

NEWSLETTER 68

January 2023



Soldierfly *Odontomyia ornata*.
See p. 3. Photo: Tim Sexton.

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New Species of *Odontomyia* (Stratiomyidae) in VCs 55 & 56

The last two years have seen several records of *Odontomyia ornata* (Ornate Brigadier, front cover) and *Odontomyia tigrina* (Black Colonel) in Vice-counties 55 (Leics. & Rutland) and 56 (Notts.).

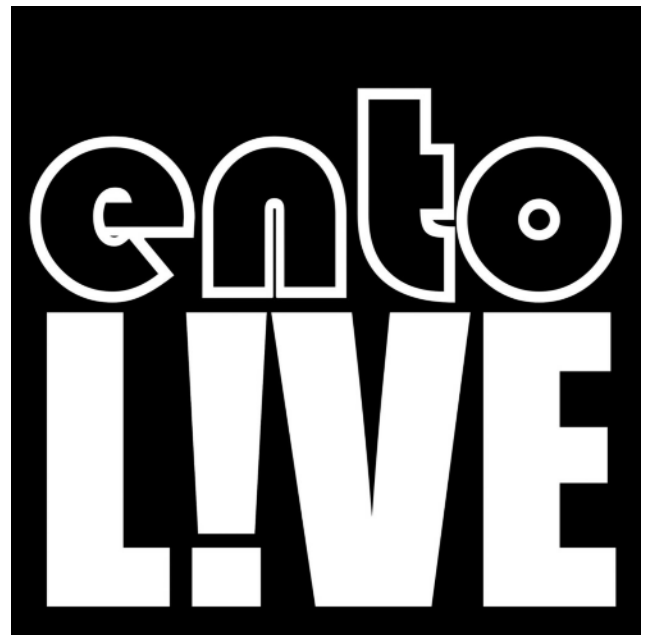
LESOPS 33, *Soldierflies of VC 55* (Morris, 2017) contains no records of either species. Only *Odontomyia argentata* (Silver Colonel) is included with records at Hugglescote on 6 May 2014 and Broughton Astley on 27 and 29 April 2015 (G. Calow). Since then additional records have been reported (iRecord) at Aylestone Meadows on 13 May 2018 and 5 May 2019 (D. Gould).

Odontomyia ornata, a large fly the size of a *Stratiomys*, is widespread in the fens and coastal levels of East Anglia, the south-east counties, Somerset and Gwent. I had only previously seen one at Ham Wall in Somerset. However in May 2020 a specimen was found on an old outwash delta at Attenborough Nature Reserve in Nottinghamshire (T. Sexton) and further specimens were recorded at the same location with a male on 23 May 2022 (B. Wetton) and several others, including a female, later in the year (S. Browne). *Odontomyia ornata* was also recorded (iRecord) in vice-county 55 on 12 July 2022 at Clipsham Park on the Lincolnshire border (M. Berriman).

Odontomyia tigrina is a smaller and more localised species mainly confined to southern counties but with a few records north as far as Scotland. I had seen one at Lakenheath Fen in Cambridgeshire and at Ham Wall, Somerset. Like the other species it is found on pond margins and in ditches. Nottinghamshire had one old record near Newark in 1925 (Nottingham Biological Record Centre). A recent record for VC 56 was added at Netherfield Lagoons on 9th June 2019 (P. Smith). The first records for VC 55 occurred in 2022 when one was found at Cropston on 7 June 2022 (D. Sumner) and a female at Egleton Nature Reserve in Rutland on 30 June 2022 (B. Wetton).

The records suggest that these species of soldierflies may be expanding their ranges beyond the traditional strongholds further south and should be expected to recur in both counties where the presence this year of females suggests they will have both bred.

Brian Wetton



I have just received a note from the British Entomological & Natural History Society indicating that, in 2023, they are co-sponsoring a series of webinars that may be of interest to local entomologists. The programme at the moment is quite esoteric including other invertebrate groups but any presentation of interest can be easily booked. The programme can be found at

<https://biologicalrecording.co.uk/entolive/>

Ray Morris

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**Ray Morris
Acting Treasurer**

£££££

Leicestershire Craneflies 2023

Suggestions for further work -

Part I: Tipulidae

From 2020 to 2022 a series of LESOPS: (40, 41, 43, 46, 51) were published to provide baseline data on the occurrence and distribution of the four cranefly families (Diptera: Tipuloidea) in VC 55. The present article, the first of a series, is offered as suggestions for further work and should be read in conjunction with these LESOPS. The book *British Craneflies* (Stubbs, 2021) is also very useful.

Of course, it is good to get out, any time, anywhere, but it would be useful to have a follow-up for some of the rarely-recorded cranefly species. (See Table 1). Specimens of craneflies captured by moth-ers at light traps would also be gratefully received. The suggestions below might prompt thoughts of suitable sites to explore. Please keep a voucher specimen for all rare species and those new to the VC 55, and send them to the County Recorder (JK).

The Genus *Ctenophora* - Comb-horned Craneflies.

Ct. pectinicornis seems to have been recorded more frequently in the past decade. This very distinctive genus seems, perhaps in response to climate change, to be establishing colonies ever further north. In recent years *Ctenophora ornata* has become established in

Sherwood Forest (*Crane-fly News* 2009 and No. 26 Autumn 2013.) On both occasions it was taken at light, which is a good opportunity to collect craneflies. The rarer *Ct. flaveolata* has also been recorded in the north of England, and recently from Scotland, (Fig. 1) so it may well occur in VC 55. Little is known of its life cycle but it seems to be associated with old beech or oak trees and emerges in May.

The Genus *Nephrotoma* - Tiger Craneflies

N. analis This species belongs to the group of 'Tiger Craneflies' with a dark stigma spot and a median dark line on the top of the abdomen. Careful examination of the underside of the last abdominal segment of the male is necessary for ID, although the 'slightly notched' appearance is shared with other species such as *N. appendiculata*. There is a single record of *N. analis* from Skeffington Wood.

N. crocata A new site for this striking wasp-mimic has been discovered in a quarry, so it may thrive in any well-drained habitat, not necessarily sandy.

N. guestfallica The species is said to prefer dry sandy soils and although its distribution indicates that it is present in VC55, voucher specimens should be sent in.

N. submaculosa This is chiefly a coastal species and so its occurrence in Leics must be questioned. It is very similar to the common *N. flavescens*.

Table 1: Where and when to look.

Name	Example Location	Habitat	Date
<i>Nephrotoma analis</i>	Skeffington Wood	Sandy alluvium or soil.	June/July
<i>Nephrotoma crocata</i>	Clipsham Quarry	Well-drained soils	May
<i>Nephrotoma guestfallica</i>	Watermead Park	Sandy soil.	June/July
<i>Nephrotoma submaculosa</i>	??	Sand dunes, sandy river banks.	May/June
<i>Nigrotipula nigra</i>	Everard's Meadow	Reedbeds	July
<i>Prionocera subserricornis</i>	Grobby pool	Ditches with organic mud	May-August
<i>Tipula cava</i>	Charnwood Lodge	Heathland	May-July
<i>Tipula selene</i>	Burley Wood	Woodland	June
<i>Tipula livida</i>	??	Woodland	June/July
<i>Tipula irrorata</i>	Mountsorrel Quarry	Woodland	May-July
<i>Tipula pabulina</i>	Collyweston Wood	Limestone woodland	May
<i>Tipula signata</i>	Charnwood Lodge	Woodland	Sept/Oct
<i>Tipula staegeri</i>	Grace Dieu Wood	Woodland	Sept/Oct
<i>Tipula montium</i>	River Eye	Rivers/streams	May-Aug
<i>Tipula pierre</i>	Empingham meadow	Wet grassland	May-Sept



Fig. 1. *Ct. flaveolata* in Fife. Photo: A. Watson Featherstone.

***Nigrotipula nigra*.** Until Mark Skevington's record in Everard's Meadow near Enderby in July 2021, we had no Leics habitat with which to associate this species. Muschamp seemed to record it from Narborough Bog (Kramer, 2011) which, before the water table was lowered, was a typical reedy habitat. Following restoration, the species may well return and other reedbeds should be searched. First record: G. Calow, at light. (LES Newsletter 49: 8, Sept 2013).

Prionocera subsericornis The margins of ditches used to drain the heavy clay soils, typical of the old wet pasture of Leicestershire would be worth searching for this elusive crane fly. There is just one known site in VC 55, near Groby Pool. Larvae of the genus feed on aquatic mosses and it flies from May to August.

The Genus *Tanyptera*. The more common *T. atrata* has not yet been recorded for the County. The female lays eggs in birch stumps and so any site with birch trees, such as Charnwood Lodge, could yield this species.

The Genus *Tipula*. Some of these are late-emergers and are worth looking for in September and October.

T. (Savtshenkia) signata and *T. (Savtshenkia) staegeri* are both Autumn-emerging woodland species.

T. (Tipula) subcunctans has not yet been recorded in Leicestershire although it is distributed all over England. It emerges to fly in October, at a time when most of us have packed up our nets. Look for it in wet, rushy meadows, or wet moorland. Single records e.g. *T. livida* may be from migratory crane flies not yet established in the County.

Subgenus *Yamatotipula*. Care is needed with this group of look-alikes and genitalia preps are necessary to identify the species. (See LESOPS 43) *T. (Y.) couckeii*, (Lockington Marsh) *T. (Y.) montium* (from bank of River Eye, Stockerston), and *T. (Y.) pierrei* (recorded from Cossington Meadows).

Rarer habitat-types

River valleys with sandy alluvium such as Watermead Park and the Soar Valley would be well worth exploring wherever possible for species preferring dry habitats. Most of Leicestershire is covered by heavy clay soils formed from glacial clays or Jurassic Marl so drier sites, such as sandy or limestone areas, may contain different species. Faster flowing streams with waterfalls are other biotopes less common in VC55, and are well worth seeking out, as is Sphagnum Bog.

References

Kramer, J. 2011 *The Crane flies in Leicestershire and Rutland* LESOPS 26.

Kramer, J. & Morris, R. 2021. *The status of Diptera in VC55: Tipulidae*. LESOPS 43.

Stubbs, A. 2021. *British Crane flies*. British Entomological and Natural History Society.

Note: LESOPS are available from the Naturespot website.

John Kramer

Looking for help?

The following are willing to act as an initial point of contact for providing advice and information to members.

Arachnids (Mites & Ticks):- Ivan Pedley, 48 Woodlands Drive, Groby, Leicester LE6 0BQ. 0116 287 6886. ivan.pedley@gmail.com

Arachnids (Opiliones, Harvestmen): - Ray Morris, see page 2.

Arachnids (Spiders):- Paul Palmer
palmerpjp@gmail.com

Arachnids (Pseudoscorpions):- Ed Darby 01509 569670 lboro.ecols@ntlworld.com

Biological Recording:- LRERC; Room 400, County Hall, Glenfield LE3 8RA. 0116 3054108.

Chilopoda:- Helen Ikin, 237 Forest Road, Woodhouse, Woodhouse Eaves, Leics LE12 8TZ. 01509 890102. helen.canids@btinternet.com

Coleoptera:- Graham Finch, 14 Thorndale, Ibstock, Leics. LE67 6JT: finchgraham1@gmail.com

Collembola: Alan Cann, 17 Overdale Road, Leicester LE2 3YJ. alan.cann@gmail.com Online identification guides:
<https://collembolla.blogspot.com/p/identification-guides.html>

Diplopoda:- Helen Ikin (see Chilopoda).

Diptera (Some families):- Ray Morris (see page 2).

Diptera (Nematocera - Mosquitoes, Blackflies & Craneflies):- John Kramer, 31 Ash Tree Road, Oadby, Leicester LE2 5TE. 0116 271 6499.
john.kramer@btinternet.com

Hymenoptera (Symphyta - Sawflies):- Dave Nicholls, 69-71 Church Lane, Ratby, LE6 0JF.
davidnicholls125@gmail.com

Hymenoptera (Bumblebees):- vacant.

Hymenoptera (Other aculeates - Bees, Wasps & Ants):- Helen Ikin (see Chilopoda).

Hemiptera:- (see p. 10) Alan Cann, 17 Overdale Road, Leicester LE2 3YJ. alan.cann@gmail.com

Sue Timms, 17 The Square, Bagworth, Leics. LE67 1DQ. sue.timms@clara.co.uk

Kate Nightingale, 12 Latimer Road, Cropston, Leics. LE7 7GN. kate.h.nightingale@gmail.com

Isopoda (Woodlice):- Helen Ikin (see Chilopoda).

Lepidoptera:- County Moth Recorder Team:-
VC55CMR@gmail.com

Mecoptera, Neuroptera, Plecoptera :- Steve Woodward, see page 2.

Mollusca: - Dave Nicholls (see Hymenoptera (Symphyta)).

Odonata:- Ian Merrill i.merrill@btopenworld.com

Orthoptera:- Helen Ikin, see Chilopoda.

Psocoptera:- Helen Ikin, see Chilopoda.

Thysanoptera: - Ivan Pedley, see Arachnids - Mites.

Trichoptera (adults):- Ray Morris, see page 2.

2023 Indoor Meetings Programme

All meetings 7-9 pm in St Bart's Community Hall, Main Street, Kirby Muxloe, LE9 2AL (unless otherwise stated). Guests are welcome to join us at meetings.

- Friday 17 February: Tim Sexton: *The Underwater World of Rutland Water*.
- Wednesday 1 March: Richard "Bugman" Jones: *Wasps - much more interesting than boring old bees*. (Joint Meeting with Leicester Lit & Phil Natural History Section at Leicester Museum).
- Friday 17 March: AGM & Members' Evening.

Alan Cann
Secretary
