

Worcestershire Moth Review 2021

Tony Simpson

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Worcestershire moth review for 2021

New species in VC37 in 2021:

There was only one new Macromoth, the rare immigrant Radford's Flame Shoulder *O. leucogaster* (Freyer).

Peter Holmes had one in his light trap in Malvern Wells SO773420 on 10/10/21 and Mike Southall another at Norchard SO847685 on 11/11/21. These records were unusual inland records associated with a major influx of this species into the UK last autumn.



Radford's Flame Shoulder.
Ochropleura leucogaster.

Mike Southall

There were four new Micromoths recorded:

Phyllonorycter distentella (Zeller)

Ian Machin caught one at light in Kingsford Country Park SO826822 on 5/6/21. There are previous Herefordshire records though none recently. Larva is a leaf miner on oak and otherwise only known from Kent.



Phyllonorycter distentella. Patrick Clement.

Phtheochroa schreibersiana (Frolich)

Berkeley-Pendlesham SO883570 one at light on 13/6/21 (Steve Whitehouse). Rare nationally with some recent records in urban and suburban areas possibly associated with new tree planting. Larva is said to spin leaves and bore in shoots, live in aphid galls and under bark of elm, bird cherry and poplar but life history needs confirmation.



Phtheochroa schreibersiana. Steve Whitehouse.

Triaxomasia caprimulgella (Staint.)



Mike Southall used a clothes moth pheromone trap for a domestic infestation indoors at Norchard SO847685 from 6/6/21 and found, as well as clothes moths, a dead moth attracted to it which was identified later by dissection by Patrick Clement as this species. The late Michael Harper showed me several living in and flying around inside an old hollow field maple tree in Ledbury Park some years ago. This species has been turning up to clearwing pheromone traps after being thought of as a rare and certainly rarely recorded species in UK.

Triaxomasia caprimulgella. Patrick Clement.

Cydia amplana (Hubn.)



Cydia amplana. Mike Southall.

Thought of as mainly an immigrant species now probably breeding in UK, mainly in acorns, and spreading northwards. It was expected to reach us sooner or later and has arrived in 2021.

Recorded at light in Abberton SO995536 on 7/9/21 (Gavin Peplow), Norchard SO847685 on 8/9/21 (Mike Southall), and Redditch, 9/9/21 (Rob Wardle)

Other interesting and significant records:

Macromoths:

Emma Beasley found a Death's-head Hawk-moth indoors in Great Witley SO755662 on 23/9/21. It was thought that it was attracted by honey bees nesting in the chimney.

A photo turned up on social media taken by non-entomologist Tony Armstrong of a Bee Hawk-moth, probably Narrow-bordered, in a garden in Wichenford SO7860 on 15/6/21. Source unknown but not far from Monk Wood.

There have been increasing numbers of Pine Hawk-moths recorded right across the county including a larva found on the ground near the River Teme at SO798526 by Carrie Randell on 19/9/21.

Festoon. Madresfield Court SO888476 one at light on 5/6/21 (Ian Duncan). Only modern record west of Severn and away from Trench Wood/Grafton Wood/Abberton area.

Peter Holmes had two Cloaked Pugs at light on 11/7/21 and 4/8/21, and a Yarrow Pug on 21/7/21 at Malvern Wells SO773420. Both species confirmed by dissection. Only second county records.

Great Oak Beauty. one at light in Upper Welland SO783405 (Ian Duncan) on 16/6/21 is very unusual away from Wyre Forest area.

Light Knot Grass. one at light at Berkeley-Pendesham SO883570 on 17/6/21 (Steve Whitehouse) is second county record of a vagrant probably from north and west.



Light Knot Grass. Steve Whitehouse.

Dewick's Plusia. one on 7/10/21 at Evesham SP043453 (Lee Taylor) was either a migrant or recent resident of a species which is spreading into west midlands.

White Point. another formerly rare migrant which is now occurring more frequently in the midlands and possibly becoming resident. Abberton SO995536 on 1/9/21 (Gavin Peplow), Darkham Wood SO738299 on 11/9/21 (Ric Benson-Bunch), Norchard SO846684 on 05/09/21 (M. Southall), Evesham SP043453 on 1/7/21 (Lee Taylor) and Stourport SO803728 on 2/8/21 Ian Machin.



Kent Black Arches. Oliver Wadsworth.

Kent Black Arches. This species had been only recorded in extreme south west of county but is clearly now becoming more widespread. Penny Hill Landfill Site SO751615 (Oliver Wadsworth) on 20/07/21, Abberton SO995536 on 30/7/21 (Gavin Peplow), as well as still in Welland SO793403 on 17/7/21 (N. & L. Harris).

Dark Crimson Underwing. one at light at Norchard SO847685 on 9/9/21 (Mike Southall)

Clifton Nonpareil continued to be found across the county with over 25 recorded.

Clearwings: Increasing use of attracting pheromones in 2021 confirmed that many species are widespread and fairly common and were under-recorded previously without the benefit of lures. It seems though that Orange-tailed Clearwing has undergone a change in numbers and distribution probably associated with feeding on alternative viburnums and possibly other shrub and tree species. White-barred and Large Red-belted Clearwings do seem to be local and mainly confined to the greater Wyre Forest area.

Bedstraw Hawk-moth. One to light at Redditch SP038656. 02/08/21. (P. Taylor)

Micromoths:

Brian Harley made the second county record of *Nemapogon variatella* (Clem.) when one was attracted to a VES clearwing pheromone lure near Defford Airfield SO897445 on 17/7/21. It has been increasingly noticed that these lures attract other moths as well as clearwings, especially some Tineidae and Tortricidae. Anyone using them should look out for these and please keep specimens to be identified later if possible.

The small ermine moth *Yponomeuta evonymella* (Linn.) is well known from regularly turning up in moth traps in variable numbers every year but is only known to feed on bird cherry which is not native in Worcestershire. It is however being planted here mainly as an amenity tree, but despite looking on it for larval webs, until this year I had never found any. The moth was therefore assumed to be only a migrant either from upland areas to north and west or possibly from abroad. In 2021 however I (Tony Simpson) found many larval webs on planted bird cherry in Stoulton Woods SO909494 on 3/6/21 and bred moths, so can confirm this species is now definitely breeding here.

Agonopterix propinquella (Treits.) We have only a few records of this moth in the county so it was nice to get a record and photo from Neal Gregory of a hibernating imago disturbed from inside the mushroom house at Hanbury Hall SO94256371 on 30/12/21.

Elachista stabilella Staint. I found two of these pretty little moths, as usual flying amongst a clump of the grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* which seems to be its usual foodplant, on 16/6/21 at Hipton Hill Orchards SPO29484. Our only other site is not far away on the other side of Avon Valley on Windmill Hill.

Commophila aeneana (Hubn.) Kevin McGee photographed this beautiful moth at Penny Hill Landfill Site SO752616 on 5/6/21. This is the first record away from the Lias Clay area in south east of the county, this time on a calcareous Silurian grassland site.

Pammene ignorata Kusnetov I had a female of this uncommon species at light at Eastham SO66696850 on 5/6/21 (Tony Simpson). Confirmed by dissection.

delete Two **were** more were seen at Dodford by Pete Smith on 9 and 15/06/21. Life history unknown.

Oncocera semirubella (Scop.) Following the first records in 2020 at Penny Hill Landfill Site SO751615 Oliver Wadsworth and Patrick Clement had three more there on 20/7/21, confirming it is resident.

Euzophera cinerosella (Zell.) Roger Scase had one of these at light in Tibberton SO90645791 on 15/7/21. An uncommonly recorded moth in the county whose larva feeds in roots of Wormwood. Ian Machin also recorded this moth on 01/07/21 at Stourport (SO803728).

insert a before 'third' *Catoptria margaritella* ([D. & S.]) there was third county record of this peat bog Crambid at Dodford SO936731 on 2/8/21 (Pete Smith). Undoubtedly a migrant here in VC37.

Migrant moths.

Numbers of migrant moths were generally low as has often been the case in recent years. A summary of species usually considered as migrants in the UK follows. Of note is the total of 74 Box tree moths *Cydalima perspectalis* compared to last year's total of 7. There is now some local breeding of this species in the county as reported by Gary Farmer in Redditch.

Code	Taxon	Vernacular	Totals
18.001	<i>Plutella xylostella</i>	Diamond-back Moth	142
28.008	<i>Metalampra italica</i>		20
49.343	<i>Cydia amplana</i>		3
62.067	<i>Cadra cautella</i>		1
63.031	<i>Udea ferrugalis</i>	Rusty-dot Pearl	11
63.048	<i>Palpita vitrealis</i>		2
63.052	<i>Nomophila noctuella</i>	Rush Veneer	14
63.054	<i>Cydalima perspectalis</i>	Box-tree Moth	74
69.004	<i>Agrius convolvuli</i>	Convolvulus Hawk-moth	3
69.010	<i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>	Humming-bird Hawk-moth	11
69.014	<i>Hyles gallii</i>	Bedstraw Hawk-moth	1
70.047	<i>Nycterosea obstipata</i>	Gem	1
73.015	<i>Autographa gamma</i>	Silver Y	383
73.076	<i>Helicoverpa armigera</i>	Scarce Bordered Straw	1
73.297	<i>Mythimna albipuncta</i>	White-point	5
73.307	<i>Peridroma saucia</i>	Pearly Underwing	4
73.327	<i>Agrotis ipsilon</i>	Dark Sword-grass	24
73.330	<i>Ochropleura leucogaster</i>	Radford's Flame Shoulder	2

***Caloptilia* species on the move.**

A recent paper, published in the Entomologists Record (Vol. 134 part1), by Colin Plant has drawn attention to a number of *Caloptilia* species that have recently been seen in the UK, as rare but increasing residents, migrants or recent colonists. Others are spreading in Europe and likely to turn up here before long. Most are visually very similar to some of the more regularly seen resident species and are likely to be overlooked.

C.hemidactylella is resident and, after an absence of records for many years, appears to be increasing and spreading. It has been recorded from Gloucestershire and Warwickshire in recent years.

C.honoratella is resident in the south east.

These Acer feeding species can be variable in appearance as can the more familiar *C.semicostella* giving us a problem with reliable identification. No reliable differences have been found in the larval feeding habits either, so mines and cones on Acer species cannot now be reliably identified to species and need to be bred out.

In the same issue, *C.fidella* is mentioned as now resident in Suffolk. The adults, again, show some variation and could be confused with *C.stigmatella*, *C.alchimiella* and *C.robustella*.

This genus seems to be particularly prone to population expansions and local population fluctuations. Flight periods are changing with more species producing extra generations in good weather. It seems that irregularly marked individuals are becoming more common also.

The upshot is that many *Caloptilia* sp. moths encountered in traps will not be able to be determined with certainty. It is recommended that any moths of this genus that differ from the 'regular' forms of our common species should be retained for genitalia determination.

Refs. The Entomologist's Record and Journal of Variation. Vol. 134. Pt.1.

pp21-39:

The status of *Caloptilia honoratella* and *C. hemidactylella* in Britain... by Colin Plant.

pp40-42:

Caloptilia fidella: Further studies in East Suffolk... by Watson and McLennen-Warnock.



Variation in *Caloptilia semifascia*. Oliver Wadsworth.

We would like to thank all recorders who have sent in their records for this last year. The total is only slightly shy of 42000, a county record and a sure indicator of the continued rise in the numbers of those taking an interest in moths. 1036 species were seen.

The Herefordshire and Worcestershire Moth blog site is still active and is a useful place to report sightings of interesting moths and ask for ID help if needed. It can be found at: <https://herefordandworcestermoths.blogspot.com/>

The West Midlands Moths Website has now been online for about a year. Distribution data for all moth species recorded in the four West Midland counties are available there. The site is a great resource and a way in which recorders can see their data added to the wider county context. It also serves as a convenient way to check local status of species and if photographic or other voucher evidence may be needed to substantiate records of rarer or difficult to identify species. Subscribing to the site, for a small donation, helps with running costs and gives access to more detail on the maps. The website can be found at:

<https://westmidlandsmoths.co.uk/>

All the records that you send to us are ultimately passed on to Butterfly Conservation for inclusion in the national database after going through additional checks. The website draws its data from here. *Recorders should be aware that their name is associated with their records and will be visible on the website. If anyone is concerned about this do please let us know and we can remove your records if needed.* The 2021 data will be added to the site before long.

The website's data policy is available here:

https://westmidlandsmoths.co.uk/West_Midlands_Moths_Data_Policy.pdf.

Tony Simpson and Oliver Wadsworth