HOVERFLY NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 37
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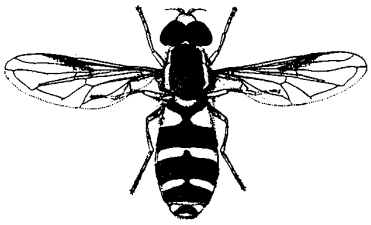
Dipterists Forum



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In the last issue of this newsletter I commented on the apparent dearth of hoverflies during the very dry summer of 2003, having experienced several day-long field meetings in seemingly ideal conditions with scarcely anything of note to record at the end of them. Some of my fellow hoverfly enthusiasts in Gloucestershire seem however to have had a much more successful season than I did, working mainly in the west of the county. I was obviously not alone though in having a disappointing season; several people have reported similarly unproductive summers via the exchanges of emails in the hoverfly e-group. Let us all hope that the year ahead brings better rewards.

Copy for **Hoverfly Newsletter No. 38 (**which is expected to be issued in August 2004) should be sent to me**: David Iliff, Green Willows, Station Road, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Glos, GL52 9HN**, Email **davidiliff@talk21.com** to reach me by 20 June.

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HOVERFLY RECORDING SCHEME UPDATE

Stuart Ball,
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Roger Morris
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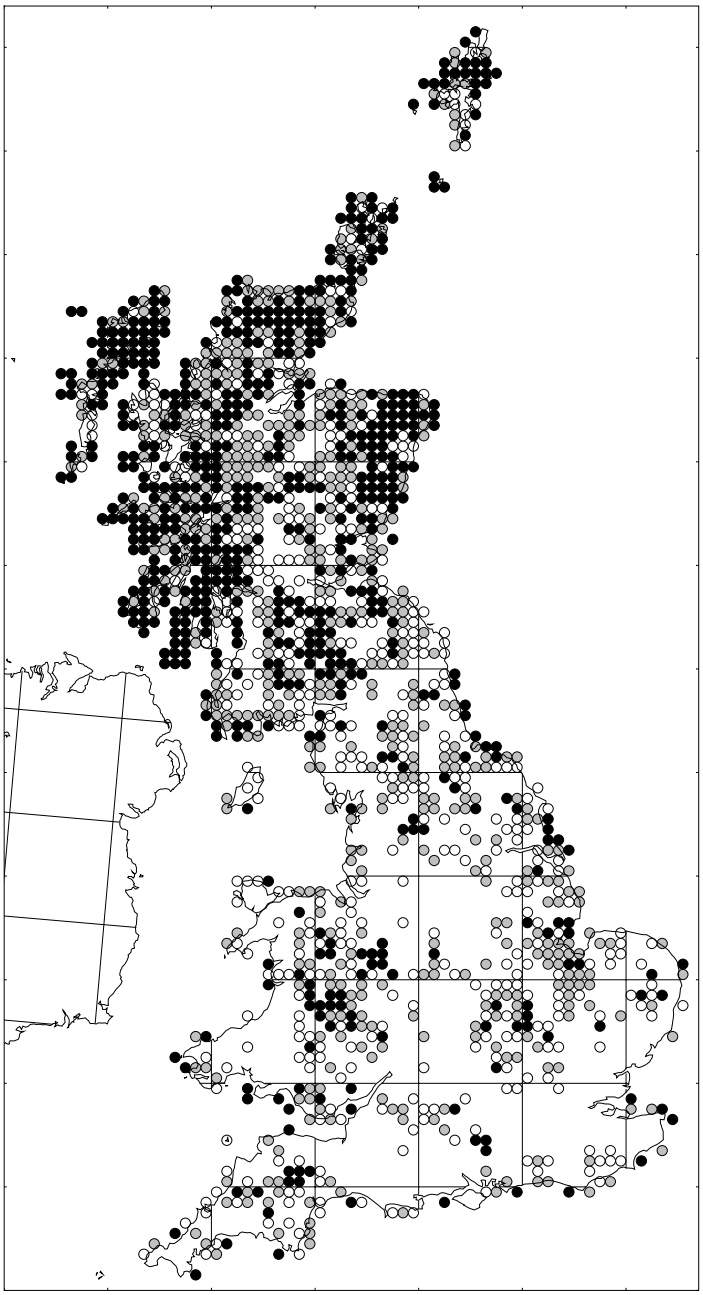
At last there is movement - although it may not be wholly noticeable to those on the ground! We have started to plough our way through a backlog of work and to get things onto an even keel for the big push towards a revised atlas around 2010. All of the backlog of paper records received to this autumn have been computerised by Roger, although they have still to be converted on to the database. This amounts to some 15-20,000 records, so we are rapidly reaching the 400,000 records mark. We have a number of machine-readable datasets to incorporate on to the system, so a major increase in records can be anticipated by the summer.

In the meantime, we have also made a start on the backlog of analyses that awaited publication. A short note on *Volucella zonaria* came out in the **London Naturalist** this autumn. The analysis of *V. inanis* is expected in the next **British Journal of Entomology & Natural History**, whilst the *V. zonaria* one is in the pipeline and may come out in the following edition. The results of our mark-recapture work at Old Sulehay Forest this last summer is also on its way - It should be out in **Dipterists Digest** by the time this newsletter lands on your doormat! We are now in the process of writing up the work on *Epistrophe eligans* that we presented to the Hoverfly Symposium in Alicante last June, and should also get the analysis of *Rhingia campestris* out later this year. It's all go! In the meantime, there are more ideas on the cards - not least the possibility of developing a league table for top deadwood hoverfly sites - along the same lines that has been done for deadwood beetles (See **Saproxylic Quality Index: Evaluated Sites Ranked by SQI** - by Adrian Fowles - on the Web). Our work on Old Sulehay Forest precipitated this as we found it a fabulous place for deadwood hoverflies and were staggered by the numbers of *Volucella inflata* that we marked (this project has encouraged Dr Chris Gibson to do a similar undertaking on *V. zonaria* that will be written up in the near future – it, too, makes remarkable reading).

Well, on to the question of square-bashing and improving the maps. To help galvanise attention, here is a map of those squares that are comparatively under-recorded in the provisional atlas. The circles represent under-recorded 10km. squares.

Can you help to turn out all the lights? It is a big challenge. We've started to look at Northamptonshire and might even be persuaded to take a look at the Fens from time to time. Roger is keen to get all paper records sorted out as quickly as possible, so feel free to inundate him with record cards or photocopied lists from diaries.

Spring approaches, and there is lots to do. Do please keep an eye out for *Epistrophe eligans* as it does seem to be a species that is a useful indicator of climate change and the more records there are, the better its responses to warmer springs can be followed. Perhaps by next year we will have a Web site to enter records and follow the spring as it moves northwards!



Under-recorded 10km squares – key

Black - no records for the square on HRS database

Grey - less than 5 of the most frequently recorded 20 species in that JNCC region

White - less than 10 of the most frequently recorded species

OVIPOSITION BEHAVIOUR BY *CHRYSOTOXUM VERRALLI*

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On 28 June 2003 Gavin Boyde led a BENHS field meeting to excellent areas within Bradlaugh Fields, Northampton. One such area was Scrub Fields LNR with a very flower rich grassland which proved to have a small population of the hoverfly *Chrysotoxurn verralli.* It was seen by various members of the party, and though I spent most of my time on adjacent areas, I too made a few observations here.

At about 2 p.m. I saw several, including one at hogweed flowers. However, the critical observation to report is of a female which was watched for several minutes. It was slowly flying among grass about 20 cm. above ground at the edge of a thick sloe hedge. The hedge had plentiful young invasive sloe suckers extending out for a metre or so, the extent limited by a path running parallel with the hedge. Though the aspect was in full sun, the sloe growth gave about 50% canopy so that the grass was largely shaded within dappled light. The female was observed in oviposition mode, every few seconds settling on grass blades about half way up their length and spending about 1 - 8 seconds testing suitability (on various species of non-flowering grass, apparently including false oat grass). During the longer pauses it almost seemed as if an egg might have been laid, but probably not (the most likely leaf blade was picked but no egg was present). The fly was not seen anywhere other than in this field.

The life history of *Chrysotoxum* is still an enigma. From scant chance findings of larvae and puparia, it is inferred that the larvae may be on root aphids, possibly attended by ants of some sort. The ecological partition of the species is obscure; for instance *C. bicinctum* (seen in this field) and *C. cautum* may be found with *verralli.* That the adults are usually seen in sunny grasslands might suggest that the larvae are also in open grassland. However, just as can be the case with some butterflies, it would seem that for *verralli* the larval and adult situation is ecologicallv different, twin or mosaic habitat being necessary. It is of course very premature to read too much into the above single observation, but it is relevant to note that *C. cautum* has previously been observed ovipositing on sedge in the shade of young trees. The subtle needs for habitat mosaic of the right sort almost certainly govern the occurrence of such species.

Please, can we try to make more observations of oviposition. We need more understanding of what makes these species tick, and in particular better leads on where to search for larvae in order to crack the big uncertainties about life histories.

COLOUR POLYMORPHISM OF *VOLUCELLA BOMBYLANS*

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I was delighted to read Steve Crellin and Mike Taylor's report of the occurrence of the pale brown form of *Volucella bombylans* in the Isle of Man (*Hoverfly Newsletter* 35, February 2003) because I have been studying polymorphism in this species for the past four years.

I am interested in Batesian mimicry, and the prediction I wish to test is: if *Volucella bombylans* really does gain protection against predators because it mimics species of bumblebee, then the relative frequencies of its different colour morphs should reflect the relative frequencies of the different coloured species of bumblebee. In other words if a population has a high frequency of the red-tailed typical morph of *V. bombylans* then this should reflect a higher than usual frequency of red-tailed bumblebees (*Bombus lapidarius*) relative to black and yellow bumblebees (*Bombus terrestris* and similar species). So what I try to do on fine days in June-July is to visit sites where *V. bombylans* is common and count the various morphs together with the different species of bumblebee on the same plants. I categorise bumblebees into four groups, black with a red tail (principally *B. lapidarius*) black and yellow with a white/buff tail (including *B. terrestris, lucorum, hortorum* etc.) black & yellow with a red/rusty tail (mainly *B. pratorum*), and brown (principally *B. pascuorum*). (Cuckoo bees go into the colour group they most closely resemble.)

For example at one site on the North Yorkshire Moors in July 2002 I counted 11 *V. bombylans* var. *plumata* and 1 var. *bombylans*, together with 175 *B. terrestris*, 1 *B. lapidarius*, 14 *B. pratorum* and 24 *B. pascuorum*, all on marsh thistle (*Cirsium palustre*). At the richest site to date, at and near to Bispham Marsh, Blackpool, on 20 June 2002 there were 40 *plumata*, 13 *typica*, 1 *haemorroidale*, and 1 of the brown Irish form, all on or close beside bramble, together with 45 *B. terrestris*, 6 *lapidarius*, 18 *pratorum* and 4 *pascuorum* on bramble flowers. The variety *haemorroidale* has yellow on the thorax like *plumata* but the tip of the abdomen has reddish hairs, so it resembles *Bombus pratorum* or *monticola*. Most other sites yielded just one or a few specimens so I try to visit these repeatedly, though usually 12-14 days apart so as to minimise the chances of counting the same individual twice. Thus in 2002 three visits to the Bispham site between 20 June and 15 July yielded a total of 57 var. *plumata*, 24 var. *bombylans*, 1 var. *haemorroidale*, and 2 of the brown form. By contrast 2003 was a very poor year with just 11 var. *plumata* & 4 var. *bombylans* on three similar visits between June 25th and July 21st.

It will clearly take me a decade or more to amass sufficient data from a dozen or so sites to test my hypothesis, so any help from colleagues would be much appreciated! This is also why the Isle of Man site is so interesting and is on my list of places I must try to visit in 2004. It sounds as though I should be

able to see at least ten insects on a single visit if the weather is fine. I am interested in collecting similar data for *Criorhina berberina* and *C. ranunculi*, but I am not tackling *Merodon equestris* which has numerous colour morphs but is a relatively recent immigrant to many sites. Incidentally, I rarely collect any of the flies as I do not want to alter the existing morph frequencies, but I have photographs of many of them, including *haemorroidale* and the brown morph. So, if any reader would like to help I would be delighted if they could contact me, and if anyone knows of a good site (with a good chance of seeing 10 or 20 insects) I would be very glad to hear of it (email: **m.and.j.edmunds@care4free.net**).

WARWICKSHIRE HOVERFLY LIST REACHES 201!

Steven Falk,
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In 2000, Warwickshire Museum re-issued Adam Wright's Provisional Atlas of the Hoverflies of Warwickshire (1988), which gave me a chance to add a supplement listing additions and a few corrections to the county list. That bought the list up to a tantalising 195 species, tantalising in the sense that we still anticipated several further species that would push it over the magic 200 mark. I subsequently added *Cheilosia psilophthalma*, *C. ranunculi* and *Platycheirus aurolateralis*, and Roger Juckes, an Alcester-based recorder, found *Rhingia rostrata* at two sites near him in 2002, making 199. Roger then added extra value by informing me that he had found *Xylota jakutorum* way back in 1989 (checked by Adam), though I had been unaware of the record. This summer, Roger and another local entomologist, Roger de Courcy Williams, both discovered sites for *Myolepta dubia*, taking the Warwickshire vice-county list to an impressive 201 species.

Vice-county Warwickshire has proven to be a fascinating place for studying syrphids and I have been amazed by some of the species that have turned up. *Eristalis similis* and *Cheilosia psilophthalma* were both recognised as British on the basis of Warwickshire specimens. I could never have imagined *Chalcosyrphus eunotus* could exist here, yet we now know three sites for it, all with suitable larval habitat. *Psilota anthracina* is currently known from 5 sites, and not all of them remarkable and a male *Pocota* was once found hovering around apple blossom on an isolated hillside seemingly miles from suitable breeding habitat. It is also clear that, irrespective of recording effort, genuine changes are afoot in our area. *Criorhina ranunculi*, *Epistrophe diaphana*, *Rhingia rostrata*, *Spherophoria rueppellii*, *Volucella inanis* and *Xanthandrus comtus* all appear to have become more frequent over the past 20 years. Others, such as *Cheilosia barbata* and *Chrysotoxum verralli* seem to be much scarcer now than in the 1980s. We still expect the county list to rise – *Callicera aurata*, *Cheilosia carbonaria*, *C. velutina*, *Eupeodes nielseni*, *Mallota cimbiciformis, Sphaerophoria taeniata* and *Volucella zonaria* could all be here

in theory. I have summarised the VC38 checklist, with brackets for species lacking recent records.

***Anasimyia**: contracta, lineata, transfuga*
***Arctophila**: (superbiens)*
***Baccha**: elongata*
***Brachyopa**: insensilis, pilosa, scutellaris*
***Brachypalpoides**: lentus*
***Brachypalpus**: (laphriformis)*
***Chalcosyrphus**: eunotus, nemorum*
***Cheilosia**: albipila, albitarsis, antiqua, barbata, bergenstammi, chrysocoma, cynocephala, fraterna, griseiventris, grossa, illustrata, impressa, lasiopa, latifrons, longula, pagana, proxima, psilophthalma, ranunculi, scutellata, soror, urbana, variabilis, vernalis, vulpina*
***Chrysogaster**: cemiteriorum, solstitialis, virescens*
***Chrysotoxum**: arcuatum, bicinctum, cautum, festivum, verralli*
***Criorhina**: asilica, berberina, floccosa, ranunculi*
***Dasysyrphus**: albostriatus, friuliensis, pinastri, tricinctus, venustus*
***Didea**: (alneti), fasciata, (intermedia)*
***Epistrophe**: diaphana, eligans, grossulariae, nitidicollis*
***Episyrphus**: balteatus*
***Eriozona**: erratica, syrphoides*
***Eristalinus**: aeneus, sepulchralis*
***Eristalis**: abusivus, arbustorum, horticola, interruptus, intricarius, pertinax, similis, tenax*
***Eumerus**: funeralis, ornatus, strigatus*
***Eupeodes**: corollae, latifasciatus. 'latilunulatus'* (precise form to be determined)*, luniger, (nitens)*
***Ferdinandea**: cuprea, ruficornis*
***Helophilus**: hybridus, pendulus, trivittatus*
***Heringia**: heringi*
***Lejogaster**: metallina, tarsata*
***Leucozona**: glaucia, laternaria, lucorum*
***Melangyna**: (arctica), (barbifrons), cincta, compositarum, labiatarum, lasiophthalma, quadrimaculata, umbellatarum*
***Melanogaster**: aerosa, hirtella*
***Melanostoma**: mellinum, scalare*
***Meligramma**: (guttatum), trianguliferum*
***Meliscaeva**: auricollis, cinctella*
***Merodon**: equestris*
***Myathropa**: florea*
***Myolepta**: dubia*
***Neoascia**: geniculata, interrupta, meticulosa, obliqua, podagrica, tenur*
***Neocnemodon**: brevidens, latitarsis, pubescens, vitripennis*
***Orthonevra**: brevicornis, geniculata, nobilis*
***Paragus**: haemorrhous*
***Parasyrphus**: annulatus, lineola, malinellus, nigritarsis, punctulatus, vittiger*
***Parhelophilus**: frutetorum, versicolor*
***Pipiza**: austriaca, bimaculata, fenestrata, lugubris, luteitarsis, noctiluca*
***Pipizella**: maculipennis, viduata, virens*

***Platycheirus**: albimanus, ambiguus, angustatus, aurolateralis, clypeatus, discimanus, europaeus, fulviventris, granditarsus, manicatus, occultus, peltatus, perpallidus, rosarum, scambus, scutatus, splendidus, tarsalis*
***Pocota**: personata*
***Portevinia**: maculata*
***Psilota**: anthracina*
***Riponnensia**: splendens*
***Rhingia**: campestris, rostrata*
***Scaeva**: pyrastri, selenitica*
***Sericomyia**: lappona, silentis*
***Sphaerophoria**: batava, fatarum, interrupta, philanthus, rueppellii, scripta, virgata*
***Sphegina**: clunipes, elegans, verecunda*
***Syritta**: pipiens*
***Syrphus**: ribesii, torvus, vitripennis*
***Trichopsomyia**: flavitarsis*
***Triglyphus**: primus*
***Tropidia**: scita*
***Volucella**: bombylans, inanis, inflata, pellucens*
***Xanthandrus**: comtus*
***Xanthogramma**: citrofasciatum, pedissequum*
***Xylota**: abiens, (florum), jakutorum, segnis, sylvarum, tarda, xanthocnema*

Unconfirmed or deleted species: *Anasimyia lunulata* (in national atlas – does anybody know the source?) *Cheilosia nebulosa* (was *albipila*), *Platycheirus immarginatus, P. podagratus* (possibly *occultus*), *Epistrophe melanostoma* (cited in updated atlas – proved to be our first *Parasyrphus nigritarsis* record).

VOLUCELLA ZONARIA IN NORTHAMPTONSIIIRE

Tony White
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The ivy has flowered early this year and at Bradlaugh Fields, Northampton - the location for a recent visit by the BENHS - it was fully in bloom by the end of August. On 29 August, 2003 I was taking hoverflies at the site (SP735636) when I was startled to see an unusually large hornet-like specimen among the hundreds of other insects besieging the flowers. I quickly netted it and even a cursory examination suggested that it was *Volucella zonaria.* I was later able to compare it with *V inanis* (which has now become frequent in the area) and both by its size (wing length 18 mm) and the chestnut-brown coloration of tergite 2 its identity became clear.

Bradlaugh Fields occupies the site of an abandoned golf course in a distinctly urban situation. The area is surrounded by housing and the location further reinforces the view that this hoverfly tends to be synanthropic.

Gavin Boyd has been kind enough to examine the specimen and confirm its identity.

ERISTALIS PERTINAX NEW FOR THE FAROE ISLANDS

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The only species of the genus *Eristalis* found and common on the Faroe Islands are *Eristalis abusivus, E. arbustorum* and *E. intricarius. E. tenax* has been caught only once on the islands.

On 6 August 2003 I was in the capital Tórshavn, which I usually visit once or twice a month. Normally I keep an eye on the insects, and this time I spotted unknown hoverflies all over the town. I counted at least 100+ and caught approximately 10 specimens. On my return back to Nólsoy I determined them to be of the species *Eristalis pertinax* – later confirmed by Tore R. Nielsen, Sandnes, Norway. In August and September *E. pertinax* was the most common ”big” hoverfly in Tórshavn!

The island Nólsoy is located 6 km east of Tórshavn, and here I spotted the first *E. pertinax* on 22 August 2003. But on the very next day, I saw 10+ in the few wild roses which grow in a small area in the village.

The average temperature (measured in Kollafjørdur north of Tórshavn) was 10.4 degrees in June, July and August from 1988 till 2001. In 2002 the average temperature was 11.6 degrees, and in the summer of 2003 the average temperature rose to 12.8 degrees, meaning that the average temperature has been 2.4 degrees higher than it was in 2001.

In the coming spring it will be interesting to see whether *E. pertinax* has survived the winter on the Faroe Islands.

ERISTALIS CRYPTARUM IN FRANCE

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This was our 10th holiday in France and it was our first encounter with *E. cryptarum*, though it has to said that we have not come across many suitable habitats where one might expect it. In June 2003 our base camp was just north of the Pyrenees and much to our surprise it was high in these mountains that we found this elusive hoverfly. The locality was quite close to Col du Tourmalet and we came upon it by chance due to a temporary road diversion, which directed us down an unmade mountain track and alongside a river called Bastan. Here at a junction in the river near a small footbridge, the water flooded the corner of an alpine meadow and produced a rich marshy site with knee-high vegetation. The altitude was about 1700m, that of the surrounding mountains being around 2500m.

Here several specimens were seen, mainly settling on the leaves of marsh plants, most of which were unfamiliar to us. There must be many mountain stream sites like this in the Pyrenees and *E. cryptarum* may be largely over-looked in such places. Two visits were made to this locality, the dates being 4 and 9 June.

A VIRTUAL ABSENCE OF *SYRPHUS VITRIPENNIS* AND *S. TORVUS* IN 2003

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The recent addition of *Syrphus rectus* Osten Sacken (Speight, 1999) to the British list makes critical examination of *Syrphus* specimens essential, and as a result RKAM regularly retains a sample of specimens for detailed examination. During 2003 it became apparent that *S. torvus* Osten Sacken and *S. vitripennis* Meigen were almost absent from these samples. Out of 61 individuals taken from Northamptonshire and East Anglia between April and August 2003, *S. ribesii* (Linnaeus) accounted for 95% (33 Ξ, 25X) whilst only two *S. torvus* (1Ξ, 1X) and one *S. vitripennis* (1X) were encountered. This compares with data for Surrey collected in a similar manner between 1994 and 1996 (Morris, 1998) which gave ratios of 54% *S. ribesii*, 5% *S. torvus* and 41% *S. vitripennis* for 311 individuals captured. The impression of relative frequencies of species given by the maps in Ball & Morris (2000) is largely consistent with the Surrey data.

The proportion of all records of these three species received by the Hoverfly Recording Scheme each year from 1980 to 1998 are shown in the following table:

Year	*Syrphus ribesii*	*Syrphus torvus*	*Syrphus vitripennis*	Total records
1980	50.2%	30.2%	19.6%	514
1981	48.0%	24.6%	27.3%	333
1982	59.1%	13.4%	27.5%	611
1983	67.8%	7.5%	24.7%	429
1984	60.7%	9.5%	29.8%	580
1985	54.7%	12.0%	33.3%	1,317
1986	48.8%	8.0%	43.2%	875
1987	47.9%	21.4%	30.7%	2,070
1988	54.2%	22.8%	23.0%	979
1989	60.2%	16.8%	23.0%	1325
1990	69.0%	13.1%	17.9%	1,078
1991	68.6%	6.7%	24.7%	928
1992	55.0%	7.3%	37.7%	1,016
1993	60.5%	9.0%	30.5%	1,392
1994	56.7%	11.6%	31.7%	1,214
1995	57.9%	13.1%	29.1%	764
1996	51.1%	13.3%	35.6%	497
1997	45.8%	19.1%	35.1%	325
1998	56.2%	8.8%	34.9%	249
Total	56.7%	14.0%	29.3%	16,496

Again, *S. ribesii* accounts for around 50-60% of records received in most years. Note that this table probably overestimates the frequency of *S. torvus*: firstly because it shows numbers of records, not numbers of individuals, and experience suggests that this species in more often encountered singly whilst there are usually many individuals of the other two present; and also because *S. torvus* is perceived as the scarcest of the three, so recorders tend to be more assiduous in contributing records.

According to current distribution maps, all three species are widely distributed, but coverage is patchy in Northamptonshire and East Anglia. The ecological separation between them has yet to be clearly defined. All three are predacious as larvae, feeding on aphids on shrubs and trees, but there are suggestions that *S. vitripennis* is more closely associated with arboreal aphids, whereas *S. ribesii* and *S. torvus* are also associated with ground-layer aphids. It is therefore difficult to attribute obvious differences in biology to the apparent dearth of *S. torvus* and *S. vitripennis* in the sample from 2003. *S. vitripennis* is generally considered to be at least a partial migrant, so one possibility is that no influx occurred in 2003 in this area.

Did other recorders note anything similar last year?

Ball S.G. & Morris, R.K.A., 2000. **Provisional atlas of British hoverflies**. Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Abbots Ripton.

Morris, R.K.A., 1998. **Hoverflies of Surrey**. Surrey Wildlife Trust, Pirbright. 244pp.

Speight, M.C.D., 1999. ***Syrphus rectus* Osten Sacken and its potential implications to the recording of *Syrphus* species**. *Dipterists Digest* (Second Series) **6**: 85-91.

SNIPPETS FROM VOLUCELLA VOL.6

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Volume 6 has a publication date of 30 December 2002; 261 pp. (copy held in BENHS library). There are 19 papers, plus an extensive update on new literature; also an obituary for van der Goot. Over half the text is in English, and papers in German have English summaries. [The notes below focus on information of particular interest in Britain.

Doczkal, D., Stuke J.-S & Goeldlin de Tiefenau, P. 2002. The species of the *Platycheirus scutatus* (Meigen) complex in Central Europe, with description of *Platycheirus speighti* spec. nov. from the Alps (Diptera, Syrphidae). **Volucella 6**: **23-40**. [This seemingly does not affect the British list.

P. speighti is apparently confined to the Alps; in the male the front trochanter has a strong tubercule bearing a tuft of hairs (much less developed in *scutatus),* among other differences.

P. *aurolateralis* In contrast to Britain, Continental records are mainly upland - from the Alps; the other records are from low mountain regions (altitude of Norwegian records not given); the altitude range is given as 325-2100m. Two broods are apparent in central Germany but the implication is that there may only be one brood at higher altitudes. It is suggested that the types of *Syrphus sexnotatus* Meigen and *P*. *scutatus* var. *pygmaeus* Frey need checking for potential synonymy. It is everywhere much rarer than *scutatus.*

P. splendidus. Widespread in Central Europe from Norway to alpine Italy, but as yet no further east than Austria. Though mainly recorded from mountainous areas it also occurs in the lowlands; altitude 5 to 2000m, but only 3 records come from above 1500m. It is everywhere much rarer than *scutatus.*

A key is provided to males of the four species in the complex, accompanied by an extensive character table. Female separation of *aurolateralis* and *splendidus* is unresolved and precludes a key a present].

Bartsch, H. D., Nielsen, T.R. & Speight, M.C.D 2002. Reappraisal of *Xylota caeruleiventris* Zetterstedt, 1838, with remarks on the distribution of this species and *X*. *jakutorurn* Bagatshanova, 1980 in Europe. **Volucella 6: 69-79**

[Details here: **British Hoverflies 2002** covers essentials. A key includes the whole complex around *X*. *florum.*]

Ssymank, A. 2002. Patterns of habitat use by Syrphidae (Diptera) in the valley of the river Strom in north-east Brandenburg **Volucella 6: 81-124**. [A very interesting analysis of two years recording in some excellent habitat mosaics (colour photos are net-twitching). 108 species recorded. Extensive analysis of flower visiting, including. phenological shifts within species. Two important conclusions.

- Location of adults is as much dictated by availability of suitable flower resources during the flight period as by larval habitat.

- Adults syrphids are much more important agents of pollination than has previously been suggested (German understanding).

The Red Data Book status in Germany is mentioned for some of the species. From a British perspective, it is noteworthy that *Riponnensia splendens* is highly endangered and the category also includes *Chrysogaster cemiteriorum, Cheilosia pubera* and *Neoascia interrupta.*

Perhaps we should be valuing our boring drab *Chrysogaster* rather more, since the author mentions the spectacular wasp-mimicking *Temnostoma meridionale* and *Spilomyia meridionale* as being in the same league!]

Speight, M. C. D., Good, J.A. & Castella , E. 2002. Predicting the changes in farm syrphid faunas that could be caused by changes in farm management regimes (Diptera, Syrphidae). **Volucella 6: 125-135.**

[A study of the fauna of a 43 ha. farm in County Cork, Ireland. The concept was to relate the fauna with the types of farmland habitat present, and then the implications for the fauna in the light of predicted changes in future farming practice. 73 species of hoverfly were recorded; Co. Cork has 116 species, Ireland 175 species. The main conclusions were: -

Most of the observed species were dependent on the non-productive parts of the farm.

- It is predicted that the (total) loss of these habitats through intensification of the use of the farm could reduce the existing syrphid fauna by more than 80%. (worst case scenario)
- Financially viable farm management options, compatible with ensuring the survival of the existing fauna, are not available. The fauna may diminish by at least 20% in consequence. (optimistic case scenario)

As commentary, this study has caused quite a stir in the Irish Republic since it gives a good basis to predict the likely consequences of farm intensification in this part of the EU. Moreover, the methodology relates to **Syrph the Net**, with its predictive capacity in relating habitats to faunas

over an increasingly wide area of Europe. It is good to see that the initiative and hard work by Martin Speight and his collaborators is bringing hoverflies into the forefront of monitoring and predictive tools for the future of the wider countryside, not just nature reserves. The future of subsidy in EU farming, and what environmental benefits should or should not accrue, is now a major issue in Western Europe, let alone Eastern Europe where the starting point in quality of farmland habitats/faunistic richness is so much better.]

Kehlmaler, C. 2002. Hoverflies (Diptera, Syrphidae) from northern Spain, with notes on *Pelecocera tricincta* Meigen, 1822. **Volucella 6: 139-153**. [The study area was near San Sebastian. Extracts here relate to *P. tricincta,* for which we have little information on biology. Males have no territory but simply plunge on to females at flowers.

Flight is slow and low, and when coming to flowers they approach from the side and land on the edge, then walk to the centre.

Flowers visited were mainly yellow; the reddish-violet of *Calluna* was among the exceptions. Most visits were to *Hypochaeris radicata* (Cat's-ear, widespread in Britain), *Picris hieracoides* (Hawkweed Ox--tongue, in Britain an introduction which died out) and *Cistus salvifolius* (shrub with large white-yellow flowers). On *Picris* the flies normally started by taking up nectar from the base of the flowers; some then moved up on to pollen - females only? On *Cistus,* several were often on one flower, always spaced out. When at flowers, they were docile and not easily frightened off.

The recorded season extended from late May to mid November (presumably flight started earlier). Throughout there was variation from small dark individuals to larger pale ones; body length from males of 3.0 mm. to females of 7.9 mm.]

Doczkal, D. 2002. Further presumed host plant relationships of *Cheilosia* Meigen (Diptera, Syrphidae) obtained from observing egg laying. **Volucella 6: 163-166**.

[Even if eggs are laid, a hoverfly larva may fail to develop on the plant concerned. Nonetheless, oviposition is a good lead.

Cheilosia impressa: Believed to have been responsible for eggs at the stem base of *Eupatorium cannabinurn* (Hemp Agrimony).

C. nebulosa: At *Centaurea nigra* (Hardheads). A female with oviposition behaviour; additional plants had a few eggs at the bases of leaves just above ground.

C. ranunculi: At *Ranunculus bulbosus* (Bulbous Buttercup). A female going though the leaf landing and subsequent routine as for *C. albitarsis* on *R. repens*.

C. vulpina: A female with oviposition behaviour at *Circium eriophorum* (Woolly Thistle).

Also non-British *C. chloris* on *Circium oleraceum* and *C.* cf. *melanura* on *Circium*. *spinosissirnum*.]

Doczkal, D. Claussen, C. & Ssymank, A. 2002. Erster Nachtrag und Korrenturen zur Checkliste der Scwebfliegen Deutschlands (Diptera, Syrphidae). **Volucella 6: 167-174.**

[This updated on the hoverfly list for Germany is or some interest to us.

The total is 458 species. I understand than even the Germans are amazed that the list has been pushed so far forward over the last 20 years. Since Germany extends from the Baltic to the northern fringe of the Alps and from the Atlantic coast in the NW to far inland, the climatic and habitat options are considerable, and lacking the inter-country barriers to species movement that the Engljsh Channel appears to provide.

As regards names, it is a relief that the stabilisation around historic usage as in the **British Checklist/British Hoverflie**s is acknowledged.]

Löhr, P-W. 2000. Syrphiden (Diptera, Syrphidae) aus einem Naturgarten im Vorderen Vogelsberg (Hessen) nach Farbschale- und Malaisefallenfangen. **Volucella 6: 195-222.**

[An aerial photo shows that it is a suburban garden, very close to uncultivated land and forest. The study compares the results of water traps with a Malaise trap.

- Of 91 species, 31 were only caught by the Malaise trap.
- 15 species were only in yellow water traps, and 2 were exclusive to white water traps.
- Whilst *Episyrphus balteatus* dominated all traps, the proportion of other species varied with trap type, and including species and number of individuals.
- The proportion of females was highest in the Malaise trap (total higher than other traps combined).
- There were also differences in the proportion of sexes between water traps at different heights.
- There were differences in flight period between trap types.]

Taxonomic papers include the use of allozyme markers in the *Cheilosia melanura* complex in the Balkans, *Paragus* of Russia. *Macropelecocera sanguinea* sp. nov. from Kirghizia and *Leucozona pruinosa* sp. nov. from the Himalayas.

Notices include two major initiatives.

- The development of distribution mapping in Baden-Wurtenberg (SE Germany). An example map of *Myathropa florea* shows a preponderance of records in the west (which may be genuine or reflect recording bias?).
- Keys to the Swiss hoverfly fauna are being initiated by the Centre Suisse de Cartographie de la Faune. These, with English version, will accompany **Syrph the Net** accounts. The team of experts includes Martin Speight and Alain Maibach (the latter met a number of us during a study year in Britain). This project should open up understanding of a very large segment of the European fauna, including a plethora of *Cheilosia*].

THE MALLOCH SOCIETY

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The Malloch Society was formed in 1988 by a small group of dipterists based in Scotland. Using a team-based approach, the aim of the Society is to improve knowledge and awareness of Diptera, particularly rare and little known Scottish Diptera. However much of the work of the Society involves syrphids, particularly saproxylic species.

A website for the Society has recently been launched which, among other things, features our project to conserve two syrphid species endangered in the British Isles, *Blera fallax* and *Hammerschmidtia ferruginea*. I invite members of the syrphid noticeboard to visit this site and hope you find this is of interest. The address is: www.mallochsociety.org.uk

INTERESTING RECENT RECORDS

Xanthandrus comtus - one female 15 September 2003 in garden at Torpoint (SX4354), Cornwall. (Leon Truscott)

Sphaerophoria fatarum: one male, Ningwood Common Wildlife Trust reserve, Isle of Wight (SZ394898), 05 June 2003. Recorded and determined by Martin C. Harvey, confirmed by Chris Palmer (voucher retained, genitalia checked). Judging from the national hoverfly atlas, this appears to be the first record for this species on the Isle of Wight.

Sphaerophoria taeniata: one male at Engine Common, South Gloucestershire (ST700836) 11 August 2003 (John Harper). Only third record for the Gloucestershire vice-counties.

Microdon devius: one specimen 9 June 2003 from Buttler's Hangings BBOWT Reserve, Bucks (SU818962 VC24). This is a South-West facing chalk grassland slope with some scrub. It was also seen on a restricted-access reserve in the Chilterns on 16 June 2003, also a sloping chalk grassland. We have been told that most recent records for this species have been from the North Downs of Kent and Surrey rather than the Chilterns. (Rita and Ken Merrifield).

Volucella inanis: one male in Avon Gorge, Bristol (ST5674) 19 July 2003 (David Gibbs); first record for VC34 (West Gloucestershire).

Volucella inanis: one female, Waddesdon Manor, Bucks (ST733166); apparently a new record for this 10km. square (David Iliff).