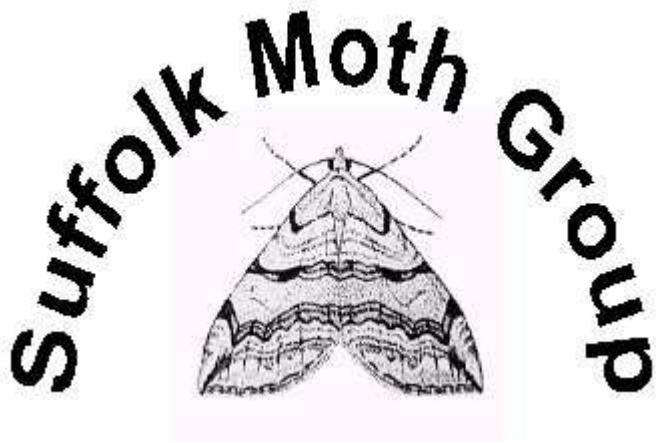


Suffolk Moth Group Newsletter

Issue 28 - Spring 2003

Edited by Tony Prichard

In this issue

Editorial

The recent spate of sunny days and cold nights has not been particularly conducive to nighttime moth recording but it would appear that spring is well underway with the usual seasonal moths putting in an appearance. Here's hoping that the forthcoming year will be a good one and better than the last.

Some of the group have been busy carrying out a survey into Lunar Yellow Undewing larvae in the Sandlings and this has produced some very interesting results and insights into its larval ecology. Read more about this later on in the newsletter.

Many thanks to recorders who have submitted their moth records for 2002. All records have been input into the database in a much shorter time this year and queries about any records scrutinised by the Suffolk Moth Panel should be sent out shortly. If recorders wish to submit their records through the year

then please feel free to send them in whenever is convenient- I'm reasonably flexible about these things and will accept records at any time.

The indoor meeting this year rather unfortunately coincided with a moderate fall of snow that prevented some people from making it to the meeting - it was touch and go at one point whether Tony Davis, the speaker, would manage to make it to the meeting. Many thanks to Tony for driving up in the potentially hazardous conditions to make the meeting. For those who missed it I have included some information about species that I am encouraging recorders to look for in 2003. For next year I have been considering Needham Market as a venue for the indoor meeting - there would be better car parking facilities and the location is a more central to the county - but there would likely be a small charge. I'd be interested to hear any views from members about this change of location or any topics to be covered at the next indoor meeting.

There has been recent concern about public liability cover at group events, particularly where members of the public are invited. This has been exacerbated by the incident in Norfolk where a fragment from an exploding bulb cut a girl's leg. I have since found out that Butterfly Conservation insurance does not cover me to lead general moth recording events and by way of this provide cover for the moth recording carried out by the group. As a result from this year everyone within the group operating equipment will need to provide their own public liability insurance if they wish to continue to do so. The British Entomological and Natural History Society provides public liability insurance to its members covering recording activities and this would seem reasonable way of covering oneself and in addition gain the other benefits from being a member of the society.

Finally, apologies for the late delivery of the events list to some people and this newsletter. I can only say I've not been sitting on my laurels for the duration. This year sees the continued high number of events held by the group - and all credit to the group that it can run so many meetings that are reasonably well attended considering the group's size. I would certainly not organise so many meetings if numbers attending started to drop off. This healthy attendance seems to be despite a trend in other natural history societies where field meeting attendance has been an issue over recent years.

Good luck with this year's recording.

Lunar Yellow Underwing Survey in the Sandlings

At the start of 2002 a few hardy souls went out searching for this larva at night during February and March. Our searches were not initially successful and we located the larva at only two sites in the Sandlings. During the year I was approached by Butterfly Conservation to consider carrying out more thorough surveying for this species in the Sandlings area to act as a comparison or contrast to the survey work being led by Gerry Haggett in the Brecks. As mid-December approached Gerry Haggett gave us invaluable assistance in identifying the young larvae that could be found at this time of year and likely habitats that would support the larvae. Richard Davis of Forest Enterprise gave help on identifying initial sites within Rendlesham Forest that might fit the required habitat. With this information several daytime visits to Sandlings sites were made to locate suitable sites for nighttime searches.

Nighttime larval searches in the Sandlings started in mid-December and have continued since then with breaks when we have had cold spells at night. Neil Sherman, Graham Bull and myself managed to make 29 visits to 23 sites. In contrast to some of the previous nighttime larval searches carried out by the group these have been very successful. Of the sites visited we failed to record Lunar Yellow Underwing larvae at only two sites. Numbers of larvae found were also quite high with over 50 being recorded at one site.

It soon became apparent that we seemed to be discovering Lunar Yellow Underwing larvae in habitats that did fit the habitats where the larvae were being found in the Brecks. In the Brecks the larva seems to have a preference for living in clumps of *Festuca* or *Deschampsia* grasses and seemed to have an intolerance for habitats where the grass had been cropped short by sheep. In contrast we were also finding larvae in habitats where the grass had been short-cropped (but by rabbits) and which seemed to have predominantly *Agrostis* grass, although there would normally be some *Festuca* present. It would appear that there must be some difference in the grass cropped short by sheep and that cropped short

by rabbits for there to be such differences in the abundance of Lunar Yellow Underwing larvae at these Sandlings sites.

Most of the sites surveyed lay within Rendlesham Forest and it appears that the moth is quite well established across the forest. Tunstall Forest and Common also had areas supporting the larvae. Other places visited where larvae were found included; Ipswich Golf Course, Martlesham Heath, Thorpeness Golf Course, North Warren RSPB reserve, Sutton Common and Upper Hollesley Common.

The results have raised some interesting questions that remain to be answered, unfortunately the recent spell of cold nights has meant that we have not been able to carry out further surveys to attempt to find some answers. Of particular interest is where do the larvae hide up during the day in these very short swards when they become larger. There also seems to be a possibility of some inverse relationship between numbers of Lunar Yellow Underwing larvae and Square-spot Rustic larvae found at Sandlings sites that would not appear to exist in the Brecks - I've still to tease the figures out for this from the data to come to any definite conclusion on this one way or the other.

The intention is to continue this survey next winter to cover new sites, monitor existing sites and hopefully answer some of the outstanding questions that will no doubt still be unanswered if the cold nights continue as they have been. If anyone is interested in getting involved then please let me know - it can be a bit tough on the back stooping over looking at grass for long periods but the work is interesting; discovering the behaviour of the larvae and a bit more proactive than sitting around a light waiting for moths to appear.

Night-time search for Square-spotted Clay larvae

Since the discovery of larvae of this species feeding in the wild last year there has been heightened interest in searching for this larvae in various parts of the country. Neil Sherman and myself visited Kenton Hills on the 28th March this year to search for larvae of this species. In 2002 an MV session at the site had attracted more than ten adults so it was thought that this would be a good location to look for the larvae. There seems to be an association between the larvae, nettles and elm trees and as this site has both of the latter initial prospects of finding the larvae appeared good. The only problem with surveying at this site is the abundance of dog muck and searching in the dark with a torch tends to bring you into direct contact with the stuff.

We had previously visited the site on the 7th March and found several larvae but no Square-spotted Clay larvae. Since this visit the conservation volunteers must have been busy as the belt of woodland next to the car park had had all the sycamore cut down and this rather altered the appearance of the site. Initial searching near to the car park turned up only common species but as we progressed further down the path we located our first Square-spotted Clay larva feeding on nettle. This was quickly followed by two further larvae and then later by a third larva underneath both a pine tree and an elm tree. Three of the four larvae were feeding on nettle but a fourth was feeding on red campion - a new foodplant for the species.

The larva looks similar to the Double Square-spot larva but can be distinguished by the pale band running the length of its side.

Double Square-spot larva

Square-spotted Clay larva

National Moth Night 2003

This year the Suffolk Branch of Butterfly Conservation is holding a meeting for National Moth Night at Minsmere RSPB reserve on the 12th April 2003. Meet in the reserve car park at 8pm. It is not expected that we will see any of the two target species; Orange Upperwing or Sword-grass so this meeting is primarily aimed at early springtime species As always moth group members are welcome to attend

A special web site has been set up, giving information on NMN 2003 and can be found at http://www.nationalmothnight.info

As always moth recorders are encouraged to run their moth traps on this night and send their results to Dept NMN, Butterfly Conservation, Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset. BH20 5QP or via email to results@nationalmothnight.info by the 30th September 2003.

Clearwing Recording in Suffolk and Norfolk - Jon Clifton

The Clearwing moths (Sesiidae) are a rarely seen group of day-flying moths of which 15 species have been recorded from Britain. Since the pheromone has been synthesised and sold to recorders for attracting the males it has revolutionised the way we can now record them, albeit with a mixed degree of success.

In Suffolk prior to recent work with pheromones, there have been records of Currant, Yellow-legged and Red-belted Clearwing prior to 2000. In Norfolk, the following species have been recorded post-1990, albeit in small numbers, Currant, Yellow-legged, Large Red-belted, Red-tipped and White-barred. Six-belted Clearwing may also be known, but needs confirmation.

A few recorders have now been searching with clearwing pheromone lures but due to timing the practise with good weather there have probably been more negative results than positive results.

The first clearwing to emerge is Large Red-belted Clearwing, which unfortunately does not respond well to lures. They do come in but will not stay long and with the recorder emerging from winter hibernation ready and very keen to get the season going with his or her new set of lures just purchased, frustration and comments of ‘these don’t work’ soon creep in. In fact I have known some recorders spend hours on good afternoons searching in vain for this species,……. don’t be discouraged, two Norfolk recorders have had varied success with this species at Marsham Heath and some of the Broadland fen sites with moths coming in after only 30 seconds but only staying for less than a minute. Try around cut birch stumps for this species. I don’t know of any searches that have taken place in Suffolk yet with lures, so further work is required here.

Currant Clearwing is one of my favourites probably because it requires very little work. Just take the family strawberry picking, hang out a tip lure and wait…… for about ten seconds and they can be like flies at muck ! Even when one has placed the lure back in its pot and is walking back to the car *tipuliformis* will continue to follow, just beware you don’t take them home with you! It has been recorded from two sites at Great Cornard but negative results from Long Melford, both sites in the SW of the county. I have recorded them at Wiverton Fruit Farm in Norfolk and others have been recorded at Filby and Swafield. Negative results from a further two sites including one fruit farm.

Darren Underwood has recorded Red-belted Clearwing at various well-established apple orchards around Bury St. Edmunds. All pheromone checks on smaller clumps of apple trees proved negative. Checks have also took place around garden apples trees at Long Melford without success.

Adrian Parr has tried three major stands of trefoil/kidney vetch sites for Six-belted Clearwing in Suffolk without success but there are unconfirmed records of it in Norfolk and is one species that apparently responds very well to the api lure, the Hornet Moth pheromone and despite the fact that Hornet Moth doesn’t respond to api this species responds very well. Clearly, we still have a lot to learn about pheromones! This one is on the wing for much of the day, and peak activity is well spread from around 9:00am to early afternoon around bird’s foot-trefoil, giving plenty of time for recording. There are some very good sites in Suffolk and Norfolk with extensive growth of the food-plant so could be a good target species. In Norfolk it has been tried for at Holme Dunes and Cockthorpe Common both without success

but weather conditions were not favorable.

Yellow-legged Clearwing. Old records exist from Thetford Forest and the Kings Lynn area in Norfolk with a more recent record from a single Broadland site. Said to breed in oak stumps of 1-2 years of age so any woodland site where regular coppicing management takes place is a good bet. With a prolonged flight time running from mid-May to mid-August there is plenty of scope. No recent searches have taken place with pheromone lures as far as I am aware in Suffolk or Norfolk.

Some other species that have been searched for in Norfolk with pheromone lures over the passed two years have been Red-tipped Clearwing at five sites without success including one site where the moth was seen in the 'old' conventional way, without lures!. This is usually one species that can respond extremely well to pheromone lures so more work could prove fruitful in both counties.

White-barred Clearwing. No searches for this species have been done with lures in Suffolk or Norfolk but is said not to respond too well to synthetic pheromone. Young alder and birch is favoured. Try using a 'decoy' clearwing to the lure for this species, it could help!

One final note of possible interest was Darren Underwood's note that while hanging a selection of lures in woodland near Long Melford he attracted an RAF helicopter which nearly landed on his head but finally swung around and landed on a track opposite to the bush to where he was standing. If Darren can remember the combination of lures used it could have possible implications for ALS trading with Middle-Eastern customers!

I have only mentioned the clearwings that respond to synthetic pheromone lures in this article and that have been recorded in Suffolk and Norfolk, the Hornet and Lunar Hornet do not respond but are both recorded in small numbers in both counties, usually by means of emergence holes around the bases of infected trees.

Any further records, positive or negative or information, would be welcomed by myself or our recorders.

Jon Clifton
01263 862068
jon.clifton@btinternet.com

Web links

A new leafminer web site has been set up at www.leafmines.co.uk/. This site is in its early stages but promises to be very useful. It intends to cover all of the leaf-mining insects, not just lepidoptera, although at the moment it predominantly covers the lepidoptera. There are an abundance of photographs of the various leaf-mines and the coverage of species is good even at this initial stage. Quite a few of the mines are from dried specimens but it is hoped to replace these in the future with photographs of fresh mines. If you're interested in leaf-mines then I expect you will be visiting this site quite frequently.

For the site Cockayne Collection - Briitish & Irish Butterflies and Moths at www.nhm.ac.uk/entomology/cockayne/index.html I have lifted the following quotes.

'The Cockayne Website will eventually provide a definitive collection of high quality digital illustrations, using specimens from the National Collection of British Lepidoptera at The Natural History Museum London. This collection is largely based on the Rothschild-Cockayne-Kettlewell (RCK) Collection of British Lepidoptera, which is supported by the Cockayne Trust.'

'The first phase of this project deals with British butterflies, and provides approximately 1700 images illustrating geographic, seasonal, genetic and major individual variations. This will be followed by a similar treatment of the moths (Macrolepidoptera and Microlepidoptera) in ensuing years as funding and resources permit. As the site and its usage develops, it is also hoped to add further information on distribution, biology and critical morphology, with digital illustrations of habitats, eggs, caterpillars, pupae and critical anatomical structures (e.g. genitalia). The Hawk moths (Sphingidae) have already been

imaged and will be available shortly.'

The final site in this section for this newsletter is Pisces Conservation Ltd at www.pisces-conservation.com. This site covers ecological software for both professionals and amateurs. Of particular note to moth records is a piece of news posted by Andy Mabbett to the ukmoths email discussion group. Their intention is to produce an e-book of Buckler's Larvae of British Moths and Butterflies. The first e-book in this series will be Volume 1, Butterflies, and we'll then move on to Vols II & III, Hawk moths and others. The one they have already produced for British Water Beetles is being for sale at £55.

Protected moth species

An article in the previous newsletter raised a few eyebrows concerning the trapping of the Sussex Emerald, as this is a species protected by law. I thought it would be useful to remind people what species are covered by legal protection and give an indication of what protection they are afforded.

The following list of moths are protected under The Wildlife And Countryside Act, 1981; Reddish Buff, Fiery Clearwing, Fisher's Estuarine Moth, Barberry Carpet, Black-veined, Sussex Emerald, Essex Emerald and New Forest Burnet. Of these only the Barberry Carpet is likely to be encountered within Suffolk.

These species are covered by Section 9 of the Act which, in summary, offers protection from

- intentional killing, injuring, taking
- possession or control (live or dead animal, part of derivative)
- damage to, destruction of, obstruction of access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection
- disturbance of animal occupying such a structure or place
- selling, offering for sale, possessing or transporting for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative)
- advertising for buying or selling such things

The following web site gives further details about the Act and the species protected by it - http://www.jncc.gov.uk/species/Legislation/protect/default.htm

Some moths to look out for in 2003

Following are three species that I covered at the indoor meeting for members to keep an eye out for and hopefully target for recording in 2003.

False Mocha

There has been some concern about this species declining and this is mentioned in Issues 13 and 15 of Atropos. Given the warnings it would seem expedient to determine its current status. The moth is double-brooded with the adults flying from May to mid-June and then from late August to mid-September. The adult is attracted to light but it would appear that actinic lights are more effective than MV lamps. The best habitat to search would appear to be one with plenty of scrub oaks. The larvae feed on oak from mid-June to late July and then again from September to early October. Unfortunately the larvae are not distinguishable from the more common Maiden's Blush (G. Haggett comment at larval workshop) - so a deal of rearing through will be required.

Marbled Clover

This species fared reasonably well during the nineties but has taken a bit of dip in the last three years. As part of the local action plan it would help to have a firmer understanding of its distribution in the county and to make some assessment of numbers of this species at known localities. The moth is

known to occur in the county, mainly in the Brecks but has also been recorded on the coast between Havergate and Minsmere. Some of these records away from the Brecks are attributed to migrants but there appears to be a reasonably consistent population in the Sizewell area. It can be found flying during the day and will also come to light from mid-June to mid-July.

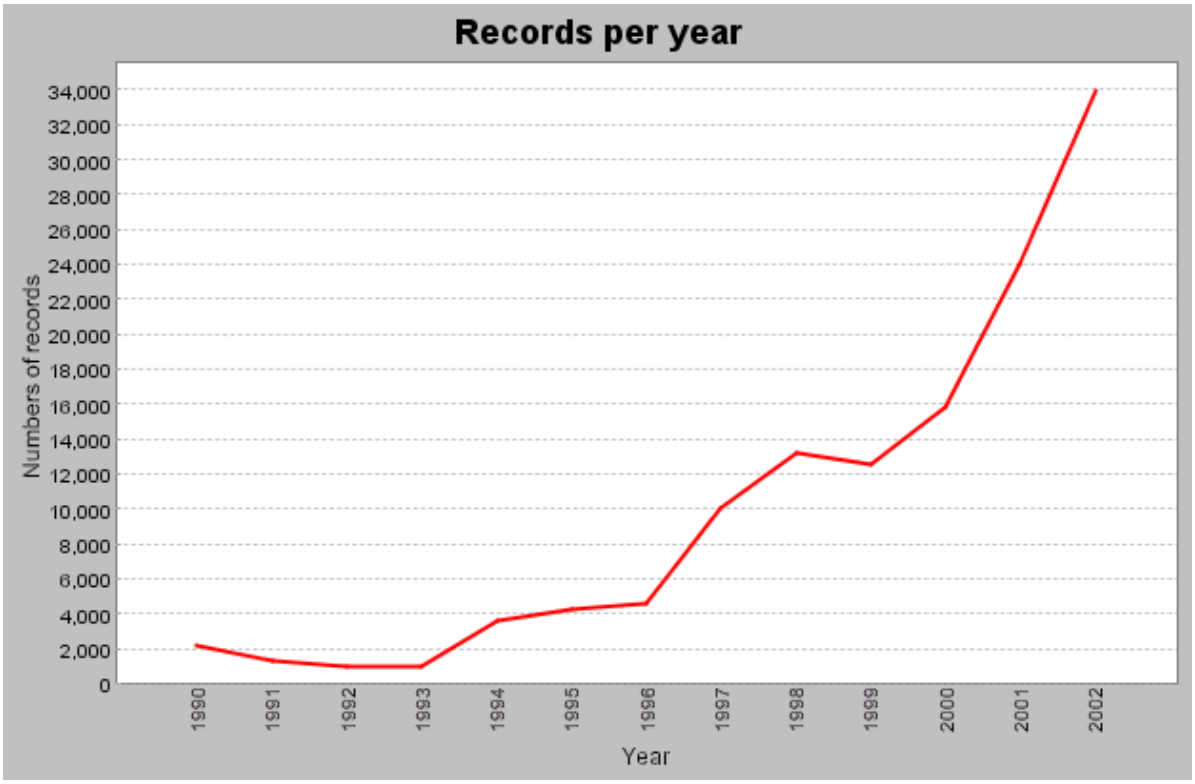
Cynaeda dentalis

Two records of this moth turned up rather unexpectedly in 2002 along the Suffolk coast at Shingle Street and Orfordness. The larvae feed on Viper's Bugloss which is present at both the sites at which the moth was recorded. It would be useful to know whether this species has established itself on the coast. There are vague references to it previously occurring in Suffolk so this species may have been present but undetected for a long time - surprising given the amount of recording that has taken places on the coast and at these sites. The larvae feed internally during May and June within the foodplant and their feeding tends to abort the plant. They form a hard cocoon among the withered basal leaves that can be detected by feeling around the base of the plant - watch out for the prickles. The adult will come to light and flies mainly in July and early August.

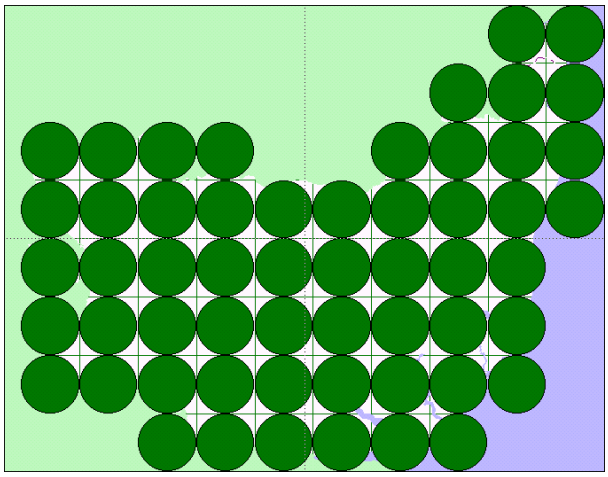
Recording in the county and the county moth record database

Some further information that was first shown at the indoor meeting.

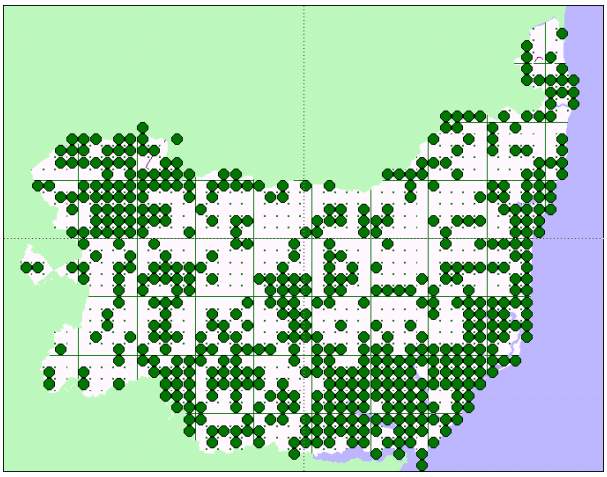
The number of records in the database now stands at over 135,000 with over 35,000 records received during the 2002 period. The graph below shows the number of records against the year of the record since 1990. The number of records made in 2002 was just under 34,000. The rate of increase is rather steep and I wouldn't like to predict where it is going to plateau out.



The following dot maps show the coverage of moth records within Suffolk.

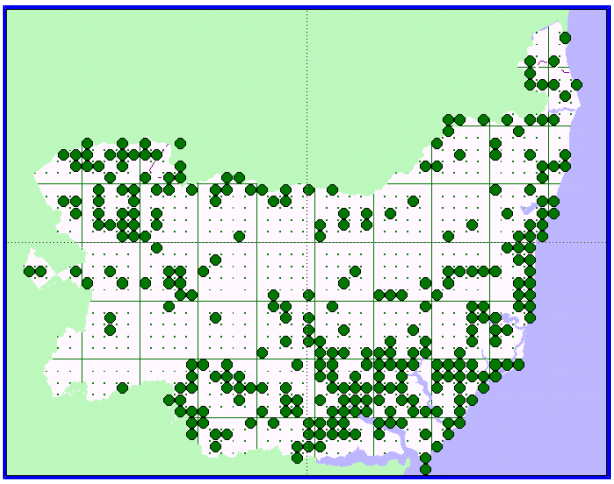


Record coverage in the county

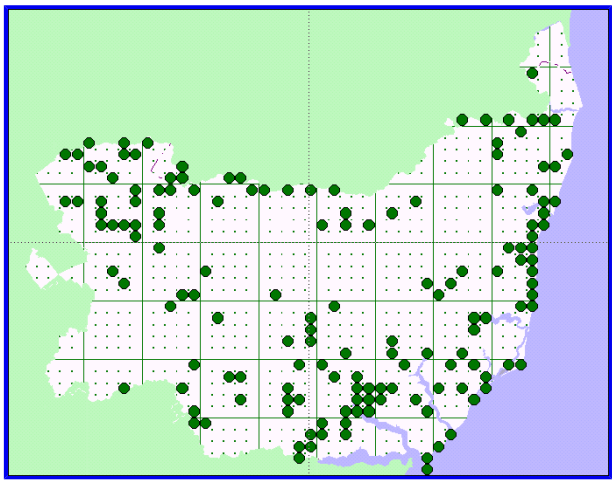


Record coverage in the county by tetrad

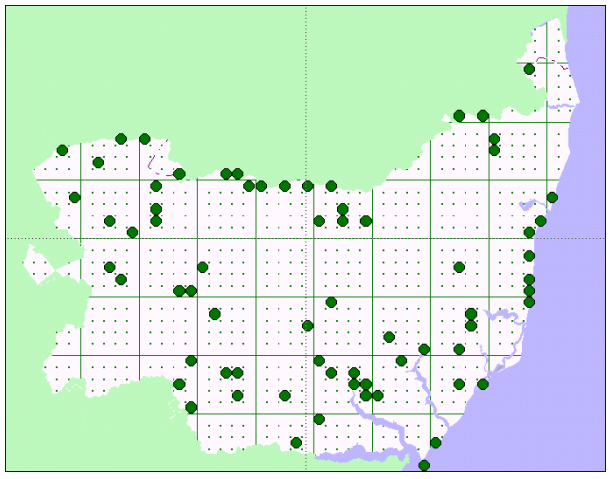
The first map would appear to show that we have complete coverage of the county - at least at the 10km level - well done everyone! We can now sit back and take it easy - I wish . Even drilling down to coverage of the tetrad level would seem to indicate reasonable coverage across the county, although signs of the usual Suffolk natural history recording black spots are starting to appear.



Record coverage for 1km squares with > 10 records



Record coverage for 1km squares with > 100 records



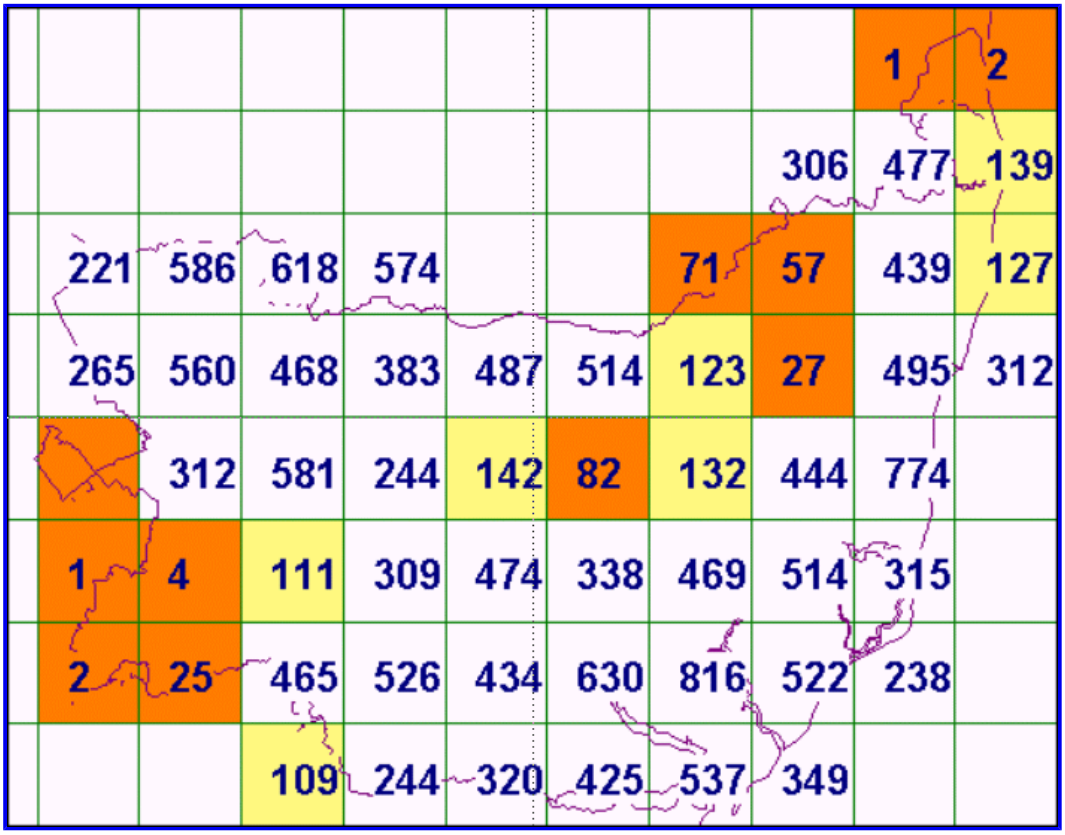
Record coverage for 1km squares with > 300 records

The decrease in coverage as we raise the number of records per 1km square may not be a surprise to some. It does show that concentrated recording is restricted to a limited number of sites.

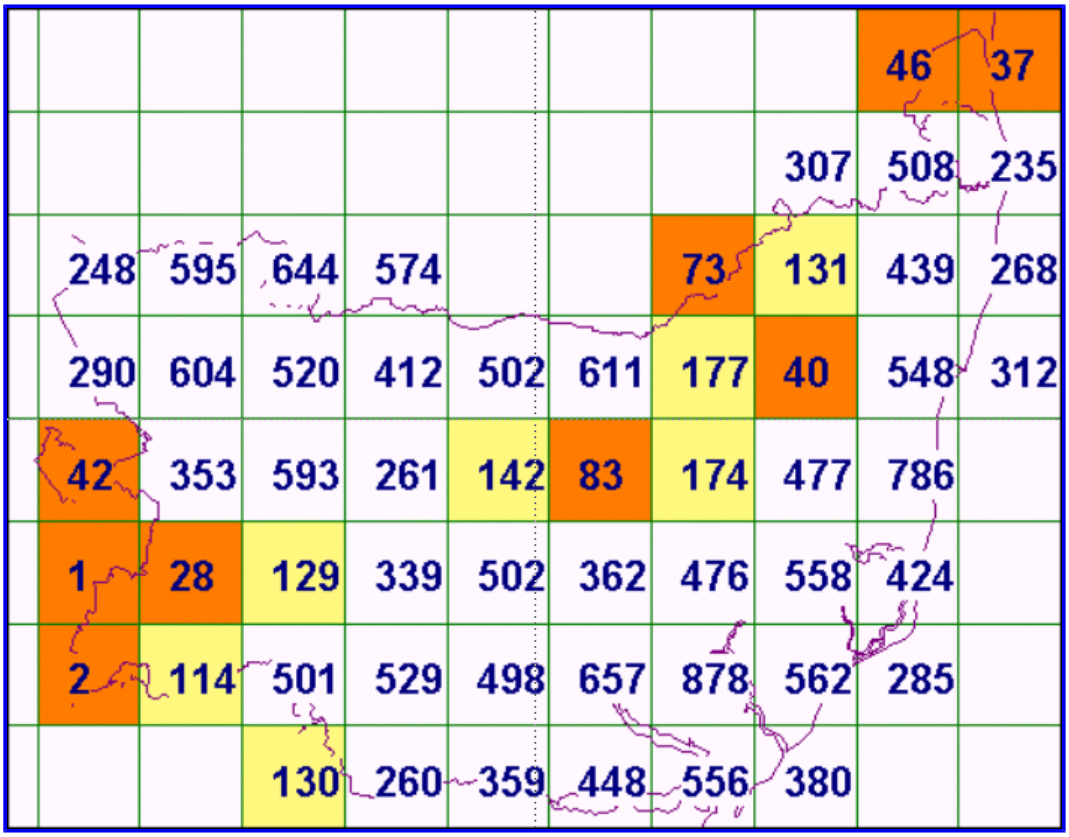
Moving on to some more of my favourite types of map and looking at things from a species rather than record viewpoint.....

These show the number of species recorded in each ten km square, firstly for 2001 and then for 2002.

The following lists how the squares are coloured in to indicate the number of species recorded in the particular 10km square; orange have less than 100 species, yellow have between 100 and 200 species and white squares have more than 200 species.



Species per ten km square in 2001



Species count per 10km square in 2002

Some progress was made during the year 2002 on increasing the coverage in under-recorded areas of the county. There has been talk in the past about producing a moths of Suffolk book but in my opinion

(and I'm starting to sound like a squeaky record about this) unless we can put in some recording in these under-recorded squares we'll only be giving a partial picture of the county. This would be the case even for the common species - never mind partial coverage due to under-recording of particular groups of moths. So if anyone would like to volunteer to carry out some recording in these under-recorded squares or find out some sites in these areas that the group could visit I'd be pleased to hear from you.

Some further boring statistics

Based on the 135,000 record dataset we have the following interesting facts

- More than 86,000 records are from the top most recorded 10 ten km squares (56 squares in all in the county)
- 64% of the records are from just 17% ten km squares
- Just under 50% of records are from 15 sites
- Records from 622 sites in all

One the main points I was trying to pull out here was that the vast majority of the records come from a very small percentage of sites in the county. Thus statements about distribution of species within the county need to be considered within this context. On the flip side you could say for a small number of sites we have a very rich set of data that will be useful in future analysis of abundance, flight periods, etc. I expect in the future that the concentration of records of will continue to grow even higher at a limited set of sites.

Additional moth nights

Other moth nights that I will be running this year and to which group members are welcome are :

Maidscross Hill on May 24th (Saturday). Meeting at 9.00pm in the new reserve car park on the outskirts of Lakenheath. This is a public meeting.

Ramsey Wood on May 31st (Saturday). Meeting at 9.30pm in small car parking area by A1071 road between Ipswich and Hadleigh (TM063437). This wood is close to Wolves Wood but from a moth recording viewpoint benefits from not having been coppiced. It has turned up the odd interesting species already since recording started by the group last year. This is a meeting of the Suffolk Branch of Butterfly Conservation.

Wormwood Pug ~ beware - Jon Clifton

This year Brian Goodey, Steve Hind, Colin Plant and myself have been looking at possible specimens of Bleached Pug *Eupithecia expallidata*.

Three females, one each from the Ipswich Golf Course, North Walsham and Holme-next-the-Sea did indeed seem good for *expallidata* after dissection, and all would have been new to their respective vice county, but to cut a long story short all three were sent to Gerry Haggett for his comments and thanks to his expertise in this field all three were re-identified as Wormwood Pug *E. absinthiata* on external features.

In an article regarding this in the autumn Norfolk Moth Survey newsletter Gerry comments “there may be two reasons why these reports of Bleached Pug have come about, firstly because the adult moths are unusual forms of *absinthiata* and secondly because the only moths examined for determination by genitalia have been female” he adds “although wings are commonly a warm, reddish-brown the forewings are subject to ground colour variations that ranges to pinky-brown. And while the forewings may be often almost unicolorous, markings can be intensified especially at the costa, the antemedian and postmedian lines, while the submarginal whitish dots become bolder and edged black towards the tornus and finally the black discoidal spot can be elongated and thickened”.

So if we have two moths that look the same would dissection of the genitalia point to the correct identification. Not the case it seems in *expallidata* and *absinthiata* as there is much confusion in the text figures used in the BENHS publication compared to diagrams in Pierce & Metcalfe “The Genitalia of the Geometridae” especially with the shape of the sternum and of the cornuti. This also seems to be the case with the females too and Gerry comments “the bursa of *absinthiata* and *expallidata* show such similar ornamentation that when I attempt to relate each to wing colour and markings I find contradiction” and “using this medium the insects taken at North Walsham in 2002 and at Holme in 2000 could be determined as *expallidata* for both”

In an e-mail to Colin Plant from Axel Hausmann (editor of Geometrid Moths of Europe Volume 4) he states that there are many problems around this species complex and that it is difficult to distinguish both taxa even on the base of their genitalia, he concludes that in the male the shape of the sternum and in the female the smaller corpus bursae of expallidata with smaller spines is the most reliable character.

Gerry warns though that *expallidata* are exclusively Solidago feeders and in Suffolk Wild Golden-rod *Solidago vigaureata* is known from 25 10km squares and in Norfolk 27 locations are scattered over the county but beware if you are looking for the larvae because in the south and west *absinthiata* larvae can all occur together on the same site at the same time of year!

With this in mind, anyone who thinks they have a specimen of *expallidata* adult or larvae (including anyone out of the county reading this) could they please forward them on to either myself or Brian Goodey for further examination and to see if these features hold true.

Jon Clifton
Kestrel Cottage
Station Road
Hindolveston
Norfolk
NR20 5DE
jon.clifton@btinternet.com

Brian Goodey
298 Ipswich Road
Colchester
Essex
C04 0ET
brian.goodey@dial.pipex.com

Some early Pug records in 2003 - Neil Sherman

So far in 2003, I have heard of 3 records of pug moths that I would deem to be unusually early. The first two were Double-striped Pugs – One recorded by Steve Goddard at Martlesham on the 25th January, followed by a second record at my Robinson trap at Ipswich Golf Club on the 26th. The conditions leading up to these records were slightly warm for the time of year, this possibly explaining why they were out (6 degrees minimum overnight). Two March Moths also appeared on the same date at the golf club (the second earliest records for the site – has been seen on the 15th January in 1995). The third record was of a Common Pug on the 21st February. This time I recorded it by day on the wall of a friend’s house in Ipswich. It looked very fresh, suggesting recent emergence. This is 3 months ahead of when it should be out! It was a warm day (11 degrees), but for the previous 5 nights (and that night) there were sharp frosts. This suggests that the moth emerged due to the warmth during the day, but I doubt it survived the night!

Field reports

Not too many of these (one to be precise) for this newsletter as most of the recent activity has involved nighttime larval searches.

Ramsey Wood - 29th March 2002

We are concentrating a bit more recording effort on this wood at the moment. It lies close to Wolves Wood but appears not to have been managed for some years, this is in contrast to Wolves Wood that has a regular coppice regime for most of its plots. This is of interest as on this night we recorded our

second *Acleris literana* at the site. Ramsey Wood is only the second known site for this species in the county and this record would give a strong indication that the species is resident in the wood. This is a bit surprising as this species has never been recorded by the group at Wolves Wood where regular trapping has taken place in recent years and I would have expected to have recorded the species if it was present. The other species of note were several Lead-coloured Drab. An abundance of Orthosias were also recorded indicating that spring is well on its way.

Reports from Recorders around the county

Ipswich Golf Course- October 2002 to February 2003 - Neil Sherman

Lights were run on 5 nights during October, in between the periods of poor weather. Of particular note was the night of the 31st, when conditions were warm (10 degrees minimum) with southerly winds, when a few interesting records were made (more later). 89 species were noted (including leaf miners), 39 of which were macros. Of possible interest were: Lunar Underwing (a maximum of 87 was recorded on the night of the 1st), Red-green Carpet (also on the 1st the second for the autumn), Deep-brown Dart (2 recorded on the nights of the 1st and 10th), Pink-barred Sallow, Barred Sallow, Spruce Carpet (one on the 1st), Merveille du Jour (a more typical date after the early one last month), Streak (peak so far of 18 on the 29th), December Moth (first record for the year on 29th), Green-brindled Crescent (only one record this year so far on the 29th) and Mottled Umber (first for the autumn on the 29th). Micros were few and far between with *Epinotia maculana* and *Acleris cristana* being the most notable of the odd ones seen.

As mentioned above, the night of the 31st was warm, with some interesting moths appearing. There were the latest site records of Large Yellow Underwing (probably a migrant), *Ypsolopha alpella*, *Argyresthia goedartella* and *Nomophila noctuella* (another probable migrant). All were fresh suggesting recent emergence.

An interesting looking November Moth species was also taken on that night, and was confirmed as an Autumnal Moth (thanks to Jon Clifton for the identification). On the 16th, a single specimen of Blair's Shoulder-knot was found on the clubhouse wall under the security lights, this being the first site record since 1998 (the position of the trap was moved from the edge of the course to the centre in 1999, away from gardens with their Leylandii trees). Also seen was a Herald on the 10th, flushed while moving logs. November was very mild for the time of year, but also was very wet, with over 5 inches of rain recorded at the golf club. A trap was put out on 4 nights – compare this with last year when the trap was put out once and caught just 2 moths! Best nights were the 5th and the 14th, both having 10 species trapped. The Streak was last seen on the 5th, when 9 were trapped. Also present then were 21 Feathered Thorns, a high total, beating the 17 recorded one night last month. Barred Sallow and Turnip made their latest ever appearances at the site, being trapped on the same night. The Scarce Umber first appeared on the 14th, and was the present in the trap each time it was put out for the rest of the month, along with the numerous December Moths (maximum 23 on the 28th) and Winter Moths. A single Northern Winter Moth appeared on the 28th, allowing close comparison with the commoner species. 3 more Autumnal Moths were picked out from the November Moths on the 14th and there were 2 records of the Dark Chestnut on the 14th and 28th. Micros were few and far between with possibly the most interesting appearing on the same night: *Duirnea lipsiella (phryganella)* and *Eudonia angustea* (this was the latest record for the site, to go with the other late records already mentioned).

Very little was seen in December – of possible note was a Pale Brindled Beauty on the clubhouse wall, under the security lights on the 27th. This is only the second time it has been recorded at the back end of the year at this site.

First moths of the New Year were seen on the 3rd, on the clubhouse wall – 4 Mottled Umber and the earliest site record for Spring Usher. The mild conditions on the night of the 26th tempted me to try the trap. 6 species were caught, including the earliest records for the site for both Double-striped Pug and *Tortricodes alternella*. Also trapped were 2 March Moths, the second earliest ever date here (earliest was the 15/1/95).

As part of the ongoing Lunar Yellow Underwing survey in the sandlings, I searched several sites around the golf course on the night of the 24th. This was successful, with 29 larvae recorded, most found sitting on sparse clumps of Sheep's Fescue grass, with one seen feeding on it.

What a cold month February was – the snow, cold winds and sharp frosts were far from ideal conditions for seeing moths let alone catching them! It wasn't until the last week of the month when the weather improved that trapping was undertaken, the first since the end of January, producing the first of the springtime moths. Hebrew Character, Oak Beauty and one of my favourite spring moths the Yellow Horned all appeared (as singles apart from 2 Hebrew Characters). Also seen were a total of 20 Small Brindled Beauties, a regular total after probable colonisation a few years ago. March Moths were abundant with 27 the highest single count on the 27th. Also seen on the clubhouse wall under the security lights but not seen trapping were singles of Dotted Border and Early Moth (24th).

Yellow Horned © Neil Sherman

Moths at Bawdsey – October 2002 to March 2003 – Matthew Deans

October

In late October 2002 I started a new job as Chief Accountant at Bawdsey Manor. Although I have not run any moth traps yet, the walls illuminated by the security lights around the Campus have provided some interesting records. In the first week of work I found a single example of The Gem which arrived on the night of 31st.

Gem © Matthew Deans

November
A single Nomophila noctuella was recorded on the 3rd. November Moth, December Moth and Feathered Thorn were regularly recorded. Single Mottled Umber, Red-line Quaker and Chestnut were also noted. More migrants included a particularly late Dark Sword-grass on the 27th and another Gem on the 24th. Single late Large Yellow Underwing on the 4th and Angle Shades on the 12th may also have been migrants.

December
Two Scarce Umbers were recorded (on 2nd and 3rd) and were the highlight of the month. There were three Mottled Umber and 69 Winter Moths were counted during the month peaking at 25 on the 29th December.

January
An impressive eight Mottled Umber appeared on the 2nd. The first Pale Brindled Beauty (14th) and Early Moth (27th) were also noted this month. The month's tally of Winter Moths was 53.

February
Nine Early Moths were recorded during the month, a Chestnut and another Pale Brindled Beauty. The most interesting record was a Satellite found on 11th February. The first March Moth appeared on 27th.

March
Three of the rather exquisite Dotted Border were noted this month, two Chestnut and two March Moths. After just over five months of recording, I have managed to notch up 19 species for the site without the use of any traps!

Moths at Rendham – October 2002 to March 2003 – by Matthew Deans

October
This was a good month in the garden with the trap run on 11 nights, some unseasonably mild. The first week of the month produced above average numbers of Merveille du Jour and the first Yellow-line and Red-line Quakers appeared. After my note in the last newsletter about the absence of Red Underwing this year, I had to ‘eat my words’ when a very worn specimen arrived on October 3rd! Two Blair’s Shoulder-knot also on the 3rd were a long overdue garden first. The first of four Large Wainscots this month was seen.

Merveille du Jour © Matthew Deans

The night of the 11th produced the highest count this month with 22 species. I was out in the greenhouse at dawn to sort the soaked trap, which contained a Deep-brown Dart – new for the garden. The Vapourer, four Green-brindled Crescents and four Merveille du Jour were also recorded.

The second half of the month saw the first November Moths and Feathered Thorns. A couple of Dark Chestnut were recorded and a single Sprawler and an early December Moth on 28th.

Micros were well down as expected with the most interesting being *Acleris sparsana* and *Acleris rhombana*.

It was a poor month for migrants with just three White-points and a Silver Y recorded.

November

In complete contrast to October, the trap was only run the once, on November 26th mainly due to work commitments. Two December Moths appeared in the trap and single Scarce Umber (new for garden) and Mottled Umber were located nearby. The first Winter Moth appeared at the kitchen windows on the evening of 20th.

December

The MV trap was operated once on the 4th resulting in four December Moths. The only other moths recorded this month were Winter Moths and a single Mottled Umber at illuminated windows or security lights.

January to March 2003

The year's moth recording started on New Year's Day when a single Winter Moth appeared on the kitchen window! The MV trap was run on the 26th with Spring Usher and Chestnut recorded.

Pale Brindled Beauty and March Moth recorded in the trap on 25th were the only records for February.

March Moth and Dotted Border were trapped on the March 4th. Pale Brindled Beauty was noted at a security light on the 5th. The year's first Hebrew Character was attracted to the kitchen window on the 14th.

Contact details

Please send any Suffolk moth records, moth articles or other queries to myself (preferably via email) at :

3 Powling Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 9JR
Email : tony.prichard@btinternet.com

Suffolk Moths web site (home of the SMG): http://www.btinternet.com/~tony.prichard

SMG Email Discussion Group: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/suffolkmothgroup

Essex County Moth Recorder : Brian Goodey, 298 Ipswich Road, Colchester, Essex. CO4 0ET.
E-mail: brian.goodey@dial.pipex.com

The Newsletter

This is the newsletter for the Suffolk Moth Group. It is distributed free to those with email and at a £2 per annum subscription for paper copies. Four issues are produced per year, usually in March, June, August and November. I am always on the look out for articles that will be of interest to moth recorders in Suffolk, although field and site reports should be topical. Articles should arrive by the end of the month preceding the month in which a newsletter is produced, eg. the deadline for articles for the March newsletter is the end of February.

Adverts

- Electrical kits from £37.00
- Full range of MV bulbs
- Full range of Butterfly/moth Nets
- Specimen pots for micros to Hawkmoths
- Honda EU10 Generators, contact us for offers
- Range of microscopes and dissecting equipment
- Store Boxes and pin-boards

Visit us at our web site for full details or send a SAE to
ALS, Station Road, Hindolveston, Norfolk, NR20 5DE.
For friendly advise phone us on 01263 862068/01606 783371 or e-mail
jon.clifton@btinternet.com
Proprietors: J Clifton & A Wander

ALS are proud to be working with Butterfly Conservation. For details visit www.butterfly-conservation.org or write to BC, Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Dorest, BH20 5QP