

Ophiniinae sp 2  
Bennison High Plain >>>>>  
1550 m  
25 Dec 16

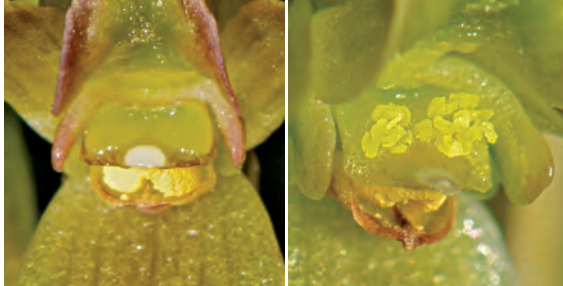


**Above** Pollinia typically attached to the face. The older ones show erosion from contacting stigmata of the visited flowers. The fresh pair sits up at first and the angle may prevent geitonogamy. As the caudicle sets, it slowly moves down and forward into pollinating position. By the time set, the wasp may visit flowers on other plants and then cross-pollinates.

### ***Prasophyllum tadgellianum* – Tadgell’s Leek-orchid**

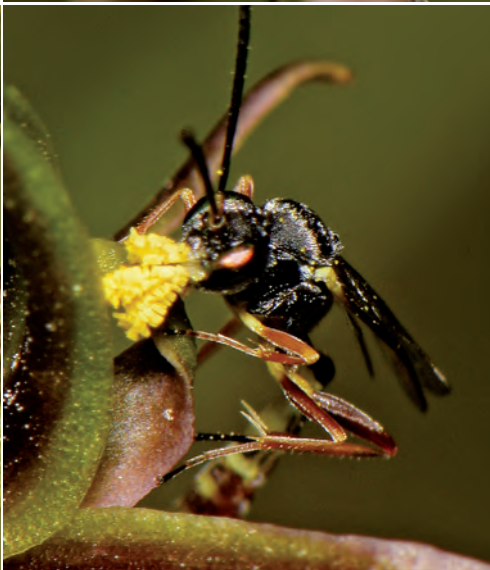
Over several seasons plants were checked for pollinators, but none of the many different insects observed feeding on the labellum were considered to be primary pollinators. In 2016 flowering was late and few plants were in bloom on the first day of checking. Several small colonies along the edge of the road with fresh flowers were watched for about 2 hours from about 12:30 PM. Many small flies, bush flies, seed bugs (*Lygaeidae*) and dark-winged fungus-gnats (*Sciaridae*) were observed feeding and some went far into the flowers, but pollinia were not seen collected. Eventually a small Ichneumonid wasp about 8 mm long flew in with pollinia attached to the face and further observations left no doubt that this species was a primary pollinator. It was witnessed pollinating several flowers of two plants with the pollinia that originated from other plants and collecting a fresh pair. It was also seen removing some of the pollinia from itself and leaving it on the flower or plant. The wasp was on the flowers for approximately 6 minutes from 1:23 PM on. Judging by the many fresh pollinia left on other parts of the flowers, wasps had been busy that morning. For the high altitude of 1550 m it was hot with 30°C, and the day being after cold weather would have contributed to the activities of so many insects. At the lower altitude of 1400 m, along the same creek, plants grow taller and go under the name *Prasophyllum sphacelatum*, but size differences appear to be caused by habitat conditions related to altitude and different ground covers. The identical looking flowers attracted the exact same range of insects. No wasps were seen there, but it was much later in the afternoon and they had left evidence with pollen material left on the various part of the plants from their actions earlier in the day.





**Above-left** A fresh flower with the yellow pollinia still in their holders and the sticky white viscidium in front, ready for pick-up.

**Above-right** Stigma with many pollinia bits deposited. The pollen parts quickly fade in colour when sitting on the stigma.



**Above-left** As it moves in, the pollinia is pushed onto the stigma. It flew in with the pollinia, thus cross-pollinated.

**Above-right** After visiting several flowers, the pairs of pollinia show erosion from depositing parts on stigmata.

**Below** A fresh pair of pollinia was collected and soon flew away after spending little time trying to remove it.

