VC32/Northamptonshire Moths – A Summary of New Species & Noteworthy Records from 2024

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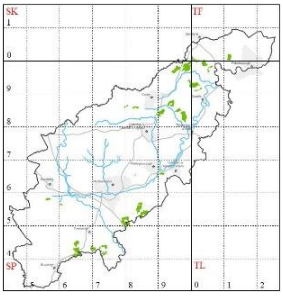
(February 2025)

Northamptonshire/VC32 Moth Group website:
http://www.northamptonshiremoths.org.uk/home.htm



This is an annual review of species newly recorded in VC32 (Northamptonshire and The Soke of Peterborough), along with interesting and noteworthy moths recorded during the 2024 season, based on records received as at the end of January 2025. If you have any queries or observations about the article, please do drop me a line. If you are reading this and still have records to submit for 2024 (or indeed from any previous years), it's never too late – please send them in. All records (macro and micro-moths) are ultimately uploaded to the National Moth Recording Scheme, hosted by Butterfly Conservation, where they are subject to further scrutiny and used in scientific research to support conservation and to increase our understanding of our moth fauna.

Introduction

Well… 2024 – what a strange year that was! Anecdotally, the feeling during the year was that we were seeing fewer moths than normal, with an associated reduction in diversity.

2024 was a warm, but very unsettled year. This was certainly the case for the spring months, with many low-pressure systems sweeping through, bringing rain and wind. That said, March started cold, but temperatures soon rose, with some unseasonal temperatures being recorded towards the latter part of the month (18^{0}C noted in Surrey on 20th). This part of the year also saw quite high levels of rainfall too. The trend for warmer than average temperatures continued until the summer (May was noted as being the warmest on record for the UK). June, July and August all suffered from lower-than-average temperature readings, and were accompanied by wet and windy conditions to boot. There was little improvement through the autumn period, which was also quite unsettled, with some prolonged periods of rain.

As with 2023, the generally unsettled conditions throughout the main recording season may well have had a direct effect on our moth species, but just as likely, would also have had a negative effect on moth trap frequency. This is perhaps reflected in the annual figures as shown below. Interestingly, and probably as many suspected, we saw far fewer individual moths than in previous years, with approximately 25,000 fewer moths noted – although from a greater number of actual records than in 2023. In terms of the number of species recorded (excluding aggregates), there was an improvement on 2023, but numbers were still quite a long way down on previous years.

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
No. records received	**46,687**	44,831	56,913	48,476	46,654
No. species recorded (exc. aggregates)	**1,001**	983	1,047	1,037	1,053
No. individual moths recorded (approx.)	**159,860**	184,660	196,600	168,600	150,000
No. species new to the county	**11**	4	14	10	12

The Top Ten species, based on number of records received (not number of individuals) seems to indicate a fairly stable top-ten over the past couple of years (2023 position in brackets). The top three remain all but unchanged from last year, with Large Yellow Underwing remaining as king of the hill! The remainder of the table is comprised of species which appear quite regularly, with the return of *Epiphyas postvittana* (Light Brown Apple Moth) after a one-year absence, the only micro-moth to feature. Hebrew Character pops up at No.10, the first time in the top-ten since 2019, perhaps reflecting on the warm early spring weather. Micro-moths rarely feature in this table, reflecting recording effort, but it may be worthy of note that *Cydalima perspecticalis* (Box-tree Moth) was the next most frequently-recorded micro-moth, landing at No.17 with a more than respectable (and for some, quite concerning) 431 records!

Pos.	ABH	Taxon	Vernacular	Records
1 (1)	73.342	*Noctua pronuba*	Large Yellow Underwing	1349
2 (3)	73.359	*Xestia c-nigrum*	Setaceous Hebrew Character	847
3 (2)	70.258	*Peribatodes rhomboidaria*	Willow Beauty	801
4 (9)	70.226	*Opisthograptis luteolata*	Brimstone Moth	766
5 (5)	73.162	*Apamea monoglypha*	Dark Arches	688
6 (8)	70.016	*Idaea aversata*	Riband Wave	621
7 (-)	49.039	*Epiphyas postvittana*	Light Brown Apple Moth	574
8 (7)	73.317	*Agrotis exclamationis*	Heart and Dart	572
9 (-)	73.291	*Mythimna pallens*	Common Wainscot	557
10 (-)	73.249	*Orthosia gothica*	Hebrew Character	546

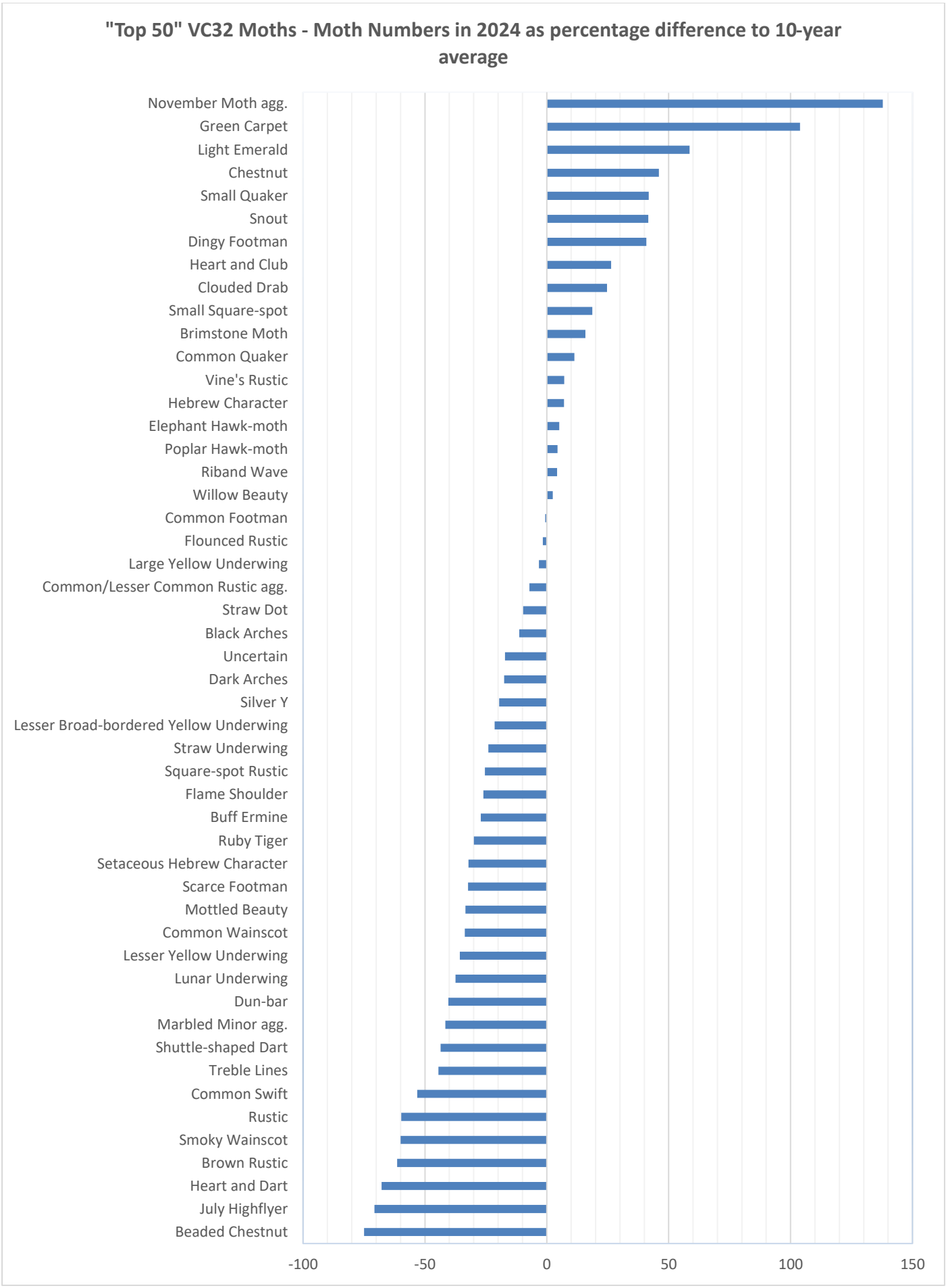
I looked in a little more depth at the “top-50” VC32 moths. For this exercise, the top 50 species was defined as the 50 most abundant species over the last decade, excluding 2024 (i.e. 2014-2023), being derived from the average number of individual moths recorded per year for the decade. This number was then compared to the records received for 2024.

The graph on the following page shows the apparent declines and gains in 2024 compared to that decade average; the X-axis showing the percentage difference. The central vertical bar “0” represents no change between 2024 and the past decade. Those with horizontal bars extending to the right of the 0/central vertical axis indicate a greater number of individuals in 2024 than the previous decade, and that they had a “good 2024”; those with bars to the left of centre were recorded in fewer numbers than in the last decade. I have included some aggregated species here for completeness (where those aggregates are often recorded at the same time of the year).

It can be seen that some moths seemed to do very well in 2024, but others experienced a dismal decline in numbers. It appears in the snapshot that out of the top-50, only 18 species appeared to do better in 2024, whereas 31 fared worse last year. Common Footman appears to show no appreciable difference in numbers in 2024 to the last decade.

Looking very superficially at flight period/voltinism with reference to the Atlas of Britain & Ireland’s Larger Moths (Randle *et al*, 2019) those that seemed to have a decent year in 2024 included several species which fly early in the season (Small Quaker, Clouded Drab) or late (November Moth species) and those displaying poorer numbers in 2024 were species which are normally seen in the summer and early autumn months. But this is clearly not the whole picture, as some of those which apparently “did well” in 2024 are species which are seen during the summer months, such as Heart & Club and Dingy Footman.

It would be an interesting study to delve deeper into individual species, for instance looking at differential aspects of their biology, habits and habitats, in an effort to find common patterns in these apparent gains and losses. It will be with some trepidation that we record moths in 2025 to see if these trends continue…


"Top 50" VC32 Moths - Moth Numbers in 2024 as percentage difference to 10-year average
November Moth agg.
Green Carpet
Light Emerald
Chestnut
Small Quaker
Snout
Dingy Footman
Heart and Club
Clouded Drab
Small Square-spot
Brimstone Moth
Common Quaker
Vine's Rustic
Hebrew Character
Elephant Hawk-moth
Poplar Hawk-moth
Riband Wave
Willow Beauty
Common Footman
Flounced Rustic
Large Yellow Underwing
Common/Lesser Common Rustic agg.
Straw Dot
Black Arches
Uncertain
Dark Arches
Silver Y
Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing
Straw Underwing
Square-spot Rustic
Flame Shoulder
Buff Ermine
Ruby Tiger
Setaceous Hebrew Character
Scarce Footman
Mottled Beauty
Common Wainscot
Lesser Yellow Underwing
Lunar Underwing
Dun-bar
Marbled Minor agg.
Shuttle-shaped Dart
Treble Lines
Common Swift
Rustic
Smoky Wainscot
Brown Rustic
Heart and Dart
July Highflyer
Beaded Chestnut
-100
-50
0
50
100
150

Essential Information for a Moth Record…and a couple of requests

I include a few quick notes for those using their own spreadsheets for recording, and users of on-line recording systems (iRecord, iNaturalist in particular), regarding some essential data required for a moth record to be entered into the database:

Excel Spreadsheets:

One issue which causes significant problems is that of "hidden spaces". These are most often present between two halves of the moth name, or directly after it. My look-up sheet will see those hidden spaces as proper characters, and thus fail to "translate" it into current taxonomy, meaning I have to do a global trim, or other manipulations.

Site Name:

Many records are from garden moth traps. Most datasets that I receive are comprehensively named, but some are annotated simply as "Garden". Inclusion of the town or village name greatly speeds up my task. NB: I often mirror what appears on the Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 series map for sites away from garden locations.

Spatial accuracy:

There seems to be an increasing tendency to record at 10-figure grid reference detail. For moths, in my humble opinion, this is usually far too detailed. 6-figure grid reference accuracy is more than sufficient for most purposes.

Date:

Please, please include the year! I often receive spreadsheets with just day and month included. I have to add the year to every record before I can add them to the database.

Method:

Noting whether the record was derived from, for example, light trapping, pheromone lures or were as a result of being observed in the field during the day would be immensely useful.

Stage:

Some records are devoid of the life-stage (i.e. larval, adult) – which can be quite often seen in iRecord and iNaturalist. Sometimes it is obvious from the photograph during verification if supplied, but once downloaded into an Excel format for manipulation and import to the county database, this evidence is lost as the field for stage remains empty. Could users please ensure that the life stage is included on every record.

MapMate

Those of you who use MapMate to keep their moth records may well be aware that the company that runs MM has now wound-up. This means that the support we have been used to over the years has ceased. This does not mean that the program will stop working. I use it most days and can reassure you that it continues to operate perfectly well. Of course, it does mean that there will no longer be updates to moth names etc. sent out to users as we have been used to.

But despair not! Les Evans-Hill, who until his recent retirement was in charge of the National Moth recording Scheme, has agreed to look after the Lepidoptera aspect of MapMate in the future, proposing to prepare updates as and when they become required. How this will work in practice, and how they will be distributed to end-users is as yet unknown, but I will be in close touch with him in the coming months and keep the group informed of plans. The end of MapMate as a trading company does not affect your use of the program, and certainly does not affect the county database, and subsequent mapping that I use for the website. So do please keep on using it in the same manner as you have been. Anyway...watch this space for further news.

Phenology

Stimulated mainly by the receipt of a very early record for Pale Tussock, which arrived in my inbox on 17th February. We then had a period of very mild spring weather which appeared to illicit many early moth records. So, I decided to have a rummage in the VC32 database and look deeper at a selection of moths often seen early in the recording season, and for which there were good numbers of records going back a few years. The database is a little lean in terms of records until the 1990's, but I felt there were sufficient of the following species to enable me to look at some basic trends.

Using one of the built-in MapMate phenology/flight period tools, I looked at the following species. I then calculated the average earliest records for each over the past four decades. The last column shows the number of days

difference (earlier in every case) between decade 2015-2024 (Decade D) to decade 1985-1994 (Decade A). The results are below, based in order of the earliest 2024 record for each species.

			Average earliest date / decade			No. Days Early
Species	Earliest 2024	A: 1985-1994	B: 1995-2004	C: 2005-2014	D: 2015-2024	Decade D vs A
Clouded Drab	25/01/2024	20-Mar	07-Mar	23-Feb	08-Feb	41
Common Quaker	28/01/2024	14-Mar	03-Mar	19-Feb	10-Feb	33
Small Quaker	29/01/2024	19-Mar	12-Mar	04-Mar	18-Feb	30
March Moth	29/01/2024	26-Feb	14-Feb	11-Feb	06-Feb	20
Oak Beauty	29/01/2024	13-Mar	06-Mar	28-Feb	10-Feb	32
Hebrew Character	02/02/2024	16-Mar	05-Mar	19-Feb	06-Feb	39
Pale Tussock	17/02/2024	18-May	08-May	01-May	15-Apr	33
Early Grey	18/02/2024	26-Mar	21-Mar	10-Mar	04-Mar	22
Red Chestnut	21/02/2024	18-Mar	12-Mar	10-Mar	07-Mar	11
Early Thorn	01/03/2024	14-Apr	24-Mar	21-Mar	18-Mar	27
Heart & Dart	02/05/2024	31-May	11-May	07-May	23-Apr	38

As you can probably see from this very small snapshot, the average earliest record date has become earlier with the progress of each decade. Many appear to have moved earlier by two or three weeks in the most recent decade compared to those seen between 1985-1994, but in some cases the average appears to have moved by as much as six weeks earlier. I have not run the trends for all species, nor indeed put this through any scientifically valid statistical package, but the results do appear to be quite marked.

Phyllocnistis saligna update

This is an entomological hot-topic! A recent paper by Voith et al (2023, Taxonomy of the complex around *Phyllocnistis saligna* (Zeller, 1839) [Lepidoptera, Gracillariidae] in North and Central Europe, with the description of a new species. Norwegian Journal of Entomology 70, 10–28) has shown that *Phyllocnistis saligna* (Willow Maze-miner) is in fact a complex of four species; discovered by barcoding specimens from Salix mines.

The species complex and situation to date:
Phyllocnistis saligna – Status unknown. Formerly considered widespread in the UK. There are 23 records in the VC32 database at present – pending further investigation and clarification. It is likely however, that most, if not all of these, actually refer to *P. asiatica*.
Phyllocnistis asiatica – Added to the UK list in 2024, found in the UK at Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire in 2018. No confirmed records in the county.
Phyllocnistis ramulicola – Discovered in 2006 as new to science in Havant Thicket, Hampshire. Noted as new to VC32 in 2024 (see separate section for details).
Phyllocnistis triandricola – Status unknown.

P. ramulicola and *P. asiatica* are thus both confirmed as UK species.

The adults of *P. asiatica* can be separated from other *Phyllocnistis* only by dissection of the genitalia (females only, males are indistinguishable). At the time of writing, various researchers are investigating both larval mines and adults with a view to determining the exact status of the above species. Studies include rearing larvae, describing the mines and performing genetic sequencing in order to reveal the DNA barcodes.

Another "Migrant Year"?

Some of you will recall the so-called "migrant year" of 2006, which at the time reached near-mythical status, when we were seemingly spoilt for choice in the UK with regards to the more rarely recorded migrant species. Of course, times have changed a lot since then, and indeed some of those rare migrants appear to have become established in

the UK…and some have almost certainly taken up residence in Northants too. A few examples in this category would be Dewick's Plusia, Gypsy Moth and White Point. These species appear to be recorded in VC32 at times outside of periods of known migration, and sometimes in such numbers as to argue that they must be breeding locally.

Below is the usual summary of known migrant species noted through the previous year, this time with 2023 numbers appended. NB: Some species, especially Silver Y, are still regarded as a migrant species for reporting purposes, but also known to breed locally.

ABH	Taxon	Vernacular	Approx. No. Individuals	(2023 Numbers)
18.001	*Plutella xylostella*	Diamond-back Moth	114	117
49.343	*Cydia amplana*	Rusty Acorn Piercer	1	0
63.031	*Udea ferrugalis*	Rusty-dot Pearl	24	32
63.048	*Palpita vitrealis*	Olive-tree Pearl	45+	3
63.052	*Nomophila noctuella*	Rush Veneer	9	2
69.004	*Agrius convolvuli*	Convolvulus Hawk-moth	5	9
70.038	*Rhodometra sacraria*	Vestal	2	20
70.047	*Nycterosea obstipata*	Gem	5	5
73.015	*Autographa gamma*	Silver Y	784	1351
73.074	*Heliothis peltigera*	Bordered Straw	1	0
73.076	*Helicoverpa armigera*	Scarce Bordered Straw	19	5
73.087	*Spodoptera exigua*	Small Mottled Willow	2	2
73.295	*Mythimna vitellina*	Delicate	142	38
73.307	*Peridroma saucia*	Pearly Underwing	1	2
73.327	*Agrotis ipsilon*	Dark Sword-grass	33	37
73.33	*Ochropleura leucogaster*	Radford's Flame Shoulder	3	0
74.01	*Nycteola asiatica*	Eastern Nycteoline	1	0

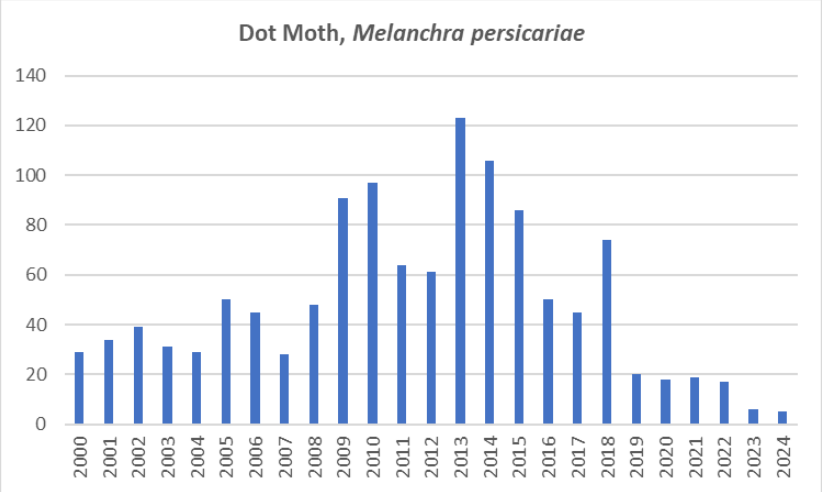
I think it can be seen from the above that a reasonable range of species were noted during 2024, but very few were seen in unexpectedly large numbers. Indeed, some species were seen in smaller numbers in 2024 than in 2023 (e.g. Vestal, Convolvulus Hawk-moth). So, overall, was it really a "good migrant year" here in 2024? Difficult to argue that case with the data as above.

However, 2024 was notable across the UK for a couple of migrant species, namely Delicate and *Palpita vitrealis* (Olive-tree Pearl). Both were recorded in significant numbers, and were widely reported across the country on social media. As seen from the above table, both were similarly recorded in significant numbers in the county last year. In my opinion, *P. vitrealis* was almost certainly a true migrant to VC32. Parsons & Clancy (A Guide to the Pyralid and Crambid Moths of Britain & Ireland, 2023) list the primary larval foodplants as being Jasmine and Olive, but with Privet and Ash listed as possible pabulums. They also state that the species has yet to be recorded in the larval stage in the UK.

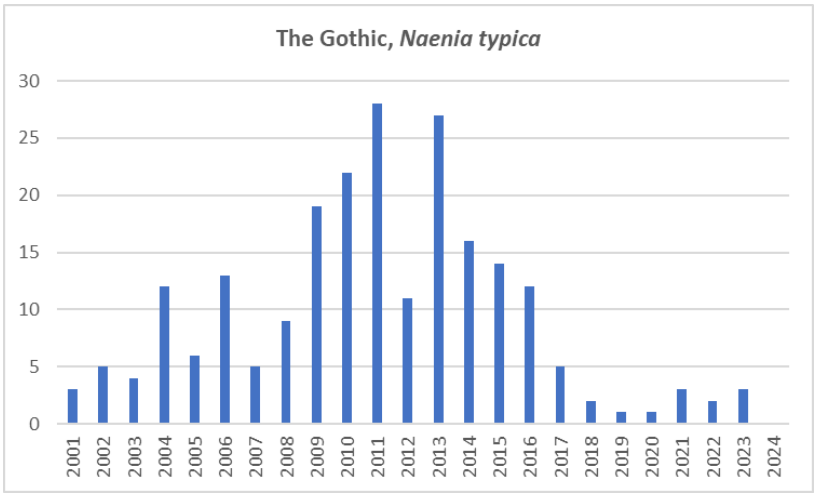
The Delicate on the other hand is known to feed on various grasses, including Cock's-foot and Annual Meadow-grass, and has been recorded as breeding in the UK over the summer months. The moth was recorded on 96 separate occasions in 2024, from all over the county. One garden light trap in the village of Nassington (TL09) noted it on 18 occasions between 30th June and 11th November, with as many as five individuals in one night. Another recorder in Oundle noted that the last few moths recorded were of smaller than normal adults – a classic sign of "forced development", where an individual completes its larval growth in a very rapid manner (usually in response to cooler conditions, or limited foodplant material). Perhaps reflecting the likely local colonisation by White Point, and given the sheer number of sightings, it is highly possible that the moth was breeding locally in the latter part of 2024.

A couple of Declining species

The Dot Moth was once a very common visitor to many garden moth traps. This was certainly the case here in Northants. The adults graced moth traps, and the larvae often seen in gardens, especially during garden maintenance operations, the larvae utilising a wide range of foodplants. The apparent increase in records during the 2000's reflects the increase in number of people recording moths and submitting their findings, rather than an increase in the species. But as this graph shows, very few records have been received over the past five or so years – with only six records in 2023, and five last year.



Gothic is another example of a once oft-seen moth, now all but relegated to history. This is another moth that would be seen most years in the garden traps, although perhaps less attracted to light than to sugar or natural sap-runs and honeydew. The larvae feed on commonly encountered plants such as Willowherbs, Dandelions, Docks and Sallows. Records for the last few years are thus:
2018: 2; 2019: 1; 2020: 1; 2021: 3; 2022: 2; 2023: 3; 2024: 0



Experiences Using a Pop-Up Mosquito Net for Recording

The following article was penned by Richard Baylis, for inclusion in one of the Garden Moth Scheme (GMS) newsletters, and is reproduced here by kind permission. On a personal note, I have been trapping with Nigel Voaden in Fife, and he regularly uses these pop-up tents, to great effect, even in the field. Of note, Richard has taken this concept one step further by use of his patented "house-brick anti-fly-away technology":

At the risk of ridicule by friends and family I purchased a pop-up mosquito net of double bed size that had an integral base sewn in. It was the largest of three sizes available and has two doors. I was inspired by a recent article sent to me by a mothing friend in GMS. It was mentioned as one of many suggestions and written by County Recorder Nigel Voaden VC85. From Butterfly Conservation it is entitled Maximising Moths and is in the Spring Issue 2024, No 145.

He states that avoiding escapees when opening a trap can increase the number of species recorded by up to 20 on a busy night. Well worth a read.

The largest size was purchased which allows me to perch on a folding stool and manipulate pots and egg boxes with confidence, knowing any that decide to leg it will usually be in the top of the dome above my head for potting at leisure. I position a large wicker basket outside the door allowing me to dump checked egg boxes out of the net tent via a small opening in the zipper door which can be opened and re-zipped each time. Thereby not duplicating records and allowing recorded moths to fly off in their own time. Any I log and fly up can be potted and ejected through the same slit opening in the door. I only partially collapse the tent afterwards and stow in my shed for next time.

I pop-up the tent on our deck which has a green outdoor polypropylene carpet which I relay after each winter for comfort and no splinters. I plan to be self-contained for an hour or so, taking coffee, notebook, a good stack of pots and various plastic containers to separate micros from macros etc. Phone camera and magnifying glass. I can just get the job done before the loo calls.

The first time I popped-up the tent it nearly took off and bowled over the rails into the pond. Lesson learned; my wife sewed a loop onto each lower corner. I have a stack of heavy paviour bricks which I have drilled, raw plugged and screwed in stainless steel cup hooks at one end. Originally made to anchor grandchildren's play tents on the deck, they have proved very versatile. Hooked into each corner loop and stretched out, the complete cage is well and truly secure.

If you search for GLKEBY Pop Up Mosquito Net for Double Bed they are circa £32 for the large size I use. Other makes are available but I recommend one with a base, two doors and room to sit up and operate. So, I hope I am now making a better job of recording all that goes into the MV trap and the submission of more complete records to GMS and our County Recorder.

BOLO (Be On the Look-Out for…)

There follows a short list of species which may make an appearance in VC32 in the coming season (or two), based on species which are known to be expanding their range. Some remain from last years' list, as I feel they are still more than likely to be encountered soon. As requested in previous editions of this report, if you are lucky enough to capture an of the species featured below, please retain any specimens of the species below, and notify the CMR as soon as possible to see if further confirmation is required.

34.009 *Cosmopterix pulchrimella* **Pellitory Beauty**

Initially noted in the Channel Islands, this moth was first recorded in mainland Britain in Dorset in 2001 and has now rapidly colonised southern England. Records appear to go as far north as Norfolk. Recent records can be found in Cambridgeshire (Ely) and Bedfordshire (Thurleigh).

The larval foodplant is Pellitory-of-the-Wall, *Parietaria judaica*. It is stated in The Flora of Northants (Gent & Wilson, 2012) as being a perennial herb of old stone and brick walls, generally in sheltered positions. The authors say that it is a common feature of churchyards, with a greater distribution in the east of the county.

Given the proximity of those records stated above, it would be well worth looking for the tell-tale mines on the foodplant in suitable habitat. Larvae can be found between September and April.

Photo credit: Steve Wullaert - bladmineerders.nl

Photo credit: Keith Tailby

49.344 *Cydia inquinatana* **Scarce Maple Piercer**

A recent colonist to the mainland, but now established in some parts of East Anglia. The nearest records I can find are from Cambridgeshire.

Adults are double-brooded, flying between late-May and mid-July, and again in August and September.

This moth is associated with Sycamore, and Field and Norway Maple, the larvae feeding on the seeds, eating into the keys. The empty half-keys may be found on the ground to indicate the possible presence of larvae.

Of particular interest is that the adults may be attracted to the VES pheromone lure.

Photo credit: Augustín Barčák - nahuby.sk

52.004 *Paranthrene tabaniformis* Dusky Clearwing

The species is reported to have a two-year cycle, so maybe odd years offer a better chance of recording this species than even ones. A single female was recorded in Warks on 07.vii.2021. This was the first mainland UK record for decades. Many recorders all over the UK looked for the moth in 2023, and it was recorded in several nearby counties including Cambridgeshire, Warwickshire and Bedfordshire. As with its congeners, the larvae feed internally, on Poplars and Sallows.

Adults are on the wing between May and July and should respond to the TAB pheromone lure. According to the information sheet associated with the lure, the best time of day to see the adult is between 3pm and 6pm, and must be in sunny conditions.

Photo credit: Keith Tailby

73.127 *Amphipoea lucens* Large Ear

This species is added due to an interesting record noted in neighbouring VC55, Leicestershire. A single "Ear Moth agg." was caught at Rutland water on 19.viii.2024, and only confirmed as being Large Ear somewhat later following subsequent dissection.

In order to confirm species identification, all Ear moths need to be subject to dissection. Given this VC55 record, it is entirely feasible that Large Ear may also grace VC32 with its presence…

Photo credit: Sam Pitt Miller

65.0021 *Drepana uncinula* Spiny Hook-tip (Borkhausen, 1790) N/A

I'm retaining this one from last year too, as I firmly believe that its presence in VC32 is imminent (if it's not here already!). It has been recorded in a dozen or so counties in the south and east, but recently noted in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

Only recently identified as a "cryptic species", being first recognised in July 2023 in Guernsey, where it has since been noted on many occasions. Some archive photos of putative Oak Hook-tip from this site going back to 2020 have also since been identified as Spiny Hook-tip.

The adults are very similar to those of Oak Hook-tip. The distinguishing features include:

- Forewing apex, which has a black mark with a white area immediately adjacent (see detailed image).

- Forewing apex often has small black marks/shading along the termen, adjacent to the hook-tip
- Forewing colour, especially in fresh individuals, seems to have a greyish or purple wash.
- Size – on average slightly larger than Oak Hook-tip
- NB: worn individuals should be retained for dissection.

Larvae feed on Oak, noted to favour Holm Oak in captivity. The larvae appear to graze the leaf during their early development, as shown in the lower image. Feeding damage may indicate the presence of the species.

I'm sure that this species will be found further afield in 2025, and so worth having a very close look at all Oak Hook-tips you may catch. Adults come to light, and fly between May and October, with at least two broods, likely three.

If you suspect you have caught one of these, **please retain it and contact me before release**.

Photo credits: Malcolm Hillier

Photo credit: Paul Chapman

Species Recorded as Being New to VC32

Eleven species were noted as being new to VC32 during 2024:

15.091 *Phyllocnistis ramulicola* **Willow-stem Maze-miner**

Three mines of *Phyllocnisits ramulicola* were found on the Farthinghoe Reserve on 14.ix.2024 (Pridmore, T). The mines, along with the pupation sites, were located on Crack Willow. This species was first discovered in the UK in Havant Thicket, Hampshire, in 2006. It was subsequently noted in other nearby areas, indicating that this was an undetected resident species. It is also recorded in Essex and Kent, otherwise information on current distribution is a little hard to find - this could be the most northerly UK record to date.

Photo credit: Jean Béguinot, https://bladmineerders.nl

33.006 *Ethmia bipunctella* **Bugloss Ermine**

A single moth was seen in a garden light trap in Duston, Northampton on 14.v.2024 (via Muddiman, N). A moth that is generally found on chalky cliffs around the south-east of England, but known to "wander inland occasionally" (per Sterling & Parsons, 2023). Not known to have been recorded in neighbouring Vice-counties at the time of first capture. The VC32 record in Duston is possibly therefore due to a dispersal event rather than being a locally bred individual. (NB: a single Portland Ribbon Wave was recorded in Bedfordshire on the same night, which may support this hypothesis). As the vernacular suggests, the larvae feed on Viper's-buglos.

Photo credit: David Manning

37.026 *Coleophora violacea* **White-tipped Case-bearer**

The species was recorded on two separate occasions during 2024.

The Ni Moth pheromone lure was left out overnight in amongst a mature hedge in Easton Hornstocks on 02.vi.2024, which produced a single moth (Hammond, M).

A second record, again of a single moth, was recorded to the Ni Moth lure, this time at Grafton Park Wood on 08.vi.2024 (Hammond, M)

The species is apparently recorded in several neighbouring vice-counties and thus possibly over-looked until now. If you have this pheromone lure, it would be worth deploying it amongst e.g. Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Apple and Dog Rose, these being the (published) preferred foodplants of the larvae.

Photo credit: David Manning

37.040 *Coleophora lithargyrinella* **Stitchwort Case-bearer**

A morning spent examining Greater Stitchwort at a couple of sites in the west of the county yielded some decent records. Amongst which was a single larval case of *Coleophora lithargyrinella,* which was found on the foodplant at Ramsden Corner SSSI on 26.iv.2024 (Hammond, M). This species has a scattered distribution across the UK, and is probably under-recorded, but is noted often to exist in fairly low density.

NB: *C. solitariella* cases were also present on the foodplant on the same site.

Photo credit: Steve Wullaert - http://bladmineerders.be/nl

39.004 *Dystebenna stephensi* **Tufted Oak Moth**

A single example of this species was recorded to light on 26.vi.2024 operated in a mature parkland setting on a private estate near Northampton (Skinner, J). Its identification was only discovered upon subsequent dissection. The larvae feed under the bark of mature Oaks.

Photo credit: Ruben Meert – Lepiforum.org

49.0388 *Clepsis peritana* Garden Tortrix

An unrecognised tortrix moth was taken in a garden light trap in Oundle 06.viii.2024 (Horsnail, P). The moth did not appear to match anything in published books, or on the UK Moths website. It was thus retained for future examination. Upon presentation to the CMR for identification, it was noted that this was not a moth that was immediately recognised, but "rang a bell". Looking through the Entomological Record & Journal of Variation, Volume 135(5) came up with a match to *Clepsis peritana*. Dissection was advised to separate it from other options, which confirmed the identification. The species is a resident of Canada and the USA, but is also known to be spreading through Continental Europe, likely feeding on a range of foodplants including Strawberry and Citrus species. It was newly recorded in the UK in July 2023 in Staffordshire, with two further records subsequently noted in Wales and Essex during September of the same year. Therefore, this record is likely only the 4th for the UK.

Photo credit: Horst Pichler

49.140 *Brevicornutia pallidana* Sheep's-bit Straw

An unidentified Tortrix moth was taken to light in Easton Hornstocks on 06.vi. 2024 (Follows, R), and retained for future examination. Subsequent dissection proved this to be *Brevicornutia pallidana*, which is new to VC32 for this species. The moth is considered to be quite scarce across the UK, with a very disjointed distribution. The larvae feed on Sheep's Bit (*Jasione montana*), which is, apparently, a very rare plant in VC32, with the only currently known site being at Newnham Hill near Daventry. This of course opens up the possibility that the plant exists undiscovered in or near to Easton Hornstocks, or that the individual moth was a vagrant. The site is regularly trapped, and so will be monitored carefully for this species in subsequent years.

Photo credit: Rasmus Elleby

62.013 *Uncinus obductella* Marjoram Knot-horn

A single example of this species was recorded to light at Ring Haw on 14.viii.2024 (Follows, R). Until fairly recently, this species was only known from Kent, but has seen an expansion in range, being found sporadically in other south-eastern counties, including Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Bedfordshire and Leicestershire. Given that the moth was recorded at a site which corresponds to ideal breeding habitat (the larvae feed on Wild Marjoram), it is quite possible that this represents an individual from a newly discovered resident colony, rather than being an individual that has dispersed from out-of-county.

Photo credit: Ron Follows

73.126 *Amphipoea fucosa* **Saltern Ear**

A single Ear moth agg. was recorded in a garden light trap in Denton on 09.viii.2024 (Terry, P). Sensibly, the moth was retained for detailed examination. Subsequent dissection proved the moth to be Saltern Ear. This has finally debunked the old adage that "we only get The Ear in the county"...

The moth is principally known from coastal locations, occupying saltmarshes and sandhills. There are however a few inland records from nearby Vice Counties, namely Huntingdonshire and Hertfordshire, although there are a number of inland records in both Norfolk and Suffolk too.

Photo credit: Keith Tailby

73.330 *Ochropleura leucogaster* **Radford's Flame Shoulder**

This species was widely reported on social media during the Autumn months, with records appearing, sometimes in significant numbers, from many southern counties. There is anecdotal evidence that this once rare migrant had colonised parts of the UK, but with many individuals arriving as primary migrants during the year. Amazingly, the species was recorded on four occasions in VC32. The first record was seen in a garden moth trap in Oundle on 09.x.2024 (Horsnail, P). Subsequent records thus:

Little Billing, Northampton, 24.x.2024 (Matthews, H)
Old Stratford, 28.x.2024 (Harding, A)
Nassington, 07.xi.2024 (Smith, N)

Photo credit: Nick Smith

74.010 *Nycteola asiatica* **Eastern Nycteoline**

A moth, almost devoid of markings and wing scales, was taken on 26.ix.2024 in a garden light trap in Oundle (Horsnail, P). Upon dissection, this moth proved to be a male Eastern Nycteoline. Not only is this a new VC32 record, but following conversations with various UK experts, this could well be only the 10th UK record. The species was first noted in the UK in 1992, in Walberton, West Sussex. A few sporadic records ensued, but until 2024 (I believe five records in 2024, including this one), has not been seen in the UK since 2005. An article is due to be published in Atropos covering the influx.

NB: Nycteoline species can be quite tricky to identify, especially given that the UK now has proven records of Sallow Nycteoline, *Nycteola degenerana* and Banded Nycteoline, *Nycteola siculana* to go alongside our "traditional" Oak Nycteoline.

Photo credit: Lepinet.fr

Significant and Noteworthy Records

Below therefore, are some species of note which were recorded during 2024. The list is by no means comprehensive and I hope I have included everything I had meant to! (inc. species recorded fewer than 5 times up to the end of 2023).

1.001 ***Micropterix tunbergella*** **Red-barred Pollen-moth**

A single moth was swept from low vegetation on 05.v.2024 in Southey Wood (Howarth, S). This is the 10th county record, 8th post-2000. This small, day-flying moth is quite likely over-looked or mistaken for one of its congener species. The adults tend to be seen feeding on pollen from the flowers of Oak, Sycamore and Hawthorn.

8.001 ***Incurvaria pectinea*** **Pale Feathered Cutter**

The 6th VC32 record was of a single moth caught in a moth trap in a private area within Yardley Chase on 12.iv.2024 (Horsnail, P/Gill, R). This is only the second time the adult has been recorded, with the previous adult record coming from the same site in 2010. The mines are quite distinctive on Birch and worth looking out for in May and June.

10.002 ***Tischeria dodonaea*** **Small Oak Blotch-miner**

A single mine of this species was noted on Oak on the Farthinghoe reserve on 24.viii.2024 (Pridmore, T). This is the 7th VC32 record. The distinctive mines have a dark circular blotch surrounded by a series of dark concentric rings or semicircles.

12.019 ***Nemapogon ruricolella*** **Rufous Fungus moth**

The species was first noted in VC32 in 2019, when adults were seen to be attracted to the VES pheromone lure. It has been recorded sporadically each year since that date, with all records made to the same lure. The 9th county record was of a male moth attracted in exactly the same way, in a Cogenhoe garden on 16.vii.2024 (Seaman, D).

15.002 ***Caloptilia cuculipennella*** **Privet Stilt**

Once again, reported from the Farthinghoe Nature reserve, following two records from the same area in 2023. The moth was again recorded as a leaf-mine on Ash on 18.ix.2024 (Pridmore, T). This represents the 6th VC32 record. Note that the mines can also be found on Privet.

15.003 ***Caloptilia populetorum*** **Black-dot Stilt**

The ninth and tenth county records were received during the year. The 9th record was of a single moth to light in an Oundle garden on 13.v.2024 (Horsnail, P). the 10th was of a singleton taken to light in Fineshade on 13.viii.2024 (Follows, R). In both cases the moths were subject to dissection to prove ID, given that the adults are hard to distinguish from other moths in this family.

15.0131 ***Caloptilia honoratella*** **Pale Maple Stilt**

Recorded three times in 2024, after the very first VC record in 2022. The records are thus:
Old Head Wood – single adult to light on 09.vii.2024 (Hammond, M/Tailby, K) – 2nd county record
Sywell Country Park – single adult to light on 20.vii.2024 (Seaman, D)
Farthinghoe NR – another singleton to light, 05.ix.2024 (Pridmore, T)
All were confirmed by dissection.
First British record was taken in Surrey in 2017, after which it appears to be expanding its range.

15.026 ***Parornix fagivora*** **Beech Parornix**

Positively identified from a leaf-mine found on Beech; the 5th county record was noted at Sywell Country Park on 17.ix.2024 (Seaman, D). It is possible that this species is over-looked in the county, especially if taken in a light trap as an adult, as all *Parornix* species require dissection to determine ID.

15.059 ***Phyllonorycter cavella*** **Large Birch Leaf-miner**

The 5th VC32 record was of a leaf-mine found on Birch, found on the Farthinghoe NR on 11.x.2024 (Pridmore, T). The adults are rarely seen, seemingly poorly attracted to light traps. Thus, all the county records to date are of the leaf-mine.

15.093 *Phyllocnistis xenia* **Kent Maze-miner**

The pale, sinuous mines resemble delicate snail-trails, and can be found on the upper-side of the leaves of White Poplar. To date, all VC32 records have been of the leaf-mine, but a single adult was recorded to light at Farthinghoe NR on 16.viii.2024 (Pridmore, T). This was the 9th county record.

20.024 *Argyresthia semitestacella* **Beech Tip Moth**

This species seems to be rarely encountered throughout its UK range. The 4th VC32 record of this species was of an adult taken to light at Ring Haw on 14.viii.2024 (Follows, R).

21.002 *Lyonetia prunifoliella* **Blackthorn Blister Moth**

A species which apparently became extinct in the UK, but which has made a recent return. The last record before this event was from 1895! First re-recorded locally in August 2022 after an absence of 127 years, the moth was recorded six times in 2022 and 2023. 2024 saw another three records, further reflecting the continued re-expansion in range. The 2024 records are thus:

Farthinghoe NR – mines located on Blackthorn, 03.viii.2024 (Pridmore, T) - 8th VC32 record
Pitsford Reservoir – mines on Blackthorn, 07.viii.2024 (Rowley, L)
Kinewell Lake, Ringstead – several mines on a single Blackthorn, 14.viii.2024 (Hammond, M)

27.002 *Oegoconia caradjai* **Straw Yellowneck**

Confirmed from dissection on three occasions during the year:
Oundle – adult to garden light trap on 09.vii.2024 (Horsnail, P) – 6th VC32 record
Cogenhoe – another adult to a garden light trap, 28.vii.2024 (Seaman, D)
Farthinghoe NR – single adult to light, 13.viii.2024 (Pridmore, T)
The adults often display a yellow-ish colouration to the pale areas, but this is not diagnostic, so putative specimens should always be retained for examination.

28.013 *Crassa tinctella* **Plain Bark Moth**

This species appears to be quite rare from all of its known distribution. The adults are indeed very similar to *C. unitella*, thus possibly masking the true picture. A 9th VC32 record was of an adult to light at Farthinghoe NR on 11.vi.2024 (Pridmore, T). The site is one of only five known to support the species in the county.

32.003 *Luquetia lobella* **Tufted Blackthorn Moth**

First recorded in the county in 2009, it had been seen on six occasions up until last year. A 7th VC32 record was of an adult seen in Raunds on 19.vi.2024 (Mole, J). The species is fairly widely distributed through the south of the UK, but adults are seldom seen, only occasionally turning up at light traps.

32.024 *Agonopterix assimilella* **Speckled Broom Buff**

The 8th county record was of a single larva found within its silken spinning on Broom along the disused railway line near Sulgrave on 11.iv.2024 (Pridmore, T). The larval spinnings can be quite prominent – spun between adjacent stems of Broom. However, other species can produce similar silk spinnings and thus larvae should either be found on-site, or be retained and reared through to confirm ID.

32.038 *Depressaria badiella* **Varied Brown**

The 7th record was of an adult to light at Easton Hornstocks on 02.ix.2024 (Follows, R). The species is known to prefer well-drained chalky habitats and as seems to demonstrate a scattered distribution in several counties. Whilst adults do attend light trap, further records might be gleaned by searching for the early stages of the larvae. Larvae occur from May to July and feed on Cat's Ear (*Hypochoeris radicata*), Perennial Sow-thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*) and Dandelion (*Taraxacum*), initially between spun leaves and later amongst the roots.

35.029 *Brachmia inornatella* **Fen Snout**

Confirmed by dissection, due to the worn nature of the specimen, the 4th VC32 record was of an adult to light in an Oundle garden on 30.vii.2024 (Horsnail, P). The larvae feed on Common Reed (*Phragmites communis*) and thus may be found more often nearer to wet habitats.

**35.045 *Bryotropha basaltinella*	Dark-spotted Moss-moth**
The moth was first confirmed as local in August 2016, and has since been recorded on a few occasions from various garden light traps. It was reportedly expanding its range and 2024 is perhaps confirmation of this. Recorded 7 times up until the end of 2023, there were 12 confirmed records in 2024! The adults cannot be reliably separated from *B. dryadella*, although at the time of writing, there are no known records of this species in Northants. Putative specimens should therefore be retained for further examination in an effort to get a better picture of its distribution within the county.

**35.053 *Isophrictis striatella*	Tansy Stem Borer**
The 5th VC32 record was of an adult to a garden light trap in Duston, Northampton on 30.vii.2024 (Warner, D). So far, four of the five records are all from within Northampton itself, with a single record from 1998 in Yardley Hastings.

**35.105 *Gelechia nigra*	Black Gelechia**
Recorded three times in 2024:
Middleton Cheney – single adult to a garden light trap, 26.vii.2024 (Pridmore, T) – 4th VC32 record
Thrapston – singleton to a garden light trap in Thrapston, 29.vii.2024 (Hammond, M)
Farthinghoe NR – another single adult to light, 07.viii.2024 (Pridmore, T)

**37.014 *Coleophora coracipennella*	Blackthorn Case-bearer**
Retained from a Northants Moth Group light trapping session at Swaddywell Pit on 31.v.2024 (Hillier, M. et al), the 9th VC32 record was subsequently confirmed by dissection. The larvae feed on Blackthorn, and therefore could well be quite widespread in the county.

**37.047 *Coleophora amethystinella*	Tare Case-bearer**
Another good record from the Northants Moth Group light trapping session at Swaddywell Pit on 31.v.2024 – a single moth was taken to light in an area of scrub and low-growing vegetation away from the central lake (Hammond, M). This is the 2nd VC32 record, following on from on taken in 2018 at Priors Hall in Corby.

**37.1	*Coleophora solitariella*	Southern Stitchwort Case-bearer**
Targeted survey work looking at Greater Stitchwort resulted in the species being recorded three times in 2024:
Everdon Stubbs – single larval case on 26.iv.2024 (Hammond, M) – 7th VC32 record
Ramsden Corner SSSI – another solitary larval case on 26.iv.2024 (Hammond, M).
(It is interesting to note that there was considerable evidence of feeding damage on the leaves of the plants on both of these sites, yet extensive searching yielded only a single record from each site.)
Grafton Park Wood – single case found on 14.v.2024 (Hammond, M).

**37.104 *Coleophora adspersella*	Large Orache Case-bearer**
The 2nd county record of this species was of a single adult recorded to light on 26.vi.2024 operated in a mature parkland setting on a private estate near Northampton (Skinner, J). This is also the only modern, post-2000 record. The larvae feed on seeds of *Atriplex* species and seem to favour waste ground and arable land, especially fields in which root crops are grown.

**38.024 *Elachista poae*	Sweet-grass Miner**
The *Elachistidae* are a difficult group to identify and record. Many of the adults require dissection to be certain of an ID, as they are often worn when caught. Mines are a better means of recording, but demands a decent level of botanical knowledge to get the plant ID correct (I count myself amongst this cohort…)! Thus, probably under-recorded in the county. The 5th and 6th county records came in 2024:
Easton Hornstocks – single adult to light on 02.vi.2024 (Hammond, M)
Old Head Wood – another singleton to light, 09.vii.2024 (Hammond, M)
(NB: a further probable record is pending confirmation and submission per Skinner, J)

38.045 ***Elachista utonella*** **Bog Sedge-miner**

With the caveat from the previous entry noted, the 4th VC32 record for this species was confirmed from a single adult to light at Farthinghoe NR on 02.viii.2024 (Pridmore, T).

45.034 ***Merrifieldia baliodactylus*** **Dingy White Plume**

Until 2024, the only known site for this moth in Northants was at Swaddywell Pit. However, the 5th county record was of a single adult was recorded to light at Sywell Country Park on 18.vii.2024 (Seaman, D).

49.094 ***Phtheochroa sodaliana*** **Pied Buckthorn Beauty**

The 9th county record was of an adult to light at Easton Hornstocks on 16.vi.2024 (Follows, R). The moth seems to be quite rare in other counties too, despite the widespread distribution of the larval foodplant. The larvae feed on the berries of Buckthorn by spinning several together. A purple berry in a group of green ones shows the presence of the larva.

49.131 ***Cochylidia heydeniana*** **Blue Fleabane Straw**

A single moth was recorded to light at Weldon Woodland Park on 03.vi.2024 (O'Riordan, S). This is the 9th county record. The adults are quite similar to others in the family, and care is required to get the ID correct, and thus possibly over-looked. The larvae feed on Blue Fleabane – the first brood on the seedheads, before hibernation. Second brood larvae feed within the central stems of the plant.

49.152 ***Apotomis sororculana*** **Lesser Birch Marble**

Generally, a more northerly species, the 3rd county record was of a single moth to garden light trap n a Denton, 25.vi.2024 (Terry, P). The other two records are indeed from the north of the county.

49.191 ***Endothenia nigricostana*** **Hedge Marble**

This small, but attractively-marked moth can be seen by day, through to dusk, but does also attend light traps. The 10th VC32 record was of a single moth seen on Farthinghoe NR on 06.vi.2024 (Pridmore, T).

49.232 ***Epinotia maculana*** **Dark Aspen Roller**

This rarely-encountered Aspen-feeding species was noted on four occasions during the year (all Follows, R):
Fineshade – adult to light, 24.ix.2024 – 6th VC32 record
Easton Hornstocks – adult to light, 02.x.2024
Fineshade – adult to light, 14.x.2024
Easton Hornstocks, adult to light, 17.x.2024

49.245 ***Epinotia tetraquetrana*** **Birch-borer Tortrix**

Recorded sporadically around the county between 1907 and 1946, there followed a gap of over 50 years before it was seen again. The 4th post-2000 record was of a single adult, seen in Southey Wood on 11.v.2024 (Newman, J)

49.246 ***Epinotia pygmaeana*** **Dingy Spruce Tortrix**

Another moth which was only ever rarely recorded in the early 20th Century. It was not recorded again until 1997 (Hazelborough), and again in 2021, where a male was attracted to the EMP pheromone lure. Another moth was recorded to pheromone lure at Grafton Park Wood on 11.iv.2024 (Smith, R) – 6th all-time VC32 record.

49.256 ***Epinotia cinereana*** **Grey Aspen Tortrix**

The general paucity of records for this species may reflect the fact that they require dissection to separate from *E. nisella*, which is common and widespread. Therefore, the 5th VC32 record was confirmed from a single moth taken to light in a restricted-access area of Yardley Chase on 19.ix.2024 (Gill, R).

49.329 ***Cydia illutana*** **Larch Cone Moth**

So far, the only site for this moth in Northants is Pitsford Reservoir. A further two records of this species were noted from the same site this year, 17.v.2024 (Barclay, F) and 22.vi.2024 (Gill, R). These are the 4th and 5th VC32 records.

49.33 ***Cydia conicolana*** **Pine Nut Moth**

The species has not been recorded locally since 2020. 2024 produced a single record from cones collected from Southey Wood in early May (Newman, J).

49.343 ***Cydia amplana*** **Rusty Acorn Piercer**

Only the 2nd time this species has been recorded in the county. A single moth was taken in a garden light trap in Old Stratford on 12.viii.2024 (Harding, A). Formerly listed as a scarce immigrant, the species is a known migrant to the UK, but now seen in greater numbers in recent years. Sterling & Parsons (Field Guide to the Micro-Moths of GB & I, 2023) note that it is possibly now resident in some parts of the south of England.

50.001 ***Cossus cossus*** **Goat Moth**

This species has never been widespread or common in Northants. So far there 49 records since it was first noted in 1863. Since that time, it was recorded only sporadically until 1988.

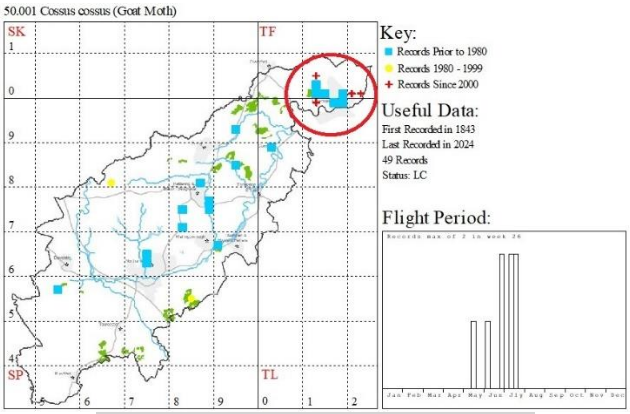
It was then recorded once in 2020, and again twice in 2022.

2024 saw a further two sightings:

Tanholt Pits, Peterborough – a single larva seen on the ground on 12.viii.2024 (Butler, H) – 4th post-2000 record. The species was also recorded here in 2022, which strongly suggests a persistent resident population.

Ailsworth – another larval sighting on 25.ix.2024 (Middleton, I) – 5th post-2000 record

Modern, post-2000 records are depicted by red + in the distribution map opposite, outlined.



Current distribution map for Goat Moth

62.0151 ***Delplanqueia inscriptella*** **Thyme Knot-horn**

The 9th confirmed VC32 record was of a single adult to a garden light trap in Cogenhoe on 28.vii.2024 (Seaman, D).

62.030 ***Hypochalcia ahenella*** **Dingy Knot-horn**

This species is not very common in the county, and the few recent records tend to be from sub-urban areas, although it is better known in other counties from dry, bare ground such as old quarries. Larvae are reportedly found on Rock-rose, but more frequently on Field Wormwood. The latter plant appears to be absent from VC32, and is not listed by Gent & Wilson. As such there are only two modern, post-2000 records prior to last year. There was just a single record for 2024, of a single adult to a garden light trap in Earls Barton on 18.vi.2024 (Gill, R).

62.053 ***Ancylosis oblitella*** **Saltmarsh Knot-horn**

As the vernacular indicates, this is a moth principally found on saltmarshes and coastal shingle habitats. It is also found on wastegrounds, where larvae feed on Goosefoot. UK distribution indicates scattered records of an inland nature throughout the south-east of the UK, with VC32 more or less at the edge of this range. The 11th VC32 record was of a moth to a garden light trap in Cogenhoe, 19.vii.2024 (Seaman, D). Interestingly the moth was recorded at the same site in August 2023.

62.059 ***Phycitodes saxicola*** **Lesser Clouded Knot-horn**

Another moth which is traditionally associated with coastal habitats such as saltmarshes and dunes, but it does appear to have a greater spread of records than the above-mentioned species, almost certainly due to its greater variety of larval foodplants. The 6th all-time (4th post-2000) record was of a single moth to a garden light trap in Oundle on 03.vii.2024 (Horsnail, P). Of note, this is the third time it has been recorded at this location since 2019. All three have been confirmed by dissection.

63.048 *Palpita vitrealis* **Olive-tree Pearl**

As previously mentioned in the section concerning migrant species, 2024 saw an unprecedented influx of this moth around the UK, and this was reflected in the numbers for Northants. Of the 49 records received to date, 34 of these were noted in 2024! Of particular note, 5 individuals were noted in one night in Nassington on 24.ix.2024.

63.109 *Pediasia contaminella* **Rolled Grass-moth**

The 3rd Northants record was of a single moth to light at Sywell Country Park on 20.vii.2024 (Seaman, D). VC32 sits at the currently known northern edge of the moth's range, with only sporadic records from further afield.

63.119 *Musotima nitidalis* **Marbled Fern**

First seen in the VC32 in 2023, the moth seems to have experienced a significant expansion within the county, with 15 records during 2024. For completeness, the 2nd to 5th county records are thus:
Earls Barton, 22.ix.2024 (Gill, R)
Oundle, 23.ix.2024 (Horsnail, P)
Earls Barton, 25.ix.2024 (Gill, R)
Easton Hornstocks, 02.x.2024 (Follows, R) – site of first capture in 2023.

70.031 *Cyclophora annularia* **Mocha**

An amazing record of The Mocha was noted at Fineshade on 13.viii.2024 (Follows, R), as part of a long-standing moth survey. The moth has not been seen in the county for 51 years! The last records were in 1973, where it was noted from Grafton Park Wood and Brigstock (both SP98). The assumption being that this is an individual moth that has migrated/dispersed from a resident population outside of VC32. The species has been searched for locally on many occasions over the past 30 years, without success. The actual moth is pictured here.

Photo credit: Ron Follows

70.033 *Cyclophora puppillaria* **Blair's Mocha**

An apparent continuation of the prolonged migration period resulted in the 3rd VC32 record of Blair's Mocha, to a garden light trap in Nassington on 01.xi.2024 (Smith, N).
The only other local records were of individuals taken in Peterborough (24.ix.2006) and Pitsford Reservoir (27.x.2013).

Photo credit: Nick Smith

70.083 *Thera cupressata* **Cypress Carpet**

A species known to be expanding its range in the UK, and first recorded in the county in 2017, it was again seen twice in 2023. However, it was recorded on four occasions during 2024:
Raunds, garden light trap, 12.vi.2024 (Avery, M) – 4th VC32 record
Pitsford Reservoir light traps twice, 05.xi.2024 and 06.xi.2024 (Cross, M) – 5th and 6th VC32 records
Earls Barton, garden light trap, 10.xi.2024 (Gill, R) – 7th county record

72.004 ***Hypena rostralis*** **Buttoned Snout**

Always a moth that was rarely seen in the county, it started to be seen more frequently after 2018. There are 37 records in the database for the moth, with 11 of those coming from 2024 alone. Seems that this was one moth that did quite well during the year.

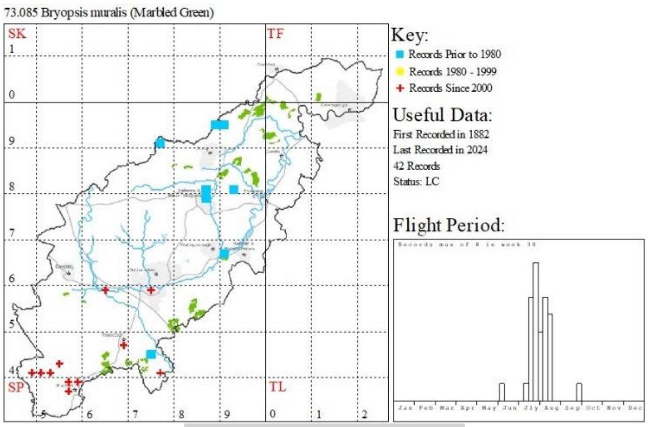
72.011 ***Lymantria dispar*** **Gypsy Moth**

Another species which seems to be on the up! First recorded locally in 2020, the database now contains 33 records. Nearly half of these were seen in 2024, with 14 records (all of adults to light) between 20.vii.2024 and 05.ix.2024.

73.085 ***Bryopsis muralis*** **Marbled Green**

I felt that this one needed a mention in despatches. Previously, the moth had an apparently wider distribution, but records petered-out locally around the early 1970's. It has made a slow and steady return since being re-recorded in 2013. Of interest, it was recorded 10 times in 2024.

All recently confirmed records are from the south-west of the county (as depicted by the red + symbols). Records received outside of this general area should be supported by a good quality photograph.



Current VC32 distribution

73.093 ***Caradrina kadenii*** **Clancy's Rustic**

The moth was first recorded here in 2023, with 6 records in total that year. 2024 saw it being noted a further 14 times, between 21.ix.2024 and 01.xi.2024, sometimes with multiples being seen in a night.

73.252 ***Tholera cespitis*** **Hedge Rustic**

Once more widely recorded, with its former strongholds being at Castor Hanglands, Bedford Purlieus, and some of the mature woodlands to the north of Kettering, the moth has only occasionally been seen since the mid-1990s. The hair-grasses upon which the larvae feed are still noted as being extant throughout VC32, especially within damp woodland and along some of the major rivers. It has only been recorded on six occasions since 2000, twice being in 2024:

Pitsford, garden light trap, 30.vii.2024 (Molyneux, A)

East Haddon, garden light trap, 30.viii.2024 (Baylis, R)

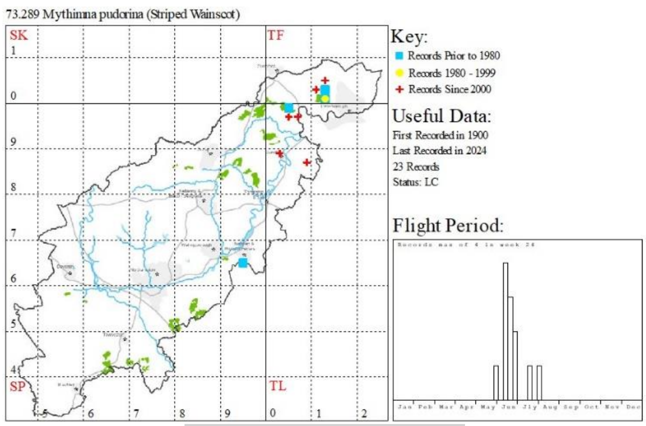
73.289 ***Mythimna pudorina*** **Striped Wainscot**

With 12 records between 1900 and 1970, then another in 1986, this moth has never been common in the county. Between 2017 and 2021 there were a further 7 records. Notably, there were 4 records during 2024:

Ring Haw – singletons to light on 11.vi.2024 and 26.vi.2024 (Follows, R)

Nassington, garden light trap – two on 23.vi.2024 and another on 30.vi.2024 (Smith, N)

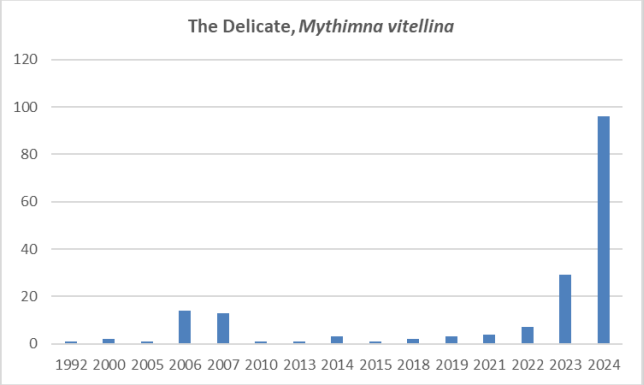
Interestingly, all but one record, modern and older, are all in the north-east of the vice-county, in and around the Soke of Peterborough



Current VC32 distribution

73.295 *Mythimna vitellina* Delicate

Reflecting the national trend for this species, 2024 saw 96 records of the moth, with approximately 142 individuals being noted. Many were of single moths to garden light traps, but on several occasions, multiples were recorded in a garden light trap in Nassington.



VC32 records over time

73.324 *Agrotis trux* Crescent Dart

A single Crescent Dart was recorded at one of the light traps operated at Pitsford Reservoir on 24.vii.2024 (Cross, M). This is only the 2nd VC32 record of this predominantly coastal species. The only previous record was of a single adult taken to sugar in Hardwick Wood on 28th June 1945!

Interestingly, neighbouring VC55/Leicestershire had its first county record of this species on 22.vii.2024 - possibly indicating a small dispersal event. The moth is pictured here.

Photo credit: Dave Jackson

73.339 *Rhyacia simulans* Dotted Rustic

A moth which seems to have very sporadic records throughout the county, and seemingly rarely recorded with any regularity. The adult moths emerge during the summer months, but then aestivate, being seen again in early autumn. VC32 records reflect this habit. Unusually, it was seen on four occasions during 2024, all pre-aestivation:

Oundle, garden light trap, 16.vi.2024 (Horsnail, P)
Nassington, garden light trap, 24.vi.2024 (Smith, N)
Cogenhoe, garden light trap, 05.vii.2024 (Seaman, D)
Higham Ferrers, garden light trap, 19.vii.2024 (Vials, T)

Update of UK BAP Species on the VC32 List

Below is an update of selected species formerly noted as UK BAP species (now not in use for the macro-moth species, having been superseded by the IUCN listings) in VC32 - limited to those species with VC32 records dated after 1st January 1980:

49.348 *Grapholita pallifrontana* Liquorice Piercer

Seen only on three occasions during 2024, perhaps reflecting the poor weather during the flight period:

Weldon Woodland Park, 09.vi.2024 (O'Riordan, S *et al*)
Ring Haw, calcining Banks, 11.vi.2024 (O'Riordan, S)
Fineshade, 18.vi.2024 (O'Riordan, S)

Further survey and monitoring work is planned for 2025

73.031 *Tyta luctuosa* **Four-spotted**
The results for the regular monitoring along the railway at Werrington, Peterborough, is as yet unknown. This will hopefully add further records in due course. Otherwise, the moth was seen only at Maxey Cut between 18.vi.2024 and 31.vii.2024 (Hearle, S).

73.149 *Photedes extrema* **Concolorous**
26 records for the species for 2024, which includes targeted monitoring at several sites. Adult moths were seen between 19.v.2024 and 03.vii.2024, with a maximum count of 77 at one of its strongholds, Swaddywell Pit, during a group moth trapping session there on 31.v.2024. Perhaps of most significance is the discovery of two new, previously unknown colonies, at Weldon Woodland Park and Wakerley Oaks.

73.214 *Cosmia diffinis* **White-spotted Pinion**
Three records for 2024:
Nassington, garden light trap on 04.viii.2024 (Smith, N)
Collyweston Great Wood, to light, 04.viii.2024 (Follows, R)
Oundle, garden light trap, 12.viii.2024 (Horsnail, P)

73.218 *Dicycla oo* **Heart Moth**
No VC32 records since 2006. There was one targeted light trapping session conducted during 2024 at a known private site, which yielded no moths of this species. The weather on the night was OK, but not ideal, yet produced a list of 124 species (inc. aggregates).

And finally…

One record of note appeared in the CMR's inbox in February 2024. I was delighted to read that someone had finally recorded Black-spotted Chestnut. My long-awaited prophecy had finally been realised. I eagerly opened the attached image….:

Funny…

References

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