

HANTS MONTHLY

NUMBER 15 - October - December 2010

Wallblings...

Winter certainly arrived early with widespread snow in late November, not that it seemed to deter the moths as there were still plenty of Winter Moth about in the headlights once it cleared. Despite all the worry about the impact such weather has on wildlife, a lot of it is surely overblown as they've had to evolve to cope with far worse conditions than anything we see nowadays. Mind you, I wouldn't want to be a moth (or a moth-er) in Queensland, Australia at the moment...

Apologies for the long delay since the previous edition. Preparations for two conferences, our own in Hampshire and the national one in Birmingham, took up much of my time, along with Tim and I working on getting in as much of your records as we could to enable us to get ahead of the game in preparation for writing the annual report.



Dusky-lemon Sallow
Freshwater, Isle of Wight
9th October (DC)

To date we have over 100,000 in, which is an excellent total at this time of year. Hampshire and the Isle of Wight really sets the pace when it comes to moth recording, and your data enables us to build a detailed picture of the two counties' lepidoptera fauna that must leave most other counties quite envious. Please keep it up, and if you have yet to submit your records, please do so as soon as practically possible.

Please keep the news coming in, either to me directly at [mike AT hantsmoths.org.uk](mailto:mike@hantsmoths.org.uk), or via the Hantsmoths yahoo group.

Until the next time, which will probably be in early March covering the moth news for January and February (what little there will be I suspect!).

A belated happy new year to you all and good mothing for 2011!

Mike



DAVE'S WEATHER SUMMARY - OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2010

OCTOBER continued the slightly above average theme with a warm opening more than compensating for the cooler end. The marked change to colder weather came at mid-month with northerly winds bringing several frosts. Indeed, I recorded an exceptional low of -3.4°C for this time of year on the morning of the 21st (in Alton). The month closed with unsettled Atlantic conditions bringing mildness and plenty of rain. Overall, rainfall was close to normal with sunshine a little above.

NOVEMBER started with very mild westerly winds but quickly became very disturbed as low pressure established itself close to the UK. This was the start of the exceptional conditions we would see in the last week as very cold air became bottled up to our north. The last week was remarkably cold for November as the bitter cold flooded in from the north-east. Averaged over the month, temperatures were between 1 and 2°C below normal, almost entirely as result of the change in the last week. Locally, the last 6 days saw an absolute maximum of 1.5°C , with two days failing to break freezing. Despite the unsettled weather, rainfall was a bit under par.

DECEMBER was truly remarkable. The combination of persistent blocking high pressure to the north and the displacement southward by 1000 miles or more of the jet stream (which brings our usual Atlantic weather) kept us in a very cold regime until after Christmas when some milder Atlantic air finally broke through. Thankfully, Hampshire avoided most of the extraordinary overnight low temperatures that were experienced further north although I recorded -10.2°C on the morning of the 20th, a figure I had not witnessed for nearly 30 years. I had a further seven days where the temperature did not exceed freezing, and, although not as bad as last winter, there were heavy snowfalls on the 7th and 18th. Records indicate that this was the coldest December since 1890. However, if you take a month's data starting at 25th November, this would probably be the coldest early winter period ever recorded. Other interesting points are that it was a very dry month and exceptionally dull.



<http://www.winchesterweather.org.uk/>

Dave Owen



***Calybites (Caloptilia) hauderi* - confirmation that it does not occur in the British Isles**

A paper published in *Nota Lepidoptera* (John Langmaid et al, 2011) presents evidence that all British specimens of *Calybites hauderi* (Rebel, 1906) are not that species but the first brood of bivoltine *Caloptilia semifascia* (Haworth, 1828). Comparison of the genitalia of British specimens against the type specimen of *C. hauderi* has confirmed that they did not belong to that species and were not consistently different from *C. semifascia*, a finding backed up by analysis of DNA data, and *hauderi* is therefore confirmed as removed from the British list. *C. semifascia* is normally univoltine in the British Isles but bivoltine populations are now spreading in southern counties, possibly arising from colonists from Europe.



The Caloptilia previously known as hauderi

In Hampshire, the previous records we have on file for *hauderi* have been synonymised with *semifascia* automatically by Mapmate. In practical terms, it means that recorders should ignore the characteristics highlighted on e.g. UK Moths and in MOGBI volume 2, and treat any such individuals as *semifascia*.

Thanks to John for bringing this article to my attention.

Reference: J R Langmaid, K Sattler (BNMH) & C Lopez-Vaamonde (INRA, France), 2011: *Morphology and DNA barcodes show that Calybites hauderi does not occur in the British Isles (Gracillariidae)*, Nota Lepidoptera 33(2): 191-197



GetReal!



If it is accepted that macro moths should be given a vernacular name, then it is my firm belief that the name should be meaningful and take into consideration a species' natural range or otherwise descriptive of its ecology, appearance or the original describer; English names are increasingly appearing on non-English websites, and those such as 'Clancy's Rustic' or 'Minsmere Crimson Underwing' continue a trend to have "ownership" claimed by the recorder who was lucky enough to catch it for the first time on this island, or an British site where it just happened to turn up: a trend that is parochial, very 'Little Britain' and out of step with a modern world that is increasingly global in outlook.

The last straw for me was an Asian noctuid which turned up in Suffolk last year, and reported in the recently published edition of *Atropos* - despite having probably jumped off a container ship, it was given the name 'Landguard Curved-ribbon'...

So I'm proposing that new moths added to the British list should be allocated English vernacular names that reflect the nature of the moth, rather than someone's "ego". Having spoken to Mark Tunmore at *Atropos*, who is in broad agreement, I hope we can get something in place to provide an executive overview - perhaps a naming panel who will adjudicate on all new additions to the British list.

It would be nice to be able to re-name *Platyperigea kadenii* (Clancy's Rustic) as - for example - Freyer's Rustic, after the original describer. I will stubbornly continue to use Blue Underwing for Clifden Nonpareil in any case!

Comments welcome. As a start, the English names used by Lerault (2009) differ from those commonly used here, and we could consider adopting those - e.g. Gorse Emerald instead of Jersey Emerald, and Large Oak Mocha in place of Jersey Mocha (the Channel Islands are the main culprits for taking ownership of new moths!)

Mike

Reference: Lerault (2009): *Moths of Europe Volume 2, Geometrid Moths*. NAP Editions, 2009.



Hampshire Moth Conference, Littleton, 15th January 2011

For the third annual Hampshire Moth Conference, a new date of mid January was chosen to sit squarely in the dead period before field work kicks in and better weather keeps Hampshire moth-ers outdoors! This proved to be a successful strategy, as in excess of 70 attendees was well up on 2010.

Tim kicked off proceedings with a round-up of the 2010 season, highlighting those species that had done well, and not so well. He finished his talk with a discussion on the identification of the three *Pyrausta* species we have in the two counties, indicating that there should be little room for mis-identification of *aurata* but *purpuralis* and *ostrinalis* need care. Following this, I gave a talk entitled 'Micros for Everyone', providing an overview of the different micro families with examples of each and a high-level introduction to their anatomy, lifecycle and evolutionary history.

After a break for refreshments and an opportunity for attendees to chat, Tony Davis gave a presentation on 'A Year in the Life of a Conservation Officer', running through the species with which he is principally concerned and highlighting the challenges being faced in ensuring their protection - species mentioned included *Syncopacma albipalpella*, *Coleophora vibicella*, Fiery Clearwing and Chalk Carpet. The day finished with Dave Green providing an entertaining illustrated tour of the various Hampshire gardens he's had the pleasure of trapping in over the years - from starting with an actinic tube taped to the window of a Whitchurch 1st floor flat via the West Park estate (which is stretching the definition of a garden to its limit!) to his current tenure at Weston Colley, where varied habitat and a railway embankment have given a garden list of over 700 and multiple VC12 firsts in just one year (by a bizarre coincidence all five properties have been in locations starting with 'W'!)

By all accounts the day, chaired by Dan Hoare, was a success and enjoyed by all who came along; it will be repeated at the same time next year, when we hope that as many Hampshire, Isle of Wight and further afield moth-ers as possible will be able to attend!

Mike



National Moth Recorders Conference, Birmingham, 22nd January 2011

Tim Norriss and Mike Wall attended the conference as County Recorders for Hampshire. Lynn Fomison also attended and along with Tim Norriss provided this report.

The Conference was opened by Maurice Avent, Chairman of Butterfly Conservation who described a few Christmas presents over the last few years that had enhanced his mothing experience, including a moth trap and the most recent of which had been the new national atlas, the *Provisional Atlas of the UK's Larger Moths*: the first national moth atlas since the publication of MoGBI and the first ever to carry distribution maps for the geometers.

Richard Fox summarised progress to date with the Moths Count Project that is now reaching the end of its four & a half year funding by the National Lottery. There was just cause to celebrate what had been achieved, not least of which was the great surge of interest in moths across the UK and the raising of public awareness. The many public events and the much visited www.mothscount.org has had great effect.

Zoe Randle's update on the National Moth Recording Scheme (NMRS) focussed on the importance of records, which had enabled the new atlas to be compiled. The establishment of the NMRS had been one of the significant outcomes of Moths Count project and she joked that at the start of the scheme there were comments that establishing a nationwide scheme and co-ordinating the efforts of volunteers and County Moth Recorders could just not be done: four years and nine million records later, this has obviously not proved to be the case. Zoe highlighted the importance of CMR's giving feedback to those contributing records. Later on Mike gave a presentation on moth recording in a Hampshire and Isle of Wight context: H&IOW are the largest net contributors to the NMRS database, and the talk was to provide an overview of how we handle the large data volumes in the two counties, and emphasizing again how important it is that feedback is provided to recorders - from members days through to Hantsmoths.

The talk from Dr Martin Anthony, county recorder for Gwent, was interesting in showing how national climatic maps showed great correlation with recent changes in fortunes of certain butterfly and moth species. He particularly linked this to species spreading to the cooler parts of Monmouthshire (Gwent) from the warmer southern part near the Bristol Channel. For example, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries was retreating to the cooler areas above 300m to the west with colonies in the east dying out despite habitat remained apparently suitable; Dingy Skipper conversely was occurring in new localities throughout the county. The Scarlet Tiger moth was also thriving.

Dr Mark Young from Aberdeen highlighted moth conservation efforts in Scotland. He explained why the future of the Kentish Glory is threatened with Scottish Natural Heritage unwilling to see mature birches chopped down to provide the extensive areas of young re-growth the moth needs to breed; these conditions however suit the Rannoch Looper, which requires exactly these conditions. However, he was able to highlight the success to date of the New Forest Burnet moth that had increased tremendously from a very low ebb in the early 1990s (13 individuals to annual peaks often in the thousands) after concerted efforts were made over quite a long period to reduce the grazing pressure on the grassy slopes where the only known colony was clinging on. Ironically the Slender Scotch Burnet was in a threatened position because grazing had ceased and the site was becoming overgrown.

Sharon Hearle, BC's Regional Officer for Eastern England gave a presentation on the beneficial effects of two projects - turf stripping in the Brecks, and elm planting in Cambridgeshire to encourage the White-spotted Pinion. In the latter scheme both micro-propagated trees and suckers from existing trees seemingly resistant to Dutch elm disease were being planted and community effort had been an important aspect of the project. Work in the Brecks had been mainly on mown rides in forestry areas and on local authority mown amenity grassland. Imaginative techniques using the available machinery had created sizeable areas of bare ground which had been quickly colonised by wild plants providing both larval foodplants and a nectar source for several threatened species. The Forester and Grey Carpet were just two of the species that benefitted greatly from the work.

Dick Groenendijk outlined the state of Dutch macro moth fauna in some cases comparing it with data from The State of Britain's Moths. In many cases species that had declined in the UK had also declined in Holland, although there were exceptions - comparisons have to be made carefully however due to differences in methodology. He also spoke of a methodology they were using to measure the rate of decline. The fact that White Prominent was widespread in Holland was of relevance to the next talk. He ended with the strap-line "The only world worth living in, is a world loaded with moths!"

"In search of the White Prominent in Ireland" was an exciting topic for the closing lecture. Dave Allen described the historical mysteries that had surrounded this almost mythical species. Armed with much prior research on the handful of previous sightings, some of doubtful provenance and the last one being in 1938, and with knowledge of the habitat requirements gleaned from studies of the continental colonies, an expedition was made in 2009 to remote areas of Southern Ireland that have had little moth recording in recent decades. The historic re-discovery of the moth was recorded on video which enabled the audience to share the excitement of the moth-hunters. Dave gave information on the extraordinary numbers found and the experience of searching for and raising a few caterpillars, which are cannibalistic.

We left feeling we had attended a very interesting and inspiring conference where we also had had the opportunity to spend time with old friends. It is hoped that the event will be held again next year though there will most likely be a charge.

Lynn Fomison & Tim Norriss



OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2010 SUMMARY

Please note that in accordance with the usual convention where referring to overnight light-trapping the evening date not the morning date is used.

October

After his first on 12th September, AJ caught another Beautiful Gothic on the 4th, although in this case, the name is a bit of a misnomer!

Relatively mild nights brought in reasonable catches in the first week of the month, with usual suspects such as Black Rustic, Dusky Thorn and Red-line Quaker making appearances.

The common migrants were recorded at moderate levels. Highcliffe saw some real highlights, with a Blue Underwing on 6th October (RAC) and a White-speck on 8th, the first here since 1978, when there was an influx to



southern England. Both of these were also reported by SAK-J from Totland on the Isle of Wight in the same period, with Blue Underwing on 27th September and 9th October, White-speck on 8th, and Scarce Bordered Straw, Oak Rustic and Delicate regular. A small influx of Dusky-lemon Sallow on the 9th saw individuals reported by DC, SAK-J and IF. Further Blue Underwing were returned by PTo in Darmerham on 11th October and the next day by RCr at Pennington (left).

In early October, Hayling Island produced some good migrants, with seven Clancy's Rustic, one Pearly

Underwing, two Delicate, and an Oak Rustic, and a second site record of Autumnal Rustic (GSAS). Further *P.kadenii* were recorded inland on 8th with one at Martin (PA) and in Grayshott (RTu), and the next day saw one in Romsey for MBa; in total 33 were recorded in 2010, the best year yet, and one on 1st November in Southsea (IRT) was the latest on record. The 7th saw two Vestal in Funtley (MLO); the latter was also reported from Martin on 8th (PA) and on the 9th, at Over Wallop, along with 39 other species (TJN), and at Stubbington (DPH). Also on the 9th, a Gem was a highlight in Funtley for MLO, and RAC had a Blair's Mocha at Blashford on 11th.

A small number of Scarce Bordered Straw were reported in a concentrated period from 8th to 11th, with no discernable pattern (13 records, 6 from VC11, 4 from VC12 and three from the Island). The example right was photographed by DC on 9th October. A late example was caught in St Cross, Winchester on 1st November (TWa).



The first autumn Figure of Eight were at Chilbolton on 4th (GCE) and MP in Cadnam on 8th; a Mottled Umber on 15th October was an unusual early record for MLO in Funtley.

PBk visited Denny Wood on 9th October and took the photos shown overleaf - a Goat moth larva not far from a known host tree and an unfortunate Red Admiral taken by a Hornet.

The Lunar Thorn larva shown left was observed by DC at Freshwater on 5th, only about the fifth island record.



Reports of Beautiful Hook-tip to traps in Chilbolton and Sherborne St John on 4th October were unusual late records (GCE, NJM), and a Scalloped Hook-tip in Cove on 9th (RGE) was the third latest record on the database. A whopping 114 Chestnut, accompanied by 58 Yellow-line Quaker, were recorded in Grayshott on 8th, over double the previous largest count to a light trap on the county database (RTu) - GCE had 94 in Wherwell on 15th. PRD had an unusual second-brood Shoulder-striped Wainscot in Normandy on 11th. Large Wainscot had a good autumn, with some 60 records (including 25 on 28th October at Leckford - GCE) and appearing in a number of new localities - the last couple of years have seen a resurgence in numbers for this distinctive autumn noctuid, after a very poor 2008, when it was reported from only five sites.



JRL caught the aberration shown right of Lesser Yellow Underwing (*Noctua comes* ab. *Sagittifer*) at Southsea on 18th.



DE trapping at Hurn on 28th October returned 241 moths of 25 species, including 73 Autumnal Moth, 34 Feathered Thorn, 14 Dark Chestnut, 24 Red-line Quaker, 33 Yellow-line Quaker, and a Southern Chestnut: for the latter, this was only the second site to report this late autumn flier, the other being at Great Linford, New Forest (DW) where five were trapped between 9th and 14th October

Reports of notable micros were few and far between but MLO reported an *Acleris logiana* in Funtley on

31st October (det. RJD), and DC recorded only the second Isle of Wight record of *Coleophora virgaureae* on 2nd (shown left).

November / December 2010

Two lights run at Mottisfont on 1st saw 20 Merveille du Jour, 13 Sprawler and a late Rosy Rustic (GCE). Four Oak Rustic in Highcliffe took the site total into double figures for the year, after only the first site record being the previous year (RAC).

MLO reported Figure of Eight *Diloba caeruleocephala* and Cypress Carpet *Thera cupressata* as highlights, along with a fairly late Vine's Rustic *Hoplodrina ambigua* on 2nd, at Funtley.

Arctic conditions in late November into December brought an abrupt halt to thoughts of trapping for many, although hardy souls turned up Feathered Thorn *Colotois pennaria*, Mottled Umber *Erannis defoliaria*, Chestnut *Conistra vaccinii* and in places good numbers of December Moth and Winter Moth, especially in the Test Valley.

New Adventive for Hampshire

PGLT caught a mystery moth in his house on 15th October, believed to have emerged from some Brazilian grapes. It was sent to Martin Honey at the British Museum (Natural History) who immediately identified it as a specimen of the noctuid moth *Spodoptera eridania* (Stoll, 1782), a known pest species whose larva is known as the Southern Armyworm. It occurs in some of the southern states of the USA but mainly in central and northern South America, including Brazil. It is recorded from a wide range of food-plants, although there is no apparent reference to it being associated with grapes. It has been recorded previously in the UK but only on two or three occasions.



FAREHAM MOTH GROUP REPORTS

MLO has kindly provided the following round-up of the activities of the Fareham group. Similar reports from other groups or individuals would be very welcome. All photos © MLO.

August to October 2010

Attendees: Pete Carr, Kevin Coker, Richard Carpenter, Richard Dickson, Dan Houghton, Alistair Goodall, Maurice Opie and Keith Wheeler,

Eleven visits to various sites around the area were made. On the 6th August, KC, RJD and KW with RC visited Titchfield Haven Nature reserve by kind permission of Barry Duffin and caught 81 species with highlights including *Bohemannia quadrimaculella* (new for site), Ear Moth, Crescent, Cream-bordered Green Pea (right) and Southern, Twin-spotted, Brown-veined, Webb's and Fen Wainscot.



13th August saw KC, RJD and KW visited Denny Wood where 62 species were recorded to MV and sugaring produced nine species. Among the more notable were *Cydia amplana*, 13 Devon Carpet, Dark Sword-grass, three Straw Underwing, 25 Copper and 6 Svensson's Copper Underwing, one Light Crimson and 4 Dark Crimson Underwing (both of these species to sugar).

KC and KW ventured out to Westbury Park on the 20th August and were eventually washed out but not before catching 46 species which included Mocha, Clouded Magpie, Dark Sword-grass, Maple Prominent, Satin Lutestring and Feathered Gothic.



27th August saw KC, RJD, MLO and KW stay local at Botley Wood with only 33 species caught (probably due to the clear and cold night after heavy rain during the day). However, we did catch Devon Carpet which is only the second record for the site.

A cool night with intermittent rain greeted us at Hen Wood near West Meon on 3rd September when only 25 species of the usual woodland moths made an appearance. Best of the bunch were Flounced Rustic, Clay Triple-lines and Barred Hook-tip (left).

52 species were caught at Westbury Park on the 10th September by KC, RJD, AG, MLO and KW. Among these were Hedge Rustic, Orange Sallow, 14 Feathered Gothic and *Ypsolopha scabrella* (right).

A precipitous decline in numbers and species awaited us at





Botley Wood on the 23rd September despite a mild evening where the only moth in any numbers was Oak Lutestring with 15. One lamp was moved just after switch on when it was found to be just below a Hornet nest.

On the 8th October, PC, KC, RJD, AG, MLO and KW visited West Walk where 32 species were caught with Merveille du Jour (left), Bordered Beauty and *Parornix betulae* amongst the more regular autumn moths

Westbury Park was the destination again for five of us on 15th October but another clear very cool night resulted in a low catch of 21 species of usual autumn moths. New for the site were

Acleris sparsana, *Plutella xylostella* and *Ypsolopha sequella* (right).



On the 22nd October we returned to Hen Wood but were rained off late; despite it being mild we only caught 13 species with Barred Sallow and Common Marbled Carpet making up much of the catch. *Argyresthia semitestacella* was a first for the site and should have been expected considering the amount of Beech in the area.

The final visit of the month was to the Alverbank Hotel grounds in Gosport kindly arranged by Stewart Swift and John Philips. We were hoping to catch the Oak Rustic (picture right) and were lucky to see three individuals.



November to December 2010

Attendees: Kevin Coker, Richard Dickson, Maurice Opie and Keith Wheeler.

During November it was decided that we would concentrate on Westbury Park, near West Meon as it is an old chalk down, to look for possibility of Plumed Prominent being present (last recorded in the county in 1984 - ed.). Despite the presence of many Field Maple trees, of varying age, we failed to catch any of the moths. We will try again next year and maybe for larva in May and June.

The first visit was on the 1st November when we caught 76 moths of 18 species amongst which were December Moth 10, Brick 24, Yellow-line Quaker 9, Spruce Carpet and Autumnal Moth (gen. det.).

On the 19th there were many fewer moths, 38 of 8 species, most prominent again were December Moth with 15 and Brick with 13.

We managed two trips in December, despite the weather, when we ran two lamps at Botley Wood on 10th. With snow on the ground we did not anticipate much but managed 31 moths of eight species as below: December Moth, Winter Moth 21, Scarce Umber, three Mottled Umber, Satellite, Brick, two Red-line Quaker and Yellow-line Quaker. Most of the Winter Moth were on the larger trees within the attraction area of the lights and all males.

On 30th three of the group went to Wickham Common with two lamps and caught 44 moths of 10 species which were a *Taleporia tubulosa* case on an Oak branch, December Moth, Winter Moth, Scarce Umber, Mottled Umber, Vapourer, Grey Shoulder-knot, Chestnut and Yellow-line Quaker.

MLO

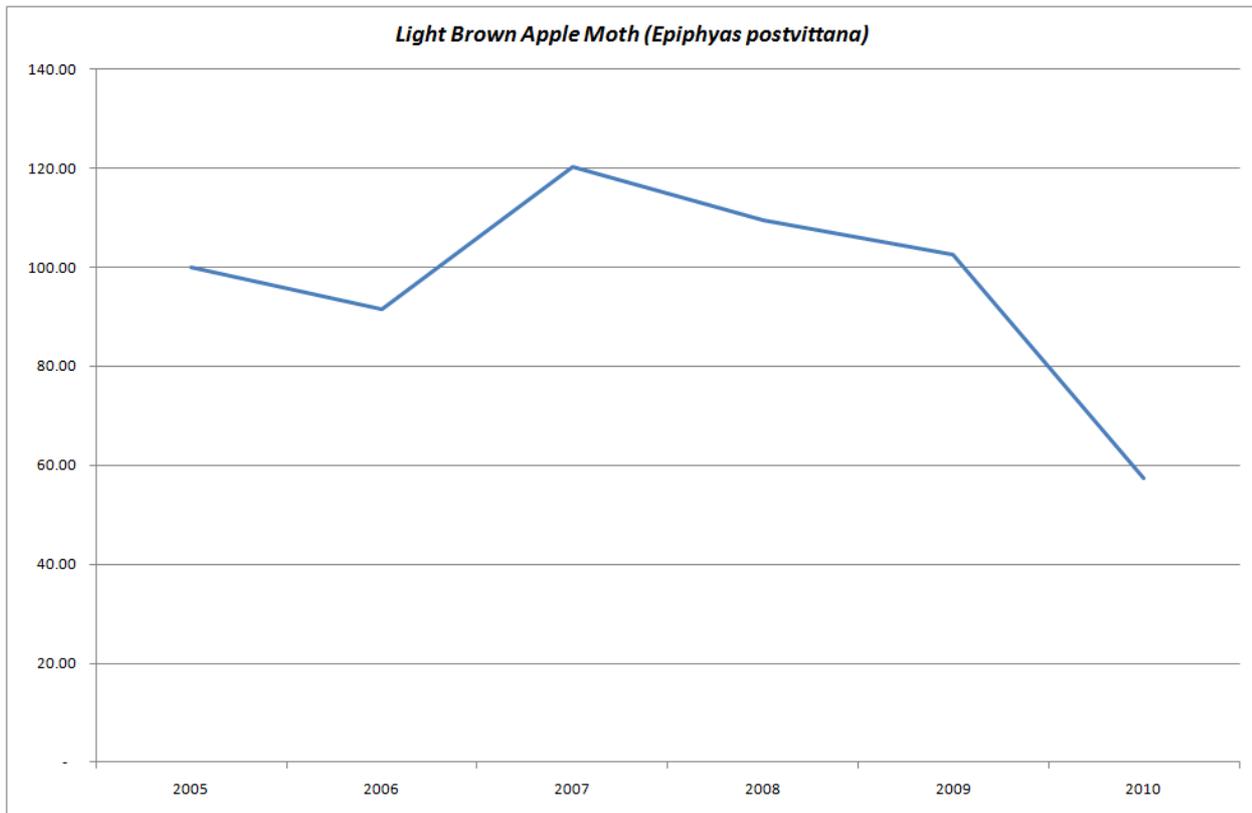


The Rise and Fall of *Epiphyas postvittana*

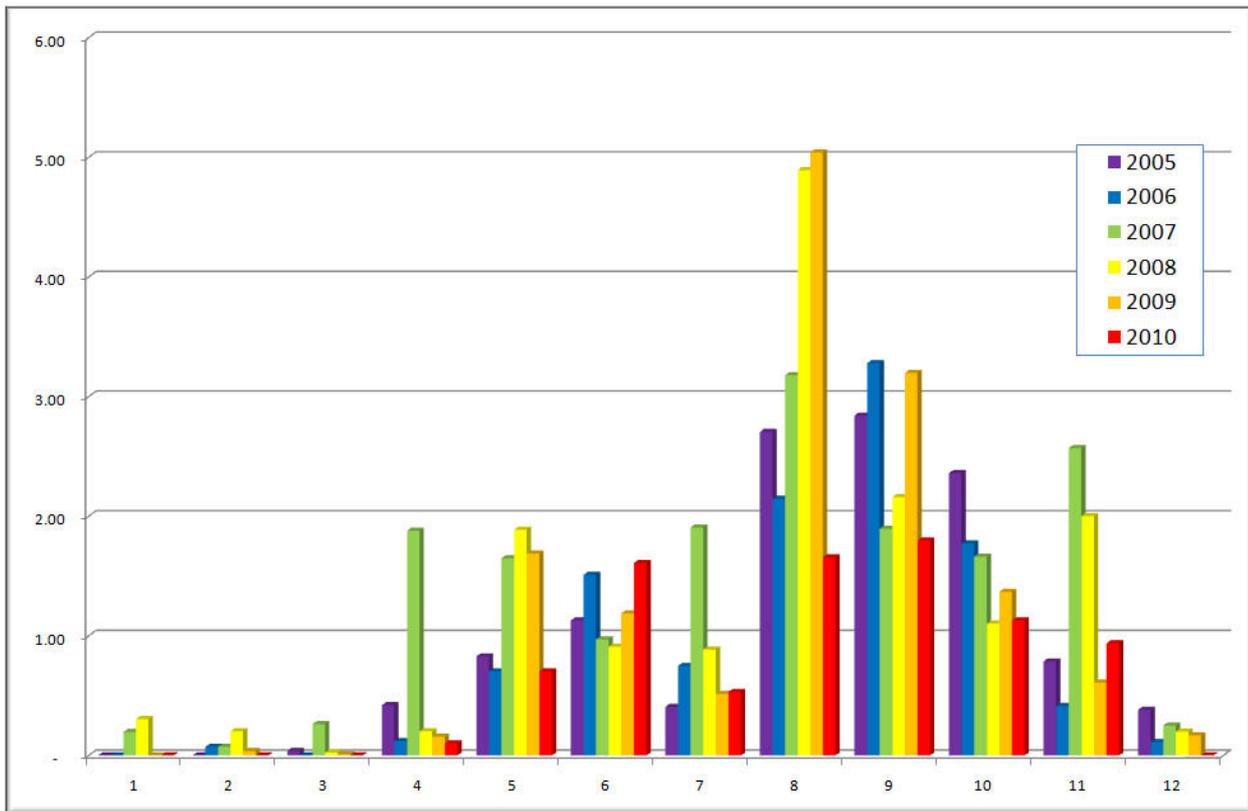


As some are aware, I've had a bit of a love-hate relationship with this Australian invader, so I've had quite a few comments this year about how it appears to have suffered a bit over the past twelve months. Now that we've had the majority of the records in for 2010, I thought I'd take a quick look at whether this perception is true according to the numbers. I've been doing some work on calculating population indices for all common species in the county adjusted for recording effort bias - a work in progress - but thought it might be of interest to publish preliminary findings.

An index is calculated by taking those sites which were trapped consistently between two years, comparing the relative catches, and turning the result into an annual index value based at 100 for 2005 and recalculated each year. For the two years 2009 and 2010, there are 45 sites that fit the criteria of having been recorded regularly in each year. Of these, 29 showed a decline, with only three showing a moderate increase - the remainder did not report any *postvittana* in either year. The graph below shows the resulting five-year index values for *postvittana*, and indicate an average 44% decline to its lowest population level for the past five years.



The second graph below shows the average counts per trapping session in each month (1-12) over the six years. 2010 (shown by the red columns) was the only year out of the six where no records were returned in January to March, and April and May were very low. A strong spring-back in June did not translate into higher numbers throughout the remainder of the year, and like the start of the year, December ended with a complete absence of reports.



The methodology needs some refining and I'll try and extend it back to the start of the decade, but beyond that our dataset is less extensive and the margin for error greater. But I hope it is of interest and bears out the general perception that *Epiphyas postvittana* does not do particularly well in cold winters.

Mike



THE GARDEN MOTH SCHEME - AN UPDATE

Editor's Note: Malcolm Bridge from the Garden Moth Scheme has provided the following update to the appeal for new members first published here in the winter of 2009. As GMS south-east region co-ordinator he would be delighted to e-mail copies of GMS spreadsheet, GMS News (six a year including the Winter GMS) or answer any queries that anyone may have. It is felt that our region is under-represented in GMS and more members in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight would be welcomed. He can be reached at malcolm.bridge@ntlworld.com.

The following is provided on behalf of GMS and it is entirely up to individual recorders whether they wish to be involved. Please note that, as county recorders, it is important that all records gathered during any GMS work are additionally submitted through the usual channels to Tim or myself.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of GMS is to undertake long-term monitoring of the numbers of common moths in gardens throughout Britain and Ireland using a standardised methodology, and in the eight years that GMS has been running more almost 400,000 moth records have been received.

A MOTH RECORDING SCHEME COVERING ALL OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND?

The Garden Moth Scheme (GMS) was set up as a regional initiative in the West Midlands in 2003, and in 2007 a start was made on expanding it into a national scheme. Steady progress has been made and the map below shows the distribution of GMS gardens at the end of 2009. It can be seen that there is a wide geographical spread, with the most northerly recorder on the Isle of Hoy and the most southerly on Jersey.

There are almost forty GMS gardens in the south-east region with Surrey and Kent leading the way. Currently Hampshire has GMS moth-ers in Alton, Christchurch, Fareham and Winchester but the first GMS base on the Isle of Wight is awaited.

Right: Distribution of GMS participating gardens, 2009.

The distribution has now spread across England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Particularly large numbers of participating recorders are in West Midlands, Wales, south-west, south-east and eastern England. Following this expansion it is now felt that GMS can be regarded as a national scheme.

OVERALL RESULTS FROM 2009

Over the 2010 recording season a complete set of monitoring results was received from more than 300 gardens. The GMS monitors approximately 200 very common species across all of Britain and Ireland, and additional species that are common in particular areas. The table below shows figures for the 30 commonest species and compares these with figures from 2008. (2010 data available shortly)

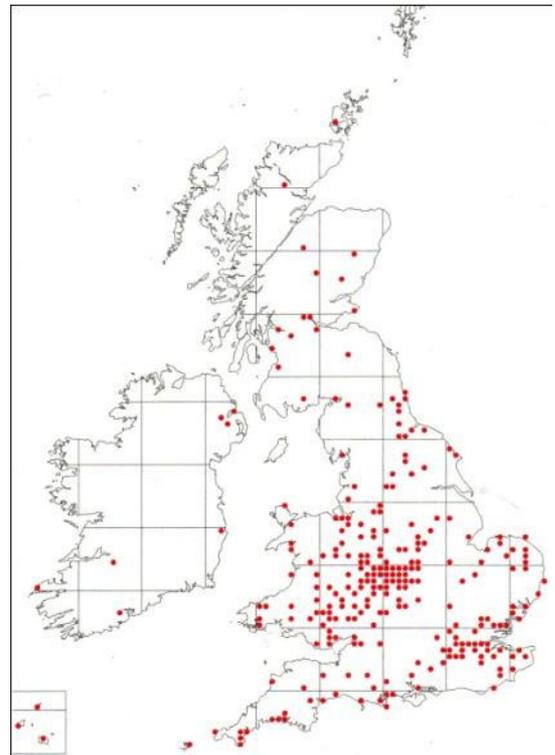


Table 1. The top 10 commonest moths recorded by GMS recorders in 2009.

Position	Species	Average per Garden 2009	Average per Garden 2008	% Increase/ Decrease in 2009
1	Large Yellow Underwing <i>Noctua pronuba</i>	189.65	221.08	- 14.2
2	Setaceous Hebrew Character <i>Xestia c-nigrum</i>	69.67	42.46	+ 64.1
3	Heart & Dart <i>Agrotis exclamations</i>	66.18	51.07	+ 29.6
4	Dark Arches <i>Apamea monoglypha</i>	45.30	41.36	+ 9.5
5	Flame Shoulder <i>Ochropleura plecta</i>	40.55	31.68	+ 28.0
6	Light Brown Apple Moth <i>Epiphyas postvittana</i>	36.49	37.90	- 3.7
7	Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing <i>Noctua janthe</i>	36.09	38.31	- 5.8
8	Hebrew Character <i>Orthosia gothica</i>	35.60	24.53	+ 45.1
9	Common Quaker <i>Orthosia cerasi</i>	31.67	17.42	+ 81.8
10	Riband Wave <i>Idaea aversata</i>	28.38	27.51	+ 3.2

WINTER GMS 2010-11

The winter GMS scheme covers the 55 commonest species recorded over the winter months. Results for 2009–10 show that a total of 69 gardens completed GMS recording for the winter months of November to February inclusive, which was a healthy increase on the 44 gardens who took part in the previous year (the first Winter GMS).

The winter was exceptionally cold but how did this affect moths and GMS participants? One of our youngest recorders in Killiecrankie, Perthshire, recorded a temperature of -18°C on 8 January 2010 (unsurprisingly no moths were caught!). Across all gardens December Moth *Poecilocampa populi* was the most common species of the winter, with Winter Moth *Operophtera brumata* and Chestnut *Conistra vaccinii* in second and third position respectively.

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REFERENCE

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Contributions and ideas for articles are always welcome. I would also like to be made aware of any errors and omissions for correction.

For more information on moth recording in Hampshire, please contact the county moth recorders, either Tim Norriss (tim@kitsmail.com) (Macros) or myself (micros), or see www.hantsmoths.org.uk/recording.htm

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