

A Moth Challenge

During lockdown last spring and summer we were all encouraged to take a daily hour of exercise locally, as a direct result of which we all paid more attention to the natural history in our gardens and immediate environs.

Consequently, your Recorders received many more records of day-flying moth species and this is what the challenge is about!

Through Lockdown No. 3 and hopefully beyond, we are encouraging Society members to go out and find, in the HDNS recording area (following current Covid guidelines), the following species which are under-recorded – and of course, all other species which happen to fly past at the same time!

Ideally, a photograph to accompany your sighting(s) would be appreciated (the long-horn species of micromoth can look very similar), together with date and accurate place name (four figure grid reference eg SE3727 please).

Macro Moths

Orange Underwing *Archiearis parthenias*

To be found flying around the tops of Silver (and Downy) Birch trees, before the leaves appear, on mild, sunny days in mid/late March into April (an early emerging species). Later in the day, they can descend lower from the tree tops to bask in the sun on bare ground.



Orange Underwing *Archiearis parthenias*

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Burnet Companion *Euclidia glyphica*

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Euclidia_glyphica_3.JPG

Burnet Companion *Euclidia glyphica*

Preferring sunny embankments, meadows and grassland areas, where the food plants of clovers and Bird's-foot trefoil occur, this subtly patterned species is on the wing from May through to July.

Chimney Sweeper *Odezia atrata*

An instantly recognizable species, with all-black wings and contrasting white wing tips. On the wing during sunny days in June and July, it also favours grassland in limestone areas, where the food plant Pignut grows. Reported from over 40 sites in our area, but some of these records are now very historical, so a selection for this year would be good!



Chimney Sweeper *Odezia atrata*

By picture taken by Olaf Leillinger - Own work, CC BY-SA 2.5, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4266977>



Mother Shipton *Euclidia mi*



Small Yellow Underwing *Panemeria tenebrata*

Mother Shipton *Euclidia mi*

Related to the above species and found in the same habitats. So called because of the upperwing pattern resembling the profile of Knaresborough's famous 16th century witch/prophetess. It flies from May to early July.

Small Yellow Underwing *Panemeria tenebrata*

Easily overlooked because of its diminutive size, like other "yellow underwings", it also has a bright yellow hind wing, although this is not always easy to see. On the wing during May and June during sunny periods, the larvae feed on Mouse-ears.

Micro moths

The first four species below are members of the "longhorn" family, whose antennae can be exceptionally long. The adults are similar in appearance, with a metallic sheen on their wings, but there are subtle differences. An indication of the type of habitat where you had your sighting would be useful for confirming the identification of the species, e.g. in woodland, or on a particular species of flower etc.

Nemophora degeerella

One of the commonest 'longhorns', the adults can be seen in some numbers in dappled shade in damp woodland or along old hedgerows, on bright days from mid May to early July. The wings have a golden-brown sheen, with a distinctive yellow band that bisects the fore wing.

Adela reaumurella

This species can swarm in some number on sunny days from mid April to June around woodland rides/clearings. The wings have a bronze/greenish sheen and males have long, white antennae, whereas the female antennae are much shorter.

Cauchas fibulella

The smallest of the long horns mentioned here, it similarly has wings with a metallic sheen but also a distinctive pale mark in the middle of the fore wing. Associated with Germander Speedwell, the adults often visit the food plant during May and June.

Cauchas rufimitrella

Closely related to the species above, the adults frequent both Cuckoo Flower and Garlic Mustard in May and June. The antennae are not as long as in *N. degeerella* and the adults have a distinctive yellow forehead.



Cauchas rufimitrella



Hysterophora maculosana

Hysterophora maculosana

A member of the large family of Tortrix moths, this attractively marked species could be nicknamed the “Bluebell Tortrix”! Associated with older woodland where the food plant Bluebell grows, there are few reports for Yorkshire so we would welcome more records of this easily-overlooked species.

We have included photos of most of these species as a guide, but please refer to the following websites as well:

ukmoths.org.uk (good for images)

yorkshiremoths.info (distribution and flight times in Yorkshire – essential reference)

We look forward to receiving your records!

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