

# Identifying soldierflies and allies: soldierflies in genus *Stratiomys*

*Compiled by Martin C. Harvey for the Soldierflies and Allies Recording Scheme*

*Version 2 at 23 February 2020*

These guides are only possible thanks to the generosity of the brilliant photographers who have allowed their images to be used. Special mention must be given to Malcolm Storey and Steven Falk, whose photo collections form the backbone for most of the species guides:

**Malcolm Storey's [BioImages website](#) – Steven Falk's [photo collections on Flickr](#)**

Other photographers included in this guide are Andrew Green, Ian Andrews, Jeremy Richardson, Judy Webb, Neil Marks, Peter Andrews, Simon Knott, Tim Hodge and Will George.

Males are shown first, one page for each species, then females. The pages for males include distribution maps taken from the recording scheme's [provisional atlas](#) (Harvey 2017).

As far as possible, these guides show features that can be seen on live insects in the field, or are likely to be visible in photographs. For comprehensive identification keys and species accounts see [British soldierflies and their allies](#), by Alan Stubbs and Martin Drake. See also the recording scheme's [additional notes](#) to accompany the Stubbs and Drake keys.

For lots more information on soldierflies and allies go to the recording scheme [website](#), [Twitter](#) page or [Facebook](#) group.

For lots more information and events, and to support the study and conservation of flies, please consider joining [Dipterists Forum](#).

## **Records wanted!**

Once you have identified your fly, please let the recording scheme have the details! Add to [iRecord](#) or send to the [recording scheme](#) so that we can share the records for conservation and research.

The Soldierflies and Allies Recording Scheme is part of Dipterists Forum



The Soldierflies and Allies Recording Scheme is supported by the UKCEH Biological Records Centre



# Recognising the genus: *Stratiomys* (plus *Odontomyia ornata*)

Genus *Stratiomys* contains four large species (12–15mm long), and this guide also includes the Ornate Brigadier, *Odontomyia ornata*, which is a similar size and is sometimes confused with the *Stratiomys* species. These are 'typical' soldierflies: they are broad-bodied, with a pair of spines on the scutellum and most have wasp-mimic markings (the exception, *Stratiomys longicornis*, is a bee mimic).

There are some differences in markings between males and females, which can readily be told apart by the eyes (males have eyes meeting on top of the head, females have a fairly broad gap).

All of this genus have larvae that develop in water, in ditches or at the edges of shallow water bodies, with each species having its own requirements.

Their habitats have come under threat from land drainage and from changes in water quality, and changes in management affecting both the water bodies and the supply of flowers that the adults need. Although none of these species are common, there have been signs of range expansion in recent years for all except the very rare *S. chamaeleon*.

For more information on these species see Stubbs, A. 2015. [Bringing soldierflies to attention](#). *British Wildlife* 26(6): 409–415.

very long antennae  
(especially first  
segment) = *Stratiomys*

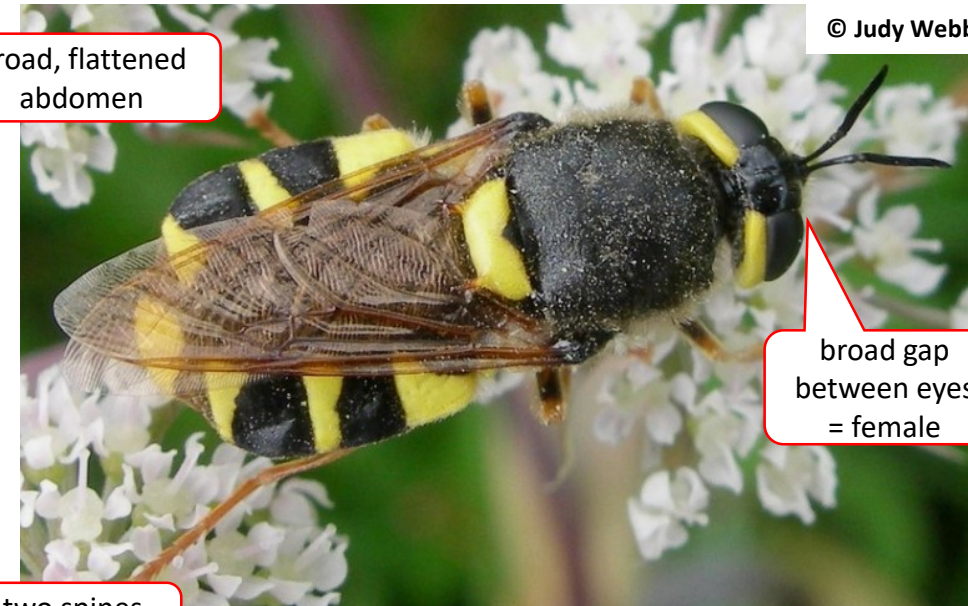
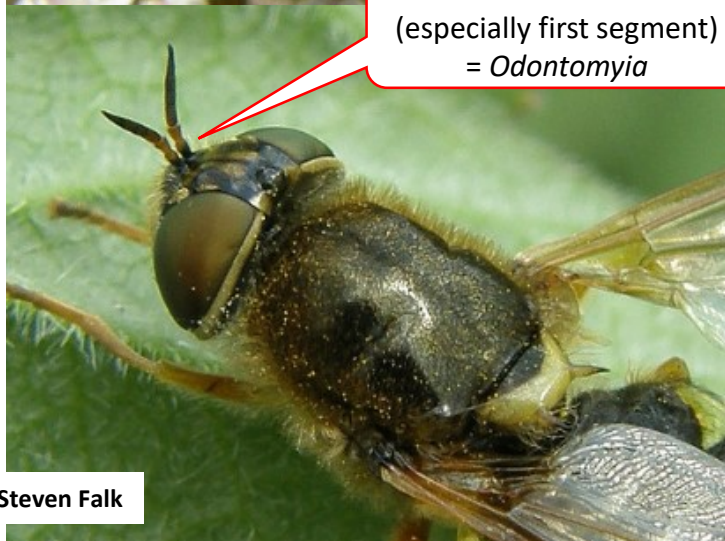
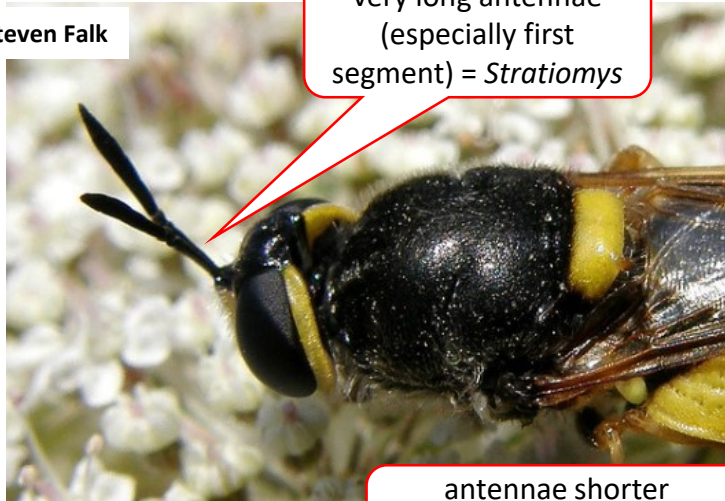
antennae shorter  
(especially first  
segment)  
= *Odontomyia*

no gap  
between eyes  
= male

broad, flattened  
abdomen

broad gap  
between eyes  
= female

two spines  
on scutellum



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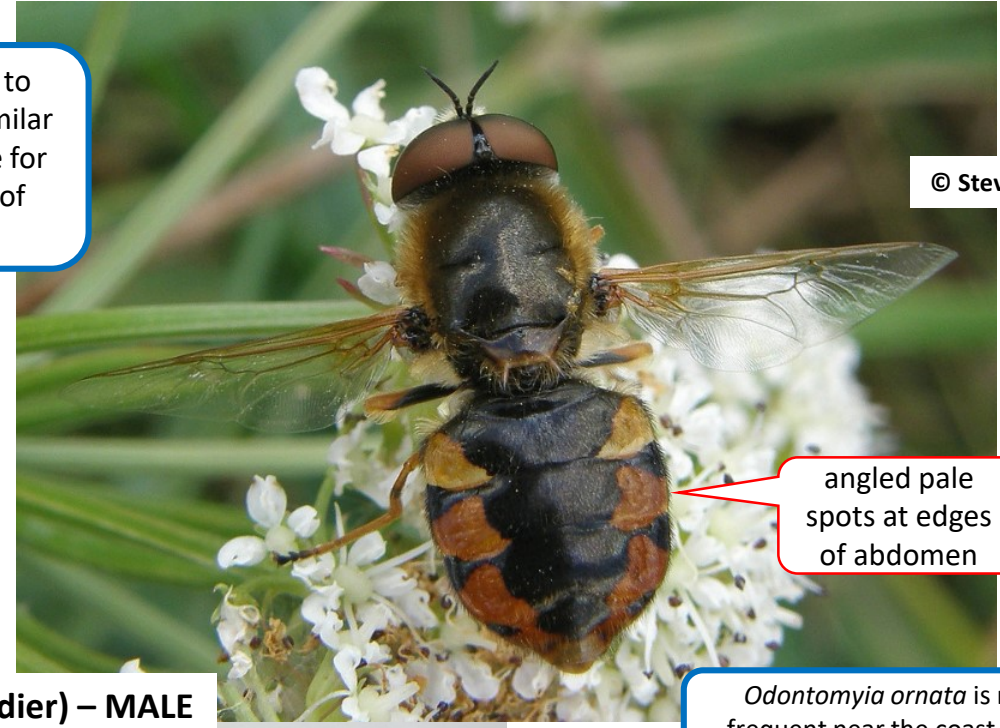
© Tim Hodge  
via iRecord



[iRecord link](#)

legs mostly yellow, with femora black at base, and a dark ring on the hind tibia

This species is a similar size to genus *Stratiomys*, and has similar markings, so is included here for comparison (other species of *Odontomyia* are smaller).



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angled pale spots at edges of abdomen

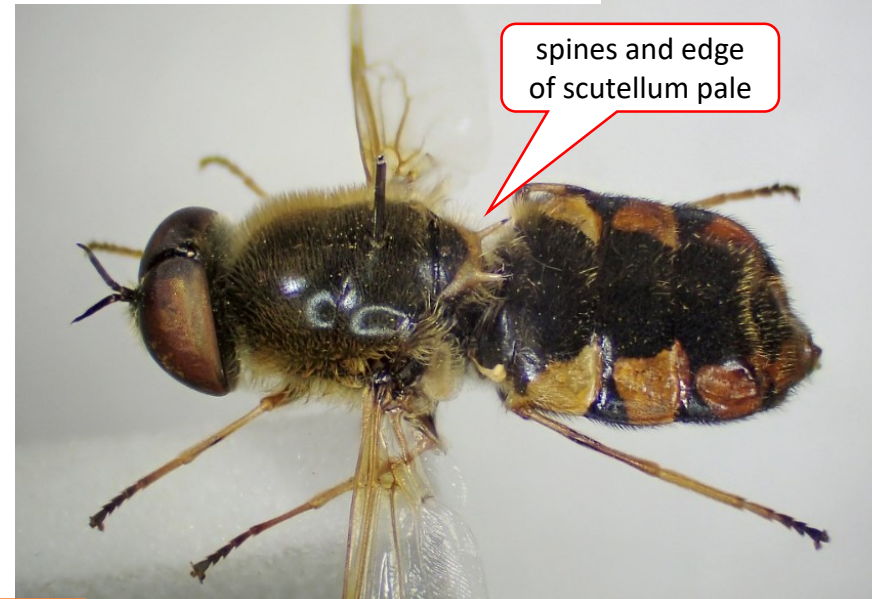
### *Odontomyia ornata* (Ornate Brigadier) – MALE

*Odontomyia ornata* is most frequent near the coast, but is increasingly being found inland.

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first segment of antennae much shorter than *Stratiomys*

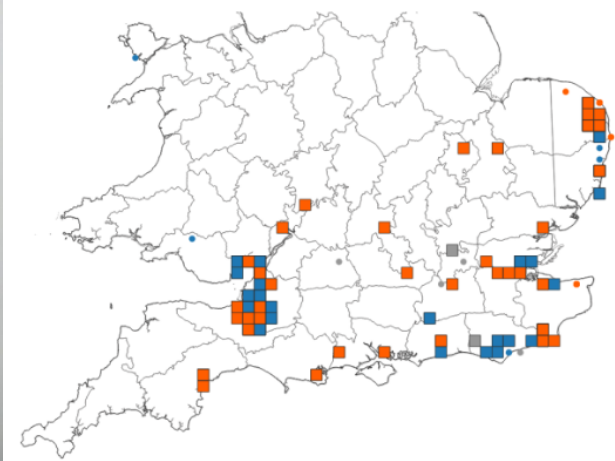


spines and edge of scutellum pale

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- ID difficulty: 2
- Flight period: late Apr to late July, peak in Jun
- GB threat: Least Concern • GB rarity: Nationally Scarce
- scattered in southern Britain
- ditches in grazing levels
- No. of records: 549 • % since 2000: 47%





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via Steven Falk

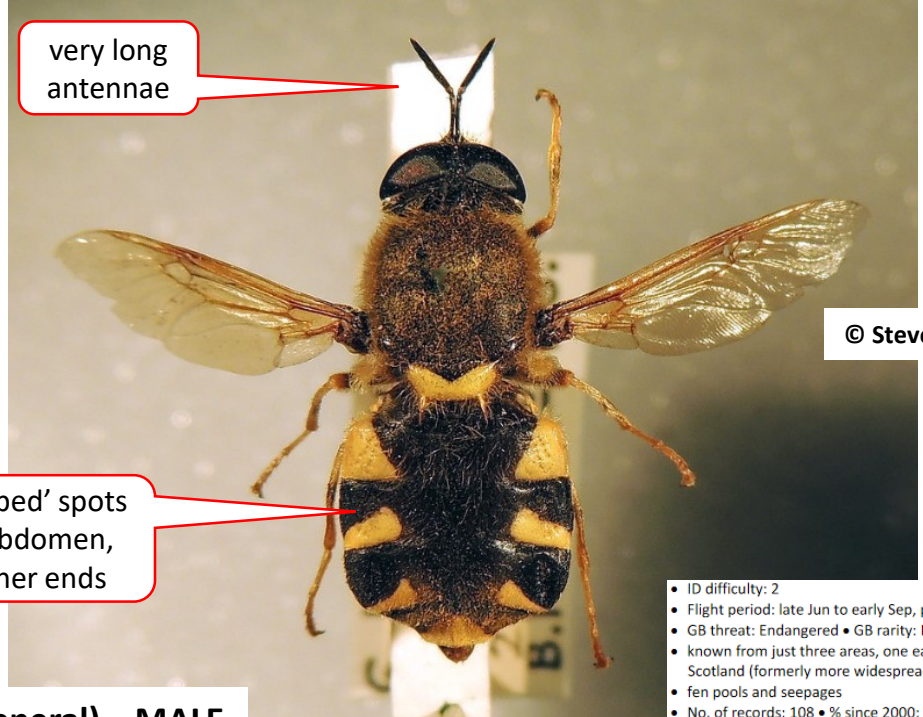


black triangle at base  
of yellow scutellum

front and mid tibia  
almost entirely yellow

[Steven Falk link](#)

very long  
antennae



© Steven Falk

yellow 'clubbed' spots  
at side of abdomen,  
blunt at inner ends

- ID difficulty: 2
- Flight period: late Jun to early Sep, peak Jul and early Aug
- GB threat: Endangered • GB rarity: Nationally Rare
- known from just three areas, one each in England, Wales and Scotland (formerly more widespread)
- fen pools and seepages
- No. of records: 108 • % since 2000: 28%

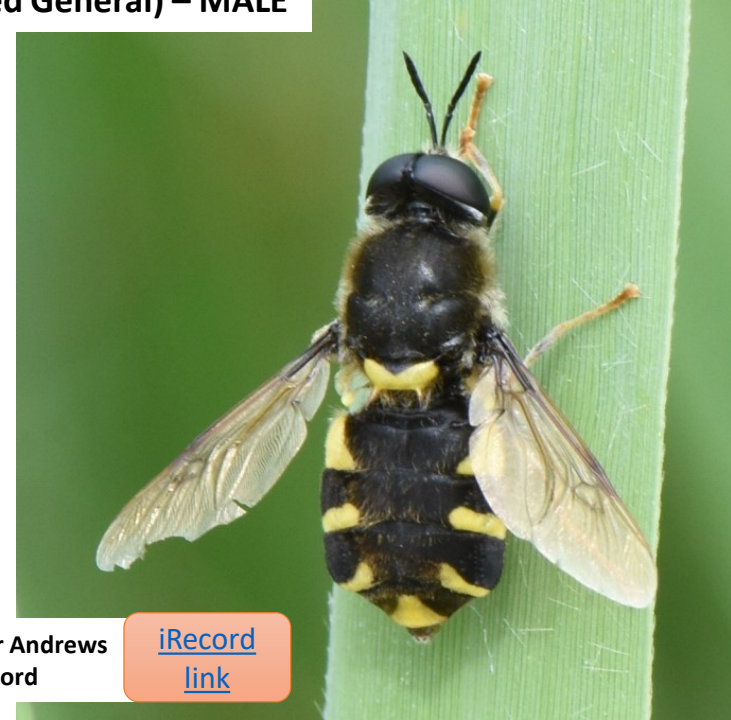
### *Stratiomys chamaeleon* (Clubbed General) – MALE

underside of  
abdomen mostly pale  
(not visible here)



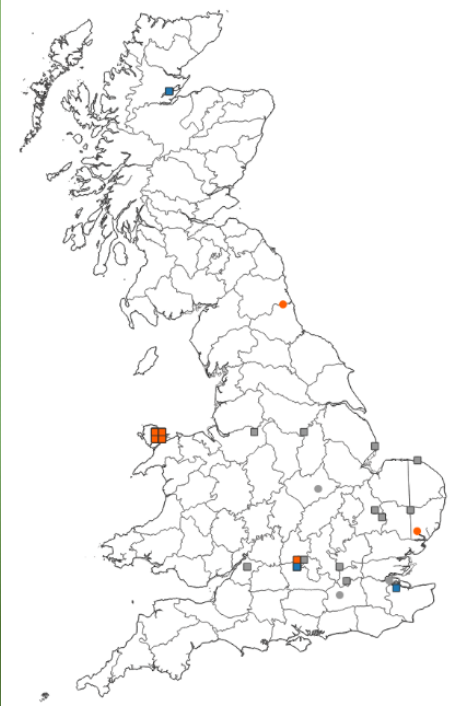
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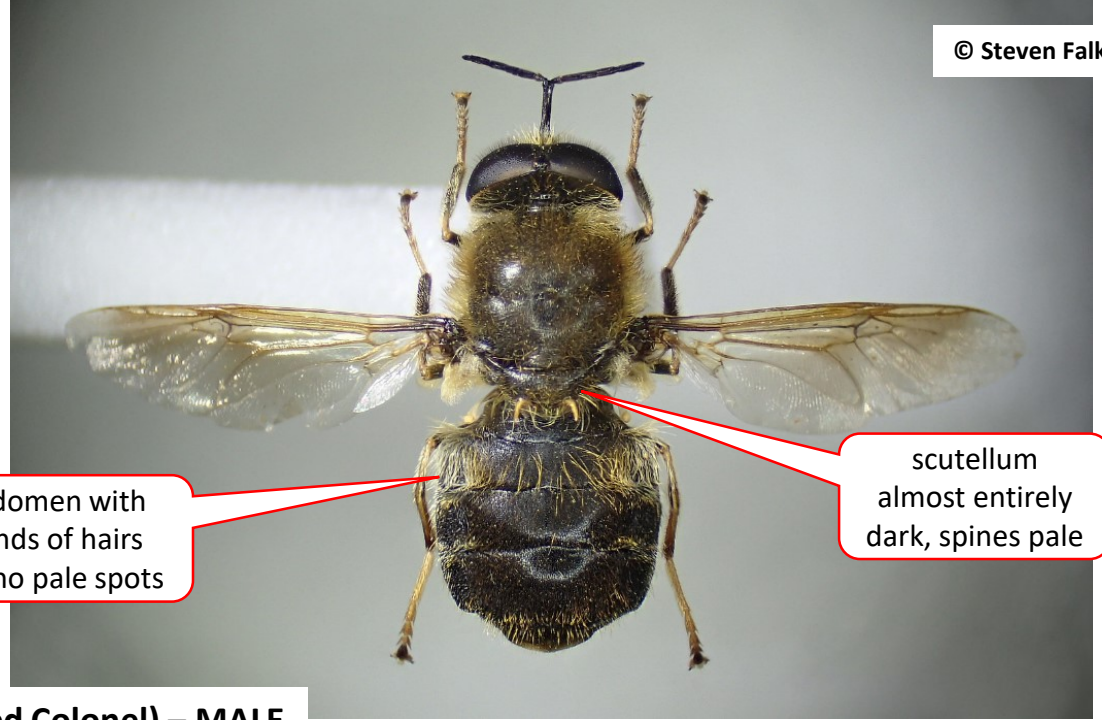
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underside of abdomen mostly dark (not visible here)

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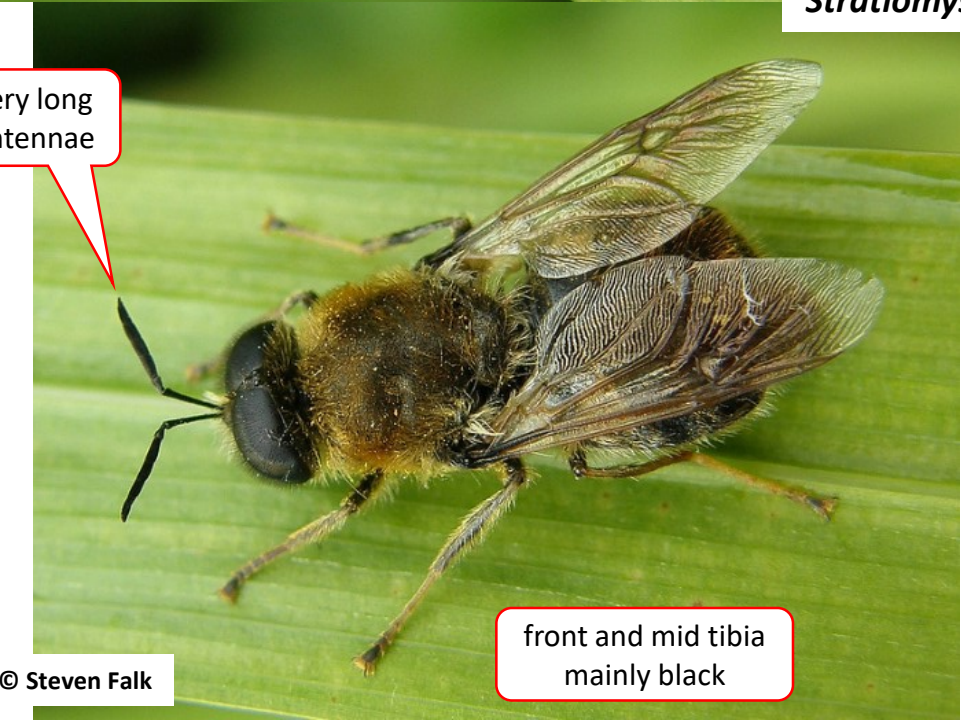


abdomen with bands of hairs but no pale spots

scutellum almost entirely dark, spines pale

***Stratiomys longicornis* (Long-horned Colonel) – MALE**

very long antennae



front and mid tibia mainly black

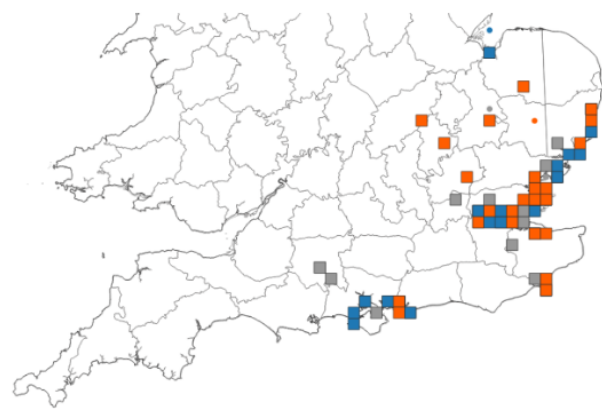
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[iRecord link](#)

© Will George via iRecord

- ID difficulty: 2
- Flight period: late May to mid Jul
- GB threat: Least Concern • GB rarity: Nationally Scarce
- coasts of south-east England, spreading inland
- brackish and salt marsh
- No. of records: 161 • % since 2000: 51%



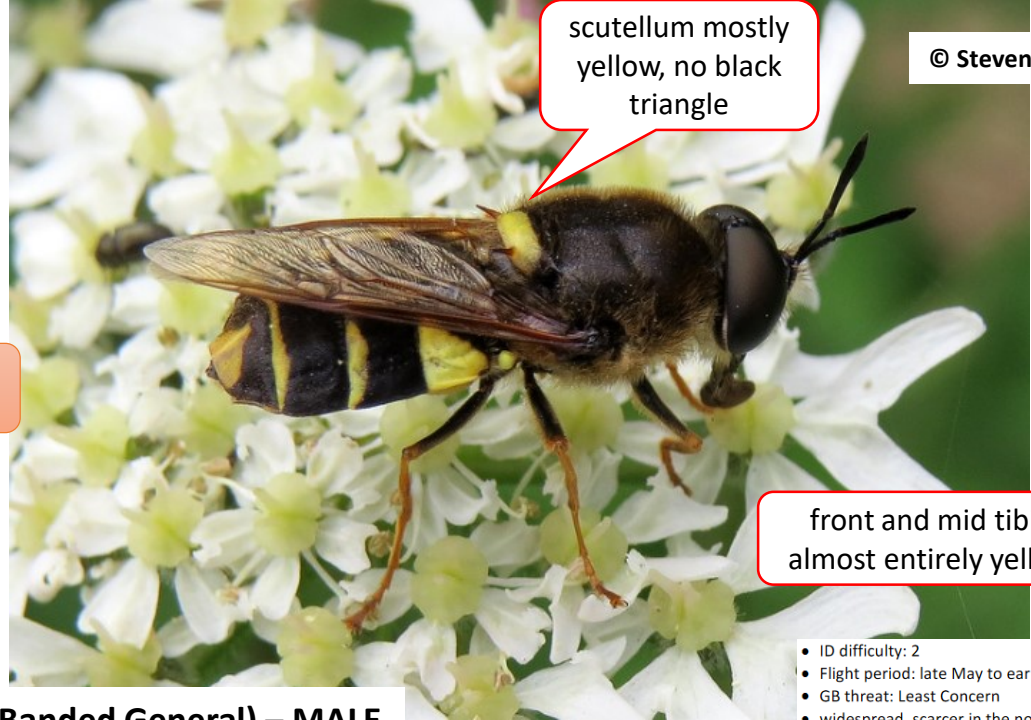


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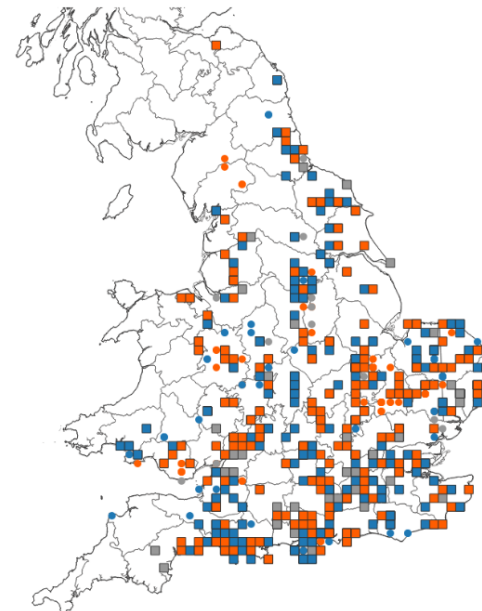


scutellum mostly yellow, no black triangle

front and mid tibia almost entirely yellow

***Stratiomys potamida* (Banded General) – MALE**

- ID difficulty: 2
- Flight period: late May to early Sep, peak late Jun and Jul
- GB threat: Least Concern
- widespread, scarcer in the north, not in Scotland
- wet meadows with ditches, streams, springs or seepages, pools and ponds, sometimes in carr or along lowland rivers
- No. of records: 847 • % since 2000: 36%



© Steven Falk

very long antennae

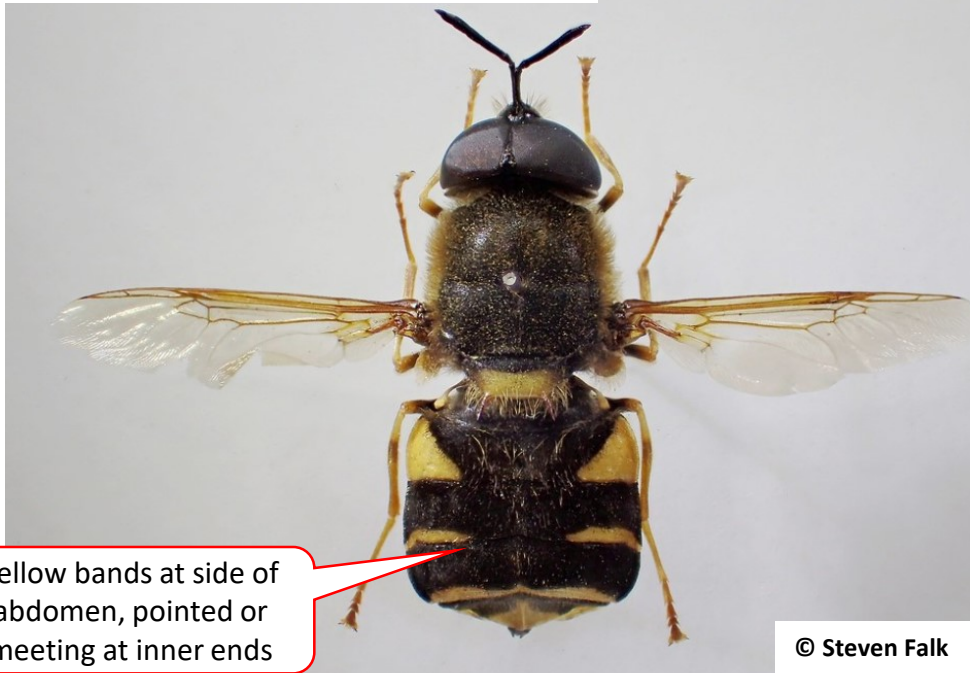


[Ian Andrews link](#)

© Ian Andrews

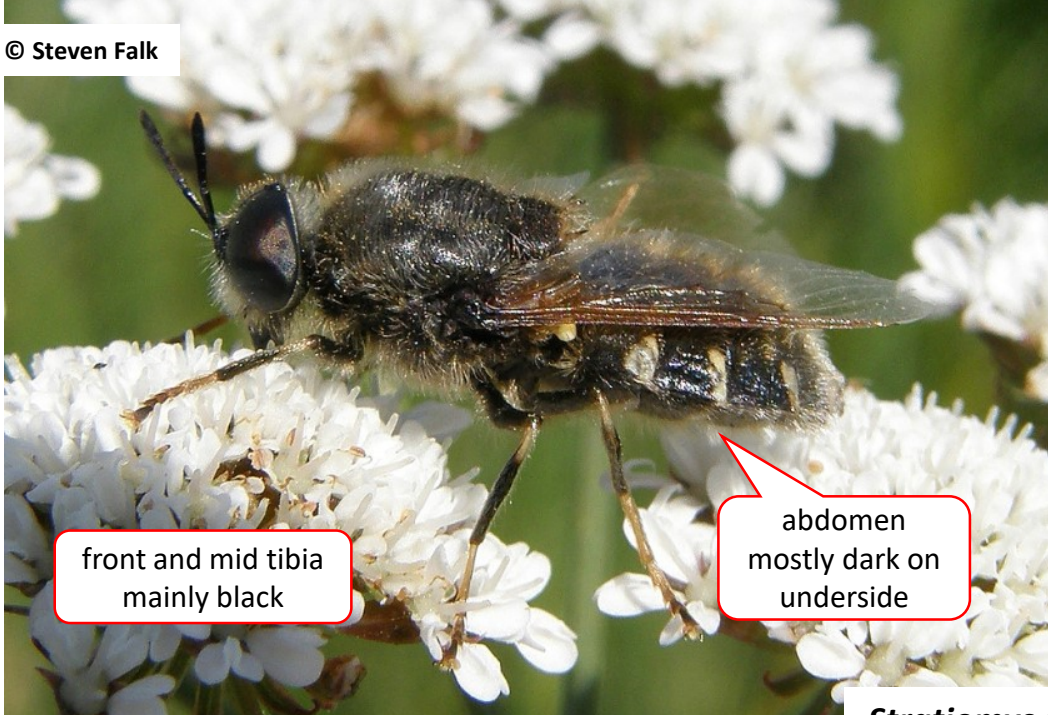
underside of abdomen mostly pale

yellow bands at side of abdomen, pointed or meeting at inner ends





© Steven Falk



front and mid tibia  
mainly black

abdomen  
mostly dark on  
underside

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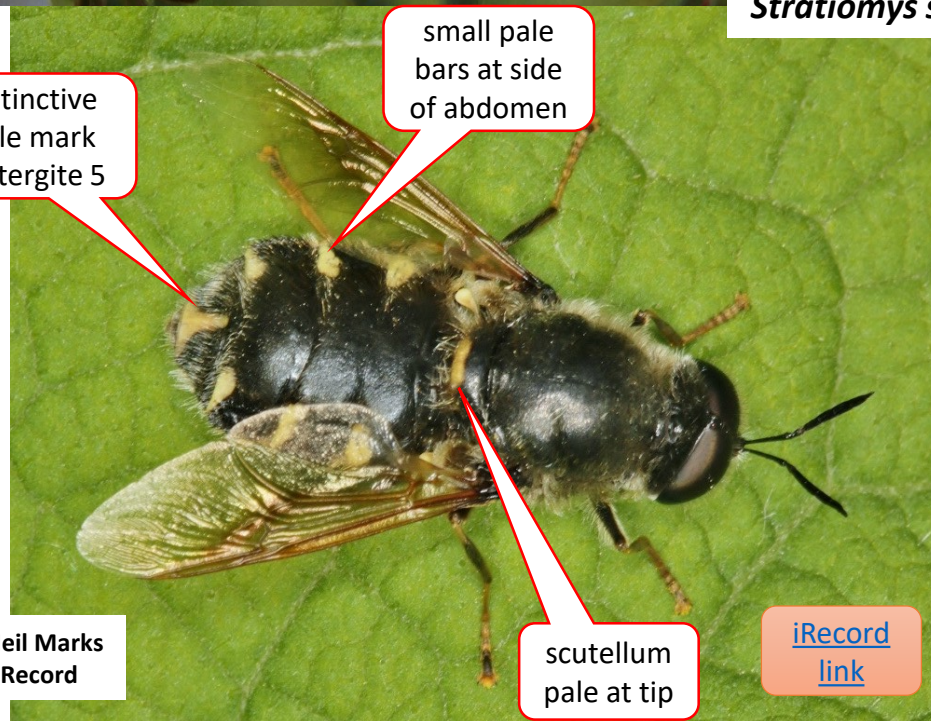
***Stratiomys singularior* (Fleeced General) – MALE**

- ID difficulty: 2
- Flight period: late May to early Sep, peak in Jul
- GB threat: Least Concern
- largely coastal and southern, some inland records
- ditches on coastal marshes, brackish pools
- No. of records: 871 • % since 2000: 42%

distinctive  
pale mark  
on tergite 5

small pale  
bars at side  
of abdomen

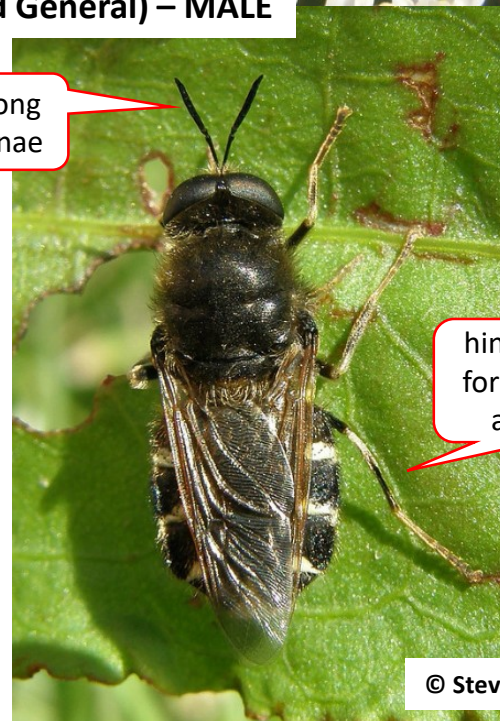
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via iRecord



scutellum  
pale at tip

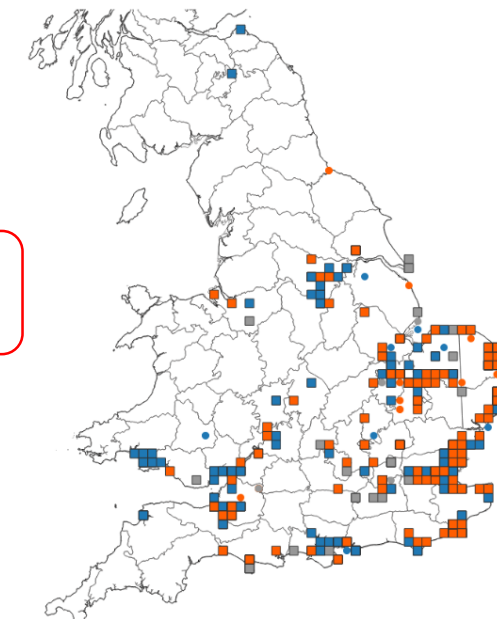
[iRecord  
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very long  
antennae



hind tibia dark  
for at least the  
apical half

© Steven Falk







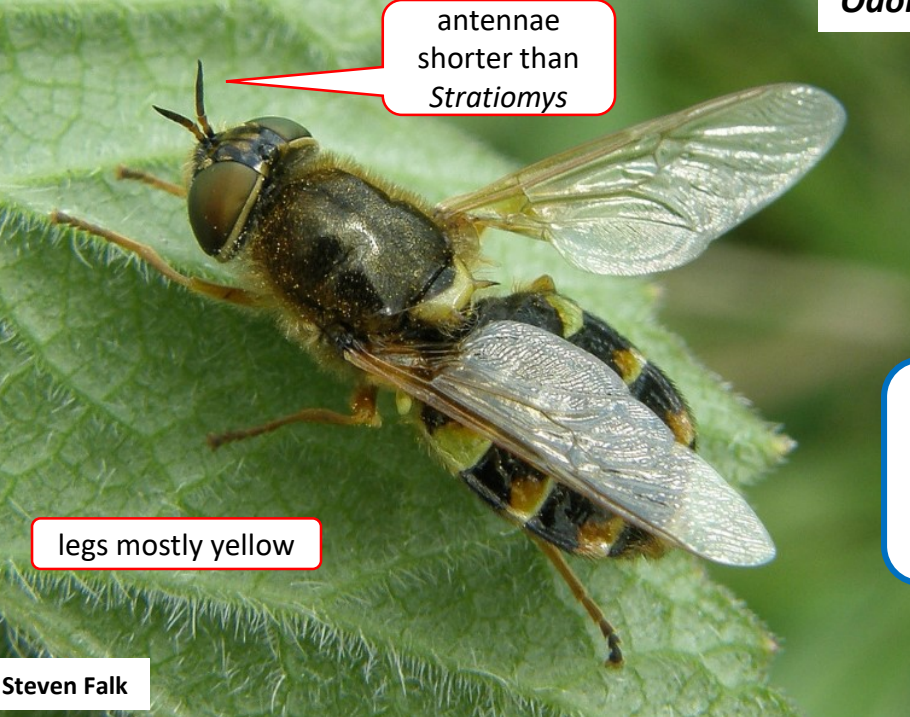
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angled pale spots at edges of abdomen (narrower than in the males)



***Odontomyia ornata* (Ornate Brigadier) – FEMALE**

antennae shorter than *Stratiomys*

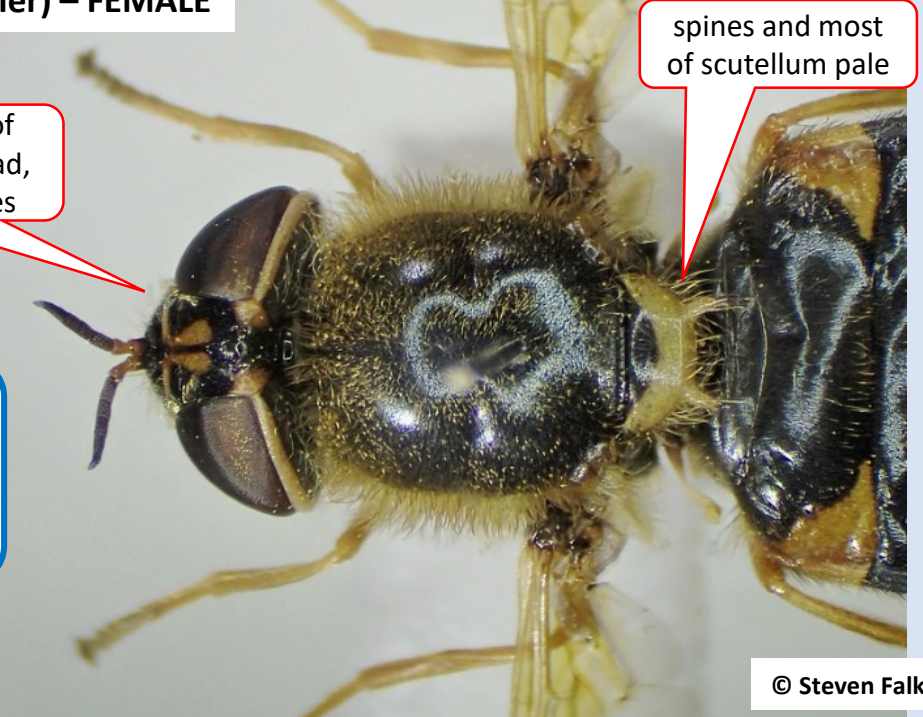


legs mostly yellow

distinctive pattern of pale markings on head, and pale behind eyes

This species is a similar size to genus *Stratiomys*, and has similar markings, so is included here for comparison (other species of *Odontomyia* are smaller).

spines and most of scutellum pale



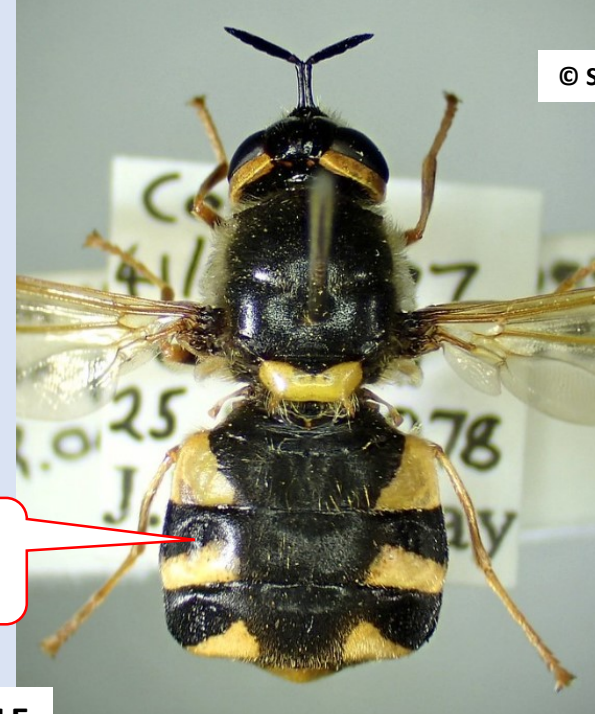


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via Steven Falk



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yellow 'clubbed' spots  
at side of abdomen,  
blunt at inner ends

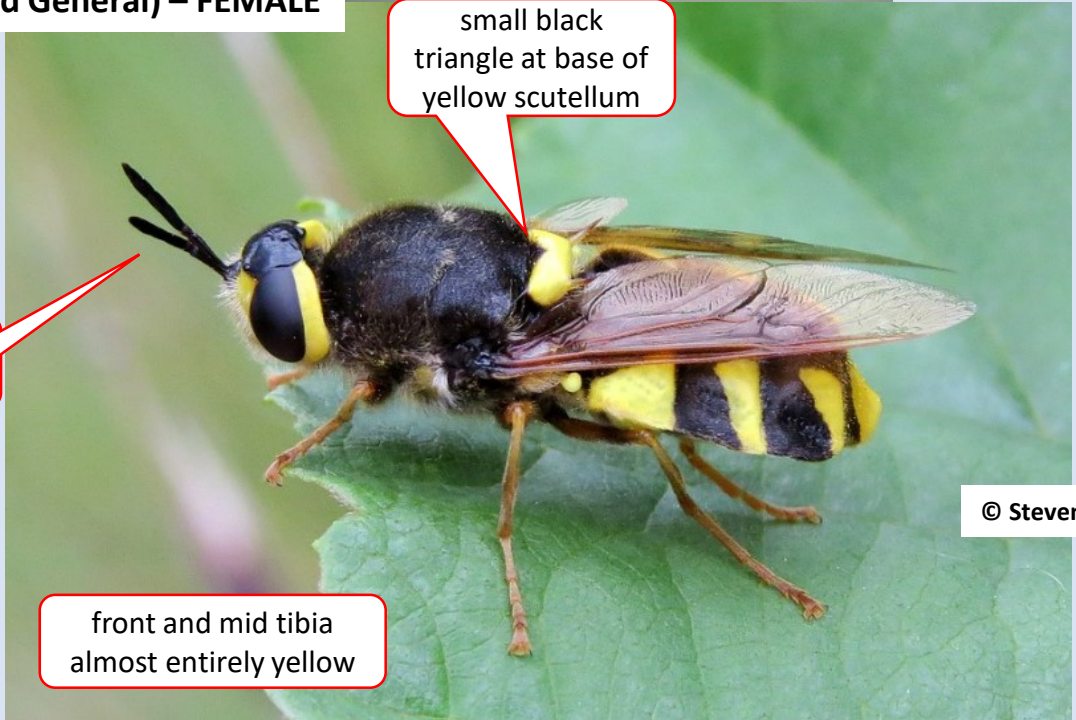
*Stratiomys chamaeleon* (Clubbed General) – FEMALE

small black  
triangle at base of  
yellow scutellum

very long  
antennae

front and mid tibia  
almost entirely yellow

© Steven Falk



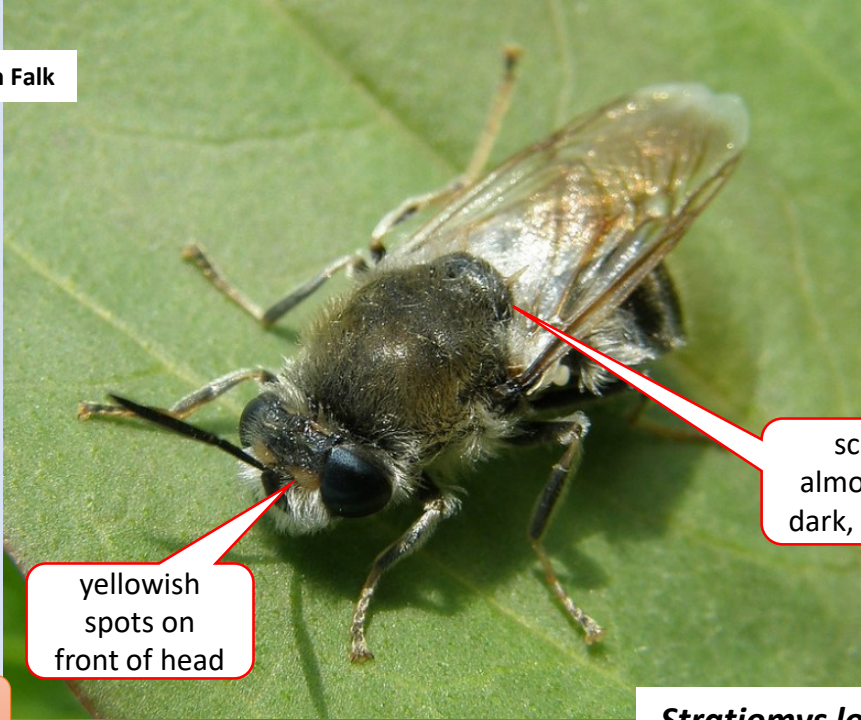
[iRecord link](#)

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underside of  
abdomen  
mostly pale



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yellowish spots on front of head

scutellum almost entirely dark, spines pale

front and mid tibia mainly black

© Andrew Green via iRecord

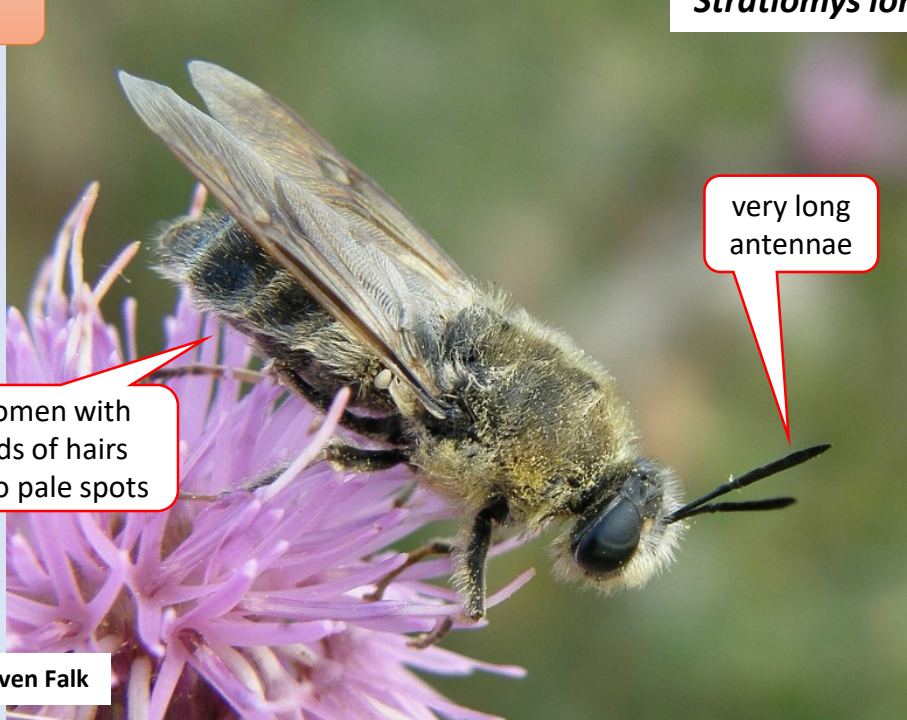
[iRecord link](#)



underside of abdomen mostly dark

***Stratiomys longicornis* (Long-horned Colonel) – FEMALE**

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very long antennae

abdomen with bands of hairs but no pale spots

© Steven Falk



yellowish spots behind head

black on top of head

© Simon via iRecord

[iRecord link](#)



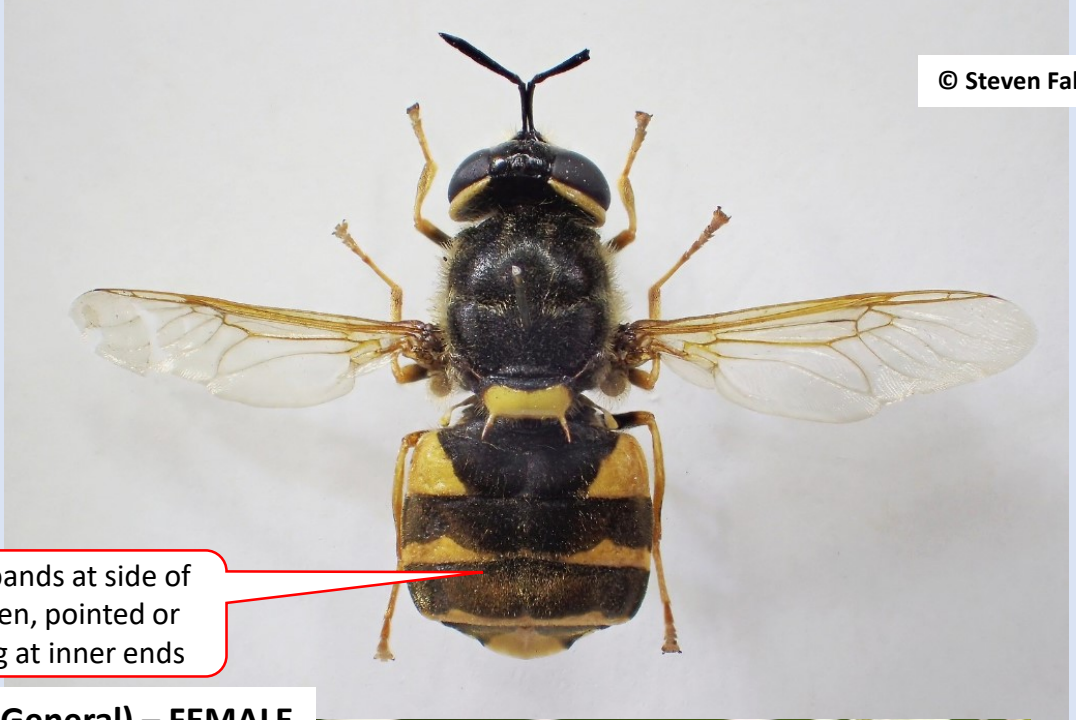
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scutellum mostly yellow, no black triangle



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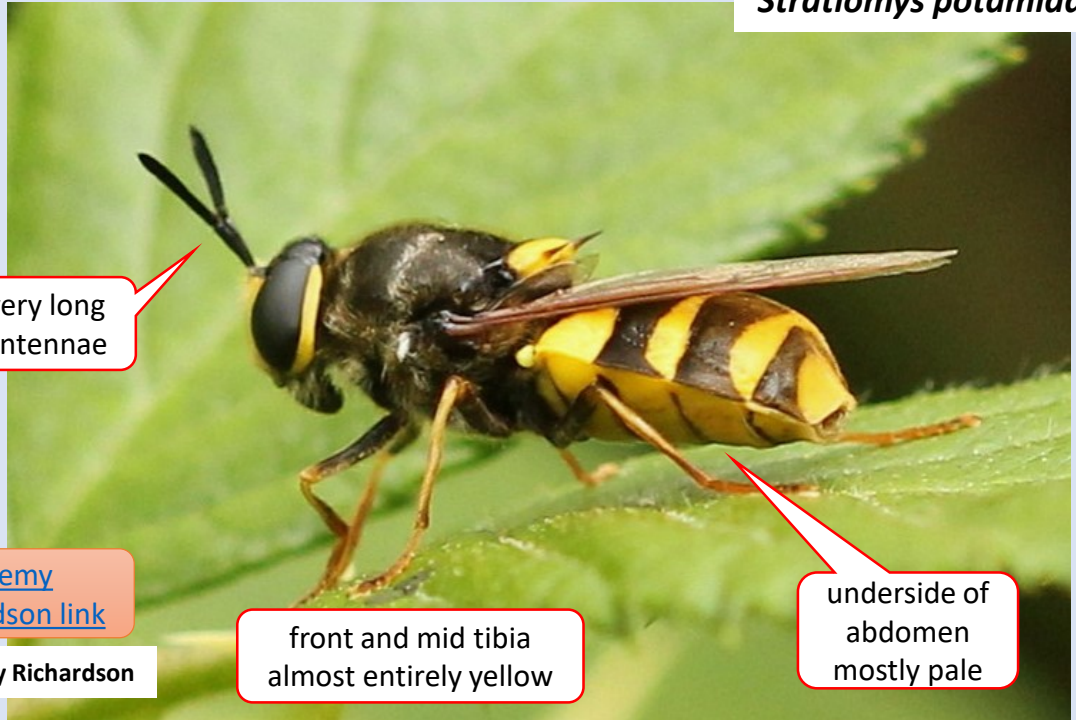
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yellow bands at side of abdomen, pointed or meeting at inner ends

***Stratiomys potamida* (Banded General) – FEMALE**

very long antennae



[Jeremy Richardson link](#)

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front and mid tibia almost entirely yellow

underside of abdomen mostly pale



[Ian Andrews link](#)

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very long antennae

front and mid tibia mainly black

small pale bars at side of abdomen

face entirely dark

hind tibia dark for at least the apical half

[Biolmages link](#)

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abdomen mostly dark on underside

*Stratiomys singularior* (Flecked General) – FEMALE

distinctive pale mark at back of head

scutellum mostly yellow, black area at front forming shallow triangle

[iRecord link](#)

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distinctive pale mark on tergite 5

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