

## Northamptonshire Moths – A Brief Summary of Noteworthy Records from 2018

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“New” Northamptonshire/VC32 Moth Group website: <http://www.northamptonshiremoths.org.uk/home.htm>

### 1. Introduction

This is a brief review of some interesting and noteworthy moth species recorded in Vice County 32, Northamptonshire & The Soke of Peterborough, during the 2018 season. Reports such as this of course rely on the now many recorders who diligently submit their records. As always, I am most grateful to all who submit records for inclusion in the county database, be they extensive or simply casual notes. NB: some accounts below were also noted on the Northamptonshire Moths website noticeboard for 2018.

The list follows the checklist produced by Agassiz, Beaven & Heckford in 2013, which replaced the previous British Checklist authored and updated by Bradley. I also include, for general reference, the former Bradley number in {brackets} and the current national status of each species in [square brackets]. It is worth mentioning that records of micro moths have increased significantly over the past couple of years, which is reflected in the relatively large number of new VC records, and 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>s etc.

Firstly, a few statistics for fun:

- Approximate total number of records received in **2018 = 51,400** (2017 = 36,620; 2016 = 26,300; 2015 = 29,400)
- Number of Species (excludes aggregates) recorded in **2018 = 1,030** (2017 = 990)
- Approximate number of individual moths recorded in the county in **2018 = 189,000** (2017 = 121,000), which is the highest ever total in any year (also reflects increasing recording effort). [NB the other “best years” for number of moths were 2009 = 134,500 & 2010 = 147,700]
- This brings the grand total of records in VC32 database to just over **545,100**

The Top Ten species, based on number of records received, not number of individuals (2017 position in brackets):

Pos.	ABH	B&F	Taxon	Vernacular	Authority	Records
1 (1)	73.342	2107	<i>Noctua pronuba</i>	Large Yellow Underwing	(Linnaeus, 1758)	1081
2 (2)	73.359	2126	<i>Xestia c-nigrum</i>	Setaceous Hebrew Character	(Linnaeus, 1758)	1028
3 (8)	73.317	2089	<i>Agrotis exclamationis</i>	Heart and Dart	(Linnaeus, 1758)	942
4 (3)	70.226	1906	<i>Opisthograptis luteolata</i>	Brimstone Moth	(Linnaeus, 1758)	750
5 (-)	73.015	2441	<i>Autographa gamma</i>	Silver Y	(Linnaeus, 1758)	661
6 (5)	70.258	1937	<i>Peribatodes rhomboidaria</i>	Willow Beauty	([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)	633
7 (4)	73.329	2102	<i>Ochropleura plecta</i>	Flame Shoulder	(Linnaeus, 1761)	630
8 (6)	72.002	2474	<i>Rivula sericealis</i>	Straw Dot	(Scopoli, 1763)	543
9 (10)	73.249	2190	<i>Orthosia gothica</i>	Hebrew Character	(Linnaeus, 1758)	541
10 (-)	73.291	2199	<i>Mythimna pallens</i>	Common Wainscot	(Linnaeus, 1758)	539

### 2. Species New to VC32 in 2018

Twelve species were noted as being new to VC32 during the 2018:

#### 16.018 {0439} *Swammerdamia compunctella* Herrich-Schäffer, 1855

A single specimen was taken to light during a Northants Moth Group excursion to Bucknell Wood on 16.vi.2018 (JS), part of a 150 species catch for the night. The species has an interrupted distribution within the UK, and has apparently not been recorded in neighbouring Vice Counties. This specimen was confirmed by dissection.

#### 35.029 {0867} *Brachmia inornatella* (Douglas, 1850)

This species was recorded twice within a couple of days, and very distinct locations. The first was seen at a NBRC BioBlitz event held at Prior's Hall area of Corby on 01.vi.2018 (JS). A second example was recorded on 03.vi.2018 in Hackleton, Northampton (MC) on 03.vi.2018. This species has a distinct South-east distribution in the UK

**35.073 {0737} *Monochroa palustrellus* (Douglas, 1850)**

The first record of this moth was taken at light at Sywell Country Park on 14.vii.2018 (DS). Current UK distribution maps indicate that Northants is at the north-western edge of its main known distribution, and is found in some of our neighbouring counties.

**37.047 {0520} *Coleophora amethystinella* Ragonot, 1885**

This was another first VC32 record from the Prior's Hall area BioBlitz on 01.vi.2018 (JS). The moth was identified following genitalia dissection. The larvae feed on flowers and seeds of various Vetches and could therefore be present at other localities.

**37.050 {0532} *Coleophora albidella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)**

A single example of this species was recorded to light again at Prior's Hall, Corby, this time on 26.vi.2018 (JS). Identification was confirmed following dissection. The moth is relatively widespread in the UK and may well be present in other suitable locations around Northants.

**43.007 {0918} *Scythris limbella* (Fabricius, 1775)**

A relatively uncommon species in the UK, it was recorded an amazing three times during 2018. The first two records emanated from a light trap in an Oundle garden on 21.vii.2018 & 24.vii.2018 (PH), with a further record, also in a garden light trap, in Far Cotton, Northampton on 25.vii.2018 (MC).

**45.017 {1508c} Small Scabious Plume *Stenoptilia annadactyla* Sutter, 1988**

A single female was kicked-up and netted during the day in Southorpe Paddock on 06.vi.2018 (MJH). Due to confusion with its congeners, the moth was subsequently identified via genitalia dissection. My experience of Plume moths is that they are often poorly represented in light traps, and thus this species, and possibly others, may be recorded better by searching during the day.

**49.319 {1275} *Dichrorampha flavidorsana* Knaggs, 1867**

A single specimen was recorded in a garden light trap in Cogenhoe on 26.vi.2018 (DS) and later confirmed by genitalia dissection. As with several of the *Dichrorampha* species, this moth tends to be active in the afternoons and towards dusk, and thus not often seen in light traps (my personal experience).

**52.001 {0369a} Raspberry Clearwing *Pennisetia hylaeiformis* (Laspeyres, 1801)**

One of two macro moth species to be recorded as new to VC32 on 02.viii.2018, in a Duston garden, Northampton (SM). The moth (male) was attracted to a synthetic pheromone lure – which is an excellent way to see many of the Clearwing species. Interestingly a second specimen was taken by the same method in the same location on 08.viii.2018 (SM). The moth has been recorded in neighbouring Bedfordshire, and thus I was hoping that it would be recorded this side of the border before too long. If you have the HYL lure, it is worth trying it near to established allotments where mature raspberry canes are grown.

**63.109 {1323} *Pediasia contaminella* (Hübner, 1796)**

A single moth was recorded to light in a Far Cotton garden, Northampton, on 14.vii.2018 (MC). I suspect this again may be overlooked in the county as the UK distribution indicates that VC32 is more or less surrounded by counties with the species on its list. The moth taken was the melanic form, *ab. Sticheli*, the moth being depicted on the species write-up on the web pages.

**72.030 {2067} Jersey Tiger *Euplagia quadripunctaria* (Poda, 1761)**

The moth was seen as part of a long-running daytime survey of the flora and fauna of Yardley Chase. A single moth was seen on 02.viii.2018 (JoS). It remained long enough for a photo to be taken, but was soon disturbed by a butterfly and flew off. Overall in the UK the species appears to be experiencing a rapid range extension from being first noted on the mainland in South Devon. The moth does also come to light traps.

**73.010 {2436} Dewick's Plusia *Macdunnoughia confusa* (Stephens, 1850)**

This species was recorded on three separate occasions in 2018! The first was on 10.vii.2018 to light at Wansford (GS, per MH). A second was noted a couple of weeks later, and not too far away from the first, at Collyweston Great Wood on 02.viii.2018 (RF). A third record was made at the other end of the vice county, in a garden light trap in Old Stratford on 09.x.2018 (AVH). The species has been recorded with some regularity in neighbouring Bedfordshire (including repeatedly from the same site in one instance that I know about), along with a healthy spread of recent records in East Anglia. This all leads to the hope that these specimens may be of more local origin, rather than a primary migrant from the Continent or elsewhere in the UK.

...And one from 1955...!

**73.207 {2233} Golden-rod Brindle *Xylena solidaginis* (Hübner, [1803])**

Slightly late reporting this addition to the VC32 list, but it was only brought to my attention recently when the article in a journal was unearthed. The moth was recorded in a garden light trap in Sutton Bassett (SP79) by an eminent entomologist of the day, and subsequently reported in the entomological press. The record is just inside the Vice County, on the boundary of VC55 where it is known to inhabit one or two locations.

### 3. Significant and Noteworthy records

One of the most significant aspects of 2018 was the prolonged hot spell during the summer months. There was considerable discussion about the effect this was having on butterfly populations and numbers, with the general feeling that it was a “good year”. Looking at the numbers in the county database, many species have been recorded in considerably higher numbers in 2018 compared with 2017. As the briefest of summaries, 2018 saw approximately 540 species being recorded more frequently than 2017, and around 220 species being recorded less frequently. This is a bit of a raw figure, and does not accurately take into account any fluctuations in recording effort, but probably does serve to highlight that in general, moths also had a “good year”.

Some notable changes can be seen in the raw data. I pick a few of the more regularly recorded species here for interest, shown as a percentage increase compared with 2017 numbers:

- ***Xestia c-nigrum*** Setaceous Hebrew Character: 100% increase
- ***Cosmia trapezina*** Dun-bar: 450% increase
- ***Eupithecia centaureata*** Lime-speck Pug: >400% increase
- ***Malacosoma Neustria*** The Lackey: >110% increase, although has seen a gradual increase over the past few years
- ***Pheosia tremula*** Swallow Prominent: >400% increase
- ***Agriphila straminella***: 180% increase

However, there were a few losers in 2018. Again, I chose a few relatively frequently-recorded species for interest, as compared with 2017 numbers:

- ***Mitochrista miniata*** Rosy Footman: 55% decrease
- ***Archips podana*** Large Fruit Tree Tortrix: 40% decrease
- ***Craniophora ligustri*** Coronet: 35% decrease
- ***Idaea biselata*** Small Fan-footed Wave: 35% decrease

Below therefore, are some species of note which were recorded during 2018. The list is by no means comprehensive, but rather a pick of the crop.

**4.040 {0074} *Stigmella assimilella* (Zeller, 1848) [Local]**

4<sup>th</sup> VC32 record was noted at Boddington Meadow on 05.ix.2018 (CC).

**9.002 {0135} *Lampronia luzella* (Hübner, [1817]) [Nationally Scarce B]**

This species was seen at Grafton Park Wood in 2013, but again on 06.vi.2018 at the same location (MJH), being the 3<sup>rd</sup> county record.

**12.006 {0203} *Infurcitinea argentimaculella* (Stainton, 1849) [Local]**

A 3<sup>rd</sup> Northants record was taken in a garden light trap in Far Cotton, Northampton on 15.vii.2018 (MC) – and interesting to note that it was recorded at the same location in 2016.

**14.013 {0276} *Bucculatrix demaryella* (Duponchel, 1840) [Local]**

A single moth was recorded to light in Bedford Purlieus on 02.vi.2018 (JN). This species is easily overlooked and thus probably under-recorded in the county, so worth being extra-vigilant when working Birch-rich localities. This sighting represents only the 2<sup>nd</sup> VC32 record.

**15.001 {0299} *Parectopa ononidis* (Zeller, 1839) [Nationally Scarce B]**

An adult of this small, but very attractive moth, was taken to light at Prior’s Hall on 18.vii.2018 (JS). This was the 5<sup>th</sup> Northants record, but one which may be seen more readily in the larval stage, who’s pale blotch mines can be seen on Clovers.

**15.003 {0281} *Caloptilia populetorum* (Zeller, 1839) [Local]**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> VC32 record was seen in Fermyn Woods (Cherry lap area) on 15.ix.2018 (MJH) during a Northants Moth Group event.

**15.035 {0316} *Phyllonorycter roboris* (Zeller, 1839) [Nationally Scarce B]**

A single larval mine (vacated) was recorded on the Farthinghoe Reserve on 20.x.2018 (TP). This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> VC32 record, and the second time it has been seen on the reserve.

**15.037 {0318} *Phyllonorycter tenerella* (Joannis, 1915) [Local]**

A single larval mine was recorded on Hornbeam in Grafton Park Wood on 12.ix.2018 (MJH). This is the 4<sup>th</sup> county record

**17.014 {0251} *Ochsenheimeria taurella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) [Nationally Scarce B]**

Another 2<sup>nd</sup> county record, this time of an adult having been swept from vegetation at Hunsbury Hill Country Park, Northampton, on 01.ix.2018 (JS). The only previous record was by Eustace Wallis in 1909 at Newton.

**20.002 {0403} *Argyresthia glabratella* (Zeller, 1847) [Nationally Scarce B]**

Two records were noted for this species, which was only first recorded in the county in 2017: Far Cotton, Northampton on 25.v.2018 (MC) and Grafton Park Wood on 10.vi.2018 (MJH) representing the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> county records to date.

**21.005 {0256} *Leucoptera spartifoliella* (Hübner, [1813]) [Local]**

This species is very unusual for Northamptonshire, given its dependency in the larval stage on Broom and Greenweed. There are only three previous records in VC32, ranging between 1902 and 1998, so this will be the 4<sup>th</sup> county record, and the only one post-2000. The moth was taken at light in Ring Haw on 22.vii.2018 (RF).

**27.002 {0871a} *Oegoconia caradjai* Popescu-Gorj & Capuse, 1965 [Nationally Scarce B]**

The species is probably under-recorded in the county given the similarity to its congeners, and requirement for determination to be made via dissection. The 4<sup>th</sup> confirmed VC32 record then was taken in a Cogenhoe garden light trap on 17.vii.2018 (DS, det MJH).

**28.008 {0642a} *Metalampra italic* Baldizzone, 1977 [Migrant]**

This species remains listed as a migrant, but has recently become established in the south of the UK. The first VC32 record was in 2017 (Farthinghoe) with the 2<sup>nd</sup> taken on 15.vii.2018 in nearby Brackley (TH). This does tend to suggest that the species may have colonised as far as the south-west of the county.

**32.003 {0668} *Luquetia lobella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) [Local]**

This species was first recorded in the county in 2009, but 2018 saw a further three records. These were 31.v.2018 in Kingsthorpe, Northampton (PS), 08.vi.2018 at Duncote (DP) and 30.vi.2018 in Bedford Purlieus (JN). The larvae feed on Blackthorn, and thus one would expect it to be more readily seen. Textbooks appear to indicate that although it does come to light (as per all the VC32 records so far) it is more readily seen by disturbing Blackthorn hedges.

**32.019 {0689} *Agonopterix ciliella* (Stainton, 1849) [Common]**

The 5<sup>th</sup> confirmed county record (and only 2<sup>nd</sup> post-2000) was of a moth taken in a light trap at Polebrook Airfield on 06.viii.2018 (PH). The moth is very likely to be much more widespread in the county, but due to its similarity to *A. heracliana*, both species get aggregated unless the hindwings have been examined.

**32.028 {0700} *Agonopterix pallorella* (Zeller, 1839) [Nationally Scarce B]**

This moth has not been seen in the county since 1944, but a single larva was found in a leaf-roll on Knapweed along the roadside adjacent to Southey Wood on 06.vii.2018 (MJH). The larva was retained and reared through to confirm identification. This constitutes the 3<sup>rd</sup> VC32 record.

**32.038 {0674} *Depressaria badiella* (Hübner, 1796) [Local]**

The 4<sup>th</sup> confirmed county record came to light at Easton Hornstocks on 24.vii.2018 (RF). Nationally it has a scattered distribution, with an apparent preference to dry, sandy or chalky soils.

**35.033 {0808} *Platyedra subcinerea* (Haworth, 1828) [Nationally Scarce B]**

A 5<sup>th</sup> county record was taken in a garden light trap at Duncote on 14.v.2018 (DP). This is the only post-2000 record, with the last one being seen in 1945. Northants is on the edge of its known UK distribution.

**35.037 {0840} *Thiotricha subocellea* (Stephens, 1834) [Nationally Scarce B]**

This is a species with a scattered distribution in the UK, with larvae relying on various wild herbs such as Wild Thyme. It is pleasing that a second Ring Haw record has been noted, after one was seen in 2016. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> county record, taken at light on 25.vi.2018 (RF).

**35.045 {0777} *Bryotropha basaltinella* (Zeller, 1839) [Nationally Scarce A]**

There are only three records of this species in the county database, after its discovery locally in 2016. Two records came in 2018 (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> for VC32) thus: 06.vii.2018 in a Wellingborough garden trap (JS); 11.vii.2018 potted indoors in Thrapston (MJH). Both were confirmed by dissection.

**35.053 {0729} *Isophrictis striatella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) [Nationally Scarce B]**

This species has been recorded from a garden in Far Cotton, Northampton every year since 2016, the latest being taken on 14.vii.2018 (MC), also being the 4<sup>th</sup> county record.

**35.055 {0725} *Metzneria aestivella* (Zeller, 1839) [Nationally Scarce B]**

A 2<sup>nd</sup> VC32 record of this species was taken at Prior's Hall on 26.vi.2018 (JS). The only previous record was in 1945. The larvae feed on Carline Thistle, which is quite rare in the county, and is associated with calcareous soils.

**35.060 {0730} *Apodia bifractella* (Duponchel, 1843) [Local]**

Another excellent find at Prior's Hall! This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> VC32 record, with a single moth being taken at light on 18.vii.2018 (JS). The larvae can be found on Common Fleabane and Ploughman's Spikenard, and it is noted that records of the moth may be had by collecting dry seed heads during the winter months and looking for adults as they emerge during the summer months. This method has shown that the moth is common where its foodplants grow so further records may be obtained in this manner.

**35.080 {0732} *Eulamprotes unicolorella* (Duponchel, 1843) [Nationally Scarce B]**

This moth was recorded on two occasions during the year, both being from the Prior's Hall area of Corby. Both were taken to light, on 01.vi.2018 & 26.vi.2018 (both JS) and confirmed by dissection. These represent the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> VC32 records.

**35.146 {0776} *Teleiopsis diffinis* (Haworth, 1828) [Common]**

Surprisingly, this moth has only been recorded twice before, but was identified from the Moth Group session at Fermyn Woods on 15.ix.2018 (MJH). The larvae feed on Sheep's Sorrel, which is apparently quite widespread in the county, and the moth as a rule is commonly encountered across much of the UK. This is possibly another under-recorded species locally.

**37.017 {0494a} *Coleophora prunifoliae* Doets, 1944 [Nationally Scarce B]**

A single moth was taken to light during a Northants group event at Shire Hill/Southwick Wood on 30.vi.2018 (MJH). The moth was confirmed by dissection, and thus the 2<sup>nd</sup> VC32 record.

**37.034 {0517a} *Coleophora frischella* (Linnaeus, 1758) [Nationally Scarce B]**

A 3<sup>rd</sup> county record was taken at the very productive Prior's Hall area on 18.vii.2018 (JS), and subsequently confirmed by dissection

**39.003 {0904} *Spuleria flavicaput* (Haworth, 1828) [Local]**

This species is relatively widespread in the UK, and thus I suspect is under-recorded locally. Interestingly it has been taken in light traps, given that the moth tends to fly in the morning. The 5<sup>th</sup> VC32 record was found in a moth trap whilst going through the traps in the morning, during a Northants Group event in Fermyn Woods on 19.v.2018 (MJH).

**40.012 {0884} *Mompha miscella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) [Local]**

Several larval mines were recorded on Rock Rose at Barnack Hills & Holes on 06.vi.2018 (MJH). This represents the 4<sup>th</sup> VC32 record, although mines had been seen on the same site in 2016, suggesting a good resident population there.

**40.014 {0881} *Mompha terminella* (Humphreys & Westwood, 1845) [Nationally Scarce B]**

Widespread, but localised, in the UK, the 4<sup>th</sup> county record was noted in Bedford Purlieus on 30.vi.2018 (JN).

**49.009 {1007} *Capua vulgana* (Frölich, 1828) [Common]**

Two individual moths were netted by day, under the tree canopy at the north end of Bedford Purlieus, on 21.v.2018 (MJH). This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> county record. The species is widely distributed in the UK, and can be quite common, and thus likely to be under-recorded in VC32.

**49.023 {0971} *Pandemis cinnamomeana* (Treitschke, 1830) [Common]**

Following its first discovery in VC32 in 2016, two further records came in 2018. The 2<sup>nd</sup> VC32 record was noted with three moths to light in Fineshade on 07.vi.2018 (RF), and another two moths (thus 3<sup>rd</sup> county record) at a Northants Group event in Bucknell Woods on 16.vi.2018 (MJH). The moths have a striking resemblance to the Dark Fruit-tree Tortrix *Pandemis heparana* but there are some differences, notably the whitish head on the males.

**49.085 {1050} *Acleris kochiella* (Goeze, 1783) [Local]**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> county record came to light in Collyweston Great Wood on 23.iii.2018 (RF).

**49.122 {0949} *Aethes dilucidana* (Stephens, 1852) [Nationally Scarce B]**

Another good find at Prior's Hall, Corby, the 5<sup>th</sup> VC32 record was of a singleton to light on 26.vi.2018 (JS). There are previous records for this site, prior to the recent housing development, but does indicate that the moth is hanging-on despite the additional concrete!

**49.131 {0957} *Cochylidia heydeniana* (Herrich-Schäffer, 1851) [Nationally Scarce A]**

Recorded for the first time in 2008 (near Peterborough), this remained the only VC32 record until 2012. 2018 saw three records (thus 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> VC32 records), all from the Prior's Hall area, on 01.vi.2018, 26.vi.2018 & 18.vii.2018 (all JS).

**49.132 {0956} *Cochylidia implicitana* (Wocke, 1856) [Local]**

Prior's Hall, Corby, yields another good record, with the 3<sup>rd</sup> county record of *C. implicitana*, 18.vii.2018 (JS), confirmed by dissection. The moth has a southerly distribution in the UK, and being quite small and easily wears and thus may be overlooked. Further records might be achieved in suitable habitat where Compositae grow.

**49.204 {1122} *Ancylis obtusana* (Haworth, 1811) [Nationally Scarce B]**

A second record of this species at Grafton Park Wood, this time of one moth netted during the day on 06.vi.2018 (MJH). This is the 4<sup>th</sup> VC32 record. The moth is more frequently seen during the day than at light.

**49.221 {1161} *Rhopobota stagnana* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) [Nationally Scarce B]**

The first post-2000 record (and 3<sup>rd</sup> VC32 record) was of a single moth found at-rest on a leaf at the entrance to Castor Hanglands on 06.vi.2018 (MJH). Previous records were from the early 1940's.

**49.232 {1152} *Epinotia maculana* (Fabricius, 1775) [Nationally Scarce B]**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> VC32 records were noted thus: 3 adults taken to light at a Northants Moth Group event at Fermyn Woods on 15.ix.2018 (MJH) and of a singleton to battery-operated lights in Grafton Park Wood on 03.x.2018 (MJH). I believe this moth is under-recorded due to its late-season flight, and reliance on Aspens as larval foodplant.

**49.310 {1286} *Dichrorampha sedatana* Busck, 1906 [Nationally Scarce B]**

Three males were netted by day over the larval foodplant, Tansy, on the former airfield at Harrington, on 21.vi.2018 (MJH). The moth is very difficult to differentiate from its congeners and was thus subject to dissection for confirmation. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> VC32 record.

**49.311 {1287} *Dichrorampha aeratana* (Pierce & Metcalfe, 1915) [Local]**

This species is as yet only known at a single site in the county, being Harrington Airfield. Previously recorded in 2012, a further five moths were netted by day at this site on 21.vi.2018 (MJH). As with several of the *Dichrorampha* species, dissection was required to confirm identity, and thus the 3<sup>rd</sup> county record.

**49.349 {1242} *Grapholita internana* (Guenée, 1845) [Local]**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> VC32 record of this species was noted at Borough Hill, Daventry, on 18.v.2018 (MJH). Approximately a dozen moths were seen (and netted and temporarily retained for confirmation) flying in sunshine adjacent to Gorse bushes. Further records I feel are sure to come from searching Gorse on sunny days during the flight period.

**49.382 {1222} *Strophedra nitidana* (Fabricius, 1794) [Local]**

There were no modern, post-2000 records for this species, until 2018 when the moth was recorded on five separate occasions: two in Fermyn Woods on 19.v.2018 (MJH, JS), Yardley Chase on 14.vi.2018 (JS), Bucknell Woods on 16.vi.2018 (JS), Bedford Purlieus on 26.vi.2018 (JN), and Shire Hill/Southwick Wood on 30.vi.2018 (MJH).

**62.012 {1451} *Matilella fusca* (Haworth, 1811) [Local]**

Prior to 2018 there were only two records for this Heather-feeding species. As a possible former resident, recent records are presumed to be vagrant individuals arriving in the immature stages on garden-planted Heathers. There were four records in 2018: Cogenhoe garden on 27.v.2018 (DS), Kettering garden on 12.vii.2018 & 08.ix.2018 (RS) and finally a Duston garden on 27.ix.2018 (SM).

**62.021 {1441} *Oncocera semirubella* (Scopoli, 1763) [Nationally Scarce B]**

With only three records prior to 2018, the moth was seen on three separate occasions: Prior's Hall on 26.vi.2018 (JS), Ring Haw on 22.vii.2018 (RF), Far Cotton, Northampton on 27.vii.2018 (MC).

**62.047 {1461} *Assara terebrella* (Zincken, 1818) [Nationally Scarce A]**

The 5<sup>th</sup> county record was of a single moth taken at light in Horton Woods on 28.vi.2018 (JS). The moth is locally distributed in the southern part of the UK, and could be recorded further by working areas of Spruce plantation.

**63.048 {1408} *Palpita vitrealis* (Rossi, 1794) [Migrant]**

The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> county records of this migrant species were seen in 2018: Old Stratford, 04.ix.2018 (AVH); Pitsford Reservoir, 14.xi.2018 (MiC).

**69.015 {1990} Striped Hawk-moth *Hyles livornica* (Esper, [1804]) [Migrant]**

A single moth was taken in a garden light trap in Oundle on 18.ix.2018 (PH). This is the 5<sup>th</sup> VC32 record for a migrant with very few inland records. The only other recent record was in the "migrant year" of 2006.

**70.023 {1689} Mullein Wave *Scopula marginepunctata* (Goeze, 1781) [Local]**

With only six post-2000 records, it was interesting to receive three records in 2018, viz. Wollaston on 09.vii.2018 (AP), 19.vii.2018 & 08.ix.2018 in Duston, Northampton (SM).

**70.032 {1677} Birch Mocha *Cyclophora albipunctata* (Hufnagel, 1767) [Local]**

Birch Mocha was always a species with few local records, seen sporadically in various locations up until the mid-1990's. A further specimen was noted in 2008, and another couple of records in 2017. However, 2018 saw fourteen records! Most were recorded in the North-east of the vice county, in Fineshade and Collyweston Great Wood, with further records at Pitsford Reservoir and Salcey Forest. A peak of 13 individuals was noted at Fineshade on 26.vii.2018 (RF) which indicates that the species is resident in this area.

**70.159 {1855} Cypress Pug *Eupithecia phoeniceata* (Rambur, 1834) [Local (alien-foodplant)]**

This species was first recorded in the county in 2013. Seen again as singletons in 2016 & 2017, there were three records during 2018: Brackley on 20.viii.2018 (TH), Oundle on 04.ix.2018 (PH) and the same date in Little Billing, Northampton (HM).

**70.195 {1864} Streak *Chesias legatella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) [Common]**

This is a species with very few Northants records since the early 2000's. It appeared to be regularly recorded in the Pitsford Reservoir traps up until 2001, but since then seems to have all but vanished. The larvae rely on Broom as their foodplant, which is not widespread in the county, thus most recent records have appeared in urban/suburban locations, and assumed therefore to be from garden-planted origins. Only one moth was recorded in 2018 in a Northampton garden trap on 21.x.2018 (RG).

**70.206 {1885} Clouded Magpie *Abraxas sylvata* (Scopoli, 1763) [Local]**

There is only a handful of post-2000 records for this species, with the last being in 2015, so it was pleasing to see this once more regularly-seen species recorded in Peterborough on 08.vii.2018 (DC).

**71.001 {2022} Oak Processionary *Thaumetopoea processionea* (Linnaeus, 1758) [Vagrant/Accidental]**

The first VC32 record was of an individual seen in Helpston in 1995. Incredibly, it was recorded on five occasions in 2018, all between 26.vii.2018 & 29.vii.2018, from Fineshade Wood (RF), Peterborough (DC), Oundle (PH) and no less than three in the Pitsford Reservoir traps (MiC). Further records of this species were reported during this period in other parts of the UK, suggesting a significant migration/dispersal event.

**72.004 {2480} Buttoned Snout *Hypena rostralis* (Linnaeus, 1758) [Nb]**

A single adult came to a garden light trap in Polebrook on 20.iv.2018 (T&JW). This former BAP species is seldom recorded in the county, with only two post-2000 records in the database.

**72.041 {2051} Four-spotted Footman *Lithosia quadra* (Linnaeus, 1758) [Migrant]**

2018 saw four records for this rare migrant to the midlands. These were 03.vii.2018 at Pitsford Reservoir (MiC), 04.vii.2018 at Yardley Chase (JS), 11.vii.2018 in East Haddon (RB), and 10.x.2018 at Thrapston (MJH). Previous to these there was only one post-2000 record. I am assuming all individuals to be migrants on these occasions.

**72.052 {2493} Dotted Fan-foot *Macrochilo cribrumalis* (Hübner, 1793) [Nb]**

There were seven records for this species during 2018 (compared to four in 2017, one in 2016), supporting the theory that it is spreading within VC32. It was also satisfying to see a record at Prior's Hall area on 26.vi.2018 (JS) – 14 years after a previous record at the site, indicating that the species survives after the recent re-development of the area.

**73.023 {2440} Lempke's Gold Spot *Plusia putnami* Grote, 1873 [Local]**

A single moth was recorded in a garden light trap in Kettering on 02.viii.2018 (JW). This is only the 6<sup>th</sup> all-time record for the county, and the only record post-2000, the last being taken in 1994.

**73.059 {2223} Toadflax Brocade *Calophasia lunula* (Hufnagel, 1766) [RDB3]**

The species was increasingly recorded during 2018, with 16 records of both adults and larvae. A maximum count of 13 larvae was noted in a Thrapston garden on 21.vi.2018 (MJH) on the copious amount of both Purple and Yellow Toadflax plants therein!

**73.082 {2292} Tree-lichen Beauty *Cryphia algae* (Fabricius, 1775) [Rare migrant]**

First recorded in 2006 in Thrapston, and assumed to be a primary migrant, there were no further records until two were noted in 2017. 2018 saw seven records of nine individual moths, at two separate locations in VC32. The moth was seen on three occasions to light in Cogenhoe on 14.vi.2018, 16.vii.2018 & 26.vii.2018 (DS) and six individuals to light in a Peterborough garden between 21.vii.2018 & 26.vii.2018 (DC). That it was not seen elsewhere during this period seems to indicate that the captors were close to local resident populations and that primary migration from elsewhere in the UK was less of a likely explanation. The species remains categorised as a migrant, but is now known to be resident in many places in the south of the UK.

**73.228 {2254} Grey Chi *Antitype chi* (Linnaeus, 1758) [Common]**

This species was recorded fairly regularly until the late 1940s, especially in the Kettering area, where recording effort was regular and well documented. In recent years the moth has been encountered much less frequently, and as such, records in repeat locations are always of interest. A single individual was recorded at Collyweston Great Wood on 03.ix.2018 (RF), having been recorded there in 2017.

**73.248 {2184} Northern Drab *Orthosia opima* (Hübner, [1809]) [Local]**

This species has traditionally been recorded in the North-east of the vice county, with a known, long-standing population at Collyweston Quarry. Other records have come from nearby locations in recent years, such as Barnack Hills & Holes (2017) and on a few occasions in a garden light trap in Woodnewton (2009 – 2014). In 2018 a single moth was taken at light in Grafton Park Wood, 03.v.2018 (MJH) which is suggestive of a wandering individual rather than indicative of an overlooked population.

**73.296 {2203} American Wainscot or White-speck *Mythimna unipuncta* (Haworth, 1809) [Migrant]**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> VC32 record of this rare migrant was recorded in a garden light trap in Denton on 13.xi.2018 (PT). According to social media sources, several were noted at coastal locations in the days prior to this record.

**73.297 {2194} White-point *Mythimna albipuncta* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) [Migrant]**

Under current national status, this species remains listed as a migrant, but the evidence strongly suggests that it is now resident in the UK. This is also the case locally, in my opinion. 2018 saw 17 records, whereas previously there has only been one or two in each year. This year also sees the moth being recorded in multiples more often than in previous years, i.e.: three individuals at Ring Haw on 18.viii.2018 (RF), another two at the same site on 01.ix.2018 (RF) and two in a garden trap in Old Stratford on 03.ix.2018 (AVH). The above, along with repeat sightings at same locations also provides strong evidence that the moth is breeding locally.

**[4. Update of UK BAP Species on the VC32 List](#)**

I felt it timely to write a brief update highlighting the current state of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan Species (UK BAP) which have been recorded in the county (limited to those species recorded since 1<sup>st</sup> January 1980 only):

**49.348 {1243} Liquorice Piercer *Grapholita pallifrontana* Zeller, 1845 [pRDB3]**

MJH conducted further targeted surveys for this moth during the flight period. Three further sites were found where the moth was present, being Southorpe Paddock, the old railway near Kings Cliffe and adjacent to Southey Wood. A further record was made at Bradlaugh Fields, Northampton, where the species has been recorded previously. The moths are active on sunny days and further records could well be found by searching around stands of Wild Liquorice.

**50.001 {0162} Goat Moth *Cossus cossus* (Linnaeus, 1758) [Nb]**

The last record in VC32 was in 1988. To my knowledge, no targeted recording effort has been attempted in order to relocate this species in the last few years, and so there is still an outside chance of it being rediscovered in the county.

**54.002 {0163} Forester *Adscita statipes* (Linnaeus, 1758) [Local]**

Apparently fairly common in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the moth appears to have suffered a serious decline. One record in 1989 was followed by another in 2010, but with none since then. Some experimental pheromone lures were made available to County Recorders as part of a University project, but despite some effort targeting known former locations, such as Barnack Hills & Holes, no moths were recorded.

**70.035 {1679} False Mocha *Cyclophora porata* (Linnaeus, 1767) [Local]**

False Mocha has suffered an apparent decline locally, with no records having been received since 2012, despite recent moth trapping work being performed in former known locations. Prior to that, there were several records submitted in most years. This local decline has been mirrored elsewhere in the UK, with one theory being the decline in small-scale rotational woodland management – the moth showing a preference for more “scrubby oak” and coppice regrowth.

**70.201 {1880} Barred Tooth-striped *Trichopteryx polycommata* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) [Na]**

This species has not been recorded in the county since 1987. Despite this, targeted recording was conducted during 2018 at former known sites, and other apparently suitable locations, using a recently available experimental pheromone lure. The lure is not yet widely available, but a small quantity was provided by Butterfly Conservation for local use. Sadly no moths were seen. The lure has been proved to be most effective and where deployed in the species’ strongholds, yielded good results (some pheromone traps containing dozens of male moths!). It has also apparently yielded the occasional Early Tooth-striped moth too.

**72.070 {2495} Olive Crescent *Trisateles emortalis* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) [RDB3]**

There is only a single record of this species in VC32, being of a single, worn moth, in 2017. This was probably a vagrant specimen and not representative of a local population.

**73.031 {2465} Four-spotted *Tyta luctuosa* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) [Na]**

A long-running transect survey along an active railway track in Werrington, Peterborough, yielded five moths during the 2018 (PW). Numbers are still down on some former years, but ongoing habitat management will hopefully ensure it remain extant. In addition to the above, a singleton was recorded at Helpston on 30.vii.2018 (MH).

**73.149 {2347} Concolorous *Photedes extrema* (Hübner, [1809]) [RDB3]**

This is probably one of Northamptonshire's "best moths" (I believe this was the moniker given to the species by the late Bernard Skinner), being the main UK stronghold of the species. Records for 2018 range between 22.vi.2018 to 19.vii.2018, with nearly 500 individuals noted. The records are mostly from the North-east of the vice county: Fineshade, Ring Haw, Swaddywell Pits, Castor Hanglands, Collyweston Great Wood & Easton Hornstocks. Three individuals were also taken to light in Yardley Chase on 14.vi.2018 (JS), which has also traditionally been a good location for this species.

**73.214 {2317} White-spotted Pinion *Cosmia diffinis* (Linnaeus, 1767) [Na]**

This Elm-feeder has suffered significant decline since the advent of Dutch elm disease in the 1970's, and Northants/Hunts/Beds remain the principle localities in the UK. It is recorded in very low numbers most years, often only single moths each year, in the North-east of the vice county. 2018 saw an excellent record for this moth with thirteen individuals taken to light at a site near Oundle on 06.viii.2018 (PH).

**73.218 {2315} Heart Moth *Dicycla oo* (Linnaeus, 1758) [RDB3]**

Despite limited targeting of former habitats for this species, no moths were seen in 2018. Last recorded in VC32 in 2006 on private land, it is hoped to rediscover this population in 2019.

**73.259 {2148} Pale Shining Brown *Polia bombycina* (Hufnagel, 1766) [Nb]**

This species used to be relatively common and widespread in the southern half of the UK, but seems to have suffered a catastrophic decline in recent years. The last VC32 record came in 1992 at Castor Hanglands.

**5. [Migrant Species Recorded in VC32 During 2018](#)**

Below is a brief table of known migrant species to have been recorded during 2018:

ABH	B&F	Taxon	Vernacular	Records
18.001	0464	<i>Plutella xylostella</i>	Diamond-back Moth	173
63.031	1395	<i>Udea ferrugalis</i>	Rusty-dot Pearl	2
63.048	1408	<i>Palpita vitrealis</i>		2
63.052	1398	<i>Nomophila noctuella</i>	Rush Veneer	3
69.004	1972	<i>Agrius convolvuli</i>	Convolvulus Hawk-moth	1
69.010	1984	<i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>	Humming-bird Hawk-moth	29
69.014	1987	<i>Hyles gallii</i>	Bedstraw Hawk-moth	1
69.015	1990	<i>Hyles livornica</i>	Striped Hawk-moth	1
70.038	1716	<i>Rhodometra sacraria</i>	Vestal	5
71.001	2022	<i>Thaumetopoea processionea</i>	Oak Processionary	7
72.041	2051	<i>Lithosia quadra</i>	Four-spotted Footman	3
73.015	2441	<i>Autographa gamma</i>	Silver Y	1600
73.295	2195	<i>Mythimna vitellina</i>	Delicate	2
73.296	2203	<i>Mythimna unipuncta</i>	American Wainscot or White-speck	1
73.307	2119	<i>Peridroma saucia</i>	Pearly Underwing	1
73.327	2091	<i>Agrotis ipsilon</i>	Dark Sword-grass	52

**6. [References](#)**

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