

E-moth

Moths Count update January 2008

A belated Happy New Year to you! Hope you are dusting off your moth traps, changing the oil in your generators and planning lots of exciting mothing for the season to come.

Although the winter months are relatively quiet for moth recording, it is a period of frenetic activity for County Moth Recorders and others involved in collating, verifying and computerising records and preparing that all-important feedback to recorders. The Moths Count project has been very busy too since the October issue of E-moth and we hope that you'll find this update useful. As always, the latest project information can be found at www.mothscount.org.

The National Moth Recording Scheme

The National Moth Recording Scheme (NMRS) is now up and running and ready to accept macro-moth datasets from County Moth Recorders across the country! Just before Christmas the first dataset was imported into the NMRS database, getting the ball rolling with a respectable 168,000 records. We expect this figure to grow very rapidly during the year as more county datasets are submitted and incorporated.

In order to ensure that the NMRS database is constructed in an orderly way, we are making contact with County Moth Recorders individually. However, if any County Moth Recorder is ready to, and wishes to forward their dataset, Les Hill (01929 406008 or lhill@butterfly-conservation.org) would be delighted to hear from you. We understand that everyone will be in the middle of sorting out 2007 moth records, but we'd be very happy to receive verified datasets up to and including 2006 records. Please contact Les first to discuss the procedure, rather than simply sending the dataset.

If you are a moth recorder who is still unsure of how to contribute to the NMRS, please simply send your records, past and present, to the appropriate County Moth Recorder (i.e. the County Moth Recorder for the county in which you recorded the moths). An up-to-date list of County Moth Recorders is available on the NMRS page of the Moths Count web site.

Data Policy – why do we need one?

The NMRS Data Policy is an important piece of the jigsaw underlying the new recording scheme and the Moths Count team has spent months developing a short, clear and workable policy. A small group of moth recorders and other experts, including the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) (which effectively sets the 'best practice' for this kind of thing) and some local environmental records centres, contributed to extensive discussions and we are very grateful to them for their time. These deliberations represent the latest phase of a long process that has its roots in the massive consultation conducted during the NMRS planning phase, and has continued through numerous public meetings over the past year. We can assure you that we have considered very carefully all of the (sometimes contentious) issues and practicalities in drafting the policy.

Although we appreciate that not everyone is interested in data policies, nowadays it is deemed essential that anyone compiling and using other people's records (whether at a local or national scale) takes steps to inform those people about what will be done with the records. The NMRS Data Policy is our approach to this. It is all the more important as we expect the NMRS to be a very active recording scheme, making full use of the information that recorders work so hard to provide. The latest issue of NBN News has a good summary of the benefits of such policies (Winter 2007 issue pages 6-7, available in .pdf format at <http://www.nbn.org.uk/downloads/files/NBN%20News%2035.pdf>) if you are really keen!

Any moth records submitted to the NMRS will be treated under the Data Policy. The fundamental principles of the NMRS Data Policy are:

- The NMRS project partners aim to maximise the use of records and data to promote understanding, recording and conservation of moths and their habitats. NMRS records will be made available in a controlled and managed way to fulfil this aim.
- The NMRS needs permission to use records received from recorders.
- All recorders supplying records to NMRS, typically via a County Moth Recorder or local environmental records centre, will be considered to have granted permission for NMRS to use the records as outlined in this policy.
- Recorders will retain ownership of their records and, of course, are free to use them as they wish. Butterfly Conservation will own the NMRS database and use it in accordance with this policy.
- It is clearly impractical to obtain permission individually from every recorder (especially for historical records) or to have different criteria governing access to records from individual recorders.
- Butterfly Conservation and NMRS will promote this data policy widely so that recorders can make an informed choice about submitting records.

The Data Policy goes on to explain in more detail how records and data will be used and shared under the NMRS. The Data Policy has already been circulated to County Moth Recorders. However, it is equally relevant to all moth recorders hence our aim to promote awareness and understanding of the Data Policy to all potential participants in the NMRS. It is only 1 page (plus a short appendix) and is available to view in .pdf format on the web site (click <http://www.mothscount.org/site/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=4&Itemid=27> and look for the "National Moth Recording Scheme Data Policy" link at the bottom of the page). We hope that you will have a look. It is important that if we will be using and sharing your records to improve knowledge and conservation of moths then it will be in a manner that you are happy with.

Free training courses in 2008

During 2007, over 320 new and existing moth recorders attended training courses organised by the Moths Count project. The feedback was fantastic, so we have organised even more free training for this year. We have also taken into account training needs specified by moth recorders at events held during 2007. At the end of this update, you'll find a listing of all the training events that have been confirmed so far. Others are still in development and will appear on the events and training page of the Moths Count website in due course.

All of the courses are free, but places must be booked in advance. Booking is open now for the courses listed here. All courses have a limited number of places, indeed one is already full, so book now to avoid disappointment.

Garden moths, what's going on?

A bit like London buses, you wait years for one to come along and then suddenly there are two projects relating to common garden moths: Garden Moths Count and the Garden Moth Scheme (GMS). It is confusing, but the two projects are very different.

Garden Moths Count is part of the Moths Count partnership led by Butterfly Conservation and is aimed at increasing the general public's awareness of the beauty, diversity and importance of moths in the garden. It is an online survey of a small number of common moths that takes place over a short period each year (21 June – 6 July 2008) and it is aimed at people who are new to moths and moth recording. No specialist equipment (e.g. moth traps) or knowledge is required. The expectation is that by taking part in Garden Moths Count, individuals will gain a better understanding of moths, which can then benefit moth conservation, for example through more sensitive gardening practices. It is also hoped that some may take further steps toward becoming moth recorders, perhaps by attending public events run by local moth groups.

The Garden Moth Scheme (GMS) is an independently-run project in which moth recorders use light traps to record a large selection of widespread moths once a week throughout the season. If GMS participants also want their records to contribute to the NMRS then they should forward them to their County Moth Recorder in the normal way. Please contact Dave Grundy dgcountryside@btinternet.com for more information about GMS.

Diary dates

Here are some dates that may be of interest. Please let the Moths Count team know of any major events that you would like to publicise through E-moth.

Saturday 2 February 2008 *Local and national moth recording at the World Museum Liverpool.* As well as being an opportunity to see the museum's entomological collections, this one-day meeting organised by BENHS and Butterfly Conservation will focus on moth recording. The day will include talks and informal discussion on the Moths Count project, local and national moth recording and studies on important species in North West England. For more info see www.benhs.org.uk. Places are limited, so please contact the organiser Guy Knight (0151 4784369 or Guy.Knight@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk) if you would like to attend.

Saturday 1 March 2008 *Scottish Recorders' Gathering 2008 at the AK Bell Library, Perth.* This one-day meeting organised by Butterfly Conservation Scotland will cover both moths and butterflies. Details and booking from Shona Greig on 01786 447753 or sgreig@butterfly-conservation.org.

Saturday 7 June 2008 *National Moth Night and Day 2008.* A great reason to hold a public moth event or just to record moths somewhere different from usual. For the first time, there is a target habitat this year, namely orchards, so why not try trapping in a local orchard? Target species are *Anania funebris*, Bordered Gothic and Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth, but as ever you can set your own targets or just get out and record moths. If you do organise a public event, you can promote it for free via www.nationalmothnight.info.

Saturday 21 June – Sunday 6 July 2008 *Garden Moths Count.* Primarily aimed at gardeners and their families who are new to moth recording, this national online survey raises awareness of the amazing moths that live in our gardens. Something to encourage friends and family who have not yet caught the mothing bug to have a go at.

Monday 23 June – Sunday 29 June 2008 *National Insect Week.* This Royal Entomological Society event is back and aims to give people of all ages the opportunity to

learn more about the most fascinating creatures on our planet. For more information, please visit www.nationalinsectweek.co.uk.

Moths Count contacts:

Susan Anders Outreach Officer sanders@butterfly-conservation.org 01929 406007
Sarah-ann Boon Project Assistant saboon@butterfly-conservation.org 01929 406009
Richard Fox Project Manager rfox@butterfly-conservation.org 01626 368385
Les Hill Database Manager lhill@butterfly-conservation.org 01929 406008
Zoë Randle Moth Recording Co-ordinator zrandle@butterfly-conservation.org 01929 406006

Sarah-ann Boon is the first point of contact for project enquiries.

MOTHS COUNT TRAINING EVENTS 2008

All events are free but **must be booked in advance**. Unless otherwise stated, booking is via Sarah-ann Boon on 01929 406009 or nmrs@butterfly-conservation.org

ENGLAND

South West England

4 June 2008 *Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth training day* led by John Walters in association with Dartmoor National Park Authority. Parke, Bovey Tracy, Devon. 10:15-16:00.

South East England

3 February 2008 *Media training for moth recorders* led by Hugo Brook. Westmeston Hall, nr Brighton, West Sussex. 10:00 – 16:00.

11 May 2008 *Finding & identifying caterpillars* led by Paul Waring in association with Hampshire Wildlife Trust. Blashford Lakes Study Centre, Ringwood, Hampshire. 10:30 – 16:00.

12 July 2008 *Striped Lychnis moth larval training day* led by Alison Cross and Mike Wall in association with Hampshire Wildlife Trust. Preston Candover Village Hall, Basingstoke, Hampshire. 10:30 – 15:00. Booking via 01256 381186 or amandab@hwt.org.uk

26 July 2008 *Introduction to the moths of the New Forest including Crimson Underwings* led by Dave Green. Brockenhurst, Hampshire. 14:00 – 16:30 then 18:30 onwards.

East of England

26 July 2008 *Introduction to moths & Fenn's Wainscot survey* led by Jon Clifton in association with Norfolk Wildlife Trust. Hickling Broad, Norfolk. 15:00 – 18:00 then 20:00 – 00:00.

West Midlands

7 June 2008 *Orchard moths by day & night* led by Dave Grundy in association with Natural England. Lodge Hill Farm, Wyre Forest, nr Bewdley, Worcestershire. 11:00 – 17:00 then 20:00 – 00:00.

21 June 2008 *Moth specialities of the Wyre Forest* led by Dave Grundy. Wyre Forest Visitor Centre, Callow Hill, Worcestershire. 19:30 – 00:00.

North West England

17 May 2008 *Introduction to moths* led by Steve Palmer. Leighton Moss RSPB reserve, nr Carnforth, Lancashire. 10:00 – 15:30.

5 July 2008 *Introduction to moths* led by Steve Palmer. Leighton Moss RSPB reserve, nr Carnforth, Lancashire. 10:00 – 15:30.

27 September 2008 *Introduction to moths* led by Steve Palmer. Leighton Moss RSPB reserve, nr Carnforth, Lancashire. 10:00 – 15:30.

Yorkshire & the Humber

10 May 2008 *Introduction to moths evening* led by Terry Whitaker. Craven Lime Works LNR, Langcliffe, Settle, North Yorkshire. 21:00 – 00:00.

28/29 June 2008 *Moth ecology, surveying and recording* led by Paul Waring. Margrove Heritage Centre, Margrove, Cleveland. 20:30 onwards on 28 June then 11:00 – 16:00 on 29 June.

9 August 2008 *Introduction to moths and moth recording* led by Terry Whitaker. Langcliffe, Settle, North Yorkshire. 13:00 – 16:30 then 19:30 – 00:00.

NORTHERN IRELAND

25/26 April 2008 *Woodland moths* led by Dave Allen and Maurice Hughes. Hollymount, nr Downpatrick, Co. Down. 19:00 onwards on 25 April then from 10:00 on 26 April.

10 May 2008 *Introduction to moths and moth recording* led by Dave Allen and Maurice Hughes. Ulster Wildlife Trust, Crossgar, Co. Down. 10:30 – 16:00.

28 June 2008 *Introduction to moths and moth recording* led by Dave Allen and Maurice Hughes. EHS Peatlands Park, Dungannon, Co. Tyrone. 10:30 – 16:00.

1/2 August 2008 *Moths of bogs* led by Dave Allen and Maurice Hughes. Lough Fea, Co. Tyrone. 20:00 onwards on 1 August then from 10:00 on 2 August.

29/30 August 2008 *Moths of fens & reedbeds* led by Dave Allen and Maurice Hughes. Portmore Lough, Co. Antrim. 19:30 onwards on 29 August then from 10:00 on 30 August.

SCOTLAND

Central Scotland

23 February 2008 *MapMate software for moth recorders* led by Neil Gregory. Scottish Wildlife Trust Head Office, Cramond House, Edinburgh. 10:00 – 14:30.

12 April 2008 *Identifying difficult moths by genitalia* led by Jon Clifton. Glasgow Museums Resource Centre, Nitshill, Glasgow. 10:30 – 16:00.

10 May 2008 *Identifying difficult moths by genitalia* led by Keith Bland. National Museum of Scotland, Granton Centre, Edinburgh. 10:00 – 16:30.

28/29 June 2008 *Introduction to moths and moth recording* led by John Knowler in association with Scottish Natural Heritage. Flanders Moss, West Moss-side Farm, Thornhill, Stirling. 20:30 – 23:30 on 28 June then from 08:00 on 29 June. Booking via 01786 450362 or David.Pickett@snh.gov.uk

Northern Scotland

15 March 2008 *Identifying difficult moths including genitalia examination* led by Mark Young. Aigas Field Centre, Beauly, Highland. 10:00 – 17:00. Booking via 01408 633247 or tony.mainwood@btinternet.com

5/6 April 2008 Talla nan Ross Hall, Kingussie, Highland. *Scottish Spring Specials: Rannoch Brindled Beauty, Sword-grass and Rannoch Sprawler* led by Tom Prescott. 14:00 onwards on 5 April then from 10:00 on 6 April. Booking via 01540 661 469 or tprescott@butterfly-conservation.org

25 May 2008 *Introduction to moths including finding and identifying larvae* led by Mark Young and Roy Leverton. Aigas Field Centre, Beauly, Highland. 10:00 – 17:00. Booking via 01408 633247 or tony.mainwood@btinternet.com

WALES

South Wales

2 February 2008 *Identifying difficult moths by genitalia* led by Norman Lowe. National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. 11:00 – 16:00. FULLY BOOKED (waiting list in operation)

Mid Wales

26 April 2008 *Introduction to moths and moth recording* led by Norman Lowe. Offa's Dyke Centre, Knighton, Powys. 19:30 – 23:00

14 June 2008 *Moth recording workshop* led by Norman Lowe. Radnorshire Wildlife Trust, Llandrindod Wells, Powys. 11:00 – 16:00.

North Wales

Dydd Sul 1 Mehefin 2008 *Cyflwyniad i wyfynod a chofnodi gwyfynod* led by John Harold. Canolfan Amgylcheddol Moelyci, Tregarth, Bangor, Gwynedd. 10:30 – 16:00.

15 June 2008 *Introduction to moths and moth recording* led by John Harold. Loggerheads Country Park, Mold, Flintshire. 10:30 – 16:00.

Nos Sadwrn 26 Gorffennaf 2008 *Cyflwyniad i wyfynod a chofnodi gwyfynod* led by John Harold. Canolfan Amgylcheddol Moelyci, Tregarth, Bangor, Gwynedd. 19:30 – 23:00.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT ALL PLACES ON TRAINING COURSES MUST BE BOOKED IN ADVANCE.