

BEETLES of GUERNSEY

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Volume 4 : Heteroceridae
Mud beetles

Heterocerus fenestratus
(3.1 to 4.7 mm)



Heteroceridae

The Heteroceridae are a small family of beetles comprising of a few very similar-looking species, only one of which has been recorded so far in Guernsey. Due to their similar appearance it may be the case that one or two other species may also occur unnoticed.

They are quite small, between 2 and 5 mm long and are relatively elongated. They have spade-like legs designed for digging and are covered in short, dense hair on the upperside. They have a variegated pattern on the elytra of pale yellow on dark brown, but this varies in shade and tone between species and individuals.

The family are all associated with wetlands, burying tunnels into the water-side mud. Many species live only in saltmarshes, but a few also occur in freshwater locations. However they fly well and may be recorded away from wetlands especially since they are attracted to light.

Checklist :

a) species recorded since 1990:

Heterocerus fenestratus

b) species listed during 20th Century prior to 1990 but not since:

c) species recorded by Luff in 1893-1907:

d) additional species only listed in 1862 and not since:

Notes on the checklist:

Section a) shows the species that have recorded on the island's insect database since 1990. This publication is concentrating on these species. These records are presumed to be reliable although the identification of many species is very difficult so some errors are inevitably going to be present.

Section b) shows species that have been listed during the 20th century as occurring on Guernsey but not since 1990. It is very difficult to ascertain the reliability of some of these records without further investigation, but equally there are no particular reasons to doubt most of these records.

Section c) shows the species reliably recorded by Luff from the late 19th/early 20th century. Luff was a respected Victorian entomologist and all his identifications are presumed correct using the knowledge available at that time.

Section d) shows species that were listed in Ansted & Latham's 1862 list of fauna of Guernsey but not since. This publication has been shown to contain errors in some areas. Most of the species listed were not authenticated and many lists were passed on second hand. Local naturalists always presume this list to be somewhat unreliable.

Heterocerus fenestratus

length 3.1 to 4.7 mm

*mandibles project out
and up from face*

antennae short

*front legs wide
with strong spurs
for digging*

*elytra pattern varies
in contrast, colour tone
and extent of pale
markings*

*pale markings reach
right up to the front
edge of the elytra*

*femoras pale
in colour*

*upper surface with
short dense hairs*



