



DEVON
MOTH GROUP



Devon Special Species

Natural Devon

Devon's Special Moth Species

Conservation Action Plan, for Devon Moth Group members

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In early 2018, following consultation with experts, the Devon Local Nature Partnership (Natural Devon) published a list of 96 threatened species for which Devon has a special responsibility to ensure their continued survival in the British Isles. These '[Special Species](#)' span all plants, animals and fungi occurring in Devon, both terrestrial and marine. Nine of them are moths. Here we set out how Devon Moth Group members can help to ensure that they survive, hopefully with healthy populations, well into the future.

Name	Habitat type	Distribution and status, nationally and in Devon	Habitat and food plant requirements	Generic conservation action required to maintain populations in the long term	Short term actions required, with timescale
<p><i>Coleophora linosyridella</i> A case-bearing micromoth</p>	<p>Coastal cliff and slope</p>	<p>pRDB1. Known only from the Thames Estuary and Devon (Berry Head) in the British Isles. The food plant at Berry Head is Goldilocks Aster <i>Aster linosyris</i> which is also short listed as a Devon special species. In the Thames Estuary the food plant is Sea Aster.</p>	<p>In Devon Goldilocks Aster is found on coastal limestone cliffs and slopes at Berry Head. This plant (and so the moth) requires fairly short swards, as created by light grazing. It is threatened at Berry Head by rank grasses reflecting a lack of grazing and by Blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> invasion.</p>	<p>Reintroduce light grazing by sheep, supplemented as necessary by control of blackthorn suckers and by cutting (swiping) patches of rank vegetation.</p> <p>Monitor the moth population by searching for larval cases.</p>	<p>1. The site is under the management of the Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust. Liaise with them, to support and encourage their continued management of the grassland. 2020.</p>
<p><i>Ectoedemia heckfordi</i> A leaf-mining micromoth</p>	<p>Woods (dry)</p>	<p>pRDB1. S41 species. Only British Isles sites are five on southern edge of Dartmoor in six 1km squares. Otherwise known only from one specimen from Austria. Larvae mine oak leaves, particularly of young plants. Occurs at the National Trust's Hembury Woods (the type locality), Bench Tor near New Bridge (Dart Valley Woods) and in a lay-by near Buckfastleigh.</p>	<p>Discovered new to science in 2004 in Devon, this moth occurs in oak woodlands, the larvae mining oak leaves.</p>	<p>Retain existing oaks used by the moths, and through planting and coppicing create a succession of young oaks of the form favoured by the moth.</p>	<p>1. Ensure that the NT and DWT remain aware of the moth and of the habitat conditions it requires, and have this written into site management plans. 2020.</p>

<p><i>Infurcitinea albicomella</i> A micromoth</p>	<p>Coastal cliff and slope</p>	<p>pRDB1. Only extant British site is Torbay where populations are currently at critically low levels.</p>	<p>Larvae feed mainly on dead leaves of Small-leaved Cotoneaster <i>Cotoneaster microphyllus</i> and of Evergreen Oak <i>Quercus ilex</i> as well as general detritus.</p> <p>The removal of <i>Cotoneaster</i> to encourage the spread of rare native plants has endangered the moth's survival.</p>	<p>Manage the small habitat patches known to be occupied by the moth to retain suitable conditions, including retention of <i>Cotoneaster</i>, and prevent excessive spread of shading trees.</p>	<p>1. Survey to determine whether moth survives. 2019?</p> <p>2. Ensure Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust remain aware of the precise habitat requirements of the moth and in particular its association with <i>Cotoneaster</i>, an invasive non-native plant. 2019.</p>
<p><i>Hadena albimacula</i> White Spot</p>	<p>Coastal cliff and slope</p>	<p>RDB. S41 species. Nationally Rare. Occurs on a few sites on the south coast of England between Kent and E Devon, where it occurs on the Beer/Branscombe undercliff.</p>	<p>This moth is found on coastal cliffs and slopes, feeding on the seeds of the Nottingham Catchfly <i>Silene nutans</i>. This plant's abundance is threatened by non-native plants such as Russian-vine <i>Fallopia baldschuanica</i>.</p>	<p>Monitor food plant abundance, as far as is practical given that much of it occurs on inaccessible cliffs.</p>	<p>1. Ensure site owners/managers (NT & NE) are aware of the moth and its dependence on Nottingham Catchfly, and that they are aware of the need to maintain suitable conditions for the plant, including monitoring invasive species and taking any action to control them as far as is practical (Russian-vine originates from privately owned chalets to the east of Branscombe Mouth). 2019.</p> <p>2. Assess current extent of the food plant and levels of threat to it. 2019.</p>
<p><i>Hemaris tityus</i> Narrow-</p>	<p>Grassland (wet)</p>	<p>Nationally Scarce. S41 species. Devon is a UK stronghold for this rapidly declining species. In Devon it</p>	<p>This bumblebee mimic is found in wet grassland (fen meadow), where the larvae</p>	<p>Encourage land managers to maintain/introduce appropriate management</p>	<p>1. Continue to support training for advisors and land managers on the moth and</p>

bordered Bee Hawk- moth		now occurs almost exclusively on a small number of sites on Dartmoor (Rhôs pastures) and in NW Devon (Culm grasslands).	feed on Devils-bit Scabious <i>Succisa pratensis</i> . The adults feed on flowers of Meadow Thistle <i>Cirsium dissectum</i> and other plants.	to maintain populations of the food plant. Agri-environment schemes are likely to be important. Often often occurs in same grasslands as Marsh Fritillary <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i> and prescriptions should accommodate both species.	its conservation. On-going.
<i>Leucania putrescens</i> Devonshire Wainscot	Coastal cliff and slope	Nationally Rare. Devon is the national stronghold, with numerous sites on N and S coasts, although it also occurs in Cornwall and SW Wales.	Found on coastal slopes and cliffs, the larvae of this species feed on a range of fine-leaved grasses.	Control invasive scrub, through either mechanical clearance or grazing. Agri-environment schemes are likely to be important to facilitate this.	1. Provide advice to those delivering Countryside Stewardship agreements, and those developing the new scheme, to ensure the needs of the moth are taken into account. 2019.
<i>Leucochlaena oditis</i> Beautiful Gothic	Coastal cliff and slope	RDB. In British Isles only occurs in Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Hants and Kent. National stronghold is in Devon, where it is known from 8 sites on the south coast. The main Devon sites are Berry Head, Prawle Point and Dawlish Warren.	This species is found on coastal grasslands, where the larvae feed on various grass species.	Control of invasive scrub, through either mechanical clearance or grazing. Agri-environment schemes are likely to be important to facilitate this.	1. Provide advice to those delivering Countryside Stewardship agreements, and those developing the new scheme, to ensure the needs of the moth are taken into account. 2019. 2. Assess current condition of sites. 2020.
<i>Lygephila cracca</i> Scarce Blackneck	Coastal cliff and slope	RDB. In British Isles only occurs in north Devon, north-east Cornwall and west Somerset. Devon is the national stronghold, where it is found at Hartland Point, Buck's Mills, Bull Point and possibly Heddon's Mouth (Exmoor).	This species inhabits coastal cliffs and rocky areas. The food plants are Wood Vetch <i>Vicia sylvatica</i> and Tufted Vetch <i>Vicia cracca</i> . Threatened by natural succession, especially scrub	Control of invasive scrub, through either mechanical clearance or grazing. Agri-environment schemes are likely to be important to facilitate this.	1. Provide advice to those delivering Environmental Stewardship agreements, and those developing the new scheme, to ensure the needs of the moth are taken into account. 2019.

			invasion, preventing growth of the food plants.	Wood Vetch tends to be on the cliff slopes, Tufted Vetch at the top.	<p>2. Assess current condition of sites. 2020.</p> <p>3. Assess which food plant is being used predominantly at each site. Note that larval surveys need to be carried out at night – so working on steep slopes not possible for H&S reasons. 2021.</p>
<i>Photodes morrisii</i> Morris's Wainscot	Coastal cliff and slope	RDB, in British Isles known only from SE Devon and West Dorset; rare internationally. It is known only from the Undercliffs between Axmouth (Haven Cliff) and a few kilometres east of Charmouth.	<p>Occurring on grassy coastal slopes and cliffs, the larvae of this species feed on Tall Fescue <i>Schedonorus arundinaceus</i> (formerly <i>Festuca arundinacea</i>).</p> <p>Note that this is same habitat and precise location as that of several very rare flies.</p>	Cliff stabilisation, recreational provision (e.g. placement of seats) and possibly water abstraction and septic tank outfalls.	<p>1. Ensure that landowners and local authorities are aware of the moth. 2019.</p> <p>2. Assess threats to the moth and associated rare invertebrates more fully. 2019.</p>
All coast and cliff species					Raise awareness of the moths and their conservation with SW Coast Path Association. 2018/9.