

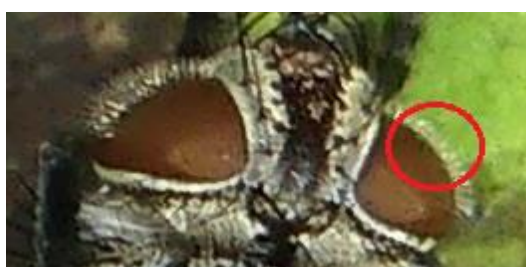
***Linnaemya picta* or *Linnaemya tessellans*? Either one would be a new Tachinid fly for Worcestershire.**

Des Jennings.

A post-Christmas assessment of a handful of unidentified insects photographed in 2019 unearthed a fly, photographed at the Christopher Cadbury Reserve, Upton Warren on the 9th October (01). The subject looked suspiciously like a fly that had been thought to be responsible for the reduction in numbers of Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urtica* butterflies as well as other Nymphalidae in recent decades: *Sturmia bella*. I sent my image to the Dipterist Society who forwarded it to Chris Raper, an expert in Tachinids, at the Natural History Museum, London. Chris dismissed *S. bella* because the Upton Warren fly has hairy eyes as highlighted in (02), a feature not found in *S. bella*. Instead, Chris felt that due to the eyes, wing venation and bristle arrangement, the insect was either *Linnaemya picta* or *L. tessellans*, neither of which has been recorded in Worcestershire. Chris could not take the identification any further unless there was an image of the lower side of the face showing the bristle and hair arrangement, which there was not.



01. *Linnaemya picta* or *L. tessellans* Upton Warren Oct 2019. Des Jennings



02. The hairy eyes of *L. picta* or *L. tessellans*. Des Jennings

There are five examples of the genus *Linnaemya* on the British list: *comta* (a handful of records), *picta*, *tessellans*, *rossica*- a species found in the uplands of Scotland, and *vulpina*, which has occurred in Worcestershire.

The range of *L. picta* (03) and *L. tessellans* (04) within the UK is very much south-east England but they are spreading north and west, *L. picta* in particular. It was at Denge Wood, Kent in 2009 that a Tachinid fly was found and thought to be *L. rossica* but because of the location, hardly upland, doubts were expressed as to the process of identification. The specimen was sent to European experts who keyed the fly as *L. picta*, the first for the UK. However, there was more intrigue behind the discovery. Examination of specimens labelled *L. rossica* at the Natural History Museum, London and originating in Kent in the mid-1950s, proved to be *L. picta* after

using the correct European key and therefore became the first UK records.



03. Map showing the UK distribution of *L. picta* (03 above) and *L. tessellans* (04 below) as at August 2020. Courtesy of iRecord.



Given the facts outlined above, I am alerting recorders to the distinct possibility that there are two new Tachinid species to be found in VC37, but only a voucher specimen or good quality images will help in establishing the correct identification.

Images:

- 01. *Linnaemya picta* or *L. tessellans* at Upton Warren in October 2019. Des Jennings
- 02. The hairy eyes of *L. picta* or *L. tessellans*. Des Jennings
- 03. Map showing the UK distribution of *L. picta* as at August 2020. Courtesy of iRecord.
- 04. Map showing the UK distribution of *L. tessellans* as at August 2020. Courtesy of iRecord.

References:

- Chris Raper-Natural History Museum, London. Via e-mail. Raper, C., August 2011. *Linnaemya Picta*. Tachinid Recording Scheme.
- Raper, C., April 2009. *The Sturmia bella controversy*. chrisraper.org.uk
- iRecord

