

Identifying soldierflies and allies: soldierflies in genus *Stratiomys*

Compiled by Martin C. Harvey for the Soldierflies and Allies Recording Scheme

Version 3 at 27 December 2020

These guides are only possible thanks to the generosity of the brilliant photographers who have allowed their images to be used. Special mention must be given to Malcolm Storey and Steven Falk, whose photo collections form the backbone for most of the species guides:

Malcolm Storey's [BioImages website](#) – Steven Falk's [photo collections on Flickr](#)

Other photographers included in this guide are Andrew Green, Ian Andrews, Jeremy Richardson, Judy Webb, Neil Marks, Peter Andrews, Simon Knott, Tim Hodge and Will George.

Males are shown first, one page for each species, then females. The pages for males include distribution maps taken from the recording scheme's [provisional atlas](#) (Harvey 2017).

As far as possible, these guides show features that can be seen on live insects in the field, or are likely to be visible in photographs. For comprehensive identification keys and species accounts see [British soldierflies and their allies](#), by Alan Stubbs and Martin Drake. See also the recording scheme's [additional notes](#) to accompany the Stubbs and Drake keys.

For lots more information on soldierflies and allies go to the recording scheme [website](#), [Twitter](#) page or [Facebook](#) group.

For lots more information and events, and to support the study and conservation of flies, please consider joining [Dipterists Forum](#).

Records wanted!

Once you have identified your fly, please let the recording scheme have the details! Add to [iRecord](#) or send to the [recording scheme](#) so that we can share the records for conservation and research.

The Soldierflies and Allies Recording Scheme is part of Dipterists Forum



The Soldierflies and Allies Recording Scheme is supported by the UKCEH Biological Records Centre



Recognising the genus: *Stratiomys* (plus *Odontomyia ornata*)

Genus *Stratiomys* contains four large species (12–15mm long), and this guide also includes the Ornate Brigadier, *Odontomyia ornata*, which is a similar size and is sometimes confused with the *Stratiomys* species. These are 'typical' soldierflies: they are broad-bodied, with a pair of spines on the scutellum and most have wasp-mimic markings (the exception, *Stratiomys longicornis*, is a bee mimic).

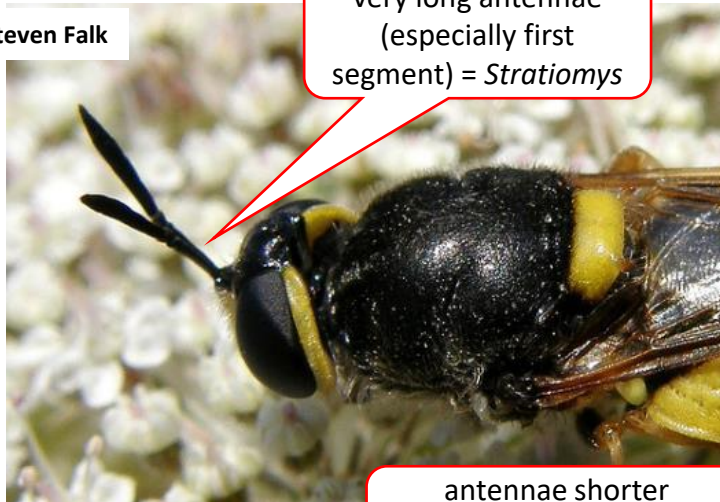
There are some differences in markings between males and females, which can readily be told apart by the eyes (males have eyes meeting on top of the head, females have a fairly broad gap).

All of this genus have larvae that develop in water, in ditches or at the edges of shallow water bodies, with each species having its own requirements.

Their habitats have come under threat from land drainage and from changes in water quality, and changes in management affecting both the water bodies and the supply of flowers that the adults need. Although none of these species are common, there have been signs of range expansion in recent years for all except the very rare *S. chamaeleon*.

For more information on these species see Stubbs, A. 2015. [Bringing soldierflies to attention](#). *British Wildlife* 26(6): 409–415.

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very long antennae
(especially first
segment) = *Stratiomys*



antennae shorter
(especially first segment)
= *Odontomyia*

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no gap
between eyes
= male

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broad, flattened
abdomen

© Judy Webb

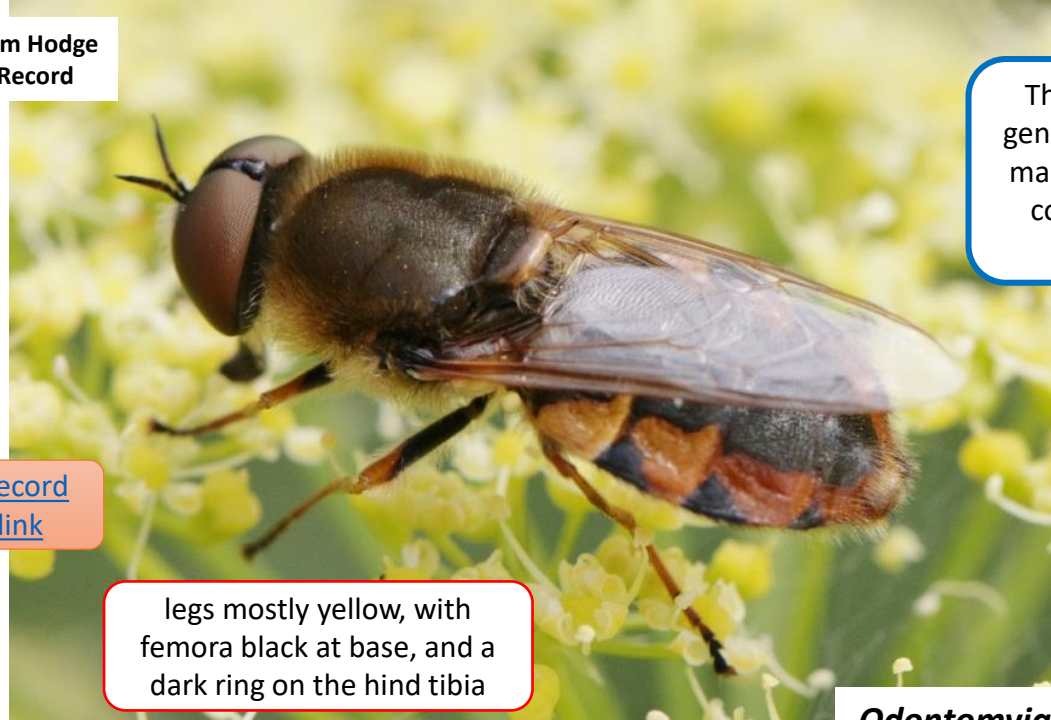
broad gap
between eyes
= female

two spines
on scutellum



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© Tim Hodge
via iRecord

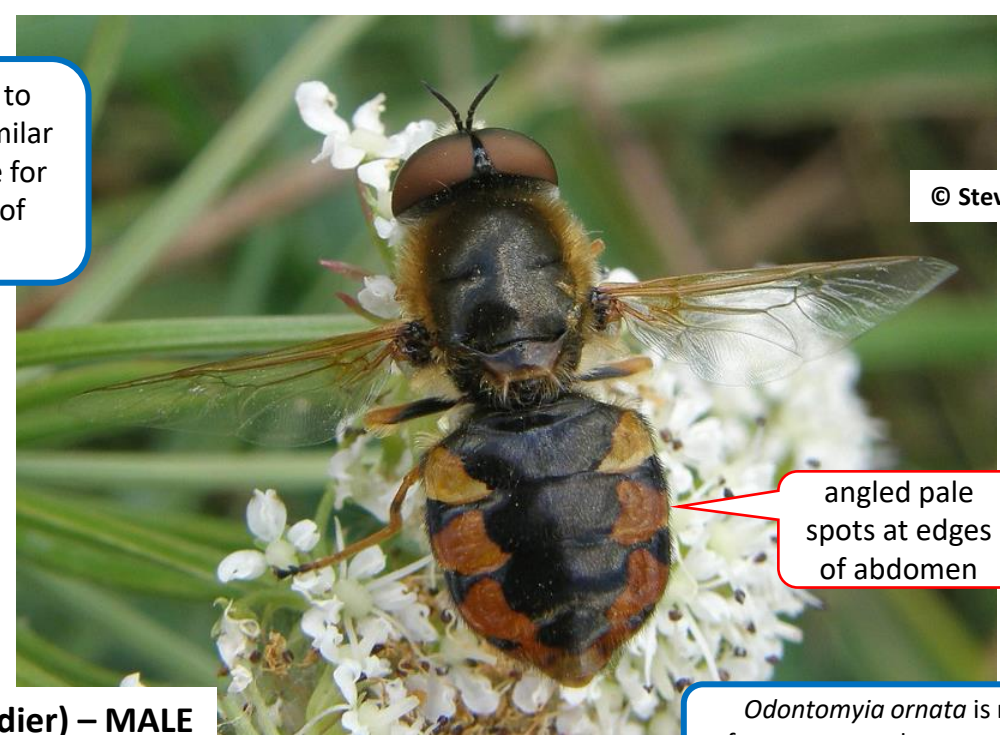


[iRecord link](#)

legs mostly yellow, with femora black at base, and a dark ring on the hind tibia

This species is a similar size to genus *Stratiomys*, and has similar markings, so is included here for comparison (other species of *Odontomyia* are smaller).

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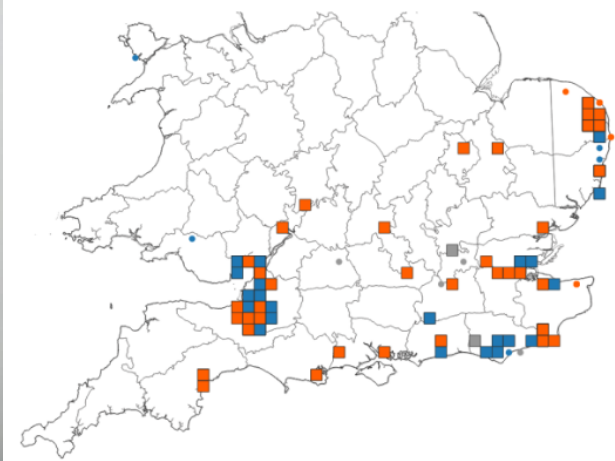


angled pale spots at edges of abdomen

Odontomyia ornata is most frequent near the coast, but is increasingly being found inland.

Odontomyia ornata (Ornate Brigadier) – MALE

- ID difficulty: 2
- Flight period: late Apr to late July, peak in Jun
- GB threat: Least Concern • GB rarity: Nationally Scarce
- scattered in southern Britain
- ditches in grazing levels
- No. of records: 549 • % since 2000: 47%



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first segment of antennae much shorter than *Stratiomys*

spines and edge of scutellum pale

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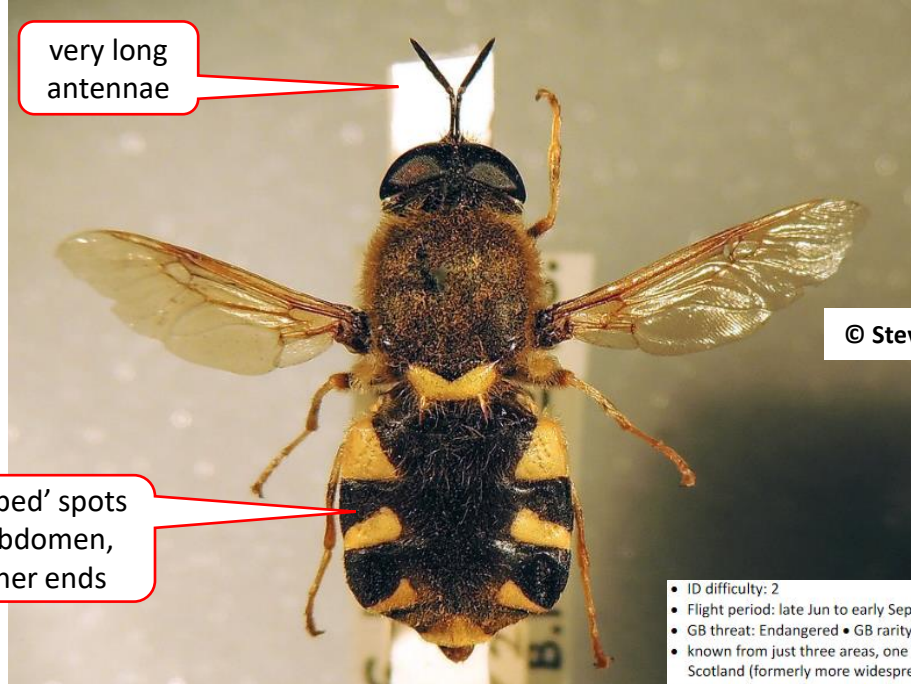
black triangle at base
of yellow scutellum

front and mid tibia
almost entirely yellow

underside of
abdomen mostly pale
(not visible here)

[Steven Falk
link](#)

Stratiomys chamaeleon (Clubbed General) – MALE



very long
antennae

yellow 'clubbed' spots
at side of abdomen,
blunt at inner ends

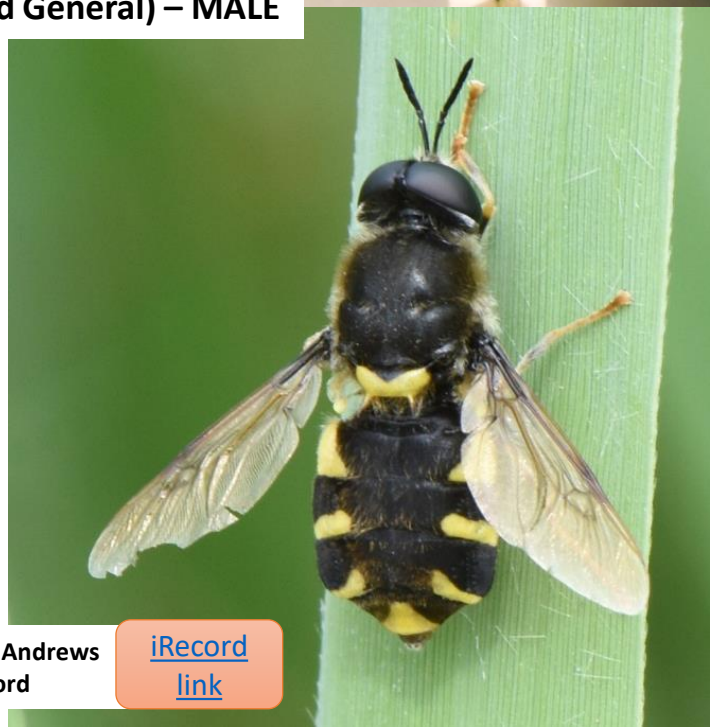
© Steven Falk

- ID difficulty: 2
- Flight period: late Jun to early Sep, peak Jul and early Aug
- GB threat: Endangered • GB rarity: Nationally Rare
- known from just three areas, one each in England, Wales and Scotland (formerly more widespread)
- fen pools and seepages
- No. of records: 108 • % since 2000: 28%



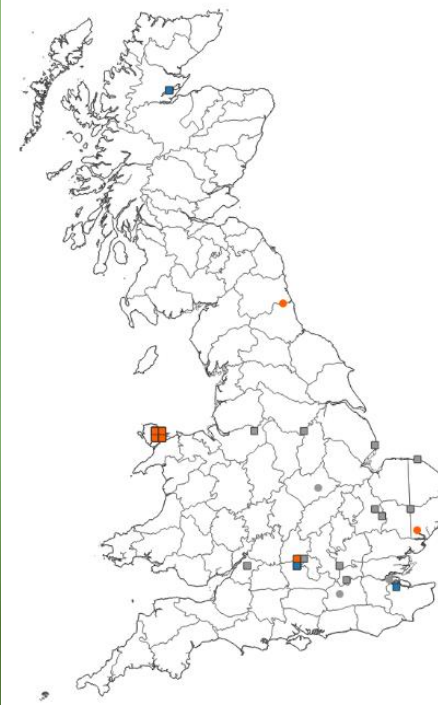
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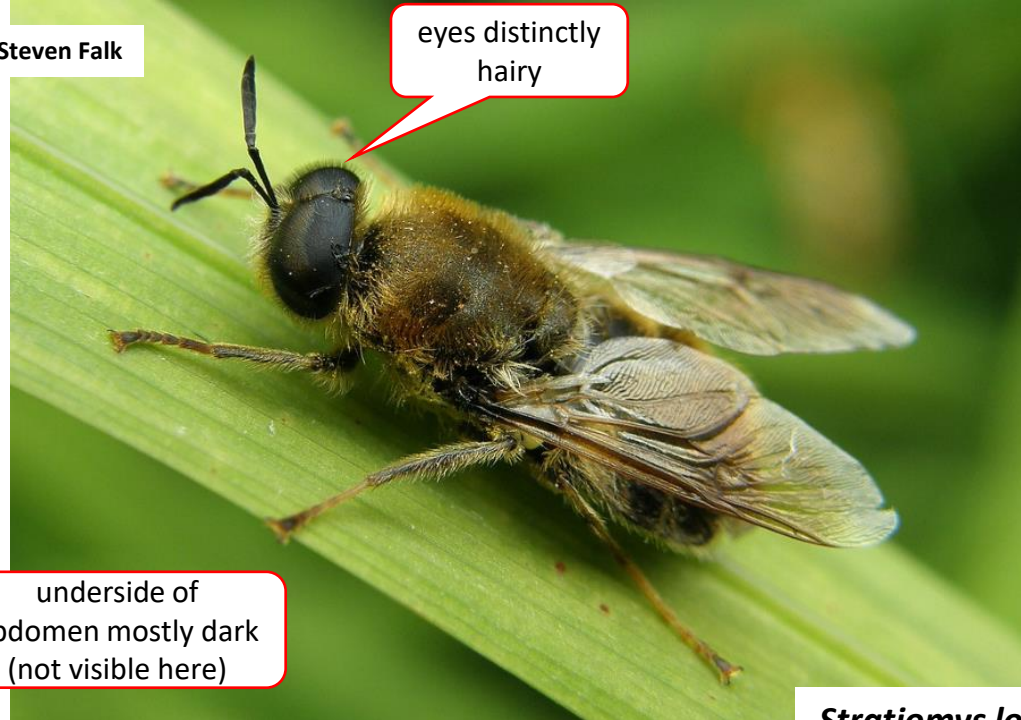
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eyes distinctly hairy

underside of abdomen mostly dark (not visible here)

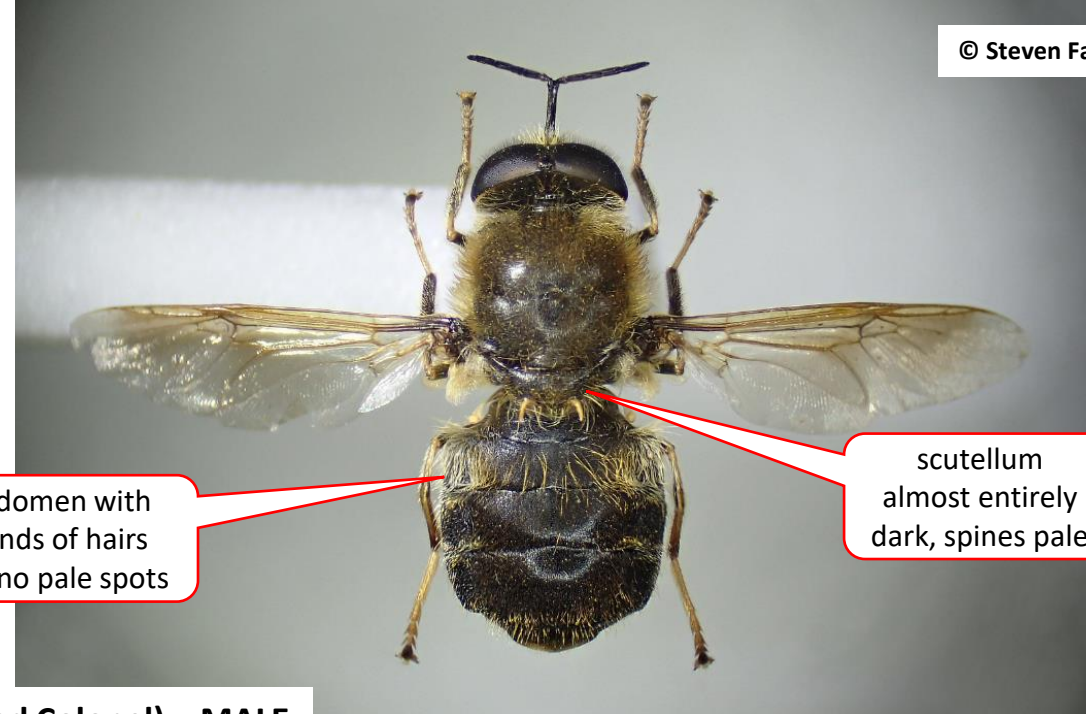


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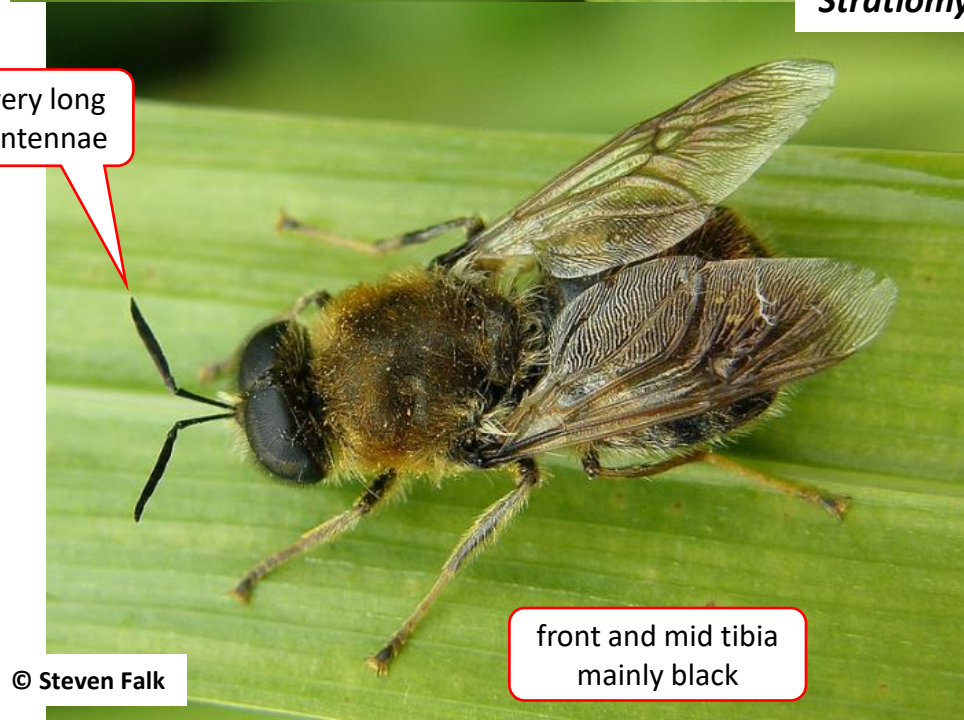
abdomen with bands of hairs but no pale spots

scutellum almost entirely dark, spines pale



Stratiomys longicornis (Long-horned Colonel) – MALE

very long antennae



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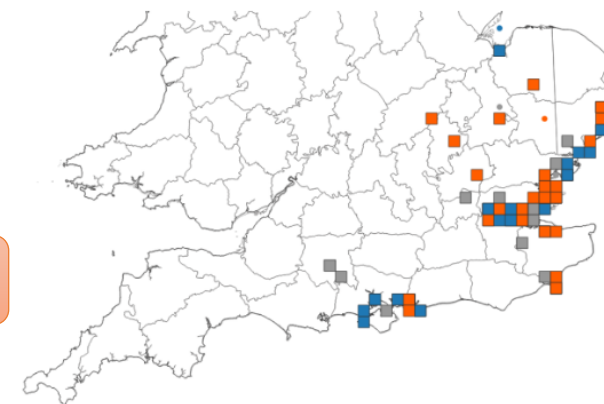
front and mid tibia mainly black



[iRecord link](#)

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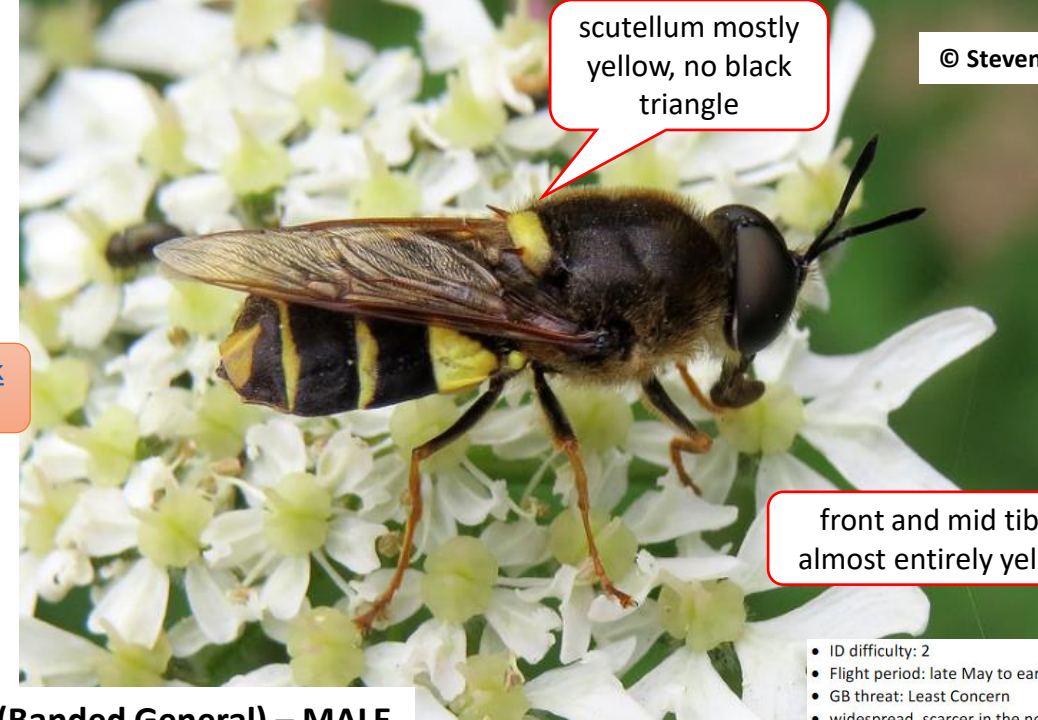
- ID difficulty: 2
- Flight period: late May to mid Jul
- GB threat: Least Concern • GB rarity: Nationally Scarce
- coasts of south-east England, spreading inland
- brackish and salt marsh
- No. of records: 161 • % since 2000: 51%



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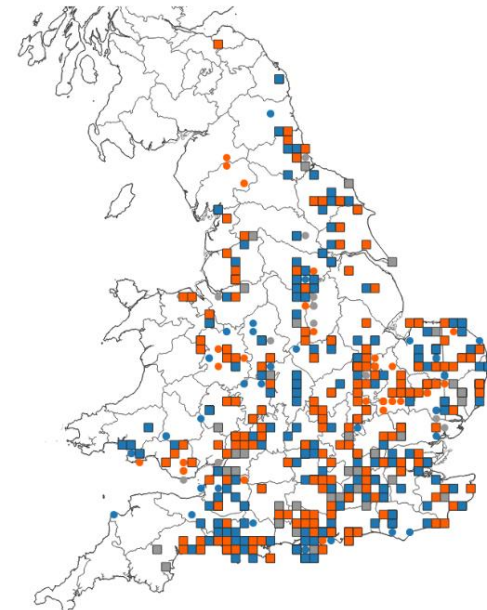
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scutellum mostly yellow, no black triangle

front and mid tibia almost entirely yellow

Stratiomys potamida (Banded General) – MALE

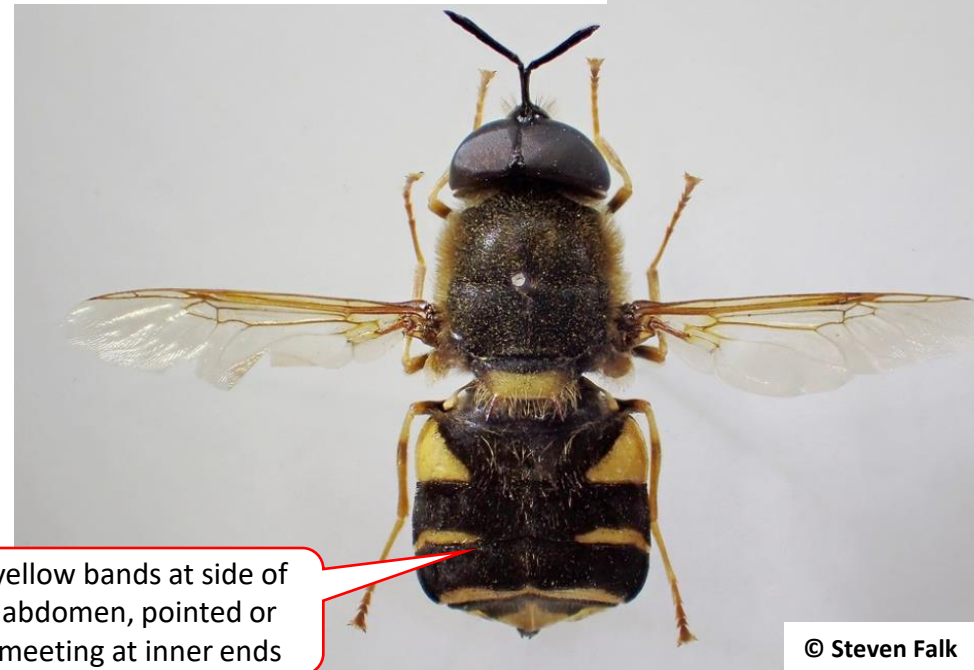
- ID difficulty: 2
- Flight period: late May to early Sep, peak late Jun and Jul
- GB threat: Least Concern
- widespread, scarcer in the north, not in Scotland
- wet meadows with ditches, streams, springs or seepages, pools and ponds, sometimes in carr or along lowland rivers
- No. of records: 847 • % since 2000: 36%



[Ian Andrews link](#)

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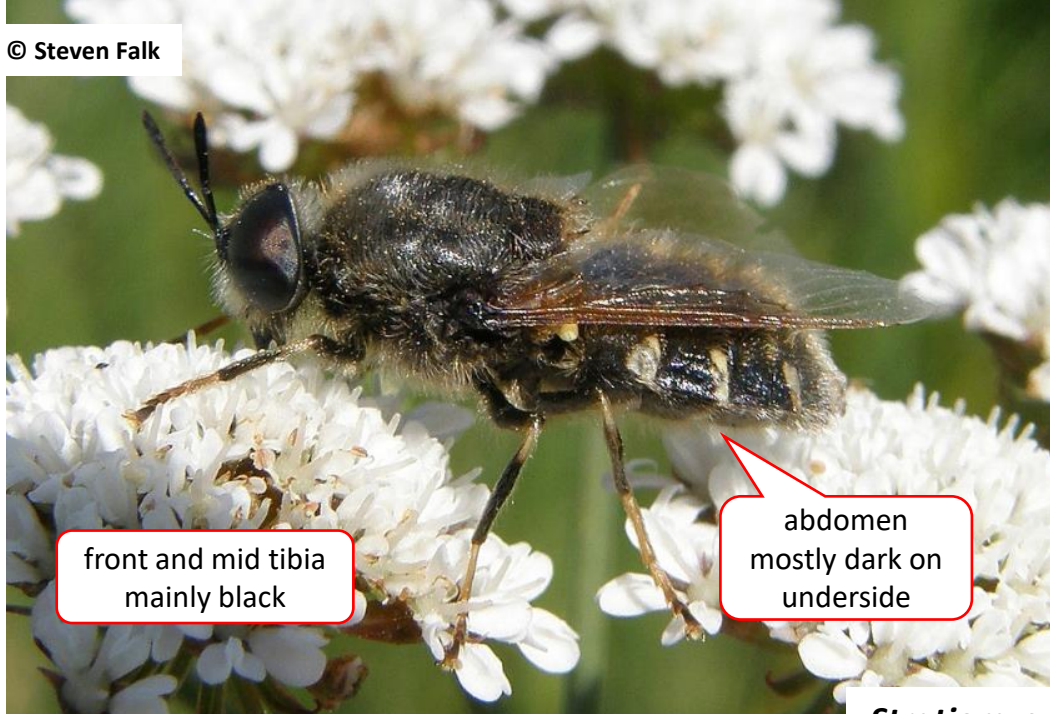
underside of abdomen mostly pale



yellow bands at side of abdomen, pointed or meeting at inner ends

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front and mid tibia
mainly black

abdomen
mostly dark on
underside

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Stratiomys singularior (Flecked General) – MALE



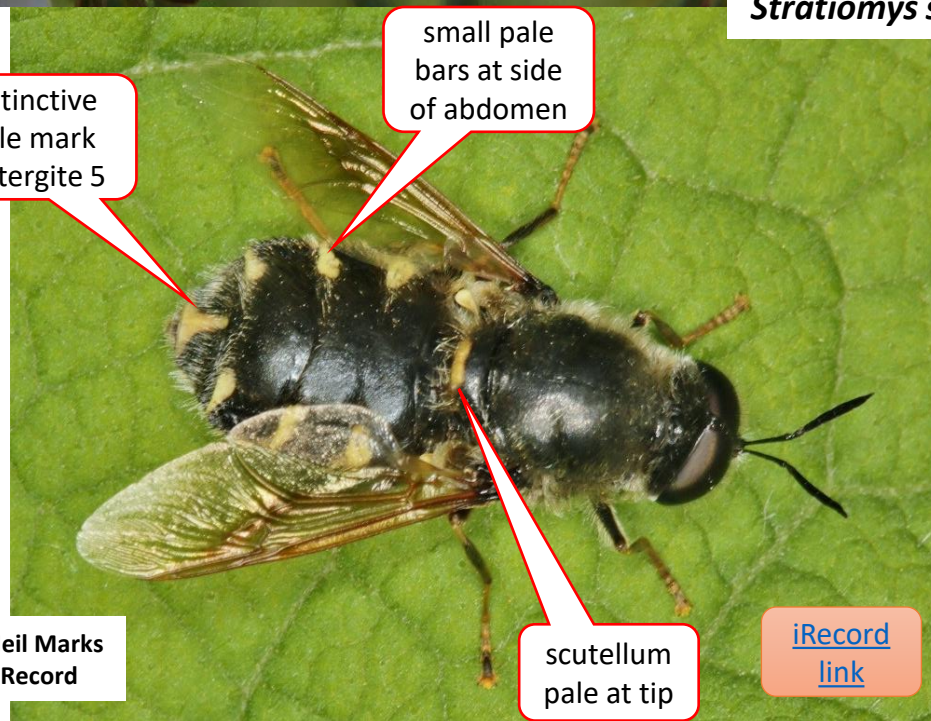
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- ID difficulty: 2
- Flight period: late May to early Sep, peak in Jul
- GB threat: Least Concern
- largely coastal and southern, some inland records
- ditches on coastal marshes, brackish pools
- No. of records: 871 • % since 2000: 42%

distinctive
pale mark
on tergite 5

small pale
bars at side
of abdomen

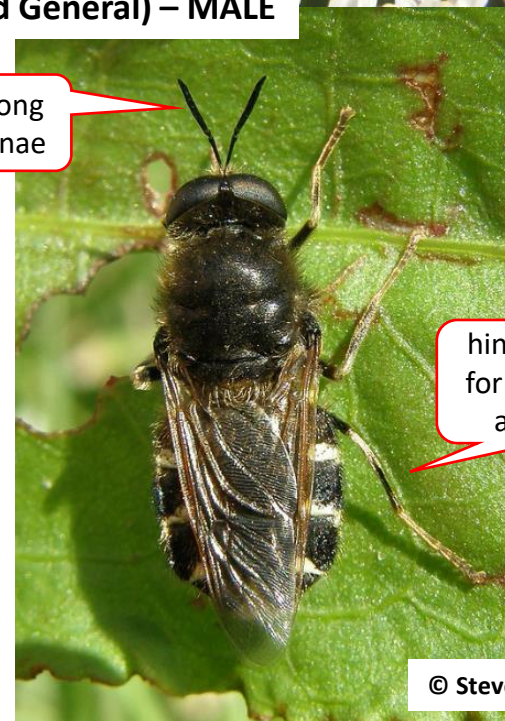
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via iRecord



scutellum
pale at tip

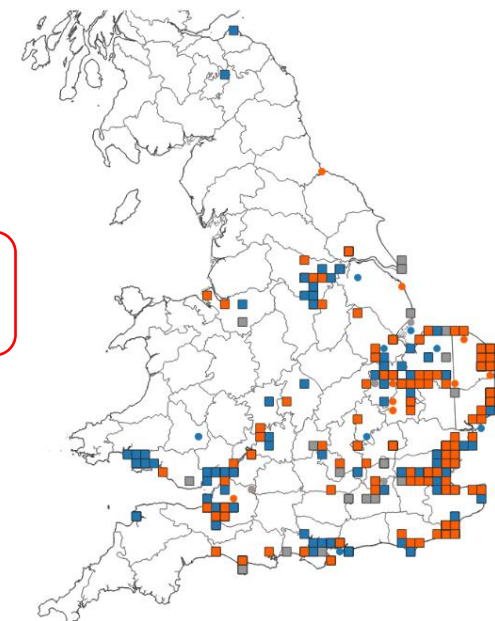
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very long
antennae



hind tibia dark
for at least the
apical half

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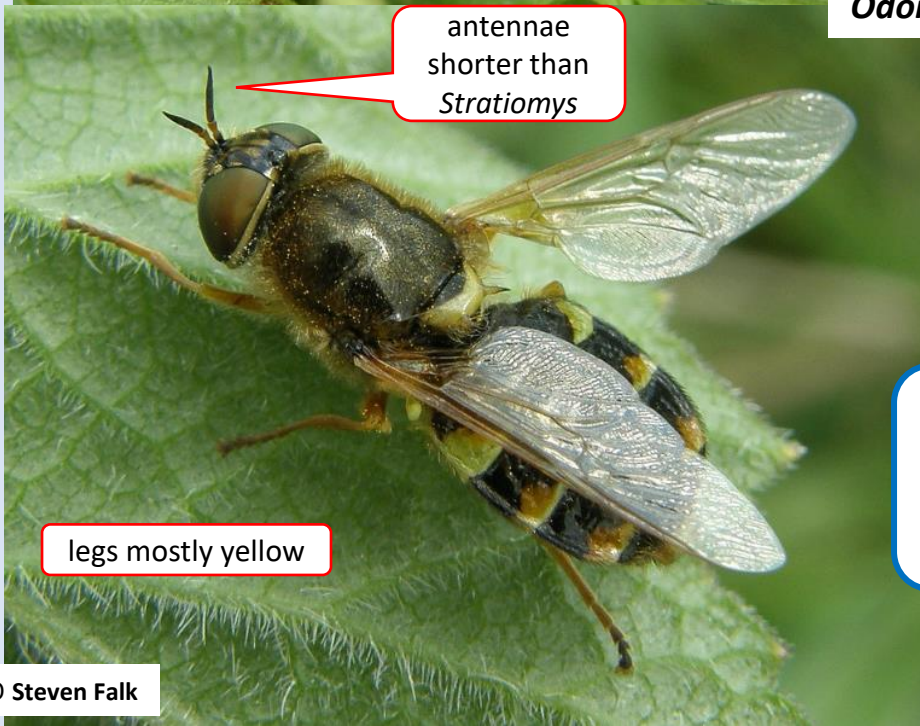
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angled pale spots at edges of abdomen (narrower than in the males)



***Odontomyia ornata* (Ornate Brigadier) – FEMALE**

antennae shorter than *Stratiomys*

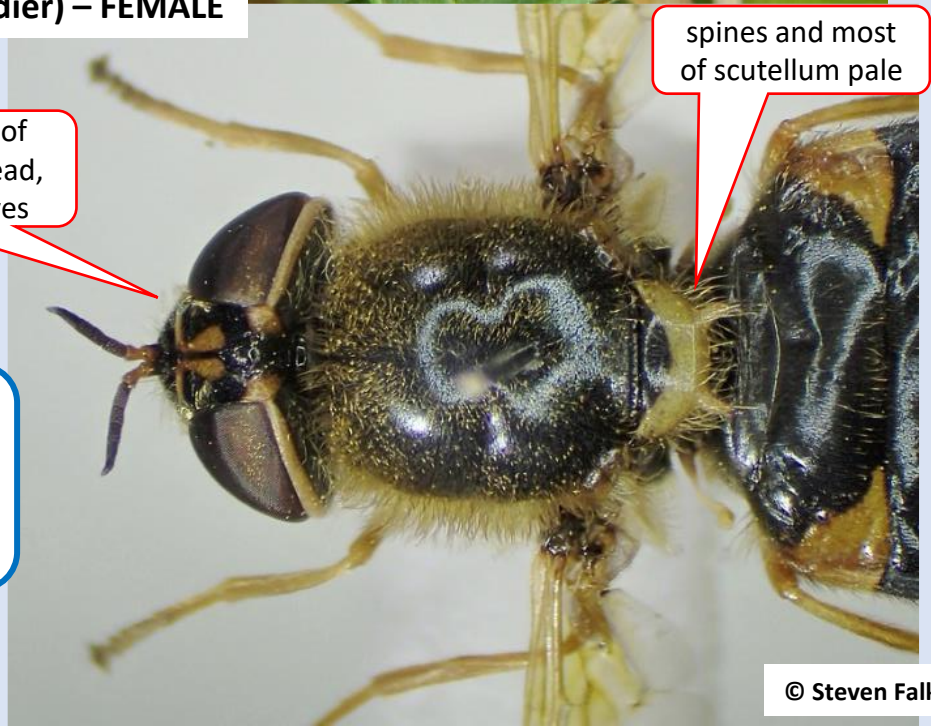


legs mostly yellow

distinctive pattern of pale markings on head, and pale behind eyes

This species is a similar size to genus *Stratiomys*, and has similar markings, so is included here for comparison (other species of *Odontomyia* are smaller).

spines and most of scutellum pale

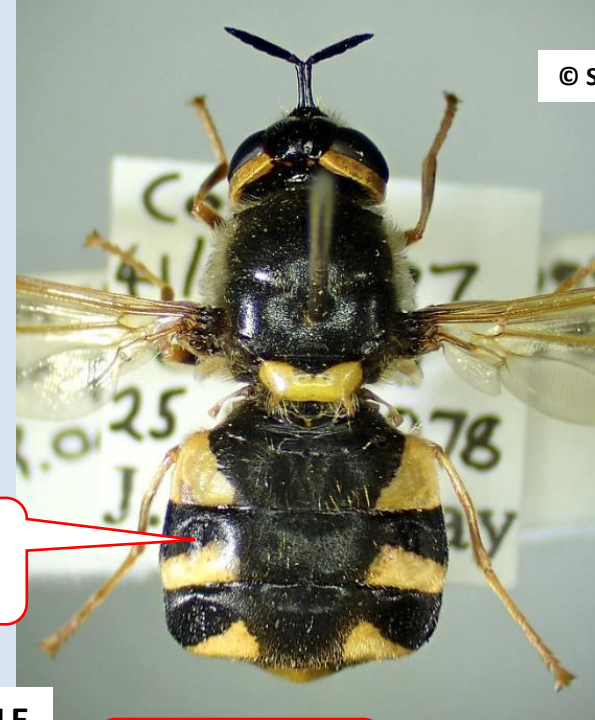


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yellow 'clubbed' spots
at side of abdomen,
blunt at inner ends

***Stratiomys chamaeleon* (Clubbed General) – FEMALE**



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via iRecord

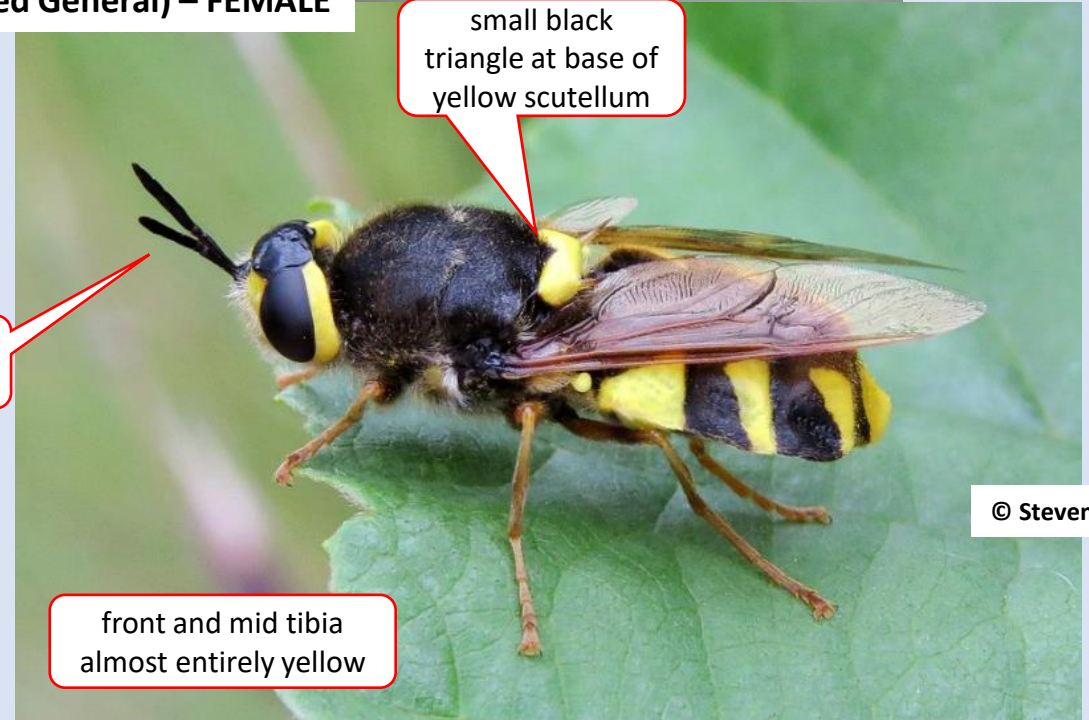
underside of
abdomen
mostly pale

small black
triangle at base of
yellow scutellum

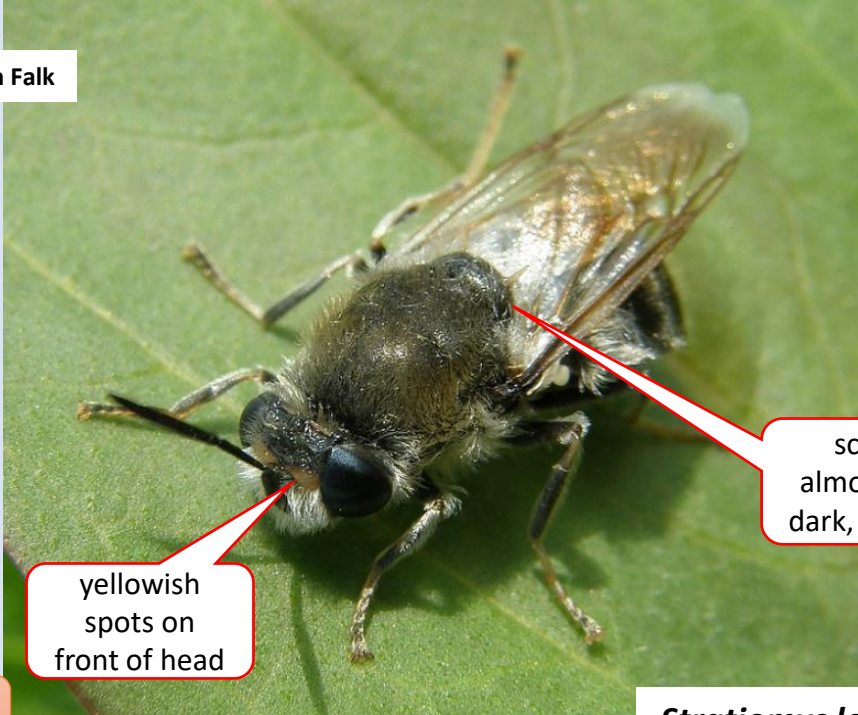
very long
antennae

front and mid tibia
almost entirely yellow

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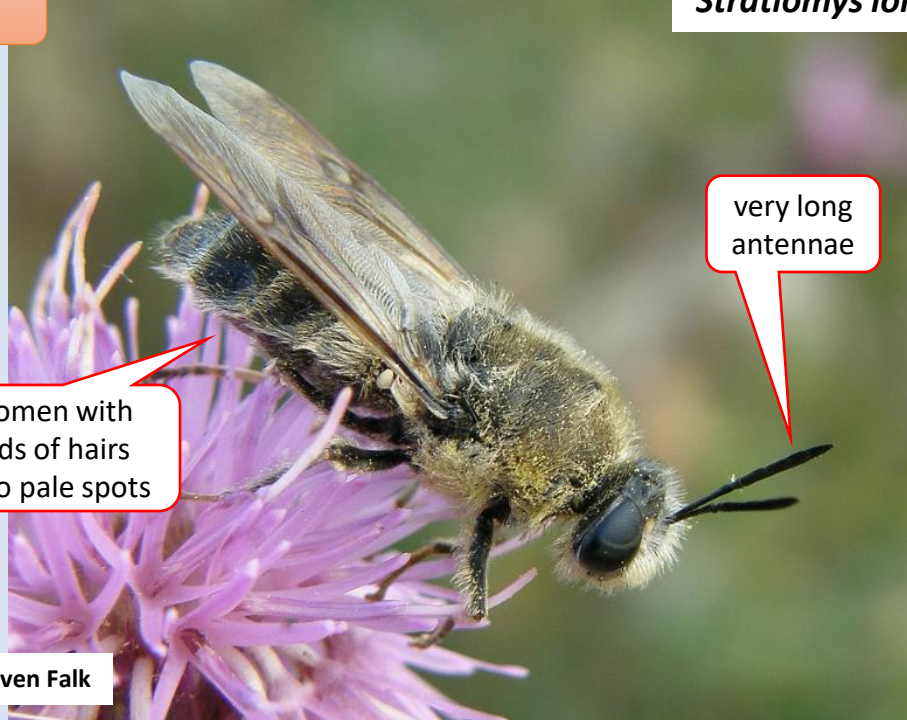
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***Stratiomys longicornis* (Long-horned Colonel) – FEMALE**

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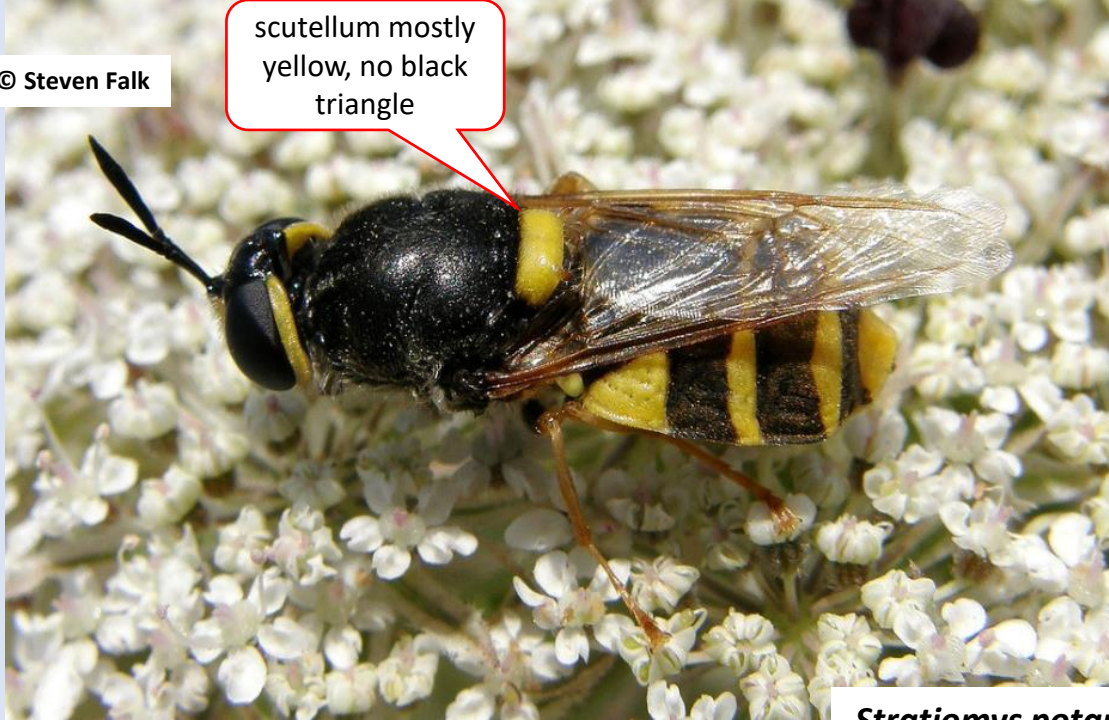
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scutellum mostly
yellow, no black
triangle



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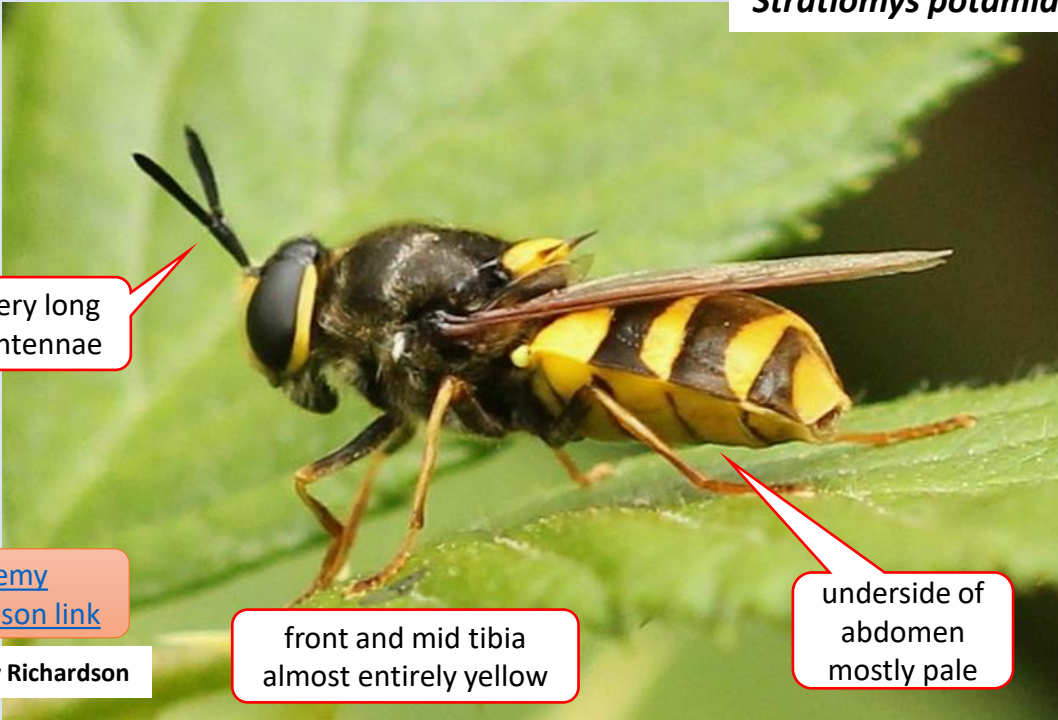
yellow bands at side of
abdomen, pointed or
meeting at inner ends

***Stratiomys potamida* (Banded General) – FEMALE**

very long
antennae

[Jeremy
Richardson link](#)

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front and mid tibia
almost entirely yellow

underside of
abdomen
mostly pale

[Ian Andrews
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very long
antennae

front and mid tibia
mainly black

small pale
bars at side
of abdomen

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face usually entirely
dark (can have two
yellow spots above
the antennae)

hind tibia dark
for at least the
apical half

***Stratiomys singularior* (Flecked General) – FEMALE**

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abdomen
mostly dark on
underside

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distinctive
pale mark at
back of head

distinctive
pale mark
on tergite 5

scutellum mostly yellow,
black area at front
forming shallow triangle

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