

## Biological diversity on the Findhorn Hinterland

Since becoming a trustee of the Findhorn Hinterland Trust last year one of my areas of focus has been gathering more information about the biological diversity that exists on the land immediately surrounding our community here. Whilst there's already a lot of knowledge about some groups of organisms, such as lichens and birds, there is much still to be learned about the fungi, insects, slime moulds and many other forms of life that are our immediate neighbours on the land.



Painted lady butterflies (*Vanessa cardui*) & a small tortoiseshell butterfly (*Aglais urticae*) on ragwort.



The pied-winged robber fly (*Pamponerus germanicus*) preys on beetles & parasitic wasps.

To address this, we're commissioning some specialist biological surveys and this year these have concentrated on spiders and two-winged flies (Diptera). A survey at the end of June recorded 127 species of flies on the Hinterland, including a crane fly (*Tipula nodicornis*) that is on the UK's Red Data Book list; the Nationally Scarce pied-winged robber fly (*Pamponerus germanicus*); and remarkably, a species of fly (*Metopia tshernovae*) that has not been recorded anywhere else in Britain before!

The spider survey is still ongoing, as it involves the use of pitfall traps that I check every month. So far it has resulted in the identification of over 40 species of spiders, including ones that are typical of coastal areas, such as the wolf spider (*Arctosa perita*). Other biodiversity records come from individual sightings, and recently I've been recording a lot of fungi and slime moulds. This summer was also a particularly good one for the painted lady butterfly (*Vanessa cardui*), both here and throughout the UK.



Female wolf spider (*Arctosa perita*) found on the Findhorn Hinterland.



Flaming scalycap fungi (*Pholiota flammans*) on a stump in Wilkie's Wood

There's a whole world of wonder on our door-step and I encourage everyone to take time to explore the biodiversity of the Hinterland area!

Alan W.F.



Slime mould (*Stemonitis fusca*) on dead wood in the Edible Woodland Garden