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**THE HOVERFLIES OF MALTA (DIPTERA: SYRPHIDAE), NEW RECORDS AND CORRECTIONS.**

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**ABSTRACT**

Additional records of hoverflies from Malta are given; 9 species are recorded for the first time, 6 had been recorded by Rondani and one was discovered in the collections of the Natural History Museum of London. The nomenclature of Rondani's records is updated and the status of the species in Malta commented upon. The total number of species known from Malta is now 46.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Since my previous article on Maltese Syrphidae (Ebejer 1988) I have been able to examine Dr.P. Gatt's collection of Diptera and some of the specimens upon which Mr.J. Cilia had based his own hoverfly records (Cilia 1973) and to whose work I had referred. I have had the opportunity to go through Rondani's Prodrusus which includes species not recorded again from Malta as well as Antonio Schembri's descriptions of two hoverflies (Rondani 1856-1880). With the publication of the Catalogue of Palaearctic Diptera (Soos & Papp 1988) it has been possible to update the nomenclature. In addition, I have undertaken further collecting myself. As a result, there are several new records for the Islands and I have listed them below. Species about which there is a serious doubt as to their occurrence in Malta are in square brackets. Unless otherwise stated, the recorded material has been collected by me and is in my collection.

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**SPECIES LIST**

**SYRPHINAE**

Bacchini

*Xanthandrus* Verrall 1901

*Xanthandrus comtus* (Harris 1782)

Material examined: 4 ♂♂, Wied il-Qlejgha, 8.xi.1992.

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<sup>1</sup> "Tamarisk", Triq P. P. Castagna, Balzan, Malta.

Rondani had recorded this species and Schembri et al. (1991), recorded it again on the basis of a single headless specimen collected by Cilia at Hamrun. Until now it was thought to be rare. However, I observed several males hovering high beneath White Poplars (*Populus alba* Linnaeus) at Wied il- Qlejgha.

Syrphini

*Eupeodes* Osten-Sacken 1877

*Eupeodes nuba* (Wiedemann 1830)

Material examined: 1 ♂, Bahrija, 21.vi.1992.

This is the only specimen I have seen in spite of checking the genitalia of many *Eupeodes* males in Dr. Gatt's collection and my own. It is very similar to several other species in the genus including *E. corollae* (Fabricius) which is one of the commonest hoverflies on the Island.

Paragini

*Paragus* Latreille 1804

*Paragus albifrons* (Fallen 1817)

Material examined: 1 ♂, Mosta, 4.iv.1965, K.M. Guichard, Natural History Museum collections, London.

I had overlooked this species in my own notes when I had searched the collections at the Natural History Museum in London.

[*Paragus majoranae* Rondani 1857]

This species was recorded by Rondani. It can be separated reliably from the above only by examination of the male hypopygium. There must therefore remain some doubt whether or not this species occurs in Malta and until its presence can be confirmed I do not consider it a member of the Maltese fauna.

*Ceriana* Rafinesque 1815

*Ceriana conopsoides* (Linnaeus 1758)

This was recorded by Rondani together with the similar species *C. vespiformis* (Latreille) which is still met with regularly but has not been found again.

## MILESIINAE

### Eristalini

#### *Eristalinus* Rondani 1845

#### *Eristalinus megacephalus* (Rossi 1794)

Material examined: 1 ♀, Wied Qannotta, 7.vii.1987; 1 ♂ and 2 ♀♀, Marsaxlokk, 27.ix.1992.

#### *Eristalis* Latreille 1804

#### *Eristalis arbustorum* (Linnaeus 1758)

Material examined: 1 ♀, Buskett, 25.viii.1991; 1 ♂, Fiddien, 8.iv.1992; 1 ♂, Gozo, Wied ir-Ramla, 23.iv.1992; 1 ♂, Gozo, Wied il-Lunzjata, 23.iv.1992.

#### *Eristalis pratorum* (Meigen 1822)

Recorded by Rondani but has not been collected again, although it could easily be overlooked.

#### *Helophilus* Meigen 1822

#### *Helophilus trivittatus* (Fabricius 1775)

Material examined: 1 ♀, Wied il-Ghasel, 29.iii.1979, S.P. Schembri; in the collection of Dr. P. Gatt.

### Merodontini

#### *Eumerus* Meigen 1822

#### *Eumerus emarginatus* (Loew 1848)

Material examined: 1 ♂, Buskett, 14.iv.1977; 1 ♀, Salina, 16.iv.1977; 1 ♀, Fiddien 4.v.1988.

This species was inadvertently omitted from my previous article.

#### *Eumerus nudus* (Loew 1857)

Material examined: 1 ♀, Ghadira, 17.iv.1992.

*Eumerus strigatus* (Fallen 1817)

Material examined: 2 ♀, Rabat, Wied Ghomor, 31.iii.1992.

*Platynochaetus* Wiedemann 1830

*Platynochaetus setosus* (Fabricius 1794)

Rondani recorded this species which is fairly distinctive and not easily confused with *P. rufus* Macquart. It has not been found again.

*Merodon* Meigen 1803

[*Merodon albifrons* (Meigen 1822)]

Rondani recorded the occurrence of *M. varius* in Malta. There are several closely related species in this group, including *M. geniculata* Strobi which is common in Malta and *M. albifrons* of which *varius* is a synonym. Without examining Rondani's specimen(s) from Malta, I cannot be sure which species Rondani was actually referring to. For the time being, therefore, the occurrence of *M. albifrons* in Malta remains doubtful.

Pipizini

*Heringia* Rondani 1856

*Heringia heringi* (Zetterstedt 1843)

Material examined: 1 ♂ and 1 ♀, Buskett, 25.viii.1981; 1 ♂, Bahrija, 3.xi.1991; 1 ♀, Buskett, 22.iv.1992; 1 ♂, Buskett, 1.v.1992; 1 ♂, Gircanti, 18.iv.1993.

Xylotini

*Syritta* Le Peletier & Serville 1828

*Syritta flaviventris* Macquart 1842

Material examined: 1 ♂, Marsaxlokk, 27.ix.1992, P. Gatt, in his collection; 1 ♂, Wied Liemu, 22.viii.1993.

This species is easily overlooked because in the field it looks so similar to the very common *S. pipiens* (Linnaeus).

## DISCUSSION

The currently accepted name for the genus *Metasyrphus* Matsumura is *Eupeodes* Wiedemann and the previously recorded species *M. corollae* should now be included under the new name. Antonio Schembri described *Sphaerophoria oleandri* which is a synonym of *S. ruppellii* (Wiedemann) and *Eumerus delicatae* which is a synonym of *E. pulchellus* Loew (Soos & Papp 1988). I have two further species of *Eumerus* in my collection which I am unable to determine at present. Cilia's records for *Chrysotoxum festivum* (Linnaeus) and *Platycheirus albimanus* (Fabricius) may not be based on correct identifications (Cilia pers. comm.). He had given his collection to Dr. P. Gatt and a search has not revealed any specimens labelled as the above species. For the time being therefore, they cannot be considered as part of our fauna.

The number of Syrphidae known from Malta is 46, including Rondani's five records which have not been found again. There is no doubt that more species will be recorded, considering the several possibilities of North African migrants.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Dr. P. Gatt for allowing me access to his collection and to use his records.

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(Received December 1993)