



DEVON MOTH GROUP

Please reply to: The Secretary/Treasurer
Roy McCormick
36 Paradise Road
TEIGNMOUTH
Devon TQ14 8NR
Telephone: 01626 779543
181525131225.devvm@talktalk.net

NEWSLETTER 2014 ISSUE 4 (August)

Excellent moth recording conditions persisted throughout July with some excellent catches. Pick of the crop was undoubtedly *Stegania cararia* Ringed Border caught during our field meeting on 25.7.2014 (see report on p.4). This very rare migrant is a new species for Devon and only the third ever recorded in mainland Britain (after one in Somerset in 2009 and one in Hampshire in 2010). Another exciting immigrant was a *Hyles gallii* Bedstraw Hawk-moth found by Ruth Parkin in her garden moth trap at Christow in Teign Valley on 28.7.2014. There are only six previous records of this species in the Devon Moth Group database, with the last at Prawle Point in 1995.

Other good recent records included one *Idaea rusticata* Least Carpet at Chapel Wood near Braunton by Ieuan Blackmore on 22.7.14, which is a new species for North Devon (VC4), and another one taken in Teignmouth on 19.7.2014 by Roy McCormick. This is a moth that is expanding its range rapidly from its stronghold in south-east England.

Clive Coombes found a *Parascotia fuliginaria* Waved Black in his Plymouth porch on 8.7.2014 (only the second Devon record this century!), Stuart Green recorded *Cryphia algae* Tree-lichen Beauty at light, also in Plymouth, on 27.7.2014 and Bob Heckford found *Tebenna micalis* larvae at Heybrook Bay on 18.8 2014.

Happy mothing!
Richard Fox



Bedstraw Hawk-moth (left) (David Price) and Least Carpet (right) (Roy McCormick)

Members of Council: Richard Fox (Chairman) Nicola Bacciu (Membership & Distribution) Bob Heckford (Ordinary Member)
Roy McCormick (Secretary/Treasurer) Rob Wolton (Conservation) Barry Henwood (County Moth Recorder)

www.devonmoths.org.uk

Sitochroa palealis – larvae found at Berry Head, Brixham

Sitochroa palealis is a comparatively large, distinctive and attractive Pyralid, having a wingspan of 29–34 mm, larger than many Geometers, with the forewings pale greenish yellow and the hindwings shining white and both having some blackish markings along the veins. It occurs in the county as an infrequent immigrant. All the records are from VC3 and mainly from coastal localities, and until now, all are of adults. Although it is resident in various areas of southern England, and also a temporary coloniser in others, the larva has never been known found in Devon even though the larval foodplant, *Daucus carota* Wild Carrot, is widespread and often common, especially on the coast.

Thus it was interesting to find larvae to be locally common at Berry Head, Brixham on 18 August 2014. They feed in the seed heads of *Daucus carota*, usually those that are still green. Their presence is usually indicated by some white silk on the upper surface of the seed heads, but I found that sometimes such silk was produced by the larvae of *Epiphyas postvittana*. The larvae of the two species are quite different. In general the body of the larva of *Epiphyas postvittana* is green and unmarked. That of *Sitochroa palealis* is unmistakable, varying from pale yellowish green to greyish green or grey and with very large, black pinacula (see image below).



I would encourage members to take a look at seed heads of *Daucus carota* this month, especially on the coast, to try to make further records. Or are the larvae at Berry Head the result of a very localised immigration?

The other question is whether a population will now become established at Berry Head.
Bob Heckford

Larva of *Sitochroa palealis* (left) and larval spinning in Wild Carrot seed head (above)(Bob Heckford)

Field Meeting Reports

Moth Night 2014 Halsdon DWT reserve, 3.7.2014

As *woodland moths* was the theme for this year's national Moth Night, Halsdon wood complex, which runs along the Torridge valley, seemed like a good, if rather remote venue. Despite being in the depths of mid-Devon's maze of tiny lanes, seven people managed to locate the spot including two from the Midlands and a family with some keen youngsters.

There had been previous records of *Moma alpium* Scarce Merveille du Jour from these woods so my hopes were high given the time of year and the good weather conditions. As it turned out the quarry did not show on the night but there were lots of unexpected highlights, as is often the case!

Among the first moths of note was the aptly named *Hypena crassilis* Beautiful Snout which feeds on the Bilberry we found present in one area. The beautifully marked *Rheumaptera undulata* Scallop Shell, which also feeds on Bilberry, although not exclusively, was new to some and had its photo taken a few times. Another “beautiful” to turn up was *Lasperyria flexula* Beautiful Hook-tip, which is often found in old orchards as well as good woodland. Spectacularly fresh, green, *Anaplectoides prasina* Green Arches were much admired. Even better was the single *Angerona prunaria* Orange Moth of the night which was of the barred form *corylaria*. *Mitochondria miniata* Rosy Footman is always a nice moth to see on a moth night as few people imagine moths can be bright pink.

Later on we had both the *Euphyia* species *biangulata* and *unangulata*, Cloaked Carpet and Sharp-angled Carpet respectively, both fairly unusual but Cloaked Carpet is Nationally Notable. *Ligdia adustata* Scorched Carpet and *Plagodis dolabraria* Scorched Wing both appeared, although the Spindle trees needed by Scorched Carpet were not obvious nearby.

Amazingly two other Nationally Notable moths were found on the night, *Hydrelia sylvata* Waved Carpet, which does seem moderately common in Devon in suitable habitat, and for me the much more exciting *Discoloxia blomeri* Blomer's Rivulet, which I had not seen in Devon before. Even better was the fact that we recorded at least six individuals of the latter, one in every trap, so it is obviously well established. Other local species included *Macaria liturata* Tawny-barred Angle, *Eilema depressa* Buff Footman, *Cybosia mesomella* Four-dotted Footman and *Mythimna turca* Double Line. We also recorded *Euchoeca nebulata* Dingy Shell, which is always a favourite of mine with its perky way of sitting upright as if about to zoom off. *Cyclophora linearia* Clay Triple-lines and *Cleorodes lichenaria* Brussels Lace were yet more Local species, the final one being a very worn *Parectropis similaria* Brindled White-spot on its last legs and often an indicator of ancient woodland.

Of the micro-moths there were two interesting records out of the 31 noted, these being the rather scarce *Anania stachydalis* and *Perinephela lancealis* although there were doubtless several that went unidentified. These brought the species count for the night to an impressive 127, with some good moths that were new to most of those present.

Thanks to all those who braved the shady lanes of mid-Devon, brought equipment, enthusiasm and who helped pack up at the end of the night, and to Kev New who suggested the site. Maybe we will be lucky another time for the Scarce Merveille du Jour?

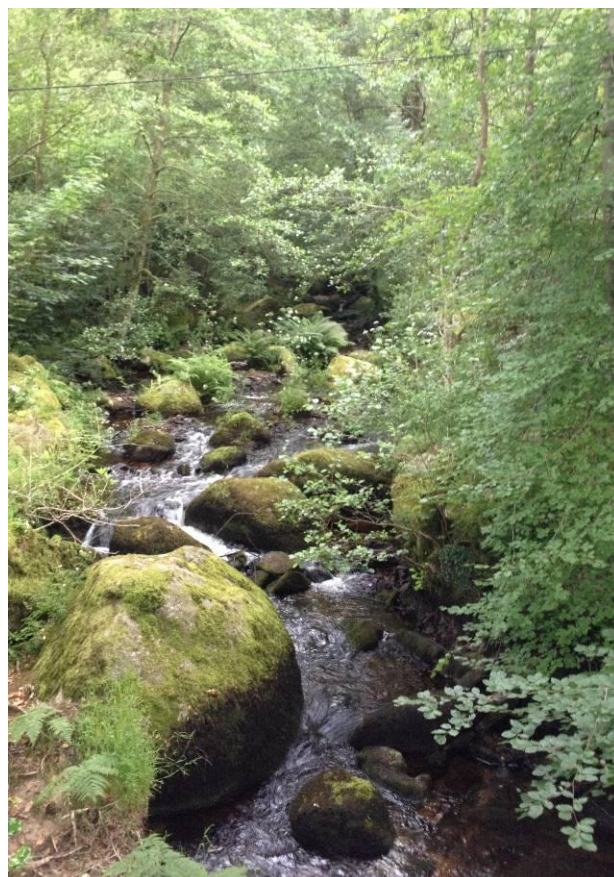
Paul Butter

Moth Night 2014 Becky Falls, 5.7.2014

What a difference a couple of days makes! After near-perfect mothing conditions on the Thursday night of Moth Night 2014, the Friday night was wet and the Saturday, the night of our event at Becky (Becca) Falls was clear and cold. Perhaps put off by the forecast, only four people attended the event, although another factor was the BENHS field meeting on Lundy, taking place at the same time, and involving many Devon Moth Group stalwarts. Though few in number, we were excited to be exploring this part of Devon for the first time. Becky Falls lies in the corner of a tetrad (2km map square) with no previous moth records at all but much promising woodland habitat.

In addition to my own traps, Ivan Lakin had brought one and Mark Marshall another, so in all we set out five traps close to the Falls, in a very picturesque setting (picture right) and waited for the moths to arrive. The early signs were promising, with *Hydrelia sylvata* Waved Carpet, *Mythimna turca* Double Line and *Schrankia taenialis* White-line Snout, among the first moths to appear.

However, the temperature quickly dropped to only 8°C by midnight, which greatly reduced moth activity and, with it, our hopes of an exciting night. A slow procession of interesting moths just sustained us, including a late *Parectropis similaria* Brindled White-spot, *Mesoleuca*



albicillata Beautiful Carpet, *Brachylomia viminalis* Minor Shoulder-knot and *Cerapteryx graminis* Antler Moth.

We ended up with 56 species and somewhat mixed feelings. It was a disappointing haul in such a good summer, but every species was a new record for the tetrad and therefore a useful contribution to our knowledge of the moths of Devon.

I'm sure that many more species await discovery in this neglected corner of the county and with the kindness and enthusiasm of the owners, perhaps we'll be able to return in the future.

Richard Fox

National Trust Parke, 25.7.2014

Fred Hutt, the National Trust warden at Parke, picked up the equipment, Veronica and myself from the car park around 20.45 with his trusty four-wheel drive, and transported us near to Parke Bridge over the river Bovey. The night was slightly breezy with the promise of showers, but fortunately we had none of these and the temperature was good after going through a very warm period for the last couple of weeks.

The equipment (two basket traps) was put out close to a bank of bracken ferns as close to the river as possible with a good variety of deciduous trees on the river bank. By this time our visitors had arrived, 11 in all including Veronica and myself. The generator was started and some dusking was undertaken by Tim Stripp with a few common species recorded, but the moths soon started to come in with the first species to arrive a female *Hepialus humuli* Ghost Moth.

The night progressed and the species list grew with Veronica as my scribe being a great help; the most notable of early species seen, one *Calamotropha paludella*; two *Euzophera pinguis*; two *Catarhoe cuculata* Royal Mantle, one fresh the other very worn; one *Epione repandana* Bordered Beauty; two *Cleorodes lichenaria* Brussels Lace. Later species included *Xestia ditrapezium* Triple-spotted Clay; five *Craniophora ligustri* Coronet; one *Apamea scolopacina*, Slender Brindle; one *Abrostola triplasia* Dark Spectacle and *Laspeyria flexula* Beautiful Hook-tip.

However, the greatest excitement of the night was still to come, when Tim Stripp noticed a strange moth flying up the side of the trap which he didn't recognise. He caught it and passed it round to puzzled faces until it was discovered to be the very rare migrant, *Stegania cararia* Ringed Border, the first ever recorded in Devon (see photo below). Great excitement ensued and a few pictures were taken though the side of the container. With this most excellent find in our memories we left the site at around 01.00 having recorded 68 species and went home elated having had a great night out.

Roy McCormick



Ringed Border (Andrew Cunningham)

Welcome to New Members

Dawn Chapman, Nethercott, Burgmans Hill, Lympstone, EX8 5HP
Telephone: 07866 566883. e-mail: dawnc@live.co.uk

Richard Winfield, 18 Fowey Avenue, Shiphay, Torquay, TR2 7RE
Telephone: 01803 400657. e-mail: winfield@blueyonder.co.uk

Forthcoming events (see Annual Report or www.devonmoths.org.uk for more details)

Tuesday 26 August 2014, Butler's Farm, near South Molton. Meet at 21.00 at Butler's Farm, SS648202. Please phone Robert Wolton (01837 810416) or John Breeds (01271 817349) in advance if the weather conditions appear unfavourable.

Saturday 30 August 2014, Saltram House, Plymouth. Meet at 20.00 at the National Trust Shop at Saltram House, SX521555. Please phone John Boon (01752 786963 or 07811243543) in advance if the weather conditions appear unfavourable.

Saturday 27 September 2014, leaf miner workshop at Woodah Farm, Doddiscombsleigh. Meet at 10.00 at Devon Wildlife Trust's Woodah Farm SX847867 / EX6 7PR. Places are limited on this whole day workshop and must be booked in advance with Barry Henwood (01626 364080 barry.henwood@btinternet.com).



Waved Black (not taken in Devon) (Dave Green)