



BRIGIT

# Species Information Sheet

## *Neophilaenus longiceps*

US  
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### Distribution and Identification

*Neophilaenus longiceps* has a very local distribution in Britain, confined to saltmarshes in south east England.

Adults are typically 6 – 7mm long; females are somewhat larger than males. As with all froghoppers, they have two stout spines on the outer edge of the hind tibiae, as well as several smaller spines at the tip. Nymphs are typically pale yellow in colour with distinctive dark patches on the wing buds.

*Neophilaenus* species can be distinguished as adults from *Philaenus spumarius* by the more parallel outer edges of the wings when viewed from above (as opposed to the more convex outline of *P. spumarius*) and their overall pattern of markings. They are much smaller than *Aphrophora* species.

The taxonomic status of *Neophilaenus longiceps* as a separate species from *N. lineatus* is uncertain; it may be simply a saltmarsh race of *N. lineatus*. Its appearance is very similar but it can be distinguished by the dimensions of the central 'plate' on the top of the head (wider than long in *N. longiceps* compared to longer than wide in *N. lineatus*). *N. longiceps* is also slightly larger.

### Habitat, Ecology and Lifecycle

*Neophilaenus longiceps* is restricted to saltmarshes in south east England, where it favours grasses rather than herbaceous or woody plants.

Females lay eggs singly or in groups in the autumn. On emergence the following spring, nymphs begin producing the characteristic spittle 'nests' which provide protection against predators and desiccation. Spittle can be seen from April to late June. The nymph moults five times within the spittle before emerging as a free-living adult. Adults can be found from June to September.

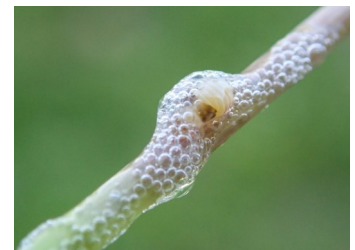
As with all froghoppers, *N. longiceps* feeds on the liquid contents of the xylem vessels of its host plant. As such, it is a potential vector of the bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa* which has caused the death of many olive trees in southern Europe, although this disease has not been detected in the UK.



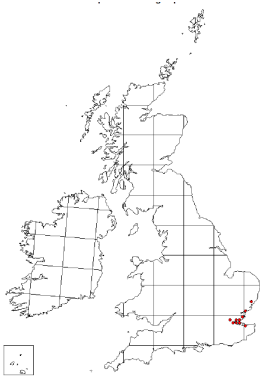
Typical frog hopper (*N. lineatus*) hind tibia showing two stout spines on the outer edge and several smaller spines at the tip



Adult of the closely related *N. lineatus* showing the parallel outer edge to the wings



*Neophilaenus* sp. nymph and spittle



Distribution of *N. longiceps* as at May 2019



*Neophilaenus* sp. spittle on grass



*Neophilaenus* sp. nymph

BRIGIT is a collaborative research and awareness-raising project aiming to understand and prevent the introduction of *Xylella fastidiosa* into the UK. <https://www.jic.ac.uk/brigit/>

For further information

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