

The common carder bee, *Bombus pascuorum*, has been recorded in the islands since 2014 and is now quite widespread making differentiation between the two carders bees a new challenge for us. Early in the season the strong orange/red of fresh moss carder bee, *B. muscorum*, is a good enough indication, but this fades as the season progresses.

Northern Colletes *Colletes floralis*



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Six species of solitary bees have been recorded in the Outer Hebrides, two *Colletes* species: *C. floralis* and *C. succinctus*, three *Andrena* species: *A. tarsata*, *A. ruficrus* and *A. clarkella* and most recently *Lasioglossum albipes*, the bloomed furrow bee.

There are one or two beekeepers in the islands so it is always possible that what you are looking at is a honeybee and, beware, some hoverflies are excellent bumblebee mimics.

White-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus lucorum*



©Bill Neill

The white-tailed bumblebee, *Bombus lucorum*, is probably an aggregate of three species (*B. lucorum*, *B. cryptarum* and *B. magnus*) which can only be reliably distinguished by examination of their DNA.

In 2020 the buff-tailed bumblebee, *Bombus terrestris* was added to the species list. Queens with buff tails are identifiable; workers are more difficult and can look like other white-tailed bumblebees.

We are interested in all your records, particularly of common species which are often under recorded. For more information, or to submit your records, please visit the Outer Hebrides Biological Recording website:

www.ohbr.org.uk



Outer Hebrides Biological Recording

Bumblebees of the Outer Hebrides



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Great Yellow Bumblebee *Bombus distinguendus*

Traditional crofting practices help make the islands a haven for bumblebees. Rotational cropping on the machair grasslands leaves some ground fallow for two or three years and either no or very low levels of herbicides or insecticides are used. So each year there is an abundance of wildflowers to provide healthy forage for the bees throughout the summer.

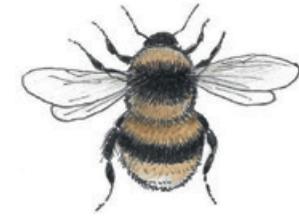
Despite the rigours of the climate, bumblebee numbers are stable and include both rare species and local varieties not commonly seen elsewhere.



Great Yellow Bumblebee
Bombus distinguendus
 A UK biodiversity priority species.
 Locally common on the Uist machairs



Garden Bumblebee
Bombus hortorum
 Note the yellowish buff band on the abdomen,
 extends up on to the rear of the thorax



Heath Bumblebee
Bombus jonellus
 The Outer Hebridean form of this species
 does not have a white tail end



White-tailed Bumblebee
Bombus lucorum
 A similar pattern to Garden Bumblebee.
 Look carefully there is a difference



Moss Carder Bee
Bombus muscorum
 The distinctive form found in the Hebrides,
 when worn can be difficult to identify



Gipsy Cuckoo Bumblebee
Bombus bohemicus
 Females take over the nests of host species,
 there are no workers



Buff-tailed Bumblebee
Bombus terrestris
 Distinctive buff tail



Common Carder Bee
Bombus pascuorum
 Recorded on the islands since 2014
 and now common



Honey Bee
Apis species
 There are now a number of honey bee keepers
 in the Outer Hebrides