



bulletin by B. Boag and R. Neilson of the James Hutton Institute, Dundee. -

*“New Zealand flatworms are usually found during the day, often curled up like a Swiss roll, under pieces of wood, stone or polythene lying on bare earth. They are relatively flat compared with earthworms, are pointed at both ends and covered with a sticky mucus. They can vary in colour but usually have a dark brown upper surface with a lighter beige speckled border which extends to cover the ventral surface. Flatworms can also vary greatly in shape from long and narrow (up to 15 cm) to short and relatively fat. They produce egg capsules which look like small, shiny blackcurrants.”*



So please, whilst enjoying your gardens and allotments, take time to look out for NZ flatworms. They may be found under stones, plastic, wood etc and you may also see their eggs as per the illustration. You can find many more illustrations on the internet of course.

In addition, we are interested in the numbers of earthworms you find in your ground, as they are, as many of you will know, the prey of the NZ Flatworm and so their abundance, or lack of it, is also an indicator of the presence, or absence, of flatworms.

A recording sheet is included on the back page if you wish to use it, but please feel free to add any other information to it and/or the table opposite that you think may be of interest and also any photos you have taken. All records will be given to the Orkney Wildlife Information and Records Centre (OWIRC) and thus add to our understanding of the local distribution of both flatworms and earthworms throughout the County.

Some useful information on earthworm species can be found by googling 'Guide to British earthworms OPAL'

The main questions we are hoping you can help with are, therefore, as follows -

Are flatworms to be found in your garden/ round your house?

Have you ever found a flatworm there? (Give year if possible)

Are earthworms plentiful there, or are earthworms very scarce or apparently absent?

Any other observations :

Your Name/Address/Contact Details :

**Please send responses to Jenny Taylor, [jenny@jtlarch.co.uk](mailto:jenny@jtlarch.co.uk), or by post to 25 Grieve's Brae, Stromness, Orkney, KW16 3BG and we will, in due course, let you know what the main findings are on our website, Facebook page and through the 2021 bulletin.**