



NEWSLETTER: OCTOBER 2022

News

Welcome to the last month of the Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme for 2021.

Remember new volunteers can join at anytime!

What happened in October 2022

- 78 transects were walked last October.
- While nine people recorded over 10 *individual* bumblebees, the average number spotted was 3. Forty walks recorded no bumblebees last October. This is very normal, especially if you leave it later in the month.
- *B. pascuorum* workers were still recorded on 38% of walks. Only three walks still had *Bombus lucorum* agg. present.
- *Bombus pascuorum* workers (210 individuals across all walks) were the most abundant bumblebee spotted across all walks last October. Also spotted were:
 - B. terrestris* Queen (9 individuals)
 - B. lucorum* agg. (7)
 - B. pascuorum* Male (6)
 - B. pascuorum* Queen (6)
 - B. muscorum* Male (3)
 - B. hortorum* Queen (2)
 - B. lapidarius* Queen (2)
 - B. pratorum* Queen (2)
 - B. lucorum* Queen (1)
 - B. sylvarum* Queen (1)
 - B. sylvarum* Worker (1)
- The total number of individual bumblebees spotted by everyone last October was 252 (plus 105 honeybees).

Tips & advice this month

- ✓ It can be difficult to find suitable weather conditions to do your last walk of the year. Don't forget it should be above 13°C and at least 60% sunshine. If this simply isn't possible just try your best and record the conditions you did have.
- ✓ Remember, the key target for your data to be of maximum use is to walk at least 6 of the 8 months. **Please don't be tempted to stop early – it's very important to also complete your October walk.**
- ✓ It is normal to walk your route and not record any bumblebees in October. If that happens it's still very important to submit the other data (date, weather etc.). Those 'zero abundance' walks at the beginning and end of the season are equally as important as those with bumblebee data.
- ✓ *B. pascuorum* seems to be the last of the Irish bumblebees to wind up its season and go into hibernation. For many of us, it'll still be spotted when the weather is suitable in October. You might also spot a few *B. lucorum* agg. and occasionally queens still trying to fatten up for hibernation.

Common errors last October

- The season is now drawing to a close for bumblebees. You may still see workers of *B. pascuorum* and *B. lucorum* agg., but it would be unusual to see other workers at this stage. Occasional males may still be around for *B. pascuorum* and for some of the late emerging species if you are lucky enough to have them in your area (*B. muscorum*, *B. sylvarum*). You might still occasionally see queens of most species making sure they have sufficiently fattened up for hibernation.
- Watch out for very faded individuals of *B. pascuorum*, and don't confuse with *B. muscorum*.

Important food plants

In October 2021, we received 28 casual bumblebee records that also stated what the bee was feeding on. Based on this data, bumblebees were foraging on around 15 different plant species last October. The most important was Ivy. 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



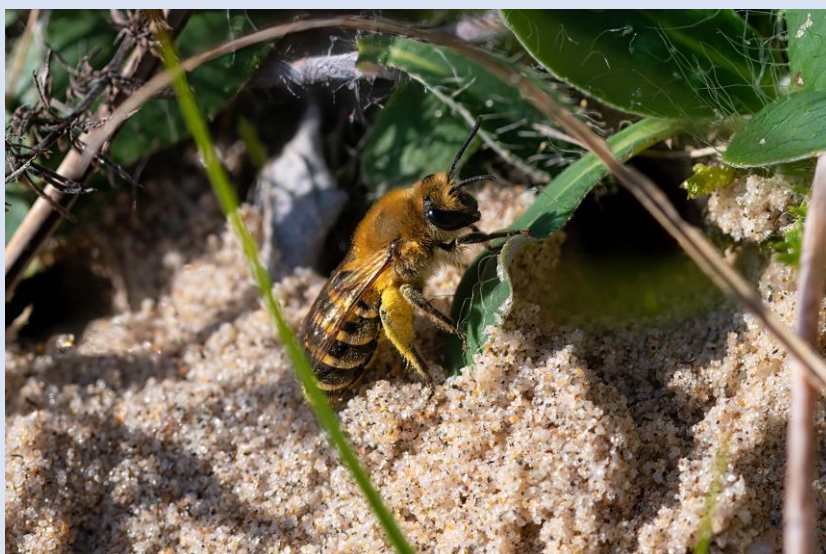
This lovely photo of a *Bombus terrestris* queen foraging on Crocus was sent to us by Áine Fenner. Now is a good time to think about adding Crocus bulbs to your garden for next spring

Interesting recent research

Climate change killing off bumblebees by waking them up early from hibernation
<https://phys.org/news/2022-08-climate-bumblebees-earlier-winter-hibernation.html>

Other things to keep an eye out for this month

The Ivy Bee was first spotted in Ireland in October 2021. It is currently only known from the Raven Nature Reserve in Co Wexford. Can you help us find new populations? Peak activity matches the flowering period of its key pollen forage plant, Ivy. It is the last solitary bee to emerge each year and is on the wing from early September until early November. The Ivy bee is about the size of a honeybee but has distinctive pale bands on its abdomen. Please email me if you think you've spotted it – it may turn up in new locations, particularly along the east coast



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.

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>

2022 data submission deadline – 31st December

You have plenty of time to add your 2022 data to the online data submission system: <https://monitoring.biodiversityireland.ie/> Data will not be removed from that system until the 31st December 2022. I'll send some reminders in advance of this date.

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.

Dr Úna FitzPatrick, All-Ireland Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme Coordinator ufitzpatrick@biodiversityireland.ie