

Moorside Allotments Moth Survey Update, July -October 2010

Jonathan Wallace

A total of thirteen trapping sessions were carried out during the period of which four were in July, four were in August, only a single session was possible in September and 4 sessions were carried out in October. A total of 56 species were caught with the monthly totals as follows: July 31 species, August 29 species, September 3 species and October 7 species.

The Species caught were:

Common Name	Scientific Name	Month(s) Caught	Comments
Bird-cherry Ermine	<i>Yponomeuta evonymella</i>	August	The commonest of several species of tiny white moths that are finely speckled with rows of black spots. The larvae feed on bird-cherry and are gregarious, living in a communal silk web.
	<i>Ypsolopha scabrella</i>	August	A somewhat strange-looking brown micro moth with tufts on the wings. Larvae feed on Hawthorn, Apple and Cotoneaster.
Diamond-back Moth	<i>Plutella xylostella</i>	August	Remarkably, this tiny moth (less than a centimetre in length) is a migrant and appears annually in this country from the continent. Larvae feed on Cruciferae, including cabbage.
	<i>Agonopterix nervosa</i>	August	The larval food plants of this micro moth are recorded as including Broom, Gorse, Dyer's Greenweed, Petty Whin and Tree Lupin.
	<i>Blastobasis adustella</i>	August	Like the following species this species is native to Madeira and is believed to have been accidentally introduced to this country. The first English record was from Lancashire in 1917 and since then it has become established and widespread. Larvae feed on dead leaves and other decaying vegetable matter.
	<i>Blastobasis lacticolella</i>	July	This species is native to Madeira and was first recorded in London in 1946 (presumably introduced with imported vegetables or fruit) since when it has established itself in the British Isles and become widespread. Larvae have a rather diverse diet, feeding on dead insects, detritus, decaying vegetables, mosses and the seed pods of Tree Lupin and Tansy.
Light Brown Apple Moth	<i>Epiphyas postvittana</i>	August, October	The LBAM is another introduced species. Originating from Australia, it is now Northumberland's 8 th most commonly recorded moth! Its larvae are capable of feeding on an extremely wide variety of different plant species.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Month(s) Caught	Comments
	<i>Eana osseana</i>	August	A relatively infrequently recorded species (not recorded in Northumberland since 2004). Larvae are said to feed on various grass and herbaceous species.
	<i>Celypha lacunana</i>	August	A common tortricid micro moth whose larvae feed on a variety of tree and herbaceous species.
Garden Grass Veneer	<i>Chrysoteuchia culmella</i>	July	One of the small pale cream coloured moths that is often disturbed from long grass during daylight. Larvae feed on stems of various grasses.
	<i>Agriphila straminella</i>	August	As above, a common 'grass moth'.
	<i>Agriphila tristella</i>	August	Another common 'grass moth'.
Chequered Grass Veneer	<i>Catoptria falsella</i>	August	Another of the 'grass moths'. Larvae of this species feed on mosses.
	<i>Dipleurina lacustrata</i>	July	A widespread micro moth. Larvae feed on mosses on walls and tree trunks.
	<i>Udea lutealis</i>	August	A common micro moth. Food plants include bramble, scabious, thistles and wormwood.
	<i>Udea prunalis</i>	July	Another widespread micro moth. Recorded larval food plants include dead-nettle, woundwort, dog's mercury, common nettle, honeysuckle, bramble, elder and elm.
Bee Moth	<i>Aphomia sociella</i>	July	A fairly common species. The larvae live inside the nests of bumble bees and wasps where they feed on old cells and detritus and, in the later stages of development, on the comb and the brood itself.
	<i>Trachycera advenella</i>	August	An attractively marked pyralid micro moth. The recorded food plants are blackthorn and rowan.
	<i>Platyptilia gonodactyla</i>	October	One of the 'Plume Moths', a group of micro-moths that rest with the wings tightly folded and outstretched to give them the appearance of a letter 'T'. The larvae of this common species feed on coltsfoot.
Riband Wave	<i>Idaea aversata</i>	July, August	Frequently recorded across the UK. This species has two common forms. In one of these the ground colour is uniform and there are a series of fine dark lines crossing the wing whilst in the other there is a dark ribbon across the wing between the second and third lines. The larval food plants include a variety of herbaceous species.
Garden Carpet	<i>Xanthorhoe fluctuata</i>	July	Another very common species. Larvae feed on various cruciferous plants.
Phoenix	<i>Eulithis prunata</i>	July, August	A strikingly marked moth whose larvae feed on blackcurrant redcurrant and gooseberry.
Spinach	<i>Eulithis mellinata</i>	July	Another species whose larvae feed on Black and Redcurrant leaves.
Small Phoenix	<i>Ecliptopera silaceata</i>	August	A very attractive small moth. Food plants include various willowherb species and enchanter's nightshade.
Common Marbled Carpet	<i>Chloroclysta truncata</i>	July, September, October	A very variable species in appearance. The larvae feed on various trees including Sallow, Silver Birch, Downy

Common Name	Scientific Name	Month(s) Caught	Comments
Common Marbled Carpet (cont...)			Birch, Bramble, Heather, Wild Privet and Hawthorn .
Small Rivulet	<i>Perizoma alchemillata</i>	July	Food plants for this species are common hemp-nettle and hedge woundwort.
Bordered Pug	<i>Eupithecia succenturiata</i>	August	The larval food plant for this species is mugwort.
Brimstone Moth	<i>Opisthograptis luteolata</i>	July	A very pretty species that can often be seen flying at dusk. Larval food-plants include Hawthorn and Blackthorn.
Scalloped Oak	<i>Crocallis elinguaris</i>	July	Quite a common species whose larvae feed on various broad-leaved trees and shrubs.
Willow Beauty	<i>Peribatodes rhomboidaria</i>	July, August	A common and widespread species whose larvae feed on a variety of trees and shrubs.
Common White Wave	<i>Cabera pusaria</i>	July	Food plants for this species include willows, birches and alder.
Light Emerald	<i>Campaea margaritata</i>	July	Food plants include a range of broad-leaved tree species. A common species.
Heart and Dart	<i>Agrotis exclamationis</i>	July	A very common species. Larvae feed on various wild and garden plants.
Shuttle-shaped Dart	<i>Agrotis puta</i>	August	This species appears to have got much more common in Northumberland during the last decade. Larvae feed on dandelion, dock species and various other herbaceous species.
Large Yellow Underwing	<i>Noctua pronuba</i>	July, August, October	Northumberland's commonest moth. At Moorside Allotments catches of this species outnumbered everything else with a maximum catch of 59 individuals on 12 August! Caterpillars feed on docks and sorrel as well as other herbaceous plants.
Lesser Yellow Underwing	<i>Noctua comes</i>	July, August, September, October	Although not rivalling its congener above, the Lesser Yellow Underwing is also very abundant. Food plants are recorded as broad-leaved dock, stinging nettle and foxglove.
Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing	<i>Noctua janthe</i>	August,	Less numerous again than the two species above but still a common species. Recorded food plants include Arum Lily, Broad-leaved Dock, White Dead-nettle and other herbaceous plants.
Double Square-spot	<i>Xestia triangulum</i>	July	Fairly common species. Larvae feed on a variety of herbaceous and woody plants.
Dotted Clay	<i>Xestia baja</i>	July, August	Another common and widespread species. Food plants include a variety of woody and herbaceous species.
Square-spot Rustic	<i>Xestia xanthographa</i>	August	Larvae feed chiefly on various grasses but have also been recorded on dock and primrose.
Six-striped Rustic	<i>Xestia sexstrigata</i>	August	A common and widespread species. Larvae feed on a variety of plants including bramble, ribwort plantain, bluebell and figworts.
Smoky Wainscot	<i>Mythimna impura</i>	July	Food plants include various grasses including cocksfoot.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Month(s) Caught	Comments
Red-line Quaker	<i>Agrochola lota</i>	October	A typical Autumn species that has its peak occurrence in October. Overwinters as an egg. Larvae feed on willows.
Marbled Beauty	<i>Cryphia domestica</i>	July, August	This very pretty, common species is associated with walls and rocks and is well camouflaged against a background of lichens on which its larvae feed.
Svensson's Copper Underwing	<i>Amphipyra berbera</i>	August	This species was first recognised as distinct from the Copper Underwing (<i>A. pyramidea</i>) in 1968. It has the more northerly distribution of the two species and is the only one present in our region. Larvae feed on oak.
Dark Arches	<i>Apamea monoglypha</i>	July, August	One of the most commonly recorded moths of the region. Larvae feed on grasses including Cocks-foot and Common Couch.
Dusky Brocade	<i>Apamea remissa</i>	July	Larvae feed on grasses including couch.
Middle-barred Minor	<i>Oligia fasciuncula</i>	July	Larvae feed on grasses.
Common Rustic agg.	<i>Mesapamea secalis</i> agg.	July, August	The Common and Lesser Common Rustic cannot be reliably distinguished without dissection and microscopic examination of genital anatomy. The term 'agg.' indicates that specimens were identified as being one or other member of the pair of species without determining exactly which one.
Rosy Rustic	<i>Hydraecia micacea</i>	July	A variety of food plants have been recorded including docks, strawberry, hop and potato.
Uncertain	<i>Hoplodrina alsines</i>	July	A good example of some of the wonderfully enigmatic names applied by Victorian naturalists to moths. The name seems to reflect the similarity between this species and a couple of others rather than any apparent lack of certainty shown by the moth itself! Food plants are docks and plantains.
Burnished Brass	<i>Diachrysia chrysitis</i>	July	Aptly named with its brassy metallic markings, this is a common species. Larval food plants include stinging nettle, spear thistle, marjoram and white dead-nettle.
Silver Y	<i>Autographa gamma</i>	September, October	A migratory species that reaches us annually from the continent, in some years in huge numbers. Commonly flies by day. Feeds on a variety of herbaceous species including brassicas and leguminosae.
Fan-foot	<i>Zanclognatha tarsipennalis</i>	July	Larval food plants are beech and oak.

All moths caught have been released back into the wild.

Jonathan Wallace