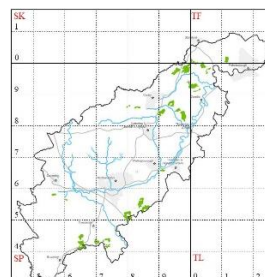


VC32/Northamptonshire Moths – A Brief Summary of New Species & Noteworthy Records from 2020

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(March 2021)

Northamptonshire/VC32 Moth Group website:
<http://www.northamptonshiremoths.org.uk/home.htm>



1. Introduction

This is a brief review of species newly recorded in VC32 (Northamptonshire and The Soke of Peterborough), along with interesting and noteworthy moths recorded during the 2020 season. Do feel free to contact me if you have any queries or observations about the article.

A healthy dataset relies on recorders diligently submitting their records and I am most grateful to all who sent records for inclusion in the county database, be they extensive in nature or simply casual notes. I was recently asked about the number of recorders in the county. In 2000 there were fewer than a dozen people regularly recording moths. As of 2020 this number is around 90! This of course includes those who submit records under the Garden Moth Scheme, and via on-line resources such as the Butterfly Conservation NMRS scheme, iRecord and more recently, iNaturalist. The job of collating all these data is becoming increasingly complex, but I am pleased to report that there have been some improvements to the iRecord site which has made verification and extraction of data much simpler so would advise anyone using iNaturalist or the BC/NMRS system to consider swapping to iRecord instead (...and those who know me well will appreciate that this is a bold and possibly unexpected statement of support for the resource).

I always implore those recording moths to get in touch with me directly, regardless of their chosen method of record-keeping/submission, as it certainly helps to identify issues with identification etc, especially with regards to those species which need to be aggregated unless dissected. I would also note here that those who participate in the Garden Moth Scheme, that your moth records are not automatically forwarded on to the County Recorders. If you have not done so, and wish your moth records to be incorporated in the local database, do please drop me a line.

Firstly, as has become customary, some fun facts and figures:

- Approximate total number of records received in **2020 = 45,765** (2019 = 44,098; 2018 = 51,400; 2017 = 36,620)
- Number of Species (excludes aggregates) recorded in **2020 = 1,053** (2019 = 1,050; 2018 = 1,030; 2017 = 990)
- Approximate number of individual moths recorded in the county in **2020 = 150,000** (2019 = 195,200; 2018 = 189,000; 2017 = 121,000), which again exceeds the previous year
- This brings the grand total of records in the VC32 database to approx. **648,500**

The Top Ten species, based on number of records received, not number of individuals (2019 position in brackets):

Pos.	ABH	B&F	Taxon	Vernacular	Records
1 (1)	73.342	2107	<i>Noctua pronuba</i>	Large Yellow Underwing	1024
2 (3)	73.317	2089	<i>Agrotis exclamatoris</i>	Heart and Dart	903
3 (4)	73.291	2199	<i>Mythimna pallens</i>	Common Wainscot	710
4 (-)	73.325	2092	<i>Agrotis puta</i>	Shuttle-shaped Dart	709
5 (10)	70.258	1937	<i>Peribatodes rhomboidaria</i>	Willow Beauty	703
6 (2)	73.359	2126	<i>Xestia c-nigrum</i>	Setaceous Hebrew Character	693
7 (-)	70.226	1906	<i>Opisthograptis luteolata</i>	Brimstone Moth	631
8 (-)	49.039	0998	<i>Epiphyas postvittana</i>	Light Brown Apple Moth	626
9 (7)	73.162	2321	<i>Apamea monoglypha</i>	Dark Arches	610
10 (-)	70.016	1713	<i>Idaea aversata</i>	Riband Wave	529

COVID Year

2020 was a very strange year! Of course, we have all been subjected to the restrictions imposed by the COVID pandemic, and this has had a significant effect on the ability to get out into “the field” to record moths. This also saw the cancellation of all group field trips, mainly as a precaution given that most of the attendees are of more mature age, but also due to restrictions placed upon survey work by site owners such as Forestry England, Natural England, etc. These restrictions also prevented some important survey work, which was to include some limited surveying for Heart Moth within the boundaries of a couple of large private estates. It is very much hoped that 2021 sees these restrictions eased sufficiently to enable a resurrection of these activities.

Interestingly the number of records received for 2020 is broadly similar to recent years, as is the number of species recorded, which possibly reflects the effect of new recorders. Perhaps reflecting the garden-centric nature of 2020 recording, I looked at a few of what I consider to be macro moth species which are more frequently encountered in woodland (as opposed to gardens) and compared the mean number of moths recorded in the years 2010 to 2019 with the number of individuals recorded in 2020 in the table below:

Vernacular	Mean 2010-2019	2020
Common Lutestring	15	0
Yellow Horned	50	1
Brindled White-spot	120	11
Yellow-line Quaker	316	78
Pale Oak Beauty	158	51

Welcome to new recorders

As mentioned in the opening paragraphs, there is a cohort of recent recorders using e.g. iRecord and I would like to welcome you to the VC32 moth-recording fraternity. For those receiving this report for the first time I hope this report is of interest, with some nuggets of interest for everyone. For those who have not met me or had email dialogue, do feel free to drop me a line if you have issues with identifications etc. In normal times I am often away from my desk for short periods of time during the main moth season, but will get back to you as soon as I am able.

Butterfly Conservation Projects

The two Butterfly Conservation projects ongoing within the county are about to end this year. Woodland Wings was effectively wrapped-up in late 2020 as Caz Bailey moved to a position with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, leaving Liz Morrison to work through the finalising of various admin tasks. It was a shame that the moth group was unable to do a great deal towards this project during 2020 due to the CV-19 issues. In the Rockingham Forest area, the Back from the Brink project over-seen by Susannah O’Riordan continued apace as restrictions allowed, and I am pleased to say has had a funding extension into mid-2021.

The following sections of this report follow a now well-worn pattern for this annual article. Nomenclature and numbering adhere to the currently accepted UK Moth Checklist published by Agassiz, Beaven & Heckford (ABH) in 2013. I also include, where available for general reference, the former Bradley (B&F) number in {brackets} and the current national status of each species appears in [square brackets].

2. Species New to VC32 in 2020

Twelve species were noted as being new to VC32 during 2020:

11.005 {0179} Lichen Case-bearer *Dahlica lichenella* (Linnaeus, 1761) [Nationally Scarce A]

Several larval cases were found on tree trunks in Easton Hornstocks on 21.iii.2020 (MJH). These were retained and reared through to adult, with the first adults emerging in May. All emergent moths were wingless females (winged males have not been recorded in the UK) and identity confirmed by examination of the head-plates of the pupal exuviae.

15.0931 {0366b} *Phyllocnistis citrella* Stainton, 1856 [Adventive]

The first record for this species was noted in a supermarket in Peterborough, as an untenanted mine on a leaf within a pack of Clementine Oranges on 07.ii.2020. A further single un-tenanted mine was located on a Lemon tree at a garden centre near Oundle on 26.x.2020 (JN).

22.004 {0449c} *Prays oleae* (Bernard, 1788) [Adventive]

Approximately twenty un-tenanted mines were located on Olive trees at the same garden centre (and date) as the species noted above, and on the same date (JN). Interestingly all mines were on a single, relatively small tree.

32.029 {0705} *Agonopterix umbellana* (Fabricius, 1794) [Local]

A single adult moth was recorded at a garden light trap in Far Cotton, Northampton on 15.ix.2020 (MC). The identity was confirmed by dissection (MJH) and the specimen retained. This species is a Gorse-feeder in its larval stages, and therefore possibly over-looked in areas of the plant within the county. Further records may be obtained by searching for the larvae, which create a distinctive silken tube; or by dusk/torch-light searching for adults (I typically record more *Agonopterix* species by this method than by light traps).

32.044 {0677} *Depressaria douglasella* Stainton, 1849 [Nationally Scarce B]

This species was recorded on three separate occasions during 2020: Swaddywell Pit on 05.ix.2020; Castor Hanglands on 07.ix.2020 and Swaddywell again on 19.ix.2020. All were taken in light traps (all MH). The first Swaddywell specimen was confirmed by dissection (JN).

35.050 {0752} *Aristotelia ericinella* (Zeller, 1839) [Local]

A singleton was taken to a garden light trap in Duston, Northampton (SM). Identity was confirmed by dissection (MJH). Being a Heather-feeder, it is unlikely that this is a resident/breeding species in the county (although there may be small amounts of Heather in Harlestone Firs and Northampton Golf Course at Chapel Brampton), but possibly the result of a garden planting or from a nearby garden centre.

37.009 {0588} *Coleophora milvipennis* (Zeller, 1839) [Local]

An adult *Coleophora* species was retained from a light trap in Yardley Chase on 21.vii.2020 (JS). This was later dissected and proved to be *C. milvipennis* (ID confirmed in discussion between JS and MJH). The adult is very similar in appearance to several other of its congeners, and further records might be obtained by searching Birch for the larval cases.

37.108 {0588} *Coleophora salicorniae* Heinemann & Wocke, [1876] [Nationally Scarce B]

A single adult *Coleophora* was retained from a garden moth trap in Oundle on 11.viii.2020 (PH). The specimen was dissected later in the year and ID determined (MJH). As its scientific name suggests, the larvae feed on glasswort (*Salicornia* spp.) and is usually found in saltmarsh habitats, however the adults are known to disperse quite widely.

45.034 {1512} Dingy White Plume *Merrifieldia baliodactylus* (Zeller, 1841) [Nationally Scarce B]

This Plume was recorded to light at Swaddywell Pits on 31.v.2020 (MH) and confirmed MJH. This Nationally Scarce species could be further recorded either by day (adults are easily disturbed from vegetation) or by light trapping areas of calcareous soil in the vice-county or by looking for Marjoram exhibiting wilted stems, giving away the possible presence of the larvae which bite through the stems to cause the plant to wilt.



52.009 {0377} Sallow Clearwing *Synanthedon flaviventris* (Staudinger, 1883) [Nb]

A newly available pheromone lure was used to great effect in VC32 during 2020. It seems most likely that this species has been previously over-looked as it was recorded on eight occasions, totalling twenty-three moths:

Brington Moor, 3 adults, 12.vii.2020 & 13.vii.2020 (BL)

Brackley, St James Lake, 8 adults on 17.vii.2020 (BL)

Pitsford reservoir, 2 adults on 17.vii.2020 (PS) and a further 2 adults on 25.vii.2020

Whistley Wood, 4 adults on 19.vii.2020 (BL)

Dallington/Kingsthorpe Meadows, Northampton, 3 adults on 21.vii.2020 (PS)

Thrapston, singleton on 29.vii.2020

The moth is known to have a two-year life-cycle and is seen mostly during even years, however it may still be worthwhile looking for it during 2021.

72.011 {2034} Gypsy Moth *Lymantria dispar* (Linnaeus, 1758) [Vagrant/Accidental]

Another species which appears to have come "from nowhere". The first encounter was of several relatively small larvae seen feeding on a garden Birch in Thrapston on 24.iv.2020 (MJH). These were retained and reared to adult to confirm identity. There followed four records of single adult males to light traps, thus:

Higham Ferrers, 31.vii.2020 (TV)

Brackley, 31.vii.2020 (JF-t)

Farthinghoe LNR, 13.viii.2020 (TP)

Kingsthorpe, Northampton, 15.viii.2020 (PS).

Perhaps unsurprisingly (given the earlier larval records), there was a further record on 05.ix.2020 in the Thrapston garden – this time of an egg-batch found on a small Hazel tree (MJH). NB: as an addendum to this note, empty cocoons with pupal exuviae were also found in the Thrapston garden during spring-time gardening in 2021.

73.104 {2392a} Porter's Rustic *Athetis hospes* (Freyer, [1831]) [Vagrant/Accidental]

A single adult was captured in a garden light trap in Oundle on 12.vi.2020 (PH). The moth was taken to MJH for verification. This rather dowdy-looking moth is a rare migrant to the UK, being recorded mostly on the south and east coast of England.

Finally, not exactly a new species for 2020, but one from 1985, but included here for completeness!

12.023 {0226} *Triaxomasia caprimulgella* (Stainton, 1851) [pRDB1]

During email conversation with a former VC32 resident (now having migrated to Dorset), a record of this species was sent through following dissection work performed recently by Mark Parsons. The moth was taken in a light trap at Thorpe Hall, Peterborough, 10.iii.1985 (AF). The larvae of this species feed on dead wood and may be located in e.g. rot-holes of trees.

3. Significant and Noteworthy Records (inc. species recorded fewer than 5 times up to the end of 2019)

Below therefore, are some species of note which were recorded during 2020. The list is by no means comprehensive and I hope I have included everything I had meant to!

(NB: UK status has not been reviewed/published for a few years, and some species below which are marked as Migrant or Rare Migrant are now believed to be resident in the country. These have been marked with an *)

4.005 {0110} *Stigmella betulicola* (Stainton, 1856) [Local]

The second VC32 record was of mines found in Easton Hornstocks on 08.x.2020 (JN).

4.057 {0085} *Stigmella suberivora* (Stainton, 1869) [Local]

First recorded in 2019, further sightings of mines on Holm Oak were noted in the far south-west of the county, namely at Aynho and Culworth (both TP). Holm Oak is scattered through VC32 and worth looking for mines on these trees at any time of the year.

4.072 {0019} *Bohemannia quadrimaculella* (Boheman, [1853]) [Nationally Scarce B]

A single adult moth was taken in a garden light trap in Thrapston on 23.vi.2020 (MJH). This is the first time the moth has been recorded in the county since 1940. Identity was confirmed by dissection. It is quite possible that the moth was drawn across The Nene to the site of capture from a reasonably large stand of Alder on the western edge of the river.

4.074 {0021} *Ectoedemia sericopeza* (Zeller, 1839) [Nationally Scarce A]

Recorded on three occasions in 2020, having only one previous record in 2016. Records thus:

Guilsborough, 16.vi.2020 (AB) – single mine in samara of Norway Maple

Farthinghoe LNR, 21.vi.2020 (TP) – three adults to light, dissected MJH

Wootton Landfill site, 10.viii.2020 (JS) – single male to light, dissected JS

7.004 {0144} *Nemophora fasciella* (Fabricius, 1775) [Nationally Scarce B]

Now apparently recorded annually in low numbers at Kingsthorpe, first noted on 09.vi.2020 (PS). Adults fly by day around flowers of Black Horehound so may be recorded at other sites in the county.

10.002 {0124} *Tischeria dodonaea* Stainton, 1858 [Local]

4th VC32 record was again of mines on Oak at Farthinghoe LNR, a known site (TP).

12.006 {0203} *Infurcitinea argentimaculella* (Stainton, 1849) [Local]

Concerted survey work before the first CV-19 lockdown resulted in this species being recorded as larval tubes on 5 occasions at different locations around the county, namely Old Sulehay, Whistley Wood, Easton Hornstocks and Little Morton Sale (all MJH). There were only four records of the moth prior to 2020, but the above searching indicates that it is likely to be fairly widespread in the county and worth looking for in likely habitat.



12.019 {0219} *Nemapogon ruricolella* (Stainton, 1849) [Nationally Scarce B]

Recorded for the 4th time in VC32, again to the VES pheromone lure on 29.v.2020 at Old Sulehay (known site – MJH). ID confirmed by dissection (MJH)

15.002 {0280} *Caloptilia cuculipennella* (Hübner, 1796) [Nationally Scarce A]

A single adult was taken to a garden light trap in Far Cotton, Northampton on 21.vi.2020 (MC). This constitutes the 3rd VC32 record and first confirmed record in the county since 1956.

15.003 {0281} *Caloptilia populetorum* (Zeller, 1839) [Local]

Having been recorded only twice before, this species was seen on 4 separate occasions in 2020, thus:

Yardley Chase, light trap, 31.vi.2020 (JS)

Ring Haw, light trap, 31.vii.2020 (RF)

Collyweston Great Wood, light trap, 08.viii.2020 (RF)

Old Sulehay, larva reared from Birch, 16.ix.2020 (MJH)

15.017 {0296} *Calybites phasianipennella* (Hübner, [1813]) [Local]

The 5th VC32 record was of a single adult moth at light in Prior's Hall, Corby on 06.viii.2020 (JS). Further records could be gleaned from looking for leaf mines (later conical leaf-folds) on dock (*Rumex*), knotgrass (*Polygonum*) and loosestrife (*Lysimachia*).

15.018 {0292} *Povolnya leucapennella* (Stephens, 1835) [-]

The 2nd county record was of an adult netted in Horton Woods on 23.vi.2020 (JS, and dissected to confirm). The species is apparently widely distributed around the British Isles, with the larvae feeding on Oak. Possibly therefore, under-recorded locally.

15.066 {0344} *Phyllonorycter strigulatella* (Zeller, 1846) [Local]

Recorded as a mine on Alder in Easton Hornstocks on 08.x.2020 (JN), this was the 4th county record.

20.024 {0423} *Argyresthia semitestacella* (Curtis, 1833) [Local]

The only previous record of this species was of an adult taken on 26.ix.1908, so a record at Polebrook on 06.viii.2020 (PH) was a very welcome update. Possibly over-looked, the moth is associated with Beech and could be confused with other *Argyresthia* species.

32.009 {0691} *Agonopterix purpurea* (Haworth, 1811) [Local]

The 4th and 5th VC32 records came in close succession, to light at Sywell Reservoir on 07.viii.2020 and then to a garden light trap in Cogenhoe on 19.viii.2020 (both DS).

34.005 {0894} *Cosmopterix zieglarella* (Hübner, [1810]) [Nationally Scarce B]

Usually recorded as a mine, the 3rd VC32 record this time was of an adult to light in Yardley Chase, 25.vi.2020 (JS). The moth was dissected to confirm ID. Further records may be added by searching for the distinctive mines on Hop as per the picture opposite.



35.017 {0797} *Neofaculta ericetella* (Geyer, [1832]) [Common]

A single adult was recorded in a garden light trap in Old Stratford, 11.v.2020 (AVH). The moth had not been recorded since August 1918. A Heather-feeding species, this could well have been an adventive from a garden-planting.

35.019 {-} *Anarsia innoxia* Gregersen & Karsholt, 2017 [Rare]

Recorded twice in 2020, thus the 2nd and 3rd county records, both to light in different areas of Yardley Chase, 25.vii.2020 & 31.vii.2020 (JS). Both moths were dissected to confirm identification and separate it from *A. lineatella*.

35.035 {0746} *Chrysoesthia drurella* (Fabricius, 1775) [Local]

A 5th VC32 record of this species was noted as vacated mines on Fat Hen (*Chenopodium*) at Farthinghoe LNR, 26.ix.2020 (TP).

35.080 {0732} *Oxypteryx (Eulamprotes) unicolorella* (Duponchel, [1843]) [Nationally Scarce B]

Two males were taken to light at Ring Haw on 02.vi.2020 (RF). These were dissected to confirm ID and thus become the 5th county record.

35.094 {0796} *Aroga velocella* (Zeller, 1839) [Local]

This was recorded on two occasions in 2020, thus:

Oundle garden light trap, 11.vii.2020 (PH)

Thrapston garden light trap, 12.viii.2020 (MJH)

Both specimens were dissected to prove ID and therefore 2nd and 3rd VC32 records respectively.

37.013 {0501} *Coleophora siccifolia* Stainton, 1856 [Nationally Scarce B]

The 5th county record was amongst dissection material gleaned from an Oundle garden light trap, taken on 16.vii.2020 (PH, det MJH). Nationally scarce throughout England in hedgerows feeding on the leaves of Hawthorn, Apple, Rowan and Birch.

37.017 {0494a} *Coleophora prunifoliae* Doets, 1944 [Nationally Scarce B]

A 3rd VC32 record was taken at light on 20.v.2020 at Farthinghoe LNR (TP), and dissected to confirm (MJH). The species is easily confused with other *Coleophora* species as both adult and the larval case.

37.029 {0511} *Coleophora orbitella* Zeller, 1849 [Nationally Scarce B]

Another excellent record from Farthinghoe LNR, taken at light on 21.vi.2020 (TP) and confirmed by dissection (MJH) – the 2nd county record of this scarce moth.

37.050 {0532} *Coleophora albidella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) [Local]

Recorded twice in Horton Woods during 2020, on 14.vi.2020 and 23.vi.2020 (JS) for 3rd and 4th VC32 records. Adults were dissected to confirm ID (JS). The moth appears to be fairly widely distributed in the southern part of the UK, but may again be under-recorded due to similarities of both adult and larval cases to some other *Coleophora* species. That said, some of the feeding damage is distinctive and thus may yield further records.

37.070 {0583} *Coleophora tamesis* Waters, 1929 [Local]

A 4th county record was taken at Calendar Meadows on 24.vi.2020 (recorded and dissected, JS). Larval cases might be found on the seed-heads of *Juncus* species.

37.103 {0555} *Coleophora follicularis* (Vallot, 1802) [Local]

A single adult male was taken in a garden light trap in Thrapston on 13.vi.2020 (MJH), constituting the 4th VC32 record. Larvae feed on Hemp Agrimony and Fleabane, both of which are nearby to the capture site.

38.003 {0592} *Stephensia brunnichella* (Linnaeus, 1767) [Nationally Scarce B]

A single adult was netted in low-growing, herb-rich vegetation on Old Sulehay Quarry on 29.v.2020 (MJH). This represents the 3rd VC32 record, and follows on from the capture of a single moth at the same spot in 2019. The adults can be very difficult to see in these situations and further sites and records might be better obtained by sweeping similar herb-rich areas.

40.011 {0880} *Mompha langiella* (Hübner, 1796) [Local]

The 4th, 5th and 6th VC32 records all came as leaf-mine records in 2020:

Farthinghoe LNR, 16.vi.2020 (TP)

Fermyn Woods (two locations), 20.vi.2020 & 22.vi.2020 (MJH).

Mines were easily spotted on Great Willowherb and thus I suspect other sites could be brought to light using this method.



43.007 {0918} *Scythris limbella* (Fabricius, 1775) [pRDB3]

Also recorded on three occasions during the year, and also for the 4th, 5th and 6th VC32 records:

Oundle garden light trap, 31.vii.2020 (PH)

Farthinghoe LNR, light trap, 07.viii.2020 (TP)

Northampton garden light trap, 07.viii.2020 (BG)

49.085 {1050} *Acleris kochiella* (Goeze, 1783) [Local]

A moth apparently increasing in range, it was recorded as adults on three occasions (5th to 7th VC32 records):

Collyweston Great Wood, 14.vii.2020, with a further two adults on 25.vii.2020 (all RF)

Duston garden light trap, Northampton, 18.vii.2020 (SM)

49.093 {0922} *Phtheochroa schreibersiana* (Frölich, 1828) [pRDB1]

A 2nd VC32 record was of an adult to a garden light trap in Old Stratford on 21.v.2020 (AVH). A species which may be making a come-back after a period of absence in the UK.

49.116 {0944} *Aethes williana* (Brahm, 1791) [Nationally Scarce B]

Recorded as an adult by day on the former Spanhoe WWII airfield (near Harringworth) on 19.v.2020 (RF). An easily overlooked species which tends to fly during the day and evenings (occasionally recorded at light), mainly of dry grassland, recorded four times previously in the county.

49.242 {1145} *Epinotia nanana* (Treitschke, 1835) [Nationally Scarce B]

The 4th county record was of an adult taken at light in Horton Woods on 23.vi.2020 (JS). The moth had been recorded previously at this site in 1999. It appears to be quite common throughout the UK and is associated with Norway Spruce and Sitka Spruce.

49.300 {1209} Pine Bud Moth *Pseudococcyx turionella* (Linnaeus, 1758) [Nationally Scarce B]

The 5th VC32 record was of a single moth taken in a garden light trap in Old Stratford, 20.v.2020 (AVH). Northamptonshire looks to be near the known range-limit for the species, but could be over-looked. As its vernacular indicates, associated with Pine trees, mainly Scots Pine.

49.310 {1286} *Dichrorampha sedatana* Busck, 1906 [Nationally Scarce B]

A single male was netted at Harrington Airfield on 15.v.2020 (recorded and dissected, MJH) and constitutes the 3rd VC32 record. It is worth noting that 3 males were taken at another part of the site in 2018, and is associated with Tansy. The moth appears to be relatively common in the UK and is probably under-recorded – and is easily confused with its congeners, requiring dissection to confirm.

49.334 {1267} *Cydia cosmophorana* (Treitschke, 1835) [Nationally Scarce B]

The 3rd and 4th VC32 records were noted thus:

Duston garden pheromone lure trap, Northampton, 15.v.2020 (SM)

Thrapston garden light trap, 26.v.2020 (recorded and dissected, MJH)

The Duston moth attended a trap where a lure for Goat Moth was being deployed.

49.351 {1252} *Grapholita lunulana* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) [Nationally Scarce B]

Spanhoe Airfield quarry area remains the only known site for this species, with 2nd and 3rd VC32 records being seen on consecutive days (06.v.2020 & 07.v.2020, RF).

49.358 {1246} *Grapholita tenebrosana* Duponchel, [1843] [Local]

The 4th county record was taken to the FUN pheromone lure, left in-situ over-night at the southern end of Fermyn Woods on 13.vi.2020 (MJH), and dissected to separate from *G. funebrana*. This lure is well-known for attracting other species and well-worth deploying in the hope of this “by-catch” result.

50.001 {0162} Goat Moth *Cossus cossus* (Linnaeus, 1758) [Nb]

After a 32-year absence from VC32, a single moth was taken to a garden light trap in Eastfield, Peterborough on 20.v.2020 (DC). The photo opposite is of that beastie!



52.001 {0369a} Raspberry Clearwing *Pennisetia hylaeiformis* (Laspeyres, 1801) [Unknown]

The HYL pheromone lure was deployed to good effect to record the county's 5th, 6th and 7th VC32 records:

Duston, Northampton, 2 adults on 19.vii.2020 (SM) – known site

Cogenhoe garden, singletons on 02.viii.2020 and 11.viii.2020 (DS)

52.007 {0381} Large Red-belted Clearwing *Synanthedon culiciformis* (Linnaeus, 1758) [Nb]

Last recorded in 2004, a single adult was seen by day at Summer Leys NR on 09.vi.2020, later confirmed by photo (PH). The moth seems not to respond well to the commercial pheromone lure (I have tried on many, many occasions to no avail!) and thus remains quite elusive.

62.010 {1449} *Elegia similella* (Zincken, 1818) [Nationally Scarce B]

Horton Woods has produced its 3rd record in 4 years of this locally rare species, and thus the 4th VC32 record. One was taken at light on 14.vi.2020 (JS).

63.046 {1403a} *Duponchelia fovealis* Zeller, 1847 [Migrant/Adventive]

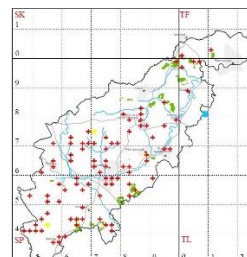
To date, Northampton is the only known location for this species. Recorded in 2001 and 2017, another adult was taken in a garden light trap in Far Cotton on 14.viii.2020 (MC). The origins of these moths within the UK have been linked to importation with horticultural material, so if that's the case, further records near to garden centres might be anticipated.

70.212 {1890} Sharp-angled Peacock *Macaria alternata* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) [Local]

This moth has been recorded in VC32 on only 6 previous occasions, the last being in Salcey Forest in 1975. One moth was noted in a garden light trap in Kingsthorpe, Northampton, on 10.viii.2020 (PS).

70.029 {2068} Scarlet Tiger *Callimorpha dominula* (Linnaeus, 1758) [Local]

No longer a rare species within the county, Scarlet Tigers were reported on 88 occasions during 2020, with many being reported as daytime sightings by "non-mothers" via Butterfly Conservation and iRecord. The current map shows just how widespread it has become (the red crosses show records after 2000).



71.001 {2022} Oak Processionary *Thaumetopoea processionea* (Linnaeus, 1758) [Vagrant/Accidental]

A species which seems to be appearing more frequently in recent years. Recorded on five occasions in 2018 (four of which were 26.vii.2018) and once in 2019, there were a further 5 records in 2020. Again, all these records fell on a single night of 31.vii.2020. These sightings lead weight to a mass-dispersal event from their breeding sites, and all were, I believe, of singleton males. The species is certainly noted as being resident in London and the Home Counties and thus no longer truly a vagrant. 2020 records thus:

Yardley Chase (JS), Helpston (MH), Old Stratford (AVH), Higham Ferrers (TV), Ring Haw (RF)

72.030 {2067} Jersey Tiger *Euplagia quadripunctaria* (Poda, 1761) [Nb]

First recorded in the county in 2018, with a further sighting in 2019, 2020 saw a veritable glut of records!

Yardley Gobion, 13.vi.2020

Kingsthorpe, Northampton, 27.vii.2020 & 28.vii.2020 (PS). NB the moth on 28th was of the yellow variety, form *lutescens*

Cogenhoe, 06.viii.2020 (DS)

Stoke Doyle, 07.viii.2020

Helpston, 06.ix.2020 (per MH)

This appears to reflect the recent range expansion of the species.

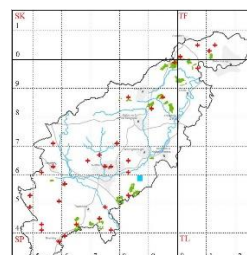
72.031 {2069} Cinnabar *Tyria jacobaeae* (Linnaeus, 1758) [Common]

I saw this image on social media, but sadly, despite my best efforts, could not get the person posting it to give me any further information or site details. I only know that it was seen on someone's strawberry patch in Thrapston. I have never seen this form depicted or illustrated before, on-line, in books or publications. Richard South mentions in his Moths of the British Isles that "Occasionally specimens have been recorded in which the usual red colour is replaced with bright yellow", but I have yet to see any description that matches the one depicted here.



72.076 {2451} Clifden Nonpareil *Catocala fraxini* (Linnaeus, 1758) [Migrant*]

The "Blue Underwing" became a local sensation in 2019, when it was recorded on 15 occasions after an absence locally of over a century. There was some debate as to whether this represented many unrelated dispersal events, or a true extension of range. We received 34 records in 2020, which does indicate that the moth has established itself in the region. The map opposite depicts the current known distribution (red crosses being post-2000 records).



72.081 {2455} Dark Crimson Underwing *Catocala sponsa* (Linnaeus, 1767) [RDB2]

This enigmatic moth had previously only been recorded on a single occasion in VC32, in 1907 in the Whittlebury Forest area. Traditionally it was regularly recorded in the New Forest, Hampshire, but neighbouring vice-counties had noted one or two over the last couple of years, so it was pleasing to receive 2 records in the county during 2020:

Helpston, single adult to light on 08.ix.2020 (RA)

Cogenhoe, another single adult to a garden light trap on 12.ix.2020 (DS).

The picture opposite is of the Cogenhoe moth.



73.010 {2436} Dewick's Plusia *Macdunnoughia confusa* (Stephens, 1850) [Rare Migrant*]

The 5th county record of this species was of an adult taken in a garden light trap in old Stratford on 15.ix.2020 (AVH). Once presumed to be a migrant (as it is still currently designated according to the UK list), it is likely that it is becoming established as a breeding species in mainland UK.

73.288 {2191} Double Line *Mythimna turca* (Linnaeus, 1761) [Nb]

Another moth which occasionally wanders from known breeding sites, the 4th VC32 record was of a single adult to light in Fineshade on 02.vii.2020 (RF).



4. [Update of UK BAP Species on the VC32 List](#)

Following on from the summary posted last year, here is a further update of the UK BAP species in VC32 (limited to those species with VC32 records dated after 1st January 1980):

49.348 {1243} Liquorice Piercer *Grapholita pallifrontana* Zeller, 1845 [pRDB3]

More targeted fieldwork was conducted throughout VC32 in 2020, resulting in 10 records (33 individuals) of the species. Most were at the same sites as previous records, but some from nearby areas within the Rockingham Forest zone.

50.001 {0162} Goat Moth *Cossus cossus* (Linnaeus, 1758) [Nb]

See above for the details of the single 2020 record.

54.002 {0163} Forester *Adscita statice* (Linnaeus, 1758) [Local]

No VC32 records since 2010.

70.035 {1679} False Mocha *Cyclophora porata* (Linnaeus, 1767) [Local]

No VC32 records since 2011.

70.201 {1880} Barred Tooth-striped *Trichopteryx polycommata* ([Denis & Schiffmüller], 1775) [Na]

No VC32 records since 1987.

72.070 {2495} Olive Crescent *Trisateles emortualis* ([Denis & Schiffmüller], 1775) [RDB3]

No VC32 records since the singleton in 2017.

73.031 {2465} Four-spotted *Tyta luctuosa* ([Denis & Schiffmüller], 1775) [Na]

Recorded on six occasions in 2020, all in the Soke region such as Ring Haw, Helpston, Etton. As demonstrated in neighbouring VC55/Leicestershire when a sizeable colony was seemingly discovered purely by accident along a country lane, this species is possibly more widespread than records indicate. The key criteria for their use of any given site is their apparent need for heat! Daytime searches (or indeed light trapping) of sunny, south-facing slopes, banks, ditches etc, which contains Field Bindweed might well yield further records, especially in the Soke area of the vice county.

73.149 {2347} Concolorous *Photedes extrema* (Hübner, [1809]) [RDB3]

Another excellent year for records, as the flight period of the adults fell outside of the strictest CV-19 lock-down periods enabling some decent survey work to take place. Recorded 29 times, totalling over 200 individual moths. Most records were at or very near to known colonies with a couple of wandering individuals recorded to light in gardens (Corby and Helpston).

73.214 {2317} White-spotted Pinion *Cosmia diffinis* (Linnaeus, 1767) [Na]

Just two records in 2020:

Ring Haw, singleton on 31.vii.2020 (RF)

Polebrook, 4 adults to light 06.viii.2020 (PH)

73.218 {2315} Heart Moth *Dicycla oo* (Linnaeus, 1758) [RDB3]

No VC32 records since 2006. COVID prevented the planned survey work (all on private sites) in 2020 but it is hoped that this work may be given the go-ahead in 2021.

73.259 {2148} Pale Shining Brown *Polia bombycina* (Hufnagel, 1766) [Nb]

No VC32 records since 1992.

5. Migrant Species Recorded in VC32 During 2020

Below is a brief table of known migrant species to have been recorded during 2020, noting fewer migrant species in 2020 than in 2019:

ABH	B&F	Taxon	Vernacular	Numbers
18.001	0464	<i>Plutella xylostella</i>	Diamond-back Moth	108
63.031	1395	<i>Udea ferrugalis</i>	Rusty-dot Pearl	12
63.048	1408	<i>Palpita vitrealis</i>	a moth	2
63.052	1398	<i>Nomophila noctuella</i>	Rush Veneer	3
69.004	1972	<i>Agrius convolvuli</i>	Convolvulus Hawk-moth	1
69.010	1984	<i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>	Humming-bird Hawk-moth	33
70.038	1716	<i>Rhodometra sacraria</i>	Vestal	1
72.041	2051	<i>Lithosia quadra</i>	Four-spotted Footman	1
73.015	2441	<i>Autographa gamma</i>	Silver Y	1004
73.076	2400	<i>Helicoverpa armigera</i>	Scarce Bordered Straw	0
73.104	2392a	<i>Athetis hospes</i>	Porter's Rustic	1
73.327	2091	<i>Agrotis ipsilon</i>	Dark Sword-grass	39

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