

NOTABLE MOTHS, ISLE OF WIGHT 2021

Jim R. Baldwin

There was a 28% increase in the number of records received in 2021 in comparison to 2020. The total of 20,467 records of 918 taxa, including aggregates, was the second highest for the vice-county. The 918 taxa were evenly split between macro-moths (461) and micro-moths (457).

The first immigrant species recorded in 2021 was a Silver Y *Autograph gamma* at Bonchurch on 14th January; otherwise, it was a quiet start to the year. A Humming-bird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum* at Wheelers Bay on 8th March and at Newport the following day were presumably overwintering individuals, with further reports of singles at Wheelers Bay on 26th & 27th March. Three Yellow Horned *Achlya flavicornis* at Hillis Gate on 20th March was only the second report of this species since 2015. The only Red Chestnut *Cerastis rubricosa* of the year was taken at Bonchurch on 31st March.

After an unexceptional April, May began with a flourish. Colin and Jillie Pope recorded a Dew Moth *Setina irrorella* at West High Down on 1st May, which was the earliest ever record for VC10 by nearly three weeks. A Beautiful Marbled *Eublemma purpurina* at Mottistone Down on 27th May was the first spring record for the vice-county with three further sightings during the year: at Arreton on 14th June, at Totland on 24th June and at Bonchurch on 15th September. *Nephoterix angustella* at Freshwater Bay on 28th May and a Currant Clearwing *Synanthedon tipuliformis* at Newport on 31st May were the earliest ever records for the vice-county for the respective species.

A Lunar Double-stripe *Minucia lunaris* at Bonchurch on 2nd June was the second record for VC10 and a Striped Hawk-moth *Hyles livornica* was reported at Shanklin on the same date. Other June highlights included a Scarce Merveille du Jour *Moma alpium* coming to light at Osborne which was the first vice-county record since 1892. *Coleophora tamesis* at Totland was a new species for VC10 and the month ended with a Porter's Rustic *Athetis hospes* at Bonchurch.

July saw six new species recorded for the vice-county: *Caloptilia honoratella* at Totland, *Anarsia innoxia* at Shanklin, *Coleophora alcyonipennella* at Totland, *Elachista maculicerusella* at Arreton, *Spilonota laricana* at Totland and Ringed Border *Stegania cararia* at Osborne. Other notable sightings in July included Bedstraw Hawk-moth *Hyles gallii* at Yaverland and the second vice-county record for the following species: *Argolamprotes micella*, at Shanklin, *Cynaeda dentalis*, at Seaview and Dotted Footman *Pelosia muscerda* at Totland. Larva of Chamomile Shark *Cucullia chamomillae* (Fig. 1) was seen on Scentless Mayweed *Tripleurospermum inodorum* at Seaview and Cridmore, the third and fourth larva records of this species for VC10.



Fig. 1: Larva of Chamomile Shark (*Cucullia chamomillae*)

Photo: Geoff Toone

The first of seven Dewick's *Plusia Macdunnoughia confusa* for the year was reported on 10th August, while there was a vice-county record of 124 Jersey Tiger *Euplagia quadripunctaria* which came to light at Newport on 26th August.

A single Palm Moth *Paysandisia archon* at Cowes was a surprise new species for the vice-county in September while a Radford's Flame Shoulder *Ochropleura leucogaster* at Brook on 29th September was followed by an amazing total of 58 in October, including 11 at Brook on 6th October, and 15 in November. *Choreutis nemorana* at Shanklin in November was the final new species for the vice-county in 2021.

New vice-county records

There were nine new VC10 records for the year as follows, all recorded at light except where stated, and confirmed by dissection where necessary:

15.0131 *Caloptilia honoratella* (Rebel, 1914)

A rare migrant species, now possibly a resident in southern and eastern counties of England. First recorded in Surrey in 2017 with further records in Kent and Suffolk in 2019 and other counties since then. This species has spread rapidly across Europe in recent years. One at Totland on 24th July and 1st October.

35.0191 *Anarsia innoxia*

Gregersen & Karsholt, 2017

A recently identified resident species now separated from *Anarsia linetella*. One at Shanklin on 21st July.

37.035 Clover case-bearer

Coleophora alcyonipennella (Kollar, 1832)

The exact status and distribution of this micro-moth

is not known due to past confusion with *C. frischella*, which is very similar and can only be separated through dissection. One at Totland on 22nd & 25th July.

37.070 *Coleophora tamesis* Waters, 1929

Like most of the *Coleophora* species, adults can only be identified by dissection so are generally under-recorded. One at Totland on 23rd June.

38.039 *Elachista maculicerusella* (Bruand, 1859)

Fairly widespread in the UK and relatively common in damp habitats. One at Haseley Manor, Arreton on 19th July.

48.0071 *Choreutis nemorana* (Hübner, 1799)

An adventive species first recorded in 2014. Occupied and vacated cocoons found on *Ficus carica* at Shanklin on 5th & 6th November.

49.225 *Spilonota laricana* (Heinemann, 1863)

Formerly considered a dark form of Bud Moth *Spilonota ocellana*, this moth has since been elevated to species level. It occurs in the southern half of Britain, although it appears to be relatively uncommon. One at Totland on 25th, 26th & 28th July.

51.0001 Palm Moth *Paysandisia archon*

(Burmeister, 1880) Fig. 2

A native of South America, accidentally imported in palm trees and now established in Europe. Three previous records in the UK of this day-flying moth which has a wingspan of 90-110mm: an adult was observed in a private garden at Bosham, West Sussex on 13th August 2002, nine adults emerged from four 5m tall *Phoenix canariensis* palms imported from Spain in West Malling, Kent in May 2007 and three larvae from a nursery in North London from palms imported from Italy in July 2007. One at Cowes on 11th, 12th & 15th September, all assumed to be the same individual.



Fig. 2: Palm moth (*Paysandisia archon*) at Cowes
Photo: Holi Kalina

70.209 Ringed Border *Stegania cararia*

(Hübner, 1790) Fig. 3.

A rare but increasing immigrant from continental Europe which first appeared in Jersey in 1981. First recorded in mainland Britain in Somerset in July 2009. Breeding confirmed in Kent in 2017. One at Osborne House, East Cowes on 22nd July.

In addition, there were two further new vice-county records, relating to 2020 records, but not confirmed until 2021, :



Fig. 3: Ringed Border (*Stegania cararia*) at Osborne
Photo: Iain Outlaw

04.012 *Stigmella aceris* (Frey, 1857)

One at Plaish on 24th September 2020.

12.023 *Triaxomasia caprimulgella* (Stainton, 1851)
Fig. 4.

One at Bonchurch on 25th June 2020 originally identified as *Lampronia corticella*. Subsequently, re-identified as *Triaxomasia caprimulgella* by Mike Wall, Hampshire County Moth Recorder.



Fig. 4: *Triaxomasia caprimulgella* at Bonchurch.
Photo: James Halsey

The following are a few of the many notable records during 2021:

20.017 *Argyresthia glaucinella* Zeller, 1839

One at Totland on 23rd, 24th & 27th July.

35.064 *Argolamprotes micella*

([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)

One at Shanklin on 18th July was the second vice-county record.

37.077 *Coleophora lassella* Staudinger, 1859

One at Totland on 29th May, 20th June, 24th & 25th July and 3rd September and at Osborne on 1st June. First vice-county adult records after a larva was reported in May 1992.

37.086 *Coleophora versurella* Zeller, 1849

One at Totland on 22nd July was the third VC10 record.

38.048 *Elachista consortella* Stainton, 1851

Following the first vice-county record in 2020, singles were reported at Totland on 21st, 22nd & 25th July and 25th September.

49.054 *Cnephasia genitalana* Pierce & Metcalfe, 1922

One at Totland on 24th, 26th & 29th July.

49.055 *Cnephasia communana* (Herrich-Schäffer, 1851)

One at Totland on 28th May was the first record for the vice-county since 1947.

63.056 *Cynaeda dentalis* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) Fig. 5.

One at Seaview on 22nd July was the second VC10 record.



Fig. 5: *Cynaeda dentalis* at Springvale

Photo: John Maskell

65.012 Satin Lutestring *Tetheella fluctuosa* (Hübner, [1803])

Two on 15th June and 9 on 22nd July, both at Osborne, were the third and fourth records for the vice-county.

70.232 Large Thorn *Ennomos autumnaria* (Werneburg, 1859)

One at Bonchurch on 4th & 6th September.

72.039 Dotted Footman *Pelosia muscerda* (Hufnagel, 1766)

One at Totland on 24th July was the second VC10 record.

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

After six records in 2020, only a single at Bonchurch on 25th August.

72.082 Light Crimson Underwing *Catocala promissa* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) Fig. 6.

Six records between 2nd July and 16th August represents the most sightings in a year for the vice-county.

72.086 Lunar Double-stripe *Minucia lunaris* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)

One at Bonchurch on 2nd June was the second VC10 record.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to everyone who submitted records in 2021, in particular Phil Barden, Andy Butler, Dave Cooke, Sue Davies, Dave Fairlamb, James Halsey, Chris Hicks, John & Sheena Maskell, Iain Outlaw, Debbie Pledge, Kev Rylands and Rachel Terry. Additional thanks to those who provided photographs for this report. I would also like to thank English Heritage, Forestry Commission, National Trust, People's Trust for Endangered Species and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds for allowing access to their estates.

Author: Jim Baldwin

email: wightmoths@gmail.com

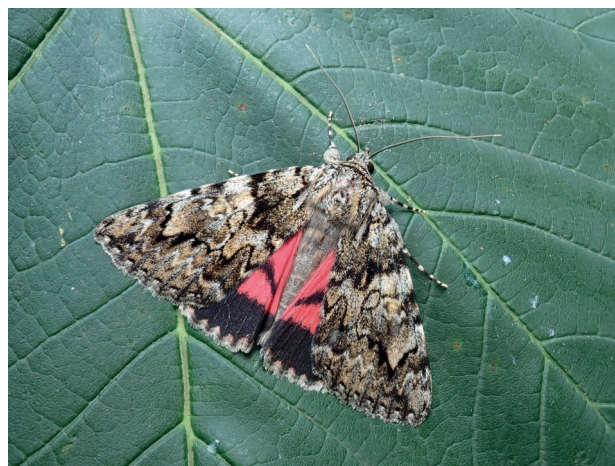


Fig. 6: Light Crimson Underwing. (*Catocala promissa*)

Photo: Phil Barden