

# Butterfly Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats



## E-moth

### Moths Count Update April 2009

This latest update from the Moths Count project brings news of further great progress but also the very sad news that Sarah-ann Mold, the Moths Count Project Assistant, passed away at the beginning of April. She had been off work since Christmas and had been undergoing treatment for cancer. Sarah-ann was extremely proud to work for the Moths Count project and for Butterfly Conservation and, in many ways, it was her dream job. Sarah-ann was a wonderful advocate for moths and their conservation, and she spread this enthusiasm to hundreds and hundreds of people through the training workshops she helped to organise, the information packs she sent out and the public events, such as the Bird Fair and the annual entomological exhibitions, which she attended. We know that Sarah-ann would not want the important work of the Moths Count project to falter due to her illness and now untimely death, so we are all trying to keep on working and make sure that Moths Count continues to be a great success.

In early March, Laura Wiffen was appointed to the Moths Count team and she will be the first point of contact for the project for the coming months. Although Laura is new to the world of moths, she has a background in ecology and has already started to identify moths caught in the office trap. She is a welcome addition to the team at this very difficult time.

#### **The National Moth Recording Scheme**

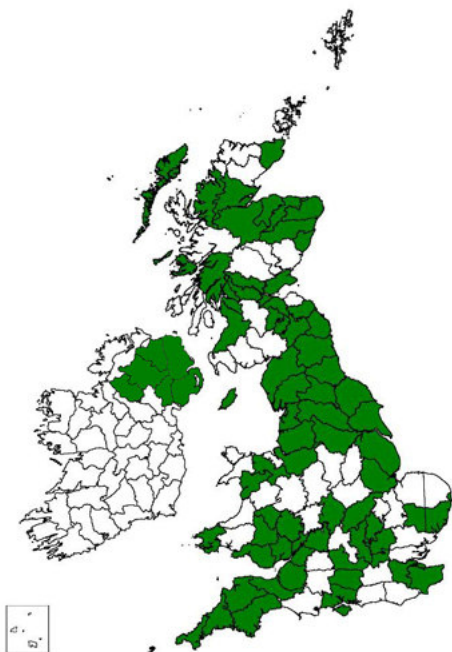
The National Moth Recording Scheme (NMRS) database now holds almost 5 million records from 76 vice-counties: a substantial increase since our last E-moth update. The most recently received data are from Northern Ireland. The green areas on the map below (figure 1) show the vice-county datasets we have received to date. We are awaiting datasets for the remaining vice-counties; these are undergoing data input, verification and formatting by County Recorders.

The Moths Count project team send many thanks to each and every one of you that has contributed records to the NMRS, and especially to all of the County Moth Recorders.

The long-awaited online provisional distribution maps for the majority of the macro-moth species will be available on the Moths Count website ([www.mothscount.org](http://www.mothscount.org)) within the next couple of months, unfortunately they have been held up by software problems. We will let you know as soon as they become "live".

All of the Rothamsted Light Trap Network moth records have been disseminated to the relevant County Moth Recorders for verification and incorporation into local datasets. These records have had a mixed reception. There appear to be a small number of errors within this dataset, which is to be expected when dealing with such a vast number of records. Nonetheless, the dissemination of this large dataset empowers County Recorders to question and possibly delete

/ amend any dubious records, as well as to have the verified data in their own county datasets. **However, it is vital that County Recorders contact Rothamsted Research about questionable records prior to removing / altering them from their local dataset.**



**Figure 1:** Vice-county datasets (coloured in green) incorporated into the National Moth Recording Scheme database by 31 March 2009.

Our second English Moth Recorders' Conference was held earlier this year. Almost 100 people attended and it was a highly successful day. Feedback has been extremely positive; everyone enjoyed the interesting talks and had fun meeting up with friends and colleagues, old and new. We look forward to holding another conference next year.

Don't forget that Butterfly Conservation Scotland is holding its Scottish Recorders' Gathering on 18 April 2009 at Scottish Natural Heritage's Battleby Centre, Redgorton, Perthshire. A wide variety of talks will be presented by County Moth and Butterfly Recorders, Butterfly Conservation staff and researchers. This is a free event, although advanced booking is essential via [scotland@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:scotland@butterfly-conservation.org) or 01786 447753.

### **National Moth Night**

National Moth Night and Day (NMN) 2008, organised by Butterfly Conservation and Atropos, took place on 7 June. This was the 10<sup>th</sup> National Moth Night. There were three target species, namely the pyralid *Anania funebris*, Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth (both UKBAP priority species) and Bordered Gothic (which is presumed-extinct in Britain). Also for 2008, a target habitat, orchards (a UKBAP priority habitat) was introduced.

Migrant Lepidoptera numbers remained far lower than in the exceptional immigrant year of 2006. A total of 13 immigrant species were recorded on NMN 2008, with the Silver Y, Diamond-back Moth and White-point heading the list by a big margin in both abundance and distribution.

The main highlight of NMN 2008 was the rediscovery of the White Prominent in Ireland. A full account of this rediscovery can be found in the autumn 2008 issue of *Atropos*. As is customary with NMN, a number of new vice-county records are being verified and accepted. At the time of

writing data processing and verification is still taking place; however, although moth numbers are generally down, the recording effort has dramatically increased over previous years, in terms of numbers of recorders and sites recorded, proving the ever-increasing popularity of NMN. The full results will appear in the spring 2009 issue of *Atropos*.

The date for NMN 2009 is now set as 18 and 19 September with migration being the main theme over the two nights instead of specific target species. Full details will be made available at [www.nationalmothnight.info](http://www.nationalmothnight.info) in due course. If you are organising an event please send details to [events@nationalmothnight.info](mailto:events@nationalmothnight.info) or fill in the online form so that it can be promoted on the NMN website.

### **Lepidoptera Conservation Bulletin Number 9**

The new issue of the Lepidoptera Conservation Bulletin is now available after a one year break in which we produced the *Conservation Review: 2000 – 2008* (this can be viewed at [www.butterfly-conservation.org/conservationreview](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org/conservationreview)).

The Bulletin includes updates on conservation efforts for a broad selection of highly threatened moths and butterflies across the UK. In addition, articles about Lepidoptera recording, Butterfly Conservation reserves, Butterfly Conservation Europe and National Moth Night are included. There is also a selected bibliography covering 2007 and 2008.

In order to reduce production costs and help us maximise funds for conservation work, the Bulletin will be distributed electronically (it can be downloaded from [www.butterfly-conservation.org/lepidopteraconservationbulletin](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org/lepidopteraconservationbulletin)). However, we will have a very limited number of paper copies, please email [lepconsbulletin@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:lepconsbulletin@butterfly-conservation.org) if you require a copy. Please forward this information to those you think would like to see the Bulletin.

### **Moths Count Training Events**

Over 1000 people have now attended free training events organised by the Moths Count project! This landmark was reached during the first event of 2009, a dissection training course run by Jon Clifton in Belfast. During 2007 and 2008, the project organised a total of 74 training courses for moth recorders.

So far we have 21 Moths Count training workshops confirmed for 2009. A few have already taken place and additional workshops are in development and will be advertised on the Moths Count website ([www.mothscount.org](http://www.mothscount.org)) in due course. Those that have been finalised can be found below. Please remember that in most cases training course places must be booked in advance. Unless otherwise stated, booking is via 01929 406009 or [nMrs@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:nMrs@butterfly-conservation.org)



Jon Clifton training moth recorders in Belfast. The 1000<sup>th</sup> participant at a Moths Count training event attended this identification workshop. Photo: Maurice Hughes

## ENGLAND

### South West England

**26 / 27 June 2009** *Introduction to moths and moth recording* led by Richard Fox. Occombe Farm, Paignton, Devon. 20:00 – 00:00 on 26 June and then 10:00 - 12:00 on 27 June. Advance booking not required.

### South East England

**6 April 2009** *Introduction to the moths of Tytherley Woods*, led by Dave Green. St Edward's Hall, West Tytherley, Hampshire. 14:00 –17:00 then 19:00 – 21:00. Advance booking essential via Kate Dent [kdent@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:kdent@butterfly-conservation.org) or telephone 02380 383455. Early booking is advisable as this is likely to be a very popular event, and not later than 31st March 2009.

**27 June 2009** *Introduction to the moths of Windsor Great Park* in association with BBOWT led by Martin Harvey. Maidenhead, Berkshire. 13:45 –17:30 and 19:30 – 00:00. Advance booking essential via Cathie Hasler [cathiehasler@bbowt.org.uk](mailto:cathiehasler@bbowt.org.uk) or 01865 788309.

### East of England

**24 April 2009** *Introduction to moths and the Sloe Carpet* led by Colin Plant. Rayleigh, Essex. 19:00 – 00:00

**18 June 2009** *Introduction to day-flying moths and the Four-spotted moth* led by Colin Plant. Little Chesterford, Essex. 10:00 –16:30

**21 June 2009** *Introduction to the day-flying moths of Breckland* led by Jon Clifton. Icklingham Community Centre, Suffolk. 11:00 –16:00

**6 August 2009** *Introduction to moths and the White-spotted Pinion* led by Paul Waring. RSPB The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire. 18:00 – 00:00

**22 August 2009** *Introduction to moths and Scarce Pug larval survey* led by Jon Clifton in association with the RSPB at Titchwell, Thornham, Norfolk. 10:00 – 17:00

### East Midlands

**8 August 2009** *Introduction to moths and moth recording* led by Jon Clifton. Whisby Nature Park, Lincoln. 15:00 – 18:00 then 20:00 onwards

**29 September 2009** *Marsh Moth larval survey training day* led by Paul Waring. Saltfleetby National Nature Reserve, Lincolnshire. 10:00 – 17:00

### West Midlands

**16 May 2009** *Introduction to moths and moth recording* led by Norman Lowe. Marden Village Hall, Marden, Hereford. 10:30 – 16:00

**25 July 2009** *Moths of traditional orchards* led by Norman Lowe. Herefordshire Nature Trust, Tupsley, Hereford. 20:00 – 00:00

## North West England

**16 May 2009** *Introduction to moths* led by Steve Palmer. RSPB Leighton Moss, Carnforth, Lancashire. 10:00 – 15:30 **FULLY BOOKED**

**6 June 2009** *Introduction to moths* led by Steve Palmer. RSPB Leighton Moss, Carnforth, Lancashire. 10:00 – 15:30

**3 October 2009** *Identification and separation of the pugs via genitalia* led by Jon Clifton in association Lancashire Moth Group and Lancashire & Cheshire Entomological Society. Liverpool World Museum, Liverpool. 10:30 – 15:45 Advance booking essential via Guy Knight 0151 478 4369 or [guy.knight@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk](mailto:guy.knight@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk)

## North East England

**5 August 2009** *Introduction to moths and moth recording* led by Dave Wainwright in association with Alnwick Wildlife Group. Ingram Village Hall, nr Powburn, Northumberland. 20:00 – late Advance booking essential via Dave Wainwright 01388 488428 or [dwainwright@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:dwainwright@butterfly-conservation.org)

## Yorkshire and the Humber

**23 July 2009** *Conserving the Chalk Carpet moth* led by Dave Wainwright. Middleton Arms, North Grimston, nr Malton, North Yorkshire. 10:30 – 15:30 Advance booking essential via Dave Wainwright 01388 488428 or [dwainwright@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:dwainwright@butterfly-conservation.org)

## **WALES**

### South Wales

**30 May 2009** *Moth recorders' workshop* led by Norman Lowe. Boncath Village Hall, North Pembrokeshire. 11:00 – 16:00

**4 July 2009** *Introduction to moths and moth recording* led by Norman Lowe. Parc Cwm Darren, Bargoed, Caerphilly. 20:00 – 00:00

### Mid Wales

**11 July 2009** *Identification of difficult moths* led by Norman Lowe. Radnorshire Wildlife Trust Offices, Llandrindod Wells, Powys. 11:00 – 16:00

Additional training events will be listed on the project website [www.mothscount.org](http://www.mothscount.org) as details are confirmed.

**PLEASE REMEMBER THAT PLACES ON TRAINING COURSES MUST BE BOOKED IN ADVANCE.**

## Moths Count Contacts

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Laura Wiffen is the first point of contact for project enquiries.



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