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Female with a white 'tail'

Eristalis intricarius is a bumblebee mimic and as one of the earliest species seen in the spring it is often found feeding on willow catkins. This species is sexually dimorphic, the females have white 'tails' and are larger than the darker males. Both have a yellow scutellum (shield-shaped structure on the back).



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Male with a reddish-brown 'tail'



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Syrphus species, feeding on hogweed

Britain's Hoverflies: An introduction to the Hoverflies of Britain by Stuart Ball & Roger Morris, published by Wild Guides and Princeton University Press will help you learn more about hoverflies and how to identify them.

We are interested in receiving information on the hoverflies you observe. Information on common species, their numbers and where they are found is important in helping us learn about our wildlife and protect our natural heritage.

For more information please visit the Outer Hebrides Biological Recording website:

www.ohbr.org.uk



Outer Hebrides Biological Recording

Common Hoverflies of the Outer Hebrides

This is a short guide to some of the common hoverflies, which are relatively easy to identify and found throughout the islands.

Hoverflies are Diptera (true flies) and have one pair of wings, most other insects including wasps and bees have two. Many species are convincing bee or wasp mimics, their striped bodies and buzzing behaviour can initially fool both predators and naturalists.

They are important pollinators and the larvae of many species feed on aphids. Therefore, they are welcome visitors to any garden, particularly as they do not sting.



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The marmalade hoverfly, *Episyrphus balteatus* is one of the few hoverflies to have a common name, and one of the easiest species to identify. The pattern of two dark bands separated by two orange bands on each segment of the abdomen is distinctive.



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The pied hoverfly, *Volucella pellucens* is a large and easily identifiable hoverfly, which is usually found visiting a wide range of flowers, especially hogweed.

The white band on a dark body is a distinctive characteristic. The black scutellum, which sits between the thorax and the abdomen, separates it from the similar *Leucozona lucorum*.



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Leucozona lucorum with a yellow scutellum



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Sericomyia silentis is a distinctive, common, large, black and yellow wasp mimic. It is often heard buzzing before it is spotted somewhere in the sun amongst the flowers.



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Syrirta pipiens is one of the small, dark, slender hoverflies that is easily identified. It has a greatly enlarged femora (the top part of the hind leg) that is clearly visible with a reasonable side on view.



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Rhingia campestris has no common name, the 'long nosed hoverfly' would be appropriate.

There is another similar hoverfly *Rhingia rostrata* present in Britain, but so far it has not been recorded in Scotland.

R. campestris is common throughout the spring and summer and can even be found quite late into September. Its long nose enables it to feed on nectar and pollen in deep flowers such as comfrey as in this photograph. However, it can also be seen on a wide range of more open flowers.



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