

NOTABLE MOTHS IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT DURING 2005

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Introduction

The winter of 2004-5 was the driest in southern England since 1962-63. At Freshwater, February was the driest month of the year with 12.5mm rainfall. January was also dry with 53.1 mm rainfall and was the warmest since 1990. A little snow fell every night from Feb. 22nd to Feb. 28th and there was also snow on March 2nd, 4th and 5th. May was a warm month and May 27th was the hottest May day for sixty years in London with a temperature of 36°C. It was a warm summer with monthly rainfall totals being below the average. The wettest month of the year was October 131.8mm. rainfall. November and December were much drier with sunshine totals well above average and the first frosts occurred on November 13th. At the time of writing the winter of 2005/06 has been exceptionally dry in southern England with the reservoirs at very low levels.

It was a nationally poor year for migrants although the Isle of Wight fared quite well with three species of macros new to the Island list.

Account of Notable Moths

The year started early when on January 19th, Colin Pope found an example of Bloxworth Snout (*Hypena obsitalis*)(Hb.). hibernating in a cave in St Lawrence. A second example was found by Peter Cramp at Ventnor on August 5th. There have been several records of this species in the Ventnor area and it may be established there where the larva feeds on Pellitory-of-the-wall. On April 2nd I recorded a Barred Toothstripe (*Trichopteryx polycommata*)(D.&S)) at light at Totland and a larva was beaten from Wild privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*)in early May on West High Down. This species is new to the Island and probably occurs in small numbers on West High Down where there is an abundance of the foodplant. It has a nationally scarce status.

There are two species of micromoths, which have been recorded in previous years which are new to the Island.

Pseudatemelia josephine (Toll.)

I recorded two specimens of the above species at Totland on May 24th and 2nd June 2005. However I had previously recorded it at Parkhurst when I recorded two examples on July 8th 1999. All the specimens were identified at the relevant years of the British Entomological and Natural History Society Annual Exhibitions.

Eucosma conterminana (Guenee)

At the 2005 Annual exhibition of the British Entomological and Natural History Society an example of the above species recorded at Totland on July 26th 2004 was identified. The larva feeds on Prickly Lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*) and was first recorded in Hampshire at Itchen Valley in 1976.

Two further macromoths, new to the Island, were recorded by James Halsey at Bonchurch in 2005.

Rest Harrow (*Aplasta ononaris*)(FueIsl.)

August 17th. This species is resident in south east England but this example was undoubtedly a migrant.

Clancy's Rustic (*Platyperigea kadenii*)

Was also recorded for the first time on the Isle of Wight at Bonchurch on September 26th. Further

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records followed from Bonchurch with singles on September 28th and two on both October 22nd and 26th. One was also recorded at Totland on October 16th.

Oak Rustic (*Dryobota labecula*).

Was recorded for the first time at Luccombe by Steve Pittis on October 21st and at Bonchurch where six were recorded at the end of October. There were three further records from Totland during the same month and eggs have been obtained. There were also records this year from mainland Britain at Swanage, Dorset and in Hampshire. It appears that it is now establishing itself along the south coast of Britain.

Flame Brocade (*Trigonophora flammea*)(Esy.) This rare migrant was recorded four times. Singles at Bonchurch on October 8th and at Luccombe on October 24 . Further records were made at Totland on October 25th and 27th.

Other migrants recorded include :

European Corn-borer (*Ostrinia nubilalis*)(Hubn.)

Was recorded in Totland on July 11.

Evergestis extimalis (Scop.)

Was recorded in Freshwater on July 25th .

Sitochroa palealis (D&S)

Was recorded at Totland on 18th August.

Udea fulvalis (Hubn.)

I noted two of this species on the light outside the Conservative Club at Freshwater where it has been established for over ten years although I have not recorded it at Totland.

Other moths of interest are listed below :

Leucoptera lotella (Stainton)

David Biggs found a tenated mine of this species at Osborne on August 13th which was confirmed by John Langmaid. This is not recorded in either of Goater's books, nor in Goater and Morris. Vol II of Moths and Butterflies of great Britain and Ireland does give a dot for Vice-county 10 (IW) so presumable Emmet himself has records of it. Interestingly he found the mine on a plant of *Lotus subiflorus*, which seems to be the first record for this plant for the Isle of Wight.

Scythropia crataegella (Linn.)

David Biggs found multiple mines that contained the larvae of this species. This species does not seem to have been recorded on the Island since the 1920's.

Archips crataegana (Hubn.)

The first recent record of this species was made at Totland on June 23rd.

Cydia amplana (Hubn.)

Three examples of this species were recorded at Totland in August and it is quite likely that these were home bred examples.

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Phlyctaenia perlucidalis (Hubn)

A record of one at Totland was made on June 26th which is the fourth Island record.

Playtes alpinella Hubn. An example of this local species was recorded at Totland on August 31st.
Homeocosma nebulella.

Three of this species were recorded at Totland on 6th, 11th and 18th August.

Clouded Magpie (*Abraxas sylvata* (Scop.)).

Two of this species were recorded in Parkhurst Forest on June 18th and one at Totland on July 31st.

Dark Tussock (*Dicallomera fascelina* (Linn.))

The fifth record for the Island in the last thirty years was made at Totland on July 18th. One was recorded at Freshwater in 2004 and it is possible that there may be a breeding colony on Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) on Headon Hill.

Rosy Marbled (*Elaphria venustula* (Hubn.))

I recorded the fourth Island record of this pretty moth at Totland on June 23rd. It has now been recorded from Freshwater, Binstead and Cranmore in recent years and is probably established at a low density throughout the Island.

Green Silver Lines (*Pseudiops prasinana*)(Linn.) James Halsey recorded a second brood of this species at Bonchurch on August 15th.

Elephant Hawk (*Deilephila porcellus*)(Linn.) James Halsey recorded this species on August 16th, a very late date. 2005 was an average year with three macromoths new to the Island recorded in that year.

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