

**Extreme size variation in the hoverfly *Episyrphus balteatus* (Degeer)
(Dip.: Syrphidae)**

This very common hoverfly is particularly characteristic, with its double, black bands on tergites 3 and 4, but these abdominal markings can be extremely variable. It also varies tremendously in its size: Stubbs & Falk (1983, *British hoverflies: an illustrated identification guide*. BENHS) give a wing length of from 6 to 10.25 mm. In a collection of set specimens, such variation is easy to overlook; relative proportions and overall appearance seem much more important to the entomologist's eye. But seeing them next to each other in nature can be quite a jolt, as was brought home to me when I took the accompanying photograph. On 8 August 1997, several hogweed umbels on the wayside of a small parking place near the National Trust reserve at Frithsden Beeches (grid reference SP 998110), Buckinghamshire, were dripping with hoverflies. Many dozens of *Episyrphus balteatus*, *Scaeva pyrastris* (L.) and *Eupeodes luniger* (Mg.) were jostling together in the sultry morning warmth. After taking a few general photos I noticed two dramatically different specimens of *Episyrphus* (Figure 1). The original 35mm slide was taken at a magnification of approximately life-size; thus, the lightly-marked male, to the left, has a wing length of about 10mm, whilst the heavily-marked but diminutive female to the right has a wing length of only about 6.5mm.—RICHARD A. JONES, 135 Friern Road, East Dulwich, London SE22 0AZ. (E-mail: bugmanjones@hotmail.com).



Figure 1. Size variation in *Episyrphus balteatus* (Degeer).



Jones, Richard. 2000. "Extreme size variation in the hoverfly *Episyrphus balteatus* (Degeer) (Dip.: Syrphidae)." *The entomologist's record and journal of variation* 112, 224–224.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/178728>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/195135>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Biodiversity Heritage Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In Copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder

Rights Holder: Amateur Entomologists' Society

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Rights: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions/>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.