

UNDER-RECORDED UNDERCLIFF NNR TALK

To start off I better show you where the Undercliffs NNR is geographically

MAP PHOTO

As you can see only a small part is actually in Dorset , the whole Reserve stretching approx. 7 Miles from the mouth of the Axe in the West to Lyme Regis in the East.

Having been on several habitat management work parties at various points along the Reserve I became aware that it was a very special place, and had only had minimal moth recording done, mainly a bio-blitz in 2011. The reason for this soon became obvious.....most of the site is very difficult to access, even on foot, let alone carrying the usual mothing equipment.

I was particularly drawn to the area known as **Humble Glades**. These are a series of glades made over a period of years starting in the late 1960s by the old headmaster of Rousden School and later added to and increased under the current managers, Natural England in their various guises.

There are currently four glades 1-4 with another one under construction 1 is the oldest and 4 the most recent. Due to the very **varied geology** each glade is quite different. Being limited in time and physical endurance I chose to trap in Glades 1 & 2 . In Glade 1, I chained my generator to a convenient tree.

PHOTO

and ran a 125 Robinson MV trap. In glade 2 I ran a Skinner with a 20watt WEM light and a battery operated actinic kindly on loan from Devon Moth Group.

I started operations in May 2018 with a view to record once a week throughout the season for a full year. As ever best laid plans and roads lined with good intentions.....the actual trapping did indeed take place most weeks but I extended my activities until July 2019 to try and fill in missing weeks. In wet weather access to the Undercliffs is too dangerous as the land is on the move all the time .

So what did I actually find ???

Over the recording period **431 species** were recorded during the survey. Of these 8019 % !!were designated as nationally Local, a further 15 were classified as Nationally Notable B , 2 more as Notable A and with two Red Data Book (RDB) species,

Portland Ribbon Wave *Idaea degenaria* and **Morris's Wainscot** *Chortodes morrisii morrisii*. Portland Ribbon wave was recorded twice, both in September so probably migrants as the resident local population on Portland flies in July.

PHOTO 1

There was one species **new to Devon**, *Ancylis upupana*. Amazingly it was also recorded in the far west of Devon the following night and again by me 4 nights later. It feeds on Birch, so my trap was

well placed.

PHOTO

Cynaeda dentalis was recorded as only the **third Devon record**, the last being from Axmouth in 2011. Vipers' Bugloss occurs in odd patches in the reserve but mainly further West near Axmouth
PHOTO

Five species were very **recent colonists** to the UK and some are almost certainly now resident on the Undercliff. These are **Sombre Brocade** *Dryobotodes tenebrosa*, which turned up singly on two nights. First Dorset records were in 2014.

Oak Rustic *Dryobota labecula* was seen five times in November.

PHOTO

Jersey Mocha *Cyclophora ruficilaria* which are all using the introduced but abundant Holm Oak as a larval foodplant. Females caught here were used to breed larvae for the forthcoming caterpillar book by Henwood & Sterling. It was a common moth ! 57 moths recorded from 22nd April to 2nd September. There have been 22 Dorset records since 2013.

PHOTO

The **Tree-lichen Beauty** *Cryphia algae* has only been recorded in Devon on four other occasions in just three sites to date. I recorded two on 2nd August 2018, may possibly becoming resident.

PHOTO

Less common Resident Species included

Several **Beech-green Carpet** Five were recorded in Glade 1 and by dusking in the woodland edge. This moth only has 3 sites in Devon and the last record was in 2008 and Living Record only has two records from a single site in 2014 on Portland.

PHOTO

Agonopterix rotundella is a scarce micro feeding on Wild Carrot

PHOTO

Ethmia dodocea on Common Gromwell.....does it also use Blue Gromwell which is a famously rare plant that occurs locally???

PHOTO

Blomers' Rivulet One only on 9th July 2018 No Elm very nearby On the edge of its range , only one Living Record entry which was in 2018.

PHOTO

Ruddy Carpet *Catarhoe rubidata* Unusually this was seen in numbers here with 17 recorded from 22nd April to July 2nd despite the recognised flight time being stated as June to July.

