

Bugs in Hertfordshire: the 2015 terrestrial Heteroptera report Joe Gray

This report contains some of the more noteworthy terrestrial Heteroptera records from 2015, grouped by family. My comparisons against earlier records are based on the data-sets that I have been able to obtain thus far and so will not be fully accurate where there are relevant records in other data-sets. Size ranges and plant and habitat associations are taken from Kirby (2015), Nau (2012), and the website www.britishbugs.org.uk. The scientific names of probable first county records are given in **bold**. It is interesting to note that four of these were found during the three-day spell between 15 and 17 August.

Special thanks should go to Simon Knott (SK) for submitting an excellent diversity of records during the year, as well as to Tristan Bantock (TB) and Jim Flanagan for acting as determiners for a number of my queries. I am also grateful to the following people for contributing records for 2015: Allan Burrows, Andrew Harris, Andrew Jewels, Chris Shortall, Dan Asaw, Erin Cook, Helen Haran, Ian Carle, Jenny Sherwen, John Murray, Martin Parr, Nigel Sawyer, Paula Shipway (PS), Peter Clarke, Phil Attewell (PA), Phil Ball (PB), Rob Ryan (RR), Ryan Clark, Sam Jones, Stuart Warrington, Trevor James (TJ), and William Bishop (WB). Sincere apologies are extended to anyone who I have inadvertently missed off.

*A good number of interesting records were made during Herts Invertebrate Project meetings. These records are denoted with an asterisk after their date.

Anthocoridae (flower bugs)

Cardiastethus fasciventris. This small bug (length, 2-2.4mm) was beaten off Larch by JG at King's Meads (TL31) on 23 May* and swept off low herbage by JG at Nomansland Common (TL11) on 23 June. There are two previous county records, from 2003 and 2004 (both TL20).

Tetrableps bicuspis. This bug (3.3-4mm), which is associated with conifers, was beaten off Scots Pine by JG at Waterford Heath (TL31) on 19 July*. The most recent previous Herts record of this insect was from 1967.

Xylocoris cursitans. This predatory saproxylic insect (2-2.5mm) was found by WB under bark on a pile of birch and willow logs at Waterford Heath (TL31) on 19 July*. The last local records for this species are from 2005.

Aradidae (flatbugs)

Aneurus avenius. This saproxylic bug (4.1-5mm) was found by WB in a dead Hornbeam branch in

Broxbourne Woods (TL30) on 24 October* (pictured) and also found by TB in the same woods earlier in the year. These constitute the first known VC20 records for the species.

Coreidae (leatherbugs)

Arenocoris fallenii.

A trip to Waterford Heath (TL31) on 19 July* in search of Fallén's Leatherbug, among other insects, proved successful. A single last instar was observed on open ground by SK near a big clump of Common Stork's-bill, a known foodplant. The species has a local distribution and is associated with gravel pits and sandy habitats. There are very few Herts records.

Gonocerus acuteangulatus. The Box Bug (11-12mm) continues to spread up through the county, with the first records coming in 2015 from north of the roughly latitudinal line that joins Hemel Hempstead, St Albans, Hatfield and Hoddesdon. The species might already have passed into the north of the county in an earlier year but been missed or overlooked on account of the adult's crude similarity to *Coreus marginatus* (the Dock Bug). Records included observations of a late instar on Box by SK (TL31) on 29 July, a late instar on Hawthorn by JG at Amwell Nature Reserve (TL31) on 15 August* (pictured) and an adult on bramble by JG on 4 October (TL11).

Leptoglossus occidentalis. As compared with a dozen records from 2014, there was a solitary record in 2015 of the Western Conifer Seedbug (16-20mm), a species which was new to Britain in 2007 (Malumphy *et al.*, 2008). The 2015 record, from 10 January, was an insect overwintering in a house in Letchworth



Aneurus avenius (photo Joe Gray).



Gonocerus acuteangulatus (photo Joe Gray).

(TL23). The fact that such a conspicuous insect has proven elusive outdoors suggests that either its population in Hertfordshire is small or that it feeds high up in the canopy.

Syromastus rhombeus. Adults of the Rhombic Leatherbug (9.5-10.5mm) were found by JG at Waterford Heath (TL31) on 27 April 2015 and by SK and WB at Panshanger Park (TL21) on 4 October. There are only a handful of previous Herts records for this species (Gray, 2015).

Cydnidae (burrowing shieldbugs)

Sehirus luctuosus. The Forget-me-not Shieldbug (5.6-9mm) has a widespread but local distribution in southern Britain and is probably significantly under-recorded on account of its unobtrusive habit. The handful of existing Herts records were supplemented during 2015 by a half-dozen new records. Adults were found at Amwell Nature Reserve (TL31), on 9 May* by WB, at Panshanger Park (TL21), on 19 July by PA and on 4 October by SK, and at Waterford Heath (TL31), including on 19 July* by JG.

Lygaeidae (groundbugs)

Gastrodes abietum. The number of Herts records for this species (6-7mm) is very limited, but an individual was found by WB at High Scrubs (SP90) on 31 October.

Graptopeltus lynceus. An adult of this species (6-7mm), found by JG at Waterford Heath (TL31) on 27 April, was thought to be a first county record (Gray, 2015), but a solitary previous VC20 record, from 1925, subsequently emerged (Gray, 2016).

Megalonotus praetextatus. There is a single previous VC20 record of this groundbug (4.1-4.8mm). One was found in 2015 by WB under Common Stork's-bill at Waterford Heath (TL31) on 19 July*.

Nysius huttoni. Several specimens of this bug (2.5-4mm) were swept off low herbage at Amwell Nature Reserve (TL31) on 15 August* by JG and PB. This is thought to be new for the county.

Nysius senecionis. This bug (4-4.4mm) was swept off low herbage at Smallford near St Albans (TL10) on 8 May by JG. There is only one previous record from the county.

Raglius alboacuminatus. An adult of this bug (5.3-6.3mm) was observed in Bengoe (TL31) by SK on 29 August. There are just three previous county records.

Miridae (plant bugs)

Agnocoris reclairei. This bug (5.1mm) was found by RR on willow at Wilstone Reservoir (SP91) on 17 August (Ryan, 2016). It is previously unknown from VC20.

Atractotomus parvulus. This Mirid bug (2.7-3.1mm)

was beaten off Scots Pine by JG at Waterford Heath (TL31) on 19 July*. It has not been reported in the county since 1984.

Chlamydatus evanescens. This bug (1.8-2.8mm) was found by RR on stoncrop in the town cemetery at Tring (SP91) on 17 August (Ryan, 2015b). The species has not previously been reported in Herts.

Heterocordylus tibialis. Adults and nymphs of this insect (4.9mm) were observed at Harpenden Common (TL11) on Broom by JG on 26 May. It has not been reported in VC20 since 1984.

Orthocephalus coriaceus. This bug (4.6-5.3mm) was swept off low herbage by JG at Nomansland Common (TL11) on 23 June. It is the first county record since 1993.

Psallus betuleti. This species (5.1mm) was swept off birch by JG at Waterford Heath (TL31) on 19 July*. There are previous records of *P. betuleti* in Herts, the last in 2000, but these records had to be disregarded after a 2007 report highlighted the ambiguity of the name caused by the raising to specific rank of a subspecies (now *Psallus montanus*) (Ryan, 2015a).

Pentatomidae (shieldbugs)

Neottiglossa pusilla. The Small Grass Shieldbug (4-4.5mm) is known from a limited number of pre-2015 Herts records, the most recent one being in 2004. It was found again in 2015, swept off grass by JG at Hertford Heath (TL31) on 15 June.

Nezara viridula. The Southern Green Shieldbug (13-18mm) is reported here as a first county record, as there was no equivalent terrestrial Heteroptera report for 2014. It was found at sites in the south-west and south-east of the county in 2014 but was not found in 2015.

Reduviidae (assassin bugs)

Reduvius personatus. A report of this insect (16-18mm) from TJ in a house in Ashwell (TL23) on 1 July was the first Herts record of this synanthropic species since 1994.

Rhopalidae (Rhopalid bugs)

Myrmus miriformis. There was only one record between 2005 and 2014 of this common but under-recorded grassland bug (7-9mm). Another record was added in 2015: it was swept off grass at Amwell Nature Reserve (TL31) on 15 August* by PB.

Rhopalus parumpunctatus. A solitary record of this bug (6.5-7.5mm), swept off low herbage at Amwell Nature Reserve (TL31) on 15 August* by PB, is a probable first county record.

Scutelleridae (plant bugs)

Eurygaster testudinaria. There are very few pre-2015 VC20 records for the Tortoise Bug (9.5-10.5mm), but 2015 saw eight new records, starting with an adult found near South Mimms (TL20) by PS on 14 June. As a result, the distribution map is now much more reflective of the probable true distribution in the county of a species that was once uncommon but is now widespread in southern Britain.

Miscellaneous photographs

A selection of other species photographed during 2015 are included with this report, these being the Bishop's Mitre Shieldbug (*Aelia acuminata*), the Brassica Shieldbug (*Eurydema oleracea*), the Juniper Shieldbug *Cyphostethus tristriatus*, and the Spiked Shieldbug *Picromerus bidens*.

References

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Picromerus bidens at Panshanger Park (photo Allan Burrows).



Aelia acuminata at Heartwood Forest (photo Joe Gray).



Cyphostethus tristriatus at Mardley Heath (photo Joe Gray).



Eurydema oleracea at Amwell Nature Reserve (photo Joe Gray).