

**A trio of scarce insects in northeast Worcestershire VC37.**

Des Jennings

The heightened interest in local recording during the Covid 19 pandemic proved to be very beneficial in terms of records and sanity! And it would be nice to think that what may have been a newfound interest for some is here to stay. I certainly found myself walking further and recording much more, as well as utilising digital photography. In fact, I accumulated so many images that I spent some time in the winter of 2022/23 archiving and deleting duplicate images.

It was while editing images that I discovered an insect feeding on Yarrow *Achillea millefolium* that, for some reason I had not investigated at the time I saw it, August 2021. I remembered taking the image at Chinn Brook Meadows in Yardley Wood (SP090800), an area that includes woodland, hedgerows, grassland and a brook. Further research revealed it was a Tachinid fly and probably *Cistogaster globosa* (01, 02, 03), a parasitoid of Bishop’s Mitre Shieldbugs *Aelia acuminata* and a pretty distinctive fly. Confirmation was provided via the British Flies Facebook page by Chris Raper an authority on Tachinid flies. *C globosa* was very much a southern and eastern species in the UK until recently and, like a number of insects in recent years, has shown an increase in sightings to the north and west, so it was pleasing to note that the record was the first in VC37.



01. Male *Cistogaster globosa*. Chinn Brook Meadows. 01.08.2021. Des Jennings.



02. Male *Cistogaster globosa*. Chinn Brook Meadows. 01.08.2021. Des Jennings.



03. Male *Cistogaster globosa*. Chinn Brook Meadows. 01.08.2021. Des Jennings.

One insect that did not slip through the analysing net was a Mirid bug similar in appearance to a number of bugs in the Miridae group of insects and confirmed by entomologist Dr Tristan Bantock, an iRecord verifier. I photographed *Dicyphus errans* (04) in my garden in Moseley, in September 2022. To my surprise, there were only a handful of records of *D errans* for VC37 in the WBRC and iRecord databases.



04. *Dicyphus errans* Moseley, September 2022. Des Jennings.

The third in the trio of scarce insects I want to highlight is one brought to my attention by Brett Westwood in the November 2022 edition of the *Worcestershire Record* (Westwood 2022). The Locust Blowfly *Stomorhina lunata*, thought to be a migrant because it lays its eggs in locusts’ egg-masses.

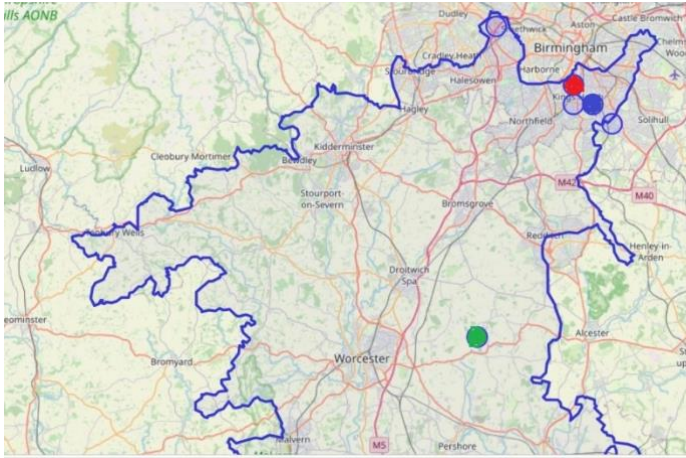


05. Female *Stomorhina lunata*. Trittifford Mill Park, Yardley Wood. 29.08.2022. Des Jennings.

Brett recorded his sightings in August 2022 and the winds must have been suitable for migration from the Continent and North Africa at that time, because I recorded *S lunata* at two sites in north east VC37 in August that year as well. In fact, August and September would

appear to be a good time to encounter this blowfly, which is often mistaken for a hoverfly because of its banded abdomen (05).

The first records of *S lunata* in VC37 were in August 2017, according to iRecord, at Highbury Park, Moseley (Map 01 red dot), swiftly followed by a sighting in September of that year at Grafton Wood (Map 01 green dot). Map 01 (blue dot) represents one of my two records - near the River Cole, Yardley Wood.



Map 01. Records of *Stomorphina lunata* in VC 37. iRecord.

With climate change having an increasing effect on insect distribution and new species being recorded in the UK on a regular basis, scarce species, such as the above, may become common species. Ironically, climate change is also responsible for affecting the habitats of some indigenous species and reducing their number.

#### Acknowledgements

Thanks to iRecord for permission to use their Map 01. And to Simon Wood from Worcestershire Biological Records Centre for supplying species records.

#### References

Westwood, B. 2022. Locust Blowfly *Stomorphina lunata* in Worcestershire. *Worcestershire Record* 50:23.  
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#### Images

01. Male *Cistogaster globosa*. Chinn Brook Meadows. 01.08.2021. Des Jennings.
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03. Male *Cistogaster globosa*. Chinn Brook Meadows. 01.08.2021. Des Jennings
04. *Dicyphus errans*. Moseley garden. 25.09.2022. Des Jennings.
05. Female *Stomorphina lunata*. Trittiford Mill Park, Yardley Wood. 29.08.2022. Des Jennings.

Map 01. Records of *Stomorphina lunata* in VC37.