

Further interesting records from southern Britain in 2004

Geoff Allen 3 Fontwell Close, Senacre, Maidstone, Kent ME15 8UY.
geoff.ali@ukonline.co.uk

Members are again encouraged to send in records of interesting aculeate captures from their area, as the success of this article depends on participation. It has been suggested that national grid references could be included to make the entries more valuable, and these may be introduced in future articles.

In this entry, the following initials are used: ICB – Ian Beavis; NB – Nick Blacker; ME – Mike Edwards; AJP – Andrew Philpott; BEW – Brian Woodhams.

I include an erratum to my previous article, particularly to the item on *Myrmica specoides*. The Hayling Island capture of this scarce red ant was made by ME and the identification was also his. Furthermore, the ant has only been found as far north as Norfolk, where it was captured by NB. He will be publishing more detail on this at some stage. NB also posed the interesting question – has this species recently expanded its range or has it always been present in these localities, but merely overlooked? This is a question asked by nearly everyone who finds a rare species out of its known range and often it cannot be given a satisfactory answer. I hope to produce something further on this for the Newsletter when time permits.

Aphelopus atratus. The “DEB” species seem to be regarded as only honorary aculeates by most wasp collectors, and so it was pleasing to receive a number of records by ICB from south west Kent. *A. atratus* was present at Tunbridge Wells, Pembury and Brenchley in May and June 2004.

Aphelopus melaleucus. Recorded from Tunbridge Wells, including the Common, in late May and June by ICB.

Anteon arcuatum. Found at Rusthall Common and Tunbridge Wells in May and June (ICB).

Anteon flavicorne. From Brenchley and the RSPB reserve at Pembury Woods in June (ICB).

Anteon tripartitum. From Tunbridge Wells, also in June (ICB).

Lonchodryinus ruficornis. Found near the River Grom at High Rocks, Tunbridge Wells in July (ICB).

Chrysus gracillima. From 3 localities in south west Kent in June and July – Ashurst, Capel parish and Tunbridge Wells (ICB).

Myrmica specoides. From Speldhurst and Capel parish, Kent, in May and August respectively (ICB).

Priocnemis coriacea. This spider wasp is scarce in Kent, found in June at Pembury by ICB.

Anoplius viaticus. I cannot find any confirmed Kent records of this spider wasp and so it was interesting to learn that it was recorded from Middlebere and Povington Heaths, Dorset, in March and June, respectively (AJP).

Gymnomerus laevipes. By ICB in June from Pembury. Also from Groombridge, Kent (ICB), in the same month.

Ancistrocerus nigricornis. This species is apparently declining nationally but found by ICB at Ashurst, Kent, in May.

Crossocerus binotatus. A scarce wasp from AJP's garden at Broadstone, Dorset, in July.

Lestiphorus (formerly *Gorytes*) ***bicinctus***. From the Broadstone garden, also in July (AJP) and from Groombridge, Kent, in the same month (ICB).

Gorytes laticinctus. This rare wasp was also found in the Broadstone garden in July (AJP).

Cerceris quadricincta. I had the pleasure to identify a series of this RDB1 BAP wasp, collected by BEW, at Richborough and Maidstone, both Kent, in July.

Podalonia hirsuta. From Povington Heath, Dorset, in June (AJP).

Andrena denticulata. Found at Corfe Common, Dorset, in July (AJP) and also found in his garden at Broadstone in August. Recorded from Southborough, Kent, in the latter month (ICB).

Andrena fucata. Scarce in Kent, from Tunbridge Wells and Pembury in May and June respectively (ICB).

Andrena labiata. Although recorded fairly frequently in south west Kent in 2004 (ICB) I was pleased to see a male specimen from Watlington, near Maidstone, captured in May (BEW).

Andrena marginata. All colour forms recorded at Corfe Common in August and September on devils bit scabious (AJP).

Andrena praecox. An oligolege on *Salix*, from Tunbridge Wells in March (ICB).

Andrena proxima. Found at Corfe Common in June (AJP).

Andrena varians. A species which is possibly declining, recorded from Corfe Common in April (AJP).

Lasioglossum brevicorne. Found at Povington Heath in June by AJP, determined by ME.

Lasioglossum semilucens. This tiny bee must be overlooked at times but is obviously still a rarity. Recorded from Brenchley, Kent, by ICB in May 2004.

Lasioglossum smeathmanellum. Although I am not sure how well this species is faring in Dorset, it is apparently declining in some parts of the south and so a September record from Worbarrow Bay (AJP) was pleasing.

Sphecodes niger. From Leigh parish, Kent, in August (ICB).

Melitta haemorrhoidalis. A rare species but 2 records from Broadstone, Dorset, in June (AJP): 4 males on a cranesbill and 1 female collecting pollen on *Campanula* sp., respectively.

Stelis punctulatissima. A scarce cleptoparasitic bee, found at Broadstone in June (AJP).

Megachile circumcincta. A rare leaf cutter bee, found at Povington Heath in June (AJP).

Coelioxys elongata. From Tunbridge Wells (3 records) in June and July (ICB).

Nomada conjungens. Recorded by ICB in July from Tunbridge Wells.

Nomada fulvicornis. A male in April and a female in July at Broadstone (AJP).

Nomada integra (formerly *N. pleurosticta*). From Corfe Common, June (AJP).

Nomada lathburiana. Still scarce in Kent, recorded from Ashurst in May (ICB). Also from Hothfield Common, Kent, with its host, *Andrena cineraria*, in the same month (BEW).

Nomada signata. This rare nomad bee has been recorded from Tunbridge Wells on a fair

number of occasions by ICB and so a record from April 2004 was not surprising.

Eucera longicornis. This long horned bee has declined quite considerably over the last few decades and so 2 records by ICB from Tunbridge Wells in May were pleasing indeed. Also recorded from Swanage Peveril point, Dorset, in the same month (AJP).

Melecta albifrons. Considered quite common in some southern counties, this species is certainly not so in Kent. From Groombridge in May (ICB).

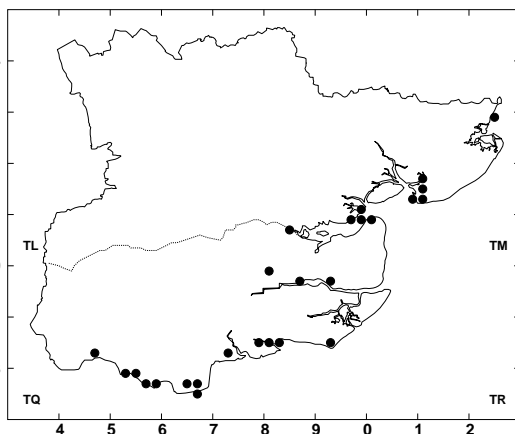
***Myrmica specioides* in Essex**

Peter Harvey 32 Lodge Lane, Grays, Essex RM16 2YP

The references to *Myrmica specioides* in the Autumn 2004 Newsletter and *Further interesting records from southern Britain in 2004* in this newsletter have promoted me to set out the situation in Essex. I first collected this ant in the county in 1988 at Shoebury Old Ranges in S. Essex but the specimens remained identified only as “*Myrmica* sp.” until later. In 1990 I was undertaking pitfall trapping on the Essex Wildlife Trust reserve near St Osyth in North Essex and I came across *Myrmica* workers that I provisionally identified as *M. specioides* and which Geoff Allen and the late John Felton subsequently confirmed.

The species has subsequently turned up in a fair number of coastal sites in the county (see 2004 map), always in thermophilic situations, on sparsely vegetated sand dune, on sections of unimproved south-facing sea wall, sparsely vegetated south-facing landslip grassland, old grazing marsh grassland with sparsely vegetated hummocks and anthills and sparsely vegetated grassland on south-facing terrace gravels. It has more rarely been taken on old sparsely vegetated brownfield habitats.

Whilst the possibility that the species is expanding its range cannot be dismissed, it seems to me very possible that this ant previously remained undetected in the county. Some species in this genus can be very difficult to identify, especially if only one or two workers are available and some samples of *M. sabuleti*, *M. scabrinodis* and *M. specioides* can be particularly confusing. Comparison with voucher specimens and knowledge of all the species is necessary to be sure of identification.



References

Harvey, P R, (1998) The modern distribution of ants (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) in Essex with their regional rarity and threat status. *Essex Naturalist (New Series)* **15**: 61-111.