

## Worcestershire VC37 Moth review 2020

### Species new to VC37:

#### Micros:

*Opogona omoscopa* (Meyr.) This introduced synanthrope and detritivore was discovered in Webb's Garden Centre, West Hagley SO895794 on 3/12/20 by Jared Tibbetts. The species is thought to have originated in St. Helena and has become common on the Scilly Islands and is spreading around the UK, no doubt with the movement of plant material.



Patrick Clement

*Anarsia innoxia* Gregerson & Karsholt This species was recognized on the continent as separate from the very similar *A. spartiella* and *A. lineatella* in 2017. It was found to occur in south-east England as probably a new arrival in UK and is spreading rapidly. The larva feeds in a spinning on leaves of *Acer* species particularly Field Maple. One was light trapped by Steve Whitehouse at Berkeley-Pendesham SO883570 on 12/6/20 with another on 30/6/20, and another by Mike Wakeman at Bromsgrove SO962972 on 12/7/20.



Steve Whitehouse

*Stenoptilia millieridactyla* (Bruand) It is nice to record a new Plume moth in the county. Jason Waine had one to light in Redditch SP027668 on 1/7/20. Found in Ireland in Dublin having been introduced from the Burren in County Clare and then accidentally introduced to Derbyshire on the food plant, Mossy Saxifrage, in 1971. It has been spreading slowly feeding in gardens and has now reached us and may well spread.



Jason Waine

*Dichrorampha sylvicolana* Hein. Quite the best find in 2020. Steve Whitehouse found this rare and very local Tortrix species in Black Meadow, Chaddesley Wood SO915736 on 13/6/20. This first specimen was very worn and was only positively identified after dissection by Patrick Clement. Steve and Patrick revisited the site on 22/6/20 and managed to find another two individuals. Previously only known from a few sites in south east England and in Scotland. Larva feeds on the rootstock of Sneezewort and is almost certainly a long standing resident at this site which has been extensively surveyed in recent years. However most recording has been done at night and *Dichroramphas* are day flying and rarely get into moth traps.



Patrick Clement

*Oncocera semirubella* (Scop.) Patrick Clement found two specimens of this beautiful Pyralid moth on Pennyhill Bank SO754616 on 24/6/20. Returning on 22/7/20 with Steve Whitehouse who trapped another two. Until recently found only in southern England on chalk and limestone grassland it has been spreading northwards and westwards reaching west Gloucestershire in 2019. The Worcestershire site is typical habitat for it on Silurian limestone grassland. It must however be very mobile as separated by a long way from previously known sites.



Patrick Clement

## Macros:

Dark Crimson Underwing *Catocala sponosa* (L.) Nicki Rowberry was surprised to find this beautiful moth in her light trap in Malvern SO777477 on 11/8/20. Jason Waine then had another in Redditch SP027668 on 15/9/20. Formerly very local and confined to a few sites in the south of England it has been showing signs of spread in past few years. These records are part of this trend and the moth may become resident here like the related Blue Underwing.



Nicky Rowberry



Jason Waine

Silver Hook *Deltote uncula* (Cl.) David Throup caught one at light at Powick SO819508 on 13/5/20. A species of wet boggy habitats it was certainly a vagrant at this site. The nearest known site is Sutton Park in Sutton Coldfield.



Dave Throup

Crescent Dart *Agrotis trux* (Hb.) Another surprise vagrant which is usually almost entirely confined to coastal habitats turned up in Alan Prior's moth trap in Hall Green SP10478292 on 29/7/20.



Alan Prior

### Other significant records:

*Crassa tinctella* (Hb) Steve Whitehouse attracted a specimen to moth trap at Berkeley-Pendesham SO883570 on 16/5/20 and another on 31/5/20. These are first county records since 1885. It had been anticipated as found in neighbouring counties but usually a woodland species so not perhaps in expected habitat.

*Pyrausta nigrata* (Scop.). Mike Southall caught one at light at Norchard SO84696851 on 30/7/20. The second county record and the first since 1899, although the moth is known from Bredon Hill and has been seen there in recent years flying mere yards into VC33 East Gloucestershire.



Mike Southall

White-barred Clearwing *Synanthedon spheciformis* ([D. & S.]) Kevin McGee photographed one in Wissett's Wood SO678727 on 9/6/20. Otherwise only known from Wyre Forest and Kingsford Country Park.

Lunar Hornet Moth *Sesia bembeciformis* (Hb.) Some previously scattered records, mostly larval, but once the new pheromone lure became available in 2020 recorded from many sites often in large numbers.

Other Clearwings included 6 species to pheromone lures in and around Stourport (Mike and Rob Williams) including more Orange-tailed *S. andrenaeformis* probably from larvae feeding in garden Viburnums.

A Lappet *Gastropacha quercifolia* (L.) in a light trap at Low Habberley SO805777 (Bob Green) on 24/7/20 was most exciting as last record in VC37 was from near Longdon in extreme south in 1995.

Small Eggar *Eriogaster lanestris* larval webs continued to be found in south of county.

Drab Looper *Minoa murinata* Brain Harley recorded 8 in Croome Perry Wood SO902464 on 18/5/20.

Buttoned Snout *Hypena rostralis* (L.) continued to spread with records at:

Powick SO819508 (David Throup) on 8/5/20, Eastham SO666685 on 9/5/20 (Tony Simpson), Welland SO793403 on 11/5/20 (N & L Harris), Crossway Green SO847685 on 9/5/20 (Mike Southall), Redmarley SO752314 on 13/9/20 (R. Padley), and Malvern SO777477 on 15/5/20 (N. Rowberry).

Brown-tail *Euproctis chrysorrhoea* (L.) Records from:  
Rednal SP00867642 on 26/6/20 by Neil Gregory,  
Welland SO791401 on 17/7/20 by P. Taylor, and  
Welland SO793403 on 1/7/20 by N. Harris.



Neil Gregory

Clifton Nonpareil *Catocala fraxini* (L.) A larva recorded in Uffmoor Wood by Beverley Challinor on 24/7/20 proved local breeding after last year's influx. This year there were 15 records of adults from 10 sites widely spaced around the county.

Toadflax Brocade *Calophasia lunula* (Hufn.) Alan Prior recorded his second at Hall Green SP10478292 on 13/6/20 suggesting it may be breeding locally.

White-spotted Pinion *Cosmia diffinis* (L.) Peter Garner surprisingly had one to lighted porch trap at West Malvern SO764456 on 16/8/20. He is not close to our only known breeding site so it was a stray from somewhere; I wonder where?

Stigmella filipendulae (Wocke) Nigel Voaden found mines in Meadow Sweet at Tiddesley Wood SO9244. Found there previously in 1988 and 1989 in our only known site.

*Tinea pallescentella* Staint. Rather typically this infrequently recorded Tinea turned up on Mike Averill's lighted window in Kidderminster SO845778 on 4/10/20.

*Metalampra italica* Baldizzone 10 records from 6 scattered sites confirm that this species is now quite widespread but mostly in suburban areas and it still hasn't made it out to my rural garden!

*Ethmia dodecea* (Haw.) Oliver Wadsworth found a larva on 10/9/20 at Ab Lench SP007517 confirming that this moth is resident and breeding in Worcestershire.



Oliver Wadsworth

*Adoxophyes orana* (F. v R.) Rick Benson-Bunch had one at Darkham Wood SO778299 on 20/8/20 after the three elsewhere in VC37 in 2018. Roger Umpelby tells me that is not far from a commercial orchard in Gloucestershire where it was trapped for the first time in 2020 but it seems that despite being checked for as a potential agricultural pest it has not been found elsewhere.

*Acleris logiana* (Cl.) Devil's Spittlefull on birch trunk at SO804749 on 3/11/20 (Brett Westwood) is the 5<sup>th</sup> county site and it is now clearly resident in birch woodland across the county.

*Celypha woodiana* (Barr.) (Jared Tibbetts) one to light at Wilden Top was our most northerly record in the county.

*Thaumatotibia leucotreta* (Meyr.) This tropical Tortrix is usually an introduced species often bred from oranges from North Africa but one came to garden moth trap at Hall Green SP10478292 on 15/9/20 (Alan Prior).



Patrick Clement

Box-tree Moth *Cydalima perspectalis* (Walk.) There have been 6 further records from across county and it is only surely a matter of time before it becomes much more common.

### **Migrants:**

Generally another year with very few migrants recorded with low numbers of even usually common species.

Records of Glaucous Shears *Papestra biren* at light by Steve Whitehouse on 27/4/20 at Berkeley-Pendesham SO883570 and Dave Smith also on 27/4/20 at Stourbridge SO887850 follow the typical and recurrent trend of similar records across the county in May 1998, 2001, 2007, 2008, and 2012 which must represent migration. It is known to be resident on high ground in west Herefordshire and Shropshire and Staffordshire. Whether from somewhere local in UK or quite possibly from further away, even from abroad, seems to be unknown but there seem to be fairly regular incursions at around the same time of year.

Convolvulus Hawk-moth *Agrius convolvuli* High Wood, Eastham SO653669 (Ken Willets) on 23/8/20 and twice at Norchard SO84686849 (Mike Southall) on 18 and 21/8/20.

White Point *Mythimna albipuncta* Carpenter's Farm SO777339 (Martin Skirrow) on 31/7/20, Norchard SO84716847 (Mike Southall) on 16/8/20 and Grimley SO83256126 (Steve Whitehouse) on 21/8/20.

There were two Delicate *Mythimna vitellina* records from Carpenter's Farm SO777339 (Martin Skirrow) on 31/7/20 and from Upper Welland SO783402 (Ian Duncan) on 8/9/20.

Scarce Bordered-straw Mike Wakeman one on 21/8/20 at Bromsgrove SO96286972.

*Palpita vitrealis* There was only a single record from a light trap at Wythall SP079755 by Janet James via Neil Gregory on 11/8/20.

Other common migrants summary:

| Code   | Taxon                    | Vernacular           | Records |
|--------|--------------------------|----------------------|---------|
| 18.001 | Plutella xylostella      | Diamond-back Moth    | 221     |
| 63.031 | Udea ferrugalis          | Rusty-dot Pearl      | 11      |
| 63.052 | Nomophila noctuella      | Rush Veneer          | 2       |
| 69.01  | Macroglossum stellatarum | Humming-bird Hawk    | 89      |
| 70.038 | Rhodometra sacraria      | Vestal               | 2       |
| 70.047 | Nycterosea obstipata     | Gem                  | 1       |
| 73.015 | Autographa gamma         | Silver Y             | 853     |
| 73.087 | Spodoptera exigua        | Small Mottled Willow | 1       |
| 73.327 | Agrotis ipsilon          | Dark Sword-grass     | 17      |

### Other News:

With the global pandemic effecting all walks of life, field recording activities were much reduced in 2020. Perhaps because of this many new recorders and some old hands returned to regular garden trapping resulting in a record high number of records received over the year - a little over 38500 records of nearly 1100 species. It has been a bumper year for adding new species to the county list and gaining new records for species that have not been seen in years.

After last years delay, we are pleased to report that the long awaited online moth Atlas for the West Midlands counties is nearing completion and we are expecting to launch very soon. Keep an eye on the Hereford and Worcestershire moth blog at; <http://herefordandworcestermoths.blogspot.com/> for details. The blog itself is a great place to report sightings and ask for ID advice if needed.

The new Website has been designed and built for us by Jim Wheeler of NorfolkMoths.com fame and populated with brief species texts and several thousand images by our local panel who will run the site going forward. It is hoped that users will submit their own images for inclusion once the site is up and running. Butterfly Conservation West Midlands has funded the project which will be an invaluable tool for all moth recorders in the area.

We receive records from many sources but it is notable how much the iRecord system (<https://www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/>) has grown in popularity over the last couple of years. It has been improving steadily and can be recommended, especially if you don't get on with spreadsheets. A big plus is that you can attach photos to records if needed to confirm identifications. This is very helpful when

collating records since it saves us having to request images directly from recorders, which always takes a bit of time.

As always, we would like to thank all recorders who sent in their data, by whatever means, and wish you all 'Good Mothing' for 2021.

Tony Simpson and Oliver Wadsworth.