

## Introduction to Scottish Ladybirds (Coccinellidae)

In the UK, there are 4,000 species of beetle. They are classified by entomologists into 103 different families. The ladybird family (Coccinellidae) is identified by its oval-shaped, often small, brightly coloured beetles with heart shaped 2nd tarsi. Many species of ladybird have more than one form, with varying numbers of spots. There are 30 species of ladybird found in Scotland. This introduction to Scottish ladybirds gives identification features for adult ladybirds and information on the habitats in which they can be found. It is intended to be used in combination with the beetle anatomy guide, and survey and recording guides.

### 2-spot ladybird (*Adalia bipunctata*)

0-16 spots



4-5mm

The typical form of this species is red with two black spots. Two other common forms are black with four red spots, and black with six red spots. The pronotum is white with black spots, or a black "M", or mostly black. This species can be confused with the 10-spot ladybird, however where the 10-spot has brown legs, the 2-spot always has black legs. Found in a range of habitats.

Photo © gailhampshire CC BY 2.0

### 5-spot ladybird (*Coccinella quinquepunctata*)

5-9 spots



4-5mm

This ladybird generally only has one form, which is red with five black spots. Found near unstable river shingle habitat mostly in the Highlands on low lying nettles, thistles, Bittercress and Angelica.

Photo © pudding4brains CC BY 2.0

### 7-spot ladybird (*Coccinella septempunctata*)

7-10 spots



7-8mm

One of our most common species. Generally one form which has red elytra with seven black spots. The pronotum is black with white marks. Found in a wide range of habitats.

Photo © John Mold

### 10-spot ladybird (*Adalia decempunctata*)

0-15 spots



3.5-4.5mm

The 10-spot is highly variable in colour and number of spots, with red, yellow, white, brown and black forms. The pronotum is white with five black spots - these may be fused. Brown legs distinguish it from the 2-spot - which has black legs. Tend to be found on deciduous trees and in hedgerows.

Photo © S. Rae CC BY 2.0

## 11-spot ladybird (*Coccinella undecimpunctata*)

7-11 spots



4-5mm

This rarely-found ladybird is red with 7-11 black spots. Occasionally the spots may have a yellow ring. Very similar to 7-spot but smaller. Found in herbaceous vegetation in dune systems, coastal habitats and inland habitats with sandy soils.

Photo © JSandy Rae CC BY 2.0

## 14-spot ladybird (*Propylea quatuordecimpunctata*)

14 spots



5-6mm

Our most common black and yellow ladybird. This ladybird can be white or yellow with black squares instead of round spots. Often found near water.

Photo © Jaybee CC BY 2.0

## 16-spot ladybird (*Tytthaspis sedecimpunctata*)

13-18 spots



3-4mm

A very small cream ladybird that can be difficult to find. It is distinguished by the central black line, round spots and merged spots on the edge of the wing cases. Found in grassland, scrub, saltmarsh and dune systems.

Photo © Ben Hamers

## 18-spot ladybird (*Myrrha octodecimguttata*)

14-18 spots



4-5mm

Distinguished from the Cream-spot and Orange ladybirds by its smaller size and a distinctive orange rounded m mark on its pronotum. This ladybird is relatively rare in Scotland but can be found in coniferous woodland, scrub, grassland, heathland and dune systems with conifers.

Photo © Dariusz Bauzys CC BY 2.0

## 22-spot ladybird (*Psyllobora vigintiduopunctata*)

22 spots



3-5mm

This yellow and black ladybird always has 22 spots and these are rarely joined up. It feeds on mildew and is often found in low vegetation. Uncommon in Scotland.

Photo © Lucia Krevetka Chmurova CC BY 2.0

## 24-spot ladybird (*Subcoccinella vigintiquatuor punctata*)

0-24 spots



3-4mm

This red ladybird can have up to 24 black spots. Its distinguishing feature is the fine hairs giving it a matt appearance. Found in rough grassland or occasionally in marshy habitats and scrub.

Photo © Claudia Watts

## Orange ladybird (*Halyzia sedecimguttata*)

12-16 spots



4.5-6mm

The Orange ladybird and Cream-spot ladybird are often confused as they are similar-looking species. The Orange ladybird is lighter in colour with larger, less distinct white spots. The pronotum has distinct yellow spots covering its surface, and a yellowish head. Found in woodland.

Photo © Nigel Jones

## Cream-spot ladybird (*Calvia quattuordecimguttata*)

14 spots



4-5mm

This ladybird is very similar to the Orange ladybird. However, the cream spot ladybird is darker with smaller, more distinct white spots. Its pronotum has only two distinct small white spots towards the outer edge on a solid background. Found in woodland.

Photo © Claudia Watts

## Larch ladybird (*Aphidecta obliterata*)

0-10 spots



4-5mm

The Larch ladybird has light brown elytra with very little patterning - frequently with a central dark line, and sometimes speckled with tiny dark spots. Often found in woodland, associated with Larch.

Photo © Sandy Rae CC BY 2.0

## Hieroglyphic ladybird (*Coccinella hieroglyphica*)

0-7 spots



4-5mm

The Hieroglyphic ladybird is light brown with black spots, stripes and patches - which are often fused. There are also very dark forms. Found on bogs and trees.

Photo © S Rae CC BY 2.0

## Striped ladybird (*Myzia oblongoguttata*)

0-15 spots



6-8mm

The Striped ladybird is one of our few ladybirds not defined by spots, instead this ladybird has stripes mixed with elongated spots running down its back. Two larger white spots flank the orange/red pronotum. A conifer specialist with occasional records on the coast.

Photo © Ben Hamers

## Eyed ladybird (*Anatis ocellata*)

0-23 spots



7-8.5mm

The spots are usually black with a pale ring. The pronotum is black with two merged spots on either side and two distinctly separate spots towards the elytra. Found in coniferous and mixed woodland.

Photo © Ben Hamers



## Cream-streaked ladybird (*Harmonia quadripunctata*)

4-20 spots



5-6mm

Not to be confused with the Striped ladybird, this ladybird can be either streaked or 16-spotted in a 1-3-3-1 pattern or 4 black spots on the outer sides of the elytra. The pronotum is white with 5-9 spots in a distinctive pattern. Found on conifers.

Photo © Ben Hamers

## Kidney-spot ladybird (*Chilocorus renipustulatus*)

2 spots



4-5mm

The Kidney-spot ladybird has only one form and is brilliantly red underneath. It is black with two red kidney spot marks, a black pronotum and the lip of the elytra is upturned. Found in deciduous and mixed woodlands, scrubland and grassland in the vicinity of trees.

Photo © Craig Nisbet

## Pine ladybird (*Exochomus quadripustulatus*)

2-4 spots



3-4.5mm

This small ladybird may be confused with the 2-spot ladybird and the Kidney-spot ladybird and black forms of the Harlequin ladybird. However, the Pine ladybird has characteristic comma shaped spots near the pronotum. Found in most habitats, including woodland.

Photo © Gail Hampshire CC BY 2.0

## Heather ladybird (*Chilocorus bipustulatus*)

2-6 spots



3-4mm

This ladybird may be confused with the 2-spot ladybird and black forms of Harlequin ladybird. It has distinctly different patterning with its 4 spots often fused in a wavy line. Its colouring is either red as pictured or black. There is a rim around the edge of the elytra. Found in heathland.

Photo © Sandy Rae CC BY 2.0

## Water ladybird (*Anisosticta novemdecimpunctata*)

15-21 spots



3-4mm

The Water ladybird is found in reeds and around the edge of ponds. It can be beige or reddish with 15-21 black spots on the elytra. Relatively localised in Scotland mostly bordering the Solway Firth.

Photo © DenisG CC BY 2.0

## Harlequin ladybird (*Harmonia axyridis*)

0-21 spots



5-8mm

A new ladybird to Britain in 2002, This species has quickly spread. It is highly variable in colour and number of spots. Its most reliable identification feature is the pronotum, which, when white has up to 5 spots—fused (in an M) unfused, or in a solid trapezoid.

Photo © Francis Rowland

## Introduction to Inconspicuous Ladybirds

Most ladybirds look distinctively "ladybird-like", however not all are as easy to distinguish from other similar-looking beetles.

These inconspicuous ladybirds are often unassuming, small, without regular spots, frequently hairy and do not conform to a typical ladybird shape.

These are generally harder to find but well worth looking for!

## Spotted marsh ladybird (*Coccidula scutellata*)

5 spots



2.5-3mm

A brownish-red hairy ladybird with five uneven spots. It has short antenna and is the only inconspicuous ladybird in Scotland with distinct spots. Found near marshes, riversides and ponds.

Photo © Gilles San Martin f CC BY SA 2.0

## Red patched nephus (*Nephus redtenbacheri*)



1-2mm

This ladybird has two large reddish-brown patches, a black head and brown legs. It is more oval in shape than conspicuous ladybirds with hair creating a matt appearance. It has short antennae. Prefers coastal habitats.

Photo © Gilles San Martin f CC BY SA 2.0

## Red marsh ladybird (*Coccidula rufa*)

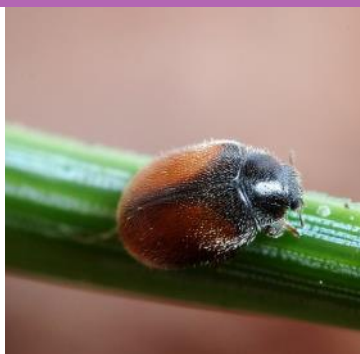


2.5-3mm

A hairy brownish red ladybird with long antenna. No spots. Elongated compared to the conspicuous ladybirds. It has straight sided elytra. Found in wet habitats such as wet grasslands and marshes.

Photo © Gilles San Martin f CC BY SA 2.0

## Pine scymnus (*Scymnus suturalis*)



1.5-2mm

This ladybird has no spots, is hairy and has a distinctive dark head and collar. It has short antennae. Found in coniferous plantations.

Photo © Gilles San Martin f CC BY SA 2.0

## Pointed keeled rhyzobius (*Rhyzobius litura*)



2.5-3mm

It has no spots, with variable patterning but often has a dark U-shaped mark towards the end of the elytra. The body is hairy with very long antennae. Found in lowland grassland and low lying vegetation.

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## Ladybird larvae

Ladybird larvae are distinctive in their shape. Identifying ladybird species from their larvae is relatively straightforward.

The larvae, barring a few examples, are often very elongated, segmented ovals with 3 pairs of legs.

Larvae are often spikey or knobbly with distinctly marked patterns on their bodies which help to identify to species.

The image at top right is a 7-spot ladybird larva and the image below it is a 14-spot ladybird larva, each showing distinctive patterns and colour markings.



Photo © Denis G

Photo © Claudia Watts

## Ladybird facts

- Many ladybirds are beautiful and brightly coloured, and most adults and larvae are efficient predators and help to maintain a healthy balance in numbers of potential crop pests like aphids.
- Some trees will even release pheromones to alert the ladybirds to an infestation of aphids. This is an amazing adaptation!
- Some ladybirds (such as the 24-spot ladybird) are known to feed on plants, whilst others will feed on the mildew (such as the 22-spot ladybird) growing on the plants.
- Often you can find 7-spot ladybirds overwintering together in leaf litter, under walls and anywhere sheltered. It's well worth a look!



Photo 7-spot Ladybird © Jon Mold

## Resources

- **Ladybird Recording Scheme** - [www.coleoptera.org.uk/coccinellidae/home](http://www.coleoptera.org.uk/coccinellidae/home)
- Bloomsbury Wildlife Guides - **Field Guide to the Ladybirds of Great Britain and Ireland**, by Helen Roy and Peter Brown (2018)
- Pelagic Publishing - **Ladybirds, Naturalists Handbooks 10**, by HL Roy *et al.* (2013)
- Field Studies Council - **Guide to the ladybirds of the British Isles** - [www.field-studies-council.org](http://www.field-studies-council.org)
- **Buglife** [www.buglife.org.uk/](http://www.buglife.org.uk/)