
Bumblebees of Caithness and Sutherland



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Bumblebees with white tails

Great Yellow bumblebee (*Bombus distinguendus*)



Now found only in north and west Scotland. Caithness and Sutherland support the last remaining populations of this bumblebee on the mainland. It is found in habitats rich in wild flowers and gardens with bee friendly plants. It can be seen between June and August.

Illustration: Queen



Mustard yellow bumblebee with a distinct black band between the wings



White-tailed bumblebee
(*Bombus lucorum*)

Found almost everywhere. Males have a yellow face the same as male Heath bumblebees

Illustration: Queen and Male



Garden bumblebee¹
(*Bombus hortorum*)

Garden bumblebee and Heath bumblebee share the same banding pattern, but Garden bumblebee has a long 'horse-like' face and male Garden bumblebees do not have a yellow face.

Illustration: Queen



Heath bumblebee²
(*Bombus jonellus*)

Illustration: Queen

Ginger/yellow bumblebees



Moss carder bee
(*Bombus muscorum*)

Difficult to identify as it looks like the Common carder bee. Requires flower rich grassland and heather moorland.

Illustration: Queen



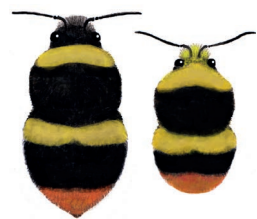
Common carder bee
(*Bombus pascuorum*)

Found almost everywhere and often warmer-coloured than shown here.

Illustration: Queen



Bumblebees with red/orange tails



Early bumblebee
(*Bombus pratorum*)

Common small bee seen from March to August.

Illustration: Queen and Male



Red-tailed bumblebee¹
(*Bombus lapidarius*)

Not regularly recorded in the area. Look for Red-tailed bumblebees turning up in lowland gardens and the Bilberry in upland heaths.

Illustration: Queen and Male



Bilberry bumblebee²
(*Bombus monticola*)

Illustration: Queen

Buff-tailed bumblebee
(*Bombus terrestris*)

Increasingly common in the far north. Workers look very similar to White-tailed bumblebees, but with a 'coffee stain' of brownish hairs at the top of the white tail.

Illustration: Queen and Worker

Broken-belted bumblebee
(*Bombus soroensis*)

Found on moorland or forest edges. Queens can be seen June to July, which is later than White-tailed queens.

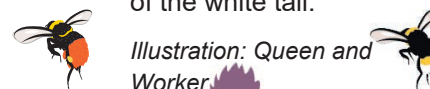
Illustration: Queen

Gypsy cuckoo bumblebee
(*Bombus bohemicus*)

Four cuckoo bumblebees occur in Scotland. Gypsy cuckoo bumblebee invades the nests of White-tailed bumblebee.

Illustration: Queen

Easily confused with White-tailed bumblebee. Generally smaller, with extra yellow hairs ahead of the main yellow band.



Who are we?

The Trust was founded in 2006 due to serious concerns about the 'plight of the bumblebee'. We aim to increase the number and distribution of bumblebees and have a vision for a world where bumblebees are thriving and valued.

Why conserve bumblebees?

Bumblebees are the sight and sound of summer. They are very important pollinators of many of our wildflowers and crops. Their pollination of crops is worth many millions to the UK economy. Sadly, bumblebees are struggling to survive and need our help.

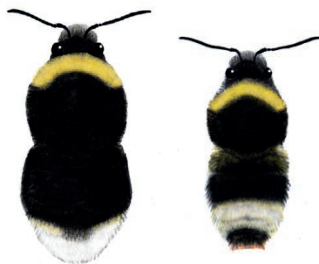
Why have bumblebees declined?

Our native bumblebees are in decline, this is largely due to the loss of over 97% of our wildflower meadows. Two bumblebees have become extinct nationally while others such as the Great Yellow bumblebee are of great conservation concern.

Red clover (*Trifolium pratense*) A favoured Great Yellow food plant



In some areas of Sutherland, you may also spot the following bumblebee:



Forest cuckoo bumblebee (*Bombus slyvestris*)

Forest cuckoo bumblebees invade the nests of Early bumblebees and probably Heath and Bilberry bumblebees as well. Males are easier to identify as they have a fringe of orange hair at the end of the tail.

Illustration: Queen and Male

The Bumblebee Conservation Trust is a registered charity (England & Wales 1115634 / Scotland SC042830). Company registration number 05618710 (England & Wales). Registered Office: Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Lakeside Centre, Lakeside Country Park, Wide Lane, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO50 5PE.

www.bumblebeeconservation.org

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