



## **Suffolk Moth Group Newsletter**

**Issue 43 - Autumn 2007**

Edited by Tony Prichard

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### **Editorial**

As the year draws to a close I have yet to meet anyone who feels that 2007 will be remembered as a good year for moth recording. After a warm April the season looked to continue in a similar vein to 2006, but then in May things took a turn for the worse and conditions were poor throughout the main recording season. By the time August arrived some people were already looking forward to the 2008 recording season. Despite the generally poor recording conditions there were several records of significance for the year. Read on to find out more.

As the recording season draws to a close can I remind recorders to send in their moth records to myself. I am interested in all moth records no matter how few or how old, they all add to the picture that we have of the moths in the county. After the problems with the web site earlier in the year I am hoping to catch up with updates to the site this winter.

An updated version of the moth BAP species has been published. Not surprisingly there are some additional species that occur in Suffolk and in the next issue of the newsletter I will outline what I think the moth group should be doing for these additions.

As usual I would like to thank all the contributors to the newsletter, some who have had to wait a while to see their articles published. I hope it has been worth the wait. The next issue of the newsletter is planned to be out around January 2008. I would be grateful for any contributions for that issue.

## **Pre-publication Offer for Moths of Hertfordshire**

The forthcoming publication of a county moth atlas for Hertfordshire may be of interest to those whose mothing interests extend a bit further than the county borders. This 500+ page A4 hardback book is due to arrive in spring 2008 and there is a pre-publication price (£26 including postage) that offers a significant saving on the post-publication price (£45). The book has been written by Colin Plant the Hertfordshire County Recorder. Samples of the species accounts that I have seen previously look very promising, I have already ordered my copy.

A pre-publication offer leaflet can be downloaded from the Herts Moth Group Web at [www.hertsmothgroup.org.uk](http://www.hertsmothgroup.org.uk) and leaflets will also appear in the various entomological journals.

## **Moth Group Indoor Meetings - Tony Prichard**

There are a couple of winter moth group indoor meetings organised that may be of interest to those in the county and here are some dates for your diary. The first is the Essex Moth Group meeting organised by Joe Firmin. This will be held on Saturday 23rd February 2008, from 10.30am to 5.00pm at the usual venue (Venture Centre 2000, Lawford). The second is the Hertfordshire Moth Group meeting organised by Colin Plant on 29th March 2008 at Havers Community Centre, Bishops Stortford from 1pm to 6pm. Moth recorders from Suffolk are welcome to attend either meeting. Joe Firmin would like to hear from anyone intending going to the EMG meeting so they can estimate catering requirements. There is normally a small charge for each meeting.

I will be thinking in the not too distant future about our own moth group meeting. This will be probably be held at the same venue as last year in Bucklesham on a Saturday, either in February or March and avoiding a clash with the other indoor meetings. I would like to hear from people who would be prepared to give presentations/talks/slideshows so I can gauge whether we need an all day meeting or just an afternoon.

## **National Moth Recording Scheme - Tony Prichard**

As the National Moth Recording Scheme/Moths Count project seems to be building up a bit of steam and as I sit on the project's steering group as a moth recording community representative I thought I would go along to the English Moth Recorders' Conference held in Birmingham on 6th October 2007. Attendance seemed good, with a guestimate of around 100 people, and the impression was that most parts of the country were represented.

Presentations were given by various members of the project and also from members of the recording community (Steve Palmer, Colin Plant). Richard Fox, the project manager, was first off the mark with an overview on progress so far. What follows is based on some notes I made at the time so there is a chance of reporter error. What will moth recorders see coming out of the project? It is expected that very shortly online distribution maps will be available from the project web site and later on into the project a provisional atlas will be published. At a much later date there is a possibility of a full atlas but this is not part of the current project. The data within the scheme will be of great value for use in moth conservation, for example determining species status and status change, implementation of BAPs, designation of sites, population monitoring, habitat restoration.

The project has been in catch-up for a while as setting up the project team took longer than

expected. This year has seen a concentration of effort on the outreach activities due to their seasonal nature but now it is expected that more effort can be directed to the recording scheme. It is estimated that there are probably 18 million existing and historical moth records that could be entered into the scheme's database, with an expectation that there will be significant growth in the number of moth records produced each year, one million records a year being mentioned. A significant amount of data to manage. The project will also set guidelines on the minimum requirements for moth records and encourage their use. A data policy should shortly be made available that will let recorders know how their records will be handled. The project will also make available facilities for web-based online recording.

Another part of the day that I thought went successfully were the discussion sessions. Plenty of time had been allowed for the raising of questions and discussion of topics of interest to the audience. A few of the topics covered were duplication of records, non-computerised county moth recorders, recorders not happy with their county recorders, health and safety, what harm does moth recording do to moths, the work involved in record validation, what will happen after the end of the project.

Overall it was a very interesting day, seeing how the scheme is viewed by other recorders around the country and gaining an insight into how other moth groups operate. Generally enthusiasm for the scheme seemed high but I might have expected that from the audience (who had gone to the effort to turn up). It is slightly disappointing that a year into the project so little progress has been made on the recording scheme although it is understandable given the staffing problems early on. The next few months should be interesting as work on the scheme ramps up and we should start to see some initial outputs.

How will the scheme affect recorders in the county? I'm hoping that there will be none or minimal change to the way things operate here in Suffolk. The intention is that the scheme will interact primarily with county recorders. So as long as you send your records into the county recorder they will be passed on to the scheme. One thing of importance to the recorders in the county will be the data policy that the scheme operates under. This will cover things such as intellectual property rights of the records and to what uses the scheme will put the records. Once this policy has been finalised and available I will be checking with recorders that they are happy for their records to pass into the scheme under the terms of the policy. I am not envisaging any problems with the data policy as it seems quite pragmatic. Once recorders have agreed to the data policy then I will be able to release their records to the scheme, although to date I am not sure when the scheme will be wanting to take any records from Suffolk.

If you have any queries about the recording scheme and its operation in Suffolk then feel free to get in touch. Further information can also be found at the project web site at [www.mothscount.org](http://www.mothscount.org).

## **Moths of Europe Volume 1 by Patrice Leraut (NAP Editions). Book Review by Neil Sherman**

ISBN 2913688071. H/B 59 Euros.

This book is the first in a series of three that will cover the macro moth families found in Europe (including North Africa and the Middle-East). This first volume covers all the families of macro-moth apart from the Geometrids and the Noctuids. Both English and French versions have been produced at the same time.

The book has an excellent introduction to moths, covering such topics as structure of moths, habitats, collecting, preparing specimens, identification and moth conservation. Following this is the main body of the text covering each species. There are brief descriptions of the sexes, any variants, closely related species (with differences), biology (covering food-plants and habitats), flight time, distribution and status in the region. There is also a small black and white map showing the distribution in Europe for each species by its text. Where there are very similar species, black and white illustrations are used to show identifying characteristics (as with Skinner).

In the centre of the book are the 78 colour plates. These show set moths, normally with both sexes illustrated. Where there are different colour forms of a moth, these are covered too quite well. There are also a few pictures of larvae (preserved) and cocoons. The quality of these plates is generally very good, although there are the usual problems with using set specimens (faded colours).

The only bad comments some people may find with the book is that there is no English index in the back of the book, only a Latin one. Also, all the moths have been given English names – I'm not sure whether these have been 'officially' adopted or not, but it may stop people putting their own English names to moths if a new species turns up in the UK!

Generally I think this will be a very useful series of books to have on the shelf, especially for those who travel to Europe on holiday regularly and find moths that they would like to identify. It should also help to pick out these new species that appear to be colonising the UK - I'll be checking my Buff-tips now as there are five species in Europe, all very similar!

## Field reports - Tony Prichard

### Friday 11th May - Moth Night at Captains Wood

Cancelled due to poor weather.

### Friday 18th May - Moth Night at Westleton Common

We have not been lucky with the weather in our visits to this heathland site and expectations were not high on this rather windy site. We ran four lights on the northern part of the heath in the sheltered areas we could find. Fifty species were recorded in all and included Cream-spot Tiger, *Cryptoblabes bistriga*, Great Prominent, *Pseudoswammerdamia combinella*, Orange Footman, Gold Spot, Dark Spectacle, Marbled Brown and Sharp-angled Peacock

### Friday 25th May - Moth Night at Cavenham Heath

This meeting also suffered from cooler night-time temperatures - not too surprising for a Breck heathland site. Traps operated within the shelter of the birch wood were most productive not surprisingly. In all 69 species were recorded, with Grey Carpet being the only Breck speciality, although also of interest were Cream-spot Tiger, Fox Moth, *Lobesia reliquana*, Four-dotted Footman, *Orthotaenia undulana*, Orange Footman, *Ancylis upupana*, Great Prominent and Alder Moth.



Around the trap © Tony Prichard

### Friday 1st June - Moth Night at Wortham Ling

Another cool night when we visited this heathland site in the northern part of the county, near the Norfolk border not far from Diss. This site has been well recorded in the past but not regularly in recent years. Along with the 75 moth species recorded at the traps were a worrying number of queen hornets. It looked like we would be plagued by hornets when we returned later in the year. A reasonable selection of species were recorded with the more noteworthy including Marbled Brown, True Lover's Knot, Ingrailed Clay, Small Elephant Hawk-moth, Green Silver-lines, Fox Moth, Large Nutmeg, Scorched Wing, Beautiful Golden Y, Clouded-bordered Brindle, White Colon, Small Clouded Brindle and White-point. The latter species most probably resident now in this part of Suffolk, as previously reported.

### Friday 8th June - Moth Night at Maidscross Hill

Cancelled due to poor weather

### Friday 15th June - Moth Night at Pashford Pools Fen

This is a small fen site in the north-west part of the county. The group has visited the site several

times in the past but it has been a few years since our last visit so I thought it would be worth a return visit. As dusk fell Grey Carpet and Ghost were noted flying in the long grass. In the end only three members of the group turned up for the evening and temperatures soon dropped with the fen becoming covered in mist. The three lights we ran attracted in 73 species. The most notable species recorded were the Blackneck, a localised species more common in the coastal areas, and the rarer Dentated Pug. Other species of interest recorded Agapeta zoegana, Four-dotted Footman, Small Elephant Hawk-moth, *Epinotia demarniana*, Eyed Hawk-moth, *Phlyctaenia perlucidalis* and Green Silver-lines

### **Friday 22nd June - Moth Night at Redgrave Fen**

Following the recording of a singleton Alder Kitten at this site last year we returned again to see if we could find any further individuals and get a better idea of the status of the species at the site. Despite cool temperatures we managed to notch up nearly 120 species but no further Alder Kittens. Species recorded were largely what one would expect from a fenland site at this time of year - *Nymphula stagnata*, Round-winged Muslin, Striped Wainscot, Dotted Fan-foot, Scarce Silver-lines, Marbled Brown, *Epagoge grotiana*, *Phtheochroa inopiana*, *Phlyctaenia perlucidalis*, Scorched Wing, *Pediasia contaminella*, Archer's Dart, *Apotomis capreana*, *Schoenobius gigantella*, Lobster and Scorched Wing. The moth of the night was the rare *Acleris lorquinana*, a RDB species that in Suffolk is currently only known from this site.

### **Friday 29th June - Moth Night at Darsham Marshes**

At this site the heathy area near the car parking area (not part of the SWT reserve as far as I know) seems to have deteriorated since our last visit. Bracken seems to have covered most of the area along with clumps of gorse. The same cannot be said for the marsh areas of the reserves at the end of the track. The marsh/fen habitat seems to have developed a richer flora based on my untrained eye. We ran traps in both types of habitat to increase our chances of a good species list. With around 120 species at the end of the night we did reasonably well but might have expected more in another year and with better weather. Species of interest included Twin-spot Carpet, Large Twin-spot Carpet, Dotted Fan-foot, Orange Moth, Striped Wainscot, *Rhopobota naevana*, *Anarsia spartiella*, Sharp-angled Peacock, Scallop Shell, Cream-bordered Green Pea, Water Ermine, *Epiblema foenella*, *Phtheochroa inopiana*, July Highflyer and *Nascia ciliialis*.

### **Friday 6th July - Moth Night at Thelnetham Fen**

Since the group last visited the reserve the area near the road has been completely opened up, with clearance of a large amount of the willow scrub that used to hide the fen from the road. Another change was that we managed to find a relatively dry patch on which to set up the sheet. Those that were at the last meeting here will remember their chairs slowly sinking into the fen. The recent wet weather meant that any traps out on the fen would have needed buoyancy aids to stay afloat so we were restricted to running lights on the track running through the fen. Out in the open the temperature soon started dropping and we felt it. After a relatively short period we were packing up the traps and warming up as we travelled back home. Not surprisingly the species list for the night was rather short with around fifty species. The more interesting were Nut-tree Tussock, Striped Wainscot, Dingy Shears, Dotted Fan-foot, Black Arches, Sycamore and Privet Hawk-moth.

### **Friday 13th July - Moth Night at East Bergholt**

This was a joint meeting with the Essex Moth Group at the 'Place for Plants' nursery on the outskirts of East Bergholt. The Suffolk contingent was rather small but it is always a good opportunity to meet up with fellow mothers from Essex. Weather conditions were fair for 2007, which was not saying much. The site has extensive plantings of rather exotic trees and there is always the hope that something odd might turn up. As we wandered around the gardens, in the dusk light, looking for sites to set up I noticed swarms of *Ectoedemia heringella* flying around and scurrying over the leaves of the Holm Oaks there.

Possibly the least expected record, of the total 105, was the single *Dioryctria schuetzeella* that turned up at our light. This still appears to be a rare moth in the county, although in recent years there have been a few more records. Other species of note included Shaded Fan-foot, Festoon and *Anania verbascalis*. It was also nice to see Large Emerald, Oak Nycteoline, Black Arches, Nut-tree Tussock, Small Emerald, Scarce Silver-lines, *Calamatropha paludella*, Olive and *Brachmia blandella*.

Thanks to Joe Firmin of the EMG for organising the event and to Rupert Eley for allowing the two groups to hold the meeting at his nursery.

### **Friday 20th July - Moth Night at Aldeburgh**

Cancelled due to poor weather.

### **Friday 27th July - Moth Night at Hen Reed-beds**

A repeat visit to this SWT reserve with a mix of old and new reed-beds. Weather conditions were not ideal but were at least better than those from last year. We were joined by Keith Talby and Peter Clark who ran a number of traps in amongst the older reed-beds, while we ran traps in the newer part of the reserve. The main objective of the night was to look for White-mantled Wainscot. This was recorded at the site last year by Tim Freed but not when we turned up on a cold night the following weekend. Despite the improved conditions this year we failed again to find any White-mantled Wainscot although a singleton Fenn's Wainscot was a useful record for the site. In all a rather short species list of around 70 species, an indication of how poor the recording season really was. Species of note included Shaded Fan-foot, Garden Tiger, *Adaina microdactyla*, Brown-veined Wainscot, Large Twin-spot Carpet, Dog's Tooth, Twin-spotted Wainscot, Reed Dagger, Oak Eggar, Antler, Crescent Striped, Water Ermine, Gold Spot, Kent Black Arches, Starwort, Olive and Silky Wainscot.

## Reports from Recorders around the county

Records reported in this section have not been checked by the Suffolk Moth Panel. Many thanks go to the recorders who provide write-ups and records for this section.

### Moths at Ipswich Golf Course, March to July 2007 - Neil Sherman

#### March

Traps were operated on 4 nights during the 2 mild spells in the middle of the month. This resulted in a species total of 23 (17 macros and 6 micros), a poorer total than last year when 25 were seen (19 macros and 6 micros).

Macros of possible interest seen included the following. Small Brindled Beauty was noted on all nights, with a maximum of 18 caught on the 8th. March Moth also reached a maximum on the same night with 26 trapped. Oak Beauty peaked later, with 6 on the 11th the highest count, as did Yellow Horned with 11 seen on the 15th. Dotted Border (3 records), Red Chestnut (8th + 15th), Satellite (8th + 11th) and Brindled Pug (first for year on the 25th) were also noted.

Micros were few and far between, which is normal for this time of year. *Diurnea fagella* (maximum 4 on the 25th), *Agonopterix alstromeriana* (2 records) and *Agonopterix scopariella* (15th) were the only ones of note.

The night of the 15th was exceptional for the number of moths seen. A Robinson trap operated in the garden caught 393 moths of 15 species, the best night ever so far for the time of year. There were the highest ever numbers of Small Quaker (169), Common Quaker (156) and Pine Beauty (10).

#### April

April 2007 will be remembered as being one of the driest and warmest on record. Only 0.5mm of rain was noted here all month! Temperatures during the daytime reached into the twenties, but some nights were quite cold, due to clear skies. Other nights when cloud cover appeared were much warmer, producing excellent conditions for moth trapping.

Traps (MV + 15w actinic) were operated on 11 nights, with a species total of 89 recorded (31 micros, 58 macros). This, not surprisingly was much better than the poor April in 2006 when only 40 species were noted from a total of 5 trapping nights.

Macros seen included Frosted Green (19 on the 15th was the largest count), March Moth (15th and 25th, late records), Maiden's Blush (2 records), Water Carpet (2 records), Red-green Carpet (on the 23rd). Pugs included Ochreous and Dwarf on the 23rd plus 2 records of Oak-tree. Three Early Tooth-striped were noted on 2 dates. Early Thorn (2 records) and Purple Thorn (22nd) were both nice to see again in the spring after poor showings in recent years. Brindled Beauty was recorded 7 times, a good count. The last Oak Beauties for the year (3) were trapped on the 9th. Quite a few of the prominent species were recorded, much better than last year when there were none! Iron, Pebble, Lesser swallow, Swallow and Pale all appeared in good numbers, but Great Prominent appeared in exceptional numbers, with a peak of 19 on the 25th. Also in good numbers was the Lunar Marbled Brown, with a maximum of 17 seen on the 15th. Chocolate-tip (2 records), Orange Footman (25th, first for year), Least Black Arches (2 records) and Grey Shoulder-knot (8th) were also noted. Numbers of the *Orthosias* declined as the month progressed, as expected.

Due to the unseasonal mild weather, a lot of species appeared that are not normally expected in April. Here is a list of species with the date first seen, these all being the earliest recorded dates for these moths here.

Blood-vein	22nd
Currant Pug	23rd
Brimstone	23rd
Peppered	22nd
Barred Red	23rd
Yellow Belle	25th
Lime Hawk-moth	25th (x2)
Pale Tussock	15th
Grey Dagger	22nd
Knot Grass	23rd
Silver Y	25th

Micros of note included 3 new species for the site, with one on the 23rd - *Pammene argyrana* - and two on the 25th; *Semioscopis steinkellneriana* and *Chrysoesthia sexguttella*. Other micros of note seen were: *Eriocrania sparrmannella* (25th), *Caloptilia populetorum* (13th), *Cedestis subfasciella* (2 on the 23rd) and *Agonopterix subpropinquella* (9th). Numbers of *Eriocrania subpurpurella* were very low in the traps, although lots were seen flying during the day.



*Chrysoesthia sexguttella* © Neil Sherman



Mating Emperor Moths © Neil Sherman

A bred virgin female Emperor Moth (reared from a caterpillar found at the golf course) was put out in the garden on the afternoon of the 19th, soon attracting a male - it was interesting watching him coming in, picking up the scent, getting close, then losing it again but soon coming back. Pairing did take place after a short while.

## May

Moth traps were only operated once at the beginning of May, as conditions were cool. That night (the 3rd) only produced 15 species. I was then away on holiday in Romania for 10 days, enjoying the wildlife of the Carpathian Mountains and the Danube delta. I did take a moth trap with me (a 15w actinic) and managed to catch some moths in both areas.

Highlights in the Carpathians included Scarce Prominent, Silver Cloud (both new to me) and Square Spot in the trap while a number of Tau Emperors were seen flying around during the day, with the best sighting of one being when a Wallcreeper caught it and ate it!

In the delta species highlights included Reed Leopard (new to me), Splendid Brocade, Reed Dagger, Flame Wainscot, Obscure Wainscot, Silky Wainscot, Water Ermine (common), Bedstraw Hawk-moth and Grey Carpet (commonest species seen). A huge Mole Cricket and lots of big Silver Water Beetles also came to the trap, both with loud thuds!



Reed Leopard © Neil Sherman



Scarce Prominent © Neil Sherman

What was interesting with the trapping in the different areas was the effect of altitude - in the mountains the moths seen there were species I would expect in early April in the UK while in the delta the moths there I would expect to see in June.

Once back in the UK, trapping recommenced in earnest as conditions in the middle of the month were excellent with some warm humid nights. The best night was during this period, when 108 species were caught in the garden trap on the 24th, with the most notable species for the month appearing also - a Blair's . This was only the second Suffolk record and the first time I've seen the species in the UK. It was also a nice fresh specimen (see photo).



Blair's Mocha © Neil Sherman

Other macros of possible interest seen included Satin Wave (23rd, first for year), May Highflyer (24th also first for year), Dwarf Pug (24th), Seraphim (2 records of 4 individuals), Sharp-angled Peacock (present again after quite a few in 2006), Brindled White-spot (23rd (3) + 24th (1)), Small Elephant Hawk-moth (2 records) and Lobster (in garden trap 24th). Great Prominent continued to appear in good numbers with 11 seen on 3 dates. Orange Footman averaged at 30 a night during the warm spell, it continues to be a common species at the site. Cream-bordered Green Pea (23rd) and Dark Spectacle (24th, third site record) appeared once.



Dark Spectacle © Neil Sherman

Micros began to build up in numbers with some interesting records for the site during the warm spell. A singleton of *Platyedra subcinerea* was caught on the 23rd, a new site record. Also of note were records of *Phylloporia bistrigella* (21st second for site), *Pammene albuginana* (20th, 21st and 24th - the second - fourth site records), *Ectoedemia decentella* (2 records), *Argyresthia trifasciata* (17th), *Pseudargyrotoza conwagana* (24th) and *Orthotaenia undulana* (2 records).

Daytime observations included a Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moth nectaring on Lilac in the garden on the 1st, 2 records of Mother Shipton and a singleton of the pretty micro *Alabonia geoffrella* found in a poly-tunnel on the site on the 24th.

The end week of the month was very wet and cool, so no trapping was undertaken. The final total for the month was 173 (108 macros and 65 micros). This was much better than 2006 when only 93 species were recorded.

## June

June 2007 turned out to be a little disappointing. It was quite wet and cool, with few warm nights, a complete contrast to 2006 with its humid conditions. Lights were operated on only 8 nights, due to the weather and holidays, recording 262 species (120 micros and 142 macros). In 2006 18 trap nights produced a total of 304 species. The best night was the 21st when 131 species were noted in 2 traps at the work sheds.

Despite limited trapping, things of interest were still seen, including new site records.

On the macro front of possible interest were the following. A Beautiful Hook-tip was noted in the garden trap on the 28th, a first for the site. Others of interest included Festoon (3 records, first for year). 10 Blotched Emeralds were trapped, a good number after dropping to low numbers a few years ago. Tawny Wave (28th), Barred Yellow (20th, the 6th site record) and Lilac Beauty (18th) were noted as singles. Brindled White-spot was seen 4 times, a very low number. Only 4 were seen last month, in 2006 35 were noted. 2 Privet Hawk-moths in the garden trap were nice to see on the 20th, always seems to be scarce here. 4 Small Elephant Hawk-moths were also trapped during the month. Maple Prominent (21st), Marbled Brown (15 trapped on the 18th was a good number), White Ermine (the 8 on the 5th were the last seen), Southern Wainscot (18th, in actinic trap), Suspected (first for year on 21st), Miller (21st), Dingy Shears (20th), Rufous Minor (28th, confirmed by dissection), Cream-bordered Green Pea (20th, in garden trap), Scarce Silver-lines (2 on the 28th were the first for the year), Shaded Fan-foot (18th, also first for 2007) and Dotted Fan-foot (21st). L-album Wainscot was seen in the garden trap on the 17th, the 4th site record.



Beautiful Hook-tip © Neil Sherman

There were some very interesting micro records. *Sophronia semicostella* was trapped on the 21st a new site record. Also new was a *Vitula biviella* on the 17th in the garden trap, a species only new to Britain in 2007 and currently only found in Kent and Sussex. Other species of possible interest were *Teleiodes vulgella* (20th), *Blastodacna hellerella* (17th), *Lozotaenia forsterana* (2 of this large tortrix during the month), *Zeiraphera ratzeburgiana* (28th - second site record), *Pammene albuginana* (6th record on the 7th following on from 4 last month), *Sitochroa verticalis* (3 records), *Oxyptilus distans* (17th, 5th site record) and *Amblyptilia acanthadactyla* (6 noted on 2 nights, seems to be on the increase here). All the following were noted on the 21st: *Lampronia corticella* (2), *Eidophasia messingiella*, *Mompha ochraceella* (scarce here), *Aethes beatricella*, *Epinotia demarniana* (2), *Stophedra nitidana*, *Scoparia basistrigalis* and *Udea ferrugalis* (first for year).



*Sophronia semicostella* © Neil Sherman



*Vitula biviella* © Neil Sherman

A few caterpillars were discovered during the month, including a Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moth on Honeysuckle (17th) and 25 Mullein larvae on Mullein plants in the garden (6th). Another daytime observation was a single Currant Clearwing drawn to the ALS 'Tip' pheromone at another site on the course after last year's discovery of a breeding colony.

## July

July 2007 did not live up to its expectations. Normally the best month of the year for trapping, this year it was decidedly average. Generally it was cool and very wet, although not as wet as other unluckier parts of the UK. There were no real hot and humid days or nights, unlike 2006 when the month was dominated by them. Lights were operated on 15 nights, mainly in the garden or around the work shed area - only on 2 nights were traps tried in different areas of the site, again due to the poor conditions. The best night was on one of those nights, on the 14th a reed-bed area was trapped - 165 species were noted. On average 80 - 90 species were noted most nights. Even the commoner species of moths seemed in low numbers. The total for the month was 370 (196 macros, 174 micros), nowhere near last year's record July when 484 species were seen. Despite the low species counts and numbers of moths, there were still some sightings of interest.

Macros of possible note here included the following. Festoon peaked on the 14th, when 15 were seen. Only one Common Lutestring was recorded, again on the 14th. Grass Emerald was seen 5

times, while the Small Emerald was noted once in the garden trap on the 13th - a rare moth here. After the single Tawny Wave last month, two were seen on the 15th followed by another on the 18th. Flame Carpet was seen three times. Only one Small Phoenix has been noted so far (19th). There were 5 records of Scallop Shell, a good number here. Slender Pug was only noted on the 14th this year (3). White-spotted Pug appeared once on the 24th. 2 more Privet Hawk-moths were noted in the garden trap during the month following on from 2 in June. The Pine Hawk-moth was much more common, with 50 noted during the month - this is the most common hawk-moth species at this site. One second brood Chocolate-tip was noted on the 18th. White Satin appeared for the first time in the garden trap on the 15th, only the 4th site record. Kent Black Arches continues to be noted at the site with 4 records for 2007. A worn Purple Clay was seen in the garden trap on the 13th, the only record for 2007. More of a surprise were the 2 records of Square-spot Rustic on the 18th and 24th, both earlier than the previous earliest (31st July 2002), a sign that the season was rapidly moving on! There were single records of Beautiful Yellow Underwing (12th) and White-point (31st). Svensson's Copper Underwing, as normal here, appeared before Copper with 2 seen (so far). Lesser-spotted Pinion was also noted twice (12th and 15th). Both Bulrush (16th) and Webb's Wainscot (15th) have been trapped once so far. Cream-bordered Green Pea appeared again after one was seen last month (10th). There were 4 records of Scarce Silver-lines, this species seems to have increased in recent years here. Also possibly on the increase is the Dark Spectacle with 2 records in the garden trap. However a moth that has not been seen in great numbers in 2007 is the Shaded Fan-foot - after one last month, 15 were noted on the 14th, followed by 4 on the 19th, but no more.

The most important macro records for the year (so far) were the 2 White-mantled Wainscot sightings. After trapping a male in the garden last year, an area of reed-bed on the site was surveyed on the 14th, with a single moth noted. A few days later, on the 19th, the same area was trapped and produced a second individual in fresh condition. It is quite possible there could be a breeding colony now present on the site, a significant shift southwards in the current known distribution of this moth. Part of this area of habitat has in the last few years been restored from scrub woodland, with more planned in forthcoming years.



White-mantled Wainscot © Neil Sherman



*Yponomeuta cagnagella* © Neil Sherman

There were a few micro sightings of note too in July. First, there were 2 new species - *Epermenia chaerophyllella* (1st, in garden trap) and *Yponomeuta cagnagella* (13th again in the garden trap). Other notables included *Lampronia corticella* (12th), *Morophaga choragella* (2 records), *Aspilapterix tringipennella* (2 on the 24th), *Prays fraxinella* (14th, not a common species here), *Agonopterix ciliella* (12th, second site record), *Carpatolechia alburnella* (14th), *Batrachedra praeangusta* (27th), *Phalonidia manniana* (16th), *Zeiraphera ratzeburgiana* (3 records, first seen only last year), *Gypsonoma minutana* (2 records), *Eucosma obumbratana* (16th, second site record), *Ostrinia nubilalis* (2 records), *Udea prunalis* (2 records, at garden trap only), *Nomophila noctuella* (18th, only one so far), *Trachycera marmorea* (14th), *Pyla fusca* (8th) and *Oxyptilus distans* (12th).

Also of interest was the number of *Vitula biviella* seen. Following on from the first last month, the species was recorded on 13 of the 15 nights of trapping this month. 64 were recorded in total, with the highest 2 counts coming from the garden trap with 12 on both the 13th and 16th. Most were indeed seen in the garden trap, but others were noted at all trap sites this month too. This strongly

suggests the moth has colonised Suffolk, especially as good numbers have also been noted in traps at Bawdsey (M. Deans).

There were 2 daytime observations considered of interest. A vacated leaf mine of *Phylloporia bistrigella* was found on a birch sapling on the 9th, proving breeding at the site following on from a couple of adult records at light. A *Gelechia senticetella* was flushed while cutting conifer hedging around the garden on the 21st, only seen at this site for the first time last year.

## Eye Moths, April to June 2007 - Paul Kitchener

### April

The extraordinarily good, record breaking weather of April really kick started the mothing season with seventy eight species being recorded, easily beating my previous April best of forty nine seen in 2003.

Over twenty species were seen on their earliest ever dates and it's the first year that the following have been seen in April: *Plutella porrectella*, *Zeiraphera isertana* (all previous records have been in July), *Epiblema cynosbatella*, White-spotted Pug, Yellow-barred Brindle, Sharp-angled Peacock, Grey Dagger, Pebble Hook-tip, Coxcomb Prominent, Ruby Tiger, Flame, Treble Lines, Light Brocade, Vine's Rustic and Maiden's Blush.

It is unusual to pick up new site records this month so to get four was amazing. The first was a superb female Emperor, one of only eleven moths caught on the 13th, and quite a sight. Flame Carpet (16th) and Great Prominent (22nd) had been hoped for/expected for a long time but I had not trapped either species in Eye during the eleven years I've been here. The fourth new one was *Elachista maculicerusella*, also on the 22nd, but overshadowed somewhat by the Great Prominent!



Female Emperor Moth © Paul Kitchener

The first *Plutella xylostella* of the year appeared on the 26th, with many more to come; already the year's total for this species has surpassed all previous years except 2006. Other notable occurrences have included the fourth site record of Red-green Carpet on the 15th (all three previous records having been in October), only the second site record of Brindled Beauty on the 24th (why this moth is so rare here is a mystery, the only other record was as long ago as 2002), the fourth record of Lunar Marbled Brown on the 23rd (the first since 2003), three Chocolate-tip, two Least Black Arches, three Powdered Quaker and the second and third site records for Nut-tree Tussock.

An example of a species that has started the year exceptionally well around here is Swallow Prominent. April of the previous four years has seen totals of two, nine, none and one but this year twenty were trapped. It will be interesting to see if the second generation is as successful.

### May

The rainfall this month certainly made up for the dry April, but generally it was a good month, the one hundred and thirteen species was the best total since 2003.

As last month many species were seen earlier than ever and the following were recorded in May for the very first time: *Cydia splendana*, *Cydia pomonella*, *Ptycholoma lecheana*, *Ditula angustiorana*, *Clepsis consimilana*, *Eudonia angustea*, *Chrysoteuchia culmella*, Wormwood Pug and Dark Spectacle.

There was one new site record this month, a *Syndemis musculana* on 22nd, but *Aspilapteryx tringipennella* (4th) and *Mompha subbistrigella* (24th) were only second records (four more of the latter were seen in June).

*Udea ferrugalis* was seen for the first time in "spring" when one appeared on the 24th and the only other possible migrants this month were White-point (2nd) and Silver Y (21st) though it's more than likely that they were "home-bred".

Other species of note in May were Dingy Shell (seen every year, but in very small numbers), Sharp-angled Peacock, Orange Footman, Cinnabar (the first since 2004), two Powdered Quaker, Dark Brocade, Clouded-bordered Brindle (none last year!), large numbers of Treble Lines (double the previous best year's total) and three Buttoned Snout (I usually see only two in a year).

## June

On the whole June was a rather disappointing and very wet month which, according to the weather statisticians, had slightly above average temperatures, but I certainly didn't notice. Heavy rain, often in the evening and at dusk, must have been responsible for the reduced catches even when the night temperatures held up.

A total of two hundred and nine species wasn't bad, only one less than last June but well down on the best June of 2003 when two hundred and thirty two were seen. Seven of them were new site records and these were *Nematopogon metaxella*, *Phyllocnistis unipunctella*, *Roeslerstammia erxebella*, *Teleiodes luculella*, *Apotomis turbidana*, *Pediasia contaminella* and Lobster Moth.



*Nematopogon metaxella* © Paul Kitchener



*Roeslerstammia erxebella* © Paul Kitchener

Other micros of note included *Argyresthia cupressella* (the usual brief flush of June records), *Prays fraxinella* (two, both on the 17th), over one hundred *Plutella xylostella* (a maximum of forty on the 8th), *Epermenia chaerophyllella* (two), *Monochroa palustrella*, *Brachmia blandella* (an early record on the 21st), *Mompha ochraceella* (second site record), *Phtheochroa inopiana* (three on the 29th; first recorded only last year when nine were seen), *Ancylis achatana*, *Epinotia bilunana* (the first since 2004), *Platytes cerussella* (second site record), *Eudonia pallida* (the fourth and fifth site records), *Perinephela lancealis* (second site record), *Phlyctaenia perlucidalis* (four), *Udea ferrugalis* (one on the 5th), a very good total of twenty one *Aphomia sociella*, the first June record for *Trachycera advenella*, *Pempelia formosa* (two), *Dioryctria abietella* (third site record), *Nephtopterix angustella* (seven), *Ephestia parasitella* (has become more and more frequent since 2003) and

*Homoeosoma sinuella* (second site record).



*Prays fraxinella* © Paul Kitchener

Of the macros the following occurrences were noteworthy for the garden: Peach Blossom (only the seventh since the first was recorded here in 2005), good numbers of Treble Brown Spot (a maximum of nine on the 21st), Yellow Shell (two), Purple Bar (the first since 2004), Blue-bordered Carpet, Slender Pug (two), Sloe Pug (fourth site record), Dingy Shell (two), Small Elephant Hawk-moth (only the third record, the first two were in 2004), Maple Prominent (four), Orange Footman (another single following the one in May), Pearly Underwing (the third site record and only the second time I've recorded it in Eye in June) on the 10th, White-point (five), Shoulder-striped Wainscot (the second and third site records having been seen for the first time here only last year), Miller (the second site record, the first was in 2003), Oak Nycteoline (my first Eye June record), good numbers of Burnished Brass, Silver Y (ten) and Dark Spectacle.

A Burnished Brass taken on the 6th was noteworthy for having a pure golden colouration to the wings. Although the books state the species has a brassy yellow, brassy greenish-yellow or golden pattern it is the first one I have seen (out of just under a thousand in Eye), that I can recall, that hasn't had any hint of green whichever way the light caught it. As one of my favourite species I always take a good look at fresh specimens so this was quite a rare sight which brightened up a wet morning. I would be interested to here if anyone else has seen one like it.



Miller © Paul Kitchener



Burnished Brass © Paul Kitchener

# Moths at Bawdsey, January to July 2007 - Matthew Deans

## January and February

No traps were operated due to the cold and blustery weather. As the security lights are no longer operational, no moths were recorded whatsoever.

## March

The first fortnight of the month was mild, a cold snap then ensued with northerly winds, before it turned mild again at the month's end. The first trapping effort of the year took place on 8th and produced just singletons of March Moth and Hebrew Character. Trapping was undertaken on three nights mid-month (12th, 13th and 14th) with the highlights being Oak Beauty and Dotted Border on 12th, Early Tooth-striped (new site record) and Pale Brindled Beauty on 13th and Diurnea fagella, Red Chestnut, Lead-coloured Drab, Twin-spotted Quaker and Angle Shades on 14th.

A final trapping attempt on 26th produced further Pale Brindled and Oak Beauties along with the usual *Orthosias* although nothing new for the year.

## April

It was the warmest April on record, with temperatures peaking at 25°C around mid month. The whole month was dominated by high pressure and rainfall was very limited. As a consequence some of the best mothing I can remember in April was on offer, with many species appearing much earlier than normal.

Micros of note included *Ypsolopha ustella* on 15th and *Cochylidia implicitana* on 24th. Early records were made of *Argyrotaenia ljugiana* on 24th, *Eudonia angustea* on 25th and *Evergestis extimalis* on 23rd (three specimens).

The Shoulder Stripe was recorded on 11th with The Streamer on 22nd and 23rd followed by two specimens of Mottled Grey on 25th.

A Puss Moth was trapped on 24th, both Lunar Marbled Brown and Chocolate-tip on 16th and Cream-spot Tiger on 30th - all constituting the earliest ever Bawdsey records. A Blossom Underwing on 22nd was the first site record and well received.



Blossom Underwing © Matthew Deans



Toadflax Brocade © Matthew Deans

The Northern Drab is surveyed every year and 29 were recorded this month between 9th and 22nd. Thirteen examples of Powdered Quaker were taken between 10th and 29th with a Toadflax Brocade (first site record) also on this latter date.

The highlight of the month however was the Dotted Chestnut taken on 16th which was a fine addition to the Suffolk list and one predicted by the author to turn up in the County in his SMG newsletter article last year!



Dotted Chestnut © Matthew Deans

Regular migrants recorded included four *Plutella xylostella* Diamond Backed Moth, two *Udea ferrugalis* Rusty-dot Pearl and one Silver Y.

## May

Following the drought in April, the weather during May was much more unsettled, although the temperatures were still a degree or two higher than the norm.

A few micros were added to the site list including *Aspilapteryx tringipennella* on 22nd, *Platyedra subcinerea* on 21st, *Isotrias rectifasciana* on 25th and *Dichrorampha simpliciana* on 8th. Other notable micros included *Eidophasia messingiella* on 24th, *Cydia ulicetana* on 9th (by day on gorse) and *Anerastia lotella* on 25th.

The Red-green Carpet was taken on 23rd and represented the first spring record. A May Highflyer also on 23rd and a Pretty Chalk Carpet on 24th were amongst the most interesting geometers.

Hawk-moths appeared with a Privet on 2nd, Lime on 8th, Eyed on 28th, Poplar on 2nd, Elephant on 21st and Small Elephant on 23rd. The records of Privet and Small Elephant were the earliest site records.

A Broad-barred White trapped on 21st and a Buttoned Snout on 24th constituted the first site records. A Mullein was taken on 16th and the first L-album Wainscot of the year on 30th.

Regular migrants recorded included 90 *Plutella xylostella* Diamond Backed Moth (56 on 21/05 was a notable influx), six *Udea ferrugalis* Rusty-dot Pearl, one Dark Sword-grass, three Pearly Underwing (first May records) and eight Silver Y.

## June

There was not much sunshine this month. For the most part we were covered in heavy cloud with frequent belts of rain, torrential at times. It was just very unsettled and a disappointing month.

There were some highlights however and on the micro front these included *Pammene regiana* on 19th, *Pima boisduvaliella* on 18th, *Dioryctria abietella* (23 between 5th and 21st - larger migrant specimens) and *Nephoterix angustella* (three between 17th and 28th).

A Bright Wave on 16th was the undoubted highlight of the month - being the first County record since c1990 when the moth was last seen at Thorpeness. Subsequent searches for further

individuals proved fruitless.



Bright Wave © Matthew Deans

The Blotched Emerald was trapped four times between 13th and 20th, a Dingy Shell appeared on 11th, Magpie Moth on 20th and a Brindled White-spot on 11th - the latter was the first site record.

Three further new species for the site were the Clouded Buff taken on 10th, Ingrailed Clay on 13th and a Rosy Marbled on 13th.

Other less rare species at Bawdsey included Water Ermine on 5th and 14th, White Colon on 24th, Striped Wainscot on 21st and Obscure Wainscot on 20th. Surveying of the L-album Wainscot continued with 15 recorded between 1st and 22nd.

Regular migrants recorded included 207 *Plutella xylostella* Diamond Backed Moth, three *Ostrinia nubilalis* European Corn-borer, five *Udea ferrugalis* Rusty-dot Pearl, two *Nomophila noctuella* Rush Veneer, one Pearly Underwing, four Delicate and 19 Silver Y.

## July

The weather this month continued in the same vein as June, very wet with frequent torrential downpours. It was deluge after deluge with most mornings spent checking soggy egg trays for an interesting moth. It was so disappointing after the promising start to the season.

A few new micros to the site appeared including *Morophaga choragella* on 28th, *Yponomeuta plumbella* on 31st, *Epagoge grotiana* on 18th, *Scoparia subfusca* on 28th, *Eudonia truncicolella* on 30th, *Trachycera marmorea* on 2nd and *Cnaemidophorus rhododactyla* on 12th.

A Ground Lackey was taken on 25th with a Peach Blossom on 13th. Amongst the geometers Large Emerald was a long overdue site 'first' on 17th, Small Emerald was trapped three times between 11th and 26th, Small Scallop on 15th, Dark Spinach on 28th, Fern on 12th, Plain Pug on 18th and 22nd and Scorched Carpet on 31st.

The White Satin was taken on 31st, a male Four-spotted Footman on 18th, Garden Tiger on 15th (with three subsequent records), Kent Black Arches on 17th, L-album Wainscot on 8th and 12th, Tree-lichen Beauty on 13th, Olive on 12th, Lesser-spotted Pinion on 18th, Lunar-spotted Pinion on 23rd, Slender Brindle on 28th and Double Lobed on 15th.

Regular migrants recorded included 54 *Plutella xylostella* Diamond Backed Moth, six *Ostrinia nubilalis* European Corn-borer, 17 *Udea ferrugalis* Rusty-dot Pearl, seven *Nomophila noctuella* Rush Veneer, three Dark Sword-grass, eight Delicate and 65 Silver Y.

## Summer 2007 - a disappointing season in Woolpit - Paul Bryant

For most of the year there has only been one subject on most people's minds...Where have all the moths gone?'

I've only been recording myself for about seven years but this must surely go down as my worst year yet. Speaking to those who've been trapping a lot longer and the story seems to be the same. The question is, what has this year's inclement weather done to our moth populations as a whole? If things in my own garden are anything to go by, then the simple answer seems to be a noticeable reduction in the number of individual species, even the so called 'common' ones.

Very little trapping took place in the garden during March, and April wasn't that much better. The few highlights from the latter month included a Chamomile Shark that turned up at actinic light on the 22nd, an *Esperia sulphurella* buzzing around the choisya in our front garden on the 25th and single Pale Mottled Willows on the 25th & 27th. May was a bit better but I still only managed a total of ten trap-nights. For the most part it was single figures with little to get excited about apart from a Lobster Moth on 24th (a garden first), Green Silver-lines on the 12th and a Bordered White on the 22nd.



Lobster Moth © Paul Bryant

June saw just the hint of an improvement but I still only managed nine trap-nights all month, the best being the 12th when I recorded 40 species. By far my commonest moth was Heart & Dart, with a maximum of 60 on the 2nd. Two of only three Privet Hawk-moths caught this year turned up on the 9th (I had 10 last year and 9 the year before!). Pick of the bunch were Maiden's Blush and White Point (2nd), Varied Coronet, Cream-bordered Green Pea and Buttoned Snout (3rd), Orange Footman (11th), Scorched Wing (12th) and Shark (20th).



Orange Footman © Paul Bryant



Shark © Paul Bryant

A combination of weather, out of county trips and a brief excursion to visit Ann's parents in France at month end meant that I only trapped on six nights in July. By far the best night of the month (and

on reflection, possibly the best of the year) was the 13th when I recorded 53 species. Notables that night were single Chinese Character, Shaded Broad-bar, Early Thorn, Scalloped Oak (also recorded on three other nights in July) and a male Vapourer. Other July treats included a scattering of Swallow-tailed Moths, and single Nut-tree Tussock (16th), Magpie Moth, Eyed Hawk-moth, Lime-speck Pug (20th) and a superb Bird's Wing (24th). Apart from that it's been pretty slow going with just Riband Waves making any sort of attempt to appear in something approaching double figures.



Vapourer Moth © Paul Bryant

August started off reasonably well; with species counts in the 30's, but numbers were soon down in the twenties by mid month. The highlight was a single *Aspilapteryx tringinpennella* on the 1st, which turned out to be a new site record. That same night I also picked up Leopard Moth, White Satin and Shaded Broad-bar. Other wanderers to the garden included Sallow Kitten and Scarce Silver-lines (4th), Magpie Moth and Dusky Thorn (8th), Oak Hook-tip, Champion and Nut-tree Tussock (10th), Chocolate-tip (17th) and two Old Lady's (on the 17th and 24th). Otherwise, it was very much run of the mill stuff with just the ubiquitous Large Yellow Underwing appearing in anything more than single figures. Will September and October be any different?



Old Lady © Paul Bryant

As always, happy trapping.

## **Moths at Rendham, January to August 2007 - Matthew Deans**

### **January and February**

No traps were operated due to the cold and blustery weather.

## March

The trap was first operated on the mild night of 12th which produced a new moth for the garden - Small Brindled Beauty. Also trapped that night were Shoulder Stripe, Oak Beauty, two Chestnuts and three March Moths. Amongst the usual orthosias were two Lead-coloured Drabs.

## April

The trap was operated three times during the month with the highlights being two Brindled Beauties and a Swallow Prominent on 11th - both earliest ever site records. More early records were broken with the mild weather on the night of 23rd producing the earliest Rendham records of Maiden's Blush, Waved Umber and Ruby Tiger. Other notables were *Esperia sulphurella*, *Acleris cristana*, Streamer, Lunar Marbled Brown, Chocolate-tip, Powdered Quaker and Pale Mottled Willow - all on 23rd.

## May

The month opened on 1st with the earliest site records *Syndemis musculana* and both Lime and Poplar Hawk-moths. A week later *Crambus lathoniellus*, Clouded Border and Clouded-bordered Brindle on 8th were the earliest ever records.

Mid-month a Flame Carpet was a notable record on 15th arriving with the earliest Scalloped Hazel and Eyed Hawk-moth. The night of 17th produced Sharp-angled Peacock, Latticed Heath and Large Nutmeg. Nothing spectacular was noted but a few more interesting species included Campion, Silver Y and Dark Spectacle on 21st.

The trap was finally run this month on 24th - a night which produced 64 species including: *Agonopterix subpropinquella*, *Eudonia pallida*, Ringed China-mark, Treble Bar, Scorched Carpet, Elephant Hawk-moth and Orange Footman.

## June and July

I moved from Rendham to Hollesley in May and was rather busy with decorating, etc. With the frequent heavy rain whenever I visited Rendham during June and July, it was just not worth running the trap.

## August

The trap was run just once, on the night of 8th producing a meagre 52 species. The most interesting were *Ypsolopha scabrella*, Small Waved Umber and Black Arches.

## Contact details

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

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[www.suffolkmothgroup.org.uk](http://www.suffolkmothgroup.org.uk)

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

Essex County Moth Recorder : David Allen

## The Newsletter

This is the newsletter for the Suffolk Moth Group. It is available for download from the Suffolk Moths website and subscribers can receive email notification when new issues are produced. Paper copy are available at a £2 per annum subscription. It is usually intended for three to four issues to be produced a year although the precise time of production varies. 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. Please contact me for publication deadlines as this varies with each issue and tends to be flexible.



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