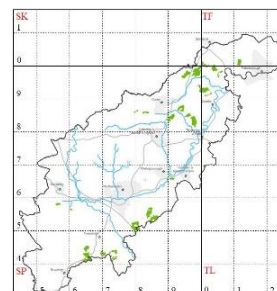


# VC32/Northamptonshire Moths – A Summary of New Species & Noteworthy Records from 2023

Mark Hammond, VC32 CMR  
(Feb 2024)

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

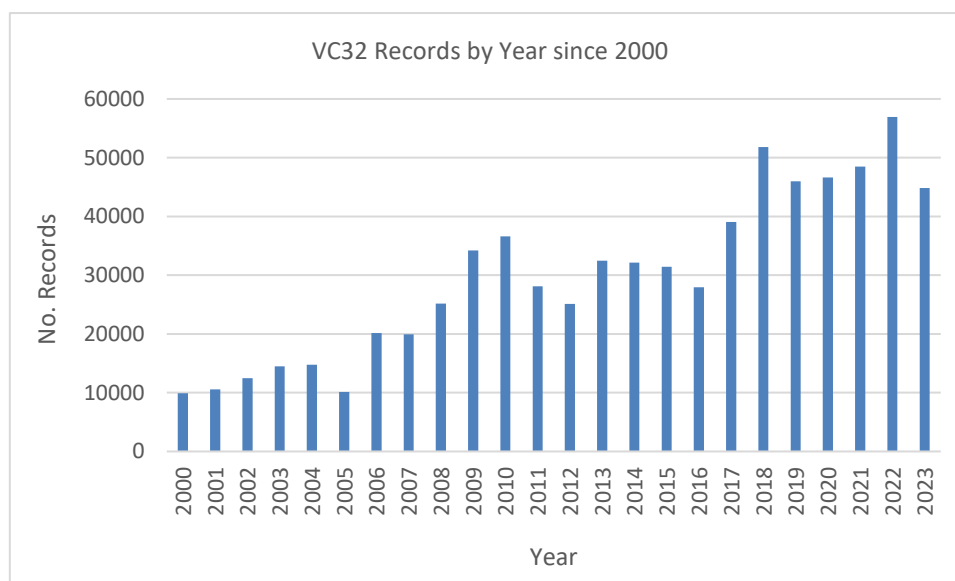


## 1. Introduction, etc

This is an annual review of species newly recorded in VC32 (Northamptonshire and The Soke of Peterborough), along with interesting and noteworthy moths recorded during the 2023 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 2023 (or indeed from any previous years), it's never too late – please send them in. All records (macro and micro-moths) 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.

2023 was provisionally the second warmest year on record for the UK, narrowly behind the record set in 2022, with Wales and Northern Ireland having their respective warmest years in a series from 1884 (Source: Met Office). The first part of 2023 was drier, sunnier and slightly milder than average, with February particularly dry across England. Spring brought into focus the shifting rainfall patterns around the UK; March was very wet! Summer was warmer and wetter than average with a record-breaking June. Autumn and early winter was milder and wetter than average, with a fine start, a very wet October and a run of named storms. The wetter summer conditions may well have had a direct effect on our moth species, but may well also have had a negative effect on moth trap frequency.

Certainly 2023 has fewer records, and fewer species recorded than the last couple of years. It will be interesting to see if this is a UK-wide effect. That said, excluding those who submitted just the occasional sighting, I have received moth trap datasets from around 65 people. Given that there were about 10 regular moth recorders in 2000 (and providing around 10,000 records per year between them), that's quite a significant increase in the volume of data!



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.

Firstly, as has become customary, some fun facts and figures (inc. amended figures for previous years):

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
No. records received	44,831	56,913	48,476	46,654	45,974
No. species recorded (exc. aggregates)	983	1,047	1,037	1,053	1,050
No. individual moths recorded (approx)	184,660	196,600	168,600	150,000	195,200
No. species new to the county	4	14	10	12	11

This brings the grand total of records in the VC32 database to over **894,000**.

The Top Ten species, based on number of records received, not number of individuals (2022 position in brackets) seems to indicate a fairly stable top-ten over the past couple of years. Large Yellow Underwing remains the top moth. Silver Y has leapt in at No.4 (perhaps reflecting that 2023 was a “good year for migrants” in the UK), and Dark Arches and Riband Wave return to the line-up.

Pos.	ABH	Taxon	Vernacular	Records
1 (1)	73.342	<i>Noctua pronuba</i>	Large Yellow Underwing	1155
2 (8)	70.258	<i>Peribatodes rhomboidaria</i>	Willow Beauty	766
3 (2)	73.359	<i>Xestia c-nigrum</i>	Setaceous Hebrew Character	711
4 (-)	73.015	<i>Autographa gamma</i>	Silver Y	651
5 (-)	73.162	<i>Apamea monoglypha</i>	Dark Arches	621
6 (3)	73.291	<i>Mythimna pallens</i>	Common Wainscot	642
7 (6)	73.317	<i>Agrotis exclamationis</i>	Heart and Dart	625
8 (-)	70.016	<i>Idaea aversata</i>	Riband Wave	602
9 (5)	70.226	<i>Opisthograptis luteolata</i>	Brimstone Moth	593
10 (10)	73.345	<i>Noctua comes</i>	Lesser Yellow Underwing	564

### Welcome to New Recorders

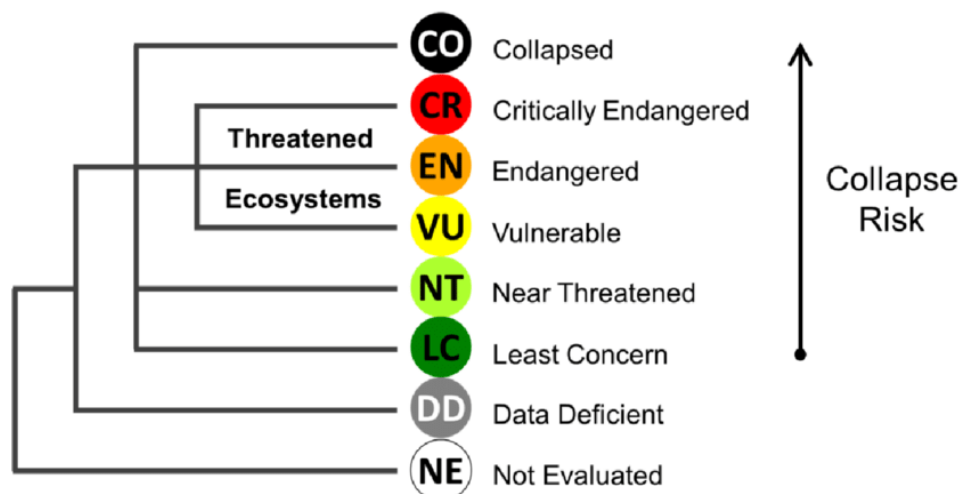
Some of the recipients of this report may be seeing it for the first time, and I welcome you to the VC32 moth community, including those who use on-line systems, such as iRecord, iNaturalist, NMRS or NBRC. For those receiving this report for the first time I hope it is of use, with some nuggets of interest 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, record submission, etc. Having a bit of a “moth wanderlust”, I am often away from my desk for short periods of time during the main moth season as I chase moths in far-away counties/countries, but always endeavour to reply to queries as soon as I am able. My contact details can be found via the website (address at the top of this report).

### Thank you to existing recorders too!

I would of course like to thank everyone who submitted records during 2023, including those who have added casual records via on-line systems. On average, over the last ten years, I have received moth trap datasets from around 54 people. Some of you have been submitting records for much longer than that, others maybe only the last two or three, maybe taking up the hobby during lockdown. I’ve said it before, but each and every sighting adds just a little bit more knowledge. Do please keep them coming.

## 1.1 Macro Moths – adoption of IUCN conservation codes

A recent change to the conservation classification of the macro-moths has taken place. The IUCN system (International Union for the Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species) has been adopted, replacing the GB Rarity Status system and the JNCC National UK Status (Red Data Book). Note that this has occurred for macro-moths only, and micro-moths remain under the older system. The system is best outlined in pictorial format:



**REGIONALLY EXTINCT (RE)** A taxon is Extinct when there is no reasonable doubt that the last individual has died. In this review, species not recorded in GB this century are considered Regionally Extinct.

**CRITICALLY ENDANGERED (CR)** A taxon is Critically Endangered when the best available evidence indicates that it meets any of the criteria A to E for Critically Endangered (see Appendix 2 of S19-17). 'Possibly Extinct' is an additional tag used for Critically Endangered taxa that are, on the balance of evidence, likely to be extinct, but for which there is a small chance that they may be extant.

**ENDANGERED (EN)** A taxon is Endangered when the best available evidence indicates that it meets any of the criteria A to E for Endangered (see Appendix 2 of S19-17).

**VULNERABLE (VU)** A taxon is Vulnerable when the best available evidence indicates that it meets any of the criteria A to E for Vulnerable (see Appendix 2 of S19-17).

**NEAR THREATENED (NT)** A taxon is Near Threatened when it has been evaluated against the criteria but does not qualify for Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable now, but is close to qualifying for or is likely to qualify for a threatened category in the near future.

**LEAST CONCERN (LC)** A taxon is Least Concern when it has been evaluated against the criteria and does not qualify for Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Near Threatened. Widespread and abundant taxa are included in this category.

**DATA DEFICIENT (DD)** A taxon is Data Deficient when there is inadequate information to make a direct, or indirect, assessment of its risk of extinction based on its distribution and/or population status. A taxon in this category may be well studied, and its biology well known, but appropriate data on abundance and/or distribution are lacking. Data Deficient is therefore not a category of threat. Listing of taxa in this category indicates that more information is required and acknowledges the possibility that future research will show that threatened classification is appropriate.

**NOT APPLICABLE (NA)** A taxon that is deemed to be ineligible for assessment at a regional level is listed as Not Applicable. This can be for a variety of reasons e.g. because it is not within its natural range in the region or because it is a vagrant to the region. In this review, GB species that are resident because of human introduction are considered Not Applicable.

**NOT EVALUATED (NE)** A taxon is Not Evaluated when it has not yet been evaluated against the criteria.

## 1.2 Micro-moth Vernacular Names

On of the most “marmite” topics of recent years! Vernacular/Common/English names have actually been proposed for micro-moths as early as 1839, in the snappily-titled “*Index Entomologicus; A complete Illustrated Catalogue of the Lepidopterous Insects of Great Britain*”, by W. Wood. Other authors since then have also proposed and published vernacular names for micros, but seem to have received limited recognition, and even more limited uptake.

Despite these various attempts, a few micro-moths have been long known by their vernacular names for many years. Commonly recognised ones would include Small Magpie, Mother of Pearl, Bird-cherry Ermine, Beautiful Plume, Variegated Golden Tortrix, etc and remain in common parlance.

Jim Wheeler published a fully-revised list of names in 2013, building on a list published by Heslop and Porter. These names gained popularity, especially with those taking up the hobby in recent years, but were still decried by many! In 2023, Mark Parsons, Phil Sterling and Sean Clancy published two significant books on micro-moths (see separate section) which amended many of those “Wheeler” names. It is likely that this most recent effort will gain further traction and become more widely accepted. These will take time for aged, wizened old entomologists such as I to get used to, so please do utilise the scientific name alongside the vernacular in communications. The vernaculars are not yet seen on iRecord, etc, and do not appear in MapMate, hence do not appear on the county website. However, the eagle-eyed amongst you will notice that I have added the recently published micro-moth vernacular names to this report.

### 1.3 Update to Taxonomy – Deep-Brown Dart

Discussions about the validity of Deep-brown Dart *Aporophyla lutulenta* and Northern Deep-brown Dart *Aporophyla lueneburgensis* as resident species in the UK have been simmering for a few years. It has long been established on the Continent that *Aporophyla lutulenta* has been shown to be south-eastern European species only, and that *A. lueneburgensis* is widespread throughout Europe. The inference there is that *A. lutulenta* is therefore absent from the UK! Genetic and taxonomic studies have now shown that there is no proven presence of *A. lutulenta* in the UK.

In summary, there is an update to the current UK checklist which now removes 73.231 *Aporophyla lutulenta* (Deep-brown Dart) from the British list. We only have *A. lueneburgensis*, "Northern Deep-brown Dart", which is now to be called “Deep-brown Dart.” I do hope that makes sense...

### 1.4 Recent Moth Publications

Alluded to in an earlier section, there are two books in particular that I’d like to draw your attention to – both covering micro-moths:

The second edition of The Field Guide to the Micro-moths of Great Britain & Ireland is now available (Phil Sterling, Mark Parsons & Richard Lewington, Bloomsbury Press).

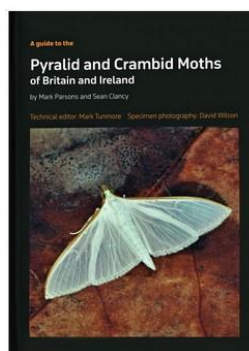
A superb general-purpose guide to micro-moths, although not all are illustrated. Includes numerous photos of leaf-mines, larvae and larval cases, alongside the excellent illustrations of adult moths by Richard Lewington.



Mark Parsons & Sean Clancy have published A Guide to the Pyralid and Crambid Moths of Britain and Ireland.

Specialising in families of micro-moths that are often studied by macro-moths, and could be the ideal way of “getting into micros”.

The book contains photographs of adult moths, with many larval and habitat shots too.





## 1.5 The Rise of The Box-tree Moth, *Cydalima perspectalis*

Originally an Asian species, the first UK record was of a single moth found in a polytunnel in Wye, Kent, on 07.ix.2007. Larvae and pupae were found the following year in a commercial plant nursery in Surrey. Since then, the moth seems to have spread rapidly and has even been reported in Scotland.



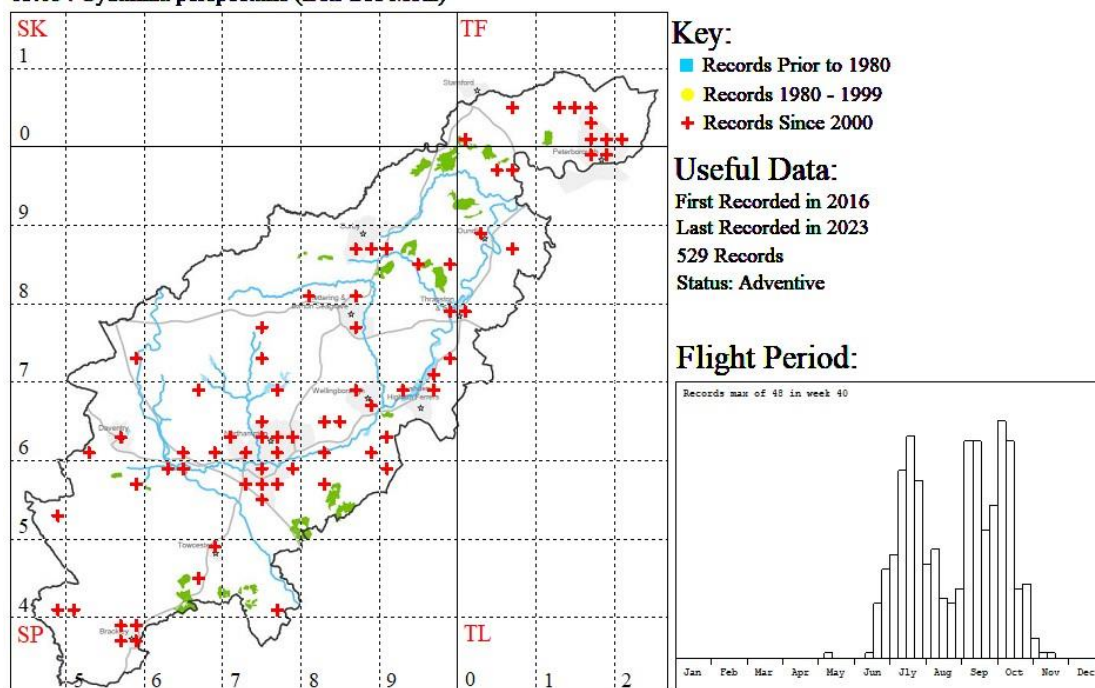
"Normal form - Photo credit: Keith Tailby



Melanic form - Photo credit: Butterfly Conservation

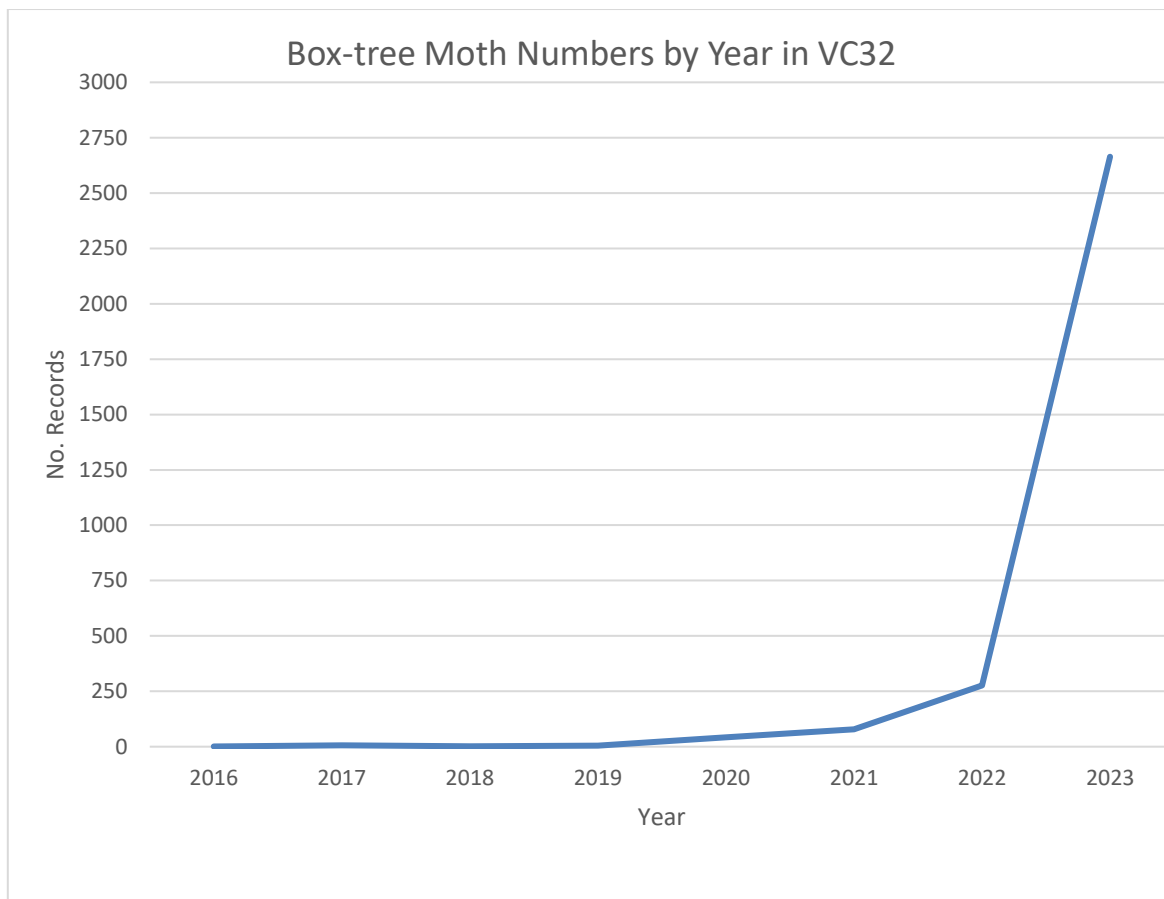
The first VC32 record was of a single adult taken in a garden light trap in Kingsthorpe, Northampton (Sharpe) on 24.ix.2016. The moth was recorded sporadically in various locations over the next two or three years. The current VC32 distribution can be seen in the map below:

63.054 *Cydalima perspectalis* (Box-tree Moth)



Current distribution and phenology (Output from MapMate)

Since 2020 though, the increase in both number of records, and number of individuals has risen dramatically. However, 2023 saw yet another significant rise in records and numbers. Several recorders saw moths in numbers over quite a prolonged period, presumably as one brood merges into another. One garden in Northampton has a top-total on **one night** of 207 moths, with an annual total count of 1,717 individual moths (Gill)! The increase in the number of moth records in the database is depicted here:



Horticulturalists are clearly very concerned about the successful colonisation by this species, as Box is used widely as a domestic hedging plant, but is seen in many public places, and gardens of historic houses, etc.



*An assemblage of moth-trapped Box-tree Moths - Photo credit: Derek Larkin*



## 1.6 BOLO (Be on the look-out for...)

There follows a list of species which may make an appearance in VC32 in the coming season (or two). Based on species which are known to be expanding their range, but also includes a couple which have been discovered as residents, having gone unnoticed! One or two remain from last years' list...and Black-spotted Chestnut now appears to be an annual member of this section! It just has to turn-up soon. To finish on a serious note, if you are lucky enough to capture an of the species featured below, please retain any specimens of the species below, and notify the CMR as soon as possible to see if further confirmation is required.

### 28.0245 *Tachystola mulliganae* No vernacular yet assigned (Meyrick, 1885) N/A

A species endemic to Australia, recently discovered in the UK, at one location in Middlesex. I add this here given that it is not too dissimilar to another recent colonist, *Tachystola acroxantha*, which is now turning up in many locations around VC32.



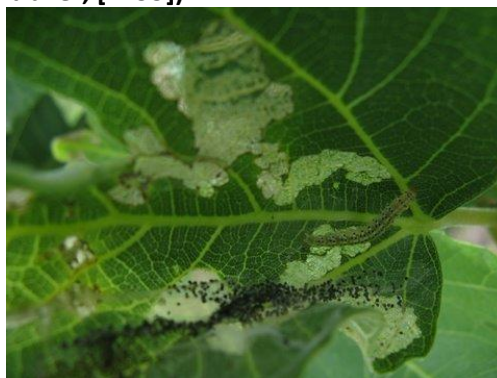
Photo credit: Barbara Mulligan

### 48.0071 *Choreutis nemorana* Fig-leaf Skeletoniser (Hübner, [1799])

First noted in the UK in July 2014, as larvae on a Fig tree in Hyde Park, this species seems to have spread quite rapidly. It has been reported from other London areas and a considerable part of Middlesex, and onwards to Essex, Kent, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Norfolk. Most recently also from East Sussex.

The adult moth is very similar in appearance as Apple Leaf Skeletoniser, *C. pariana*. Adults appear to be double-brooded, first appearing in July, then again from October, hibernating over winter.

However, the adults seem not to attend light traps so is best looked for by day as adults or as larvae. The larvae make an obvious silk spinning on the upper side of the leaf, with very obvious feeding damage surrounding this.



Larva and damage - Photo credit: [www.papillon-poitou-charentes.org](http://www.papillon-poitou-charentes.org)



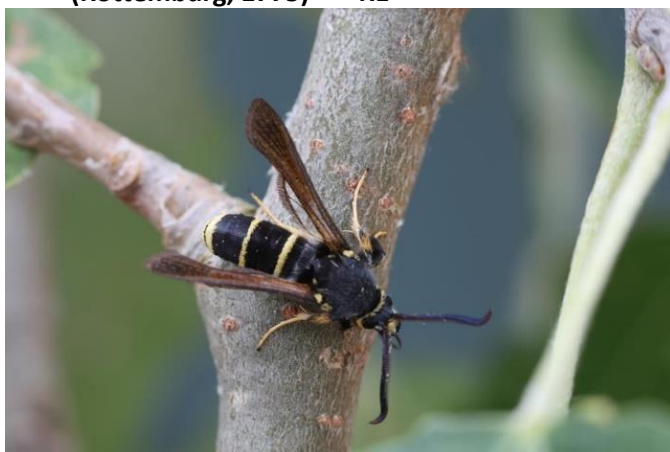
Photo credit: Jonathan Newman

**52.004 *Paranthrene tabaniformis* Dusky Clearwing**

**(Rottemburg, 1775) RE**

I'm leaving this one on the BOLO list – several people looked for it in 2023, without success, but this really needs to be looked for again this year! A single female was recorded in Warks on 07.vii.2021. This was the first mainland UK record for decades. Many recorders all over the UK looked for the moth in 2023, and it was recorded in several nearby counties including Cambridgeshire, Warwickshire and Bedfordshire. 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 must be in sunny conditions.



**Photo credit: Keith Tailby**

**62.070 *Synaphe punctalis* Long-legged Tabby**

**(Fabricius, 1775) Local**

Originally restricted to southern-most counties, and occupying shingle and coastal dunes habitats. Larvae feed on mosses, and the adult comes readily to light.

The adults can be found on the wing from June through to August. Recently the moth has spread to Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, East Bedfordshire, Berks, Bucks, Herts & Middlesex.



**Photo credit: Keith Tailby**



**65.0021      *Drepana uncinula*      Spiny Hook-tip**

**(Borkhausen, 1790)      N/A**

Only recently identified as a “cryptic species”, being first recognised in July 2023 in Guernsey, where it has since been noted on many occasions. Some archive photos of putative Oak Hook-tip from this site going back to 2020 have also since been identified as Spiny Hook-tip.

The adults are very similar to those of Oak Hook-tip.

The distinguishing features include:

- Forewing apex, which has a black mark with a white area immediately adjacent (see detailed image).
- Forewing apex often has small black marks/shading along the termen, adjacent to the hook-tip
- Forewing colour, especially in fresh individuals, seems to have a greyish or purple wash.
- Size – on average slightly larger than Oak Hook-tip
- NB: worn individuals should be retained for dissection.

Larvae feed on Oak (including Holm Oak), with Silver Birch also noted as possible foodplant on the Continent.

The Guernsey findings encouraged searching on the mainland, where it has been confirmed in Gloucestershire, Glamorgan and Somerset. I’m sure that this species will be found further afield in 2024, and so worth having a very close look at all Oak Hook-tips you may catch. Adults come to light, and fly between May and October, with at least two broods.

If you suspect you have caught one of these, please retain it and contact me before release.



***Photo credits: Malcolm Hillier***

**72.047      *Eilema caniola*      Hoary Footman**

**(Hübner, [1808])      LC**

This species is most easily confused with Scarce Footman. Formerly only known at some coastal locations, it has recently been recorded from apparently isolated, inland sites. The current distribution for the moth includes those original coastal locations, but it also seems now to be recorded in many of the south-eastern counties, up to Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. Since 2013, there has also been a very localised population in Leicester city, but there are recent records outside of the city too.

In late August 2023, several very pale Footman were captured in Easton-on-the-Hill. These could not be confirmed, but seemed to be “good candidates” from photos submitted to the CMR. The normal flight period is between July and September, and the adults are attracted to light.

If you suspect that you have caught this species, please retain the specimen for further inspection.



**Photo credit: Keith Tailby**

**73.196 *Conistra rubiginosa*      Black-spotted Chestnut**

**(Scopoli, 1763)      Migrant\***

For fear of boring everyone...another species that I am going to retain on the BOLO list from last year (and the year before...) 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**

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.



## 2. Species New to VC32 in 2022

Only four species were noted as being new to VC32 during 2023:

### **63.0604 *Everegestis aenealis* Yellow-headed Pearl ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)**

Not only a new species to VC32, but a new species to the UK! A single, worn, unidentified moth (illustrated in the lower image) was taken to light at Easton Hornstocks on 19.vi.2023 (Follows).

The moth was retained but not identified until October, when the moth was dissected (*det.* Mackay). Identification was confirmed by various UK experts and noted as being new to Britain.

The moth was taken during a period of migration and thus it is assumed that it arrived in similar manner.

A full report will be published in the Atropos journal.



**Photo credit: Robin Howard**



**Photo credit: Ron Follows**

### **63.061 *Hellula undalis* Old World Webworm (Fabricius, 1781)**

A single individual was recorded to a garden light trap in Cogenhoe on 19.x.2023 (Seaman). This is the 1st VC32 record for this rare migrant species. This follows a period of significant migration, which saw a good number of these species recorded in mainly coastal locations in south-western counties of the UK. I have not seen any other records for this species this far inland/north.



**Photo credit: Darren Seaman**

**63.119 *Musotima nitidalis* Marbled Fern Walker**

Always quite gratifying when one of the BOLO species is actually recorded the following season! A single moth, shown in the image opposite, was taken to light at Easton Hornstocks on 05.x.2023 (Follows). This species appears to be expanding its range fairly rapidly, since its first discovery in the UK in Dorset in 2009. An adventive, being originally native to Australia and New Zealand, it is assumed to have arrived in the UK as a result of horticultural imports.

Larvae feed on various ferns.



Photo credit: Ron Follows

**73.093 *Caradrina kadenii* Clancy's Rustic (Freyer, [1836])**

The first record for VC32 was actually on the same date, from two garden moth traps, in Oundle (Horsnail) and Thrapston (Hammond) on 30.ix.2023. A further moth was taken at light in a Nassington garden (Smith, N) on 04.x.2023, with further examples being taken at this location over the next couple of weeks. A singleton was also recorded to light in a Northampton garden (Gill) on 09.x.2023.



Photo credit: Keith Tailby

### **3. Significant and Noteworthy Records from 2023**

Below therefore, are some species of note which were recorded during 2023. 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 2022).

**4.025 *Stigmella nylandriella* Rowan Dot (Tengström, 1848)**

21 vii 2023

A number vacated mines were noted on 21.vii.2023 on Rowan at Farthinghoe NR (Pridmore). This is the 3rd VC32 record, the last being in 2011. A fairly common species across the UK, but low records in the county perhaps reflects the relative infrequency of the foodplant locally.

**4.074 *Etainia sericopeza* Norway Maple Dot (Zeller, 1839)**

A single adult was taken in a garden light trap in Thrapston (Hammond) on 07.ix.2023. The moth was dissected to prove the identification. It is suspected that the moth originated from a medium-sized Norway Maple in the same garden, so the larval mines will be looked for in the coming season. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> VC32 record.

**8.005 *Phylloporia bistrigella* Striped Cutter (Haworth, 1828)**

There have only been three previous records of this species in the county, all between 2006 and 2019 in and around Yardley Chase (SP84/85). A single specimen was recorded to light at Fineshade (Follows) on 24.v.2023. This therefore represents a significant increase in local range, although nationally it appears to found in most vice-counties. The larvae ultimately form a blotch mine on Birch and therefore further records could well be obtained by searching for these in late summer.



**12.035 *Niditinea striolella* Brindled Nest Moth (Matsumura, 1931)**

The fourth county record was of a single moth taken at light in the grounds of Althorp House on 24.vi.2023 (Hammond). Again, the moth required dissection to prove its identification. The larvae, as the vernacular suggests, live within birds' nests, presumably feeding upon feathers and other "detritus". They might also be found in mole burrows and within the nests of various Hymenoptera. Nationally it has a fairly localised distribution in the south of the country.

**15.002 *Caloptilia cuculipennella* Privet Stilt (Hübner, 1796)**

A couple of mines of this species were noted on Ash saplings at Farthinghoe NR (Pridmore) on 29.viii.2023. These represent the 4th VC32 record of this nationally scarce moth, only the second modern record for this species and the first ever record of the leaf mine in the county. Interestingly, further mines were noted at a different location at the same site a few days later on 04.ix.2023 (Pridmore).

**15.060 *Phyllonorycter ulicicolella* Gorse Leaf-miner (Stainton, 1851)**

Following its first record in 2022, the species was noted a further five times during 2023 (noting that two of these records are from the same site as the first VC record of 2022), all in the larval form as stem-mines on Gorse. Records are as follows:

14.iii.2023 – Weekley Hall Woods; 2 mines found (Smith, R)  
20.iii.2024 – Prologis Park adjacent to Kettering (Smith, R)  
06.iv.2023 - Weekley Hall Woods; 2 mines found (Hammond)  
14.iv.2023 – Rockingham Road, Kettering (Smith, R)  
30.xii.2023 – Simon's Wood, Marholm; 2 mines found (Newman)

**16.008 *Yponomeuta sedella* Orpine Ermine Treitschke, 1832**

A single *Yponomeuta sedella* was recorded in a Middleton garden light trap on 07.vii.2023 (Pridmore). This is only the 5th VC32 confirmed record. The larvae feed on Orpine, but are also known to feed on cultivated Sedum plants.

**30.001 *Agnoea flavifrontella* Yellow-headed Concealer ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)**

This group of moths can be quite tricky to identify and thus possibly under-recorded as a result. That said, the 2<sup>nd</sup> county record for this species was taken in Badby Woods on 27.v.2023 (Pridmore) as part of a group moth-trapping session. The moth was dissected to confirm ID. Little is known of the early stages of this moth, the larvae being suspected to feed upon decaying leaves, living within a portable case. The first VC records was in 2015.

**34.005 *Cosmopterix zieglereella* Hop Beauty (Hübner, [1810])**

A couple of vacated mines were located on Hop on 02.ix.2023 near the The Nene in Thrapston (Hammond). This is the 5th VC32 record. Northamptonshire is probably at the very edge of this species' range in the UK, with most records seemingly from the south-eastern counties.

**35.033 *Platyedra subcinerea* Mallow Seed Moth (Haworth, 1828)**

First recorded locally in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, there were no further records until 2021 (which was then the 5<sup>th</sup> VC32 record). Recorded once again in 2022, the moth was noted on four more occasions during 2023, all as adults taken at light, thus:

16.iv.2023 – Oundle (Horsnail)  
29.iv.2023 – Higham Ferrers (Vials)  
21.v.2023 – Higham Ferrers (Vials)  
18.viii.2023 – Oundle (Horsnail)

Possibly this represents a genuine expansion in range, possibly greater focus on micro-moths. The larvae feed on Common Mallow and possibly Hollyhock, and thus may well be encountered in garden light traps, as evidenced above.

**35.045 *Bryotropha basaltinella*      Dark-spotted Moss-moth      (Zeller, 1839)**

Recorded only four times before, the moth was noted on three further occasions as adults to light traps during 2023 (NB all of these were dissected to prove ID):

23.v.2023 – Weedon (Wadey)

09.vii.2023 – Woodford House Estate (Skinner) as part of a BioBlitz event

07.ix.2023 – Thrapston (Hammond)

As mentioned in last year's report, the adults are easily confused with its close relatives and thus any putative specimens should be retained for dissection.

**35.080 *Oxypteryx unicolorella*      Bronze Neb      (Duponchel, [1843])**

A single moth was taken at Swaddywell Pits (Hillier) on 09.vi.2023 during a Northants Moth Group trapping event. This represents only the 5<sup>th</sup> VC32 record. The moth identification was confirmed by dissection. The early stages of this species are apparently undescribed, but believed to feed upon Perforate St John's Wort.

**35.105 *Gelechia nigra*      Black Gelechia      (Haworth, 1828)**

The first and only previous record of this species was of an adult taken to light in Denton Wood in 1998 by the late David Manning. 2023 saw two further records from different parts of Farthinghoe NR (Pridmore). Both were of adults at light, on 12.vii.2023 and 23.vii.2023. Both were dissected to confirm their ID. Nationally, the moth is described as being quite local, with scattered distribution in England and Wales. The larvae feed between flatly spun leaves of Aspen, Grey Poplar and White Poplar.

**37.063 *Coleophora albicosta*      Gorse Case-bearer      (Haworth, 1828)**

A single adult was recorded in a light trap in Collyweston Great Wood on 26.vi.2023 (Follows). This is the 4<sup>th</sup> vice-county record, reflecting the relative scarcity of Gorse within the county. *Coleophora* can often be better recorded in their larval stages, where the cases can be quite distinctive. This, combined with the foodplant upon which they are found is often diagnostic, whereas the adults often require dissection. Finding the larval cases of this species is however, particularly unpleasant given the very spiny nature of its larval pabulum!

**45.034 *Merrifieldia baliodactylus*      Dingy White Plume      (Zeller, 1841)**

A further single adult of this species was noted at Swaddywell Pits on 16.vi.2023 (via Hillier), being the 4<sup>th</sup> VC32 record. This remains the only known site for the species in VC32. The larvae feed upon Wild Marjoram and may be found at other former quarry sites. The larvae cut through the stem of the plant during Spring, causing the apical leaves to wilt, upon which they subsequently feed. This may prove useful in finding the species at this and other locations.

**49.009 *Capua vulgana*      Pale-shouldered Tortrix      (Frölich, 1828)**

This species appears to be quite common and widespread throughout the UK, yet has only been recorded on three previous occasions. A single adult was taken to a light trap during the group event at Badby Woods on 27.v.2023 (Skinner). This is also only the second time it has been recorded since 2000. Larvae appear to utilise a range of different foodplants, including Alders, Hornbeams and Whitebeam.

**49.380 *Pammene gallicana*      Purple Marbled Tortrix (Guenée, 1845)**

A 3<sup>rd</sup> VC32 record (2<sup>nd</sup> since 2000) came from inspection of an insectocutor device in farmyard buildings on Farthinghoe NR on 29.viii.2023 (Pridmore). The moth was not in good condition and required dissection to identify. Previous VC32 records are from Wadenhoe in 1902 and Desborough in 2010, from daytime observation and sweeping. The moth tends to be seen during the afternoon, but occasionally visits light. Larval foodplants include Wild Angelica, Hogweed and Wild Carrot.

**62.059 *Phycitodes saxicola*      Lesser Clouded Knot-horn      (Vaughan, 1870)**

5<sup>th</sup> all-time county record, and only the 3<sup>rd</sup> since 2000, a single adult was taken at light in an Oundle garden on 17.vii.2023 (Horsnail), and confirmed by dissection. The species is said to be mainly coastal in habitat, but the distribution maps show that it has been recorded inland in several counties. Larvae feed on various plants including Scentless Mayweed and Fleabanes.

**63.111 *Platytes cerussella* Little Grass-moth ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)**

Almost overlooked in the trap, the 2<sup>nd</sup> VC32 record of this moth was of a single adult to light at the group trap session at Swaddywell Pits on 09.vi.2023 (Hammond). The only previous record is of an adult seen in Peterborough in 1993. Another species that is principally stated as being coastal in nature, but known to feed on grasses associated with calcareous areas.

**69.005 *Acherontia Atropos* Death's-head Hawk-moth (Linnaeus, 1758)**

The first record since August 2015, a single adult was noted on iRecord, photographed indoors in Brackley on 27.x.2023 (Hammond, O).

**70.039 *Phibalapteryx virgata* Oblique Striped (Hufnagel, 1767)**

The 3rd VC32 record of Oblique Striped was an adult taken to light in a garden in Oundle (Horsnail) on 19.viii.2023. I believe that it was also seen in Warwickshire for the first time the same weekend, and social media indicates that other inland sightings were made during this period. The last time this rare migrant was seen locally was in August 1992, in Helpston.

**70.083 *Thera cupressata* Cypress Carpet**

10 x 2023

An excellent record of Cypress Carpet was of an adult to a garden light trap in Little Irchester (Gosling) on 10.x.2023. This is only the 2nd VC32 record, following one caught in Peterborough in 2017.

A further specimen was taken in a garden light trap in Denton (Terry). This represents the 3rd VC32 record.

(Geyer, [1831])



Photo credit: Paul Gosling

**70.217 *Macaria brunneata* Rannoch Looper**

June 2023 was a very good month for Rannoch Looper! Previously recorded only twice in the county, a further seven records were forthcoming during the year:

- 15.vi.2023 – Harpole (De la Fuente)
- 15.vi.2023 – Ring Haw (Follows)
- 16.vi.2023 – Collyweston Great Wood, x2 (Follows)
- 18.vi.2023 – Helpston (Hillier)
- 18.vi.2023 – Harpole (De la Fuente)
- 19.vi.2023 – Easton Hornstocks, x2 (Follows)
- 21.vi.2023 – Wakerley Oaks (Follows)

This mirrors a pattern throughout a lot of southern UK counties, with numerous records being posted on social media, etc.

(Thunberg, 1784)



Photo credit: Ron Follows



**73.008 *Chrysodeixis chalcites* Golden Twin-spot**

**(Esper, [1803])**

A single moth was recorded at light in a Kingsthorpe, Northampton garden (Sharpe) on 01.x.2023. This is only the 3rd VC32 record, and comes at a time of fairly significant migration activity across the UK. The previous local record was of a singleton to a garden light trap in Nether Heyford in late August 2022.



**Photo credit: Pete Sharpe**

**73.295 *Mythimna vitellina***

**Delicate**

**(Hübner, [1808])**

Another indicator of the significant migration activity during last year – a total of 29 records (of 39 individual moths) of this species were noted in VC32. Records ranged from 01.vii.2023 to 22.x.2023 and covered pretty much the entire county. The highest individual count was of 5 moths in a garden trap in Nassington on 26.ix.2023 (Smith, N), followed by 3 in a Denton garden trap the following night (Terry)



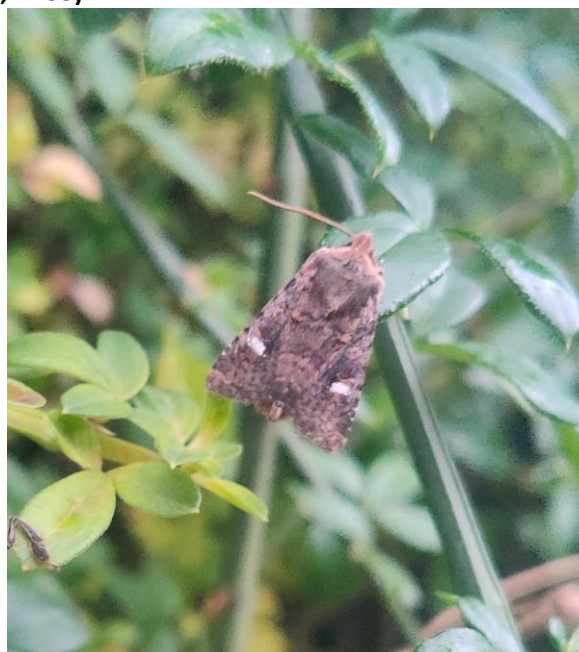
**Photo credit: John Ward**

**73.223 *Dryobota labecula***

**Oak Rustic**

**(Esper, 1788)**

A 3rd VC32 record of Oak Rustic was of a single adult taken in a garden light trap in Nassington on 10.x.2023 (Smith, N). This follows from two records in 2021, and reflects an ongoing increase in range.



**Photo credit: Nick Smith**



**73.338 *Lycophotia porphyria*****True Lover's Knot**

([Denis &amp; Schiffermüller], 1775)

A single True Lover's Knot was recorded in a garden light trap in Helpston on 28.vi.2023 (Wright). This is only the second post-2000 record of this species in the vice county, reflecting the lack of heathland locally.

This moth is likely a vagrant from a garden planting or possibly the result of a dispersal from suitable habitat further afield.

The moth used to be recorded at Castor Hanglands up until the late 1930's, at which time the heathland was lost when it was ploughed up for use as a bombing range for the RAF.



Photo credit: Hugh Wright

**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 1<sup>st</sup> January 1980):

**49.348 *Grapholita pallifrontana*****Liquorice Piercer Zeller, 1845**

Ten records for this species during 2023. The majority of these were from the known local stronghold area in and around the Rockingham Forest area, but with further sightings at Croughton Quarry (SP53).

**50.001 *Cossus cossus*****Goat Moth**

(Linnaeus, 1758)

No VC32 records since 2022.

**54.002 *Adscita statices*****Forester**

(Linnaeus, 1758)

No VC32 records since 2010.

**70.035 *Cyclophora porata*****False Mocha**

(Linnaeus, 1767)

No VC32 records since 2011.

**70.201 *Trichopteryx polycommata*****Barred Tooth-striped**

([Denis &amp; Schiffermüller], 1775)

No VC32 records since 1987.

**72.070 *Trisateles emortualis*****Olive Crescent**

([Denis &amp; Schiffermüller], 1775)

No VC32 records since the singleton in 2017.

**73.031 *Tyta luctuosa*****Four-spotted**

([Denis &amp; Schiffermüller], 1775)

Further records were received for Maxey Gravel Pits, TF10, with fourteen individuals seen by day on 08.vi.2023 (Hearle). A further three were seen at the same site on 20.vii.2023. All of these follow on from records there in 2022.

One female was witnessed at a regular transect site along the railway at Werrington on 16.vi.2023 (Waring)

Other records were from light trapping as follows:

09.vi.2023 - Swaddywell Pits (Northants Group moth session)

12.vi.2023 - Nassington garden (Smith)

17.vi.2023 - Helpston (Hillier)

27.vi.2023 - Helpston (Hillier)

19.viii.2023 - Vergette Wood Meadow (Hillier)

**73.149 *Photodes extrema* Concolorous (Hübner, [1809])**

A total of 17 records for 2023, between 16.v.2023 and 27.vi.2023, totalling approximately 140 individuals. The majority were seen in known woodland locations in the north-east of the county such as Fineshade (Galpin, Follows), Collyweston Great Wood, Easton Hornstocks and Ring Haw (Follows), Swaddywell Pits (Hillier), with occasional specimens being seen in gardens – Nassington (Smith), Brigstock (Graham) and Corby (Durman). 2 adults were also seen at Light in Yardley Chase on 24.v.2023 (Gill).

**73.214 *Cosmia diffinis* White-spotted Pinion (Linnaeus, 1767)**

Last recorded in VC32 in 2022.

**73.218 *Dicycla oo* Heart Moth (Linnaeus, 1758)**

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)**

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 2023. NB: this is as per the definition by MapMate – I am firmly convinced that *Matalampra italica* is resident in VC32. Records of this species appear throughout the season, and seem not to conform to periods of “migrant activity”.

ABH	Taxon	Vernacular	Approx. No. Individuals
18.001	<i>Plutella xylostella</i>	Diamond-back Moth	117
28.008	<i>Metalampra italica</i>	Italian Bark Moth	9
63.031	<i>Udea ferrugalis</i>	Rusty-dot Pearl	32
63.048	<i>Palpita vitrealis</i>	Olive-tree Pearl	3
63.052	<i>Nomophila noctuella</i>	Rush Veneer	2
63.061	<i>Hellula undalis</i>	Old World Webworm	1
63.119	<i>Musotima nitidalis</i>	Marbled Fern	1
63.0604	<i>Evergestis aenealis</i>	Yellow-headed Pearl	1
69.004	<i>Agrius convolvuli</i>	Convolvulus Hawk-moth	9
69.005	<i>Acherontia atropos</i>	Death's-head Hawk-moth	1
70.038	<i>Rhodometra sacraria</i>	Vestal	20
70.047	<i>Nycterosea obstipata</i>	Gem	5
70.217	<i>Macaria brunneata</i>	Rannoch Looper	9
73.008	<i>Chrysodeixis chalcites</i>	Golden Twin-spot	1
73.015	<i>Autographa gamma</i>	Silver Y	1351
73.076	<i>Helicoverpa armigera</i>	Scarce Bordered Straw	5
73.087	<i>Spodoptera exigua</i>	Small Mottled Willow	2
73.295	<i>Mythimna vitellina</i>	Delicate	38
73.307	<i>Peridroma saucia</i>	Pearly Underwing	2
73.327	<i>Agrotis ipsilon</i>	Dark Sword-grass	37