

NOTABLE MOTHS RECORDED IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT DURING 2004

Sam Knill-Jones

It was a very dry year at Freshwater with 754.1 mm rainfall compared with 774.1 mm the previous year, being the driest since 1997. There were some very mild days in February and 18°C was recorded at Gravesend on 4th February. There was a large migration of Painted Ladies (*Cynthia cardui* Linn.) during this month and every migrant moth ever recorded during February was noted along the South coast. The driest month was June with 24.4 mm rainfall and September was also an exceptionally dry month. It was the wettest August since 1956 with 75 mm rainfall, accompanied by some very strong South-westerly gales. The wettest month of the year was October with 157 mm rainfall and the wettest day of the year was 7th July with 31 mm rainfall. It was the driest November since 1988 with 60 mm rainfall. There were 127 days without rain and 212 days with measurable rain. There was a covering of about 5 cm of snow on 26th February with a further light flurry of snow on 11th March.

The year started with a considerable migration in February with a Red-headed Chestnut (*Conistra erythrocephala*) (D. & S.) at Bonchurch on 13th February, a Ni Moth (*Trichoplusia ni*) (Hb.) at Totland on 10th February, two Cosmopolitan (*Mythimna loreyi*) (Dup.) at Freshwater on 11th and 13th February and an example of the rare Pyralid *Euchromius ocella* (Haw.) at Totland on 11th February.

There were three species new to the Island although the first, which was taken this year, was actually taken in 1996.

Cydia amplana (Hubn.)

I recorded ten of the above migrant species at light in my garden at Totland between 30th July and 21st August. However, on looking through my collection of micros, I noticed a series of five taken on 20th August 1996 at Freshwater.

Phyllonorycter platani (Staud.)

Dr David Biggs found many mines present, most vacated, but some still tenanted of the above species on *Platanus hispanica* at Fairlee, Newport on 27th September.

Cameraria ohridella

Dr David Biggs found one mine with active feeding larvae on *Aesculus hippocastaneum* at Pelham Woods, Ventnor, of the above species on 15th September. He also later recorded it at St Lawrence, Ryde and Newport later in the month.

Other rare migrants that were recorded are given below:

Red-headed Chestnut (*Conistra erythrocephala*) (D. & S.)

A second example was taken at Cranmore by Ian and Cathy Fletcher on 10th November.

Bedstraw Hawk (*Hyles gallii*) (Rott.)

Dr David Biggs observed two of the above species on the cliff top at Whale Chine by day on 7th August.

Orache (*Trachea atriplicis*) (Linn.)

Two examples were recorded by Sam Knill-Jones at Totland on 17th and 24th August.

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Four-spotted Footman (*Lithosia quadra*) (Linn.).

Three examples were noted at Totland on 8th, 10th and 21st August and a further one was noted at Cranmore on 17th August.

Tree-lichen Beauty (*Archanara algae*) (Esp.).

James Halsey recorded two at Bonchurch on 7th August and a further one on 8th August.

Bloxworth Snout (*Hypena obsitalis*) (Hb.).

Peter Cramp caught one in his porch at Ventnor on 5th December. This is the third record for the Island.

Evergestis extimalis (Scop.).

Two were taken at Totland on 5th and 9th August.

Diasemiopsis ramburalis (Dup.).

A very late example was noted by Sam Knill-Jones at Totland on 2nd November.

A Four Spotted (*Tyta luctuosa*) (D & S) was recorded at Totland on 5th August which was the first record since 27th July 1949, when Dr K G Blair took it at Freshwater. Dave Wooldridge noted a Dark Tussock (*Dicallomera fascelina*) (Linn.) which was the first record since I took three at Freshwater in August 1973. I recorded the Striped Wainscot (*Mythimna pudorina*) (D & S) at Totland on 9th July which is the second Island record since one was recorded at Godshill on 12th July 1994. I recorded the Sand Dart (*Agrotis ripae*) (Hb.) at Totland on 10th June. Although this species is locally common at Bembridge and St Helens, this was the first to be recorded in the West Wight since one at Freshwater on 13th July 1994. Three examples of the very local *Pempeliella ornatella* (D & S.) were recorded at Totland on 2nd, 5th and 9th September which are the first records for the Island for over one hundred years. I noted the local species *Ypsolopha sequella* (Clerck.) at Totland on 8th August, and *Tinea semifulvella* (Staint.) on 14th July at Totland which happens to be the first recent record.

The Crambid *Thisanotia chrysonuchella* (Scop.) was recorded in small numbers on a Society meeting on Arreton Down on 22nd May. These are the first records of this declining species since 28th May 1993 when one was recorded on Chale Green.

Dr David Biggs has recorded the following leaf miners which have only occasionally been recorded on the Island before.

Stigmella luteela (Staint.)

On *Betula pendula* at Ventnor Botanic Gardens on 25th October, which is the first record since one was noted at Parkhurst Forest in 1975.

Coleophora salicorniae (Heinemann & Wocke).

Larva on *Salicornia pusilla* at Newtown on 5th October which is the first record for the Island since 1887. Identification confirmed by Dr John Langmaid.

Coleophora salinella (Stt.).

Numerous Coleophoid cases on Sea Purslane (*Halimione portulacoides*) at St Helens Mill Pond on 28th September. The last apparent record of this moth was in Morey (1909). Dr John Langmaid confirmed its identification.

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Argyresthia goedartella (Linn.).

An adult from Alder at Hurst Stake on 17th August which is only the second record for the Island.

There are two examples of exceptional late broods which I should like to mention. On 4th December I recorded a possible third brood example of the Willow Beauty (*Peribatodes rhomboidaria* (D & S.)) at light in my garden. On 6th December I took a very late second brood example of the Dark Arches (*Apamea monoglypha*) (Hufn.). I have taken examples of a partial second brood in October but never as late as December. Both specimens were in immaculate condition. Finally, I should like to mention an extremely early capture of the Common Quaker (*Orthosia cerasi*) (Fabr.) on 25th November at Totland. This species usually emerges in the Spring!

2004 was an average year with two micros new to the Island list.

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