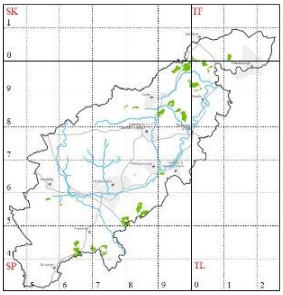
VC32/Northamptonshire Moths – A Summary of New Species & Noteworthy Records from 2022

Mark Hammond, VC32 CMR
(March 2023)



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

1. Introduction, etc

This is a review of species newly recorded in VC32 (Northamptonshire and The Soke of Peterborough), along with interesting and noteworthy moths recorded during the 2022 season. If you have any queries or observations about the article, please do drop me a line. If you are reading this and still have records to submit for 2022 (or indeed from any previous years), it's never too late – please send them in. All records are ultimately uploaded to the National Moth Recording Scheme, hosted by Butterfly Conservation, where they are subject to further scrutiny and used in scientific research to support conservation and to increase our understanding of our moth fauna.

I hope you find this article to be of interest. I agree that it is a little "weighty" in places, with as much detail crammed in as I can manage, without putting off the casual reader. I have endeavoured to include all pertinent records under each section, but apologise for any omissions contained therein. Do please let me know if you spot something missing, as this might mean that the record has not made it into the county database.

After the disruption of the "Covid years", 2022 saw a bit more activity for the group, with a welcome return to a reasonably full program of organised field trapping sessions. These were quite well attended, as always, with results reported against each session on the Trips 2022 page of the website. 2022 also saw a significant jump in numbers of records received, individual moths recorded, and a good spread of species being recorded as new to the Vice County.

I always request that anyone who is 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 again 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:

	2022	2021	2020	2019
No. records received	**52,099**	46,953	45,765	44,098
No. species recorded (exc. aggregates)	**1,047**	1,037	1,053	1,050
No. individual moths recorded (approx)	**196,600**	168,600	150,000	195,200
No. species new to the county	**14**	10	12	11

This brings the grand total of records in the VC32 database to over **892,000.**

The Top Ten species, based on number of records received, not number of individuals (2020 position in brackets) seems to indicate a fairly stable top-ten over the past couple of years:

Pos.	ABH	Taxon	Vernacular	Records
1 (1)	73.342	*Noctua pronuba*	Large Yellow Underwing	1195
2 (3)	73.359	*Xestia c-nigrum*	Setaceous Hebrew Character	961
3 (5)	73.291	*Mythimna pallens*	Common Wainscot	867
4 (-)	73.325	*Agrotis puta*	Shuttle-shaped Dart	837
5 (2)	70.226	*Opisthograptis luteolata*	Brimstone Moth	769
6 (6)	73.317	*Agrotis exclamationis*	Heart and Dart	717
7 (8)	73.329	*Ochropleura plecta*	Flame Shoulder	684
8 (4)	70.258	*Peribatodes rhomboidaria*	Willow Beauty	682
9 (-)	49.039	*Epiphyas postvittana*	Light Brown Apple Moth	630
10 (-)	73.345	*Noctua comes*	Lesser Yellow Underwing	602

Welcome to New Recorders

Some of the recipients of this report may be seeing it for the first time, and I welcome you to the VC32 moth community. For those receiving this report for the first time I hope this report is of use, 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. I am often away from my desk for short periods of time during the main moth season, but always endeavour to reply to queries as soon as I am able.

Thank you to existing recorders too!

I would of course like to thank everyone who submitted records during 2022. Including those who have added casual records via iRecord or iNaturalist. There were over 220 people who submitted at least one record during 2022, and thus far too many to be able to list in a sensible manner in this article. Some of you have been submitting records for many years, others maybe only the last two or three. They all count – each sighting adding just a little bit more knowledge. Do please keep them coming. As a result of this mammoth effort by everyone, this annual report has increased significantly in size over the past couple of years. As you will see below, the vast majority of the data refers to species considered to be micro-moths. It is a fact that this aspect of the local moth fauna has been less well studied over the years, but is certainly gaining momentum now.

Amyl Acetate

An interesting paper appeared in The Entomologist's Record & Journal of Variation recently (Vol 134, Pt 6), showing that the use of Amyl Acetate in conjunction with a moth trap appeared to increase the catch of that trap by between 18 and 31%. The authors placed a small soaked cotton-wool ball onto the choke housing of their mercury vapour moth tarp (as this always runs a little warm, and thus encourages evaporation of the chemical). Certainly, this chemical has been utilised in various sugaring mixtures over the years, having a fruity aroma of bananas (or pears – depending on who you ask). It is available on eBay and sold as a flavouring agent in the food industry. Use of this chemical goes with certain safety caveats, it being flammable, and prolonged contact should be avoided. However, some outdoor experimentation with this compound might prove interesting.

Notes on the identification of Copper Underwing / Svensson's Copper Underwing

It has now been proved empirically that the only safe way of separating these two species as an adult is to **view the underside of the hindwings**. No other features are sufficiently reliable to enable determination with any certainty. This can only be performed on fresh individuals. Worn individuals must either be aggregated for recording purposes, or retained for further, detailed examination (e.g. dissection). This was explained in detail in the Entomologist's Record & Journal of Variation, Vol 134, Pt 3.

The image below has been borrowed from the British Lepidoptera web resource,
https://britishlepidoptera.weebly.com/

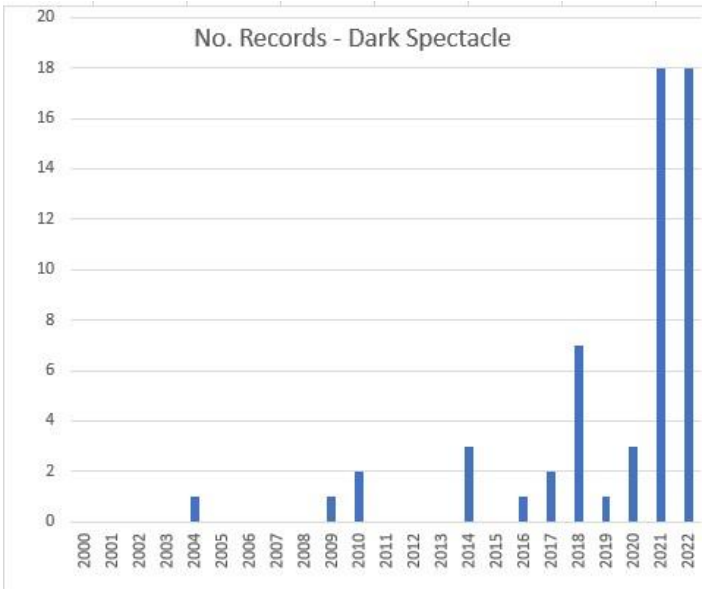
Copper Underwing | **Svensson's Copper Underwing**

Hindwing underside (diagnostic in fresh specimens)
The most reliable external distinction between these two species. Both show a broad grey suffusion along the costal border; both show a broad dark postmedian fascia extending from the costa towards the dorsum; both have a copper colour in the dorsal half of the wing distal to this fascia.
In *A.pyramidea* the copper colour is much paler proximal to the fascia (more pale straw than copper) so that there is a strong contrast between the outer 1/3 and inner 2/3; in *A.berbera* the copper colour proximal to the fascia is similar to that distal to the fascia so that there is little or no contrast.

A couple of recent "Winners"

We hear much about the decline and loss of species, but it is quite the opposite story for some. Whether this is due to climate change, or other factors, there are a few species which are now being recorded with much greater frequency that before. I have picked just a couple out for highlighting; species which might otherwise be slipping under the radar (not being particularly rare elsewhere, nor being very "flashy" or brightly coloured):

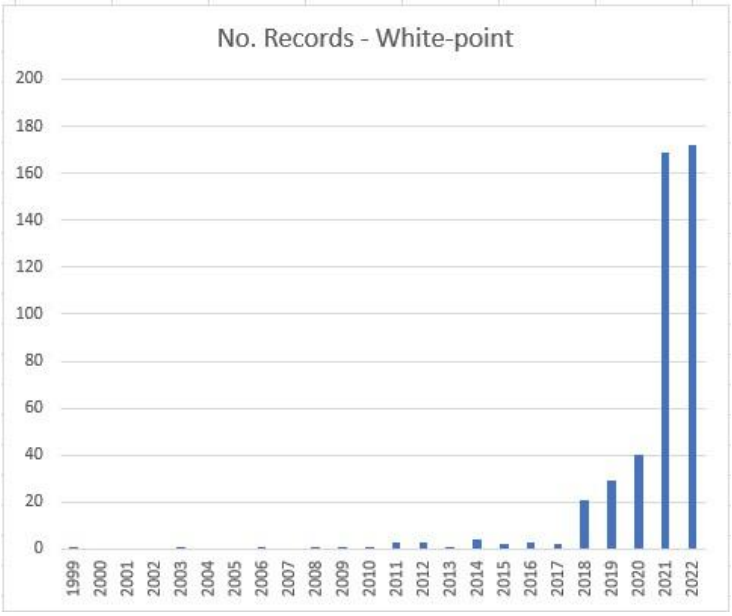
73.002 *Abrostola triplasia* Dark Spectacle (Linnaeus, 1758) Common



This moth was almost unheard of in VC32 when I first started light trapping in the early 1990's. It may easily be mistaken for its much more widely spread congener, The Spectacle, but there has been an almost inexorable increase in the number of sightings of this species over the past decade.

The larvae feed on Common Nettle, and thus liable to turn up almost anywhere in the county. So do please keep a wary eye on any Spectacles that end up in your traps. They might be darker than you think…!

73.297 *Mythimna albipuncta* White-point ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) "Migrant"



A species first recorded in VC32 in 1999, and subsequently in very low numbers each year, or absent altogether. The graph opposite shows a significant increase in number of records from 2018, with comparatively huge numbers of records during 2021 and 2022.

The species is still listed as a migrant in MapMate, but given the number and spread of records, indicates that it is breeding locally. Larvae feed on various grasses and thus likely to be present in many habitats, including gardens. Care is required to differentiate this from The Clay.

BOLO (Be on the look-out for…)

Those that know me well will know that I have been waxing lyrical for a couple of years about the (hoped-for) imminent appearance of moths expanding their range, such as Black-spotted Chestnut. Suffice it to say, this has not yet come to pass! So, I thought I would list a small handful of species which might be appearing (or re-appearing) in the county soon.

15.0115 *Caloptilia fidella* (Reutti, 1853)

A species that expanded its range in Europe and was first detected in the UK as an adult in Suffolk during July 2020.

A double brooded species that hibernates as adult. The flight period given for the near continent includes every month except July, so it seems likely it can be found throughout the year. The species feeds on Hop and also Nettle Tree. A typical larval mine and adjacent cocoon is shown opposite.

Given its similarity to a number of other *Caloptilia* species, adults resembling this must all be retained for further examination (as per the *Caloptilia* update in last year's report, and copied again below, Section 2).

Photo credit: bladmineerders.nl

36.0019 *Batrachedra confusella* Berggren, Aarvik, Huemer, Lee

Recognised as a separate species to *B. pinicolella* (itself only recorded five times in VC32) last year. Externally the two species are inseparable – a frequent occurrence with many micro-moths. Therefore, any specimens caught as adults must be retained for further examination (dissection and/or DNA bar-coding.

Examination of museum and collection material has shown that the moth has been present in the UK for a number of years and thus may be quite well-distributed. Known examples have been noted from a variety of counties including Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Nottinghamshire.

The larvae feed on Norway Spruce, whereas those of *B. pinicolella* feed on various Pinus species. Adults may be seen during June and July.

Photo credit: Mick ACourt – Norfolk Moths

52.004 *Paranthrene tabaniformis* Dusky Clearwing (Rottemburg, 1775) Status Unconfirmed

Much to local consternation, a single female was recorded in an as yet undisclosed site in Warks on 07.vii.2021, but was only reported in the summer of 2022. The discovery in adjacent Warwickshire raises the interesting possibility that it might be in Northants too.

As with its congeners, the larvae feed internally, on Poplars and Sallows. Adults are on the wing between May and July and should respond to the TAB pheromone lure. According to the information sheet associated with the lure, the best time of day to see the adult is between 3pm and 6pm, and preferably in sunny conditions.

Photo credit: oreina.org

63.119 *Musotima nitidalis* Walker Adventive

I first noted this as a possible arrival to VC32 last year, and still feel it has validity within this section of the report

This adventive Antipodean species was first noted in the UK in 2009, and has since spread from Dorset, throughout many southern counties in England.

The larvae in the UK feed on various ferns, including Bracken, *Pteridium aquilinum*, Hard Fern, *Blechnum spicant*, and Broad Buckler Fern, *Dryopteris dilatata* in June, and again in the autumn through to December.

Adults are easily disturbed by day and come readily to light traps at and shortly after dusk.

Photo credit: Keith Tailby

73.196 *Conistra rubiginosa* Black-spotted Chestnut (Scopoli, 1763) Migrant*

Another species that I am going to retain on the BOLO list from last year as I am convinced that it will show-up here soon!! Another recent arrival to the UK, first noted around the Dartford/Gravesend area in 2011. The moth had spread quite rapidly through Northern Europe, and continues to expand its range in the UK, with repeat records in Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire suggesting that it is now a breeding species there.

The adult comes to light, emerging in October, and flying on mild nights through to early April.

Larvae are said to feed on a range of deciduous trees and low-growing plants and thus could turn-up anywhere! So, this is an excellent excuse to run garden light traps throughout the winter month, especially on slightly warmer nights.

Photo credit: Keith Tailby

73.3481 ***Noctua tertia*** **Wilson's Yellow Underwing** **von Mentzer, Moberg & Fibiger, 1991**

Following the discovery that there are specimens of this species within UK museums and other collection material, I'd ask that any reddish-tinted specimens of Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwings be retained for further examination, as records are currently only being accepted following dissection.

The presence of the species within the UK was reported in The Entomologist's Record & Journal of Variation last year (Vol 134, Pt 5).

Adults apparently come to light traps, and presumably, like its close relatives, might also be recorded at sugar or wine ropes. Adults appear to be on the wing at the same time as other close relatives, between July and September.

Photo credit: euroleps.ch

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, with annual updates and additions as appropriate. I also include, where available for general reference and the current national status of each species appears in [square brackets], although it might be noted that some of these now feel a little dated and do not reflect the rapid change to the distribution of some species *(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 *)*.

2. Species New to VC32 in 2022

Fourteen species were noted as being new to VC32 during 2022:

1.002 ***Micropterix mansuetella*** **(Zeller, 1844) Nationally Scarce B**

A number of *Micropterix mansuetella* were seen in Fineshade (SP99) on 19.v.2022 during some butterfly survey work (Soar *et al*). This is the 1st VC32 record for a moth which may be overlooked. Having said that, I have searched for this within the Fermyn Woods complex over the years and have failed to record it, so may well be quite localised in its distribution. Of note: this species was also recorded for the first time in neighbouring Leicestershire/Rutland - VC55 at around the same time.

4.010 ***Ectoedemia minimella*** **(Zetterstedt, 1839)** **Common**

Several vacated mines were located on Birch at Farthinghoe NR (SP54) on 28.vi.2022 (Pridmore). This is the 3rd VC32 record, and first for twelve years. Apparently quite well-distributed over the south and west of the UK, and probably easily overlooked – certainly so as an adult.

4.093 ***Ectoedemia agrimoniae*** **(Frey, 1858)** **pRDB3**

A single tenanted mine was located at Farthinghoe NR (SP54) on 23.x.2022 (Pridmore). Despite much further searching, no others were found. Text books list Agrimony, *Agrimonia eupatoria*, as the main foodplant, and that the species prefers chalk downland. The mine was actually located on Fragrant Agrimony, *Agrimonia procera*, which I note is listed as a possible larval foodplant on the lepiforum.org website (https://lepiforum.org/wiki/page/Ectoedemia_agrimoniae). Nationally, records for this species are predominantly from south-eastern localities.

15.0131 *Caloptilia honoratella* (Rebel, 1914) (no UK status at time of writing)

This moth was discovered during a batch of dissection work performed by the CMR in early 2023. The moth proved to be a female, and resulted from light trapping in a Northampton garden (SP76) on 18.vii.2022 (Gill). The species has only recently been discovered in the UK, given its similarity with several other of its congeners, may well be "hiding in plain sight" around the county. I therefore re-print the news I posted earlier about this species complex:

"Caloptilia News

Due to the confusion over several *Caloptilia* species, and the possibility that other *Caloptilia* species exist in the UK "cryptically", having yet to be formally recorded and identified (such as *C. jurataea* which some authors suggest might already have found its way to these shores, or will do so in the next few years). *C. hemidactyla* and *C. honoratella* are both recorded in the UK (although neither have yet to be confirmed in VC32, but are now recorded in neighbouring vice counties). Hence, in line with other counties, the following measures are adopted:

- Any **adults** of Caloptilia species which **exhibit a yellow costal mark should now be retained for dissection** to confirm identity. This includes *C. alchimiella* and *C. robustella* (also, *C. hemidactyla, C. azaleella, C. fidella, C. honoratella* – although not yet recorded in VC32), but also includes forms of *C. ellongella, C. rufipennella* & *C. betulicola*.
- **Larval leaf-rolls/leaf-cones** from Field Maple, Norway Maple and Sycamore must now also be **retained and reared through** to adult to confirm species identity (which may involve dissection, as described above)."

15.055 *Phyllonorycter viminetorum* (Stainton, 1854) Nationally Scarce A

A single mine was discovered on Osier at Ferry Meadows, Peterborough (TL19) on 22.x.2022 (Newman). Further searches during June/July and September/October might reveal further records. The leaf is curled over by the mine, which is underside and usually near the leaf base.

15.06 *Phyllonorycter ulicicolella* (Stainton, 1851) Nationally Scarce B

Two mines of this species were located on Gorse in Weekley Hall Wood (SP88) on 16.ii.2022 (Hammond). The mines are notoriously difficult to spot and thus may be located in other areas of Gorse within the county (see opposite). In my limited experience of finding this species in other counties, it seems to prefer the smaller stems, and plants which exhibit slightly softer spines (of course this may simply be that these plants are easier on the hand when examining for mines...!). I have heard anecdotal evidence that there may be a preference to feed on Western Gorse rather than Common Gorse.

22.0041 *Prays citri* (Milliére, 1873) Adventive

A single record was located amongst the iRecord data, which was verified in early 2023. The moth was apparently taken in a light trap in Thrapston (TL07) on 16.vii.2022 (Bailey). The iRecord entry was associated with an image of the moth, enabling verification. The species was first recorded in the UK in London in 2000. Larvae can become a serious pest of citrus crops in suitable climate, feeding on the flowers, buds and fruit.

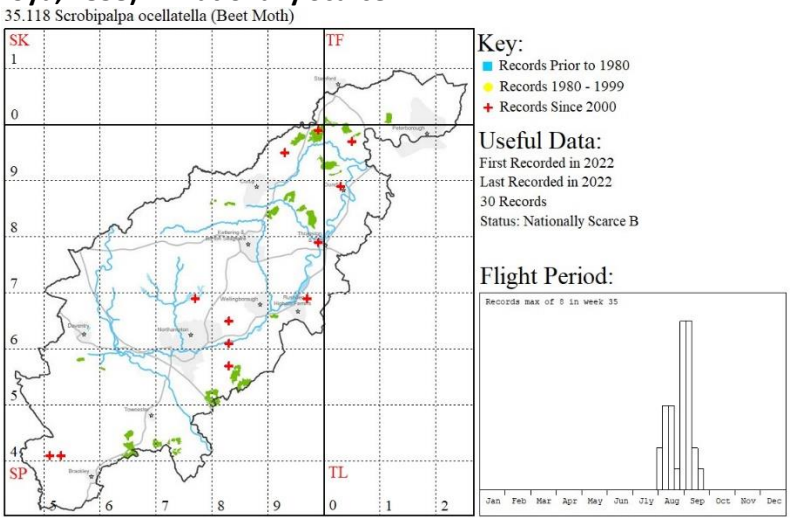
35.041 *Bryotropha desertella* (Douglas, 1850) Nationally Scarce B

A single female was confirmed by dissection. The moth was taken to light at Farthinghoe NR (SP54) on 20.vii.2022 (Pridmore). The species is primarily recorded on coastal sand dunes, but is known to "wander". Yet to record one this far inland is somewhat unusual.

35.118 *Scrobipalpa ocellatella* Beet Moth (Boyd, 1858) Nationally Scarce B

The first confirmed VC32 record was of a single moth attracted to a garden light trap in Thrapston (SP97) on 01.viii.2022 (Hammond), subsequently confirmed by dissection. Following on from this first record, the species was recorded a further twenty-nine times during the summer, and another ten times in the same Thrapston garden, with a maximum of seven individuals on 18.viii.2022. This mirrors the apparent massive range expansion during the year, in which it was recorded as new to numerous midland and western counties.

The final record for 2022 was of a singleton on 21.ix.2022, but from the map opposite, it can be seen how well-spread the moth appears to have been. It will be interesting to see if this pattern is repeated in 2023



38.012 *Elachista obliquella* Stainton, 1854 Nationally Scarce B

Two interesting *Elachista* moths were retained from a group field trip to Salcey Forest (SP85) on 06.viii.2022. Subsequent dissection proved both to be this species. The moth is apparently fairly well distributed over England, where it occupies woodland rides and clearings. As with many of its congeners, the larvae mine the leaves of various sedges and grasses. Likely overlooked in VC32.

49.339 *Cydia servillana* (Duponchel, 1836) Nationally Scarce B

The FAG pheromone lure (designed to attract *Cydia fagiglandana*) was deployed in Fermyn Woods (SP98) on 29.v.2022 (Hammond), hung on a reasonably mature Goat Willow tree. This attracted a single example this species, which is known to be attracted to this lure. The lure trap had been left in situ for three days, being examined each day - the moth was inside on the third day. A further two males were attracted to the FAG pheromone lure, this time deployed for a couple of days/nights amidst several mature Goat Willows in Grafton Park Wood (SP98) on 02.vi.2022, and another example was recorded at a different location within the wood to the same lure on 21.vi.2022.

62.02 *Etiella zinckenella* (Treitschke, 1832) Migrant

Amidst a period of apparently significant UK-wide moth migration, a single *Etiella zinckenella* was recorded to light at Ring Haw (TL09) on 27.x.2022 (Follows). The UK Moths website states that there have been "a handful of records of this species since the first in 1989", but I am unaware of exactly how many have been recorded in the UK to date. Whatever that number might be, this is a very significant record for The Midlands. This record was accompanied by a putative Plumed Fan-foot *Pechipogo plumigeralis* (see note later in this section).

63.039 *Mecyna flavalis* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) pRDB3

A singleton was recorded to light in a garden light trap in Kingsthorpe, Northampton (SP76) on 20.vii.2022 (Sharpe). That the species is normally seen on chalky habitats and on cliffs around the south of England and Wales suggests that this individual is an adventive specimen.

63.059 *Evergestis limbata* (Linnaeus, 1767) Nationally Scarce B

A single moth was taken in a garden light trap in Helpston (TF10) on 22.vi.2022 (Hillier). The catch that night also included a single Vestal, a migrant species, suggesting that this moth was undergoing a dispersal event. The species was formerly recognised as a rare migrant to the UK, but has recently become fairly well established in southern counties.

72.057 *Pechipogo plumigeralis* Plumed Fan-foot (Hubner, [1825]) Recent Colonist

A single moth was taken in a garden light trap in Oundle (TL09) on 14.ix.2022 (Horsnail). This individual moth is most likely to have been a migrant individual, possibly dispersing from sites where it is known to be breeding within the UK.

Interestingly, a second, putative/worn moth was taken to light at Ring Haw (TL09) on 27.x.2022 (Follows).

3. Significant and Noteworthy Records from 2022

Below therefore, are some species of note which were recorded during 2022. The list is by no means comprehensive and I hope I have included everything I had meant to! (inc. species recorded fewer than 5 times up to the end of 2021)

(*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* *)

4.100 *Ectoedemia minimella* (Zetterstedt, 1839) Common
Three vacated mines were located on Birch at Farthinghoe NR (SP54) on 28.vi.2022 (Pridmore). This is the 3rd VC32 record, and first for twelve years.

7.007 *Adela cuprella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) Local
Approximately 15 *Adela cuprella* were recorded at Old Sulehay quarry area (TL09) on 25.iii.2022 (Hammond). This is the 6th VC32 record, but also the first confirmed record for the species within the county in over 80 years (last was 4th May 1939, Weekley Hall Woods). The moths were only seen around three mature Sallow trees in the entire quarry area, and mostly remaining high-up near the tree tops, but occasionally descending briefly before climbing back to their more usual height. I have seen the species reported on social media in other counties, so perhaps it's having a "good year".

8.001 *Incurvaria pectinea* Haworth, 1828 Local
A daytime stroll through Fermyn Woods/Harry's Park Wood (SP98) on 21.v.2022 (Hammond) yielded a record of this species. Several leaves were found (fortunately at about chest-height) on a single Birch tree along one of the grassy rides, each containing numerous larval mines of this species. This is the 5th VC32 record and the only record away from its only presently known location in and around Yardley Chase.

12.023 *Triaxomasia caprimulgella* (Stainton, 1851) pRDB1
The LUN lure (intended to attract Lunar Clearwing) was deployed during a group field trip session in Fineshade (Far Markham's Wood, SP99) on 08.vii.2022 (Hammond *et al*). The lure was left in-situ overnight in a lure trap, hanging off an Oak tree. Upon inspection in the morning, the trap had a single occupant, which looked to be a Tineid. After subsequent dissection of the specimen, it proved to be a male *Triaxomasia caprimulgella*. This is only the 2nd VC32 record, the first resulting from a larva collected from the rot hole of a felled Horse Chestnut or Wych Elm (captor unsure which) on 10.iii.1985. the moth was successfully reared and retained, but only identified by dissection in 2021!

12.044 *Haplotinea insectella* (Fabricius, 1794) Nationally Scarce B
Recorded four times in 2022: A single moth was taken in a garden light trap in Thrapston (SP97) on 17.vi.2022 (Hammond). The moth was quite worn and subject to dissection. This proved to be the 4th VC32 record, and second for the site.
Further singletons were recorded to light traps at different sites on Farthinghoe NR (SP54) on 09.vii.2022 and 11.vii.2022 (Pridmore), constituting the 5th and 6th county records (dissected to confirm ID).
A 7th VC record was achieved when a further specimen was netted at the same Thrapston site as above, this time indoors, on 28.vi.2022 and subsequently dissected to prove the ID (which made a very pleasant change from all the *T. pellionella* that are usually seen here...!).

15.026 *Parornix fagivora* (Frey, 1861) Local
A single mine was recorded at Southey Wood (TF10) on 13.viii.2022 (Newman). There are only three earlier records for this species in the county.

15.035 *Phyllonorycter roboris* (Zeller, 1839) Nationally Scarce B
Technically from 2021, a single adult was reared from tenanted mines collected from Oak at Farthinghoe NR (SP54) in late October 2021 (Pridmore). The adult emerged in April 2022, proving to be the 3rd VC32 record.

15.045 *Phyllonorycter mespilella* (Hübner, [1805]) Nationally Scarce B
Vacated mines of *Phyllonorycter mespilella* were located on Whitebeam in the grounds of Sulgrave Manor (SP54) on 28.ix.2022 (Tailby). This is the 3rd VC32 record; the two previous records for this species being of adults from 1936 and 1999.

15.047 *Phyllonorycter hostis* Triberti, 2007 Local
More belated records from material collected in 2021: adults were reared from mines on Malus collected from Farthinghoe NR (SP54) collected on 21.x.2021 (Pridmore). This is the 3rd VC32 record. Further records were of 2 males taken to the NIG lure in Cogenhoe (SP86) on 11.iv.2022 (Seaman) and of a single male attracted to light in a Thrapston garden (SP97) on 17.vi.2022 (Hammond). All adults were dissected to prove ID.

15.093 *Phyllocnistis xenia* Hering, 1936 Nationally Scarce B
First recorded in the county in 2021, this species was recorded a further five times in 2022:
12.viii.2022; Thrapston garden (SP97); single mine on White Poplar (Hammond)
12.ix.2022; Kinewell Lake, Ringstead (SP97); numerous mines on White Poplar (Hammond)
14.ix.2022 and 31.x.2022; Farthinghoe NR (SP54); mines on Poplar (Pridmore)
29.ix; Brackmills CP, Northampton (SP75); single mine (Seaman).

16.008 *Yponomeuta sedella* Treitschke, 1832 Local
Farthinghoe NR (SP54) has produced yet another good moth, with a single *Yponomeuta sedella* to light on 18.vii.2022 (Pridmore). This is only the 4th VC32 record. The larvae feed on Orpine, but are also known to feed on cultivated Sedum plants.

21.002 *Lyonetia prunifoliella* (Hübner, 1796) pRDB1
Following the BOLO (be on the look-out for) warning in last year's moth summary, I was very pleased to see that this species was once again recorded in VC32. Not once, but on four separate occasions.
First was of a single adult to light in an Oundle garden (TL08) on 03.viii.2022 (Horsnail). This constituted the 2nd VC32 record. The only previous was of the species being listed in Meyrick's (1895) Handbook of British Lepidoptera and The Lepidoptera of Northamptonshire (Wallis, 1908). Possibly recorded near Stony Stratford and could be the same record as in the VC24 database due to proximity with border and vagueness of detail.
The next incidence was of approximately 20 mines found on Prunus in the grounds of Burghley House (TF00) on 08.viii.2022 (Barden).
Following an extensive search on Farthinghoe NR (SP54), 5 vacated mines were located on 11.ix.2022 (Pridmore).
Lastly, another single adult was taken in a garden light trap in Thrapston (SP97) on 22.ix.2022 (Hammond).
Hopefully this spread of records, geographically, will be further added-to in 2023.

28.022 *Alabonia geoffrella* (Linnaeus, 1767) Common
The 4th VC32 record was of a single moth, unusually in a light trap (given they are noted as a day-flying species) in East Hunsbury, Northampton (SP75) on 02.vi.2022 (Emary). A simply stunning moth, however it is encountered.

32.003 *Luquetia lobella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) Local
A single adult taken in a garden light trap in New Duston, Northampton (SP76) on 17.vi.2022 (Belton) constituted only the 5th VC32 record of this species. The moth appears to have a broken distribution over the southern half of the UK.

34.004 *Cosmopterix zieglerella* (Hübner, [1810]) Nationally Scarce B
Several mines were located in an Oundle garden (TL09) on Hop on 16.ix.2022 (Horsnail). This is the 4th VC32 record. The mines stand out as uneven pale brown galleries and blotches along the midrib, although care must be taken to eliminate those made by e.g. flies on the same plant.

35.045 *Bryotropha basaltinella*(Zeller, 1839) Nationally Scarce A
First recorded in the county in 2016, a 5th county record; taken to light at Farthinghoe NR (SP54) on 15.viii.2022 (Pridmore), and subsequently confirmed by dissection. The adults are easily confused with its close relatives and thus any putative specimens should be retained for dissection, which may yield further records in the county.

35.050 *Aristotelia ericinella* (Zeller, 1839) Local
Only the 2nd time that this species has been recorded in VC32. The larvae feed on Heather species, and thus, given the almost complete lack of Heather growing wild in the county (is there any at all…?), is likely only to be seen as a result of garden planting. This record was of a single moth taken to light in an Oundle Garden (TL09) on 20.vii.2022 (Horsnail).

A further specimen (thus 3rd VC32 record) was of another single moth taken to light in Helpston (TF10) on 11.viii.2022 (Wright).

35.073 *Monochroa palustrellus* (Douglas, 1850) Nationally Scarce B
A single moth was taken on rough grassland associated with a privately-owned former quarry near Northampton (SP76) on 12.vii.2022 (Hammond). This is the 4th VC32 record.

35.084 *Athrips rancidella* Cotoneaster Webworm (Herrich-Schäffer, 1854) RDB2
Seven individuals were recorded between 07.vii.2022 and 22.vii.2022. All were taken in the same Oundle garden light trap (TL09) (Horsnail), and confirmed by dissection. The moth was recorded on four separate occasions at the same site in 2021.

37.034 *Coleophora frischella* (Linnaeus, 1758) Nationally Scarce B
A 5th VC32 record was confirmed after dissection. The moth was taken in a garden light trap in Denton (SP85) on 15.vii.2022 (Terry).

37.050 *Coleophora albidella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) Local
Another 5th county record. A single moth was recorded to in Far Markham Wood, Fineshade (SP99) on 08.vii.2022) (Hammond). The moth is quite widely distributed across the UK, and quite possibly under-recorded in VC32.

35.073 *Monochroa palustrellus* (Douglas, 1850) Nationally Scarce B
Recorded on two occasions during the year:
Harlestone, Northampton (SP76) on 12.vii.2022 (Hammond) – 4th VC32 record
Wollaston garden (SP96) on 20.vii.2022 (Peilow) – 5th VC32 record

38.024 *Elachista poae* Stainton, 1855 Nationally Scarce B
Resulting from a batch of catch-up dissection work, a single *Elachista poae* was confirmed, taken in Fermyn Woods (SP98) on 07.v.2022 (Terry). This is the 4th VC32 record, after three records near Peterborough in 2021.

38.048 *Elachista consortella* Stainton, 1851 Nationally Scarce B
Recorded three times at Farthinghoe NR (SP54) between 15.viii.2022 and 04.ix.2022 as singletons (Pridmore), these represent the 3rd to 5th Vc32 records.

49.053 *Cnephasia pumicana* Cereal Tortrix (Zeller, 1847) Local
With only two previous (confirmed) records, it was good to have a third VC32 record for this difficult to identify moth. It was of a single moth taken to light in Hanging Houghton (SP77) on 23.vii.2022 (Barclay), and subsequently confirmed by dissection – essential for almost all of the *Cnephasia* species. Until 2010, *C. pumicana* was synonymised under *C. pasiuana* by Razowski (1989). Work recently published in Langmaid and Agassiz, 2010 indicates that consistent differences in genitalia exist between the two taxa, especially in the male, and that therefore there is no reason to not treat *pumicana* as a valid taxon. NB: there are 18 pre-2010 records in VC32 for *C. pasiuana*.

49.152 *Apotomis sororculana* (Zetterstedt, 1839) Nationally Scarce B
A second county record was taken to light at a group event in Fineshade (SP99) on 08.vii.2022. The moth is very similar to other *Apotomis* species and thus could be under-recorded as a result.

49.253 *Epinotia fraternana* (Haworth, 1811) Nationally Scarce B
A small moth, which is generally only encountered by day, where it flies in sunshine close to conifer trees. This may be reflected by its apparent scarcity in Northants. A fifth record was achieved when a single moth was netted during the day around conifers in Bucknell Wood (SP65) on 22.vi.2022 (Sharpe)/confirmed by dissection.

49.256 *Epinotia cinereana* (Haworth, 1811) (no classification)
This species was only formally separated from *E. nisella* in 2012, and subsequently only recognised a handful of times since in VC32. It was first recorded in VC32 in 2016, despite many good candidates having been examined microscopically. It was recorded to moth traps on three separate occasions in 2022:
Denton garden (SP85), 29.vii.2022 (Terry)
Bulwick Estate (SP99), 03.ix.2022 (group event)
Farthinghoe NR (SP54), 09.xi.2022 (Pridmore)
All the above records were confirmed by dissection.

49.261 *Crocidosema plebejana* Zeller, 1847 Local (migrant to midlands)
A migrant species, but also now naturalised on the South coast, recorded twice to a garden light trap at the same site during the year. Northampton, Kingsthorpe (SP76) on 17.vii.2022 & 25.vii.2022 (Sharpe). Interestingly the species was recorded at the same location again back in November 2017.

49.262 *Phaneta pauperana* (Duponchel, [1843]) pRDB3
A second VC32 record was of a single moth recorded at light at Ring Haw (TL09) on 17.iv.2022 (Follows). The moth was dissected to confirm ID. Interestingly, the only other record of this species is at the same site, when two individuals were taken on 25.iv.2015.

49.310 *Dichrorampha sedatana* Busck, 1906 Nationally Scarce B
The 4th county record was noted at Kingsthorpe, Northampton (SP76) on 12.ix.2022 (Sharpe). Generally, this small, but attractive moth is only recorded by day, and often in close association with its larval foodplant, Tansy.

49.319 *Dichrorampha flavidorsana* Knaggs, 1867 Nationally Scarce B
Many of the *Dichrorampha* require dissection to confirm their true identity, which is certainly true for this species, and thus this species might be slightly under-represented in the dataset. The moth has only been confirmed on two previous occasions, one of which was in 1910! As with the previous species, the larvae feed internally on Tansy.

49.360 *Pammene splendidulana* (Guenée, 1845) Nationally Scarce B

The only modern record of this scarce species. Recorded to light at Easton Hornstocks (TF00) on 13.iv.2022 (Follows), and confirmed by dissection. This species should respond to the ARG pheromone lure (designed to attract its congener, *P. argryana*), and best looked for on sunny afternoons or with lures left in pheromone traps overnight in suitable habitat (oak woodland is best). The previous record is rather vague, but is reported in The Lepidoptera of Northamptonshire and dated May 1918.

62.053 *Ancylosis oblitella* (Zeller, 1848) Nationally Scarce B

2022 saw the 5th to 8th county records on this nationally scarce moth, all as singletons to light thus:
Thrapston garden (SP97) to light on 11.viii.2022 (Hammond)
Nether Heyford (SP65) on 28.viii.2022 (Smith, F.)
Bulwick Estate (SP99) to light on 03.ix.2022 (group event)
Helpston (TF10) on 04.ix.2022 (Wright)
The moth is reasonably well-established in the South-east, with the larvae feeding upon Orache and Goosefoot.

63.002 *Loxostege sticticalis* (Linnaeus, 1761) Migrant

This species was seen quite widely in 2022, especially around the southern half of the UK, and was associated with records of other known migrant species. VC32 had two records during the year, the 4th and 5th respectively:
Peterborough garden (TF19) to light on 02.ix.2022 (Cox)
Helpston garden (TF10), also to light, on 12.ix.2022 (Hillier).

63.112 *Platytes alpinella* (Hübner, [1813]) Nationally Scarce B

The 4th VC32 record was of a single moth taken to light in a Helpston garden (TF10) on 11.viii.2022 (Wright). The UK distribution is quite patchy, being seen more frequently in coastal locations. The larvae are presumed to feed on various mosses. It is unknown therefore, if moths in VC32 are resident, or as a result of dispersal.

63.046 *Duponchelia fovealis* Zeller, 1847 Migrant/Adventive

I think we have an example of one adventive, and one migrant in 2022!
The 4th VC32 record was of a single moth seen indoors in Rothwell (SP88) on 14.i.2022 (Showers). The captor believes it probably arrived in the pupal stage with a Poinsettia plant given as a Christmas gift, and thus emerged due to the increased warmth of its environment. The 5th county record was of a single adult taken to light in an Oundle garden (TL09) on 22.vii.2022 (Horsnail), during an extended period of migrant activity across the country.

70.046 *Orthonama vittate* Oblique Carpet (Borkhausen, 1794) Local

A single Oblique Carpet was taken to light in a Helpston garden (TF10) on 10.viii.2022 (Wright). There have only been three records of this species since 2000, and was last recorded in VC32 in 2017. The larvae feed on Bedstraw, and tend to be seen in marshy and damp environments, but is otherwise quite widely distributed over the rest of the UK.

70.217 *Macaria brunneata* Rannoch Looper (Thunberg, 1784) Nationally Scarce/Migrant

A very warm night produced a single Rannoch Looper to a garden light trap in Thrapston (SP97) on 17.vi.2022 (Hammond). This is the 2nd VC32 record of this migrant species. Other examples appear to have been noted in the preceding few days in other southern and eastern counties. This is therefore only the 2nd VC32 record, the previous being taken in Northampton in June 2021. The resident UK population exists in Scotland, but those appearing in southern counties are assumed to be migrants for the near Continent.

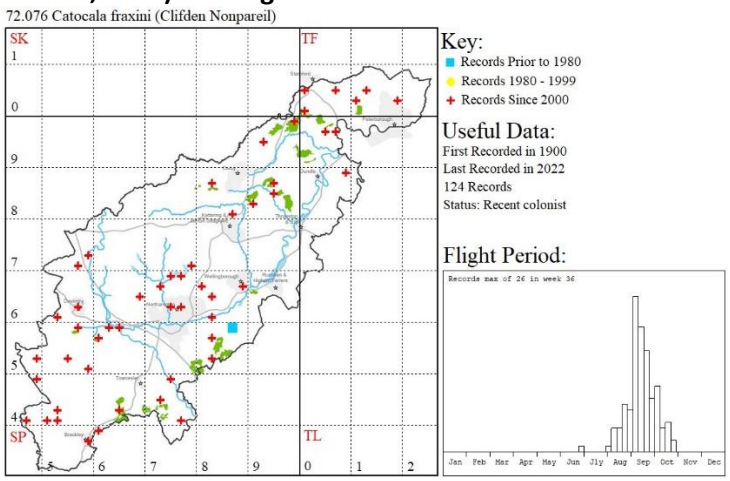
72.007 *Hypena crassalis* Beautiful Snout (Fabricius, 1787) Local

Sadly, this is a tale of "the one that got away". Fortunately, the moth is very easily identifiable. A single Beautiful Snout was recorded in a garden light trap in Duston, Northampton (SP76) on 08.vii.2022 (Mundy). The moth was seen upon opening the trap, but immediately took to flight! The moth must be regarded as an adventive here in the county, and likely to have originated from planted Heathers in nearby gardens, or possibly from garden centre stock in the nearby region. This sighting constitutes only the 2nd VC32 record, with the only other being from pre-1940 at Castor Hanglands, presumably from a time prior to the degradation and loss of the heathland on that site.

72.076 *Catocala fraxini* Clifden Nonpareil (Linnaeus, 1758) Migrant*

A further 35 records were received in 2022 (all but one of these being of adults to light traps), following on from 37 records in 2021.

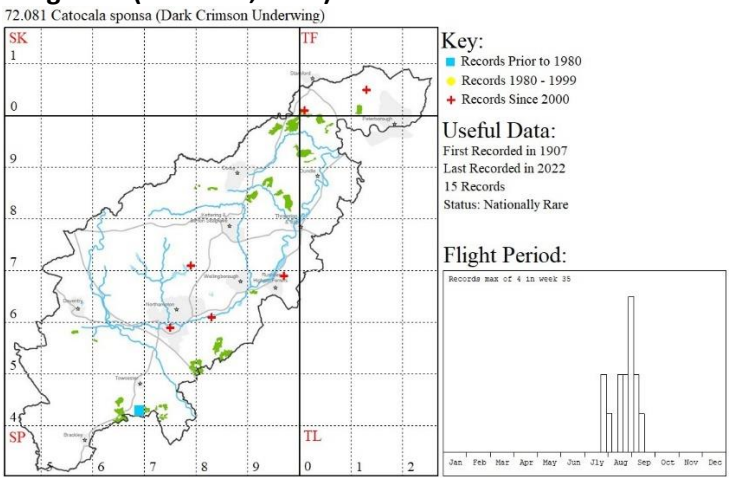
However, of some significance – the first time that a larva has been seen in the county was noted in Fermyn Woods (SP98) on 07.vii.2022. The record was confirmed from a photo submitted to the CMR. The larva was spotted on the ground during a daytime walk.



72.081 *Catocala sponsa* Dark Crimson Underwing (Linnaeus, 1767) RDB2

An incredible year for this species – recorded an amazing nine times. VC32 during 2022 and now has a total of 14 post-2000 records, dating between 23.vii.2022 and 08.ix.2022.

The spread of records is shown in the latest map opposite. It was recorded several times at regular traps operated at Pitsford Reservoir (SP77), but also at Easton Hornstocks (TF10), Higham Ferrers (SP96) and Collyweston Quarries (also TF10)



73.008 *Chrysodeixis chalcites* Golden Twin-spot (Esper, [1803]) Migrant

A single Golden Twin-spot was recorded to light in Nether Heyford (SP65) on 26.viii.2022 (Smith, F). This is the 2nd VC32 record, and the first of an adult to light. Prior to this, the only other VC32 record came in 1997 at Sywell (SP86), with an adult moth being seen indoors. The origin of that moth was most likely imported in some cut flowers that were purchased from a local Tesco store. Subsequent investigations revealed an empty pupal case in a rolled up rose leaf amongst the bouquet. Enquiries of the importer revealed that the flowers were most likely to have come from Kenya. The true origin of such exotica in the Midlands will always pose some queries as to whether it is a primary migrant (this far from coastal locations...) or an adventive which has found its way here with assistance from the horticultural trade. That said, there was a significant number of other migrant species recorded in the county in the preceding few days/week, with a Convolvulus Hawk-moth on 22nd August in Sywell and numerous Bordered Straws being taken over the county in the past few days, including one in the same trap as this Golden Twin-spot.

73.347 *Noctua janthina* Langmaid's Yellow Underwing [Denis & Schiffermuller], 1775 Recent Colonist
Always worth keeping an eye on Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwings in the county, as amongst these was a single Langmaid's Yellow Underwing, taken in a garden light trap in Oundle (TL09) on 20.vii.2022 (Horsnail). The ID was confirmed by both external checks of the hindwings and dissection. Probably the 3rd VC32 record for the species. This species has so far only been seen sparingly and intermittently at one site in Kingsthorpe, Northampton. I still think those moths recorded in VC32 represent migrants.

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 *Grapholita pallifrontana* Liquorice Piercer Zeller, 1845 [pRDB3]
Only two records of this moth in 2022, and only of two individual moths. One of these records was from a known site on the periphery of Fermyn Woods (SP98) on 29.v.2022, but the other was from Bugbrooke (SP65) on 29.v.2022, which is a reasonable distance from the currently known hotspot area around the Rockingham Forest area.

50.001 *Cossus cossus* Goat Moth (Linnaeus, 1758) [Nb]
Following on from a single moth recorded in Peterborough in 2020, another single moth was recorded to light in a Helpston garden (TF10) on 11.vii.2022. Only the 2nd time this species has been seen in the Vice County since 2000.

54.002 *Adscita statices* Forester (Linnaeus, 1758) [Local]
No VC32 records since 2010.

70.035 *Cyclophora porata* False Mocha (Linnaeus, 1767) [Local]
No VC32 records since 2011.

70.201 *Trichopteryx polycommata* Barred Tooth-striped ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) [Na]
No VC32 records since 1987.

72.070 *Trisateles emortualis* Olive Crescent ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) [RDB3]
No VC32 records since the singleton in 2017.

73.031 *Tyta luctuosa* Four-spotted ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) [Na]
At the time of writing, information for a known and regularly surveyed site along the railway at Werrington, Peterborough, TF10, is unknown.
A single moth was seen at Maxey Gravel Pits, TF10, on 09.v.2022 with another eight seen at the same site on 20.vii.2022.
Two moths were seen during the day at Castor Hanglands, also TF10, on 03.vii.2022
Ten adults were recorded in a garden light trap in Helpston, TF10, between 11.vii.2022 and 22.vii.2022 – a slightly different garden location to a singleton also taken to light in Helpston in 2021.

73.149 *Photedes extrema* Concolorous (Hübner, [1809]) [RDB3]
17 records were forthcoming for this species during 2022, of approximately 183 individuals. One light trapping session yielded 72 individual moths in Fineshade on 15.vi.2022.

73.214 *Cosmia diffinis* White-spotted Pinion (Linnaeus, 1767) [Na]
Three records from 2022 – all of singletons to light traps, between 18.vii.2022 and 29.vii.2022.

73.218 *Dicycla oo* Heart Moth (Linnaeus, 1758) [RDB3]
No VC32 records since 2006. There was one targeted light trapping session conducted at a known, private site, but yielded no moths of this species. The weather on the night was cool and breezy, which may have prevented moths from flying.

73.259 *Polia bombycina* Pale Shining Brown (Hufnagel, 1766) [Nb]
No VC32 records since 1992. There is some debate as to whether this species is now extinct in the UK.

5. Migrant Species

Below is a brief table of known migrant species to have been recorded during 2022. NB: this is as per the definition by MapMate – I am firmly convinced that some of these so-called migrant species are in fact resident in VC32, in *particular Matalampra italica*, *Cydalima perspecticalis* (Box-tree Moth) and *Mythimna albipuncta* (White-point). Records of these species appear throughout the season, and seem not to conform to periods of "migrant activity".

ABH	Taxon	Vernacular	Approx. No. Individuals
18.001	*Plutella xylostella*	Diamond-back Moth	110
28.008	*Metalampra italica*		10
62.020	*Etiella zinckenella*		1
63.002	*Loxostege sticticalis*		2
63.031	*Udea ferrugalis*	Rusty-dot Pearl	25
63.048	*Palpita vitrealis*		2
63.052	*Nomophila noctuella*	Rush Veneer	208
63.054	*Cydalima perspectalis*	Box-tree Moth	203
69.004	*Agrius convolvuli*	Convolvulus Hawk-moth	9
69.010	*Macroglossum stellatarum*	Humming-bird Hawk-moth	214
69.014	*Hyles gallii*	Bedstraw Hawk-moth	3
69.015	*Hyles livornica*	Striped Hawk-moth	3
70.038	*Rhodometra sacraria*	Vestal	35

70.047	*Nycterosea obstipata*	Gem	1
73.008	*Chrysodeixis chalcites*	Golden Twin-spot	1
73.015	*Autographa gamma*	Silver Y	402
70.217	*Macaria brunneata*	Rannoch Looper	1
73.074	*Heliothis peltigera*	Bordered Straw	11
73.076	*Helicoverpa armigera*	Scarce Bordered Straw	8
73.087	*Spodoptera exigua*	Small Mottled Willow	2
73.295	*Mythimna vitellina*	Delicate	4
73.297	*Mythimna albipuncta*	White-point	302
73.307	*Peridroma saucia*	Pearly Underwing	6
73.327	*Agrotis ipsilon*	Dark Sword-grass	56

6. Obituaries

John Ward
30th July 1937 – 23rd January 2022

It is with considerable sadness that I have to announce the passing of John Ward, who died unexpectedly on Sunday, 23rd of January. As many of you will know John was the previous County Macro Moth Recorder for Northamptonshire/VC32, a role he held for some 30 years until he relinquished it in May 2015. John's interest remained firmly with the macro moth species rather than the micros, proudly proclaiming himself to be a "Heart and Dart man".

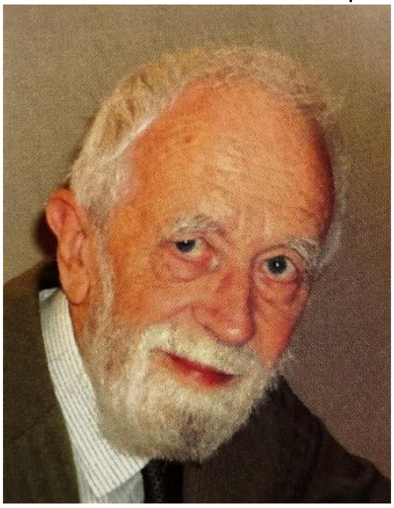
John was instrumental in gathering macro moth records from all eras, poring over notebooks of earlier recorders for information and searching through specimens lodged in local museums. He was therefore the driving force behind the digitisation of these data, eventually putting them into a single database (aided hugely by his wife, Brenda). This then enabled local distribution maps to be created for the first time. These were then added to a newly created website, along with a write up for every species that had ever been recorded in the vice county. John's attention to detail in sorting through these records was nothing short of legendary, and his recall of species, sites and dates was most enviable! This information provided the impetus to search for some of the long-lost species within the county, including those that had not been recorded for many years. Very often these activities would take the form of a moth group field trip, an activity that continues to this day.

Away from his duties as County Moth Recorder he spent a lot of time out of county with his good friend Derek Howton. The pair would travel the length and breadth of the United Kingdom in search of rare and elusive species that could not be seen locally. This nasty little habit has of course rubbed off on the current county recorder.

After retiring as the CMR, he directed his efforts into completing a book documenting the current state of Northamptonshire's macro moths. "The Larger Moths of Northamptonshire & the Soke of Peterborough" was privately published in 2015. The tome includes comprehensive notes on some of the earlier recorders, and their contributions to our knowledge base. It also contains a very handy guide to some of the local sites, many of which have been visited by the moth group over the years.

On a personal note, I owe John a huge debt of thanks. I first met him around 1995, at which point he immediately took me under his wing (clearly my identification skills were so awful, he had no choice). John spent a lot of time teaching me about moths and taking me to the best moth sites in the county. He would often attempt to lure me into the dark side of slug and snail identification. I somehow resisted, but still have an inexplicable soft spot for both White-lipped and Brown-lipped Snails… John was hugely generous with his time and knowledge for which I will always be grateful. I will cherish the time we spent in his study, mulling over the state of moths, sipping cups of coffee ferried in at regular intervals by Brenda.
John, may your Heart & Darts be plentiful, with the occasional ab. *lineolatus* thrown in for good measure.

David Manning
14th December 1936 - 30th September 2022



Those who have been "doing moths" for a few years will remember that David was the County Micro-moth Recorder for both Bedfordshire (VC30) and Northants for many years, until he finally retired at the end of 2015. David initially was the County Micro-moth Recorder for VC30, but later became a key figure in the recording of micro-moths in VC32, responding to a request by the late Maitland Emmett to "fill-in some gaps" as part of the publication of the book series, The Moths & Butterflies of Great Britain & Ireland. To that end he added numerous micro-moth species to the VC32 list. He specialised in finding and identifying leaf-mines, and thus many of his County Firsts were derived in this fashion. David also therefore made a significant contribution to the British Leafminers website, which has become one of the go-to web resources for identifying mines.

David suffered a serious fall about three years ago, which had a subsequent and significant impact on his mobility, and thus he was unable to pursue his passion in the last couple of years. I'm sure that this would have been very frustrating for him, as he was still actively recording leaf-mines in the region up until that point.

David spent a not inconsiderable amount of time tutoring me in the ways of "the dark side" when he handed the VC32 micro-moth recording job to me in late 2015/early 2016. We spent many happy sessions poring over his microscope as he brought me a bit more up-to-speed on the finer art of dissection techniques and identification.

One abiding memory for me was sharing a train trip into London 4 or 5 years ago, to attend the annual BENHS Exhibition, whilst loudly discussing the merits and pitfalls of the study of genitalia...much to the amusement (and possibly consternation) of our fellow passengers. I for one will miss his sage words of advice, and his enthusiastic encouragement.