

## Suffolk Moth Group Newsletter

Issue 45 - Autumn 2008

Edited by Tony Prichard

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### Editorial

It has been a while since the last newsletter was produced - the poor start to the season led a certain lack of editorial inspiration. In general, another poor season to follow the one in 2007, although late summer proved very fruitful for some recorders. We are now into the peak of the leaf-mining season and the moth group's last meeting of the season is the annual leaf-mining meeting. This is normally quite a popular meeting (especially the pub lunch) and all are welcome to attend.

Over the next few weeks I will be finishing off getting the moth records ready to send to the National Moth Recording Scheme. This process will mainly involve checking that no locally sensitive information is sent out. The data policy of the scheme means that not all county records will be exported as it specifies additional criteria for what constitutes a valid record, which a proportion of the records in the database fail to satisfy. This data for historical records can be tricky to satisfy as details of historical records can be quite patchy. This unfortunately means that the NMRS will not have the complete picture of the county's moth fauna. The good news is that there will still be a

place for local county-based distribution maps on the web site.

Recently I was contacted by Andrew Toomey who reported the finding of a Moon Moth in the vicinity of Ringshall. This turned out to be an Indian Moon Moth *Actias selene*. This is a species sold commercially and is apparently quite popular for rearing by children. So the origin of this moth is almost certainly to have been from commercial stock. I did wonder if this individual had come from Jimmy's Farm where they have a new butterfly house and which has already been the apparent source of some exotic butterfly records. If this is the origin of Andrew's moth there could be the possibility of other unusual moth species turning up in recorders' traps in the area.

Many thanks to those who have contributed material for this issue of the newsletter. The next newsletter will be due over the winter period and any articles will be much appreciated.

## ***Nemapogon falstriella* - A Moth New to the British Isles Found in Suffolk - Neil Sherman and Jon Clifton**

On the 8th August 2007, whilst working in a poly-tunnel at Ipswich Golf Course [Purdis Heath], I noticed a small dark moth at rest on the inside of the plastic sheeting above my head. It is not unusual to find various species of insects, including moths, inside the tunnel as the doors are left open all summer, with the tunnel acting as a large trap. Specimen pots are always kept to hand to collect anything worth a closer look. The moth was duly collected and kept for examination after work.



*Nemapogon falstriella* © N Sherman

Later, when the moth was scrutinized under a 10x lens it was seen to be predominately black with a pale ochreous head and a small ochreous tornal spot (see photo). Checking the literature I had available, the closest match I could find was *Psychoides filicivora* (Meyrick), a species I was not familiar with. Comparison of the adult moth with photographs on the UK Moths web site again seemed to confirm this initial identification.

I photographed the moth with my digital camera and emailed copies of the digital images to Tony Prichard and Jon Clifton for their opinions on the moth's identity. Both agreed that it did look like *P. filicivora*, and Jon asked if the specimen could be retained for genitalia examination later in the year for further confirmation.

The abdomen was dissected and mounted by Jon Clifton in December 2007. As he did not have any published diagrams of the genitalia of *P. filicivora*, he emailed photographs of the genitalia preparation and a digital image of the adult moth to Martin Honey at the Natural History Museum, London for determination. Both Martin Honey and Gaden Robinson identified the moth as *Nemapogon falstriella*, a new species to the United Kingdom.

The moth was originally described from two specimens taken in Denmark (the island of Falster) on 13 August 1874 and was found again there some 100 years and 10 days later (on the island of Funen) when it was attracted to MV lamps. It has recently turned up in several other European

countries (Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Denmark, Sweden, Croatia and France).

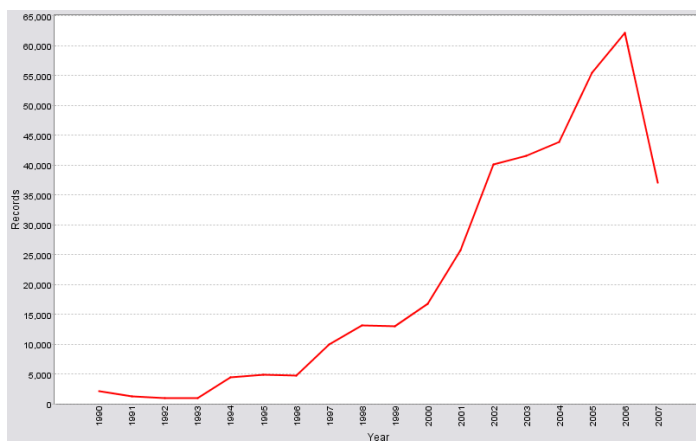
The origins of this specimen are as yet unknown. The poly-tunnel in which it was found is used for growing stocks of native gorse and heathers, with no materials imported from outside the local area. Nor are any materials such as bark chippings imported in from Europe for use on the golf course, only locally produced stock is stored in the vicinity. There was no evidence of immigration occurring at the time the specimen was found so there is the possibility that it may be an overlooked resident or recent colonist. No more specimens were found, but I will be watching out for the moth again in 2008, and I urge other recorders to do the same.

## Annual Indoor Meeting - Bucklesham Village Hall - Saturday 5th April 2008 - Tony Prichard

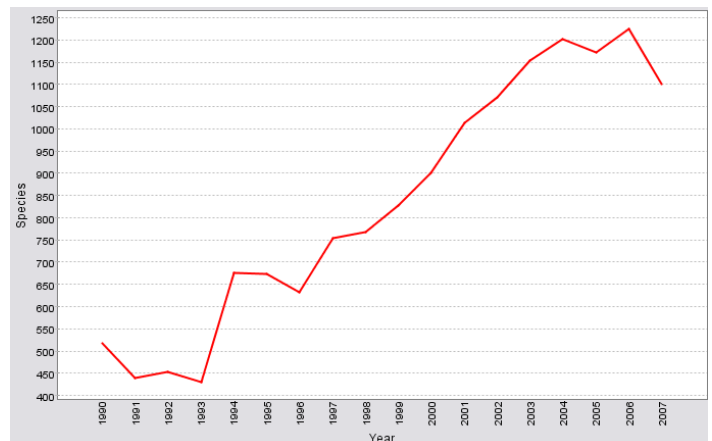
The annual indoor winter meeting seemed to go well this year, although now it seems a long time ago and thoughts are slowly starting to turn to next year's meeting. There was a variety of talks from the drier county recorder reports to the more colourful slideshows from the moth group members.

As previously I thought it might be interest to show a few of the graphs/maps that I covered at the meeting as they cover the state of moth recording in the county and will be of interest to many.

The first set of graph starts to put the year into context with a decrease in records received and species recorded for 2007. Given the general feeling that it was a poor year there were still plenty of species to be found.

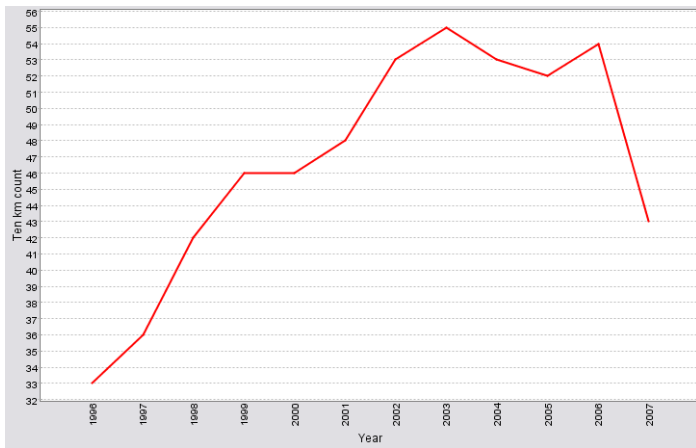


Record totals per year

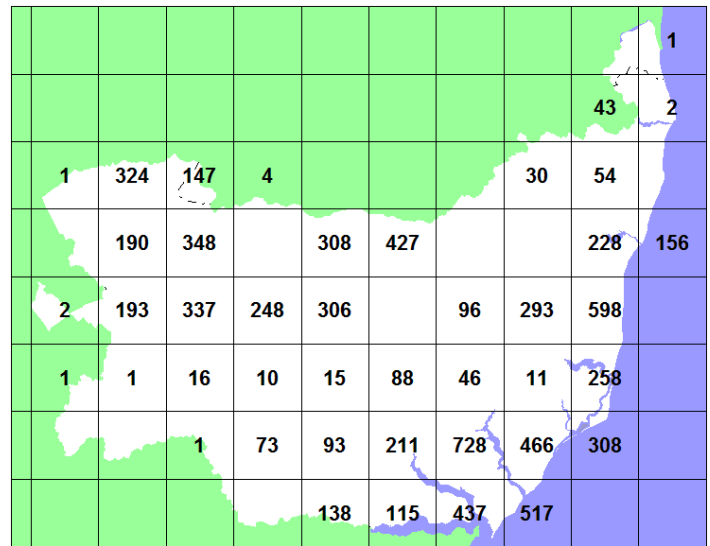


Species totals per year

The first graph shows the number of ten kilometres for which I have records for each year and gives a rough impression of recording effort away from home trapping sites. As can be seen there was a significant drop in 2007, giving the impression that recorders were not out and about recording as much. The map shows to an extent where recording effort took place in 2007 and follows the normal pattern of this being concentrated in the south-east, along the coast and in the north-west.

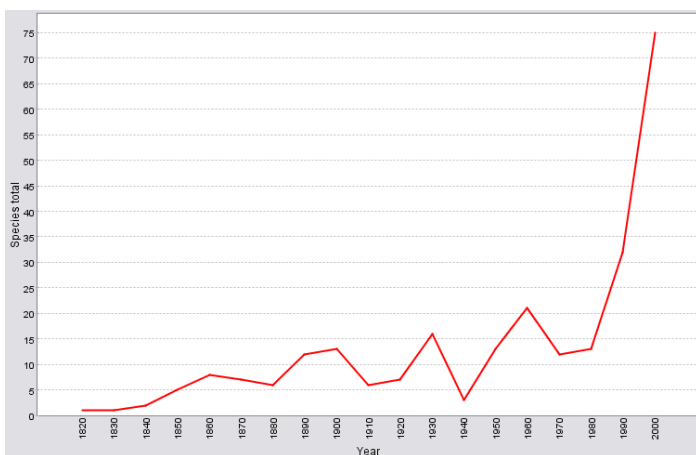


Number of ten kilometres recorded per year



Species totals per year

In this next set the first graph shows the number of migrant species recorded per decade from 1820 to now - a significant increase within the last twenty years or so. What are the causes of this dramatic increase? Global warming? Increased recorder effort? - there are now several regularly trapped sites along the coast. The second graph shows the number of migrant species recorded per year for the last ten years. 2006 was officially a good year for migrants whereas 2007 returned to more normal levels. Where will 2008 lie?



Number of migrant species per decade

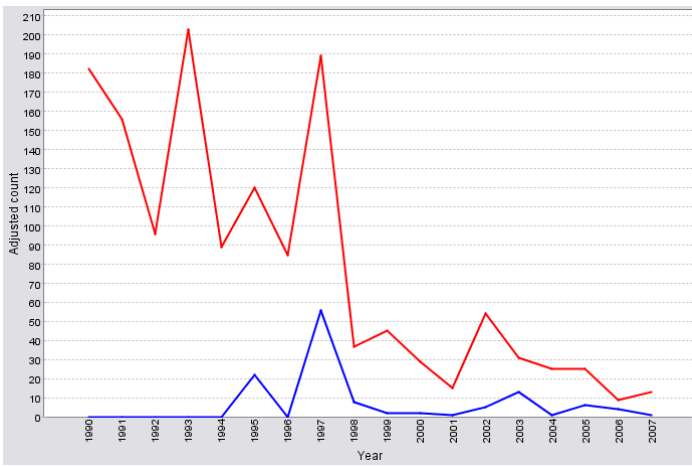


Number of migrant species per year

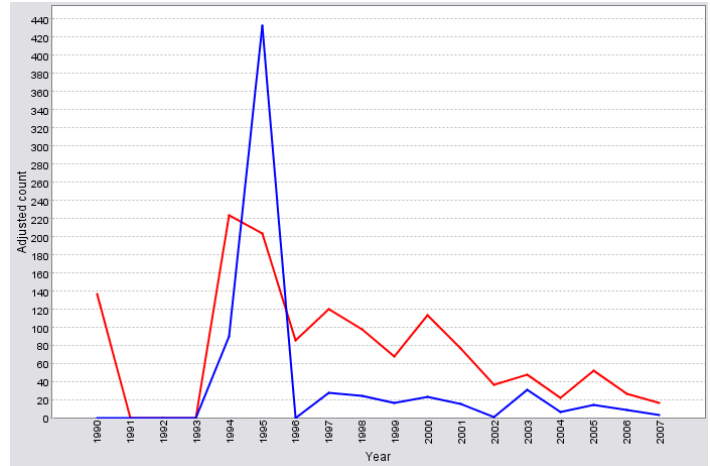
With the publication of the latest update to the BAP moth list and evidence suggesting that common species are suffering serious decline I thought I would see whether the local database show similar patterns of decline. The data in the database is not very good for this type of analysis outside the last ten years or so, as it lacks the quantitative detail, so I have had to limit the view to a short time frame. Moth populations are subject to fluctuations and it could be that just looking back for such a short time period may not show the complete picture of naturally occurring troughs and peaks in a particular species' population. That said I thought it would be useful to show some of the graphs as it could well indicate that some species at least are in real decline and we need to start thinking of doing something before they disappear completely.

The following graphs shows the ratio of a particular species' records/abundance counts to the total number of records/abundance counts for a particular year. This is done to try to compensate for differing levels of recording effort in each year and if a year was generally poor for all moth species. The red lines show record values and the blue lines show recorded abundance values.

It would appear that for the following six species there has been a consistent gradual decrease in the populations. For the Garden Dart it looks as though there has been a reduction to 10% of its population (in comparison with the whole moth population) over the last 10-15 years. Possibly not such a worse case for the Lackey but still a consistent decline over the period.

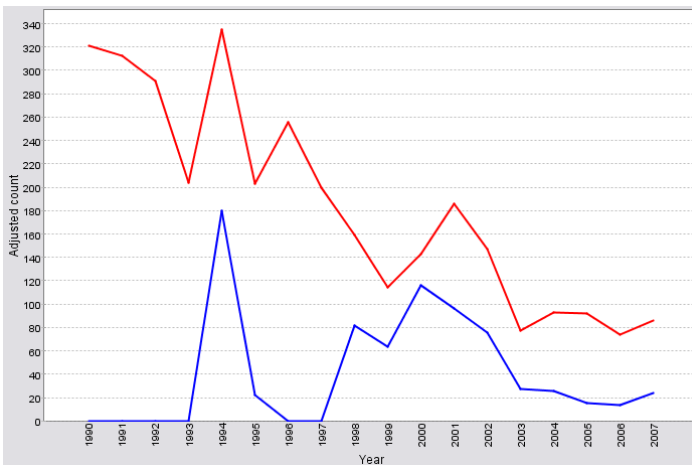


Garden Dart

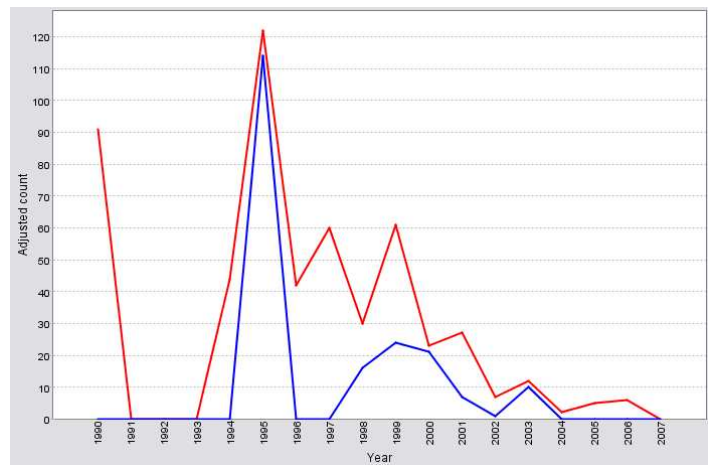


Lackey

Magpie Moth used to be a common garden moth when I was growing up. I have recorded it once in my garden trap since the mid-1990s. I have seen the Minor Shoulder-knot a handful of times in the last ten years but not after 2001. There were four records of this species in 2006 and none in 2007. Is it quietly slipping into local extinction?

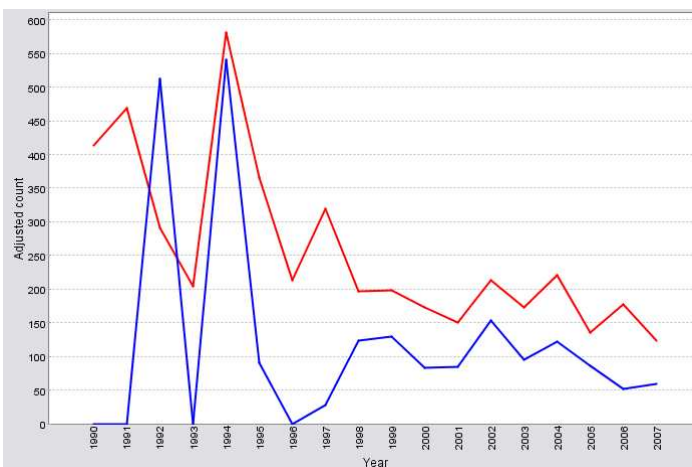


Magpie

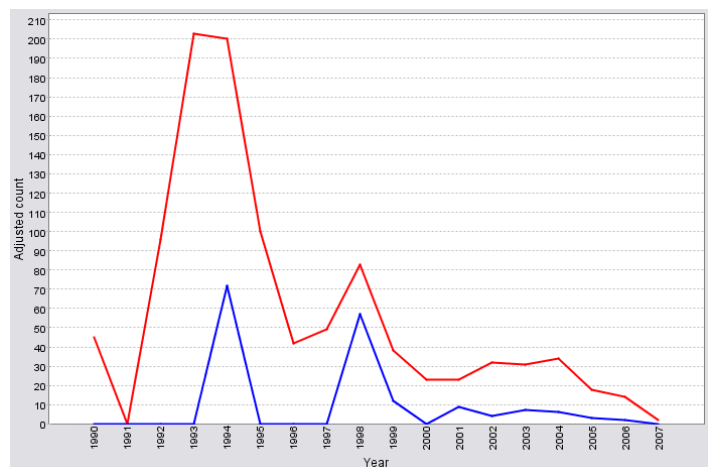


Minor Shoulder-knot

The Mouse Moth is not a rare moth but its numbers do appear to be decreasing. Whereas, another more convincing case for a population in decline is the Spinach.

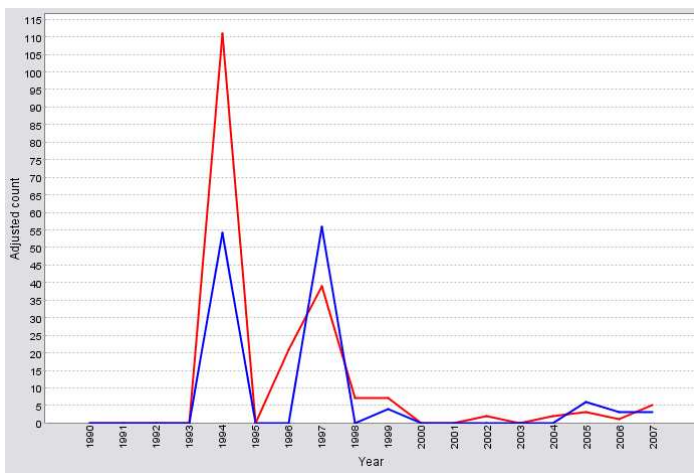


Mouse

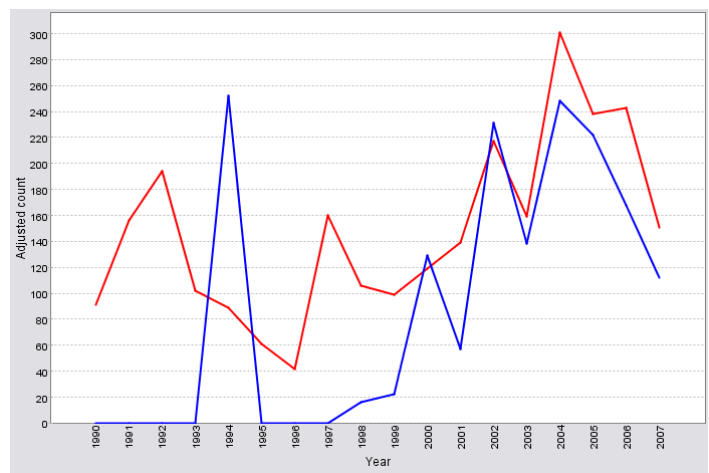


Spinach

Some of the graphs are possibly less convincing - general opinion seems to be that V-Moth has disappeared to a large extent but how significant are the two peaks in 1994 and 1997? Finally, Beaded Chestnut, a species that locally appears to be faring well with increasing numbers.



V-Moth



Beaded Chestnut

## A successful day looking for Large Red-belted Clearwing - Paul Bryant

Until fairly recently, searching for the various Clearwing species in Suffolk was very much a hit and miss affair. The introduction of synthetic pheromones changed that and we now know a bit more about the distribution of the likes of Currant, Red-belted and Red-tipped Clearwings. However, if you check the records, there are still a few Suffolk species that have proved harder to track down. One of those is *Synanthedon culiciformis* (Large Red-belted Clearwing).

Inhabiting areas of birch woodland, this species has been recorded as recently as 2003 on Dunwich Heath. But does it still survive there and does it occur elsewhere the county? This was a question I first tried to answer a couple of years ago. In June 2006 I made a couple of unsuccessful trips to Cavenham Heath. In 2007 it was very much the same story but a trip with Nick Mason to Lower Hollesley Common in mid-May 2007 gave a tantalising hint that *culiciformis* might just be present, when I found an apparent empty pupal case projecting from a birch stump. So, at the start of 2008, I was more determined than ever to find the moth in Suffolk. All I needed was the 'perfect weather weekend'.

As luck would have it early May 2008 was ideal. The southern part of the country had been bathed in warm sunshine. Even better, the forecast for the weekend promised a light breeze, blue skies and daytime temperatures in the mid-20's. I had already been back to Cavenham several times without success but, undeterred, I had managed to persuade Lee, Matthew and Neil to join me at Lower Hollesley.

So, on Saturday 10th May, we all meet up - nets, pots and pheromones to hand. The first area we looked at was a bit overgrown with few birch stumps. After wandering around for a bit seeing nothing Matthew suggested we try another spot down the road where he and Nick Mason had light trapped recently. Having parked our cars under a conveniently shady tree the others had barely gone ten yards when Matthew shouted "We've got one". A bit of deft net work by Neil and our quarry was in the pot. Yippee! Wandering on a bit further, we came across a clear area covered in small birch stumps, just an inch or so high and much the same in diameter. During the next few hours we saw somewhere between 10 and 15 individuals. Surprisingly, the pheromones seemed to be having little or no effect. Instead, we just wandered around carefully checking the stumps and keeping out eye out for anything small, black and fast flying. By early afternoon we decided to call it a day as the peak period of activity seemed to be over.



Lower Hollesley Common © P Bryant



Large Red-belted Clearwing © P Bryant

So, all in all, it was a great success. We had all had good views and perhaps, more importantly, had confirmed that Large Red-belted Clearwing was still present in Suffolk. My thanks go to Lee, Matthew and Neil for joining me on the day.

Happy trapping,  
Paul Bryant

*As a postscript to this article, Matthew visited the site again on the last Bank Holiday Weekend in May and reported that the area was covered in knee high bracken and that there wasn't a tree stump to be seen!*

## **Wanted - More Garden Moth Recorders in East England! - Dave Grundy**

Do we really know what is happening to populations of common moths in our gardens? Yes we know that species like Large Yellow Underwing are common, but does that mean that we see 10 per night or 100 or 1000? Are those numbers going up or down? How can we measure these population changes of common moths over time? How can you make a difference to all this and contribute to help create valuable scientific statistics to measure these changes?

We need to be able to quantify these changes to our common moths if we are to be able to help them. So, the answer is that we need to join the Garden Moth Scheme (GMS) to try and record this vital information.

The purpose of the Garden Moth Scheme is to try and find out what's happening to our common garden moths. This is particularly relevant following the publication of the Butterfly Conservation report "The State of Britain's Larger Moths" in which it appears that a lot of apparently common moths are declining in Britain as a whole. Are these national declines of some of our common moths reflected in your area? The main aim of the GMS is to coordinate records to get standardized data from your results, which can be used for future study. The more people that take part - the more useful the data. We are not attempting to find out who's found the rarest moths, or who's got the best garden - all sites are useful, however many species you record.

The main aims of the scheme are to encourage more people to get involved in studying moths and therefore wildlife on their doorstep and to create a valuable dataset of garden moth records. This dataset can then be used to study the effects of climate change, change in habitats, to act as a biodiversity indicator and to plot against garden features such as distance from nearest wood, green-space etc or presence of pond, log-pile etc in garden.

The Garden Moth Scheme has been running now for six years in the West Midlands Region with 50 gardens taking part across six counties. Intentionally there was no fan-fare to announce the start of the scheme, as we wanted to keep it quiet while we worked out a recording system that was effective. We now have a GMS that works and want to expand it to a national scheme.

In 2007 this process of expansion started and has already been a great success. We now have GMS in Wales with 30 gardens (GMS Cymru), South East England with 30 gardens, South West England with 20 gardens and the rest of the East of England with 20 gardens. As well as this we have additional recorders across the country from the Isle of Wight to Scotland (but we are short of recorders in Suffolk). In 2008 we will have close to 200 GMS recorders and we are hoping for another big expansion in 2009. So do you want to join in for 2009? If so, let us know - you will be very welcome, we are particularly keen on recorders from Suffolk joining in.

What do you need to do to take part? You just need to count the numbers of common moths you see in your moth trap, for one night every week from March to November (and you are probably doing that already). The list of moths consists of about 200 species, common in your area and those that are difficult to identify are intentionally left out. This means that the GMS is open to recorders of all abilities - you don't have to be an expert, just get yourself a moth trap and field guide and you will be welcome! This is a rapidly expanding garden moth-recording scheme that measures the fortunes of our common moths. And to make it even more attractive to recorders the GMS now has its own popular chat-site for recorders, website - [www.gardenmoths.org.uk](http://www.gardenmoths.org.uk) , regular newsletter, annual report and meeting.

So what have been the results of the six years of West Midlands GMS? We have found that some moths including Dot Moth and Garden Carpet are in decline while others such as Common Footman and Blair's Shoulder-knot are increasing. To answer these questions we need more moth recorders throughout the UK. If you count moths in your back garden and want to make a real difference to the future of moths and our environment then get in touch with me to sign up for the 2009 recording season.

Please remember that the GMS is not intended to replace your county recorder - it is to work alongside your county recorder - so please still send all your moth records to your county moth recorder. The new Moths Count (NMRS) programme is administered by Butterfly Conservation to support County Moth Recorders, form a National Moth Data Base and run a wide variety of moth related training and public events. The GMS aims to run alongside Moths Count and Butterfly Conservation.

So, get in touch straight away if you want to join the GMS in Suffolk - your records will be really valuable for 2009.

Dave Grundy, 5, Melrose Avenue, Woodfield Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham, B12 8TG. Tel: 0121-446-5446, Email: [dgcountryside@btinternet.com](mailto:dgcountryside@btinternet.com)

## **Moth Identification Quiz - Neil Sherman**

Time for another of Neil Sherman's picture puzzles - answers in the next issue.



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4



Image 5



Image 6



Image 7



Image 8



Image 9



Image 10



Image 11



Image 12



Image 13



Image 14



Image 15



Image 16



Image 17



Image 18



Image 19



Image 20

## Field reports - Tony Prichard

As with 2007 there were several cancelled meetings this year.

### Friday 25th April - Moth Night at Lavenham

Here we planned on running some lights along the disused railway line that runs between Lavenham and Lineage Wood. There used to be a length of old railway cutting with an interesting piece of chalky grassland but this now appears rather neglected and scrubbed over. A reasonable selection of about fifteen spring-time species were recorded including Water Carpet, Waved Umber, Early Thorn, Purple Thorn, Streamer, Pale Prominent, Red Chestnut and *Semioscopis steinkellneriana*. An unexpected visitor was a female Emperor Moth, a species not so frequently encountered in this part of the county.



Lavenham Railway Line Reserve © A Prichard



Emperor Moth © A Prichard

### Friday 2nd May - SMG Moth Night at Groton Wood

A rather slow cold night at this woodland reserve. A paltry eleven species, with Lunar Marbled Brown, Purple Thorn, Frosted Green, Flame Shoulder and Least Black Arches

### Saturday 3rd May - Moth Night at Tangham Forest

An improvement on the preceding night with 35 species recorded at this site. In the vicinity are wet woodland, heathland and coniferous woodland habitats. Nothing unexpected was seen, but the species list did include *Metendothenia atropunctana*, Narrow-winged Pug, *Cryptoblabes bistriga*, Pebble and Scalloped Hook-tips, Lesser Swallow and Swallow Prominents, *Acleris hyemana*, Pale Tussock, Great Prominent, Emperor, Early Tooth-striped, Grey Birch, Pebble and Coxcomb Prominents.

### Friday 9th May - SMG Moth Night at Captains Wood

A site we have visited several times now - although conditions never seem very favourable and the site has a tendency to get quite cold even though it is mainly oak/birch woodland. Over all 46 species, with an increasing number of late spring species appearing - Oak-tree Pug, Small Phoenix, Great Prominent, Orange Footman, Scalloped Hook-tip, Maiden's Blush, V-Pug, Yellow Belle, Sharp-angled Peacock, *Caloptilia robustella* and Water Carpet. The most notable sighting was left until we were clearing up at the end of the night when a single Pale Pinion came to one of our lamps as we were closing down a trap.

### Friday 16th May - SMG Moth Night at Lavenham

Meeting was cancelled due to poor weather, a cold site when it is damp.

### **Friday 23rd May - SMG Moth Night at Dunwich Forest**

The long-term plan for this site is to carry out some recording in the forest as it is gradually reverted from coniferous plantation to a more natural habitat. On this night we were situated in an area with some wet woodland sandwiched between the southern edge of Westwood Marshes and the conifers. The total of thirty species was low for the time of year but again the weather was not in our favour. The more interesting moths included Great Prominent, Orange Footman, Birch Mocha, Marbled White-spot, Poplar Hawk-moth, Fox, Alder Moth, Marbled Brown, and Maiden's Blush.

### **Friday 30th May - SMG Moth Night at Icknield Way**

A visit to a Breckland site where unfortunately the habitat continues to degrade. 80 species recorded on the night, an improvement at last, but no real Breck specialities amongst them. Some of the species recorded were Lime, Pine and Small Elephant Hawk-moths, White Pinion Spotted, Cream Wave, Cream-spot Tiger, Fox, Bordered White, Foxglove Pug, White-spotted Pug, Clay Triple-lines, *Cydia fagiglanda*, *Eulia ministrana*, Alder Moth, Pale-shouldered Brocade and the pick of the bunch - Dark Brocade.

### **Saturday 31st May - SMG Clearwing Search at Lower Hollesley Common**

Meeting cancelled

### **Friday 6th June - SMG Moth Night at Maidscross Hill**

Meeting cancelled

### **Friday 13th June - SMG Moth Night at Blakenham Chalk Pit**

Mid-June and only 37 species recorded! A reflection of what most would consider a poor season so far. More interesting than the moths were the large number of Roman Snails that were crawling over the floor of the pit. Of possible note were Eyed Hawk-moth, Grey Pug, Maple Prominent and Small Waved Umber.

### **Friday 20th June - SMG Moth Night at Redgrave Fen**

A repeat visit to this fen site with several targets in mind for the evening, including Alder Kitten, Lempke's Gold Spot and Fen Square-spot. The total of 68 species recorded was again rather disappointing for the time of year and for the site. Species of interest included Four-dotted Footman, Miller, Ghost, Scallop Shell, Valerian Pug, *Phtheochroa inopiana*, Striped Wainscot and Oblique Carpet. The latter species we have only recorded once before at the reserve in 2006.

### **Friday 27th June - SMG Moth Night at Lackford Lakes**

This SWT reserve has proved quite productive in the past and produced the highest species count so far with over 90 species. There were large number of *Hedya salicella* filling every trap, there is plenty of the foodplant, willow, on the site. Other noteworthy species included Ghost Moth, Cream-bordered Green Pea, Yellow-barred Brindle, *Mompha ochraceella*, Gold Swift, *Olindia schumacherana*, Small Seraphim and Shark.



Lackford Lakes © A Prichard

### Friday 4th July - SMG Moth Night at Thelnetham Fen

I think this was our third recent trip to this site looking for Silver Hook, a species previously recorded here. As we were setting up plenty of Round-winged Muslin were seen flying around. It did not take too long for a single Silver Hook to appear at the lights but no more were seen after this one. If conditions had been better might we have seen more? Of the 75 species recorded those of interest included Ghost, Striped Wainscot, Blackneck, Small Seraphim, Shaded Pug, Cream-bordered Green Pea, Valerian Pug, Privet Hawk-moth, Small Rufous, Beautiful Hook-tip and *Phtheochroa inopiana*. Beautiful Hook-tip seems to have been doing well recently with a slight increase in the number of records from the county.



Thelnetham Fen © A Prichard

### Friday 11th July - SMG Moth Night at Herringfleet Hills

Meeting cancelled due to poor weather

### Friday 18th July - SMG Moth Night at Aldeburgh

Just under 30 species were recorded at several lights during the short period before the rain started. This was rather disappointing as conditions seemed quite favourable otherwise.

### Thursday 24th July - Moth Night at Hen Reed-beds

I met up with Tim Freed from out of county for a mid-week visit to this reserve. Conditions were reasonably favourable although there was quite a breeze blowing through most of the evening. A good selection of fen species were recorded including three individuals of the target species - White-mantled Wainscot. In all 80 species were recorded with some of the more interesting being *Ostrinia nubilalis*, Double Lobed, Four-dotted Footman, *Eucosma obumbratana*, Reed Dagger, Silky

Wainscot, Kent Black Arches, White Satin, Garden Tiger and Crescent.

### **Friday 25th July - SMG Moth Night at Lakenheath Fen**

A visit to this RSPB reserve in the north-west of the county. At the start of the evening I was not that optimistic that this would be a successful night, due to poor recent weather. A species total of over 90 was still rather a low tally for what should be the peak of the recording season but for a change there were large numbers of moths on the wing and filling the traps. Species of note were Chocolate-tip, Silky Wainscot, Brown-veined Wainscot, Herald, Lesser Cream Wave, *Yponomeuta rorella*, Reed Dagger, Dog's Tooth, Double Lobed, *Gypsonoma aceriana*, Dotted Fan-foot, Garden Tiger, Webb's Wainscot, *Endothenia quadrimaculana*, Bulrush Wainscot, *Evergestis extimalis*. One of the more memorable aspects of the evening were the large numbers of White Satin and to a slightly lesser extent Olive. These are not normally species I would expect to see in large numbers at any of the sites we visit in Suffolk. On this night, however, the White Satin seemed as common as Large Yellow Underwings.

## 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.

### Mendlesham Green, March to September 2008 - Steve Woolnough

The trap was first run on 1st March, when 9 moths of only 4 species were taken. Of these, four were *Agonopterix arenella*, a species which I had first seen in the garden shed in early February. Setting something of a trend for the next few months, the adverse weather allowed the trap to be run only twice this month, providing a total of only 8 species.

Amongst the usual suspects of Common Quaker and Clouded Drab, April 2nd produced the first new garden moth of the year with a fresh Tawny Pinion amongst the 9 spp. This proved to be the highest nightly total for April. Although the trap was run on only four nights, catch numbers actually declined on each occasion, with the total spp number being only 14 for the month.

May continued the trend, when on 2nd, only 5 moths of two species were caught. New garden moths appeared in the form of a Lunar Marbled Brown on 4th and a Chestnut on 7th. Somewhat more unwelcome was experiencing something of an influx of *Endrosis sarcitrella* White-shouldered House-moths, which peaked with 12 on 10th – fine provided they stay in the garden. The trap was run on 8 nights with 65 species being recorded, which is very close to my average for this month.

June, however, was poor, with the weather being responsible for running the trap on just four nights, which produced a total of only 116 spp – well down against my average June total of 135. Highlights were *Elachista apicipunctella*, *Apotomis turbidana* and *Endothenia marginana*, all new for the garden. The only new macro was an Olive on 28th June, when the highest total for the month was achieved, with a count of 78.

Nothing finally picked up with the dry July, when 216 species were recorded from the seven nights the trap was run, which was my second highest July total, falling just under the 220 recorded in the bumper year of 2006. On 25th, a new record for a single night was achieved, when 140 species were identified from my single Skinner. Within this number were 13 new garden records; *Argyresthia goedartella*, *Paraswammerdamia nebulella*, *Coleophora mayrella*, *Brachmia blandella*, *Blastodacna hellerella*, *Phalonida manniana*, *Acleris notana*, *Apotomis capreana*, Plum Fruit Moth, *Agriphila inquinatella*, *Sitochroa palealis*, Small Rivulet and Oak Nycteoline ssp. *ramosana*. Many thanks has to go to Neil Sherman, without whose help with the micros, the total would have been considerably lower! Other garden 'firsts' during the month were *Argyresthia glaucinella*, *Endothenia ericetana*, *Thiodia citrana* and The Miller (15th), and *Cataclysta lemnata* Small China-mark and Wormwood Pug (26th).

The wet normality of 2008 was resumed in August, when the poor weather meant that the trap was run on just three nights, giving a miserable total of 89 species. The only records of note were from 29th, when over 100 Square-spot Rustic were coating the egg-trays and the plume *Amblyptilia acanthadactyla* appeared. One can only hope that September will improve, but given that as I am writing this, the rain is belting down outside and has been for some time, this does appear to be more in hope than expectation. Oh, well – there's always 2009...

### A brief summary of Eye moths, January to August 2008 - Paul Kitchener

By all accounts that I have read, 2008 has been a very poor year for moths and certainly activity around the trap here in Eye has been the slowest that I have known for a long time. However, I'm not going to go on about what's been missing, instead I'll just mention the few highlights that there have been, because there are always some, however bad the overall picture appears.



Frosted Green © P Kitchener

In March, an Oak Beauty on the 15th was a first site record and well overdue considering that I have now trapped for seven springs at this site. Two *Eriocrania subpurpurella* on the 27th April constituted my first trap record in Eye and also that month were second site records for Frosted Green and Puss Moth. A *Eurrhypara hortulata* (Small Magpie) on the 27th April was early and was only my second ever April record. In May there were first site records for *Phyllonorycter blancardella* (8th), *Elachista canapennella* (three on the 3rd and two later in the month) and *Aroga velocella* (on the 16th, with a second record in July). *Callisto denticulella* was only the second site record and three *Argyresthia trifasciata* were seen, there being only two previous records. Orange Footman has been annual for some years now but isn't getting any more common with only two this year. Least Black Arches had it's best year I've known in Eye, the total number seen more than doubled the number in it's previous best year of 2000. A Pine Beauty on the 4th May was a very welcome sight as it was only the third site record and the first since 2003. Other notables during May were White-point (the first of the year on the 27th), Mullein (two, the first since 2005), Tawny Pinion (second site record, 23rd), Dark Brocade (two), Oak Nycteoline, Silver Y (just the one) and two Buttoned Snout (eight of the thirteen records since 2000 have now been in May with only one record in the "autumn" period).



Dark Brocade © P Kitchener



*Callisto denticulella* © P Kitchener

June produced very little to write about with only one moth new to the site, *Swammerdamia*

*caesiella*, with four more in July (I've probably overlooked it in the past). A *Phtheochroa rugosana* was only the second site record, *Enarmonia formosana* (first of four so far this year) and a single *Sciota adelphella* (the tenth record since the first in 2003) completes a dismal picture for June.



*Phtheochroa rugosana* © P Kitchener



*Swammerdamia caesiella* © P Kitchener

Things certainly picked up in July, but for only a week or so did it really feel like "summer" with the numbers of moths never really approaching anything like what one would hope for at the peak of the season.

Micros provided most of the interest and the best of these were *Ectoedemia decentella* (three this year), *Monopis laevigella* (first site record, 28th), *Phyllocnistis saligna* (seven records of eight moths between 10th July and 21st August), *Argyresthia brockeella* (first site record, 22nd), *Yponomeuta rorrella* (ten individuals between 24th and 4th August, with four on the 27th), *Yponomeuta plumbella* (thirteen this year, after a blank last year), *Acrolepiopsis assectella* (third site record, 24th), *Bryotropha affinis* (first site record, 30th), *Stathmopoda pedella* (third site record, 24th), *Apotomis lineana* (seventh site record on the 14th and appearing for the third consecutive year), *Endothenia ericetana* (third and fourth site records), *Epinotia tenerana* (first site record, 14th), *Epinotia abbreviana* (second and third site records), *Crociosema plebejana* (second site record, 30th), *Rhopobota naevana* (seven records of nine moths, having been recorded for the first time only last year), *Pammene fasciana* (first site record, 27th), *Scoparia subfusca* (third site record), *Scoparia basistrigalis* (first site record, 28th), *Aglossa pinguinalis* (fourth site record), *Achroia grisella* (first and second site records, 28th and 30th), *Dioryctria sylvestrella* (first site record, 30th) and *Dioryctria simplicella* (first site record, 22nd). *Cameraria ohridella* (Horse-chestnut Leaf-miner) was seen here for the first time only last year when twenty five were recorded during August. This year the total for July alone is over two hundred so things aren't looking too good for the local Horse Chestnut trees.



*Epinotia tenerana* © P Kitchener



*Achroia grisella* © P Kitchener

The macros did provide some interest this month however and these included Leopard Moth (four on the 27th was very unusual as I've never had more than two at any one time before), Scalloped Hook-tip (only the third site record and first since 2002), Least Carpet (the fifth consecutive year I've seen it here but numbers remain very low, only three this year), Shaded Broad-bar (surprisingly a first site record, 28th, with a second in August), Clouded Magpie (first site record, also 28th) and

Barred Red (first site record, 22nd).

I am getting the impression that moth numbers are pretty average this August with the highlights being *Phyllonorycter leucographella* (second and third site records), *Phyllonorycter strigulatella* (first site record, 4th), *Mompha propinquella* (fourth and fifth site records), *Blastodacna atra* (second site record), *Udea ferrugalis* (the only one of the year, so far, on the 21st), *Cryptoblades bistriga* (second site record), Flame Carpet (the fourth record of a moth recorded here for the first time only last year), Dark Spinach (fourth site record), August Thorn (second site record, the first was seven years ago), Black Arches (only the fourth site record of a moth that is very common in woods just a few miles away), White-point (only the ninth this year), Twin-spotted Wainscot (second site record) and Pinion-streaked Snout (fourth site record).



*Phyllonorycter strigulatella* © P Kitchener



*Mompha propinquella* © P Kitchener

## Moths at Ipswich Golf Course - January to June 2008 - Neil Sherman

### January

Sightings for the New Year started on the 1st, with Winter Moth, Mottled Umber and Spring Usher all seen on the clubhouse wall by the security lights. Trapping started on the 23rd. That night, cloud and temperatures of around 10 degrees produced a record-breaking catch, in fact the best ever January figures for the site. The single Robinson trap put out by the work-sheds caught 169 moths of 6 species: 76 *Tortricodes alternella*, 58 Pale Brindled Beauty (both the highest ever totals for one night), 26 Spring Usher, 4 Chestnut, 4 *Acleris notana/ferrugana* and an *Acleris logiana*. Cold weather then arrived for a short while, with trapping not attempted again until the 29th, this time in the garden. 5 Pale Brindled Beauty and a *T. alternella* were captured, much lower numbers than the 23rd, as the garden is away from the wooded areas of the site and the temperature dropped to 4 degrees. Wind and freezing temperatures then brought a halt to recording.



Moth trap at IGC on 23rd January © N Sherman

## February

February was a very dry month, with lots of unseasonably warm sunny days. Unfortunately, this meant that the nights were predominantly cold and frosty due to the clear skies. A trap was only operated on 3 nights, when cloud cover held up temperatures. 11 species were recorded, which is about average for February here. The 7th was notable for the number of species seen - 10, while the night of the 21st was notable for the number of moths trapped - 136. Only 4 species were seen on the night of the 25th due to breezy conditions.

Macro records of possible interest included the following. The last Spring Usher for the year were seen on the 7th (2). That night the Pale Brindled Beauty was also seen for the last time, with 24 trapped. The Small Brindled Beauty was noted on all trap nights, with a maximum of 20 on the 21st. There were 4 Dotted Borders seen, an average number, but the Chestnut was in poor numbers with only a maximum of 5 seen on the 21st. This follows on from the poor numbers seen at the end of 2007. March Moth was in good numbers however, with a maximum of 66 trapped on the 21st. There were a few records of Small Quaker and Hebrew Character, with the Small Quaker seen on the 7th being the earliest ever record for this site. One Satellite has been trapped so far (21st).

Only 2 micros were seen - *Tortricodes alternella* (common with a maximum of 42 on the 21st) and an *Agonopterix umbellana* (21st).

## March

March was a poor month for recording, with trapping attempted on only 5 nights - in fact these were the only nights when the weather was even remotely suitable. The rest of the time it was either windy, wet or frosty. There was even some snow towards the end of the month. 27 species were recorded (8 micros, 19 macros), slightly better than last year when 23 species were seen. The best night was the 14th, when cloudy and mild conditions resulted in 388 moths of 17 species appearing in the garden Robinson trap. 286 of that total were Small Quaker, this being the highest ever figure for one night at this site in 14 years of recording. The previous best was the 169 seen on the 15th March 2007.

Other macros of possible interest included Yellow Horned (best total for 2008 was the 28 seen on the 6th), Small Brindled Beauty (last one seen on the 6th), Oak Beauty (maximum 6 on the 6th), Dotted Border (19 on the 6th was a good number), Satellite (6th), Pine Beauty (6th and 14th), Grey Shoulder-knot (2 on the 6th) and Common Quaker (best figures 63 on the 6th in the home trap).

Micros were few and far between, but included *Acleris logiana* (6th), *Agonopterix scopariella* (2 on the 6th in the home trap), *Eriocrania subpurpurella* (14th - the earliest ever record) and best of all a *Caloptilia falconipennella* (14th, in the home trap). This was the first record of an adult moth at light, the species has only been noted before as leaf mines.



*Caloptilia falconipennella* © N Sherman

## April

April turned out to be quite a frustrating month - there were a few warm periods, but also a lot of cold conditions including some snow. Moth numbers seemed very low in the traps, but there seemed to be a good variety as 60 species (40 macros, 20 micros) were recorded from 9 night's trapping. This was lower than April 2007, but then that was a record-breaking period. The best night was the 27th, when 23 species were caught in the garden trap.

A new macro was recorded during the month - a Nut-tree Tussock appeared in the garden trap on the 25th, a long expected addition. Other macros of possible note here included Powdered Quaker on the 27th, only the third site record and the first since 2000. Frosted Green was noted in normal numbers on 4 occasions. Brindled Pug however appeared in lower than usual numbers, with a peak of only 9 on the 3rd. Other pugs seen included White-spotted Pug (25th, earliest ever), Dwarf Pug (27th) and Oak-tree Pug (first on 25th). There were 2 records both of Early Thorn and Brindled Beauty. A Herald was noted on the 2nd in the garden trap. The prominents started to appear towards the end of the month with 5 Great and 1 each of Lesser Swallow and Swallow Prominent. Lunar Marbled Brown was also noted on 7 occasions. The first Least Black Arches of the season was caught on the 24th.



Nut-tree Tussock © N Sherman



Powdered Quaker © N Sherman

Daytime sightings included 3 Orange Underwings on the 2nd, the only ones noted all month. A day later a Shoulder Stripe was found at rest on the garden fence, again the only sighting for the month.

Micros began to increase in number and variety in April. The most common, certainly in the latter part of the month was *Eriocrania subpurpurella*, with a maximum of 152 seen on the 26th. Notables included *Caloptilia stigmatella* (24th), *Agonopterix scopariella* (26th), *Acrolepiopsis assectella* (26th, the 4th site record) and a *Plutella xylostella* (24th, the second earliest site record).

## May

The frustration continued this month, with continuing low numbers of moths in the traps. Even on warm nights very little appeared. Maybe the effects of the wet summer last year are now showing themselves. The start of the month was quite dry with cold nights, whilst the end was very wet with only slightly increasing numbers of species. I was away on holiday for the middle of the month, so no recording took place then. Species total for May was 136 (50 micros, 86 macros), poorer than last year when 173 species were noted. Best night was the 28th when 42 species appeared. Compare this to 2007, when the best night had a total of 103. The worst night was the 7th - only 10 species were trapped!

Macros of possible note were few and far between. Frosted Green was seen for the last time on the 8th (2). A few more pug species appeared with 4 records of Ochreous and 2 of Dwarf. The Seraphim was noted once (11th). A Scorched Carpet was trapped on the 10th - this is a scarce species at the site. The first and only (so far) Brindled White-spot was noted on the 27th. Small Elephant Hawk-moth was seen in both the garden trap and at the work-sheds on the 27th. The Large Yellow Underwing seen on the 28th was only the 4th May record in the 14 years I have been recording here. The prominents had a bad month, with only 1 Iron, 5 Lesser Swallow and 1 Swallow noted. Both Lunar Marbled Brown (2) and Marbled Brown (1) were in low numbers too. The most notable decrease in numbers was the Orange Footman - only 35 were noted, last year there were 133!



*Incurvaria oehlmanniella* © N Sherman

The micros were definitely more interesting than the macros this month, with some notable sightings. An *Incurvaria oehlmanniella* caught on the 10th was only the second site record. Another second site record was the *Cydia coniferana* on the 27th. The second and third site records of *Scrobipalpa acuminatella* were also trapped on the 8th. Others seen included *Caloptilia stigmatella* (3rd), *Aspilapterix tringipennella* (2 records), *Argyresthia trifasciata* (2 records), *Cochylis nana* (28th), *Epinotia demarniana* (also 28th) and *Plutella xylostella* (2 records).

The most interesting daytime observation was the adult Lunar Yellow Underwing seen on the 30th - this is the earliest ever record here (it is normally noted in June). Other discoveries included mines of *Eriocrania salopiella* seen during the last week, and larvae of *Capperia britanniodactyla* at its two regular breeding spots on the site.

## June

By June moth numbers should in a typical year start to increase. This year however, it was slow going. Even on warm nights numbers appeared low, even of the commoner species. Last year's rain seems to have had quite a drastic effect on moths, hopefully this will not be repeated this year and they will be given the chance to recover. However, as always there were a few things of note.

Traps were operated on 14 nights, producing a total of 276 species (151 macros, 125 micros). This was in fact better than last year's total of 262, but that count was from only 8 nights of trapping. Also, the best count for one night in 2007 was 131, in 2008 there were no counts of over 100, the best total being the 97 recorded on the 30th. On the 4th, only 24 species of moth were seen, the lowest ever for a June night here.

Macros of note here included one new site record - a Water Ermine on the 8th. This has been a long expected arrival. Other records included Festoon (4 records, first for year), Blotched Emerald (15 noted a good count), Tawny Wave (21st, first for year), Least Carpet (30th), Satin Wave (2 records), Barred Yellow (in the garden trap on the 24th), Satyr Pug (21st), Sloe pug (only one this year on the 9th), Lilac beauty (21st), Brindled White-spot (2 on the 1st were the last records, this species seems to be in decline here at the moment with only 3 this year, 8 in 2007 down from 35 in 2006), Puss Moth (24th, on the garage wall at the house, only the second adult record here), Lobster (9th), Kent Black Arches (29th, earliest record), Purple Clay (30th), Varied coronet (in garden trap 24th, first record since 1997), Alder (1st, the only one), Beautiful Golden Y (2 records).



Puss Moth © N Sherman



Water Ermine © N Sherman

Quite a few species appeared to be around in low numbers. This included the Hawk-moths, with 1 Eyed, 8 Poplar, 5 Elephant and 3 Small Elephant noted - there were no Pine Hawk-moths, normally the most common species at the site by far. Prominents also seemed to be around in low numbers. Even Heart and Dart, with a total of 161, was down - 200 were seen in 2007, and that was a bad count then! Light Brocade was another example - in 2006 there were 13, in 2007 8, this year there were 3. But the Heart and Club bucked the trend, and appeared to be present in normal numbers, so the bad weather did not affect everything.

Micros produced more interest again this month, just like in May. There were 2 new species seen, both in the garden trap - *Tachystola acroxantha* (21st, a nice colourful micro) and *Grapholita funebrana* (24th). Other notables included *Ectoedemia decentella* (21st), *Triaxomera parasitella* (9th, the first since 2006), *Argyresthia trifasciata* (5th, after the 2 seen last month), *Pexicopia malvella* (30th), *Blastodacna hellerella* (24th), *Lozotaenia forsterana* (10th), *Olindia schumacherana* (2 records), *Bactra furfurana* (1st, 4th site record), *Epinotia demarniana* (6 records), *Cydia fagiglanda* (21st), *Eudonia pallida* (2 records), *Udea prunalis* (2 records) and *Pempelia palumbella* (30th). Numbers of *Aleimma loeflingana* were only about half of 2007's, with 210 noted. *Tortrix viridana* however was not as affected, with 499 recorded, about the same number as 2007.



*Tachystola acroxantha* © N Sherman



*Nemapogon wolfiella* © N Sherman

Daytime observations included some good micro records. Both *Nemapogon wolffiella* (2nd, in the poly-tunnel) and *Dichrorampha petiverella* (3rd) were new site records. Also found in the poly-tunnel on the 2nd were *Incurvaria oehmanniella* (with another there on the 4th, the 3rd and 4th site records) and *Telechrysis tripuncta* (3rd site record). Another look in the poly-tunnel on the 24th resulted in the discovery of a *Lampronia corticella*. *Epinotia tenerana* was found on an Alder tree leaf by one of the lakes on the 11th. Macros of note were fewer, with a Lunar Yellow Underwing seen on the 5th and a single caterpillar of a Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moth found on the 30th.

## 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@suffolkmoths.org.uk](mailto:tony@suffolkmoths.org.uk)

Suffolk Moths web site (home of the SMG): [www.suffolkmoths.org.uk](http://www.suffolkmoths.org.uk) also  
[www.suffolkmothgroup.org.uk](http://www.suffolkmothgroup.org.uk)

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

## 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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Proprietors : A & J Clifton