

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 *B. muscorum* is a good enough indication, but this fades as the season progresses.

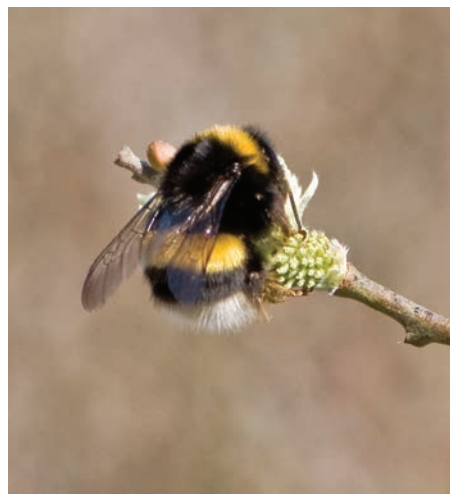
Northern Colletes *Colletes floralis*



© R Petley-Jones

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.



© Chris Johnson

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.

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.



Illustrations © Bill Neill

The great yellow bumblebee, *Bombus distinguendus* is a rare UK priority species that is still locally common on the Uist machairs. Look out for it on common knapweed, *Centaurea nigra* in the late summer and autumn.



Garden bumblebee, *Bombus hortorum*; note the yellowish buff band on the abdomen extends up on to the rear of the thorax. The size of a bumblebee is never a good indicator of species.



Heath bumblebee, *Bombus jonellus* is similar to the garden bumblebee. On the mainland *B. jonellus* has a white tail but here in the Outer Hebrides it is buff so separating the two species is easier.



White-tailed bumblebee, *Bombus lucorum*, has a similar pattern to the garden bumblebee, note that the black on the thorax extends onto the abdomen. The characteristics once used to separate *B. magnus*, from *B. lucorum* are no longer considered to be accurate.



Moss carder bee, *Bombus muscorum*, is a distinct form found in the Outer Hebrides, Shetland, Coll and Tiree. In late summer some individuals can show a black band where hair has worn off on the thorax. This can cause confusion with great yellow bumblebees.



Gypsy cuckoo bumblebee, *Bombus bohemicus*. Females (there are no workers) take over the nest of the host species whose workers then raise new cuckoo bumblebees. In the Outer Hebrides it has only been found in and around Stornoway woods. Their wings are darker than those of other bumblebees.