

Hoverfly Newsletter Number 72 Autumn 2022 ISSN 1358-5029



Copy for **Hoverfly Newsletter No. 73** (which is expected to be issued with the Spring 2023 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 20th November 2022. Given the size limitations it may be worthwhile to send your articles in good time to ensure that they are circulated with the bulletin, in which newsletters are now restricted to a maximum of eight pages. My thanks to all contributors, and also to Martin Matthews for his meticulous proof-reading of the text.

The hoverfly illustrated at the top right of this page is a female *Meligramma guttatum*.

SyrphBoard – a new, easy to use way to record hoverflies

Andy Murdock and Ioannis Sofos

January 2022 saw the launch of SyrphBoard, a new way to record British Hoverflies online. SyrphBoard was developed by Maploom Limited, a web mapping and data visualisation company, run by Andy Murdock (geospatial specialist and HRS volunteer) and Ioannis Sofos (software and data visualisation specialist) and was guided by HRS and UK Hoverflies Facebook Group members.

The aim was to address current challenges with hoverfly recording and create a system that can:

- Capture and store records online
- Capture nil returns (when no hoverflies are seen)
- Make regular recording easier through very visual data entry screens (icons and widgets)
- Capture other information (e.g. time of day, weather etc.)
- Make records available 'live' for HRS
- Provide self-service tools and real-time feedback to recorders
- Share and export data

Species can be entered very easily from lists such as 'HRS top 20' and 'My Recent 20' species seen. There are also text look ups for species and buttons

for entering the gender, date and observation method as well as validation to reduce errors.

The screenshot shows the SyrphBoard web interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Home' and 'Edit Session' buttons. Below this, there's a list of hoverfly species with their observation counts and details. The species listed are *Helophilus pendulus*, *Platycheirus albimanus*, and *Merodon equestris*. Each entry includes a count (e.g., 2 for *Helophilus pendulus*), a date (e.g., 2022), and a location (e.g., 'Around hoverfly lagoon and pond'). There are also buttons for 'Fill down', 'Comments', and 'Ovi-positing on aphid infested Globe artichoke leaves'. At the bottom, there's a search bar and a grid of species names for quick selection.

Fig 1

A common and time consuming issue with records is incorrect grid references. SyrphBoard allows users to save frequently visited sites and to click on the map to automatically return an accurate grid

reference and vice county. They can also search the map based on a grid reference entered.

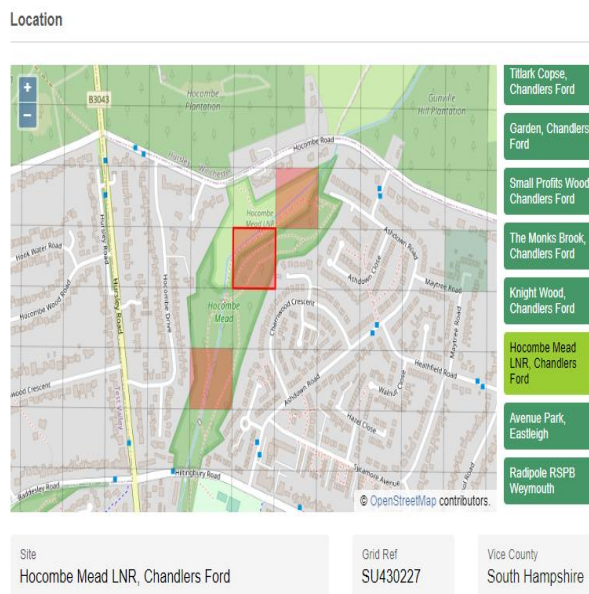


Fig 2. Location data entry: saved sites and grid reference finder

The weather, time of day and 'nil return' (no hoverflies seen) options can be used to support new analysis such as high frequency recording across different times of day (e.g. to explore the impacts of hot weather events).

Another key advantage of SyrphBoard is that the records are accessible securely online and HRS can gain access to the records quickly, rather than having to wait until the end of the year when recording spreadsheets are usually submitted.

We are very keen that recorders should have access to and gain benefit from the records they provide to the Scheme. At any point users can export their records as a spreadsheet for use elsewhere. SyrphBoard also has a basic dashboard allowing a summary of recorders' observations to be viewed, for records to be browsed and links out to the UK Hoverflies Facebook group where identifications have been checked. This functionality will be extended later this summer in Release 2 with updates likely to focus on greater visualisation and analysis capabilities for users, third party recording, easier use on mobile devices and greater support for early stages recording (larval rearing).

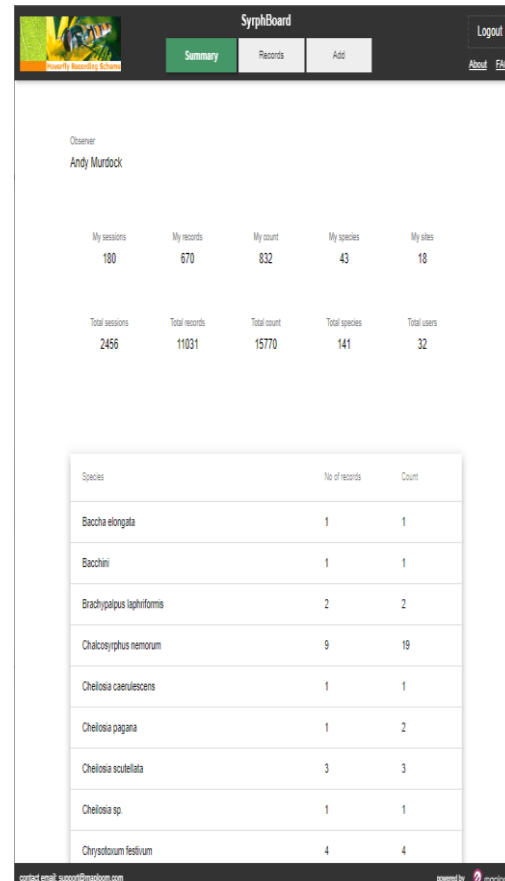


Fig 3

At the time of writing and since SyrphBoard launched in January, users have entered c.11,000 records of 141 hoverfly species from across Britain saving the HRS Administration team considerable time and effort. While SyrphBoard does not replace existing recording methods, it is hoped that more people will switch to and get greater value from submitting their records through it.

For more information about SyrphBoard you can watch a video here: <https://youtu.be/66Bul4qJfew>

To use the SyrphBoard, go to: <https://syrphboard.maploom.com> and login with your Facebook username and password.

For any queries, please get in touch at: support@maploom.com

HOVERFLY RECORDING SCHEME UPDATE: Autumn 2022

Stuart Ball, Roger Morris, Joan Childs, Ellie Rotheray and Geoff Wilkinson

This has been a busy year. As in 2020, the volume of data arriving for 2021 exceeded 100,000 records, which makes the job of checking and absorption into the database long and frustrating. A major factor in this process is the growing volume of data coming from iRecord and from iNaturalist, which add huge numbers of new names that have to be matched with the existing dataset. It is a slow and difficult job that is made worse by the numbers of people who use different screen names for different datasets.

This job was completed in late winter but a small number of datasets remain to be incorporated, so the final figure will doubtless be a lot more than exists at the moment. Also, there is a growing backlog on iRecord as new data are uploaded and verified. Further complications arise because there are people who are placing archive data onto iRecord that have already been submitted to the HRS many years ago. Some of this upload will be duplication that can be resolved computationally, but there can also be problems with nomenclature caused by splits such as those in *Cheilosia albitarsis*, *Platycheirus scutatus* and *P. peltatus*. This process of backlog uplift is also causing additional problems because people forget that the verification process is particularly demanding during the summer months. So, for verifiers who have scheduled enough time to keep on top of the daily average of about 200 records, the addition of a further 400+ records can cause apoplexy! These data cannot simply be 'accepted' by a global rule – they have to be checked for possible problems with species splits.

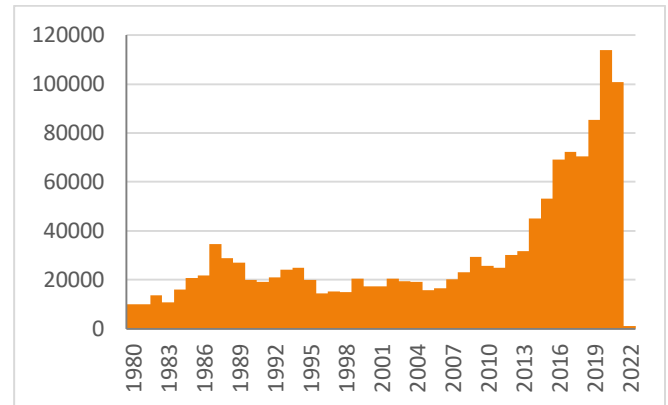


Fig. 1. Numbers of 'unique' records on the HRS dataset to 12 April 2022.

News from the Facebook group

Last winter, we started to develop a programme of on-line talks for Facebook group members. These talks have covered a range of subjects pertinent to the growing interests of the group, and will be expanded to draw in a wider range of speakers as time passes. The talks are advertised on the UK Hoverflies FB group, so if you are interested in listening in, it is worth joining the group.

There have been further important advances, such as the development of an online platform 'SyrphBoard' that has been designed to help record at a much more refined level. One of the projects the HRS has always wanted to do is to encourage detailed daily recording (including nil results) throughout the day. SyrphBoard makes this possible. What we now need is somebody who might take an interest in co-ordinating efforts to do such recording so that we can investigate, for example, the way hoverflies behave in exceptionally hot weather.

Recent snippets

Recorders using the Facebook page sometimes report observations that in themselves may not appear to be of great significance but when combined with other data could be important pointers to aspects of hoverfly ecology and distribution. It is difficult to know how to capture such information so the following notes have been included here:

Paragus (probably haemorrhous) - Simon Knott

'Fascinating watching *Paragus* behaviour on bramble today (15/06/2022) in Bengeo garden (TL319134). Early morning females start ovipositing on buds. Later, when it's hotter, males patrol; if he finds a female, he abducts her & mating occurs elsewhere.' UK Hoverflies (15 June 2022)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/609272232450940/posts/5451075891603859/>

Hoverflies out at sea – Craig Hannah

'Good to see the first influx of hoverflies offshore this year on an oil rig, 140 miles from Scotland and 170 miles from Norway, so more or less the middle of the North Sea. *Syrphus* sp, today I've probably counted 200 so far. (UK Hoverflies, 24 June 2022).

'Another mass migration of hoverflies offshore today, 3, possibly 4 species counted on the oil rig I work on, which is 140 miles from Scotland and 170 miles from Norway, so more or less the middle of the North Sea. Thousands of them, I think *Syrphus* sp, *Episyrphus balteatus* about 49% of each of them. Also think there was *Eupeodes* sp. plus another type (*Scaeva pyrastris*). Photos are poor as just the works camera.' (UK Hoverflies, 30 June 2022).

Location is 58°02'51.8"N 1°08'11.6"E or Block 16/26.'

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/609272232450940/posts/5475575335820581/>

Hoverflies also at sea – Lenny Simpson

Lenny works on Brent Charlie Oil Platform, 120 Miles NE of Shetland 60°54'N 1°48'E and provided a running commentary on hoverfly numbers over the course of a mass movement over the same period of late June/early July. His comments were as follows:

'A few *Syrphus*, *Eupeodes* and *Episyrphus balteatus* going about this morning'. (UK Hoverflies, 30 June 2022).

'Lots of *Syrphus*, *Episyrphus balteatus* a few *Eupeodes* and a handful of *Scaeva pyrastris* this morning'. (UK Hoverflies, 01 July 2022)

'A Few *Syrphus* and *Eupeodes* today plus a couple of *Episyrphus balteatus*, a lot windier today'. (UK Hoverflies, 02 July 2022).

Of those animals photographed, the *Syrphus* females seemed either to be *S. vitripennis* or *S. torvus* (usually not possible to be definitive from photos) and the *Eupeodes* were *corollae*.

Eriozonea syrphoides larva near Great Yarmouth

- Neil Winston Symonds

A larva of this species was video-recorded in association with the giant willow aphid *Tuberolachnus salignus*. UK Hoverflies (25 June 2022)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/609272232450940/posts/5480913261953455/>

Hoverfly conference 2022

Stuart & Roger will be attending the forthcoming Symposium at Barcelonnette in September and have offered four talks covering:

- Plenary presentation: update on progress with the GB HRS.
- Range shift in *Leucozona glauca* in Great Britain.
- Changes in the phenology of British hoverflies.
- A model to explain possible climate change impacts on hoverfly populations.

At the time of writing this Newsletter we don't know what has been accepted.

Hoverfly Lagoons and Pseudo Rot Holes

Boyd Barr

I was very interested to read the report in the Hoverfly Newsletter, (Bulletin Dipt. Forum No93 Spring 2022) from Ellen Rotheray regarding Hoverfly lagoons etc.

I have been meaning to emulate these pseudo rot holes for some time.

The use of a chainsaw to cut into existing tree stumps is beyond my ability so I intend to use green glass wine bottles which are cut to remove the top neck section.

I also wanted a system by which I could quickly substitute or exchange these glass cylinders effectively. The reasoning for this being that it would be easy to record the presence of larvae in the chambers on a weekly / monthly basis. Providing an easy method to record dates as to when eggs / larvae appear. The procedure is simple; a wooden dowel is screwed to the tree trunk through two spring clips with stainless steel screws, at various heights. This would also provide

data for any preferences or selection by egg laying females as well as species. (As described by Ellen, it is also important to 'standardise' the size of these chambers for experimental replication).

Two further spring clips are attached to the glass cylinder via cable ties. The glass bottle / cylinder is then simply clipped to the dowel with a further cable tie securing it. This extra tie is simply snipped off to unclip the cylinder and attaching its replacement.

Exchanging these vessels is quick and simple and by changing them frequently and storing them in racks netted at the top, will provide accurate data.

I intend to place a few of these in some local woodlands which are quite ancient; they appear on maps over two centuries ago.

The biggest problem is the wine bottles require emptying of wine before modification. I seldom volunteer for anything, but in the interest of science I immediately put one step forward and offered my services!

Hope to be able to report some positive results from these trials a.s.a.p.



Photos: Boyd Barr

Oviposition in *Chrysotoxum cautum*

Roger Morris

Stuart and I visited Stonepits Quarry and Old Sulehay Forest after we had finished work on the abstracts for our presentations at the Symposium in September. At one point we watched a female *Chrysotoxum cautum* ovipositing on the underside of *Brachypodium pinnatum* leaves - just a single egg on each leaf. Amazingly, the egg was visible even to my eyes! This seems to have been very deliberate placement of an egg.

A note placed on the UK Hoverflies Facebook group elicited a comment from Vic Brown who records in the Gamlingay area: 'I watched this one ovipositing on Giant Redwood (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) in my garden (9/5/2020). Single eggs, one visible in the photo. Note. My Redwood isn't a giant, it is only about 1.5 m tall. Container grown from seed, brought back from Sequoia National Park, when the kids were small, 19 years ago.' <https://www.facebook.com/groups/609272232450940/posts/5445575438820571/>



Chrysotoxum cautum female (photo: David Iliff)

Rhingia -a life on the edge

Judith Hibble (via Roger Morris)

This post by Judith Hibble in the UK Hoverflies Facebook group provided a rare insight into the threats faced by ovipositing *Rhingia campestris*:

'Looking for dung beetles - I spotted a fly with a large red abdomen buzzing around the cow-pats - realised it had a long rostrum and must be a

Rhingia. Occasionally landed on a blade of grass near a pat. Realised she was laying eggs on the pat. However, along with *Sphaeridium* beetles, another common inhabitant is a beetle – *Ontholestes (murinus)*. Saw a commotion on another cow-pat - 2 *Ontholestes* has caught a *Rhingia*.’



Rhingia campestris female on blade of grass overhanging a very fresh cow pat (note the egg floating in the pool just above the fly)



Ontholestes murinus (a rove beetle, Staphylinidae) – an active predator on cow pats.



Two *O. murinus* subduing a female *Rhingia campestris*.

(photos: Judith Hibble)

Eristalis arbustorum and pseudoscorpion

Andrew Cunningham

During a visit to the ornamental gardens at Killerton (Tiverton, Devon) on the 23rd March 2022, I potted up a female *Eristalis arbustorum* for further examination. Surprisingly, there were two pseudoscorpions attached to hind leg of the *Eristalis*. These were identified as *Lamprochernes chyzeri*. Further information on *L. chyzeri* can be seen

on https://www.chelifer.com/?page_id=194



Lamprochernes chyzeri
(photo: Andrew Cunningham)

Is it time to use AI to verify iRecord and iNaturalist data?

Roger Morris

The volume of records posted on iRecord has steadily grown and is now at a level where it is necessary for me to spend about an hour a day on verification during the summer months (longer when the egg timer refuses to clear). I dread to think what moth recorders have to deal with! So, we face a dilemma: check all posts manually or introduce some automated processes.

Having spent a lot of time assessing the sorts of identification problems presented on iRecord I do not think there should be automatic acceptance of any species based on photographs. Some remarkably common mistakes happen, such as listing a species as *Syrphus ribesii* when it is in fact a *Eupeodes*; or listing *Eupeodes latifasciatus* (or *Epistrophe diaphana*) when in fact it is a *Syrphus*. Much less rigour is possible in the case of records not supported by a photograph, so it must be accepted that at least a few will be wrong. The only realistic solutions for those records are: only accept records from recorders whose abilities are known; or accept data for very widespread and relatively easily identified species. I tend to favour the latter, as we must not lose sight of the need to encourage newcomers and it can never be known when the next really competent specialist will emerge.

In the case of AI, I think we need to tread carefully, although I am told existing systems in The Netherlands are showing great promise. To me, the critical issue is to bring down to manageable levels iRecord verification using experienced specialists. If that does not happen it can only be a matter of time before the pool of verifiers dwindles to a puddle. In some taxa that already exists, so there is a separate issue of determining how at least some records might be dealt with in bulk so that the verification process focuses on genuinely complicated taxa. Understanding the challenges faced by non-specialists is the key.

The problem of identification skills is central to my having much time in recent years getting to grips with the issues surrounding photographic identification. This medium is not going to go away, even though reviewers of papers may regard the subject to be ‘of little scientific interest’ (as one journal said on rejecting my analysis). To my mind, far from being of little scientific interest, there is a massive necessity to undertake detailed analyses across all taxa so that the quality of the data being accessed and used in numerous high impact papers is properly understood.

Using the most recent batch of iRecord and iNaturalist data downloaded to the HRS by Martin Harvey at CEH, I think it can be seen how much of the verification job could potentially be automated by AI. In those datasets there were 19,914 photographic records comprising 199 species in iRecord and 16,174 photographic records

comprising 132 species in iNaturalist. Those figures are far from even, however, as the data are heavily biased towards big, brightly coloured and obvious species, dominated by Eristalines, some Syrphini and all the Volucellini. Consequently, the top 30 species in both datasets are very similar (see below:

Species	% Photo (iRec)	ranking (iRec)	% Photo (iNat)	Ranking (iNat)
<i>Cheilosia illustrata</i>			1.21182	25
<i>Cheilosia pagana</i>			0.21021	30
<i>Chrysotoxum bicinctum</i>	0.9716057	25		
<i>Chrysotoxum festivum</i>			0.27822	18
<i>Dasysyrphus albostratus</i>	1.4322808	20	0.72338	26
<i>Epistrophe eligans</i>			1.3973	20
<i>Epistrophe grossulariae</i>	0.9716057	26	0.55027	27
<i>Episyrphus balteatus</i>	6.7844878	3	14.9314	1
<i>Eristalis arbustorum</i>	2.9483206	9	1.24274	11
<i>Eristalis intricarius</i>	1.507664	19		
<i>Eristalis nemorum</i>	1.8678281	16	1.05107	21
<i>Eristalis pertinax</i>	4.9585392	5	10.8384	2
<i>Eristalis tenax</i>	9.3223888	1	9.57092	3
<i>Eupeodes corollae</i>			2.5102	24
<i>Eupeodes latifasciatus</i>	1.3066421	22		
<i>Eupeodes luniger</i>	1.1139961	23		
<i>Helophilus pendulus</i>	6.9687579	2	9.37307	7
<i>Helophilus trivittatus</i>	0.8962225	29	0.84704	22
<i>Leucozona lucorum</i>			0.64919	17
<i>Melanostoma mellinum</i>	1.6165508	18		
<i>Melanostoma scalare</i>	1.8845799	15	1.87956	6
<i>Meliscaeva auricollis</i>	0.9213502	28	0.92741	13
<i>Meliscaeva cinctella</i>	1.030237	24	0.50699	28
<i>Myathropa florea</i>	5.2265684	4	5.49648	5
<i>Parasyrphus punctulatus</i>			0.08038	14
<i>Platycheirus albimanus</i>	2.1777368	14	0.80376	12
<i>Platycheirus scutatus</i> sl.	0.9464779	27		
<i>Rhingia campestris</i>	1.4239049	21		
<i>Scaeva pyrastris</i>	0.8878466	30	2.08977	19
<i>Sericomyia silentis</i>	2.2363682	13		
<i>Sphaerophoria scripta</i>	2.3620069	12	1.9723	4
<i>Syrpita pipiens</i>	4.5816233	6	2.68332	15
<i>Syrphus ribesii</i>	1.8175727	17	0.21021	23
<i>Volucella inanis</i>	2.5211492	10	1.34784	10
<i>Volucella pellucens</i>	3.4424994	8	4.21664	9
<i>Volucella zonaria</i>	4.1125722	7	4.79164	8
<i>Xanthogramma pedissequum</i> sl.			0.36478	29
<i>Xylota segnis</i>	2.445766	11	1.26747	16
Total % of dataset	80.68515		84.0237	

Fig. 1. The 30 most frequently reported species in iRecord and iNaturalist data downloaded to the HRS in February 2022, represented as percentage of each dataset and ranking within those datasets.

This list seems to me to offer a starting point of what might be tackled by AI. Not all species will be suited to such an approach. For example, *Melanostoma* are potentially much more complicated and in need of detailed attention. Similarly, *Syrphus ribesii* records are only of

females and most *S. torvus* records are males, so we cannot assume that these species will be as readily separated by AI as might be desired. Nevertheless, it is a starting point that might help to make iRecord more manageable and that might also help to ensure that the people who contribute see their records verified quickly. This latter point is important because feedback I receive is that recorders find even a positive confirmation of a record useful feedback on their ID skills.

An apology for a mistaken identification

Martin Matthews

Some readers will have realised that the ‘encounter with *Sericomyia superbiens*’ reported in Hoverfly Newsletter 71 (Spring 2022) was in fact an encounter with a quite different fly, a male *Gasterophilus intestinalis* (Horse Bot Fly; family Oestridae), a parasite of horses, mules and donkeys. The error was spotted very quickly by André van Eck in The Netherlands and Andrew Grayson in the U.K. Apparently my account reminded Andrew of John Ray’s description of a similar hilltop encounter in 1660 when he found the Horse Bot to be ‘a very aggressive nuisance’. My puzzlement at the behaviour of the fly and the habitat in which I encountered it is, of course, fully explained by the corrected identification. Other hoverfly recorders might wish to bear in mind the confusion that *G. intestinalis* may cause them, particularly if it is a species with which they are not familiar.



Lejops vittatus male, Horsey Mere
17 June 1998 (photo: David Iliff)



Dasysyrphus albostriatus male, Northway
14th April 2022 (photo: Martin Matthews)



Pipiza noctiluca female, Cowfield Marsh
19 May 2022 (photo: Martin Matthews)



Brachyopa scutellaris male, Arle Grove
19 May 2010 (photo: David Iliff)



Cranefly News

Dipterists Forum Cranefly Recording Scheme

For Superfamily Tipuloidea & Families Ptychopteridae & Trichoceridae

Newsletter No 39

Autumn 2022

Editor: John Kramer



Geranomyia unicolor Photo: Paul Whitehead

Jersey Craneflies – Alan Stubbs

Introduction

In the period 1985 to 2002, Tony (A.G.) Warne made a series of visits to Jersey, the largest of the Channel Islands. His main interest was Coleoptera but he offered to obtain samples of crane flies for me to identify. Data from 14 sites was obtained, mainly for the 1990s.

The Channel Islands are British Crown Dependencies, often regarded as part of the British Isles but geographically very close to the continental mainland. Some recording schemes regard the British List and data sweep as including the Channel Islands. From inception, the Cranefly Recording Scheme has excluded these Islands. None the less, it is of interest to gain insight of the Channel Islands fauna.

The visits by Tony Warne were most frequent in late June, with none earlier in the season. Hence the spring fauna was missed entirely. There are very few records for July. Fortunately there is some other data for early autumn. Of note is the September emergence of *Tipula paludosa* in 1991 (that would have been very exceptional in Britain 30 years ago but is now common in southern Britain); on Jersey, most of the autumnal species would be expected to emerge later into October (as is now the case in Britain). This review has been prompted by Piotr Oosterbroek in an effort to record knowledge of the crane fly fauna of this part of Europe, there being nothing published. He obtained a list of my identifications of Warne's samples with many the names of species in outdated nomenclature. He also obtained a list of species in the Société Jersiaise Collection but the complete data, including identifier, is not currently available. I thank Piotr for his copy of data long out of my mind and his pursuit of the collection.

In the list of species below the two sources are combined and current nomenclature is used. Hopefully this will be an incentive for others to improve knowledge about the fauna of these Islands.

Warne localities

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Egypte (Fungus Farm) | 7 c. Les Landes, cliffs (south, centre). |
| 2. Fern Valley | 7 h. Les Landes, heath (south). |
| 3. Grouville Marsh | 8. Lower St. Lawrence Valley (Waterworks Valley). |
| m. meadows | 9 Noirmont. |
| wc willow carr | 10. Ouaisne Common |
| 4. La Landes du Oust | 11. St. Catherines Valley. |
| 5. La Miellede Morville | 12. St. Ouens Pond |
| 6. Le Canne du Squez, Les Landes. | 13. The Elms, Les Pres. |
| 7. Les Landes. | 14. Trinity Valley. |

SPECIES LIST.

NB. Species with specimen(s) in the Société Jersiaise Collection (SJC), Museum drawers Q1 and Q2, are indicated with an asterisk * and the number of specimen(s) indicated as (SJC: 1-4). Species on this list but without specimen are given as (SJC: 0). The determiners are as yet unknown.

*** Indicates specimens in the collection which need the identification checking.

Species without an asterisk were collected by Tony Warne and identified by me (AES). Their habitat is indicated by a number.

TIPULIDAE (12 species)

*Dolichopeza albipes**. (SJC 1)

Nephrotoma flavipalpis (SJC: 0). 5 (15.IX.1986); 14 (29.VI.1993).

Nephrotoma guestfalica (SJC: 0). 5 (29.VI.1985, 29.VI.1993, 26.VI.1999).

*Nephrotoma submaculosa** (SJC: 4).

*Tipula cava** (SJC: 1). 4 (VI.1986); 6 (28.VI.1993); 7 (VI.1986, 14.VI.1986); 7 c (28.VI.1993); 7 h (28.VI.1993); 9 (VI.1986); 10 (24.VI.1998).

Tipula fascipennis 10 (27.VI.1991).

Tipula fulvipennis (SJC: 0).

Tipula lateralis 3 (02.X.1991); 3 m (30.VI.1993); 14 (09.VII.1990, 28.VI.1991).

Tipula luteipennis (SJC: 0). 7 (14.VI.1986, questionable because June is too early in the season, IX.1986); 10 (01.X.1991).

Tipula maxima (SJC: 0). 2 (22.VI.1992); 6 (27.VI.1993).

*Tipula oleracea** (SJC: 1). 3 m (30.VI.1993); 5 (16.X.1993, 26.VI.1999, 30.VI.1999); 8 (27.VI.1993); 12 (25.VI.1993, 26.VI.1993); 14 (09.VII.1990).

Tipula paludosa (SJC: 0). 1 (25.IX.2001, 09.X. 2002); 2 (04.X. 1991); 3 (02.X.1991); 8 (15.X.1993); 10 (10.X.1991); 13 (07.X.2001, 29.IX.2002); 14 (03.X.1991).

Tipula pierre 3 m (30.VI.1993); 12 (25.VI.1993, 26.VI.1993).

Tipula rufina (SJC: 0).

PEDICIIDAE (3 species)

Pedicia claripennis 2 (12.VII.1990).

Tricyphona immaculata (SJC: 0). 4 (VI.1986); 6 (28.VI.1993); 7 (VI.1986); (14.VI.1986).

Pedicia rivos (SJC: 0). 6 (28.VI.1993); 14 (20.IX.1988).

LIMONIIDAE (30 species)

Achyrolimonia decemmaculata 3 (03.X.1997).

*Austrolimnophila ochracea** (SJC: 1). 11 (30.VI.1993).

*Dicranomyia chorea** (SJC: 1). 3 wc (03.VI.1993); 8 (27.VI.1993);

Dicranomyia modesta 2 (04.X.1991); 3 wc (03.VI.1993); 8 (27.VI.1993).

Eloeophila maculata 3 (03.X.1997).

*Erioconopa diuturna**** (SJC: 1). Possibly *E. trivialis* with an open discal cell, a much commoner species not in the collection.

Erioconopa trivialis 3 m (30.VI.1993); 14 (26.VI.1991, 26.VI.1992).

Erioptera fuscipennis 3 m (30.VI.1993); 14 (26.VI.1991, 26.VI.1992).

Erioptera fusculent 3 m (30.VI.1993);

Erioptera lutea 14 (26.VI.1992).

Euphyllidorea aperta 2 (22.VI.1992).

Euphyllidorea lineola 2 (04.X.1991).

Helius pallirostris 3 (03.X.1997); 14 (26.VI.1991).

Ilisia maculata 14 (26.VI.1992).

*Limonia dilutior** (SJC: 1).

Limonia macrostigma 2 (04.X.1991); 3 (03.X.1997); 14 (26.VI.1991).

*Limonia nubeculosa** (SJC: 4). 5 (26.VI.1999); 11 (30.VI.1993).

Molophilus appendiculatus 2 (12.VII.1990); 3 wc (30.VI.1993).

*Molophilus czizeki**** (SJC: 0). Questionable, not known from France.

Molophilus griseus (SJC: 0). 3 (03.X.1997); 10 (11.X.1998).

Molophilus obscurus (SJC: 0). 7 (VI.1986, 14.VI.1986); 14 (03.X.1991).

Paradelphomyia senilis 8 (27.VI.1993).

Phyllidorea ferruginea (SJC: 0). 3 (03.X.1997); 3 m (30.VI.1993); 9 (VI.1986); 14 (29.VI.1993).

Phyllidorea fulvonervosa 8 (27.VI.1993).

Pilaria discicollis 3 (03.X.1997); 8 (27.VI.1993); 14 (26.VI.1991, 29.VI.1993).

Pilaria fuscipennis 2 (12.VII.1990); 11 (30.VI.1993).

Pseudolimnophila lucorum 14 (29.VI.1993).

Pseudolimnophila sepium 14 (29.VI.1993).

*Rhipidia maculata** (SJC: 1). 5 (15.IX.1986, 26.VI.1999).

Symplecta hybrida 3 m (30.VI.1993); 8 (27.VI.1993); 12 (25.VI.1993, 26.VI.1993).

*Symplecta stictica** (SJC: 2). 3 wc (30.VI.1993).

PTYCHOPTERIDAE

*Ptychoptera albimana** (SJC 1)

TRICHO CERIDAE (1 species)

*Trichocera annulata**.(SJC 4)

Alan Stubbs

Leicestershire Entomological Society Occasional Publications - VC55 Craneflies

The Leicestershire & Rutland Entomological Society is producing a series of Status Reviews of the Diptera of VC55 up to 2020 to act as a baseline for future recording effort.

These are available at: www.naturespot.org.uk/content/leicestershire-rutland-entomological-society

Amongst the reviews done to date are the species comprising the Tipuloidea (Craneflies) with 184 being found in the two counties (see table).

Family	Review Number	Date of issue	Author(s)	No VC55 species
Cylindrotomidae	40	Aug 2021	RM	2
Pediciidae	41	Oct 2021	JK & RM	8
Tipulidae	43	Oct 2021	JK & RM	48
Limoniidae: Chioneinae	46	Jan2022	JK & RM	52
Limoniidae: Limnophilinae & Limoniinae	51	Jul 2022	JK & RM	74

Much of the work in recording this group of flies was carried out by JK with RM collating the VC55 data, checking available databases etc for other records, removing duplicates and producing the draft texts and maps (MapMate©).

John Kramer & Ray Morris

***Atypophthalmus umbratus* (de Meijere 1911)**

This species is noted in British Craneflies as captured in 1987 by Alan Stubbs and seems like a new addition to the British List (British Craneflies p350) but it was not included in Peter Chandler's RES Checklist of British Diptera published in 1998, or anywhere else, as far as I know, so it has come 'out of the blue'. Specimens were discovered in a hot house in Kew Gardens in and they are reported as last seen in 2002. It is one to look out for at Kew, and other similar hot houses where plants from hot tropical regions are grown. The Dome at the Eden Project, Cornwall, might be another site to search. It is recorded as pantropical in the Palaearctic Catalogue. The type locality is given as Djakarta, Indonesia, and it has been recorded in Asia and Israel. If anyone has any information, or any British specimens, there is a paper waiting to be written !!

***Geranomyia unicolor* from the Channel Island of Alderney with notes on habitat and associations**

Paul Whitehead & Pjotr Oosterbroek

Geranomyia unicolor Haliday, 1833, is a west European species, distributed in Great Britain, Ireland, France, Spain, Portugal,



Madeira, the Canary Islands and the Azores (Oosterbroek, 2022). Throughout its range it is found along coastal cliffs and rocky shores (Coe, Freeman & Mattingly (1950); Oosterbroek (2022); Stubbs (2021)). The single inland record known to us is from the south of the French department of Mayenne, some 100 km inland (Quindroit, 2020); all other French records are coastal and limited to four departments in the northwest of the country [Pas-de-Calais (62) (Poisson 1932), Ile-et-Villaine (35) (Poisson 1932), Finistère (29) (Prenant 1925, Pierre 1926, collected in May 2022 by Jean-Yves Gloaguen), Morbihan (56) (MNHN, 1912)]. (Clovis Quindroit, pers. comm.). This coastal record comes from Hannaine Point, Clonque Bay at 49°71'N 02°22'W, on the Channel Island of Alderney. On 8 June 2022 a pair was observed *in copula* (Fig. 1) immediately beneath a Pleistocene raised beach cliff section in open exposure (Fig.2). As far as we know this is the only record of a cranefly from Alderney. Information for the other Channel Islands is limited to Jersey and is presented in this issue of Cranefly News.

Fig. 1. *Geranomyia unicolor* Haliday, 1833, *in cop.*

©photo: Paul Whitehead



Fig. 2. Hannaine Point, Clonque Bay, Alderney, Channel Islands, 8 June 2022. Position of *Geranomyia unicolor* Haliday, 1833 (arrowed), *in cop.* at base of raised beach. ©photo: Paul Whitehead.

Figure 2 depicts the boulder beach fronting the cliff. The boulders result from multiple cycles of derivation, most recently from the raised beach, its wave-cut platform here marked by flowering Wild Carrot *Daucus carota* L. The cliff marks what remains of a larger probably last interglacial raised beach that linked Hannaine Point to Fort Clonque Island as recently as c6000BP (James, 1997). Its upper levels mark storm surges and reworked solifluction, the section capped by post-glacial solifluction and human activity features. It is likely therefore that *G. unicolor* has an extended history on Alderney.

Stubbs (2021) provided evidence of the larval pabulum of *G. unicolor*: lichens and algae (seaweeds) around the upper splash zone, visible here in Fig. 2. The herbaceous vegetation at the foot of the cliff is a mixture of species down-slumped from above bringing with it various *Otiorhynchus* weevils and the coccinellid *Subcoccinella vigintiquattuorpunktata* (L., 1758). Littoral species such as Sea Beet *Beta vulgaris* ssp. *maritima* (L.) Arcang. proved attractive to the syrphid *Eristalinus aeneus* (Scopoli, 1763) for courtship purposes and the carabid beetle *Ocys harpaloides* (Audinet-Serville, 1821), its nomenclature recently confirmed, is new to the archipelago. Although also a littoral species there are one or two inland records in Britain associated with ancient landscape features. The chrysomelid *Apteropoda orbiculata* (Marsham, 1802) is here probably new to Alderney.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank John Kramer for the confirmation of our identification and Clovis Quindroit for information on French records. PW has benefited from dialogue with Maxwell V. L Barclay (NHMUK).

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Verrall's work on craneflies

Introduction



George Verrall (1848-1911) is best known for his two volumes of British Diptera: Vol 8, (1901) on the Platypetidae, Pipunculidae and Syrphidae, and Vol 5 (1909) on the Stratiomyidae and other lower Brachycera, but, in addition to these, and his checklists of British Diptera, he also did some very significant work on the identification and distribution of British craneflies (Pont, 2011). Between 1886 and 1888 George Verrall published some 50 pages in a series of seven papers in the Entomologists Monthly Magazine (EMM) entitled 'List of British Tipulidae, &c. ('Daddy-Longlegs'), with notes', which set the study of British craneflies on a firm base. (Verrall 1886, 1887, & 1888). He included Dixidae, Ptychopteridae and Trichoceridae as 'Daddy-long-legs, but dealt chiefly with the Tipuloid craneflies. The papers show that Verrall was not only a collector but, as with the other groups that he studied, a very serious student of the Tipuloidea and his work certainly provided a base from which subsequent authors such as F.W. Edwards and Henri Audcent and Ralph Coe later benefitted.

His extensive travels gave him access to excellent habitats in England, Wales and Scotland and his library, correspondence and visits put him in touch with all of the leading dipterists in Britain, Europe and North America. He especially admired the work of Baron Osten-Sacken (1869) in his Monograph of North American Tipulidae, a work which includes keys.

The Papers: 'List of British Tipulidae, etc. (Daddy-long-legs) with notes'.

Below is a brief summary of the contents of each part as published. Verrall's list is based on Vol. III of Walker's British Diptera (1856) and also informed by Osten-Sacken's systematic arrangement of the genera (Osten Sacken 1869).

Part 1, Nov. 1886. EMM 23:117-125. At that time the 'Daddy-long-legs' ('craneflies') were divided into four families: Dixidae, Ptychopteridae, Limnobiidae and Tipulidae. Verrall adds 15 more species to the 28 species which he listed on his Jan 1886 'List of British Diptera' making a total of 148 Tipuloid craneflies then known. He then lists some 24 reputedly British species of craneflies for which he claims that more evidence is needed in order to ascertain their British Status.

Keys

A key to the 'cranefly' families and genera is then given, which is followed on pp 123-124 by a key to the genus *Limnobia* (*Limonia*). This part finishes with notes, including a close comparison of *Limnobia nitida* n.sp., now *Limonia maculipennis* (Meigen) with *Limnobia pannonica* Kowartz, which is an East European species not known in Britain. Also presented are notes on *L. trivittata* (*L. phragmitidis*) and *L. macrostigma*.

Part 2: EMM 23, Dec. 1886 pp 156-160. The description of the family Limoniidae (called Limnobiidae by Verrall) continued with the Key to *Dicranomyia*, and notes. *D. aquosa* Verrall is described as a new species with comparisons to similar species and Verrall uses the term 'open discal cell' to describe the lack of medial cross-vein. Notes are given on *D. modesta* Meigen and Verrall recommends 'a very close study of the male genitalia' to better define this and similar species. A similar recommendation is made with *D. chorea*. Notes are also given on *D. stigmatica*, *lutea*, *mitis*, *sericata*, *dumetorum*, and *didyma*.

Part 3: EMM 23, 1887 pp 205-209. The family Limoniidae, continued.

Notes on *Rhamphidia* (now *Helius*) *longirostris*, *Orimargo virgo*, and *Antocha opalizans*.

Key to *Molophilus*. Seven species were known to Verrall, which included *murinus*, now *Tasiocera murina*.

Key to *Rhypholophus*. Five species were known to Verrall which included *Ormosia lineatus*, *O. nodulosus*, and *O. similis*. He mentions finding '*R. pentagonalis*', 'a large species with a discal cell', which is now placed in the genus *Scleroprocta*.

Notes on *Erioptera*. Six species are on Verrall's list. He also mentions a species with 'a curiously forked end to the hooks on the male genitalia' which he has failed to identify with any described species. This is presumably *E. griseipennis* Meigen 1818, although Meigen did not describe the genitalia.

And finally there are notes on *Lipsothrix errans*. Verrall mentions that out of eleven specimens 'only one male has quite black knees'. The remaining ten specimens we would now identify as *L. remota* (Walker 1848)

Part 4: EMM 23, May 1887. pp 263-267

Notes on the genera: *Idioptera*. Verrall states that he is not sure that *I. fasciata* (now *I. linnei*) is British, but he has taken *I. pulchella* Meigen at Lyndhurst.

Genus *Ephelia*, (now *Eloeophila*). Four species are described: *miliaria*, *apicata*, *submarmorata* and *marmorata* (now *maculata*).

Key to *Limnophila* species. Sixteen species are described here, all of which have now been allocated to other genera. This section finishes with a detailed discussion of the yellow European species of *Limnophila*.

Part 5: EMM 24, Oct. 1887. pp 108 – 112. Continues notes on the British '*Limnophila*' species: *aperta*, *ferruginea*, *ochracea*, *bicolor*, (*Adelphomyia*?) *punctum*, *fuscipennis*, *discicollis*, *subtineta* (*scutellata*), *lucorum*, *nemoralis*, *filata*, and *senilis*. A brief note on the genus *Trichocera* (winter gnats) follows which Verrall comments on the lack of knowledge of this group. Key to genus *Amalopsis*, and notes on *littoralis*, *occulta*, *immaculata*, and *unicolor*. The section ends with a note on *Phalacrocerca replicata*.

Part 6: EMM 25, June 1888. pp 20 – 27. This part deals with the Tipulidae, **as follows:**

Dolichopeza sylvicola Curtis (Now *D. albipes*.) – note. Verrall comments on the function of the 'white feet' as a distractor to predators, but comments that he has never seen a mutilated specimen, with a food snapped off by a bird or spider.

Nephrotoma dorsalis note. The genus *Nephrotoma* was defined as having 19 antennal segments.

Key to *Pachyrrhina*: This genus was defined by having 13 antennal segments. 10 species are keyed and notes given on these species of *Pachyrrhina*. It is now merged with *Nephrotoma*.

Key to *Tipula* and notes on *Tipula*. Verrall begins this section by saying 'Most reluctantly do I attempt any table of this genus at present;' however he concludes that 'an imperfect table is better than none at all', and hopes that Lepidopterists may be induced to take up the group. 34 species are described. *Tipula lunata* is identified by its 'ashy-grey' abdomen. (Perhaps *T. luna*) *Tipula ochraceous* has an 'ochraceous' thorax and the male genitalia have a 'tufted plate beneath' ie this is *T. lunata*. *T. fuscipennis* is also described with 'thorax brownish-grey.'

Part 7: EMM 25, Oct. 1888. pp 97 – 99

This begins with the Key to Ctenophora in which the three species we know today are described. This is followed in parenthesis by a description of a male '*Amalopsis pyrenaica*' sp. n. from a specimen caught in the Pyrenees and given to Verrall by Baron Osten-Sacken.

There then follows a few paragraphs 'On Collecting & Setting Tipulidae' (p98). Verrall concludes this section by saying 'I would especially emphasize the labelling, as specimens without a history are almost valueless.' He added a circular label to his specimens 'punched with an old gun-wad punch' !!!

The final section is 'Addenda and Corrigenda' and makes interesting reading. The final part of this section is a description of *Amalopsis claripennis* sp. n., now *Dicranota (Ludicia) claripennis* (Verrall 1888).

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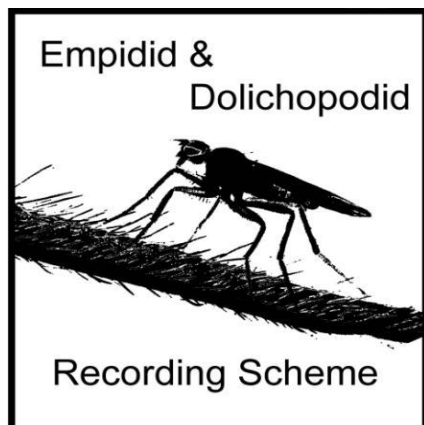
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John Kramer

The next copy deadline for issue #40 of Crane fly News is Dec. 20th 2022. Please send any copy to me.

There is an expanded digital version of this newsletter sent to members of the Crane fly Recording Scheme. If you wish to join the mailing list, please let me know.

john.kramer@btinternet.com



Newsletter No. 27

Autumn 2022

Interesting dolichopodids recorded at the Dipterists Forum field meeting in Cornwall, 2021

Martin Drake

This meeting's haul of dolichopodids was good – 108 species among just over 1000 specimens, and including about a dozen species of conservation interest. I say 'about' a dozen because the formal rarity status can be misleading for tiddlers, such as *Rhaphium fasciatum* and *Syntormon monile*, that are almost certainly under-recorded. See the maps on the next page to accompany the accounts.

Most nationally scarce dolichopodids were sparsely distributed and found in low numbers. A distinctive exception was *Dolichopus andalusiacus* which was found at six sites and was sometimes quite numerous, particularly at Penhale dunes. Ponds seem to feature frequently in the site descriptions of these records. The national distribution is now absurdly tilted to the far west of Cornwall. Perhaps the clue to this distribution is in its name – Strobl described it from a specimen from Algerciras in Andalusia on the southern tip of Spain, and its European distribution is decidedly south-western. Another species with a strong cluster of records in this part of Cornwall was *Campsicnemus pumilio* (Croft Pascoe Pool, Rospanel Farm, Windmill Farm), although its habitat affinity is not easy to fathom as I think that records submitted to the recording scheme probably include plenty of errors based on females. But the swampy nature of these three Cornish sites does fit with a known preference for water margins. The first record west of Somerset for *Rhaphium antennatum* was from dunes at Kennack. Not only does the record upset the distribution pattern but introduces an unusual habitat for this species that appears more at home on coastal marshes and floodplain wetlands. The map for *Syntormon macula* is filling up nicely. I wonder whether this species is undergoing an increase in frequency, like *Dolichopus virgultorum* (Drake 2017), but of course it is difficult to disentangle increased recording from a population expansion. Not only is the density of dots on the map increasing but there is an increase in records of males which are found far less frequently than females and fly in midsummer when recording is at its peak, unlike the early-flying females, so their increased occurrence does not seem to be an artefact (Drake 2021a). The record from the Cornwall meeting was a single male from Croft Pascoe Pool. *Schoenophilus versutus* is small and probably overlooked but almost certainly correctly identified when found. Its habitat affinities are somewhat vague; it shows

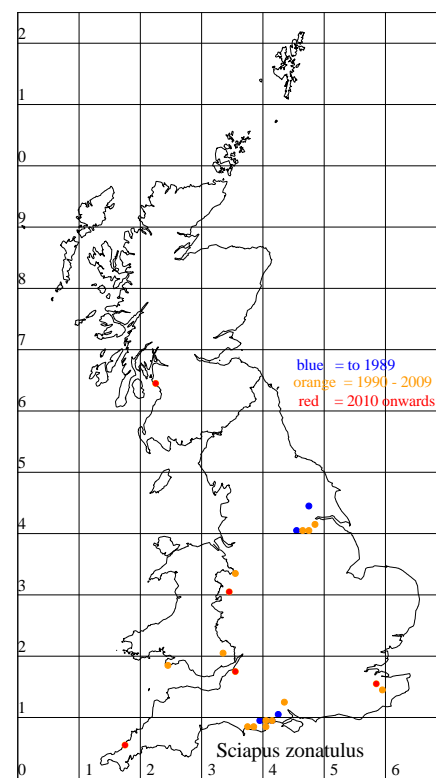
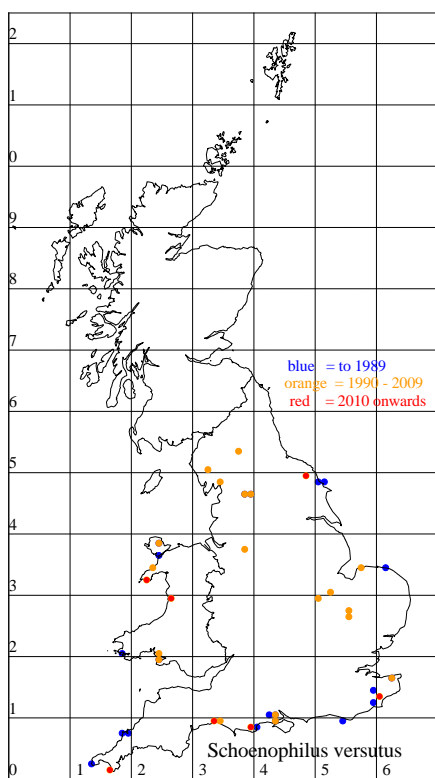
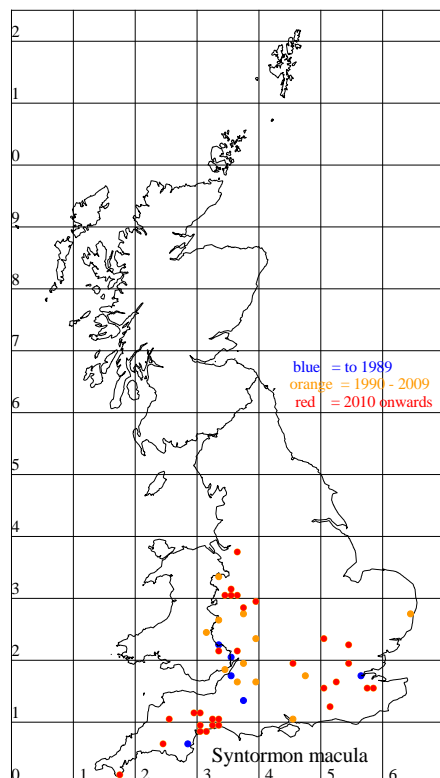
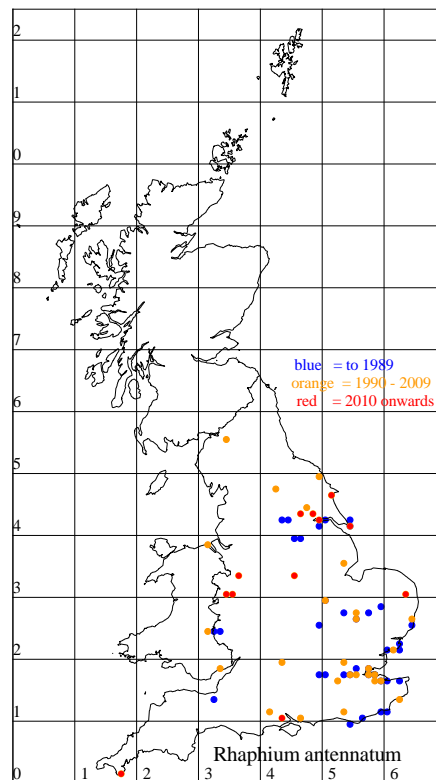
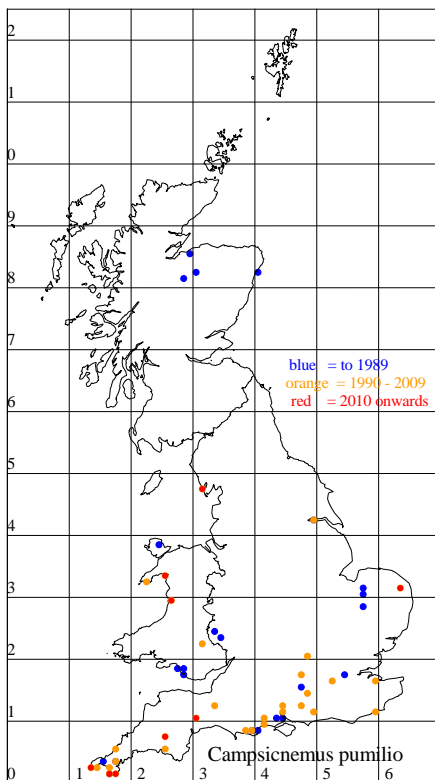
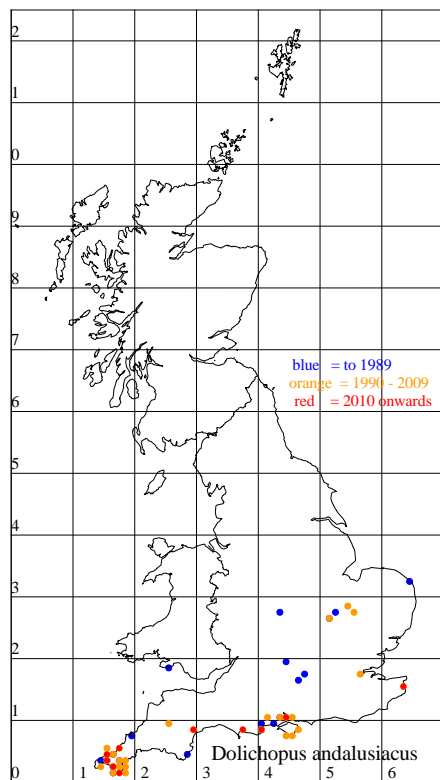
a propensity for coastal sites but is not closely tied to them and is found at a variety of wetlands. A small colony was found at Windmill Farm on the Lizard by sweeping a swamp dominated by spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*), bulrush (*Schoenoplectus*) and short flooded grass. *Syntormon mikii* (Rare) was found at Gwithian Green where two collectors each found single females. As the distribution map in Drake (2021b) shows, Cornwall is one of the most favoured counties for this coastal species, where it had previously been found at several of the sites that we visited in 2022.

Uncertainty surrounds several *Sciapus* as d'Assis Fonseca's key has become unreliable following Meuffels and Grootaert's (1990) revision of the trickiest species-group in the genus. In this group, we found *S. zonatulus*, including a male which makes the record reliable, at Penhale dunes on the bare wind-blown sand of the foredune (two recorders, several specimens). Confirmed records come from soft coastal cliffs and dry heaths, which fits with the Cornish find but this is the first in the West Country beyond the Dorset heaths. Its status was left as Data Deficient owing to the previous muddle in identification but it is a good candidate for 'Rare'.

Thrypticus is unusual among dolichopodids in having herbivorous stem-mining larvae, and adults can sometimes be found by sweeping likely foodplants including spike-rush and bulrush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*). At Bulrush Pool on Penhale dunes, *T. nigricauda* was frequent on the bulrush which suggests that it could be another host-plant for this fly, although spike-rush was very abundant too. I also found another species that I will be describing shortly – so I cannot spill the beans just yet; suffice to say that it looks just like *T. cuneatus* which has distinctive wings shaped like those of the common *Sciapus platypterus*.

The final species to mention is *Aphrosylus raptor*, one of the two larger species in the genus and whose larvae may feed on barnacles, as do those of *A. celtiber*. It is far less frequently recorded than *A. celtiber* although it is found on the rocky coasts from the Solent to south-west Scotland. Maybe in Cornwall it is moderately common, but we still found it at only one site at Coverack compared to three for *A. celtiber* and four for the tiny *A. ferox*.

Many thanks to the numerous dipterists who handed their specimens to me during the meeting, making up over half of the records.



***Rhamphomyia marginata* (Empididae) on the move**

Nigel Jones

The 4-5mm length females of *R. marginata* are amongst the most distinctive of flies in the British fly fauna, having remarkably broadened wings, featuring a distinct dark brown apical band that extends more faintly around the hind margin. It was first discovered in Britain in East Kent in May 1973. The recording scheme database contains 53 records from the period 1973 – 2008, all from East Kent and West Kent. In

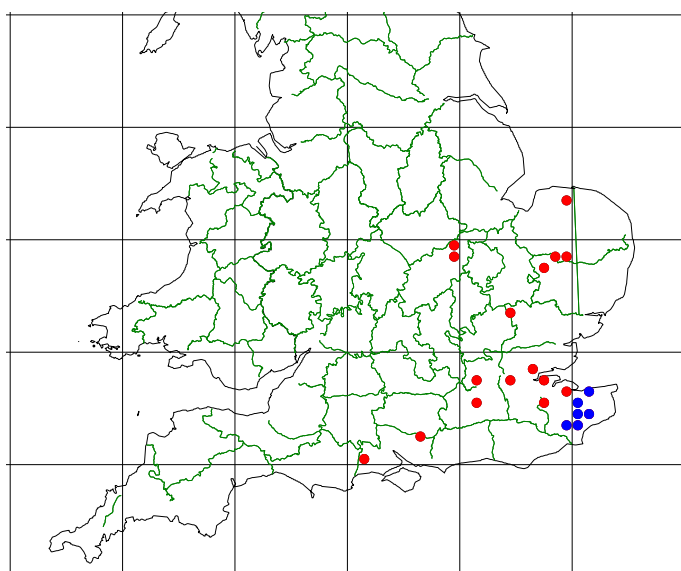
Newsletter no. 16 (Autumn 2011), Adrian Plant reported that a first record from outside Kent had come from the New Forest in April 2009. No further ex-Kent records were submitted to the scheme until 2013, since when there has been a slow but steady trickle of records submitted from another seven vice counties. It appears that after gaining a very firm foothold in Kent over the period 1973 – 2008, the species has begun to extend its UK range. Since 2017 records have been made every year, often from new vice counties. So far the range, though considerably extended, is restricted to south east England, including the following nine vice counties,

Hampshire, East Kent, West Kent, Surrey, South Essex, Hertfordshire, West Suffolk, West Norfolk and Northamptonshire.

R. marginata is most often found along rides in broadleaf, conifer and mixed woodland between late April and early June, peaking throughout May (recorded UK dates 18 April – 6 June). It will come to light traps, but can be found quite readily by searching woodland rides from late afternoon until 20:30 hours. Laurence Clemons has had particular success finding it at these times, most notably as part of a determined blitz search on 19 May 1995 when he found *R. marginata* males and females at 12 sites in East Kent! Look for aerial swarms. Separate male and female swarms have been found, but “role reversal” is the norm with females establishing swarms and males flying into these to select a female partner. Swarms can be low flying or at up to 6 metres height. The fly has also been found resting on foliage and by sweeping both ground vegetation and tree foliage.



Rhamphomyia marginata (f) Grafton Park Wood, Northamptonshire. Photo: Ron Porch.



Known distribution of *Rhamphomyia marginata* at July 2022. Blue – before 1990, red, 1990 to 2022.

Dolichopodids of a small London wetland

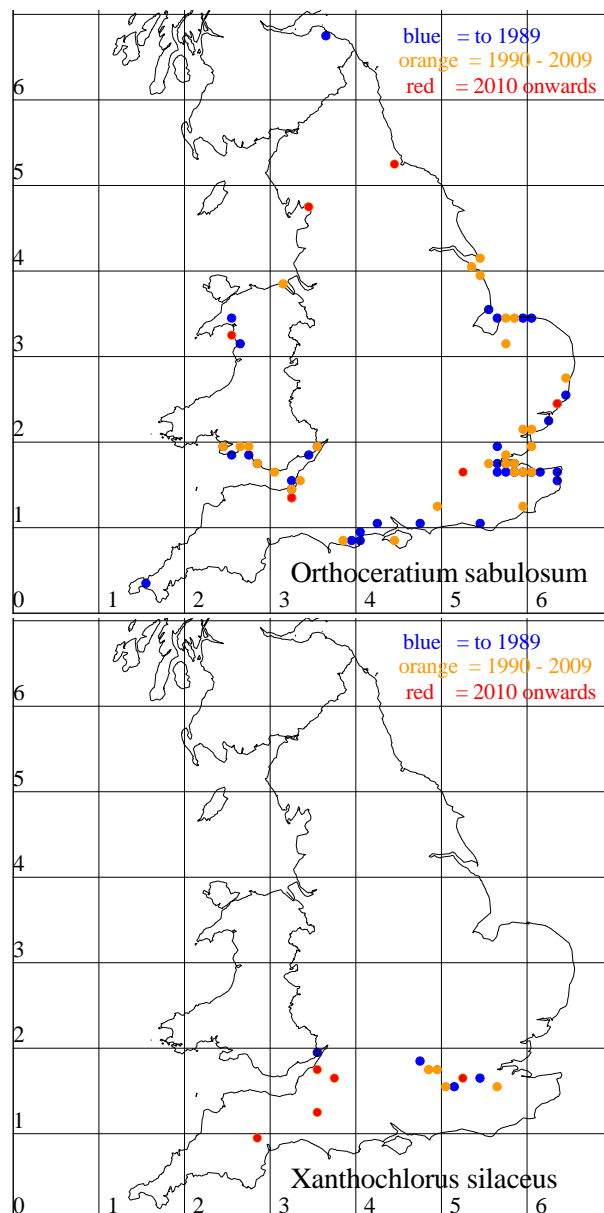
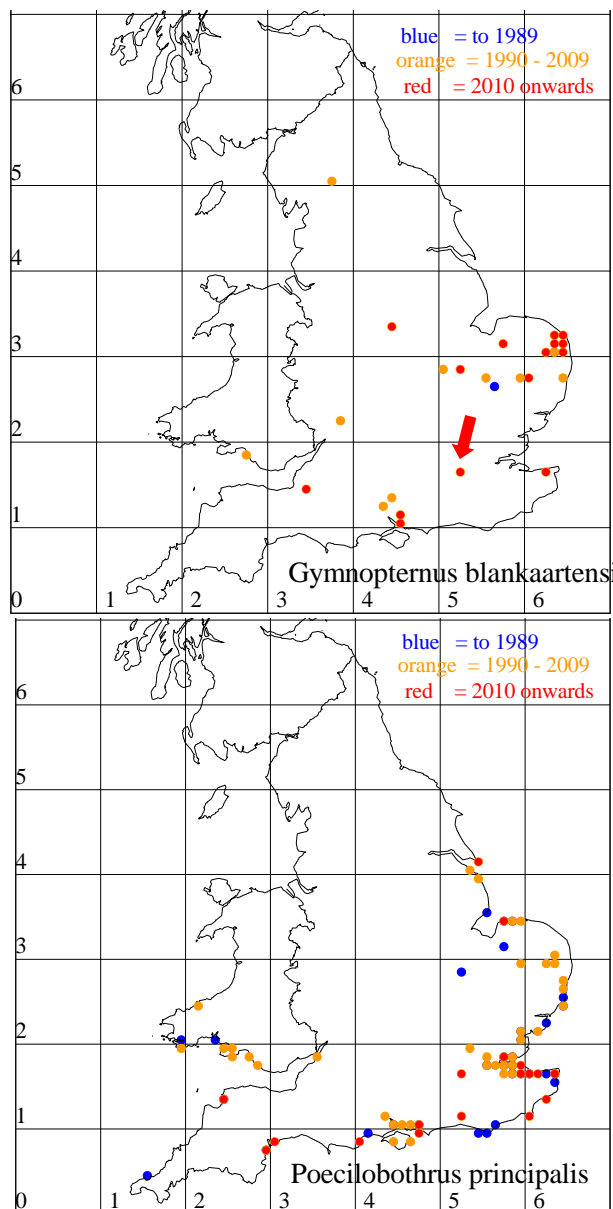
Martin Drake

Roger Morris and Derek Coleman ran a Malaise trap at Spencer Lane Wetlands, a small Local Nature Reserve in Surrey managed by London Wildlife Trust (TQ279667). The reserve developed from an area where watercress was grown by the River Wandle, a base-rich chalk-stream just right for watercress. Now it is a mix of reedbed and willow carr with limited dead wood. Glancing at a road atlas you’d think that it was in the middle of endless housing and industry of Greater London. So not very promising except in a London context. But the dolichopodids that I identified form a remarkable and almost ecologically impossible assemblage for its geographical position.

As might be expected, there was an assemblage of species associated with fens, including lots of *Ethiomyia chalybea* and occasional *Poecilobothrus chrysozygos* and *Teuchophorus spinigerellus*. The most unexpected was *Gymnopternus blankaartensis* which was commonest species by far in the samples, with nearly 700 individuals representing nearly half entire catch. I normally expect this uncommon species in top-notch fens such as those of Norfolk. There were also other species of good swamps, such as plenty of *Hercostomus plagiatus* and singletons of *Campsicnemus picticornis*, *Achalcus flavicollis* and *Hercostomus parvilamellatus*. But then there were four coastal species, or at least species that are very rarely recorded far from the coast, and two of them have a conservation status: *Orthocentrus sabulosum* (1♂) and *Syntormon mikii* (2♂ on different dates). Then a male of *Poecilobothrus principalis*, a species of saltmarshes, and a couple of *Syntormon pseudospicatum* although this last species does occur rarely inland. The nearest stretch of the River Thames lies about 8.5km away across a swathe of old built-up London, but its reinforced banks are hardly suitable habitat for such specialists. The river is tidal here but probably only just brackish. So these saltmarsh or coastal species clearly have not read the text-books or they survive on presumably substandard habitat. As their numbers were very low they could be strays, but one would not apply that argument to explain, say, the single *Teuchophorus spinigerellus* trapped in the middle of a reedbed, its normal habitat. I suspect that some saltmarsh species have wider tolerances than we normally assume.

Other uncommon species were more probable residents. *Syntormon macula* is turning out to be moderately widespread in southern England but males remain elusive (Drake 2021a, b). On three dates between 15 August and 5 September, four males were caught. Roger tells me that there is not much dead wood on the site, just old willows, so these are probably the larval development site for *Systemus pallipes* (1♀) and *Australachalcus melanotrichus*. It was good to see a population of *Xanthochlorus silaceus* flying for several weeks in the absence of other commoner species in the genus; this record lies in the middle of a local band stretching across the London Clay and just into the flanking Chalk.

Many thanks to Roger Morris for picking out the dolichopodids from a year’s worth of Malaise-trap samples and for comments on the site. Apologies to Scotland for chopping off record-free area on the maps.



Distribution of four dolichopodids found at Spencer Lane Wetlands (arrow on *Gymnopternus blankaartensis* map).

Empididae workshop key – index

Nigel Jones

I've recently made an index for the Empididae key produced for the Dipterists Forum workshop in 2019. Members who would like a copy of this should make their request to me at nipajones@talktalk.net

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- Drake, M. 2021a. *Syntormon macula* phenology. *Empidid and Dolichopodid Recording Scheme Newsletter* **26**, 2.
- Drake, C.M. 2021b. Comments on the taxonomic status of some British species of *Syntormon* Loew, 1857 (Diptera, Dolichopodidae). *Dipterists Digest (Second Series)* **28**, 17-44.
- Meuffels, H.J.G. & Grootaert, P. 1990. The identity of *Sciapus contristans* (Wiedemann, 1817) (Diptera: Dolichopodidae), and a revision of the species group of its relatives. *Bulletin de l'Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique* **60**, 161-178.

Recent literature (dolichopodids)

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- Chursina M.A. & Selivanova O.V. 2022. Morphometric characters in the taxonomic recognition of the species of *Dolichopus pennatus* group. bioRxiv preprint doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/2022.02.25.481977>

Contacts

Dolichopodids

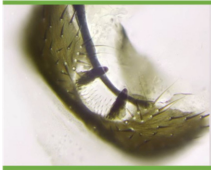
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Empididae & Brachystomatidae

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Lesser Dung Fly Study Group - Newsletter 3

Sucking up small-fry on the South Devon coast

Andrew Cunningham

Mark Welch was down in Devon for a few days in late May. This presented an opportunity for Dave Brice, Richard Lane and I to meet up in pursuit of strandline sphaeroceridae. Checking out the ordnance survey maps, we decided on Weston Mouth (SY164879). A walk down from a little car park brought us to a shingle beach at the base of some high soft crumbling cliffs. The strandline was a bit sparse but we managed to record no less than three species of *Thoracochaeta* amongst other genera. These were dominated by the common *T. zosteriae* followed up by a few *T. erectiseta*.

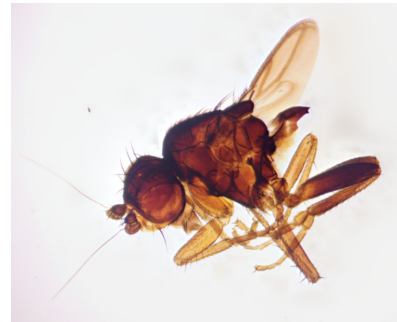


What I found most interesting was the usefulness of a modified hand vacuum in shingle. The flies and other insects will scurry away into the shingle but plunging the vacuum into the shingle was effective in producing several specimens below seaweed. As a test, I selected a few spots of bare shingle, well away from any strandline debris, and plunged the vacuum into it which produced specimens even then!

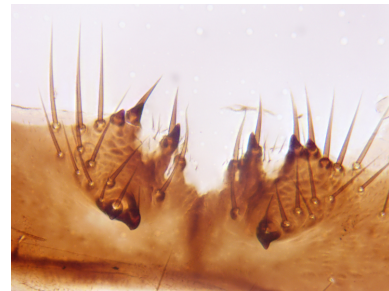
As an ongoing study of shoreline sphaeroceridae and associated diptera in the UK, we would be grateful for any records or unidentified specimens. If you are able to help with this, then please get in touch with Dave Brice by email at ischiolepta20@gmail.com

Sampling brachypterous species Mark Welch
Following on from Andrew's item on the virtues of vacuum-sampling, I thought that it would be of interest to mention some brachypterous sphaeros. I came across specimens of two rarely recorded brachypterous species in a batch of sphaerocerids sent to me for identification by Nigel Jones: *Spelobia manicata* (1m 1f), *Pullimosina mejerei* (3m, 1f). As well as these "rarities", two female *Pteremis fenestralis* were found, a common species that

can also occur in a short-winged form. All of these specimens were collected by Nigel from a single Shropshire site (Racecourse Common near the village of Llawnt). Not being aware of *S. manicata*, I initially considered the two specimens (1m, 1f) to be brachypterous *Spelobia clunipes*, a morphologically very similar species. I contacted Dave Brice about them and he pointed me to *Spelobia manicata*, which is described in Roháček (1991) and appears to be exclusively brachypterous. While considering *S. manicata* to be a *bona fide* species, Roháček mentions that it could be a terricolous ecotype of *S. clunipes*.



The identification of *Pullimosina mejerei*, a very small sphaero' at 1mm long (partially dissected brachypterous male shown above), was straightforward as it keys correctly in Pitkin (1988). It occurs in brachypterous and normal forms. Not having encountered this species before, I dissected the specimens and prepared slide-mounts to confirm my identifications.



Diagnostic 5th sternite of male *Pullimosina mejerei*.

I have just been working through sphaerocerids from Cothill NNR, Oxon, given to me by Judy Webb at the DF Spring Field Meeting. One of the specimens taken in a pitfall trap is *Crumomyia pedestris*, a micropterous relatively "large" sphaero' with very short wings. This species would seem to be genuinely localised.

All sampling methods are selective. Vacuum sampling, water traps and pitfalls are convenient means of studying an otherwise largely inaccessible fly fauna, i.e. ground/soil dwellers. With increased use, a more representative picture of species' distributions and status will emerge. The message is clear: use vacuum samplers, water traps and pitfall traps more often Please!

Forum News

A new lesser dung fly for the British Isles

Minilimosina floreni Rohacek and Marshall (Diptera, Sphaeroceridae) new to Britain from Fair Isle, Scotland. Mark D. Welch, Dave Brice & Nick J. Riddiford *Dipterists Digest*, 2022, **29**, 239-244.

A female *M. floreni* was taken in a pitfall trap at Swey Bog on Fair Isle. It is likely that the specimen arrived at Fair Isle *via* an easterly airstream from Scandinavia, like so many of the avian rarities recorded on the island.

Three new lesser dung flies for Ireland

Thoracochaeta Duda (Diptera, Sphaeroceridae) recorded from marine strandlines on Ireland's east coast, including three additions to the Irish list. Simon Hodge & David Brice. *Dipterists Digest*, 2022, **29**, 221-224.

T. erectiseta, *T. seticosta*, *T. valentinei* (+ *T. brachystoma* confirmed).

Sampling of 11 strandlines on the east coast of Ireland between July 2021 and January 2022 produced 225 sphaerocerid specimens of five species, including these three additions. All three have been recorded in Britain, although *T. seticosta* is extremely rare.

LDF wings: sub-family Limosininae

Here, we illustrate some key features of the wing used in the identification of members of the sub-family Limosininae. Flies of this sub-family are easily distinguished from those of the Sphaerocerinae and Copromyzinae using wing venation (Pitkin, 1988, pp 82, 93, 101). Important features of the wing (top photo opposite) include the relative lengths of costal sectors 2 and 3; the length (zero, very small, obvious/long) of costal overshoot OS at intersection of vein R_{4+5} and costa (red circle). *Coproica* spp and *Pullimosina* spp have long costal overshoots (photos). *Spelobia* spp have a straight R_{4+5} and a very small costal overshoot (a nubbin that extends beyond the costa/ R_{4+5} junction). *Rachispoda* illustrates the case where there is strictly zero overshoot and the vein is slightly curved forward at the distal end. An enlargement of the wing of *Rachispoda* (photo) showing the feint "ghost vein" extending from the true (thick, sclerotised) median vein ($M = M_{1+2}$ of Pitkin) and very nearly reaching the wing edge. This "vein" is NOT to be considered as present when identifying the sub-family (couplet 1). Furthermore, Limosininae lack an anal cell, whereas the other two sub-families have one. *Minilimosina* spp (photo) have a small overshoot and the R_{4+5} vein is bent slightly forward distally. Note that this small overshoot, a little longer than that of *Spelobia*, qualifies as "well beyond junction" (Pitkin, couplet 54).

Pitkin (1988) RES Handbook for the Identification of British Insects Vol. 10, Part 5e. Lesser Dung Flies.

