

## Moths in Worcestershire VC37 in 2016

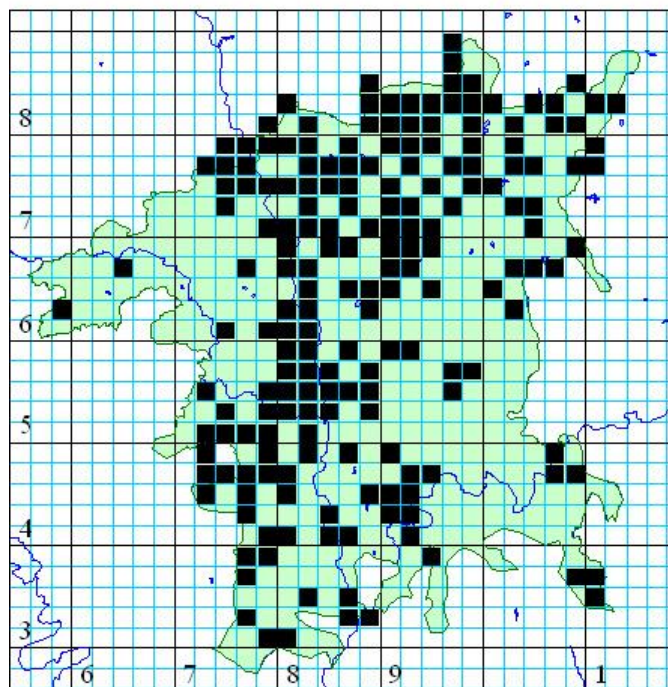
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With all the records now in, it can be seen that 2016 was a pretty good year for recording moths in Worcestershire. This may be something of a surprise given the very average weather conditions throughout the season. Most recorders felt that both numbers and variety of species encountered were continuing the general downward trend of recent years.

On the plus side, the recording effort in the county continued to grow with several new recorders adding valuable records to our database (01). At time of writing we have received a little over 25000 records of 1065 species, slightly up on last year in both respects.

VC37 Moths Recorded Sites 2km

2016



01. VC37 Recorded sites 2x2km grid 2016

### Summary of the more interesting records by Tony Simpson:

Despite 2016 being a poor year for numbers of Lepidoptera there were six new species recorded in VC37 and a new species from 2015 which was only recently identified. There were also some nice species recorded for which we have had no recent records, some for many years.

### New Species for VC37:

#### Micros:

Patrick Clement caught a Nepticulid at light at Halesowen on 17/8/16 which on dissection turned out to be *Stigmella carpinella* (Heinemann) which feeds on Hornbeam and is likely to be an overlooked resident.

He also found six specimens of *Pleurota bicostella* (Clerck) (02) on 24/5/16 at Kingsford Country Park SO824819, an extension of the heathland of Kinver Edge into Worcestershire. It is surprising that it does not seem to occur on the Kidderminster and Stourport heathlands.



02. *Pleurota bicostella*. Patrick Clement.

Rick Benson-Bunch had caught an unidentified moth at actinic light in Darkham Wood SO740299 on 12/8/2015 which he passed to ANBS in 2016. On dissection it turned out to be a female of the rare *Caryocolum proxima* (Haworth). This has been bred from Chickweed in Oxfordshire and in south-east England but there are few national records.

*Apotomis lineana* (D. & S). A specimen of this rare willow feeding Tortrix came to a light trap operated by P.G. Smith at Dodford SO936731 on 29/7/16 (03).



03. *Apotomis lineana*. Peter Smith.

Several females of *Epinotia pygmaeana* (Hubner) (04) were caught flying around conifers at Grove Farm, Worcester SO821543 on 3/6/16 by Billy Dykes. Strangely they looked more like specimens of the more uncommon *Epinotia subsequana* (Haworth) but on dissection they appeared to be *pygmaeana*. It is hoped to find earlier flying males there in 2017 which should resolve this uncertainty.



04. *Epinotia pygmaeana*. Bill Dykes

**Macros:**

A Banded Pine Carpet *Pungelaria capreolaria* came to Andrew Gardner's moth trap in Stourbridge SO892830 on 15/9/16 (05). This rare migrant was the seventh and most inland UK record (*Atropos*, 2016 number 57: p58).

Oliver Wadsworth had a White-line Snout *Schrankia taenialis* (Hubner) (06) come to actinic light at Blackhouse Wood SO73375180 on 5/8/16, which is likely to be an overlooked resident. There are some records for southern Herefordshire and this record seems to be an extension of those.



06. White-line Snout *Schrankia taenialis*. Oliver Wadsworth

**No Recent Record:**

*Lampronia corticella* (Linn.) Broadway Wood SP11173471 Oliver Wadsworth found larvae on Raspberry 24/4/16 (Last Record Moseley 1987).

*Lampronia morosa* Zeller a single moth was seen by Billy Dykes at Hawkwood Crescent, Worcester SO831556 on 30/5/16 (Last Record Tibberton 1856).

*Caryocolum junctella* Wyre Forest, Lodge Hill Farm SO759766 Oliver Wadsworth and ANBS found larvae in Lesser Stitchwort *Stellaria graminea* on 1/6/16 and OW bred out imagines to confirm the rediscovery, close to original site, of this rare UK moth (Last Record 1994).

Ian Machin attracted a Marsh Oblique-barred *Hypenodes humidalis* Doubleday to his light trap in Bewdley SO776755 on 13/8/16. There is a specimen in Worcester Museum collected by McNaught at the bog at Hartlebury Common in July 1916. It is speculated that

Ian's moth may have come from nearby wet areas along the river Severn.

**Other interesting records:**

*Ectoedemia quinquella* (Bedell) still present around southern Malverns (mines found at White-leaved Oak SO761359 ANBS & Upper Welland SO782403 Ian Duncan).

*Elachista rufocinerea* (Haworth) recently few records of a previously common moth but 50+ on 8/5/16 along Laugharne Brook, Worcester SO827556 by Billy Dykes.

*Atenia scriptella* (Hubner) ANBS found larval feedings on Field Maple at a second site SO76955860 on 6/9/16 Laughern Hill, near Broadwas.

*Gelechia nigra* (Haworth) Jason Waine had 1 in light trap at Redditch SP027668 on 6/7/16.

*Dichomeris alacella* (Zeller) Darkham Wood SO740299 1 to actinic light 12/8/2015 Rick Benson-Bunch.

*Celypha woodiana* (Barrett) R. Comont found mines in Mistletoe at Malvern Link Common SO780471 on 9/3/16.

*Cydia strobilella* (Linnaeus) one to light Bransford SO792527 (ANBS) and one to light Carpenter's Farm, Pendock SO778339 (Martin Skirrow) both on 11/5/16 suggesting these Spruce Feeders may have been local or distant migrants. It has been bred from the county but these records were well away from conifers.

*Assara terebrella* (Zincken). This Spruce cone feeding species continues to spread and was recorded at light Bransford SO792527 one on 3/6/16, 10/6/16 & 10/8/16 (ANBS), one on 22/7/16 Redditch SP027668 Jason Waine, and two at Tiddesley Wood SO92954545 Steve Whitehouse 22/6/16.

*Hellinsia osteodactylus* (Zeller) c.10 at Ribbesford Wood SO785732 30/6/16 Brett Westwood.

*Capperia britanniodactylus* (Gregson) c.10 seen on Malverns, North Hill SO771464 27/6/16 by Billy Dykes.

Terry Knight found a larva of Privet Hawk Moth *Sphinx ligustri* at Honeybourne in August confirming that this species is now resident and breeding in the extreme south of Worcestershire.

Garden Tiger *Arctia caja* (Linnaeus). An increase in numbers. Sixteen VC37 records of which eleven were around the Malverns. Dusky-lemon Sallow *Cirrhia gilvago* There were two records of this now uncommon Wych Elm feeding species: Mike Southall 24/9/16 at Norchard SO847685 and R. Comont 1/11/16 at Lower Wyche, Malvern SO7274432.

**Migrants**

It was a quiet year for migrants apart from the huge influx of Diamond-back Moths *Plutella xylostella* between 1-10<sup>th</sup> June when large numbers suddenly arrived and were caught in moth traps and seen all around the county. In fact numbers here in the West Midlands did not quite reach the extraordinary proportions seen elsewhere and oddly a few recorders seemed to miss out. Nevertheless we received records of over 8000 individuals compared to 61 last year!

The common migrants were not in great numbers: only 12 Dark Sword-grass *Agrotis ipsilon* through the summer and autumn, 16 Rusty-dot Pearls *Udea ferrugalis*, and less than 20 Rush Veneer *Nomophila noctuella* reported, but Silver Y *Autographa gamma* were more common than 2015 with about 200 records sent in. Apart from Andrew Gardner's Banded Pine Carpet there were few interesting rarer migrants.

European Corn-borer *Ostrinia nubilalis* (Hubner) Upper Welland SO782403 1 to light 6/9/16 (Ian Duncan) 3<sup>rd</sup> VC37 record Cypress Carpet *Thera cupressata* (Geyer) Upper Welland SO782403 1 to light 22/7/16 (Ian Duncan) 2<sup>nd</sup> VC37 record (It may now be a resident species as has been regularly recorded just to the south in Gloucestershire)

Gem *Nycterosea obstipata* A single record only at Worcester SO883570 28/10/16 Steve Whitehouse

Scarce Bordered Straw *Helicoverpa armigera* singletons recorded at Norchard 5/9/16 Mike Southall and Bewdley 27/8/16 Ian Machin.

Small Mottled Willow *Spodoptera exigua* only a single record at Norchard 5/9/16 Mike Southall.

He also had one of two *Convolvulus Hawk Moths* *Agrius convolvuli* at Norchard on 17/9/16 the other was seen by P. Rae at Wick on 15/9/16.

There were some Vestal *Rhodometra sacraria*: singletons at Norchard 24/8/16 & 23/9/16 (Mike Southall), Bewdley 26/8/16 (Ian Machin), Bransford 14/9/16 (ANBS), Carpenter's Farm 15/9/16 (Martin Skirrow), and Eastham 21/9/16 (Ken Willets).

#### Migrant moth species VC37 2016

Taxon	Vernacular	Totals
<i>Plurella xylostella</i>	Diamond-back moth	8117
<i>Udea ferrugalis</i>	Rusty-dot Pearl	16
<i>Nomophila noctuella</i>	Rush Veneer	12
<i>Agrius convolvuli</i>	Convolvulus Hawk-moth	2
<i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>	Humming-bird Hawk-moth	23
<i>Rhodometra sacraria</i>	Vestal	5
<i>Nycterosea obstipata</i>	Gem	1
<i>Autographa gamma</i>	Silver Y	193
<i>Helicoverpa armigera</i>	Scarce Bordered Straw	1
<i>Spodoptera exigua</i>	Small Mottled Willow	1
<i>Agrostis ipsilon</i>	Dark Sword-grass	14

#### Finally,

The online distribution maps are available on the Worcestershire Moths website now hosted by Butterfly Conservation West Midlands. These should be updated shortly to include the 2016 records. The County List reference spreadsheet is also to be found on the site.

<http://www.westmidlands-butterflies.org.uk/VC37/worcsmoths.html>

We share a bi-county blog with Herefordshire recorders, administered by Peter Hall. This is a good place to keep up to date with recent sightings in the area and to post any ID queries you might have <http://herefordandworcestermoths.blogspot.co.uk/>

Many thanks to everyone who sent in records in 2016.

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#### Images

01. VC37 Recorded sites 2x2km grid 2016

02. *Pleurota bicostella*. Patrick Clement.

03. *Apotomis lineana*. Peter Smith.

04. *Epinotia pygmaeana*. Bill Dykes.

05. Banded Pine Carpet *Pungelaria capriolaria*. Suzanne Cawood.

06. White-line Snout *Schrankia taenialis*. Oliver Wadsworth