



Pollinator Academy

Genus: *Psilota*



Psilota anthracina male

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Genus: *Psilota* Meigen 1822

Family: Syrphidae

Subfamily: Eristalinae

Tribe: Merodontini

Number of species of this genus found in Europe: 6

Description

Head

Face and frons shiny black, without any dusting, except for a very thin line of dusting along the eyes. Face, frons and vertex entirely haired. Face with a median bare vitta, from the antenna to the oral margin. Antenna small, third antennal segment about 1.5 times longer than high. Arista about as long as the antenna, swollen in the basal third. Eye is long and densely haired.

Thorax

Thorax is entirely black, with finely punctured. Scutellum with a row of hair-like bristles at the margin.

Wings

Veins clearly yellow at the base. Wing-membrane nearly entirely covered with microtrichia.

Legs

Entirely black, the tibiae are basally pale brown to darkbrown, and apically narrowly also dark brown.

Abdomen

Entirely black, shiny, with erect hairs.

General comments on identification to species level

Differential diagnosis

Genus *Psilota* comprises small to medium sized black hoverflies, typically shiny with a blue tinge. The body is of a compact build, abdomen is about as long as wide; body is entirely black or bronze coloured (without spots or stripes), mostly shiny. The face has a distinctly protruding mouth margin (view in profile) and lacks a facial tubercle. The eye is densely haired. The wing vein M_1 is more or less parallel with the outer wing membrane, the angle with vein R_{4+5} ranges from acute to about right. The *vena spuria* is rudimentary or entirely lacking. Male genitalia with forked surstyli.



Psilota atra habitus male



Psilota exilistyla habitus male



Psilota aegeae female head lateral

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Geographical distribution and global diversity

The genus has representatives in most zoogeographical regions, except in the Neotropics and Afrotropics.

Presence in Europe

Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation

- European Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

Biology

Adult behaviour and flower preferences. Preferred environment are deciduous forests; *Quercus/Carpinus/Ulmus* forest and old orchards of *Malus* and *Prunus*. Adult apparently largely arboreal; may be found in small glades within forest; females can be found investigating tree trunks in the shade. Flowers visited: white umbellifers; *Acer campestre*, *Crataegus*; *Photinia*; *Rhamnus frangula*; *Prunus avium*, *Salix*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Gleditsia*.

Reproduction and larval biology. Larvae are saproxylic, they can be found in internal pocket of decay, containing rotten wood, sap and water, in the trunk of living trees.

Seasonal life cycle. Flight period: May/beginning July.



Type species: *Psilota anthracina* Meigen, 1822

Common names:

SV - sotblomflugor;

NB - sotblomsterfluer

List of species found in Europe:

1. *Psilota aegeae* Vujić, Ståhls & Smit, 2020
2. *Psilota anthracina* Meigen, 1822
3. *Psilota atra* (Fallén, 1817)
4. *Psilota exilistyla* Smit & Vujić, 2008
5. *Psilota innupta* Rondani, 1857
6. *Psilota nana* Smit & Vujić, 2008

References

IUCN. 2021. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2021-3. Available at: www.iucnredlist.org. (Accessed: 10 April 2023).

Radenković S., Likov, L., Ståhls, G., Rojo, S., Pérez-Bañón, C., Smith, J., Petanidou, T., van Steenis, W. & Vujić, A. (2020) Three new hoverfly species from Greece (Diptera: Syrphidae). *Zootaxa*, 4830 (1): 103–124. <https://doi.org/10.11646/zootaxa.0000.0.0>

Smit, J. T., Vujić, A. (2007): The Palaearctic species of the genus *Psilota* MEIGEN (Diptera, Syrphidae) with the description of two new species. *Studia dipterologica*. 14(2): 345- 364.

Speight, M.C.D. 2020. Species accounts of European Syrphidae, 2020. *Syrph the Net, the database of European Syrphidae (Diptera)*. Syrph the Net publications, Dublin 104: 1-314.

Attributions

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