

Through the Sanctuary **with** ***Robyn Howard***

Green Long-legged Fly (*Austrosciapus connexus*)

Robyn Howard

Several flies are known commonly as long-legged flies, and all belong to the order Diptera – the true flies. True flies have large compound eyes, piercing or sucking mouthparts, and short antennae.

Their major distinguishing feature is that they have only one pair of flying wings. The second pair of wings evolved into small club-like appendages named halteres, and these are used to aid balance and direction in flight.



The bright metallic colouration (mostly either

green or bronze) of long-legged flies make them attractive and jewel-like. The Green Long-legged Fly obviously has long legs, is a mere 6 mm long, slimly built, with black circles around its abdomen, and dark “C”-shaped opaque markings on its otherwise transparent wings. They feed on small soft-bodied insects such as aphids. Their larvae prefer locations under decomposing tree bark or in damp soils, where they feed either by scavenging or by predated other insect larvae.

When not actively feeding, this fly often perches openly on flat green leaves. It is quite widely distributed and inhabits home gardens, parks, and forests.

This is the most common long-legged fly at the wetlands sanctuary, and is commonly found in the garden around the information centre, or on foliage in moist forest areas.