

The Mistletoe Miner *Celypha woodiana* and other moths recorded during the Worcestershire Orchard Survey 2013-2015

Tony Simpson

A two year Orchard Project in the Worcestershire (Lashley 2013) finished August 2015. I was particularly keen to see if during the survey we could record more on the occurrence and distribution of the rare Mistletoe feeding moth *Celypha woodiana* (Barrett) (01). It is usually found in orchards although it may not be confined to this habitat but just most easily found there. It has recently been noticed in Mistletoe on a Hawthorn and a Lime tree but these were at the edges of old orchards.



01. *Celypha woodiana*. Oliver Wadsworth

The moth has a limited historical and current national distribution in the UK being recorded only from Somerset, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, east Monmouthshire, and Worcestershire in recent years with an old record from west Warwickshire.

The life history was discovered by Dr. John Wood of Tarrington at the end of the 19th century. The larva forms mines in the leaves of Mistletoe *Viscum album* (02) through the winter with the blister like mines (03) becoming most visible in April and early May.



02. *Celypha woodiana* early mine in Mistletoe. Tony Simpson

There is an old record for Droitwich and I found larvae at Drakes Broughton and in north Worcester City in 1980's. Robert Homan (2007) found a mine at Chaceley in the extreme south of the county in 2007. During a Butterfly Conservation national survey in 2009 it could not be found at the old sites and the only new site was in an apple tree in what is now the car park at Croome Court.

In 2014 & 2015 Oliver Wadsworth and I have found larvae in seven orchard sites, all but one just south of Bredon Hill in 10x10 km squares SO84 and SO94. It seems to be a moth of the lower Severn

Valley with many searches in orchards full of Mistletoe north of Worcester City drawing a complete blank. It often occurs at very low density and no evidence of the moth was found at many orchard sites good for Mistletoe. The history of Mistletoe harvesting and management may be a factor in its survival. Removal of too much of the food plant during the winter would obviously be detrimental to its survival but the loss of many old orchard trees is probably the main reason for the very local and patchy distribution.



02. *Celypha woodiana* early mine in Mistletoe. Tony Simpson

Other moths of orchards found during the project included the apple web-feeding Small Ermine *Yponomeuta malinellus* (04) which was found to be common, and the Red-belted Clearwing *Synanthedon myopaeformis* (05). The latter has now been recorded from 26 sites in the county and most records are of moths attracted to pheromone lures.



04. Small Ermine *Yponomeuta malinellus*. Tony Simpson



05. Red-belted Clearwing *Synanthedon myopaeformis*. Tony

References

Lashley, B. 2013. Recording in traditional orchards. *Worcestershire Record* 35:9.
 Homan, R. 2007. A record of the Mistletoe Leaf Miner *Celypha woodiana* in Worcestershire VC37. *Worcestershire Record* 22:22.

Images

01. *Celypha woodiana*. Oliver Wadsworth

02. *Celypha woodiana* early mine in Mistletoe. Tony Simpson

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04. Small Ermine *Yponomeuta malinellus*. Tony Simpson

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