

**Butterfly  
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment



## E-moth

### Moths Count Update January 2016

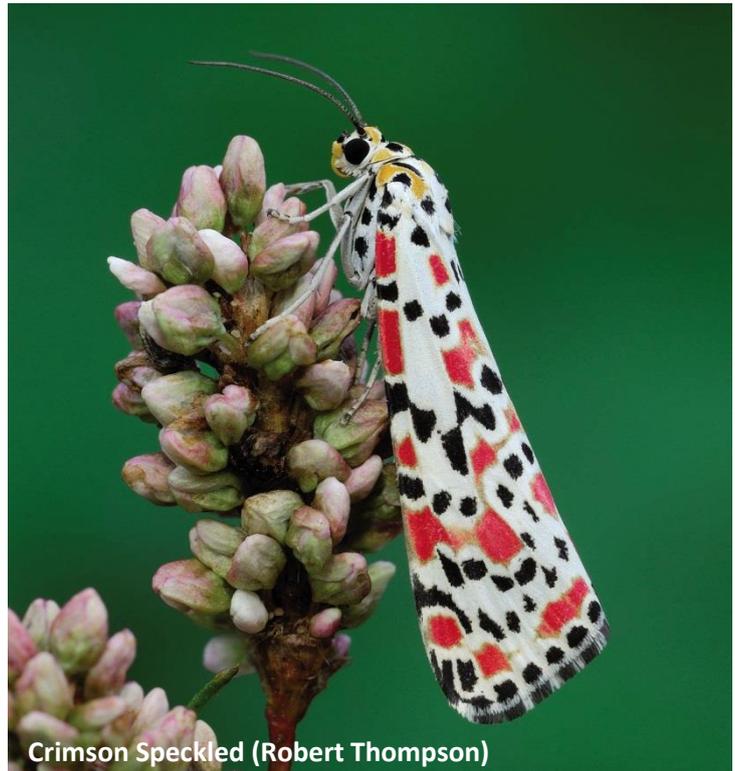
December is not usually a month known for moth immigration, but in southern England December 2015 will be remembered for an extraordinary occurrence of a range of very scarce immigrant species, along with more regularly encountered immigrant moths (such as Small Mottled Willow *Spodoptera exigua* and Scarce Bordered Straw *Helicoverpa armigera*). Meanwhile resident species typically expected at that time appeared in low numbers and early spring species started turning up in moth traps. No doubt this was down to the prevalence of very mild conditions during the month (it was the warmest December on record), although windy at times, with a series of low depressions which are likely to have triggered these wind borne arrivals.

Amongst these arrivals was a crambid new to Britain, *Cornifrons ulceratalis*, being first noted in Dorset and Hampshire on 18<sup>th</sup> December and several others were recorded in other counties before the end of the month.

An article is being produced on the species for the journal *Atropos*. Another remarkable event was the occurrence of the very scarce, if rather small, gelechiid *Syncopacma polychromella*. Although full records are not yet compiled, over 60 are known to have been recorded, not bad for a species with only a handful of records prior to this year. There were even a few records of multiple examples, including six at Portesham, Dorset, on 27<sup>th</sup> December, although the first occurrence in the month was on the 16<sup>th</sup> (Devon, Dorset, Hampshire, Sussex and Wiltshire). Over the rest of month it was recorded from several other counties, with reports north to Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire and Norfolk.

Double figures of the crambid *Euchromius ocella* were reported, occurring from Sussex to Carmarthenshire, this a species more typically recorded in this country in the winter months. A few *Spoladea recurvalis* were noted, including 2 on 27<sup>th</sup> December at a site in Dorset.

Of the larger moths, there were singles of the Crimson Speckled *Utetheisa pulchella* (Dorset), Red-headed Chestnut *Conistra erythrocephala* (Kent) and Tunbridge Wells Gem *Chrysodeixes acuta* (Hampshire) and what will probably prove to be the second British record of Spalding's Dart *Agrotis herzogi* (Dorset), found on the 17<sup>th</sup> December. Two Black-spotted Chestnut *Conistra rubiginosa* were reported from Bedfordshire (at the same site but on consecutive nights), with two Levant Blackneck *Tathorhynchus exsiccata* (Dorset & Surrey). A few Eastern Bordered Straw *Heliothis nubigera* were



Crimson Speckled (Robert Thompson)



*Cornifrons ulceratalis* (Barry Henwood)

seen in Cornwall and Dorset, with one reported in Caernarvonshire. Remarkably, a few immigrant species perhaps more associated with the summer period were also noted, including several Striped Hawk-moth *Hyles livornica* (Cornwall, Dorset, Isle of Wight and Kent) and Purple Marbled *Eublemma ostrina* (a single example in Cornwall).

From the records so far reported it would seem there were two main pulses to this immigration, between 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> December and again on 27<sup>th</sup> December (this being a calmer night than those either side of that date). At the time of writing there is some evidence that this immigration could continue, given favourable conditions (although the forecast is for cooler weather), with a Black-headed Chestnut being recorded in Dorset in early January. If you

have any records of immigrant moths from this time of year please ensure the records are forwarded (along with your other moth records) to the relevant County Moth Recorder so that this remarkable event can be properly assessed in due course.

### National Moth Recorders' Meeting

Our sixth National Moth Recorders' Meeting is being held on **Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2016** at the Birmingham and Midland Institute, central Birmingham. As with this time last year this event is fully booked and there is a waiting list, if you have booked a place but can no longer attend please let us know so that someone else can have your place. The line-up for the day features speakers from the amateur moth recording community and academic researchers. The programme for the day can be found [here](#). We will also have [Atropos](#), [Creature Candy](#), [Hachiware Art](#), [Pemberley Books](#) and [Watkins & Doncaster](#) in attendance, so bring your purses and wallets to stock up on natural history books, moth-ing equipment and other moth-related things. If there is anything specific that you might require, please contact the traders in advance who can take pre-orders for collection on the day. There is a £7.50 per person registration fee for attendees, payable on the day. This includes morning and afternoon tea/coffee and a buffet lunch all subsidised from Butterfly Conservation budgets. **To be added to the waiting list please contact [info@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:info@butterfly-conservation.org) or telephone 01929 400209.** We look forward to seeing you there.

### National Moth Recording Scheme

The number of macro-moth records in the National Moth Recording Scheme (NMRS) database has breached the 20 million mark and it now holds **20.3 million** macro-moth records. Over the past year we have received 90 vice-county datasets; 68 of these have been refreshed so far, adding 1.9 million records to the database and the remaining 22 datasets are yet to be processed and imported. The largest VC dataset in the NMRS is South Hampshire (VC 11) with 1,008,268 records followed by Dorset (VC 9) with 853,035 records and Cheshire (VC 58) with 703,477 records. We are incredibly grateful to the moth recording community, and in particular to the County Moth Recorders and Record Collators who assemble and verify the data prior to it entering the NMRS. Les Hill is primed for the next rush of **full** refreshed County datasets to the NMRS prior to the 31st March deadline. Please submit your moth records to your County Moth Recorder if you wish them to be included in the next refresh.

We are at the start of the final year of fieldwork for moth records to be collected for inclusion in the forthcoming Atlas of Britain and Ireland's Larger Moths. It is likely to be a busy year for the moth recording community what with targeting under-recorded areas and white-holes, capturing data from old diaries and notebooks and gathering historical records. We are keen to ensure that as many verified records as possible are incorporated into the Atlas which will include records up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016.

As stated previously if you foresee any problems meeting the deadline or if you think that your VC will not be represented comprehensively please contact us as soon as possible. Don't forget that your records will only enter the NMRS and, ultimately, the forthcoming Atlas if they come via the County Moth Recorder Network.

Les Hill has recently repatriated 15,312 Humming-bird Hawk-moth records to County Moth Recorders for verification and incorporation into local datasets. These data were submitted to our online Migrant Watch survey between 2008-2012. Further moth data from the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS), Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) and the Big Butterfly Count will be repatriated to County Moth Recorders in the coming weeks. In addition to this, all records in the official NMRS online recording system ([www.mothrecording.org](http://www.mothrecording.org)) will be forwarded to the relevant County Moth Recorders.

### Local Moth Group Meetings

Berkshire Moth Group holds regular meetings on the **second Thursday** of each month, further details can be found [here](#).

North Wales Moth Group holds informal meetings on the **first Monday** of each month starting at 8pm at Pensychnant, Sychnant Pass, Conwy, North Wales, LL32 8BJ Conwy. Contact Julian Thompson on 01492 592595 for further details.

Huntingdonshire Moth & Butterfly Group; **Tuesday 9th February 2016** 'The Butterflies and other Wildlife of Arizona' by Peter Rowlings, 7.30pm at Hartford Village Hall, Huntingdon, PE29 1XU. There is a charge of £2.00 for non-members. Further details, if required, from Barry Dickerson ([barry@eynesbury27.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:barry@eynesbury27.freeserve.co.uk)).

Essex Moth Group Annual Meeting; **Saturday 13th February 2016**, 10.30am – 5pm at the Green Centre, Wat Tyler Country Park, Pitsea Hall Lane, Pitsea, Basildon, Essex, SS16 4UH

East Kent Moths Meeting; **5th March 2016**, 11.00am at Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory, Guilford Rd, Sandwich Bay, Sandwich, Kent, CT13 9PF. The meeting will be informal with the aim of giving people a chance to discuss what they would like to see as an output from the data, ways to contribute and ideas of how to progress in the future. Please register your interest in attending via [eastkentmoths@gmail.com](mailto:eastkentmoths@gmail.com)

Staffordshire Invertebrate Science Fair; **Saturday 5th March**, 10am - 4pm at Staffordshire University Science Centre, Leek Road, Stoke on Trent, ST4 2DF.

Herts and Middlesex Moth Group Annual indoor meeting, **Saturday 12th March 2016**, 2 pm to 6 pm at Havers Community Centre, Waytemore Road, Bishop's Stortford, Herts, CM23 3GR. Butterfly 'Conservations' Sharon Hearle, will be talking at this event to publicise the 2016 survey work for the Four-spotted Moth. Recorders from other East Anglian areas are encouraged to come along and learn how to look for this species. A massive search for Four-spotted Moths with dozens of people in hundreds of places would be fantastic.

The Lepidoptera section of the Yorkshire Naturalists Union Annual Meeting, **Sunday 13th March 2016**, 11am at Bramham Village Hall, Low Way, Bramham, LS23 6QT.

Huntingdonshire Moth & Butterfly Group Members evening, **Tuesday 12th April 2016**, 7.30pm at Hartford Village Hall, Huntingdon, PE29 1XU. There is a charge of £2.00 for non-members. Further details, if required, from Barry Dickerson ([barry@eynesbury27.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:barry@eynesbury27.freeserve.co.uk)).

### Moths Count Contacts

**General enquiries** [info@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:info@butterfly-conservation.org) 01929 400209

**Richard Fox** Head of Recording [rfox@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:rfox@butterfly-conservation.org) 01626 368385 [@RichardFoxBC](https://www.facebook.com/RichardFoxBC)

**Les Hill** Data Manager [lhill@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:lhill@butterfly-conservation.org) 0203 7596103 [@LesHillBC](https://www.facebook.com/LesHillBC)

**Zoë Randle** Surveys Officer [zrandle@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:zrandle@butterfly-conservation.org) 01929 406006 [@Moth Lady](https://www.facebook.com/MothLady)



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[www.mothscount.org](http://www.mothscount.org)