

***Blepharidopterus diaphanus*  
(Kirschbaum, 1856) (Heteroptera:  
Miridae) and *Ichneumon stramentor*  
(Rasnitsyn, 1981) (Hymenoptera:  
Ichneumonidae) new to Scotland,  
amongst other notable invertebrates  
discovered at RSPB Scotland Loch  
Lomond during summer 2019**

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RSPB Scotland Loch Lomond is a 237 ha reserve at the south-east corner of Loch Lomond, Scotland (VC86 and VC99). It was acquired by the RSPB in 2012 and includes part of the Loch Lomond National Nature Reserve. The reserve contains a wide variety of habitats, including ancient woodland, bog/fen, ponds and sandy beaches, and is already known to host some rare invertebrates, including the weevil *Bagous lutulentus* and the great otter spider *Pirata piscatorius*.

During May to August 2019, as a residential volunteer, I spent roughly 120 h over the four months carrying out casual surveys of various habitats on the reserve, principally with a sweep-net but also with an aquatic survey net and plastic trays for surveying ditches. When identification was not possible in the field, specimens were taken back to the reserve office to study microscopically, and some specimens were sent to national or vice-county recorders for identification. The final total of 513 species (mainly invertebrates) new to the reserve included a number of unusual species, a few interesting examples of which are described in this Short Note.

RSPB Scotland Loch Lomond is well-known for its wetland plant diversity, and it was pleasing that several invertebrate species recorded as new to the reserve during the 2019 survey were specialists associated with wetland plants, such as the flea beetle *Longitarsus holsaticus* (found here on marsh lousewort (*Pedicularis palustris*)), the sawfly *Athalia scutellariae* (Fig. 1) (whose striking white-pimpled black caterpillars were found on skullcap (*Scutellaria galericulata*)), and the leafhopper *Macrosteles septemnotatus*, a locally distributed species in the U.K. associated with meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*).

Although regular moth-trapping on the reserve means that its moth fauna is reasonably well-known, during this

survey three species new to West Dunbartonshire (VC99) were found. Brussels lace (*Cleorodes lichenaria*; Fig. 2), a lichen-feeding geometrid which is locally distributed in Scotland, was caught in a Robinson trap outside the volunteer farmhouse in late June. The British population of Brussels lace decreased by 33% from 1968 to 2002, unlike many other lichen-feeding moths whose populations increased over this period (Fox *et al.*, 2006). A winter oak groundling (*Carpatolechia decorella*) was caught by sweep-netting the ground vegetation of western Ring Wood (ancient oak woodland) in late July. This gelechiid micro-moth is listed as Nationally Scarce B (Davis, 2012) and overwinters as an adult (lending the moth its common name); the larvae presumably feed on oaks (*Quercus* spp.) in Ring Wood. Lastly, an Indian meal moth (*Plodia interpunctella*) was found inside the volunteer farmhouse in mid-August; this is a local introduced pest of stored grains.



**Fig. 1.** A larva of the sawfly *Athalia scutellariae* found on skullcap *Scutellaria galericulata* in 20 Acres, RSPB Scotland Loch Lomond, on 20th August 2019. The larva is ca. 15 mm long. A marsh beetle (*Cyphon* sp.) is “piggy-backing” on the sawfly. (Photo: S. Buckton)



**Fig. 2.** The geometrid moth Brussels lace (*Cleorodes lichenaria*) caught in a Robinson trap near the volunteer farmhouse, RSPB Scotland Loch Lomond, on 30th June 2019: the first known record of this species for VC99. The wingspan is ca. 35 mm. (Photo: S. Buckton)

Perhaps the most interesting find was a pale greenish mirid bug (Fig. 3) swept from a white willow (*Salix alba*) along the bank of the River Endrick in Snipe Flats at NS44008792 (Fig. 4) on 8th August. This was identified as *Blepharidopterus diaphanus* (Kirschbaum, 1856) by Petro Pynnönen, who is familiar with the species from Finland. The British status of *B. diaphanus* is described as "widely scattered" (Bantock & Botting, 2018); Jim Flanagan (National Organiser of the Plant Bugs & Allies Recording Scheme) noted that this record was the first for Scotland, a view supported by the absence of *B. diaphanus* in the Scottish Invertebrate Records Index (SIRI). *B. diaphanus* is associated with white and weeping willows (*Salix* spp.). The new Scottish record of *B. diaphanus* is a major extension from the recent, next-most northerly record from weeping willow in the grounds of Durham University, England (Jim Flanagan, pers. comm.), which is itself a big advance from the most northerly record in the NBN Atlas at the time of writing, which is just outside Derby, England. Soon after the Scottish record, *B. diaphanus* was found on white willow in County Armagh, a first record for Ireland (Brian Nelson, pers. comm.). At present it is not clear if this species has been widely distributed but under-recorded, or if its range has been recently expanding.



**Fig. 3.** The mirid bug *Blepharidopterus diaphanus* swept from white willow (*Salix alba*) in Snipe Flats, RSPB Scotland Loch Lomond, on 8th August 2019: the first known Scottish record of this species. The bug is ca. 5 mm long. (Photo: S. Buckton)

There were two other finds of particular note. The first was the leafhopper *Metidiocerus rutilans* (Fig. 5), a female of which was swept from a grey willow (*Salix cinerea*) in Reserve Compartment 28 (NS430871), an area of bog, on 13th August. This record is the first *M. rutilans* from mainland Scotland, since it was previously known only from the island of Skye (Alan Stewart, pers. comm.). The species is absent from SIRI.



**Fig. 4.** The white willows (*Salix alba*) along the bank of the River Endrick in Snipe Flats, RSPB Scotland Loch Lomond, which yielded the first Scottish record of the mirid bug *Blepharidopterus diaphanus*. (Photo: S. Buckton)



**Fig. 5.** The leafhopper *Metidiocerus rutilans*, swept from grey willow (*Salix cinerea*) in Reserve Compartment 28, RSPB Scotland Loch Lomond, on 13th August 2019: the first record of this locally distributed species in mainland Scotland. The leafhopper is ca. 5 mm long. (Photo: S. Buckton)

*M. rutilans* is a local species associated with willows (*Salix* spp.) and often overwintering on pines (*Pinus* spp.) (Bantock & Botting, 2018). It is found primarily in southern Britain; there are no previous records for mainland Britain north of a line running west to east to the Humber estuary in England (Alan Stewart, pers. comm.).

The second notable find was surprising, not because the species in question is rare, but because it is common. On 7th June, a female *Ichneumon stramentor* – a handsome black-and-yellow ichneumonid wasp parasitising the pupae of moths such as large yellow underwing (*Noctua*

*pronuba*) and setaceous Hebrew character (*Xestia c-nigrum*) (Prehn & Raper, 2017) – was caught from a huge mature oak (*Quercus* sp.) near Shore Wood (NS427878). This species was new to the Scottish checklist of Ichneumonidae (Broad, 2016) (which included searches of the Natural History Museum collection), absent from SIRI, and confirmed as absent from the original invertebrate collections held by National Museums Scotland and World Museum Liverpool. There is a pre-existing record of *I. stramentor* on *iRecord* (<https://www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/>) from Handa Island, Sutherland, on 20th July 2013, but no photographs were provided and the recorder was not known to Gavin Broad, making the record unverifiable (Gavin Broad, pers. comm.). Hence, despite *I. stramentor* being common and widespread south of the border in England, and likely widespread in Scotland too, the Loch Lomond record apparently represents the first verified *I. stramentor* from Scotland.

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## REFERENCES

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