Hoverfly Newsletter
Number 61
Autumn 2016
ISSN 1358-5029

It is probable that in most years we entomologists complain about the seasonal shortage of insects in the families that we study, however 2016 (at least till the beginning of August when these words are being written), seems to be quite exceptionally bad, not just for hoverflies and other Diptera but for many other insect orders too (Lepidoptera and Hymenoptera for example). In the case of hoverflies, this year's records in my area include a good range of species, but numbers of individuals are well below expectation. Of course we all hope that this is merely a temporary setback and that in due course we shall see a recovery.

In 2001 the first Symposium on the Syrphidae was held in Stuttgart. Since then these symposia have been held in alternate years in different countries, and the 9th in the series will take place in Brazil next year. With the permission of the organisers the invitation and details of the event are included in this newsletter. Please note that the September date for registration of interest is not a final deadline for application to attend the Symposium. Further details can be found on the website http://syrphidaesymposium.wixsite.com/iss9-curitibabrazil

Copy for **Hoverfly Newsletter No. 62** (which is expected to be issued with the Spring 2017 Dipterists Forum Bulletin) should be sent to me: David Iliff, **Green Willows, Station Road, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Glos, GL52 9HN, (telephone 01242 674398), email:davidiliff@talk21.com**, to reach me by 20 November 2016. The hoverfly illustrated at the top right of this page is *Helophilus pendulus*.

Hoverfly Recording Scheme Update Summer 2016

Stuart Ball, Roger Morris, Ian Andrews, Joan Childs and Ellie Rotheray

For those who are wondering what has happened to the update of the atlas, please bear with us! It is proving to be a somewhat bigger job than we had expected, not least because there has been a significant increase in the volume of records arriving (see Figure 1 below). We now have all of the 2015 data uploaded but know that there are several datasets we have yet to get. Another reason for the delay is that Stuart has been busy rewriting the HRS website; this is progressing well and will hopefully go live before too long.

So, when will the atlas revision emerge? Realistically it is a few months away. We have still to check some records and make sure that there are as few errors as possible. Then the text will need vetting by CEH at Wallingford. Hopefully all this will be completed by spring 2017.

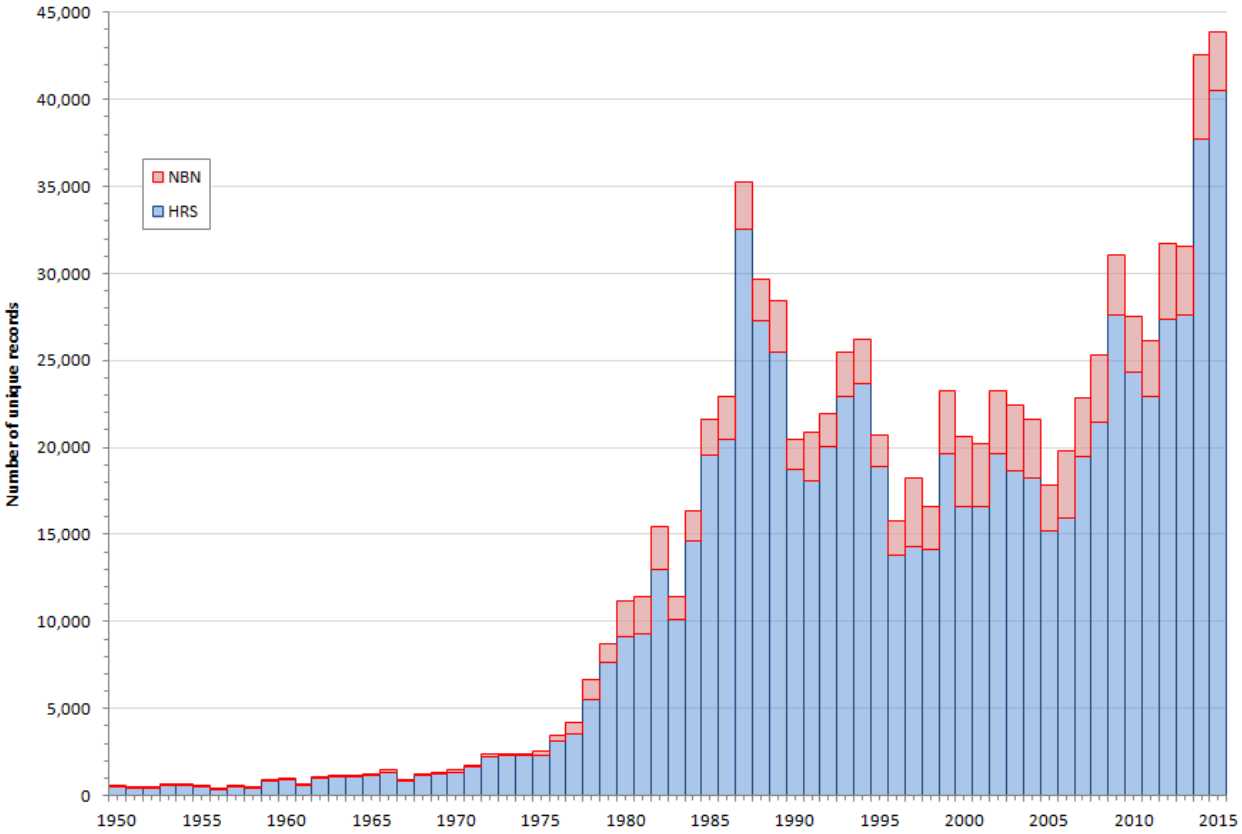


Figure 1. Numbers of 'unique' full records available, separated into data held directly by the Scheme database and additional data held on the National Biodiversity Network (NBN). (note that 'unique' data are those species' records from separate dates and grid references).

The main reason for the jump in recording is the level of activity generated by the UK Hoverflies Facebook group. In the last three years, this group and other web-based sources have received contributions from more than 1,000 people each year and seen a substantial number of very active recorders become established. This can be seen in Figure 2, which also shows how recording by photographers has developed between 2013 and 2016. The growth in recording effort is actually more dramatic than this figure suggests because some of the more active photographers have switched from only submitting photos to submitting their full records via spreadsheets but getting a few photos checked when they are unsure of identifications. This change is a very positive demonstration of the ways in which the internet can be used as a teaching medium.

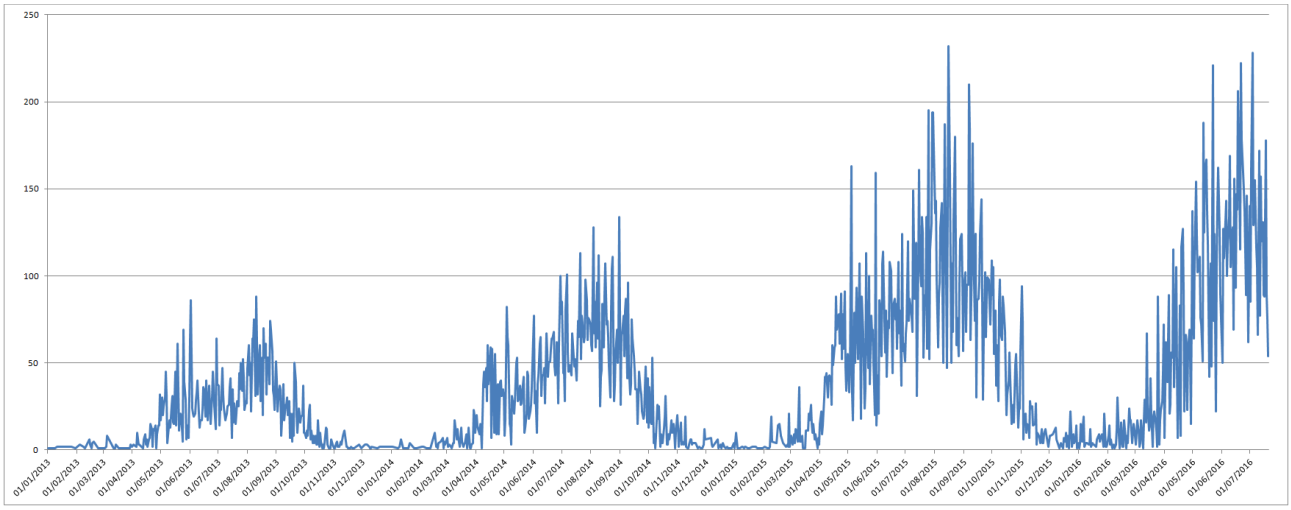


Figure 2. Daily records from photographic sources between 2013 and July 2016.

One of the most striking features of the Facebook group is the way it has stimulated recording during winter months. Last winter was quite a revelation, with amazing numbers of hoverflies recorded in the depth of the winter (also illustrated in Figure 2). We really did not have an idea of how active hoverflies could be during those months, although it is clear that the winter of 2015-2016 was not "normal" with the period Dec-Feb being the mildest on record. It remains to be seen what will happen in future years, but the establishment of a really big and active group has the potential to explore this issue in much greater detail. In addition, there is also a growing group of people who record from their gardens or a favoured site on an almost daily basis. This sort of recording has huge potential to develop into a long-term monitoring scheme which would be similar to the idea promoted by Alan Stubbs many years ago.

A further reason for increased recorder effort must be that the impact of the training programme is beginning to be seen. Not every course generates new recorders, but occasionally a course has a significant effect. This result is best demonstrated by the level of activity in Norfolk where participants in our course at Wheatfen now make a highly significant contribution to incoming data. Can this outcome be repeated elsewhere? Stuart and Roger are still available to run courses and as yet have no bookings for winter 2016/2017. The most effective courses are those where there is somebody locally who wants to get a county recording scheme moving. Anybody with such aspirations might like to contact us so that we can see what might be done.

Pocota v parakeets! Potential competition for rot holes between *Pocota personata* (Syrphidae) and ring-necked parakeets *Psittacula krameri*

Joan Childs
16 Judith Gardens, Potton, Bedfordshire SG19 2RJ
waterpipit@live.co.uk

On 16 May 2016 I visited Abney Park Cemetery in Stoke Newington, north London, to look for *Pocota personata*, which had been reported at this location by Mick Massie on the UK Hoverfly Facebook Group a few days earlier. On first arriving at the cemetery I noticed that there were many ring-necked parakeets flying over and perching in trees. A large feral population of the ring-necked parakeet has become established in the UK through escapes or deliberate release of captive birds. From an initial breeding population in Kent in 1969, they are now particularly numerous in the London area, but are spreading increasingly further afield.

Starting to explore the cemetery, I located a large ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) tree with multiple rot holes that looked likely for *Pocota*. One of the holes in this tree was occupied by a ring-necked parakeet, presumably nesting (photo 1). I did not see a *Pocota* at this tree.

At another mature ash tree, I located a *Pocota personata* investigating a number of rot holes, flying from one to another, between a height of approximately 6 and 9 metres. A parakeet had taken up residence in one of the holes in this tree. A second bird, presumably its mate, was sitting close by on top of another rot hole (photo 2). The *Pocota* repeatedly buzzed around this right hand rot hole, frequently coming into close vicinity with the bird sitting on top. The parakeet was clearly agitated by being buzzed by the fly, looking around and snapping repeatedly at it as it came close.

I can only speculate on whether there is competition between *Pocota* and parakeets for prime rot holes (or if *Pocota* might prefer wetter holes and the parakeets drier ones), or if the interaction might be deleterious enough to put *Pocota* off finding a mate or laying eggs, or indeed if a parakeet might have any real chance of catching a *Pocota* that might be irritating it. However, I thought that the interaction was of note.

I would like to thank Mick Massie for his *Pocota personata* photo, which was much better than mine!

Ring-necked parakeet occupying tree hole in ash (photo: Joan Childs)

Pair of parakeets dominating two tree holes contested by *Pocota personata* (photo: Joan Childs)

Pocota personata, 13 May, Abney Park Cemetery
(Photo:Mick Massie)

Basking and mating habits of *Orthonevra geniculata* at Wicken Fen

Joan Childs
16 Judith Gardens, Potton, Bedfordshire SG19 2RJ
waterpipit@live.co.uk

There are 123 species of hoverflies listed on the Wicken Fen database, one of which is a Red Data Book species and nine being Nationally Scarce. The local and declining *Orthonevra geniculata* is represented on the database by seven records. The first for the reserve was recorded on 9 June 1932 by J E Collin. The remaining six records, each a single specimen, were all made by Ivan Perry, the latest being in 2001. The records are spread from 12 April to 9 June.

When I started working at Wicken in April 2014 I was keen to establish if this species was still present on the Fen. It was not one I was familiar with, so I had no field experience of it. The only hint to method of collection in the Wicken database was that a male had been 'swept from buckthorn'.

In my first field season on the Fen, I spent time looking specifically for this species through sweeping and searching flowers by eye, including extensively working sallow blossom which is listed as a preferred food source. However, I was unable to confirm its continued presence.

On 21 April 2015, I arrived on the Fen early morning with the intention of undertaking survey work. The conditions were sunny and warm, but very windy. I decided to concentrate my efforts in some sheltered wet woodland on the boardwalk close to the Visitor Centre in the Sedge Fen, part of the National Nature Reserve. Conditions were very wet in the woodland with standing water at the base of the trees. I spotted a pair of mating flies some distance into the woodland, on the sunny side of an ash tree, *Fraxinus excelsior*, and took some photos in order to get a clue as to their identity. Back in the office, magnifying the images showed that the flies were an *Orthonevra* species. The third antennal segment was highly elongated and the legs were partially yellow. Additionally, the male fly had one wing extended, showing some dusky shading, and dark marks at the inner end of the stigma and cross-vein r-m. All of these features indicated *O. geniculata*. I returned to the wet woodland and located several individual flies on similar trees in the immediate area, with a mating pair on a different tree from the one where the original pair was found. I collected a specimen and was able to confirm the identity as *O. geniculata*. Incidentally, several male *Cheilosia pagana* were exhibiting similar behaviour, which I have observed previously in this species.

Having 'got my eye in' to the behaviour of *O. geniculata*, I located a number of additional individuals and mating pairs in similar circumstances around the boardwalk and Nature Trail in the Sedge Fen throughout April, both on live standing trees and felled trunks. They seem to particularly like basking on sunny trunks along rides, which appear to provide ideal lekking and mating opportunities as they are frequently seen in cop. I have not seen reference to this behaviour in *O. geniculata*.

Initial sighting of *Orthonevra geniculata* in cop on ash tree at Wicken Fen

Close-up of mating pair of *O. geniculata*

Ash tree in wet woodland where *O. geniculata* was originally located

An additional species of *Sphaerophoria* exhibiting an interrupted thoracic stripe

Joan Childs
16 Judith Gardens, Potton, Bedfordshire SG19 2RJ
waterpipit@live.co.uk

I was interested to read the article in the last Dipterists Forum Hoverfly Newsletter by David Iliff and Martin Matthews about a specimen of *Sphaerophoria scripta* with an interrupted thoracic yellow stripe above the wing base, resembling that found in *S loewi* and *S rueppellii*. The key in Stubbs and Falk already notes that some specimens of *S fatarum* and *S virgata* can have a broken thoracic stripe.

I have also found this condition in a male *S interrupta* taken from Yealand, Lancashire on 8 June 2012 (identification from genitalia examination). As can be seen in the photograph, there is absolutely no hint of the yellow stripe continuing posteriorly.

male *Sphaerophoria interrupta* (photo: Joan Childs)

A comparison of pollen cover of male and female *Eristalis pertinax* at Wicken Fen

Joan Childs
16 Judith Gardens, Potton, Bedfordshire SG19 2RJ
waterpipit@live.co.uk

On 20 March 2016 I was staking out some thistles on a muddy drove at Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire, looking for early *Cheilosia*, when I noticed a number of female *Eristalis pertinax* coming down to oviposit on the mud. Additional females were perched on adjacent dry reed stems. Every female that I could see had an obvious covering of pollen, presumably from the sallows on the edge of the drove, the only obvious pollen source in the vicinity, and certainly abundantly available. There were also a number of male *E. pertinax* which were either holding territory patrolling airspace over the mud or perched on the reed stems near the females. None of the males had any pollen covering at all. There were approximately equal numbers of each sex (about 10 of each). Among the possibilities, one conclusion might be that the males are prioritising mating over feeding whereas the females, needing to nourish their eggs, do not miss an opportunity to feed. Certainly, the males seem to spend a lot of time patrolling airspace, which is presumably territorial behaviour.

Male *Eristalis pertinax* showing no pollen cover (photo: Joan Childs)

Female *Eristalis pertinax* showing extensive pollen cover (photo: Joan Childs)

The 9th International Symposium on Syrphidae - 2017
1st Circular - June 24th 2016

Welcome

Dear Fellow Dipterists and Friends,

It is a great pleasure to invite you to attend the 9th International Symposium on Syrphidae (ISS9). Taking place for the first time in the Neotropical Region, the ISS9 will be held in Curitiba (Brazil) from 28th August to 1st September 2017. We are sure it will be an excellent opportunity to establish new research collaborations and share experiences on Syrphidae.

This information is also available at www.syrphidae.com and www.diptera.info.

Location

Curitiba is located in the South Region of Brazil and most of its inhabitants are of northern European descent. It is an important cultural, political, and economic centre in Latin America. Although Curitiba holds a population of 2 million inhabitants, it is managed to preserve its mid size town atmosphere. It was founded by the Portuguese over 300 years ago and settled by immigrants (such as Italians, Polish, Ukrainians, Germans, and Japanese). The name "Curitiba" comes from the Tupi words *kurí tyba* (= many pine seeds), due to the large number of pinecones of Paraná pines (*Araucaria angustifolia*) occurring in the region by the time of its foundation.

The ISS9 will be held in the Hotel la Dolce Vita located in a preserved region of rich nature, close to the "*Serra do Mar*", 40 km away from Curitiba´s metropolitan area.

Further details about prices and booking will be announced soon.

Transport
Curitiba is served by the Afonso Pena International Airport and the Symposium venue is located about 18 Km from the airport.

If you are coming to Curitiba from abroad there are flights from all the larger capitals (São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Brasília and Porto Alegre). The easiest way is to take a flight to São Paulo (São Paulo International Airport - GRU) with a connection flight to Curitiba (CWB).

Registration and Travel support funds
Registration fee and travel support grants will be estimated based on the available funds.

At this time, we would like to ask you to complete and return a 'Registration of interest' to receive further information about the ISS9 and to assist us in planning the symposium.

Abstract submission and presentation

Submission of abstracts will be opened in early 2017. Further details will be announced soon.

Preliminary Program
Following the previous Symposium, the scientific program will include sessions on Faunistics and Biogeography; Systematics and Phylogenetics; Biology and Ecology; Biodiversity Assessment and Conservation; and Integrated Pest Management and Biocontrol.

Day / Time	**Monday August 28th**	**Tuesday August 29th**	**Wednesday August 30th**	**Thursday August 31st**	**Friday September 1st**
8:30 - 9:00		Opening	Opening	Opening	Excursion
9:00 - 12:30		Symposium	Symposium	Symposium	
12:30 - 13:30		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
14:30 - 17:00	Arrival	Symposium	Symposium	Symposium	
17:00 - 19:00	Registration				
19:30 - 21:30	Welcome Dinner	Dinner	Banquet	Dinner	

Important dates

Until 15th September 2016: Registration of interest

28th – 31st August 2017: Symposium

1st September: Excursion

Excursion

We are still planning the best option for an excursion. As soon as we have the itinerary, it will be announced.

Weather

Curitiba has a mild humid temperate climate with warm summers and no dry season. The months of August/September are characterized by *gradually falling* daily high temperatures, with daily highs ranging from 20°C to 23°C over the course of the months, exceeding 26°C or dropping below 16°C only one day in ten (Source: https://weatherspark.com/averages/33386/9/Curitiba-Parana-Brazil).

For questions or suggestions, you can reach us at:

Dr. Mírian Morales

Universidade Federal de Lavras

Departamento de Entomologia, PO Box 3037

37200-000 Lavras, Minas Gerais, Brazil

Phone: +55 (35) 3829 5216

E- mail: **syrphidae9@gmail.com**

We cordially invite you to attend the ISS9 and contribute to the scientific program by presenting your research. Come and meet colleagues from all over the world, exchange ideas, develop collaborations and enjoy!

We look forward to meeting you all in Curitiba.

Best regards,

Mírian Morales & Luciane Marinoni
The Organizing Committee

Registration of interest

To receive further information about the 9th International Symposium on Syrphidae and to assist us in planning for the event, please complete and return this form to <**syrphidae9@gmail.com**>, by 15th September 2016.

Name:

Title (Dr., Prof., etc.):

I am a student: ( )

Postal address:

E-mail:

( ) I am interested in presenting a talk.
( ) I am interested in presenting a poster.
( ) I will need a letter of invitation.
Accommodation at the Dolce Vita Hotel:
( ) I would like to require a single room.
( ) I would like to require a double room [additional bed for child: ( )]
( ) I would like to share a room [Options - ( ) twin room; ( ) triple room; ( ) quadruple room].

Additional requirements:

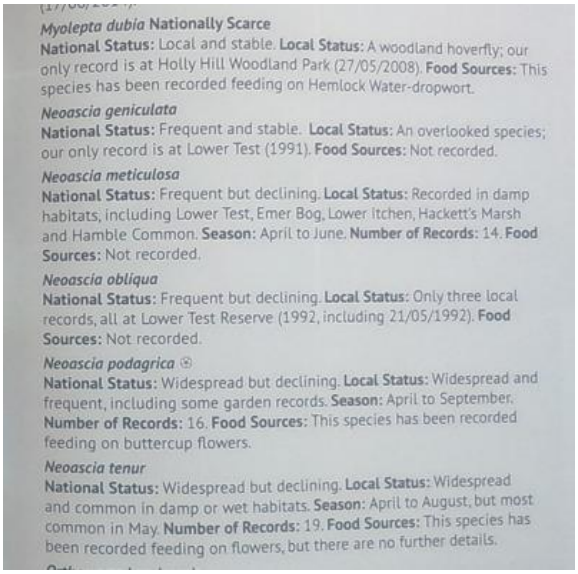
Book Notice: Hoverflies of Southampton by Southampton Natural History Society 2016 ISBN: N/A Paperback and in colour. 60pp. @£3.50 (including p & p)

Phil Budd philipbuddathos@gmail.com

The Southampton Natural History Society (*Registered Charity No. 264662*) is a small, non-profit making organisation that can date its origins back to 1907. Its aims are to study, record and teach others about all aspects of flora and fauna in the Southampton area. Our President is Chris Packham of BBC Springwatch fame. More details can be found on our web-site: http://sotonnhs.org

Over my time as Chairman, i.e. most of the last 17 years, it has been realised that many taxonomic groups, especially flora, fungi, birds, butterflies and moths, are well served by other recording groups in the Southampton area. Therefore the SNHS has decided to concentrate most of our project work on the less well recorded insect groups. To this end we previously produced the Ladybirds of Southampton (2005) and Shieldbugs of Southampton (2007).

The Hoverflies of Southampton was based on a members' survey launched in March 2013 with much additional information provided by non-members and also records accessed with permission from the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre database. 3,037 individual hoverfly records of 148 species were available up to the end of 2015. Each of the 148 species is listed in the well illustrated guide along with is a wealth of other information gleaned entirely from the survey data and other observations. Three examples of the pages are illustrated below.



Myolepta dubia **Nationally Scarce**
National Status: Local and stable. **Local Status:** A woodland hoverfly; our only record is at Holly Hill Woodland Park (27/05/2008). **Food Sources:** This species has been recorded feeding on Hemlock Water-dropwort.

Neoascia geniculata
National Status: Frequent and stable. **Local Status:** An overlooked species; our only record is at Lower Test (1991). **Food Sources:** Not recorded.

Neoascia meticulosa
National Status: Frequent but declining. **Local Status:** Recorded in damp habitats, including Lower Test, Emer Bog, Lower Itchen, Hackett's Marsh and Hamble Common. **Season:** April to June. **Number of Records:** 14. **Food Sources:** Not recorded.

Neoascia obliqua
National Status: Frequent but declining. **Local Status:** Only three local records, all at Lower Test Reserve (1992, including 21/05/1992). **Food Sources:** Not recorded.

Neoascia podagrica
National Status: Widespread but declining. **Local Status:** Widespread and frequent, including some garden records. **Season:** April to September. **Number of Records:** 16. **Food Sources:** This species has been recorded feeding on buttercup flowers.

Neoascia tenur
National Status: Widespread but declining. **Local Status:** Widespread and common in damp or wet habitats. **Season:** April to August, but most common in May. **Number of Records:** 19. **Food Sources:** This species has been recorded feeding on flowers, but there are no further details.

Nationally Scarce
National Status: Local but not declining.
Local Status: Rare with three recent records: Singles at Andrew's (East) Park, Southampton (05/09/2012), Hum Hole, Bitterne (24/06/2013) and Mount Pleasant (01/08/2015).
Food Sources: Recorded at Bramble and cultivated roses and pictured on Teasel *(Dipsacus fullonum)*

We have almost 200 copies of the Hoverflies of Southampton to sell at £3.50 each, inclusive of postage and packaging. If you would like a copy please send a cheque made out to Southampton Natural History Society to Sue Channon, 12D Farmery Close, Southampton. SO18 2JX. I'm sorry but we are not yet able to accept any form of electronic payment.

Interesting Recent Records:

Dasysyrphus pinastri: Castlett Wood SP082262, Gloucestershire. Two females, 16 May and 24 June 2016 (Martin Matthews); a county rarity, last recorded in Gloucestershire in 1996 (also a female), and only second and third VC33 records (previous one was in 1923).

Pipiza fasciata: The Mythe SO8834, Gloucestershire. Female 3 May 2016 (Martin Matthews). Eighth county record, and only second for VC33.