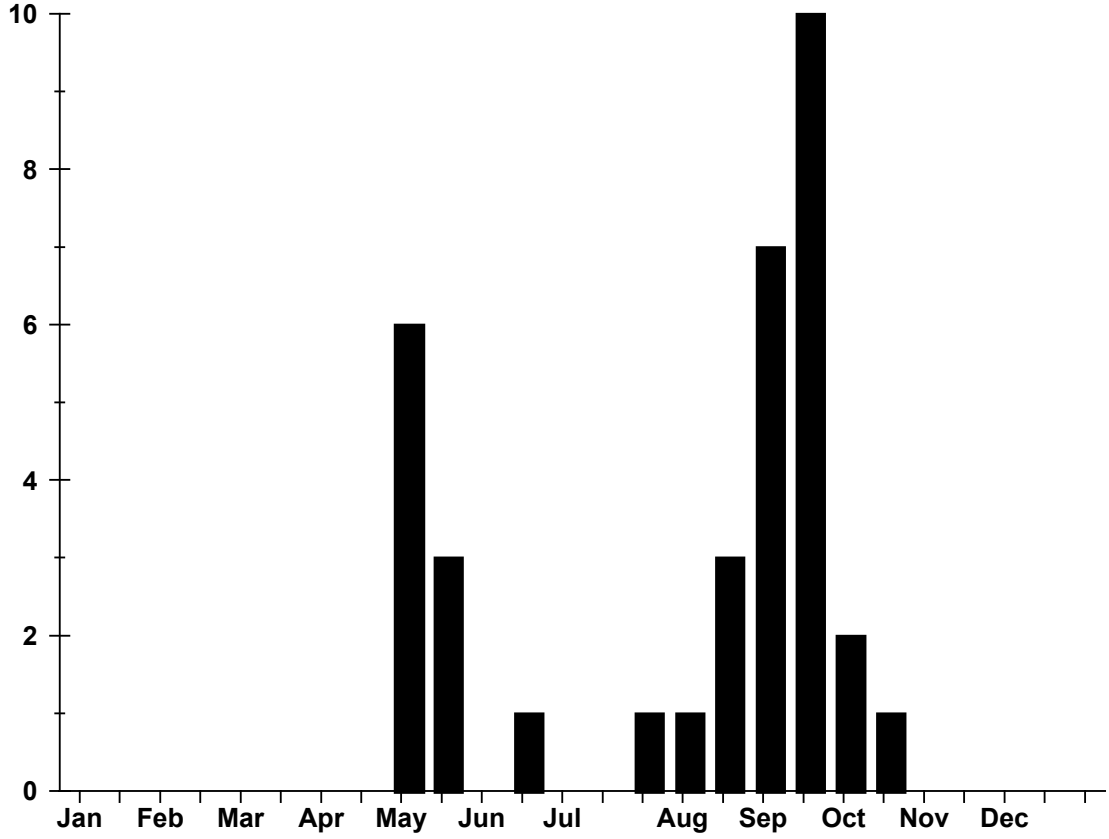
1998 saw further records from "The Plants", Pembury (TQ6244), 31.viii., I. Beavis and Smallmans Wood KWT Reserve (TQ988336), 6.vi., L. Clemons.

1999 was a good year with records from Boys Wood, Pembury (TQ6144), 25.iv., I. Beavis, Kingston near Canterbury (TR1950), 27.iv., L. Clemons; Denge Wood (TR107524), 6.v. and 9.v., A.E. Stubbs and 15.v., L. Clemons; Spong Wood (TR125455), 19.v., I. Wynne and Covert Wood (TR1748), 25.ix., L. Clemons. At Denge Wood adults were particularly attracted to the flowers of wood spurge *Euphorbia amygdaloides* whilst from one ditch in Covert Wood about a dozen specimens were counted from *Succisa pratensis* flowers.

So far only three site records are known to me from 2000. On 1.v. I netted a single specimen from around a patch of bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* at Potter's Wood, Hartlip (TQ831632) and on 9.ix., during dull and overcast conditions, *R. rostrata* was observed to outnumber *R. campestris* by about 6:1 on *Succisa* flowers at Angley Wood (TQ7636). On 23.viii. Mr J. Denton reported adults on common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* at Holwood near Downe (TQ4263) (Denton, J. 2001. Rare and uncommon Diptera in England and Wales, 2000. *Dipterists Digest* (*Second series*) **8**: 27-30).

It may be worthwhile mentioning here that, during the last visit to Angley Wood, the hoverflies *Cheilosia longula* (Zetterstedt)*, Dasysyrphus tricinctus* (Fallén)*, Didea fasciata* Macquart*, Epistrophe grossulariae* (Meigen)*, Eristalis pertinax* (Scopoli)*, Eristalis tenax* (Linnaeus)*, Helophilus pendulus* (Linnaeus)*, Melanogaster aerosa* (Loew)*, Melanostoma scalare* (Fabricius), *Meliscaeva cinctella* (Zetterstedt)*, Neoascia podagrica* (Fabricius)*, Platycheirus albimanus* (Fabricius)*, Sericomyia silentis* (Harris)*, Sphegina elegans* Schummel*, Syrphus ribesii* (Linnaeus)*, Syrphus vitripennis* Meigen and *Xylota segnis* (Linnaeus) were also recorded from the same patch of *Succisa pratensis* flowers which encompassed an area less than that of an average town bus.

Whilst these records augment the view that *R. rostrata* is double-brooded it may be of interest to compare the adult phenology histogram of the 36 known Kent records, for which dates have been ascertained, with that given by Ball & Morris. The vertical axis shows the number of records whilst the horizontal axis shows the calendar in fortnightly periods.



RHINGIA ROSTRATA IN THE COTSWOLDS: UPDATE

David Iliff
Green Willows, Station Road, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Glos, GL52 9HN

In **Hoverfly Newsletter No. 30** I described the appearance in numbers of *Rhingia rostrata* at Gotherington Wood in the Cotswolds in 2000, and wrote that I would continue to monitor the site to discover whether the species was present there later in 2000 on in the following year. I can now report that I found it regularly at the same site and at the nearby Bushcombe Wood and at a roadside verge in August 2000 and Martin Matthews found it during the same summer at Leckhampton Hill, about 6 miles away.

Since then, Harry Green has written in **Newsletter No. 31** of finding the species regular in Worcestershire during the last 3 years, and in this issue Laurence Clemons writes of its apparent recent abundance in Kent.

Foot and mouth disease restrictions precluded my return to Gotherington and Bushcombe Woods until very recently, and I have not seen it this year at those sites. However I have seen two examples at the same roadside verge where I found it last year, and have also found it this year in Stroud Cemetery, at Sapperton and in Lassington Woods (the last site being in the Severn valley rather

than the Cotswolds. Certainly the current inpression I have is of a hoverfly that is relatively easy to find, albeit in areas where there was no sign of it in the previous 15 years. I can honestly say that this year I have found more examples of *R. rostrata* than of *Eristalis tenax* (which seems surprisingly elusive this year). Perhaps we are at present witnessing the phenomenon of the occasional abundance of this species over a period of a few years. Will it become a rarity again when this period is over?

INTERESTING RECENT RECORDS

(records included elsewhere in this newsletter are not repeated here)

Recorders: John Bratton (JB), David Iliff (DAI)

Sphegina siberica	9 /5/2000	Llyn Cywion, Gwynedd	JB
Brachypalpoides laphriformis	29/5/2000	Coed Cochwillan, Gwynedd	JB
Lejops vittatus	22/7/1999	Ludham Marshes, Norfolk	JB
Criorhina asilica	31/5/2001	Far Wood, Broughton, Lincs	JB
Criorhina ranunculi	21/4/2001	Newent Lake (Glos)	DAI
Chalcosyrphus eunotus	21/4/2001	Newent Lake (Glos)	DAI
Xanthogramma citrofasciatum	20/5/2001	Stroud Cemetery (Glos)	DAI
Pipizella virens	20/5/2001	Stroud Cemetery (Glos)	DAI
Xanthogramma citrofasciatum	26/5/2001	Cleeve Hill (Glos)	DAI

NEW HOVERFLY Egroup

An egroup has been created for discussion about hoverflies in Britain. Created by Bristol-based entomologist, Steve Preddy, the new group "UK-Hoverflies" complements other online discussion groups such as those devoted to moths, beetles, dragonflies etc

For those of you not familiar with egroups, they are a simple way for people with a common interest to share information quickly & easily. Messages sent to a central email address are distributed automatically to all members of the group. There is also space to upload files e.g. pictures, species lists, keys. Although the group is mainly intended for discussion of hoverflies, it can be used to discuss flies from other families too.

To subscribe ,just send a blank email to:

UK-Hoverflies-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

For further info, contact Steve on **Steve.Preddy@blueyonder.co.uk**

PROVISIONAL HOVERFLY ATLAS

JNCC's eagerly awaited **Provisional Atlas of British Hoverflies (Diptera, Syrphidae)** has now been published by BRC. This comprehensive study must surely be an essential working aid for everyone who collects or studies hoverflies in Great Britain. Stuart Ball and Roger Morris are to be warmly congratulated on producing this atlas, clearly a task of monumental proportions. It is probable that almost every reader of this newsletter has also made a contribution to this work. The authors acknowledge this contribution by listing in the atlas the names of all everyone who has submitted records to the scheme.

The main body of the atlas is the set of species-by-species distribution maps, each of which includes a species account and a phenology histogram. The atlas also contains much other information, such as the history and the coverage of the recording scheme, the changing status of various species, endangered species, habitat indicator species and much more.

The growth of interest in hoverflies in many parts of the world has already been noted in earlier newsletters. With the appearance of this atlas to complement such publications as **British Hoverflies,** Graham Rotheray's **Colour Guide to Hoverfly Larvae** and the county atlases, syrphidologists in Britain are in a very fortunate position of having such a wealth of reference works available.

The atlas is available from Biological Records Centre, CEF Monks Wood, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE28 2LS.

CALLICERA SPINOLAE: ENGLISH NATURE LEAFLET

English Nature has published an illustrated leaflet entitled **"Golden Hoverfly: a rare British fly"**, which provides information on the conservation of *Callicera spinolae*, which is of course one of the rarest (and many would consider one of the most beautiful) hoverflies in Britain. The leaflet, which was written by Graham Rotheray, covers the appearance, distribution and life history of the species, and discusses reasons for its decline in recent years with recommendations for measures that be taken to assist its conservation.

If you are, like me, one of the large number who have never seen, and perhaps may never see, *C. spinolae* alive, why not do the nest best thing, and get a copy of the this attractive and informative leaflet? It is obtainable from the External Relations Team, English Nature, Northminster House, Peterborough, PE1 1UA.

INTERNATIONAL HOVERFLY WORKSHOP

By the time this newsletter has been distributed, the first international hoverfly workshop will have been held in Stuttgart. A review of that event will be included in the next newsletter.