

Shetland Bumblebee Survey



How are Shetland's bees faring? Please help us to find out by spending a short time each month counting bees in your garden or on a regular walk you take.

Bumblebees are an important pollinator and thus a key part of the natural environment. We have a good knowledge of their distribution in Shetland, but it is unclear how each species is faring. By taking part in this straightforward survey you could help us to find out about the health of our bumblebee populations. Full instructions and a recording form are given overleaf.

<p>Northern White-tailed Bumblebee <i>Bombus magnus</i></p>	<p>Buff-tailed Bumblebee <i>Bombus terrestris</i></p>	<p>Shetland Bumblebee <i>Bombus muscorum</i></p>
		
<p>A common visitor to gardens and crofting land in Shetland, and the first species to appear in spring. Very neat-looking with a single yellow band at the front and another on the abdomen.</p>	<p>First discovered in Shetland in 2012, it appears that <i>B. terrestris</i> is now well established. However, there are still very few records north of Lerwick. Superficially similar to <i>B. magnus</i>, this species is easily identified by its buffy tail.</p>	<p>A common species, found in a variety of habitats in Shetland. The Shetland Bumblebee is very distinctive, having a thorax that is completely orange, and a yellowish abdomen.</p>

<p>Heath Bumblebee <i>Bombus jonellus</i></p>	<p>Garden Bumblebee <i>Bombus hortorum</i></p>		
		 <p><i>B. jonellus</i></p>	 <p><i>B. hortorum</i></p>
<p>This is a scarce species, closely associated with heather moorland, and is most frequently seen when the heather is in flower (July & Aug). It has honey-yellow bands on the front and back of the thorax and another on the abdomen.</p>	<p><i>B. hortorum</i> is superficially similar to <i>B. jonellus</i>; however unlike that species it is almost always found in gardens, rather than on the hills. With good views, these species can also be identified by the shape of their face (see diagram).</p>	<p><i>B. jonellus</i> has a short face, roughly only as long as it is wide. The face of <i>B. hortorum</i> is clearly much longer than it is wide.</p>	

Caution: Bees of the same species can vary in size significantly; large queens are usually first to be seen in the spring, while the smaller workers appear later in the year.

Some hoverflies look extremely similar to the bumblebees that they mimic. However, being true flies, they have only one pair of wings, whereas bumblebees have two.

The Survey

Anyone can take part, either by taking a regular walk for up to an hour or spending just 15 minutes counting in your garden, just once a month, from April to September inclusive. Choose the first sunny day you can manage each month and count all of the bumblebees you see. Try to identify them to species using the guide overleaf. Enter the number of each species you see into the table below and then the number of bumblebees that you could not identify. If you can take a photograph, we can try to identify the bees for you.

Garden - If you are counting in your garden, watch for around 15 minutes, counting all the bumblebees you see.

Regular Walk - If you are taking a regular walk then it is important to follow the same route each time recording all of the bees you see.

It is helpful if you can fill in the details of the start and finish time of each walk or watch, and the date. Remember, where possible, to count on a sunny day when bumblebee activity is likely to be much higher.

We also need details of the location of your garden or the route you walk. A grid reference is especially helpful.

At the end of the last survey, please send your recording forms back to Shetland Biological Records Centre at the address on the bottom of this form.

Thank you from the Records Centre team!

Observer	
Location Name	
Grid Reference	

- Garden
- Regular Walk

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>magnus</i>	<i>muscorum</i>	<i>terrestris</i>	<i>hortorum</i>	<i>jonellus</i>	Unidentified
April									
May									
June									
July									
August									
September									

Please give a brief description of your chosen site/walk and tick all habitats that are present:

Garden Urban Woodland

Croftland Coastal Hill/moorland