



NEWSLETTER: SEPTEMBER 2022

News

Welcome to the penultimate month of the Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme for 2022. We are still number crunching the 2021 data but will release an annual report with the 2012-2021 trends over the coming months.

Remember new volunteers can join at anytime!

What happened in September 2021

- 77 transects were walked last September (this was down from 95 last August)
- Nine walks still recorded more than 30 *individual* bumblebees, but the average number spotted was 14. As is to be expected, this is significantly down from last August's average of 34.
- Eight people walked their route and didn't find any bumblebees last September.
- *B. pascuorum* workers were the predominant taxa across all transects last September (recorded on 77% of all walks). This was followed by *B. lucorum* agg. (29%), *B. pascuorum* queens (25%), *B. lapidarius* males (18%), *B. pascuorum* males (17%), *B. terrestris* queens (17%) & *B. pratorum* workers (12%).
- *B. pascuorum* workers (831 individuals) took over from *B. lucorum* agg. (74) as by far the most abundant bumblebee spotted across all walks this month. The total number of *B. pascuorum* workers spotted was up from Sept 2020 figures of 519 individuals.
- Species diversity is now lower – 10 species were spotted across all walks last September – *B. pascuorum*, *B. lucorum* and *B. lapidarius* predominated. Interestingly *B. terrestris* didn't make the top three, but was spotted in smaller numbers along with *B. pratorum*, *B. jonellus* and *B. hortorum*. *Bombus sylvarum*, *B. muscorum* and *B. monticola* were still occasionally spotted on walks in areas that are lucky enough to have these species.
- The total number of individual bumblebees spotted by everyone last September was 1,234 (plus 337 honey bees). As expected, this is a big drop from the previous month last year (3,244 bumblebees).

Tips & advice this month

- ✓ For me, September is often the month of the *B. pascuorum* worker and that is what many of us might see in greatest abundance.
- ✓ Numbers are generally substantially down as bumblebees begin hibernating again. The later in September you leave your walk, the less bees you're likely to see.
- ✓ There will still be males around this month so keep an eye out for them. You are also likely to see new queens as they fatten up before going into hibernation.
- ✓ If you're lucky enough to have rarer species like *B. muscorum*, *B. sylvarum* or *B. distinguendus*, you are likely to still see them, especially earlier in the month.

Common errors last September

- There were very few errors last September.
- Be careful with rarer species like *B. muscorum*. *B. pascuorum* can become quite faded and cause confusion. If you're not sure, I'm happy to check photographs for you.
- Bear in mind that the season is drawing to a close for bumblebees so if you're spotting something outside the very common species, double check to be sure.

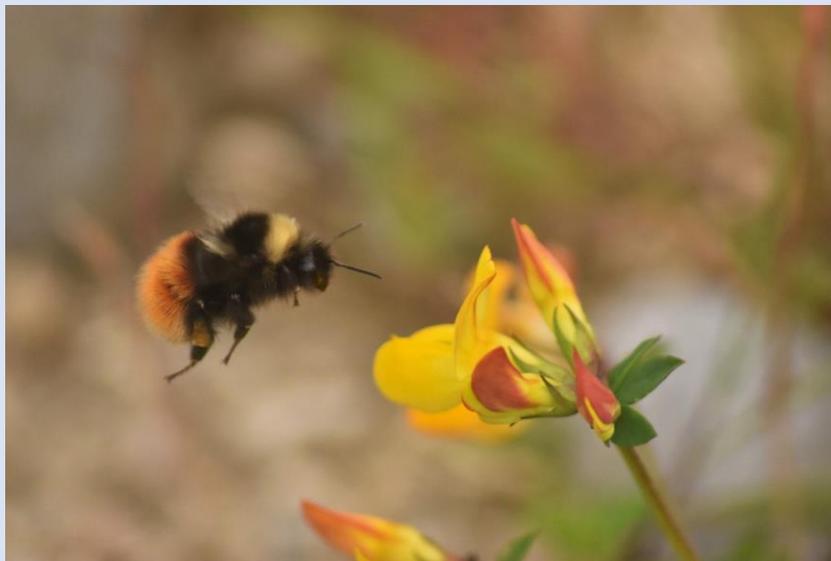
Important food plants

In September 2021, we received 132 casual bumblebee records that also stated what the bee was feeding on. Based on this data, bumblebees were foraging on over 50 different plant species last August. The most common were Knapweed, Devil's-bit Scabious, Ragwort & Sedum. If you're seeing something important or unusual on your walk this month, please submit a casual record and fill in the foraging box:

<https://records.biodiversityireland.ie/record/bumblebees>



Photo of the month



This lovely photo of *Bombus monticola* was taken by Brian Power

Interesting recent research

Most widely used pesticide in history harms the ability of bumblebee to regulate nest temperature

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jun/02/glyphosate-weedkiller-damages-wild-bumblebee-colonies>

Other things to keep an eye out for this month

This hoverfly is an amazing bumblebee mimic! It's called *Arctophila superbiens* and mimics *Bombus muscorum*. Hoverflies differ from bumblebees in having one pair of wings, being able to hover, and having very large eyes that take up most of the head. This is a hairy hoverfly with ginger hairs on the thorax & blonde hairs on the abdomen. Flies from the end of July to October.



Workshops and upcoming events

We don't have any additional events planned for 2022, but I hope to be back out in 2023 running Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme workshops. You are very welcome to submit ideas for future locations to me over the winter.

We had a fantastic weekend in Skerries (26-28th August), in collaboration with Sustainable Skerries and Fingal County Council. Thanks to all those who made this weekend of workshops, walks and talks possible. It was great to see *Bombus muscorum* doing so well in Skerries, thanks to the inspirational work of the local community. As part of the event, we were delighted to launch a new All-Ireland Plan Resource on this rare species: <https://pollinators.ie/helping-endangered-pollinators/large-carder-bee/>

Free online course on identifying and monitoring bumblebees

Don't forget we have this free online resource. It should be especially useful for new volunteers. It not only helps you get familiar with our common bumblebees, but it also explains how to take part in the monitoring scheme, including how to log your route online and submit your monthly data. You can access it here: <https://biodiversityireland.ie/identifying-irish-bumblebees/lesson.html>

We need more volunteers

2021 was our most successful year to date, with 84 transects that were walked at least 6 of the 8 months. Some new volunteers joined the scheme during the year and their data will hopefully come fully on board from 2022. **This is an incredible achievement and we are very grateful to all of you.**

We also fully understand that sometimes unexpected events arise and it is simply impossible to achieve the target of at least 6 walks in a particular year. Where this happens, please do still persevere as the data is still extremely useful. The longer you've been in the scheme, the better we are able to statistically account for occasional monthly gaps in your walk data.

Our target is to get to **100** monitoring standard walks each year so we do still need to recruit more volunteers over the coming years. If you know of anyone wishing to get involved with the monitoring scheme please forward this to them and/or encourage them to get in touch with me.

Thank you for all your efforts and for being generous enough with your time to take part in this important scheme.

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