1	The impa	ects of predators and parasites on wild bumblebee				
2	colonies.					
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32	Running hea	ader: Monitoring survival of bumblebee colonies				

- 33 Keywords: Bombus; nest; predation; survival; reproduction; Aphomia sociella, Apodemus
- 34 sylvaticus

35 Abstract

- The study of wild bumblebee nests has been hindered by the difficulty in locating and
 observing them. Here, 47 wild nests were located using a sniffer dog and volunteers.
 The entrances to 32 nests were filmed continuously to identify successful nests (those
 which produced gynes) and observe vertebrate species interactions.
- 40 2. Of the 47 nests, 71% and 21% produced gynes in 2010 and 2011, respectively.
- A total of 39 vertebrate species were filmed at entrances but the majority did not
 interact with the nests. Great tits (*Parus major*) depredated or attempted to depredate
 bees on 32 occasions at the entrances to ten nests, something which has not previously
 been described. Small mammals were very often recorded accessing entrances to
 bumblebee nests, but whether they depredated bees was not known, and frequentlyvisited nests were no less likely to produce gynes. Eight nests were entered by adult
 wax moths, *Aphomia sociella*.
- 48
 4. The faeces of 1,179 workers from 29 *Bombus terrestris* nests were screened
 49 microscopically for parasites. *Crithidia bombi* infections were apparent in 49% of
 50 worker bees, while *Nosema bombi* and *Apicystis bombi* were present in 5.5% and
 51 0.68% of bees, respectively. Nests with a high prevalence of *C. bombi* infection were
 52 less likely to produce gynes, the first evidence for a direct impact of this common
 53 parasite on bumblebee colony reproduction in wild nests.
- 54 5. Overall, our data indicate that bumblebee nests are at the heart of a rich web of
 55 interactions between many different predator and parasite species.

56 Introduction

57 Bumblebees are amongst the most abundant and important of pollinator species throughout 58 the temperate northern hemisphere, and some have undergone marked declines in abundance 59 and contractions of range in recent decades (Goulson et al. 2015). These declines have 60 stimulated much research, but the study of wild bumblebee nests has been somewhat 61 neglected as locating nests remains challenging (Kells and Goulson, 2003; Osborne et al., 62 2008; Suzuki et al., 2009; Lye et al., 2009). Hence we still have a poor understanding of 63 bumblebee nesting and population biology (Osborne et al, 2008; Goulson et al., 2010; Lye et 64 al., 2012). This is significant as the nest is, arguably, the breeding unit; each nest normally 65 contains one breeding female, the queen (but see O'Connor et al. 2013).

Aspects of bumblebee ecology and behaviour have been studied using nests reared 66 from wild caught queens in the laboratory or obtained from commercial bumblebee rearing 67 68 companies, which are then placed in the field (e.g. Schmid-Hempel and Schmid-Hempel, 69 1998; Goulson and Stout, 2001; Goulson et al., 2002; Carvell et al., 2008; Whitehorn et al., 70 2012). The outcomes of these experiments, whilst valuable, may not always provide an 71 accurate representation of wild bumblebees. Artificially reared bumblebee nests placed in the 72 field tend to be housed in constructed domiciles raised above the ground and with entrances 73 that are apparent (Lopez-Vaamonde et al., 2004; Carvell et al., 2008). They may thus be more 74 vulnerable to attack by predators and parasites than natural nests.

75 Bumblebees are thought to have a number of mammalian enemies in the UK; for 76 example, small mammals such as wood mice (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) and shrews (*Sorex* spp.) 77 are said to enter and depredate nests before the first brood of workers have emerged (Darwin, 78 1859; Sladen, 1912; Cumber, 1953; Pouvreau, 1973), or they may be excavated and eaten by 79 larger mammals such as badgers (Meles meles) (Sladen, 1912; Pouvreau, 1973; Alford, 1975) 80 and foxes (Vulpes vulpes) (Benton, 2006; Goulson, 2010). Bumblebee nests can also fall 81 victim to the larvae of the wax moth Aphomia sociella which consume the entire nest; 82 destroying comb and brood (Sladen, 1912; Pouvreau, 1973; Alford, 1975; Goulson, 2010). A 83 large proportion of our understanding of bumblebee nest predators originates from the 84 extensive work of Sladen (1912). Whilst his book formed the foundation for later bumblebee 85 research and many of the facts he presents are repeated in later texts, the reliability of some of 86 his observations are questionable. For example Sladen (1912) writes that 'moles [Talpa 87 *europea*] and weasels [Mustela nivalis] also destroy nests' yet later states that he has found 88 'no evidence for predation by any vertebrates other than mice and shrews'. Similarly in a 89 study of the life histories of 80 Bombus pascuorum (formally Bombus agrorum) nests,

90 Cumber (1953) documented that 17 were 'destroyed by rodents, badgers, etc' and 25 'died 91 out prematurely', but no details on how this was determined is given. It is therefore unclear 92 how rodent predation was deduced as the cause of death, or what proportions of failed nests 93 were due to the different predators. Darwin (1859) quoted Col. Newman's estimate that 'Two 94 thirds of bumblebee nests are destroyed by field mice' but again, methods for assigning mice 95 as the cause of failure are not given. Casual observation of bumblebee nests is unlikely to 96 produce useful data in this respect since vertebrate predators are likely to modify their 97 behaviour if a human observer is present, and most are nocturnal. Further clarification of the 98 predators of bumblebee nests and quantification of the rates of their destruction is needed to 99 advance understanding of bumblebee nest ecology and facilitate development of suitable 100 conservation strategies (Goulson, 2010; Winfree, 2010).

101 As with rates of predation, we also have poor data on the frequency with which 102 bumblebee nests survive to produce gynes or males. Data on wild nests in the UK is limited 103 to the study by Cumber (1953) who found 23 (28.8%) of 80 B. pascuorum nests produced 104 gynes. Experiments using artificially reared nests find varying levels of reproduction. For 105 example, 25 commercially reared *B. terrestris* colonies placed in the field resulted in a mean 106 of 13.7 gynes per nests (\pm 5.7) with 11/25 (44%) of nests failing to produce gynes 107 (Whitehorn et al., 2012). Of 36 laboratory reared *B. lucorum* nests, 5 (13.9% of nests) 108 produced gynes, ranging from 1 to 125 per nest and totalling 250 (Müller and Schmid-109 Hempel, 1992), and in another study of 32 B. lucorum nests, 21.9% produced gynes (Imhoof 110 and Schmid-Hempel, 1999). Others reported lower success; for example none of 14 111 laboratory reared B. terrestris colonies placed in the field produced gynes (Otti and Schmid-112 Hempel, 2008). It has been hypothesised that the majority of nest failures occur in the very 113 early stages when the founding queen is solely responsible for establishing a nest (Sladen, 114 1912; Free and Butler, 1959; Alford, 1975), so figures obtained from laboratory reared nests 115 or those followed in the wild after the first brood have hatched are likely to be overestimates. 116 Infection by internal parasites may also affect the survival and reproductive success of 117 bumblebee colonies (Durrer and Schmid-Hempel, 1995; Brown et al., 2003; Otti and Schmid-118 Hempel, 2007), but the impact these parasites have on wild bumblebee nests has never been 119 quantified. 120 Here, we deploy cameras to film wild bumblebee nest activity, detect gyne 121 production, and to record visits by vertebrate predators, A. sociella or cuckoo bees

122 (Psithyrus). We also screen workers for internal parasites, providing a detailed account of the

123 factors affecting the fates of 47 bumblebee nests.

125 Methods

- 126 The work took place on the University of Stirling campus and nearby farmland in 2010 and 127 2011. A trained bumblebee nest detection dog and volunteers assisted in locating nests 128 (Waters et al. 2011; O'Connor et al., 2012). Searches were focussed on areas likely to have 129 bumblebee nests, particularly woodland and semi-natural grassland (Cumber, 1953; Alford, 130 1975; Svensson et al., 2000; Free and Butler 1959; Fussell and Corbet, 1992). Woodlands 131 comprised a mix of mature stands of oak (Quercus robur), ash (Fraxinus excelsior) and 132 beech (Fagus sylvatica) with some areas of younger deciduous trees and small areas of 133 planted coniferous woodland. Grasslands were semi-natural, ungrazed and characterised by 134 presence of tussocks of dead grasses and herbs. All sites had to be suitable for repeat visits 135 and for use of recording equipment, therefore areas of dense undergrowth, those prone to 136 water logging or next to roads and paths were not searched to avoid risk of equipment theft or 137 vandalism. On occasions, nests were found which were deemed too close to paths, and some 138 were reported by farmers in outbuildings. These were observed for a minimum of 20 min 139 twice each week and parasite samples were taken but they were not filmed.
- 140

141 Cameras

142 Ten camera recorders were designed and manufactured by N. Butcher at the Royal Society 143 for the Protection of Birds Headquarters, Sandy, UK. Each consisted of a black and white, 144 waterproof camera, (Misumi, MO-R430G-C) with a resolution of 240 T.V. lines. Six 145 infrared, no-glow bulbs were positioned around each of the ten cameras to facilitate night 146 filming. Infrared lighting was controlled by a digital timer, housed inside the weather proof 147 box. A metal hood fitted over and around the camera (and infrared bulbs) and measured 148 approximately 6 x 4 x 3 cm. This was connected to a metal stake 50cm in length. Both hood 149 and stake were painted with a green and brown pattern to camouflage the camera. The metal 150 stake was driven into the ground to hold the camera in position approximately 40-60 cm from 151 the bumblebee nest entrance. The camera was connected via a 4 m cable to a 12 Volt battery 152 and a MemoCam Digital Video Recording unit, (Video Domain Technologies Ltd., Petah 153 154 12 cm). The weather proof box and battery were wrapped in a waterproof sack and buried 155 inside a shallow pit, 4 m from the camera. The turf from the excavation was replaced above 156 the equipment to minimise disturbance and provide camouflage. The wire was also buried 157 just below the surface of the ground.

159 The MemoCam software package was designed for surveillance operations and has been used 160 for vertebrate observational studies (Bolton et al., 2007). The software allows the user to 161 specify an area of the filmed image to be movement sensitive. In this case the nest entrance 162 was selected. The software detected any movement at the nest entrance and recorded one 163 frame before this movement and the following five frames. This ensured there was no time 164 lag between the movement trigger and start of filming, as was found to be an issue with other 165 commercially available wildlife camera traps. Sensitivity was set so that movement of 166 anything greater than ~3mm in diameter would trigger recording (i.e. the very smallest 167 bumblebees were filmed, but diminutive flies were unlikely to trigger recording). Footage 168 was recorded onto 2 G.B. 'mini' S.D. memory cards. Batteries and memory cards were 169 replaced every two to three days. When a nest expired, the camera was redeployed to a 170 newly-discovered nest as quickly as possible.

171

172 Video analysis

173 Footage was viewed at x2 real time. Any events which were of interest were watched again at 174 slower speed to establish their exact nature. The number of bees entering and leaving nests 175 was recorded for one hour, from 12:00-13:00 hrs, each day and termed 'midday traffic'. In 176 some cases the nest was visited at midday by researchers, (changing batteries, S.D. cards, 177 etc,) and in these cases, bumblebee traffic for the hour nearest to midday was used. For every 178 day that a nest was filmed, a seven-day running mean of the midday traffic was calculated 179 (the mean of the traffic on the day in question, plus the traffic on the previous and following 180 three days). The greatest value of seven-day mean midday-hour traffic was termed 'peak 181 traffic' and used as a proxy measure for the maximum size attained by each nest for statistical 182 analysis.

183 All vertebrates filmed within approximately 1m of the entrance were identified to 184 species and their behaviour was recorded. Behaviours were categorised as: no interaction 185 (where animals simply passed nest entrances); some interaction (sniffing at entrance, waiting at hole); attempted predation (widening entrance, chasing bumblebee foragers) and predation 186 187 (bees killed); or entering or exiting the nest entrance. For each species, rates were calculated 188 for attempted predation/predation or use of nest entrance by dividing the total number of 189 events by the total number of days that the nest was filmed. Small mammals are more active 190 at night, with very few records during daylight hours. Their numbers were calculated for each 191 24 hr period beginning at 8am (instead of for example, midnight which would result in

192 nightly visits being split over two days). For small mammals which entered the hole, we

- 193 would expect a visit to consist of one record of entry followed by one record of exit, but this
- 194 was not always the case (presumably because some holes led to underground tunnel networks
- 195 with multiple exits). In this case, the number of entries or exits per 24 h period (whichever
- 196 was the greater) was used.
- 197

198 Screening for internal parasites

199 Faeces from *B. terrestris* workers from 29 nests were screened for the internal parasites 200 Nosema bombi, Crithidia bombi and Apicystis bombi. Faecal samples were collected from 201 five bees twice weekly from each nest where possible. Bumblebees were collected at their 202 nest in clean sample pots. They were released when they defecated or after 15 min. Faeces 203 were collected from the pot using a microcapillary tube which was then sealed at both ends 204 with PTFE tape, labelled and chilled on an ice block in the field before being refrigerated at 205 2-5 °C. Each bee was examined for signs of wing wear and assigned to one of four categories 206 (after Carter, 1992; Rodd et al., 1980; Müeller and Wolfmueller, 1993; Whitehorn et al., 207 2011): 0= no wing wear; 1, some minor indentations; 2, most of margin with minor 208 indentations; 3, more than 5% wing surface missing. In the laboratory, samples were 209 transferred to a haemocytometer within 24 hours and examined under a light microscope at 210 x400 magnification. The presence of N. bombi, C. bombi and A. bombi was recorded and 211 numbers of each within 0.1µL on the haemocytometer grid was counted. Counts of C. bombi 212 and N. bombi correlate with intensity of infection (Otterstatter and Thompson 2006; Otti and 213 Schmid-Hempel 2008). Bees were not marked after sampling, so it is possible that some 214 individual bees were screened more than once. Bees were caught as they entered or left the 215 nest; it is possible that these bees were intruders from another nest, but this is likely to be 216 very infrequent (O'Conner et al. 2013). 217 218 Nest success

- 219 We use gyne production as the measure of nest success, since the numbers of colonies in the
- next generation depends upon the numbers of gynes (Chapman and Bourke 2001). In addition
- 221 to observation of video footage, gyne production can be detected by the presence of queen
- cells in the nest and so once nest activity ceased we attempted to excavate them. However, it
- was rarely possible to get to the nests (usually prevented by large tree roots), so these data are
- not included.

225 The most common bumblebee species studied here was *Bombus terrestris*, in which

226 males and workers cannot be distinguished from camera footage, so detection of male

- production was unreliable. Males could only be reliably distinguished for *B. pratorum* and *B.*
- 228 *lapidarius* of the species studied here.
- 229

230 Statistical analysis

Statistical analysis was carried out using R Statistical Software Version 2.12.2 (R
Development Core Team, 2011). Model fit was checked by visual examination of residuals.
Over-dispersion in the data was assessed and any points with Cook's Distance of greater than
1 were removed from analysis due to disproportionate influence on the data set (Zuur et al.,
2007).

A χ^2 test was used to compare the proportion of nests producing gynes in 2010 versus 2011, for all bumblebee species combined. This analysis included both filmed nests and those that were observed bi-weekly. A General Linear Model (GLM) with binomial distributions was used to assess the effect of 'peak traffic' and 'days filmed' (a proxy for nest duration) on the likelihood of each nest producing gynes, using data from the filmed nests only. Data from all bumblebee species were pooled as there were too few nests of species other than *B*. *terrestris* for meaningful analysis (Table 1). However, the analysis was rerun excluding *B*.

243 *pratorum* (a species in which nests end early) in case this influenced the results.

244 Four separate GLMs were used to investigate the likelihood of A. sylvaticus, Sorex 245 spp., great tits (*Parus major*) and *A. sociella* visiting bumblebee nests. The response variable 246 used for each of these models was the total number of visits from the species of interest to 247 each nest, using 'year' as a fixed factors and 'peak traffic' as a covariate in the model. As 248 above, data from all bumblebee species were pooled. Models used quasi-Poisson distributions 249 to account for over-dispersion in the data. Some data points were removed from the analysis 250 (two nests each A. sylvaticus, Sorex spp. and P. major and one nest from the A. sociella 251 model) because these data were outliers (Zuur et al., 2007). There were too few nests visited 252 by bank voles (*Clethrionomys glareolus*) or field voles (*Microtus arvalis*) to allow statistical 253 analysis (four and three nests, respectively).

A GLM with a binomial distribution was used to assess the effect of visits from *A*. *sylvaticus*, *Sorex* spp., *P. major* and *A. sociella* upon gyne production (binary response),
including 'peak traffic' as a covariate.

Two Generalized Linear Mixed Effects Models (GLMMs) were carried to identify factors that influenced the likelihood of a *B. terrestris* worker bee carrying either a *C. bombi* 259 or a *N. bombi* infection. The model used 'presence of infection' (of either *C. bombi* or *N.*

- 260 *bombi*) as the binary response, with the following potential explanatory variables: 'year',
- 261 'habitat', and 'presence of other protozoan infection' (i.e. either C. bombi or N. bombi,
- whichever was not being used as response) as fixed factors in these two models. 'nest' (i.e.
- the nest from which the worker was caught) was used as a random factor, and 'day' (i.e. day
- on which the sample was taken; day one being the first day a nest was found in that year) as a
 covariate. The interaction between 'year' and 'day' was also included.
- To assess the impact of infections with either *C. bombi* or *N. bombi* on nest success, i.e. gyne production, a GLM with binomial distributions was used to assess the likelihood of *B. terrestris* nests producing gynes (the binary response), with the 'proportion of infected bees' for *C. bombi*, *N. bombi* as covariates and presence or absence of *A. bombi* as a fixed factor.
- 271

272 Results

- A total of 47 bumblebee nests were found between 10 June and 25 August, and followed until their demise. In 2010, 28 nests were located and 19 of these were filmed. In 2011, 19 nests were found and 13 were filmed (Table 1). The majority were *B. terrestris* (34), with small numbers of other species; *Bombus hortorum* (4), *Bombus lapidarius* (3), *Bombus lucorum* (2), *Bombus pascuorum* (2) and *Bombus pratorum* (2).
- 278

279 Gyne production

- 280 Across all 47 nests (i.e. all species and both filmed and observed nests) gyne production was 281 significantly greater in 2010 than 2011 with gynes successfully produced by 71.4% and 21.1% of nests in 2010 and 2011, respectively ($\chi^2_1 = 12.7, P < 0.001$; Figure 1a). The pattern 282 remains similar if we use only the more reliable data for filmed nests (63% versus 23% of 283 284 nests produced gynes in 2010 and 2011, respectively). Two nests (nests 27 and 29; Table 1) 285 failed on or soon after the day that they were found (i.e. >2 bees were seen to enter or leave 286 the entrance, but thereafter, either no or very few (<5) bees were seen. It is highly unlikely 287 that gynes could have been made by these nests, but as we have no estimations of peak 288 traffic, vertebrate species visits, etc, these two nests were not included in statistical analysis 289 of predator/moth visits etc. 290 Of the filmed nests suitable for analysis, (n=30) those with high 'peak bumblebee
- traffic' were significantly more likely to produce gynes ($F_{1,28} = 40.3$, P < 0.001; Figure 1b).
- 292 The likelihood of nests producing gynes was not related to the duration of nest filming (F_{1,28}

- 293 = 0.80, P = 0.379; Figure 1c) and this was not affected by removing data for *B. pratorum*. 294 Therefore data were collected approximately equally for both nests that successfully 295 produced gynes and nests that failed to produce gynes.
- 296

297 Species interactions with bumblebee nests

Thirty-three vertebrate species were recorded at bumblebee nest entrances on at least one occasion (Table 2) in addition to the wax moth *A. sociella*, cuckoo bumblebees (*Psithyrus*) and other true bumblebees. The majority of large vertebrates filmed did not interact with the bumblebees or their nests.

302

a) <u>Mammals</u>

304 The most commonly observed interactive vertebrates were rabbits (Oryctolagus cuniculus) 305 and grey squirrel (Sciurus carolinensis), both of which are very common in the study area. 306 Sometimes they dug in leaf litter near the nest entrance, but they did not appear intent on 307 gaining access to nests, did not attempt to interact with bees, and were regularly observed 308 carrying out similar behaviour away from nest entrances. Erinaceus europaeus were filmed 309 investigating entrance holes and enlarging the entrance in what appeared to be deliberate 310 access attempts on seven occasions, but they were unable to penetrate in to any of the nests 311 (Figure 2).

312 Small mammals were very frequently recorded entering and leaving nest entrances, 313 particularly A. sylvaticus. However, these events may indicate shared occupancy of the 314 burrow system rather than predation of bumblebee nests and these observations are therefore 315 difficult to interpret. However, at two nests, (nests 16 and 23; Table 1) wood mouse visits 316 peaked during a single night and no bumblebee traffic was seen thereafter (Figure 3). In these 317 instances, mice carried leaf litter into the entrances and in one case (Figure 4) excavation of 318 the tunnel revealed that the tunnel had been tightly blocked with leaf litter and more than 50 319 live but subdued adults and considerable numbers of pupae and larvae remained in the nest, 320 suggesting that the blockage had ended nest activity prematurely.

321 Visits from *A. sylvaticus* to nests were not influenced by year, $(F_{1,28} = 1.16, P = 0.291)$ 322 or peak bumblebee traffic $(F_{1,28} = 1.23, P = 0.276)$. Numbers of *Sorex* spp. visits to 323 bumblebee nests differed significantly between years $(F_{1,28} = 44.86, P < 0.001;$ Figure 6) but 324 were not influenced by bumblebee traffic $(F_{1,28} = 0.020, P = 0.890)$. There were too few nests 325 visited by bank and field voles to allow statistical analysis. Neither *A. sylvaticus* nor *Sorex* spp. visits affected the likelihood of a nest producing gynes ($\chi^2_1 = 0.48$, P = 0.485 and $\chi^2_1 = 0.32$, P = 0.571, for *A. sylvaticus* and *Sorex* spp., respectively).

329

330 b) <u>Birds</u>

331 A number of bird species were seen investigating nest entrances (Table 2), but only P. major 332 were observed to depredate bees. Foragers/males and gynes were observed being captured as 333 they departed from or returned to the nest. On a total of 32 occasions at six nests, the birds 334 pecked at walking bees, but also appeared to watch returning bees before they landed and 335 occasionally pursued bees into the air. Great tits were also filmed exhibiting 'stalking 336 behaviour' on 17 occasions at eight nests (i.e. remained at entrance holes, looked inside, 337 removed leaf litter from the entrance, etc.) but no bees were present at the time. Stalking, 338 predation attempts or successful predations took place at ten nests, in both years, at sites up to 339 4 km apart.

- The number of *P. major* depredations were not significantly different in either year (χ^2 $_1 = 1.13, P = 0.470$). There appeared to be a trend for *P. major* to target larger nests with greater peak bumblebee traffic than smaller nests with infrequent bumblebee traffic, but this trend was not significant ($F_{1,28} = 7.94, P = 0.057$; Figure 5). *Parus major* attacks were positively correlated with gyne production ($\chi^2_1 = 5.47, P = 0.019$, Figure 7a).
- 345 346

c) <u>Invertebrates</u>

347 *Aphomia sociella*, were filmed entering and leaving 8 of the 30 filmed nests, but the 348 likelihood was not affected by the year ($F_{1,28} = 0.92$, P = 0.443) or peak bumblebee traffic (χ^2 349 $_1 = 1.92$, P = 0.279). *Aphomia sociella* visitations were positively correlated with gyne 350 production ($\chi^2_1 = 3.88$, P = 0.049, Figure 7b).

A *Bombus sylvestris* (cuckoo bumblebee) female was filmed exiting a *B. pratorum* nest 5th June 2011 (nest 20; Table 1). Within seven days the nest traffic was much reduced to
 0-4 bees per hour. No other *Psithyrus* were observed.

One *B. lapidarius* nest was visited by 14 *B. terrestris* or *B. lucorum* workers (Figure
8) over six days. None of the *B. terrestris* visitors were carrying pollen and so cohabitation of
the burrow system seems doubtful.

A queen *B. terrestris* or *B. lucorum* entered a small *B. terrestris* nest on 8th July 2010 (nest 17; Table 1) and a queen exited the nest approximately twelve minutes later. The queen walked around the entrance of the nest for some time, eventually walking out of view.

- 360 Whether this bee was the founding queen or an intruder is unclear as the nest was queenless
- 361 eight days later when it was excavated. Subsequent genetic analysis of the remaining twelve
- 362 workers showed that they were sisters (O'Connor et al., 2013). Similarly, a *B. terrestris* or *B*.
- 363 *lucorum* queen was filmed entering a *B. terrestris* nest (nest 10; Table 1) in early July, and
- 364 subsequent genetic analysis of nest mates showed that there were unrelated individuals in the
- nest but the foreign queen was not found (O'Connor et al., 2013).
- 366

d) <u>Internal parasites</u>

In total 1,179 faecal samples from *B. terrestris* workers from 29 nests were examined for
infections of the three protozoan infections (682 and 497 collected in 2010 and 2011,
respectively). *Crithidia bombi* was far more prevalent (49.0%) than *N. bombi* (5.54%) and
only eight bumblebees (0.68%) were infected with *A. bombi* (bees from five nests, all
detected in 2010). All 29 nests contained at least one worker infected with *C. bombi*, while
62% of nests had at least one bee infected with *N. bombi*.

374 Infections of C. bombi were detected more frequently in the faeces of B. terrestris with increased wing wear (assumed to be older bees) compared to unworn, younger bees (γ^2_3 375 = 60.89, P < 0.001; Figure 9). There was a significant 'year by day' interaction; B. terrestris 376 377 were less likely to present C. bombi infections towards the end of the summer and this decline was more marked in 2011 ($\chi^2_1 = 11.00$, *P* <0.001; Figure 10). Infection with *N. bombi* 378 379 was not (quite) significantly associated with C. bombi infection, though the relationship was positive (χ^2_1 =3.82, *P* = 0.051). *Crithidia bombi* infections did not spread through all nest 380 381 mates in wild *B. terrestris* nests (Figure 11 shows two typical examples of sampled nests). 382 There were often uninfected and infected bees collected within the same sample, and 383 intensity of infections varied greatly.

- 384 The likelihood of a *B. terrestris* worker presenting a *N. bombi* infection was significantly affected by 'year' ($\chi^2_1 = 15.16$, P < 0.001) with a far greater proportion of N. 385 386 bombi infections detected in 2010 (9.1% and 0.90% in 2010 and 2011, respectively). 387 Bumblebees infected with C. bombi were significantly more likely to be infected with N. *bombi* ($\chi^2_1 = 11.34$, *P* < 0.001). The likelihood of a *B. terrestris* worker being infected with 388 *N. bombi* was not associated with bee wing wear ($\chi^2_3 = 0.27$, P = 0.965; Figure 9). There was 389 no relationship with 'day' ($\chi^2_1 = 0.1$, P = 0.750) and there was no 'day' by 'year' interaction 390 391 $(\chi^2_1 = 0.23, P = 0.630).$
- 392 The likelihood of a *B. terrestris* nest producing new gynes was not affected by 393 presence of *A. bombi* in at least one worker ($\chi^2_1 = 0.447$, *P* = 0.580), nor by the proportion of

workers infected with *N. bombi* ($\chi^2_1 = 0.217$, *P* = 0.641). The proportion of workers infected with *C. bombi* was a significant negative predictor of the likelihood of a nest producing gynes, ($\chi^2_1 = 7.433$, *P* = 0.006; Figure 12).

397

398 Discussion

399 The proportion of nests producing gynes varied between the two years of observations with 400 more nests producing gynes in 2010 than 2011. No obvious reason for this disparity was 401 observed in the field and the trend was not explained by rates of other species visitations to 402 nests. Indeed, the proportion of B. terrestris infected with C. bombi and N. bombi was 403 appreciably lower in 2011, but this is unlikely to have caused any reduction in gyne 404 production. Gyne production was positively predicted by peak traffic, suggesting that 405 intensive monitoring of nest traffic can provide useful data on the strength of bumblebee 406 nests. Bumblebee nests can utilize multiple entrance holes, sometimes metres apart (D.G. 407 pers. obs.), which might influence both measurements of traffic and of gyne production, but if 408 this did occur in our nests it was not sufficient to obscure the relationship between the two. 409 Perhaps surprisingly, gyne production was not predicted by colony duration, but it

410 should be noted that our estimate of colony duration (the length of time for which we

411 observed it) was crude, since we do not know when colonies were founded and hence how

- 412 long they had been in existence when we located them.
- 413

414 Interactions with mammals

415 Despite many indications in the literature that large mammals such as *M. meles* and perhaps

416 *V. vulpes* are predators of bumblebee nests (Sladen, 1912; Pouvreau, 1973; Alford, 1975;

417 Goulson, 2010), no such events were recorded in our study. We have never discovered sets of

418 *M. meles* in the study area, so it is likely that they are locally absent. However, *V. vulpes* is

419 locally abundant and was captured four times on camera traps but showed no interest in the

420 nests. Furthermore, O'Connor (2013) surveyed studies of the diet of V. vulpes; of 2,617 scat

421 samples that have been dissected for identifiable prey parts, none contained fragments of

422 *Bombus.* Together, this suggests that Sladen (1912) may have been incorrect on this point.

- 423 Erinaceus europeaus were observed investigating nests, and had these been surface nests such
- 424 as those of *B. pascuorum* is seems plausible that they may have attempted to depredate them,
- 425 but they were unable to access these subterranean nests of *B. terrestris*.
- 426 Visits by smaller mammals were very frequent. All bumblebee nests were found in 427 networks of nests, runs and burrows which appeared to have been made by other animals,

428 which is a well-known trait of bumblebees (Sladen, 1912; Alford, 1975; Lye et al., 2012). 429 Camera footage indicated that the majority of these burrows were frequented by mice, shrews 430 and/or voles at the time of bumblebee occupation (Table 2). Early literature suggests that 431 these small mammals are major predators of bumblebee nests (Darwin, 1859; Sladen, 1912; 432 Cumber, 1953; Pouvreau, 1973), but we found no evidence for this. Visits by small mammals 433 were not targeted towards large nests, and nor did they predict subsequent gyne production. 434 Sorex spp. were more common in 2011, when fewer nests produced gynes, but we suggest 435 that this is unlikely to be causative since the nests visited by Sorex spp. did not have a 436 reduced likelihood of producing gynes.

437 So far as our data indicate, it seems most likely that small mammals are simply438 sharing the burrows, using them at night when the bees are inactive. However, it is important439 to note that Sladen (1912) suggests that small mammals may primarily depredate very young440 nests, when only the queen is present. Our nests were detected by the presence of worker441 traffic or by their smell, and all had workers present when located. Thus, we can infer nothing442 about predation levels early in the season.

Filming inside bumblebee nest (perhaps using an endoscope) would be needed to establish the actual relationships between small mammals and bumblebees. Such footage would also facilitate examining interactions out-with the scope of this study (e.g. effects of *Talpa europaea*). It would also be extremely interesting to film incipient nests as, in addition to small mammal attacks, this is when most usurpations and nest failures are thought to take place (Alford, 1975). However, finding and filming such nests in the wild poses a serious challenge.

450

451 Interactions with birds

452 Parus major were previously known to depredate vulnerable/walking bumblebees, including 453 bees feeding on *Rhododendron* spp. (Free and Butler, 1959) or *Tilia* spp. (Sladen, 1912; 454 Benton, 2006) which seem to have an intoxicating effect on bees, and also when infected 455 with Sphaerularia bombi (Bols; quoted in Benton, 2006). However, this is the first time that 456 P. major have been found to depredate 'healthy' bumblebees and identifies them as a potentially significant predator of bumblebee nests, for almost a third of filmed nests were 457 458 targeted by them, and *P. major* is an abundant species across much of Europe and Asia. It 459 would be useful for further filming of nests to be carried out elsewhere to establish if this 460 behaviour is restricted to the region or is common elsewhere. Parus major tend to attack nests 461 with high traffic which were likely to produce (or be producing) gynes, and it seems likely

that this was simply because these nests were easier to locate. Since they were observedcapturing gynes it is possible that they are having a significant impact at the population level.

464 Other bird species such as *Corvus corone, Erithacus rubecula* and *Turdus merula* also
465 appeared to show interest in bumblebee nests.

466

467 *Interactions with invertebrates*

468 Eight nests were entered by A. sociella, the larvae of which can be highly damaging to 469 bumblebee nests (Sladen 1912; Free and Butler, 1959; Pouvreau 1973; Alford 1975; Goulson 470 et al., 2002). As with P. major, visits were targeted at nests that were likely to go on to 471 produce gynes, perhaps because these nests were large and therefore more easily detected. 472 However, this positive relationship suggests that the moths may not have had a major impact 473 on nest success, perhaps because moth infestations that begin in summer are unlikely to cause 474 significant damage before the nest has produced new gynes. Of course, it may be that these 475 nests would have produced more gynes if not infested.

476 We recorded few other interactions with the larger invertebrates detectable with our 477 cameras. Only one *Psithyrus* was observed, a single *B. sylvestris* queen was recorded exiting 478 a B. pratorum nest. Nest traffic dwindled thereafter, but since the observation was made in 479 June, nests of *B. pratorum* (which is an early species) tend to be at the end of their natural life 480 at this time. We recorded no *Psithyrus* entering nests of *B. terrestris*, which is unsurprising 481 given that its main cuckoo bee associate is Bombus vestalis, which did not occur in Scotland 482 at the time (Benton, 2006). It should also be noted that, as with predation by small mammals, 483 *Psithyrus* are thought to attack mainly when their host nests are small, so it is likely that we 484 may have missed much of this activity.

We did record one instances of repeated entry of a *B. lapidarius* nest by *B. terrestris/lucorum* workers, and it seems likely that they were stealing nectar as this has been reported before (Free and Butler, 1959; Andrews, 1969). The *B. lapidarius* nest had already produced gynes, but it seems likely that if a nest were invaded at an earlier stage, the effect could be detrimental to the host colony, either through reducing food stores or horizontal pathogen transmission. Intra-specific robbery may also occur, but we could not detect this with our cameras.

It appeared that a failed usurpation attempt was recorded at one *B. terrestris* nest and
potentially a successful usurpation at another. Usurpation by true bumblebee queens is
thought to occur early in the season, (Sladen, 1912; Alford, 1975; Donovan and Weir, 1978;
Paxton et al., 2001) whereas the potentially successful usurpation occurred later in the season.

- 496 These were the only detected incidences of nest usurpation which is surprising considering
- 497 the frequency found in previous studies. For example, of 48 artificially reared *B. terrestris*
- 498 nests which were placed in the field in spring time, 18 colonies were invaded by a total of 30
- 499 wild *B. terrestris* queens (Carvell et al., 2008). However, these were not wild nests but were
- 500 lab-reared and placed in artificial boxes, which may be more easily detected.
- 501

502 *Effects of internal parasites*

- 503 Infections of *C. bombi* and *N. bombi* spread horizontally between nest mates consuming
- 504 contaminated nectar and pollen from stores in wax pots within nests, via contact between
- 505 individuals or shared contact with larvae, (Otti and Schmid-Hempel 2008; Erler et al., 2012;
- 506 Folly et al. 2017) or between foragers visiting flowers which have recently been
- 507 contaminated by an infected bumblebee (Durrer and Schmid-Hempel, 1994; Rutrecht et al.,
- 508 2007; Graystock et al. 2015). In broad accordance with earlier studies, *C. bombi* was found to
- 509 be the most common of the three parasites, followed by *N. bombi* at low prevalence and with
- 510 A. bombi being very scarce. Rates of infections of C. bombi and N. bombi have been found to
- 511 vary greatly between bumblebee species, populations and years (Otti and Schmid-Hempel,
- 512 2008; Popp et al., 2012), and we found that *N. bombi* prevalence was tenfold higher in 2010
- 513 (the year when gyne production was higher) compared to 2011.
- 514 Neither N. bombi nor A. bombi infections were associated with any measurable 515 negative impact on traffic or gyne production (though this does not of course demonstrate 516 that they are not harmful to their hosts). Interestingly, N. bombi infections were more 517 frequent in individuals that were also infected with C. bombi, which may be because the 518 presence of one parasite impairs the immune response, enabling attack by a second, or 519 alternatively may be because jointly infected bees possess behavioural traits that render them 520 more likely to be exposed to both parasites. For example, their preferred flower(s) may be 521 ones on which rates of pathogen contamination are high.
- In accordance with previous studies we found that older bumblebees were more likely to be infected with *C. bombi* and this is thought to be due to increased exposure and reduced immune response (Shykoff and Schmid-Hempel, 1991; Otterstatter and Thompson, 2006). However, in contrast to previous studies we also found that, having taken into account the effects of bee age, prevalence dropped in late season, particularly in 2011. We are unable to
- 527 explain this pattern.
- 528 To our knowledge, ours are the first data on patterns of changing parasite prevalence 529 in truly wild bumblebee nests, and also the first to provide evidence that these parasites might

- 530 impact on the success of wild nests. We found that nests with a high prevalence of infection
- 531 of workers with *C. bombi* were less likely to produce gynes. Without experimental
- 532 manipulation (for example by inoculating some nests in early season) we cannot be sure that
- this relationship is causative, however, and *C. bombi* is generally thought to have relatively
- mild effects on its host (Brown et al., 2000) (though when combined with other stress is can
- 535 strongly impact on queen founding success, Brown et al. 2003).
- 536 Overall, our data provide a unique insight into the relationships between bumblebees 537 and their predators and parasites, identifying many new questions and avenues for further
- research. It would be fascinating to continue this further; for example, we gathered
- 539 insufficient data on any species other than *B. terrestris* to be able to detect differences
- 540 between bee species in their susceptibility to predators, but such differences are likely. The
- 541 discovery of regular predation by *P. major* at the entrances to bumblebee nests suggests the
- 542 possibility of significant negative impacts at the population level that were hitherto
- 543 unsuspected. Interactions with small mammals are likely to be very frequent but require
- 544 further investigation to indicate what happens beneath the ground. It is clear that bumblebee
- 545 nests are at the heart of a complex web of interactions with diverse predators and parasites
- 546 which we are only just beginning to describe.
- 547

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- 554

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Figure 5. Total number of great tit attacks in relation to peak traffic of nests. Points 8 and 23 were
removed from the analysis as they had Cook's distance greater than 1 (i.e. they were overly influential
outliers; Zuur et al., 2007).

687	Figure Legends
688	Figure 1 (a) Total nests and presence or absence of new gynes, for all species. (b) Mean bee peak of
689	traffic for nests with and without new gynes (filmed nests only). (c) Mean of total days nests were
690	observed for. Error bars in b and c show standard errors of means.
691	
692	Figure 2a. Great tit depredating <i>B. terrestris</i> (nest 1; Table 1); (b) Hedgehog 'rooting' in leaves at nest
693	entrance (nest 1; Table 1).
694	
695	Figure 3. Wood mouse visits during 24hr and daily bumblebee midday hourly traffic at (a) nest 23 (B.
696	hortorum) and (b) nest 16 (B. terrestris). Breaks in lines indicate loss of footage. Wood mice
697	transported leaf litter into nest entrances during visits.
698	
699	Figure 4 (a) Wood mice transported leaf litter into <i>B. terrestris</i> nest entrance (nest 16; Table 1). (b)
700	Nest tunnel and external entrance was blocked by leaves and sticks placed by wood mice several
701	hours later. Bumblebee traffic ceased.
702	
703	Figure 5. Total number of great tit attacks in relation to peak traffic of nests. Points 8 and 23 were
704	removed from the analysis as they had Cook's distance greater than 1 (i.e. they were overly influential
705	outliers; Zuur et al., 2007).
706	
707	Figure 6. (a) More shrews were recorded visiting nests in 2011 than in 2010 (mean and standard
708	errors); (b) There was no relationship between shrew visits and peak bumblebee traffic. *Points 23
709	and 15 were removed from statistical analysis as they were overly influential on the data set (Cook's
710	distance of >1; Zuur et al., 2007).
711	
712	Figure 7. Mean great tit attacks (a) and wax moth events (b) to nests with and without gyne
713	production (error bars show standard errors).
714	
715	Figure 8 (a) B. lapidarius nest (b) visited by B. terrestris or B. lucorum worker. The footage allows
716	identification from the different stripe patterns between some species. (The red tail of B. lapidarius
717	appears white.)
718	
719	Figure 9. Proportion of B. terrestris infected with C. bombi and N. bombi within each age
720	class (0=no wing wear; 1=some indentations; 2=<5% of wing surface damaged; 3=>5% wing
721	wear absent).

7	n	2
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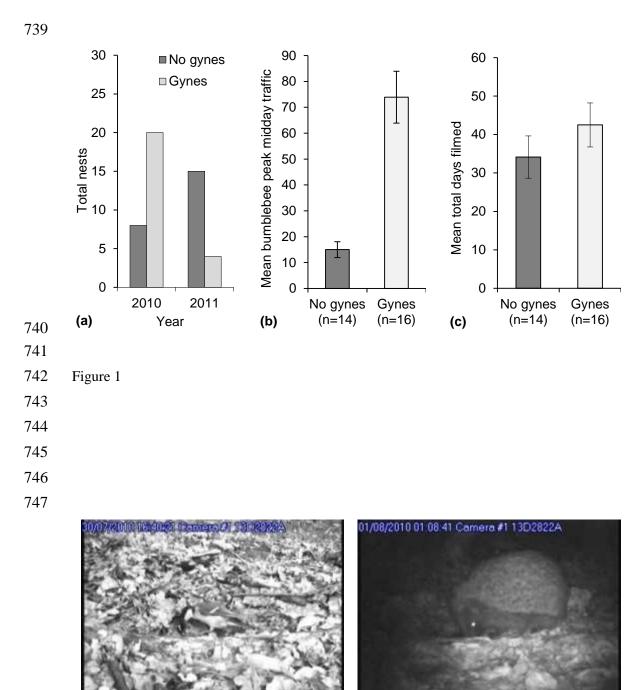
723	Figure 10. Proportion of worker <i>B. terrestris</i> infected with <i>C. bombi</i> , throughout the experiment in (a)
724	2010 and (b) 2011.
725	
726	Figure 11. Intensity of C. bombi infections in B. terrestris from two typical nests for the duration of
727	observations (Ref 16 and 26; Table 1; (a) and (b) respectively).
728	
729	Figure 12. Mean proportion of <i>B. terrestris</i> workers infected with <i>C. bombi</i> from 29 nests, with and
730	without gyne production (with interquartile ranges, maximum and minimum values shown).

- Table 1. Longevity, gyne production and the proportion of bees hosting *C. bombi* and *N. bombi*
- 733 infections for filmed nests. *Nest which failed prior to filming; >2 bees were seen to enter or leave,
- but footage revealed few/no further bee traffic. These were excluded from predation analysis.

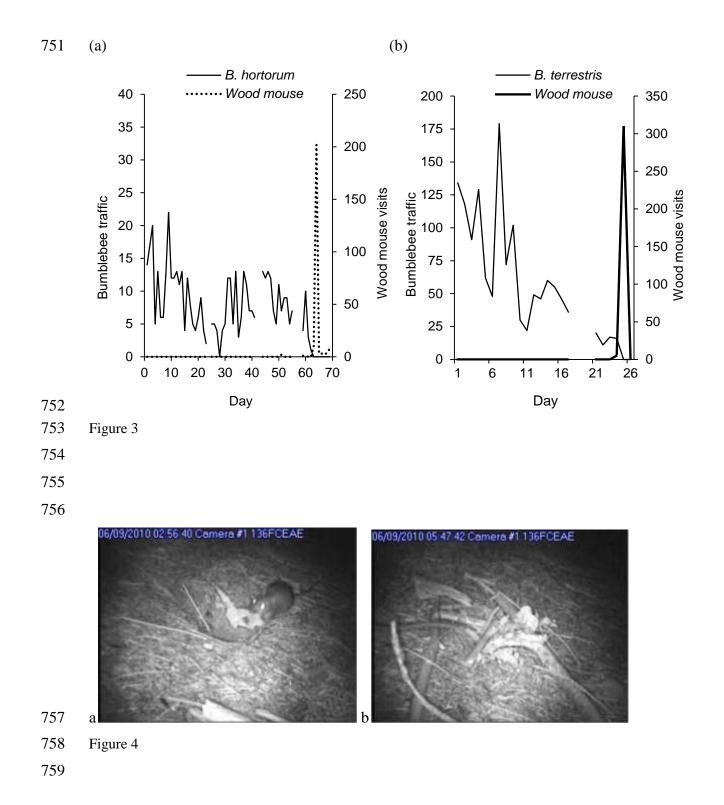
Nest details			Period of filming			Proportion of infected bees		
No.	Species	Habitat	Start	End	Gynes Produced	C. bombi	N. bombi	(n)
1	B. terrestris	Woodland	19/07/10	17/08/10	Yes	0.46	0.05	39
2	B. terrestris	Woodland	27/07/10	17/08/10	Yes	0.74	0.03	35
3	B. terrestris	Woodland	15/06/10	26/07/10	No	0.92	0.08	26
4	B. terrestris	Woodland	09/08/10	18/08/10	No	1.00	0.50	2
5	B. terrestris	Grassland	29/07/10	16/09/10	Yes	0.48	0.05	65
6	B. hortorum	Grassland	25/06/10	05/08/10	Yes	0.43	0.11	37
7	B. hortorum	Grassland	19/06/10	25/07/10	No	0.62	0.12	34
8	B. lapidarius	Woodland	27/07/10	10/08/10	Yes	0.50	0.00	6
9	B. pratorum	Grassland	10/06/10	08/07/10	No	0.80	0.07	15
10	B. terrestris	Grassland	13/06/10	28/07/10	No	0.34	0.00	29
11	B. terrestris	Woodland	22/06/10	30/07/10	Yes	0.50	0.06	34
12	B. terrestris	Woodland	09/08/10	20/08/10	No	0.29	0.00	7
13	B. terrestris	Woodland	18/08/10	22/08/10	Yes	0.60	0.20	5
14	B. lucorum	Woodland	16/06/10	29/08/10	Yes	0.51	0.03	63
15	B. terrestris	Woodland	22/06/10	27/07/10	Yes	0.65	0.18	55
16	B. terrestris	Woodland	13/08/10	06/09/10	Yes	0.28	0.01	80
17	B. terrestris	Woodland	16/06/10	16/07/10	No	1.00	0.00	9
18	B. terrestris	Woodland	29/06/10	16/08/10	Yes	0.39	0.07	61
19	B. terrestris	Woodland	19/06/10	03/09/10	Yes	0.69	0.21	94
20	B. pratorum	Woodland	31/05/11	20/06/11	No	-	-	-
21	B. terrestris	Woodland	01/06/11	08/08/11	No	0.55	0.02	60
22	B. terrestris	Woodland	01/06/11	29/08/11	No	0.27	0.01	138
23	B. hortorum	Woodland	01/06/11	08/08/11	No	0.38	0.00	13
24	B. terrestris	Woodland	02/06/11	11/07/11	No	0.71	0.00	24
25	B. terrestris	Grassland	02/06/11	29/06/11	No	0.50	0.00	10
26	B. terrestris	Grassland	06/06/11	02/09/11	Yes	0.38	0.02	112
27*	B. terrestris	Woodland	09/06/11	15/06/11	No	-	-	-
28	B. terrestris	Woodland	14/06/11	23/06/11	No	1.00	0.00	1
29*	B. terrestris	Woodland	23/06/11	24/06/11	No	-	-	-
30	B. terrestris	Woodland	27/06/11	01/09/11	Yes	0.27	0.00	75
31	B. terrestris	Woodland	12/07/11	28/09/11	No	0.38	0.00	58
32	B. terrestris	Woodland	22/07/11	10/09/11	Yes	0.33	0.00	51

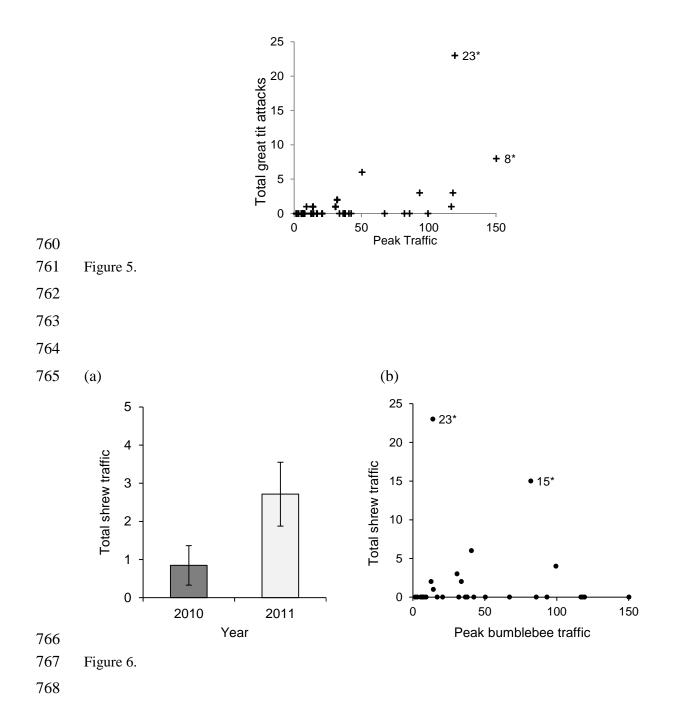
- 736 Table 2. Interactions with animals observed on the cameras. Invertebrate observations were not
- recorded, with the exception of wax moths and their larvae.

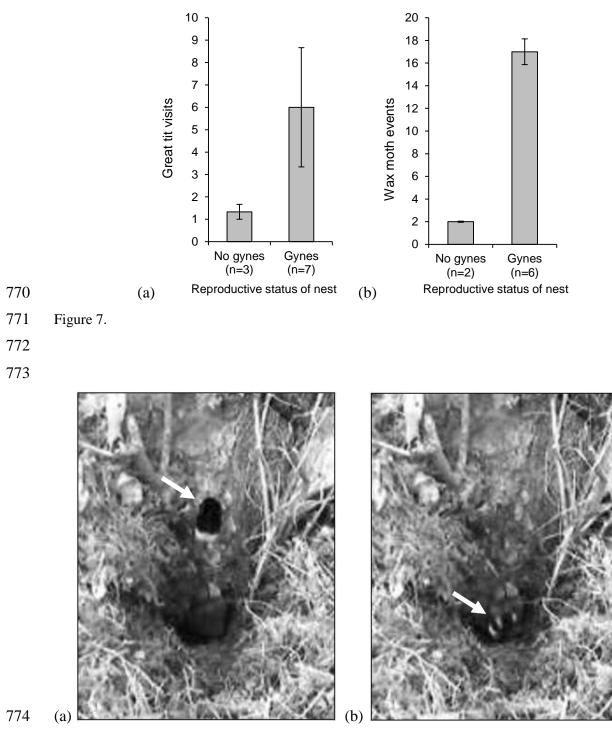
Species (common name)	Events	Nests	Summary of interactions with nests (n=number of times observed)
Large mammals			
Vulpes vulpes (fox)	4	4	No interaction
Mustela erminea (stoat)	12	5	Enter and leave (1)
Erinaceus europaeus (hedgehog)	34	15	Attempts to gain access (7)
Sciurus carolinensis (grey squirrel)	157	22	Sniffed at or near entrance (32), looked in hole or dug at nearby leaves (7)
Oryctolagus cuniculus (rabbit)	207	22	Sniffed at entrance (34), entered hole (1)
Lepus europaeus (hare)	7	3	No interaction
Capreolus capreolus (roe deer)	8	4	No interaction
Ovis aries (sheep)	1	1	No interaction
Felis catus (cat)	6	3	No interaction
Canis lupus familiaris (dog)	1	1	No interaction
Bos primigenius (cow)	9	1	No interaction
Small mammals			
Clethrionomys glareolus (bank vole)	17	4	Enter and leave (8)
Microtus arvalis (field vole)	70	3	Enter and leave (21)
Apodemus sylvaticus (wood mouse)	1396	18	Enter and leave (837)
Unidentified small mammal	16	7	Enter and leave (16)
Sorex spp. (shrew species)	162	10	Enter and leave (56)
Reptiles and Amphibians			
Lacerta vivipara (common lizard)	1	1	No interaction
Rana tempora (frog)	7	5	No interaction
Bufo bufo (toad)	5	3	No interaction
Birds			
Anas platyrhynchos (mallard)	1	1	No interaction
Columba palumbus (wood pigeon)	8	3	No interaction
<i>Corvus corone corone</i> (carrion crow)	16	4	Pecking at hole and widening entrance (5)
Erithacus rubecula (robin)	29	12	Investigation/waiting at nest (5) possible attempted predation of worker (1)
Fringilla coelebs (chaffinch)	20	6	Looking at or waiting at hole (3) no bee chases or kills
Haematopus ostralegus (oyster catcher)	12	1	No interaction; Investigating entrance (1)
Turdus merula (blackbird)	28	13	Investigating/waiting at hole (5) Possible attempted predation of worker (1)
<i>Turdus</i> spp. (thrush other)	10	6	Entrance investigated (1), no traffic and no predation
Parus caeruleus (blue tit)	1	1	No interaction
Parus major (great tit)	60	10	Predations (10) attempted predations (22) 'stalking' (17)
Passer montanus (tree sparrow)	6	4	No interaction
Pica pica (magpie)	1	1	No interaction
Prunella modularis (dunnock)	22	4	Investigating/waiting at entrance (6) no bee chases or kills
Troglodytes troglodytes (wren)	11	7	No interaction
Wax moth			
Aphomia sociella	19	8	Enter and leave (19)



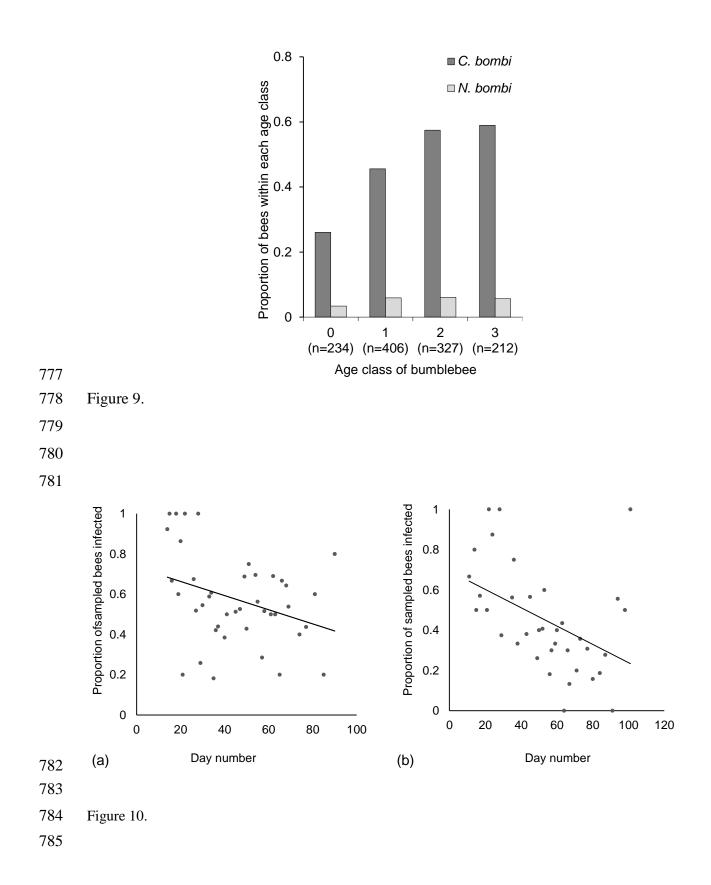
a 749 Figure 2







- Figure 8



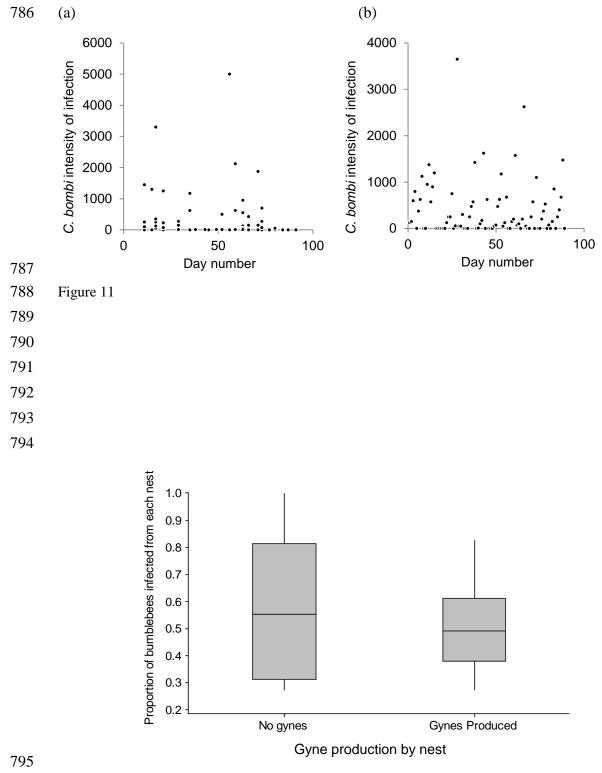


Figure 12