

Logjammers in Worcestershire: observations of *Chalcosyrphus eunotus*.

Brett Westwood

I first became aware of the Logjammer hoverfly *Chalcosyrphus eunotus* when I read about it in the ground-breaking British Hoverflies book, written by Alan Stubbs and magnificently illustrated by Steven Falk (Stubbs & Falk 2002). It attracted my attention because a record of this apparently scarce and elusive insect was from the Wyre Forest where the author had seen one "sitting on a log in a shaded stream". This observation became key to locating more specimens in the Welsh Marches and English West Midlands. In Worcestershire, they are fairly widespread, appearing from late April along the Dowles Brook and its larger tributaries, but not always easy to find. I have also seen them in several places along the Dick Brook, for instance at Shaver's End (01), Astley and Shrawley Wood. Mark Peacock told me of a site on the Barnett Brook at Blakedown at which he placed a suitable log in a sunny spot and lured in a male within a few days. This year I found another along the same brook about 1km away at Mount Segg, though this one was on a woodland path (02).



01 Male *C. eunotus* on sunlit log, Dick Brook, Shaver's End. Brett Westwood.



02 Male *C. eunotus* on path-side, Mount Segg. Brett Westwood.

Male *C. eunotus* defend territories between late April and mid-June centred around partially submerged timber in streams where they bask on logs in sunlit patches and intercept females flying in to lay their eggs in the rotting wood. Males also use sunlit leaves overhanging brooks as monitoring posts: permanently shaded areas are not used. In suitable areas, they are relatively easy to find once you have familiarised yourself with their appearance. Like a small, scruffily-hairy dronefly *Eristalis* with a white "face", they fly fast around streams and on landing, hunker down on the surface of on a sunlit log. An individual will often return to the same spot many times. I hardly ever see the stripier females, so it was slightly confusing to find one nectaring on bramble flowers above the Dick Brook at its confluence with the Severn (03). Entomologist Andy Jukes told me that this was the first instance he knew of this fly nectaring from flowers in the UK.



03 Female *C. eunotus* on bramble flower, Dick Brook, Shrawley. Brett Westwood.

For anyone wanting to study this hoverfly in Worcestershire, it would be well worth exploring places such as the Teme Valley and tributaries of the Severn in May and June. It is very likely that the species is much more widespread than we know and since the search will take you along streambanks in dappled spring sunshine, what's not to like?

Reference

Stubbs, A & Falk, S, 2002. *British Hoverflies*. British Entomological and Natural history Society (BENHS)

Images

01 Male *C. eunotus* on sunlit log, Dick Brook, Shaver's End. Brett Westwood.

02 Male *C. eunotus* on pathside, Mount Segg. Brett Westwood.

03 Female *C. eunotus* on bramble flower, Dick Brook, Shrawley. Brett Westwood.