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Inspired by other recording schemes, I has produced a draft shieldbug atlas to accompany the IUCN status review. This includes all recording scheme data as of 2014.

This is available on-line to download at:

http://www.britishbugs.org.uk/Provisional_atlas_of_shieldbugs_and_allies_2018.pdf



Arctic walrus spotted in North Ronaldsay and Sanday

The island of Sanday is one of the larger inhabited outer islands of Orkney, with a population of around 550. Rich in natural and man-made history, Sanday has a wealth of wildlife, heritage and archaeology.

This was increased this week by a rather unexpected visitor. Five years after the "once-in-a-lifetime" sighting of a walrus in Orkney, a second animal has been spotted there.

The mammal was first spotted by Lewis Hooper, a volunteer at North Ronaldsay bird observatory. He said it is not thought to be the same individual that was seen in March 2013, though it is the same species.



The walrus was photographed on the island of Sanday.

Sanday ranger Emma Neave-Webb, of Sanday Development Trust, said: "My job here is very much looking after the local - and not so local - wildlife. A wonderful job, made all the better by sightings like this.

Honey found to contain neonicotinoid pesticide residues

One in five samples of UK honey were found to contain neonicotinoid pesticide residues following the introduction of the EU-wide ban on the use of neonicotinoid pesticide seed dressings on flowering crops.

Neonicotinoids were also found in around half of the honey samples taken prior to the ban's introduction. Whilst the percentage of samples that tested positive after the ban was introduced had declined, the persistence of such pesticide residues indicates the need for further research.

The new results are from a national survey conducted by scientists at the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, published in the scientific journal PLOS ONE this week.

The researchers analysed 130 honey samples, provided by bee keepers across Great Britain during 2014 and 2015, to assess the effectiveness of the current EU-wide ban on neonicotinoid pesticide seed dressings on flowering crops, such as oilseed rape – a policy that aims to reduce exposure risk to honeybees and other pollinators.

Lead author Dr Ben Woodcock said, "While the frequency of neonicotinoid contaminated samples fell once the EU-ban was in place, our data suggest that these pesticides remain prevalent in the farming environment."

The concentrations of neonicotinoids in honey were found to have declined between May to September during 2015. The researchers also found a positive association between neonicotinoid concentrations in honey and the amount of oilseed rape grown in the vicinity of the hive.

Dr Woodcock said, "Honey samples collected earlier in the year, when oilseed rape is in flower, were more likely to contain neonicotinoid residues than samples collected in late summer when bees feed on other flowers"

The study suggests that the neonicotinoid residues found in honey after the ban may come from crops that are attractive to bees (particularly oilseed rape) being grown in soils contaminated with residues of these pesticides from previous crops.

UK farmers continue to treat a large proportion of cereal with neonicotinoid seed dressings as this practice is currently exempt from EU restrictions. If treating cereals with neonicotinoids results in soils contamination that lasts from one year to the next this may pose a risk to bees feeding on flowering crops sown into the same fields the following year.