

MOTHS RECORDED DURING 2006 INCLUDING ONE MACRO NEW TO BRITAIN

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With one specimen new to Britain, four new County records and five new Vice County records, 2006 proved to be the best year in living memory for moths on the Isle of Wight.

Nationally. 2006 was the warmest year since records began with July and September being the warmest months ever. October was also one of the warmest on record. The rainfall at Freshwater was about average for the year with the three wettest months being October (118.9mm), November (117.8mm) and December (104.8mm.). June was the driest month of the year with 3.1mm rainfall and January was the second driest month with (19.3mm) rainfall. The Winter of 2005-2006 was also extremely dry and hose pipe bans were in force throughout many southern counties during the Summer.

The year started well when on 3 Feb, I had a telephone call from Dave Dana saying that he had found a cocoon on some Columbian bananas which he had purchased at Morrisons in Lake. He brought it over that same day and I suggested that it was probably the Banana Stowaway *Antichloris eriphia* (Fabr.). The moth emerged two days later and it was indeed an example of this species and is a new County record. A Hummingbird Hawk-Moth *Macroglossum atellatarum* (Linn.) was seen at Newport on 15 Jan, which is further evidence that this species now overwinters in this country.

On 11 Sept, I caught a moth which was unfamiliar to me and I identified it as the Alchemist *Catephia alohymista* (D & S.). At the end of the month Steve Pittis visited me and on seeing the moth he thought that it was slightly different to the Alchemists he had from the continent. He photographed my specimen, and e-mailed it to Martin Honey at the British Natural History Museum in London who confirmed that it was an example of *Aedia leucomelas* (Linn.), a species new to Britain. An English name, the Sorcerer, was suggested to me by Bernard Skinner and I hope that this name will be adopted.

This was the start of my best week ever for rare migrants as on the following night 12 Sept, I recorded the Passenger *Dysgonia* (Linn.) at Totland which is a new County record.

James Halsey took a female Porters Rustic *Athetis hospes* (Freyer) at Bonchurch on 19 Aug from which he bred over fifty examples This is a new County record. He also took the rare migrant Pyralid *Catoptria verellus* (Zinck) on 18 July at Bonchurch which is new to the Isle of Wight.

Bernard Skinner paid a visit to the Island at the end of October. Apart from the Oak Rustic *Dryobota labecula* (Esper), he took the Crimson Speckled Footman *Utetheisa pulchella* (Linn.) at Bonchurch on 26 Oct which is the first record for the Island since 1881. On 27 Oct, He took the Slender Burnished Brass *Diachysia orichalcea*. (Fabr.) at Totland which is only the fourth Island record. On 28 Oct he recorded the fourth Island record of the Red-headed Chestnut *Conistra erythrocephala* at Bonchurch,

On 22 Dec David Biggs found some mines on Pellitory-of-the-Wall *Parietaria diffusa* at Shanklin and a few days later at Steephill Cove, which he believed to be *Cosmopterix pulchrimella*. He sent some tenanted mines to John Langmaid and he confirmed that it was this species which is a new County record. This species was first recorded from a moth trap on 13 Oct 01 in Dorset, then Guernsey on 6 Oct 02 and Cornwall in Jan 2004.

There are four other vice-county records which are new to the Island which I give below :-

Langmaid's Yellow Underwing *Noctus janthina* (Borkh.)

Taken at Bonchurch on 26 July by James Halsey,

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24 June at Totland by Sam Knill-Jones

Cochylis molliculana, (Zell.)

On 5 Aug at Parkhurst by Tim Norris & Sam Knill -Jones .

Coleophora albidella (D.& S.)

One case found by Tim Norris on 5 Aug Ningwood Common,

Other rare migrants recorded are given below :—

Small Marbled *Eublemma parva* (Hb.).

Bonchurch 13 June & Totland 7 Aug.

Great Brocade *Eurois occulta* (Linn.) .

Two at Totland on 5 Aug, Bonchurch 5, 8 & 14.Aug

Oak Processionary *Thaumetopoea processionea*(Linn.)

Bonchurch on 19 Aug.

Portland Ribbon Wave *Idaea degeraria* (Hb.)

Bonchurch on 1 & 6 Sept.

Blue Underwing *Catocala fraxini*(Linn.).

Totland on 15 Sept & Bonchurch on 4 & 16 Sept.

Psammotis pulveralis (Hubn.).

Two on 20 July & one on 23 July at Totland.

Antigastra catalaunalis (Dup.)

At Totland on 14, 23 & 25 Sept. and 13 Oct.

Sitochroa palealis (D.&S.).

One on 7 July at Totland

Ancylois oblitella (Zell.).

At Totland on 1, 2 (Two),3 July & 5 Aug.

It was the best year ever for the Delicate *Mythimna vitellina*.(Hb.) (640 records), the Scarce Bordered Straw *Heliothis armigera* (Hb.), 670 records, the Bordered Straw *Heliothis peltigera* (D.& S.) and the Ni Moth *Trichoplusia ni*(Hb.) with fourteen records.

The Bloxworth. Snout *Hypena obsitalis*(Hb.) with five records, the Tree-lichen Beauty *Cryphia algae*(Fabr.) with nine records, Clancy's Rustic *Platyperigea kadenii* with over sixty records and the Oak Rustic *Dryobota labecula* with over fifty records are all now firmly established along the south coast of the Island.

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Other records of note are given below :—

Pyrausta nigrata (Scop.)

Tony Steele found a colony of this species at Monkham Copse in May 2002 which was confirmed from photographs this year.

Old Lady *Mormo* 9 Sept and at Ventnor on 25 Aug.

Archips rosana (Linn).

At Totland on 13 June which is the first record since 1969.

Caloptilia alchimella (Soop.).

14-3-05 & 17-4-06 at Totland. Confirmation that this species is now present on the Island.

Epinotia immundana (Fisch. & Rosl.).

At Totland, on 8 Aug which happens to be the first record for the Island since 1933.

Nemophora minimella . (D & S._).

This species was recorded at Monkham Copse on 5 Aug and is the first Island record since 1933.

Hyles livoraica (Esper.)

There were ten records of the Striped Hawk from Ventnor, Bonchurch and Totland in June, and September and James Halsey successfully bred this species from ovae deposited by two females that he took on 14 June. This has only rarely been achieved in this country and the three stages are included in the plate.

Trichopteryx polycommata (D&S)

Four Larvae of the Barred Tooth-strip were beaten from Wild Privet *Ligustrum vulgare* on West High Down in May from which pupae were obtained and these should emerge in March 2007. It seems that this species is established on West High Down which is excellent news as it is referred to as Notable in the Red Data Book.

Diaphora mendica (Clerok)

A very out of season Muslin Moth was recorded at Bonchurch on 7 Nov. This is usually a Spring species emerging in April and May.

2006 was certainly an historic year for rarities. Apart from being the warmest year since records began it must also have been the latest leaf fall in living memory. There were still leaves on Oaks, *Quercus sp.*, Elms *Ulmus sp.*, Birches *Betula sp.* and Sallows *Salix sp.* at the beginning of December and on some Willows *Salix sp.* in Freshwater at the beginning of January 2007, I also had ripe Raspberries *Rubus idaeus* In my garden in January 2007 which was recorded in the local press.

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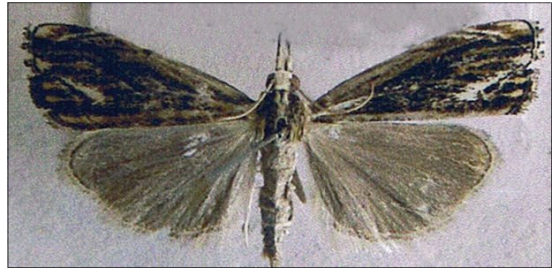
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Aedia leucomelas



Pyralid
Catoptria verellus



Banana Stowaway (emergence)



Banana Stowaway (adult)



Langmaid's Yellow Underwing
Noctus janthina



Porters Rustic
Athetis .hospes



The Passenger
Dysgonia

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Striped Hawk
Hyles livoraica



Rare Island Spider *Araneus angulatus*
Photo Colin Pope