

A tachinid fly

Gymnocheta viridis

Identification:

This 10mm long fly is the only 'greenbottle' that can confidently be identified in the field, and once recognised it is very distinctive. Shiny green with bronze highlights, unlike others it is very strongly bristly on the abdomen. The antennae tend to be held forward from the relatively small head. The eyes are strongly hairy. Green flies in other families are smaller and more softly hairy, any bristles are distinctly less robust, and the eyes may be bare.



Photo © James Lindsey
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ec/Gymnocheta.viridis.jpg>

Distribution:

Probably widely distributed in Highland, but the family as a whole has been poorly studied here. Its early flight season encourages under-recording.

When to look for it:

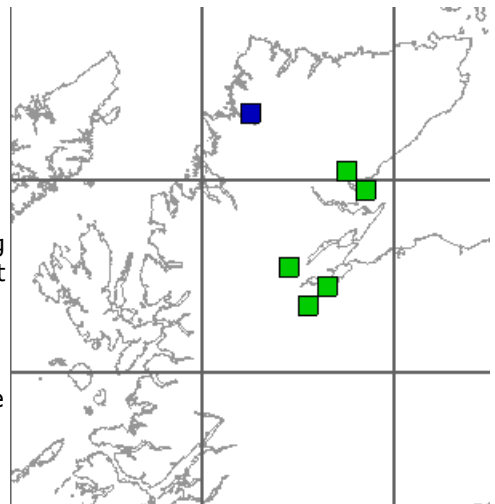
March to early June. It enjoys basking on sunlit tree-trunks and walls, when it can be studied at close range.

Similar species:

There are several other greenbottle-like flies, but none is as bristly as this. A helpful guide is at <http://thetopshamnaturalist.blogspot.com/2010/02/six-green-bottles.html>. If in doubt, a photograph or specimen should be taken.

Notes:

Gymnocheta viridis, like all tachinids, develops as a parasite on other insects. Its hosts are moth larvae.



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