

Two rare hoverflies on the same day *Xylota zanthocnema* and *Mallota cimbiciformis*

Tony Simpson

On June the 6th 2018 I joined other members of the Wyre Forest Study Group on a morning visit to the new Worcestershire Wildlife Trust Helen Mackaness Reserve in the Worcestershire part of Wyre Forest.

There were not many Lepidoptera, my main interest, to be found but I spotted a *Xylota* hoverfly running about on bramble leaves in the sunshine. I netted this and not certain of the identity took it home where it keyed out to *Xylota zanthocnema* Collin. It was very like a small *Xylota sylvarum* (Linnaeus) but a lot smaller and with entirely yellow hind tibiae (01, 02). Stubbs & Falk (2002) describe it as a rare species mostly from southern England.



01. *Xylota zanthocnema*. Tony Simpson.



02. *Xylota zanthocnema*. Tony Simpson.

On the way home at Eastham near Tenbury Wells I stopped in an old apple orchard to try to record Red-belted Clearwing using a pheromone lure without success (I think my pheromones are out of date!). Being rather bored watching the lure I was looking around and saw a large bumble bee mimic hoverfly nectaring on a dogwood flower-head in the nearby hedge. After netting this I realised I had finally caught a fly, *Mallota cimbiciformis* (Fallen), that I have been hoping to see for many years. It looks a bit like a large robust Drone Fly *Eristalis tenax* (Linnaeus) at first sight, but it is a much more impressive insect with denser thoracic hairs, strongly looped vein R4+5 and swollen hind femurs (03, 04, 05). Stubbs & Falk describe it as rare though widespread in England.

Both species are described as having larvae which occur in wet rot holes in trees.

I cooled them off in the fridge to get photos the next morning and released my *Mallota* which zoomed off into the nearby treetops.



03. *Mallota cimbiciformis*. Tony Simpson.



04. *Mallota cimbiciformis*. Tony Simpson.



05. *Mallota cimbiciformis*. Tony Simpson.

Reference

Stubbs, A.E. & Falk, S. J. 2002.. *British Hoverflies*. British Entomological and Natural History Society

Images

- 01. *Xylota zanthocnema*. Tony Simpson.
- 02. *Xylota zanthocnema*. Tony Simpson
- 03. *Mallota cimbiciformis*. Tony Simpson.
- 04. *Mallota cimbiciformis*. Tony Simpson.
- 05. *Mallota cimbiciformis*. Tony Simpson.