



# Dorset Moths

A celebration of the moths of Dorset...

July 2020

## Welcome to our Dorset Moths newsletter.

Firstly, we would like to thank everyone for your positivity following the first monthly newsletter that we published covering June. As we said then it's a rather informal look back at the month where we'll aim to summarise the most interesting sightings from across Dorset as posted on our range of websites and also on social media.

July felt a little uneventful for most with just the occasional interesting species turning up in traps – but were we just building up to something special? Well that's exactly what happened, as we ended the month with a good influx of scare and rare migrants following the arrival of some warm air from the continent. A real nice mix of species was seen across the county but most significant was an arrival of Oak Processionary that spilled over into August. Records were largely from Weymouth, Portland and Purbeck but quite possibly more will be submitted from this influx. Another highlight worthy of more than just a mention in the summary of July highlights was a Pine-tree Lappet that was discovered by Steve Hales in a trap he set near Abbotsbury on the night of the 31<sup>st</sup>. This is only the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dorset record of this attractive moth.

The big highlight also appeared on the night of the 31<sup>st</sup> in a Preston moth trap set by Ricky Lambert and was one of two new species discovered in Dorset during July. Tawny Prominent may well go down as the moth of the year in the county as it was only the 3<sup>rd</sup> UK record of this extremely rare visitor.



Photo: Paul Harris

Also new for Dorset was *Cnephasia pumicana* which was recorded on the 5<sup>th</sup> July at Puddletown by Hugo Wood Homer. Here's Phil Sterling's brief summary:

*Those of us who record micros tend to glaze over when we see one of the mottled grey Cnephasia tortrix moths. Most examples need dissecting to identify which species they are so most get recorded as an aggregate and we move on. Not so Hugo Wood Homer, who has been determined for many years to find C. pumicana among the many Cnephasia he catches at Puddletown. He handed me one that he just thought was a good candidate, and having dissected it, that is what it is. The forewings are rather plain pale grey which is also a feature of C. pasiuana, and some forms of C. incertana and C. genitalana.*

**Luke Phillips**

### **Dusking for rare Tineids – Phil Sterling**

I guess not many people have heard of this wee beast, *Tenaga nigripunctella*, let alone realised it was here in Dorset. It is a small tineid moth, slightly smaller than the Case-bearing Clothes-moth *Tinea pellionella*. It was thought to be extinct in the UK, the last example having been found in the 1930s. Then one was found on a camp site near Creech in Dorset in the 2000s, and Jack Oughton then had one fly into his bedroom in Portesham on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2014 and he has since seen others in the garden in his parents' house on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2015 and 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017. Then on 26<sup>th</sup> June this year Joe Stockwell caught one in a moth trap at Abbotsbury Swannery. These remain the only recent records in the UK of a species that was in Victorian times quite widespread in England and occurred in Wales. The life history is poorly understood. The larva probably lives in a portable case and may feed on detritus in rodent nests, or possibly even faeces or carcasses; in 1878 Barrett suggested "its larva may be suspected of tastes and habits which can hardly be described as decent, much less fastidious".



Photo: Joe Stockwell

Luke Phillips, Steve Hales and I spent a fun evening down at the Swannery on 14<sup>th</sup> July looking for moths flying at dusk, which is the best time to find tineids. We simply wandered around the old sheds and workshops, a likely place for detritus feeding species and netted anything that moved. We didn't find *nigripunctella*, but did see 26 species, 6 of which were new to the Swannery including Large Tabby *Aglossa pinguinalis* and two tineids *Nemapogon ruricolella* and *Tinea dubiella*. Mothing at dusk is highly recommended to find species rarely seen at light, and sometimes really productive, as it was for us that evening.

## Highlights for July

Below is a snapshot of interesting sightings which have been posted on our various online ventures such as the [Dorset Moth Group](#) website and the '[Dorset Moths](#)' Facebook page. We've also been kindly granted permission from [Portland Bird Observatory](#) to republish sightings plus we'll include any exciting recent discoveries from the Dorset verification panel and records submitted to [Living Record](#). It's important to note that records featuring here are still subject to verification and need to be submitted via [Living Record](#) or by following guidance on our [Dorset moths recording page](#).

Dates highlighted are as posted online (unless the actual date is known) and may not reflect the actual date recorded and we've no doubt missed some records which will be captured in our annual report at the end of the year.

Enjoy!

6 <sup>th</sup> July	Cloaked Carpet, Whitchurch Canonicorum (A Martin)
7 <sup>th</sup> July	Blair's Mocha, Bridport (A Foster)
	Cloaked Carpet, Leigh (C Fox)
	Wood Carpet, Leigh (C Fox)
8 <sup>th</sup> July	White-line Snout, 2 at Whitchurch Canonicorum (A Martin, L Phillips)
9 <sup>th</sup> July	Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moth, Thorncombe Woods (R Porter)
12 <sup>th</sup> July	Light Crimson Underwing, Verwood (M Jenkins)
14 <sup>th</sup> July	<i>Nemapogon ruricolella</i> , Abbotsbury (P Sterling, L Phillips, S Hales)
16 <sup>th</sup> July	Plain Pug, Weymouth (L Phillips)
	Dusky Plume, Tolpuddle (J Francis)
	Langmaid's Yellow Underwing, Weymouth (P Sterling)
17 <sup>th</sup> July	White-line Snout, Abbotsbury (S Hales, L Phillips)
	<i>Morophaga choragella</i> , Abbotsbury (S Hales, L Phillips)
	Langmaid's Yellow Underwing, Weymouth (P Sterling)

- 19<sup>th</sup> July *Morophaga choragella*, Tolpuddle (J Francis)  
21<sup>st</sup> July Brown-line Bright-eye, Alderholt (T Morris)  
22<sup>nd</sup> July Peppered Moth of the form *carbonaria*, Tolpuddle (J Francis)



Photo: Julian Francis

- 23<sup>rd</sup> July *Celypha aurofasciana*, Whitchuch Canonicorum (A Martin, L Phillips)  
*Scoparia bisistrigalis*, Whitchurch Canonicorum (A Martin, L Phillips)  
Blair's Mocha, 2 at Bridport (A Foster)  
Feathered Ranunculus, 1 early individual at Preston (G Lightfoot)
- 24<sup>th</sup> July Langmaid's Yellow Underwing, Preston (G Lightfoot)  
Orache, Upwey (P Harris)



Photo: Paul Harris

27<sup>th</sup> July Dark Crimson Underwing, Swanage (A Millar)  
30<sup>th</sup> July Cloaked Carpet, Hilfield (R Thornbury)  
31<sup>st</sup> July Marbled Clover, by day at Swanage (T Whincup)  
Tawny Prominent, Preston near Weymouth (R Lambert)  
Pine-tree Lappet, Abbotsbury (S Hales)  
Oak Processionary, several reported across Dorset  
*Celypha aurofasciana*, Warre Wood (P Sterling)  
*Ancylosis oblitella*, Upwey (P Harris)  
Beautiful Marbled, Preston (G Lightfoot)



Photo: Oak Processionary. Luke Phillips