

Records of note 2019.

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Lepidoptera

Red-tipped Clearwing *Synanthedon formicaeformis* (Lep: Sesiidae).

Two freshly emerged adults were active during hot sunny weather not far from the River Teme at The Fold, Bransford, during a Worcestershire Biological Recorders Field Trip on 01.06.19. With grateful thanks to Gary Farmer who first observed them.



01. Red-tipped Clearwing at The Fold, Bransford on 01.06. 2019. K.McGee.

Yellow-legged Clearwing *Synanthedon vespiformis* (Lep: Sesiidae).

Two were seen during very hot sunny weather by several observers during an organised 'bio-blitz' event at Hartlebury Common on 29.06.19. Both were in the far western corner close to the Worcester Road in an area where several developing oaks have been removed relatively recently, but with the stumps remaining in the ground.



02. Yellow-legged Clearwing at Hartlebury Common on 29.06. 2019. K.McGee.

Coleoptera (in date order)

Poecilium alni (Col: Cerambycidae). Notable B.

Three were actively running around on the twigs and thin branches of recently pruned ash limbs left on the ground at The Fold, Bransford, during a Worcestershire Recorders Field Trip on 01.06.19.



03. *Poecilium alni* on pruned ash branches at The Fold, Bransford on 01.06. 2019. K.McGee.

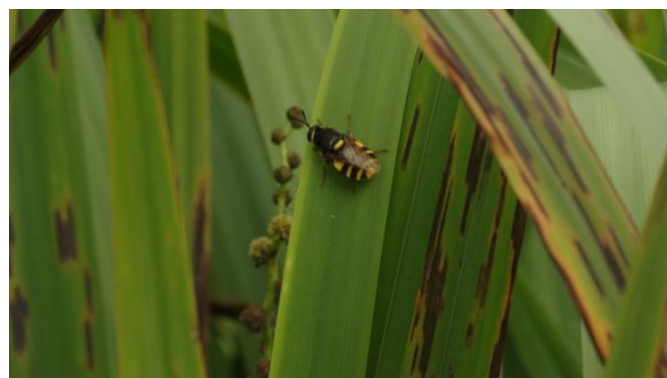
Bembidion doris (Col: Carabidae).

This is my first record of this localised ground beetle associated with damp ground. I can report that a small population exists at the seasonal pond alongside the Worcester Road at the western corner of Hartlebury Common. Whenever I have visited this pond recently it has been almost completely dry containing no open water but extensive areas of mud. One of two was collected from damp mud on 16.07.19 and another one of approximately six was collected from mud on 05.08.19.

Diptera.

Stratiomys potamida (Dip: Stratiomyidae). Notable.

One female was found in poolside vegetation on the Shakenhurst Estate on 20.07.19. This pool is close to where we live and I often take a short stroll there to see what's about. This is one of those (very regular) occasions when entomological photography does not go quite as planned! The pool is bordered by soft muddy margins polluted by agricultural run-off containing dense stands of Yellow Iris with occasional Branched Bur-reed. During this particular stroll I immediately recognised a very large specimen of *Stratiomys potamida* at rest on Yellow Iris foliage about two metres out from the edge. Conditions were quite cool, and it is my experience that insects at rest in these situations are highly likely to remain still and allow close approach. I decided it was worth the risk to remove shoes and socks, roll up the trouser legs and start wading very carefully through the deep mud and Yellow Iris to try and get closer to the fly for the perfect 'book cover' photos. As I got closer, I was glad I took the decision to take a couple of shots from a considerable distance just for the record one of which is reproduced here! It became obvious that the combination of thick wet mud, deepening water and density of Yellow Iris roots, (I had no idea they are so treacherous), to fight through would only end in disaster. I was quite relieved to see the fly take to flight and head far away out of sight!



04. *Stratiomys potamida* at a poolside on the Shakenhurst Estate on 20.07.2019. K.McGee.

Hemiptera

Aphanus rolandri (Hem: Lygaeidae). Notable A.

One nymph was collected from beneath an oak log at the eastern side of Hartlebury Common on 05.08.19. This is my first record anywhere of this scarce and predominately southern and eastern species, and could possibly be new for Worcestershire. It's a pity it wasn't a fully formed adult; these are very distinctive and easily identified visually in the field. Have a look on-line for images and keep a look-out at similar heathland sites during late summer next year.



05. *Aphanus rolandri* nymph at Hartlebury Common on 05.08. 2019. K.McGee.

Hymenoptera (in date order)

Andrena proxima (Hym: Andrenidae). RDB3.

One female was collected from a low wall at St. Peters churchyard, Martley, on 07.05.19. It was keyed out as *A. proxima* (female) but as this is a rare species with very few records from the midlands I emailed the image to Steven Falk and offered to post the specimen to him. He replied to confirm the identity from the image without the need to see the specimen. This constitutes my first record of this species, and it may be a new record for Worcestershire.



06. *Andrena proxima* female collected at St. Peters Church, Martley, on 07.05. 2019. K.McGee.

Sapyga quinquepunctata (Hym: Sapygidae).

I rarely encounter this species, and I have never successfully photographed a female until this year when I managed to get good shots of this one on the south wall at St. Peters church, Martley, on 23.05.19.



07. *Sapyga quinquepunctata* female at St. Peters Church, Martley on 23.05.2019. © K.McGee.

Rhyssa persuasoria (Hym: Ichneumonidae).

One female and approximately ten males were present at a pile of Spruce logs in Wissetts Wood, Shakenhurst, on 25.05.19. The very large impressive female was difficult to photograph as she always made towards the surfaces on the undersides of logs to find places suitable for ovipositing. During very poor light in warm humid conditions I eventually obtained the photograph reproduced here. The numerous and smaller males were also elusive as they continually attacked each other in what I assumed to be territorial conflict.



08. *Rhyssa persuasoria* female at Wissetts Wood, Shakenhurst on 25.05.2019. K.McGee.



09. *Rhyssa persuasoria* male at Wissetts Wood, Shakenhurst on 25.05.2019. K.McGee.

Andrena congruens (Hym: Andrenidae).

One male collected from Hogweed foliage in our garden at Shakenhurst on 16.06.2019. The male of this species (which is rare in the midlands) is superficially similar to males of *Andrena bicolor* so care must be taken. Males of *A. congruens* have pale-haired mid and hind femora.



10. *Andrena congruens* male collected in our garden at Shakenhurst on 16.06.2019. K.McGee.

Eucera longicornis (Hym: Apidae). Notable A.

A female appeared in our garden at Shakenhurst on 16.06.19 to visit Bush Vetch flowers. I have recorded the distinctive males of this species (the long-horned bee) along the nearby disused Bewdley/Tenbury Wells railway line during May and June of 2015 and 2016, but I had never previously encountered a female. Another female also visited Bush Vetch flowers in our garden on 30.06.19. This species is quite large and appears at first glance rather like an unusual form of *Bombus pascuorum* or very large *Anthophora* species.



11. *Eucera longicornis* female visiting Bush Vetch in our garden at Shakenhurst on 16.06.2019. K.McGee.



12. *Eucera longicornis* female in our garden at Shakenhurst on 30.06.2019. K.McGee.

Chrysura radians (Hym: Chrysididae). Notable A.

Until this year I had just two Worcestershire records of *C. radians* on my database (2004 & 2005) but I added a further five records during 2019. The 'ruby-tailed' wasps are notoriously difficult to identify with confidence and certainty, but *C. radians* is a much easier species when encountered as it lacks the 'teeth' or angular prominences at the posterior margin of the third gastral tergite (at the end of the abdomen). All of the more familiar *Chrysis* species, (including the common *C. ignita*), possess such 'teeth' at the end of the abdomen. I collected females from St. Peters churchyard in Martley on 01.07.19 and 03.07.19. I collected a female from our garden wall at Shakenhurst on 08.07.19, and I collected two from Devil's Spittleful, on 22.06.19 and 13.07.19.



13. *Chrysura radians* female collected from a wall at St.Peters Church, Martley on 01.07.2019. K.McGee.



14. *Chrysurans radians* female collected from a wall at St.Peters Church, Martley on 03.07.2019. K.McGee.

Andrena fulvago (Hym: Andrenidae). Notable A.
One female was collected from yellow composite flowers during the Worcestershire Biological Recorders Field Trip to Crews Court Meadows on 06.07.19. This is my first Worcestershire record, my only previous record is from the Essex coast. This is a scarce species in the midlands and is mainly associated with chalk and limestone grasslands where it forages on various yellow composites including Hawk's-beards and Hawkbits. Note the orange hairs at the tip of the female abdomen.



15. *Andrena fulvago* female collected from Crews Court Meadows on 06.07.2019. K.McGee.



16. *Andrena fulvago* female collected from Crews Court Meadows on 06.07.2019. K.McGee.

Dryudella pinguis (Hym: Crabronidae).

One female was collected on 13.07.19 from a sandy bank along the track through Upper Blackstone Farm towards Devil's Spittleful.

This is my first Worcestershire record for this digger wasp strongly associated with sparsely vegetated sandy ground, my previous records are all from the Ynyslas coastal dunes near Aberystwyth.

Females collect nymphs of various hemipteran bugs which they stock their nest burrows with to supply food for their developing larvae.



17. *Dryudella pinguis* female collected from Upper Blackstone Farm near Devil's Spittleful on 13.07.2019. K.McGee.

Dipogon variegatus (Hym: Pompilidae).

I rarely encounter this species of spider-hunting wasp, and manage to photograph them even more infrequently. In my experience Pompilid wasps are by far the most difficult of all the aculeates to photograph, they are constantly on the move running rapidly across a variety of surfaces in search of spiders. If you do find one halt, it won't be for much more than a second or two! Most *Dipogon* species I find are *D. subintermedius* on large tree trunks, I was therefore pleased to encounter and successfully photograph this female *D. variegatus* on a wall at St. Peters churchyard in Martley on 12.08.19.



18. *Dipogon variegatus* female collected from a wall at St.Peters Church, Martley on 12.08.2019. K. McGee.

Nysson trimaculatus (Hym: Crabronidae). Notable B.

One female was collected from a wall at St. Peters church in Martley on 02.08.19. This cleptoparasitic digger wasp is generally uncommon throughout our region although it can be found in a

variety of habitats wherever its host *Gorytes quadrifasciatus* is present.



19. *Nysson trimaculatus* female collected from a wall at St.Peters Church, Martley on 02.08.2019. K. McGee.

Episyron rufipes (Hym: Pompilidae).

This easily recognisable spider-hunting wasp is only found sparingly at sandy habitats in our region. Late summer into early autumn at Hartlebury Common is a good place to see them, as long as the weather is warm and sunny. However, as described earlier, photographing one successfully is quite another matter, so I was particularly pleased to capture this decent image of a female at Hartlebury Common on 05.08.19.



20. *Episyron rufipes* female at Hartlebury Common on 05.08.2019. K. McGee.

Araneae (in date order).

Zora spinimana (Araneae: Zoridae).

One photographed along a sandy track at Devil's Spittleful on 15.05.19. This is essentially a ground-dwelling grassland spider that is also associated with other open habitats, including heathland. Although considered common, this one represents my first record as I gradually improve my knowledge of spiders.



21. *Zora spinimana* at Devil's Spittleful on 15.05.2019. K.McGee.

Drassyllus pusillus (Araneae: Gnaphosidae).

One was on a low wall at St. Peters churchyard in Martley on 23.05.19. This is my second record here of this localised uncommon species associated with dry open habitats where it hides by day beneath stones and in dense grassy tussocks. Note the pale reddish-brown last two segments on each leg.



22. *Drassyllus pusillus* on a wall at St. Peters Churchyard, Martley on 23.05.2019. K.McGee.

Marpissa muscosa (Araneae: Salticidae).

Approximately six of these relatively large readily identifiable 'jumping' spiders were found on the bone dry limbs of a long dead fallen oak at The Fold, Bransford, during a Worcestershire Recorders Field Trip on 01.06.19. This species has a south and south-eastern distribution in the UK and is strongly associated with dead wood containing loose bark which it hides behind, and on wooden fence panels. It is also found on dry stone walls; particularly in Dorset. I have found them behind bark on standing dead wood in large SSSI woodland reserves in Hertfordshire. However, this Worcestershire record is likely to be due to the presence of a large commercial nursery very close to the site where large amounts of timber fencing materials are being regularly imported from elsewhere in the UK. There are records held on the WBRC database of *M. muscosa* being found at garden centres elsewhere, and I found one at a garden centre on the Herefordshire side of Tenbury Wells on 21.04.19.



23. *Marpissa muscosa* on a dead oak at The Fold, Bransford, on 01.06.2019. K.McGee.

Misumena vatia (Araneae: Thomisidae).

Although not particularly rare or uncommon I have included this record because I did not realise at the time of photography exactly what I had captured! I came across a scrubby little bit of flowering Hogweed on which a female *Misumena vatia* had captured a large 'flesh-fly' in the family Sarcophagidae. I wasn't paying too much attention as the light was poor and I just wanted a general shot for the record. It was only when I looked at the images on my laptop when I noticed the tiny little male *M. vatia* clinging to the abdomen of the much larger female while she feasted on the hapless fly! I had no idea until now that males of *M. vatia* are quite so small! The second photo below has been much enlarged and cropped very closely to appreciate the tiny size of the male.



24. *Misumena vatia* (male & female) on Hogweed at The Fold, Bransford, on 01.06.2019. K.McGee.



25. *Misumena vatia* (male & female) on Hogweed at The Fold, Bransford, on 01.06.2019. K.McGee.

Tegenaria gigantea (Araneae: Agelenidae).

Again, a common enough species, but rarely seen outdoors during broad daylight. This is one of the very large 'house spiders' that frighten people when they come indoors. This one was on a south-facing stone wall at St. Peters churchyard in Martley on 02.07.19. I was inspecting the wall (as usual) for any invertebrates of note when I noticed an *Andrena* species struggling to escape from a sheet-web in complex joints in the ancient stonework. I waited to see if the owner of the web would appear to investigate it did, but only to undertake repairs to the web after the bee managed to free itself. I had to work fast to obtain the shots I wanted before the spider retreated into its hiding place.



26. *Tegenaria gigantea* male on a wall at St. Peters Churchyard, Martley on 02.07.2019. K.McGee.

Arctosa leopardus (Araneae: Lycosidae).

I can confirm that a small population of this distinctive and locally uncommon species exists at the seasonal pond alongside the Worcester Road on the western side of Hartlebury Common. I have found singles there on damp mud on 05.08.19 and 20.09.19. John Partridge kindly confirmed the identification from the images.



27. *Arctosa leopardus* on poolside mud at Hartlebury Common on 20.09.2019. K. McGee.

Amaurobius similis (Araneae: Amaurobiidae).

On the subject of waiting to see if a spider will emerge from its hiding place to investigate disturbance to its web I came across a female *Lasioglossum* mining bee struggling in a sheet web on a stone wall at St. Peters churchyard in Martley on 08.08.19. After waiting for fully ten minutes the spider eventually came rushing out at great speed to collect its prey, leaving me very little time to capture the moment! Considering the tiny amount of warning the spider gave me I am pleased with the overall result of the image published here.



28. *Amaurobius similis* capturing a female *Lasioglossum* bee species on a wall at St. Peters Churchyard, Martley on 08.08.2019. K.McGee.

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Images

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