

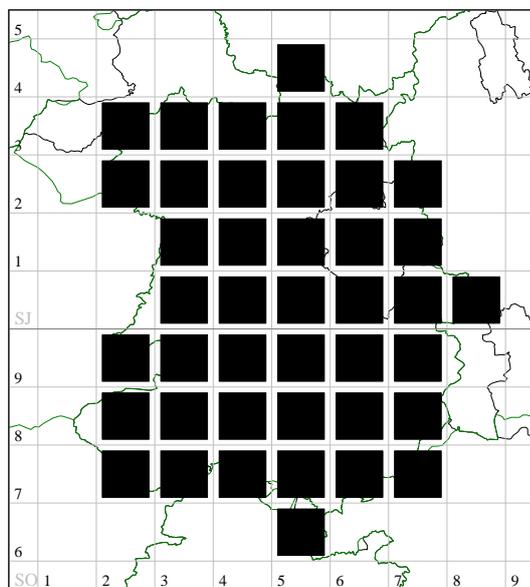
Recording Shropshire Collembola

Prior to 2015 the Collembola (springtails) were not represented upon the SEDN database due to two reasons; firstly they are a difficult group of mostly small to very small invertebrates (most are 1-2 mm in length) that few people tackle, and secondly MapMate, the principal recording format used by SEDN recorders had not included a checklist within its software, therefore any records that did come in could not be added. In the past couple of years the National Collembola Recording Scheme, led by Dr Peter Shaw has enabled an up to date checklist to be included and so now it is possible to record them more easily. They however remain poorly recorded nationally.

Springtails are ubiquitous creatures and have roles in soil improvement and nutrient recycling. They are readily found in all micro-habitats within Shropshire including dead and living timber, leaf litter, soil, ponds, and on vegetation. The FSC has worked with Natural England and Dr Peter Shaw recently to highlight soil biodiversity and the identification of springtails over the past three years and therefore it was felt the time was right to begin to record them to at least hectad level in terms of their Shropshire distribution (though all grid references allow monad level mapping).

SEDN funding enabled me to begin this process and as of 26/07/15 the database holds just over 400 records of 49 springtail species across 42 of Shropshire's hectads (see Map 1).

VC40 Collembola Recorded 10km squares



Map 1 – hectad level map of springtails



Fig 1 – *Bilobella braunerae* new to the UK

Star find was the pink springtail *Bilobella braunerae* which was found in a Shropshire garden and noted as new to the United Kingdom. It is associated with rotting timber and found under bark. Given the early stages of this project several species were noted as new to Shropshire. The small (0.5 mm) white dotted springtail *Sminthurinus trinotatus* was found at Fordhall Farm, and Abdon, in plant pots. This species is probably ubiquitous in Shropshire's potted plants spreading with the garden centre trade, whilst another small species, *Deuterosminthurus pallipes* (0.8mm) occurring in yellow and purple colour forms and probably in every Shropshire garden during the summer period.

Looking forward I would hope to continue recording springtails in Shropshire with a view to a distribution atlas being put together at some future point, perhaps after a further 3 or 4 years coordinated recording. It is my intention also to encourage other entomologists in Shropshire to record these invertebrates and hold training events to enable this to happen.

Pete Boardman