

# Sarcophagidae Recording Scheme update

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## Progress update

The Sarcophagidae Recording Scheme (SRS) started verifying Sarcophagidae records held by iRecord in spring 2020. In that first year Daniel Whitmore verified around 2,500 records. In November that year the scheme was formally launched at the Dipterists Forum annual meeting. Daniel continued to verify data received by iRecord and latterly Nigel Jones has been verifying incoming records, as Daniel has had to step back from this particular task. Daniel is still providing taxonomic expertise, particularly for identification queries made on the UK Fleshflies Facebook Group and for any difficult entries arising on iRecord.

At the end of 2025 there are 13,075 verified species records of all 61 UK species held on iRecord – a very gratifying increase in the dataset. An impressive number of these records came from Steven Falk (over 30% of the entire dataset). Much of this data was harvested from scans of Steven's 1979 – 2014 notebooks, with Nigel Jones working over a roughly 3 month period to digitise the data. We are aware that Steven's notebooks now contain another 11 or so years of data. The scheme hopes to harvest this next mega batch of Steven's data over the next few years, pending arrangements for scanning of these later notebooks.

## Some highlights from the data

*Blaesoxipha erythrura*: A rare UK species for which we hold just six post 2020 records, from four vice counties: Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey and West Kent made by Matt Harrow, J. Mellings, Ryan Mitchell and Richard Wilson. Thanks to the work of Ryan Mitchell, 35 historic records were harvested from the BENHS and UK museums collections. This included records from C.J. Wainright, C.D. Day, E. d'Assis Fonseca, J.E. Collin and Cyril Hammond in the period 1912 – 1960.

*Sarcophaga bulgarica*: be on the lookout for this species. Introduced to the British list by Daniel Whitmore (Whitmore *et al.* 2020a). The SRS now has 27 records from south east England north to near Wisbech South Lincolnshire (see Fig. 1). Steven Falk has also recorded it from Warwickshire but we

have not yet managed to grab the record details from Steven.

*S. bulgarica* is very similar to the common and widespread *S. haemorrhosa*, but males should be easy enough to distinguish using the guide available from the SRS web page on the Dipterists Forum website. Make sure that any *S. haemorrhosa* males you collect are closely inspected; they might well be *S. bulgarica*.

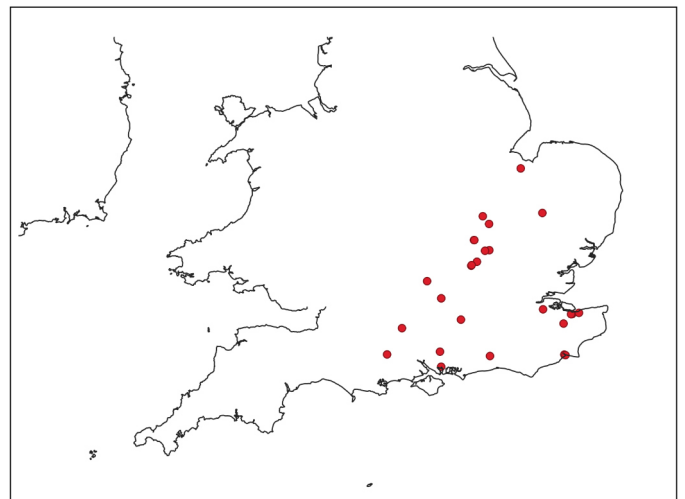


Figure 1. *Sarcophaga bulgarica* records at December 2025

*Sarcophaga villeneuvei*: The scheme held just ten records for this rarely encountered fly, but in 2025 Nigel Jones received a large sample of calypterate flies requiring identification. The samples came from riverside meadows south of Eynsham in Oxfordshire. They were collected in pan traps by Ivan Wright as part of a project to monitor biodiversity changes in a series of grasslands being managed for wildlife. So far 12 specimens have been found from pan traps laid out on site in June, July and September 2024. Pan traps frequently prove to be very useful for collecting Sarcophagidae and this example illustrates that nicely. So far seven sarcophagid species have been discovered in this particular pan trapping exercise.

## Most frequently and rarely recorded UK species

Twelve sarcophagid species are recorded much more frequently than any of the other UK species and can probably be regarded as the most abundant UK species. For the most part, bias introduced by photographic recording is not an issue in this list, as the vast majority of the ubiquitous species cannot be reliably determined from photographs. The one exception to this in the 12 species list is possibly *Nyctia halterata* (Fig. 2) which is frequently photographed, and with its dark wings and typical sarcophagid habitus it is readily identified, sometimes from even quite poor images.



Figure 2. *Nyctia halterata* male - Steven Falk

Fig. 3 gives an idea of the relative abundance of the “Big 12”. Unsurprisingly, the large and not easily overlooked trio in the *Sarcophaga carnaria* complex lead the pack with *S. carnaria* way out in front with 1,382 records.

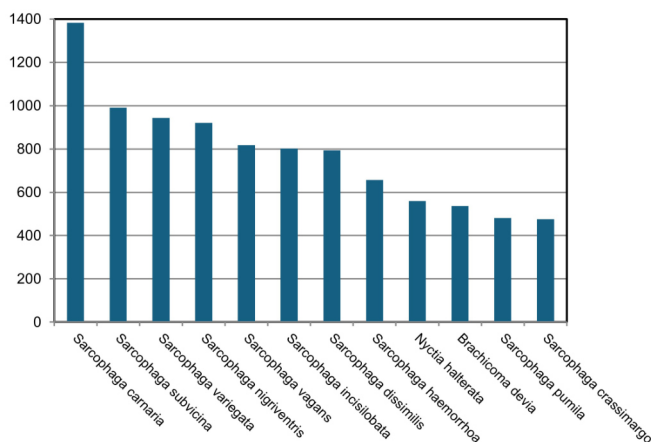


Figure 3. The most frequently recorded UK Sarcophagidae

There are 14 species for which we hold fewer than ten records. *Macronychia striginervis* may well be more frequent than indicated, but without checking historic voucher specimens to exclude *S. dolini* this cannot be easily ascertained. The

discovery of *Agria mamillata* during June 2024 in Perthshire indicates that this rare species is not confined to southerly parts of England (Falk, 2025). Recorders should be sure to closely inspect any webs of ermine moths they see on bird cherry anywhere in Britain. You never know, you may discover new locations for *A. mamillata*. Table 1 lists the 14 sarcophagid species with fewer than ten records.

Species	No.	Species	No.
<i>Macronychia griseola</i>	9	<i>Metopia tshernovae</i>	3
<i>Metopia grandii</i>	6	<i>Sarcophaga jacobsoni</i>	3
<i>Macronychia striginervis</i>	5	<i>Sarcophaga uliginosa</i>	3
<i>Blaesoxipha rossica</i>	5	<i>Angiometopa falleni</i>	2
<i>Agria mamillata</i>	5	<i>Macronychia agrestis</i>	2
<i>Pterella grisea</i>	4	<i>Agria affinis</i>	1
<i>Sarcophaga vicina</i>	3	<i>Taxigramma hilarella</i>	1

Table 1. Rare UK Sarcophagidae with fewer than ten records

## Resources

There are good resources to help anyone identify Sarcophagidae. Many species require inspection of the male genitalia to confirm the species, but dissection is rarely required; hinging out the genital capsule is usually an adequate preparation. A draft key (Whitmore *et al.* 2020b) is available for download (see reference below). This contains many colour photographs of critical features referred to in the key.

Steven Falk has built an extremely useful and content-rich resource within his Flickr photo pages. Most UK species have a dedicated photo album. Each album contains copious photographs, including the genital capsule of *Sarcophaga* species which can be enlarged to view the detailed structure of genitalia, making it easier to compare a specimen with the image.

Each species album includes a very helpful account giving habitat and distribution details, along with a description of each species with key characters given for separating closely similar species from each other. Available at: [flickr.com/photos/63075200@N07/collections/72157717896352376/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/63075200@N07/collections/72157717896352376/)

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## References

- Falk, S.J. 2025. *Agria mamillata* (Pandellé) (Diptera, Sarcophagidae) discovered in Scotland. *Dipterists Digest*. (Second Series) **33**, 111-113.
- Whitmore, D., Plummer, S. & Clemons, L. 2020a. First records of *Sarcophaga (Heteronychia) bulgarica* (Enderlein) (Diptera, Sarcophagidae) from Great Britain. *Dipterists Digest* (Second Series) **27**, 223-229.
- Whitmore D., Dupont S., & Falk S. 2020b. *Key to adult flesh flies (Diptera: Sarcophagidae) of the British Isles*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/vf5r6>