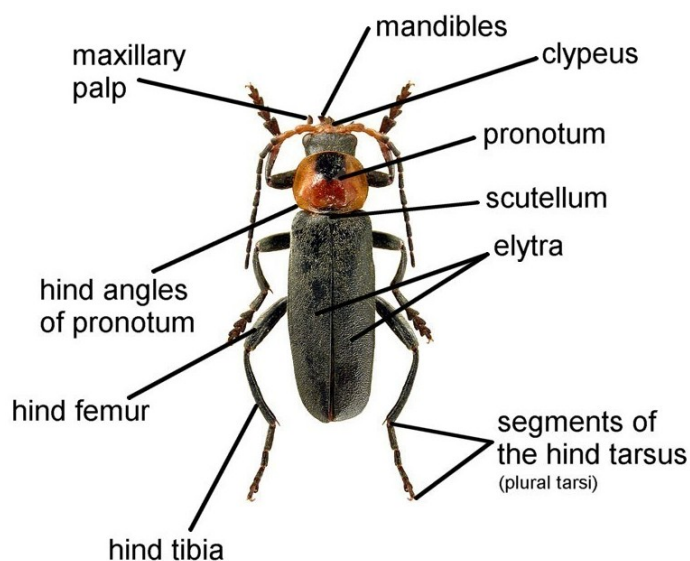


# Genus *Cantharis*



## Checklist

From the Checklist of Beetles of the British Isles, 2008 edition, edited by A. G. Duff (available from [www.coleopterist.org.uk/checklist.htm](http://www.coleopterist.org.uk/checklist.htm)). Currently accepted names are written in bold italics, synonyms used by Joy in italics.

## **CANTHARIS** Linnaeus, 1758

***cryptica*** Ashe, 1947 (= *pallida* in the sense of some authors, not Goeze, 1777)

***decipiens*** Baudi, 1871 (= *haemorrhoidalis* as used by British authors)

***figurata*** Mannerheim, 1843

***fusca*** Linnaeus, 1758

***lateralis*** Linnaeus, 1758

***livida*** Linnaeus, 1758

***nigra*** (De Geer, 1774) (= *fulvicollis* Fabricius, 1792 non Scopoli, 1763)

***nigricans*** (Müller, O.F., 1776)

***obscura*** Linnaeus, 1758

***pallida*** Goeze, 1777

***paludosa*** Fallén, 1807

***pellucida*** Fabricius, 1792

***rufa*** Linnaeus, 1758 (includes *darwiniana* as used by Joy)

***rustica*** Fallén, 1807

***thoracica*** (Olivier, 1790)

## Image Credits

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# Genus *Cantharis*

Illustrated key to the British species adapted from Joy (1932) by Mike Hackston

1 Elytra yellow/orange/brown. ....2



Elytra black. ....7



- 2 Length 11-14 mm.; hind tibiae entirely, or almost entirely, black. Head reddish-brown with a black central spot which sometimes is not obvious if overhung by the pronotum; pronotum reddish-brown; apex of elytra sometimes darker, apex of hind femora generally black. This species is variable in the colouration of the elytra - the black variety is shown here, but it still shows the same leg colouration. ....  
..... ***Cantharis livida***  
Common species



Smaller species, length 7.5-11 mm.; hind tibiae at most black towards apex. ....[3](#)

- 3 Pronotum with a well-defined black mark covering whole of the central part, or at least extending close to the front margin. Head black, generally yellow in front of the antennae; scutellum sometimes darker; patch of black sometimes present towards base of the femora; antennae darker towards apex; length 7.5-8.5 mm. ....

..... ***Cantharis decipiens***

Local species; England and Scotland.



Pronotum uniformly brown, or with an irregular black mark on top, which extends at most only slightly into the front half. ....[4](#)

- 4 Length 9-11 mm. Head and pronotum orange-brown; top of pronotum and legs sometimes with scattered dark marks, but extreme apex of tibiae never black. ....  
..... ***Cantharis rufa***



Length 6-8.5 mm. ....5

- 5 Head, pronotum and legs entirely orange-brown, except the extreme apex of the middle and hind tibiae are sometimes black. Length 7-8.5 mm. ....[6](#)

Base of head, top of pronotum, scutellum, and femora towards base darker; length 6-7.5 mm. ....

..... ***Cantharis figurata***

Very local



- 6 Apex of the last segment of the maxillary palps darkened, sometimes nearly black; hair on the elytra uniform, short and fairly dense. ....  
 ..... ***Cantharis pallida***



- Last segment of the maxillary palps uniform in colour (occasionally the tip very slightly darker); hair on the elytra of two kinds, the first type short and looking combed down on the surface and the second type longer and more erect. ....  
 ..... ***Cantharis cryptica***

Joy has both these species under the same *pallida* which he describes as a common species



7	Femora entirely black. ....	<a href="#">8</a>
	Femora partly yellow/orange. ....	<a href="#">11</a>



8 Elytra dark brown-black; length 4-7.5 mm.; head black, except front part and jaws; pronotum black with the sides indistinctly lighter; tibiae and tarsi brownish black. ....[9](#)

Elytra black; length 8.5-13 mm.; tibiae and tarsi black, except sometimes the inner side of the front tibia which may be reddish. ....[10](#)

9 Length 6-7.5 mm. ....  
..... ***Cantharis figurata* v. *scotica***

Length 4-5 mm. ....  
..... ***Cantharis paludosa***  
Local species in Wales, Northern England, Scotland and  
Ireland



- 10 Pronotum black, with sides abruptly and rather broadly pale brown, clypeus black; length 8.5-10 mm. ....  
..... ***Cantharis obscura***  
Local species



- Pronotum red, with a black mark on top in front of the middle, more or less touching the front margin; length 10-13 mm.; pronotum rather distinctly punctured; clypeus reddish. ....  
..... ***Cantharis fusca***  
Local species, England and Scotland



- 11 Elytra dirty brown; femora dark brownish-black, with the apex narrowly paler. Head yellow, marked irregularly with black, pronotum yellow, with an irregular dark mark towards base, tibiae generally black, with base yellow; length 7.5-9.5 mm. ....

..... ***Cantharis rufa***

Local species on the coast under seaweed. Stated by Joy as *Cantharis darwiniana* – now known as a synonym of *rufa*, which keys at couplet 4a. Note that this illustration does not match the above description which appears to be a dark coloured variety adapted for the littoral environment.



Elytra black, femora entirely orange brown, or with the apex narrowly black, or base vaguely darker. ....[12](#)

12 Elytra almost covered with close-set very short pubescence, along with more scattered longer hair. Head black with front parts yellow, pronotum entirely yellow, or with two marks on the top black, or more generally black; legs entirely yellow, or with apex of hind femora, and hind tibiae mostly black. ....[13](#)

Hair on the elytra not as above. ....[14](#)  
This half of couplet is missing from Joy's book.

- 13 The extreme edge of the elytra that bends round onto the underside is orange brown (this can be seen from the side); length 5.5- 6.5 mm. ....

..... ***Cantharis lateralis***

Local species



Extreme edge of elytra black like the rest of the elytra; length 7-11 mm. Pronotum sometimes with whole of the middle black. ....

..... ***Cantharis nigricans***

Common species



14 Elytra more shining and with a more distinct granular texture; hind tibiae entirely yellow; length 4.5-7 mm. ....[15](#)

Elytra duller and less strongly granulate; hind tibiae black; length 9-14 mm. ....[16](#)

- 15 Scutellum black. Pronotum nearly all black, base of femora dark brown-black. (Variety *flavilabris* has the pronotum and femora entirely pale brown. ....  
..... ***Cantharis nigra***



Scutellum yellow. Pronotum and femora entirely pale. (Variety *suturalis* has the area around the suture, in particular towards the scutellum, yellow  
..... ***Cantharis thoracica***  
Very local on marsh plants.



- 16 Pronotum more distinctly broader than long; elytra broader; pronotum usually finely punctured and with a black mark in the middle; front tibiae almost entirely black. Head with the base black; length 9-12.5 mm. ..

..... ***Cantharis rustica***

Common species. Front tibia black with orange patch at apex on ventral surface. Basal two segments of antennae orange, rest black; 1.5 segments of abdomen projecting from elytra. Identified from Farley Mount, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1990; photographed on *Oenanthe crocata* between Exmouth and Lympstone, SX995826, 25<sup>th</sup> May 2008.



Pronotum less distinctly broader than long; elytra narrower; pronotum without punctures and entirely reddish brown; front tibiae entirely, or almost entirely, reddish brown. ....[17](#)

- 17 Head with the base black, apex of hind femora very narrowly black; length 9-12 mm. ....  
..... ***Cantharis pellucida***  
Common species



- Head entirely yellow, apex of hind femora more broadly black; length 11-14 mm. ....  
..... ***Cantharis livida*** (var. *rufipes*)

Common species. Note that in these two couplets Joy describes the apex of the hind tibiae being black which is not consistent with couplet 13b which states that the hind tibiae are black.

