



2024 VC37 Moth Review
A.N.B. Simpson
and
O. Wadsworth

There were 10 new species recorded in VC37 in 2024; 7 Microlepidoptera and 3 Macrolepidoptera despite the generally poor cold, wet and dull weather resulting in low insect numbers affecting especially day flying butterflies and moths and causing lower numbers of moths at light traps at night.

NEW SPECIES:

12.046 *Oinophila v-flava* (Haworth, 1828)

Another presumed import at Webb's warehouse near Hagley SO896792. Jared Tibbetts found this little moth flying near imported cacti.



O. Wadsworth

15.018 *Povolnya leucapennella* (Steph.)

Steve Whitehouse swept one from Slade Wood SP024537 on 5/7/24. The larva of this moth feeds on oaks, including evergreen oak. Worcestershire was mentioned by Barrett (Lepidoptera of the British Islands 1893-1907) but he gave no source for the record and it was not mentioned in the Victoria County History of 1901 and therefore regarded as unconfirmed. A local and uncommon species in the UK.



S. Whitehouse

32.035 *Agonopterix yeatiana* (Fabr.)

J.Bromley had our first confirmed record at light at Welland SO803347 on 8/5/24. This previously mostly coastal, usually wild carrot and water dropwort feeding species, has been spreading inland in recent years.



J. Bromley

34.009 *Cosmopterix pulchrimella* Chambers

Seth Gibson was on a charity walk and noticed larval feeding in pellitory of the wall growing along the canal at Severn Street in Worcester SO85075431 and SO84945428 on 9/10/24. His record was passed on to us by Mark Parsons. Oliver Wadsworth found its larval feedings at Evesham Abbey Gardens SP03684365 on 11/10/24. This beautiful little moth has been spreading steadily northwards in the UK. Searches on the foodplant in Bewdley and Tenbury Wells were negative, but it is expected to continue to spread up through the county.



O.Wadsworth



O.Wadsworth

34.0111 *Anatrachyntis badia* (Hodges)

This adventive species has been bred from larvae on imported pomegranates and grapes and now sometimes is seen at light outdoors. Dave Grundy caught one in Balsall Heath SP081845 on 2/9/24.

35.009 *Aproaerema polychromella* (Reb.)

One of these colourful migrants was attracted to a light trap in Malvern SO772486 on 29/11/24 by Roger Prue.



O.Wadsworth

35.048 *Bryotropha umbrosella* (Zeller, 1839)

Ian Machin found this usually coastal species at Hartlebury Common SO821705 on 03/06/24 and 29/06/24. While the site has retained other coastal species the appearance of this one is a surprise and begs the question, 'was it always present or is it a new arrival?'



O.Wadsworth

49.112 *Eupoecilia ambiguella* (Hubn.) Vine Moth
 Danny Arnold caught one at light at Upper Rochford
 SO64446677 on 13/8/24. This was recorded in Herefordshire by
 Wood from Lynton Wood in VCH 1908 and is said to feed on the
 berries of alder buckthorn, but there are no modern records.
 Abroad it is sometimes a pest in vineyards and this record is
 almost certainly a long distance migrant.



D.Arnold

63.119 *Musotima nitidalis* (Walk.)
 This New Zealand moth has been introduced,
 probably with imported tree ferns, to south-west
 England and has been spreading rapidly with the
 larvae feeding on bracken and other native ferns.
 Mike Southall had our first at light at Norchard
 SO84686849 on 5/10/24. It is expected to continue
 to spread through the county.



M.Southall

70.034 Jersey Mocha *Cyclophora ruficiliaria* (H-S)
 This uncommon migrant came to Mike Southall's
 actinic light at Norchard SO84696851 on 27/8/24



M.Southall

70.058 Many-lined *Costaconvexa polygrammatica*
 (Borkh.)
 Peter Clarke caught one of these rare migrants at
 light at Hanley-Swan SO80344282 on 6/9/24



P.Clarke

73.085 Marbled Green *Bryopsis muralis* (Forster)
John Boon found our first at Wick Grange Farm SO969454 on 18/7/24. The larva of this species feeds on lichens on walls and rocks especially on the coast but it does occur inland often in urban areas and in open country on calcareous soils, mainly in the south west of England and it has been increasing in numbers in recent years.



J.Boon

Other significant records:

7.003 *Nemophora cupriacella* (Hubn.) Found at a new site at South Littleton Nature Reserve SP07714582 on 19/7/24 (D. Jones)

7.005 *Nemophora minimella* (D & S) Trench Wood SO926586 on 22/7/24 (Steve Whitehouse), a new site for this local moth.

15.0131 *Caloptilia honoratella* (Reb.) this continues to increase in numbers with 15 recorded in 2024 but all at 4 sites in the north east of the county.



O.Wadsworth

21.002 *Lyonetia prunifoliella* (Hubn.) after its arrival locally in the south of the county in 2023 it was expected to spread further, but this did not happen. The only record was at one of the 2023 sites, Kinsham Lake SO936365 where mines were found by Oliver Wadsworth on 21/9/24.

35.118 *Scrobipalpa ocellatella* (Boyd) the Beet Moth. After the huge influx in 2022 there were 5 in 2023, and 2 in 2024 so it has still not completely disappeared. This usually coastal moth's UK wide arrival was probably migration from abroad but the source of the invasion still seems to be uncertain.

35.0191 *Anarsia innoxia* Gregerson & Karsholt since its recent arrival in the county it has spread widely in the south and east with 16 recorded in 2024.

37.020 *Coleophora fuscocuprella* (H-S) 1 at light at Monkwood SO80396094 on 30/5/24 (Oliver Wadsworth, confirmed by dissection) showing it is still present there since last record in 1996.

49.075 *Acleris umbrana* (Hubn.) continued to increase in numbers and range with another 14 recorded.

63.042 *Diplopseustis perieresalis* (Walk.) Jared Tibbetts recorded our second county record at Webb's Garden Centre near Hagley SO896792 on 5/11/24, either a migrant or more probably an adventive record.



S.Whitehouse

63.072 *Eudonia delunella* (Staint.) 1 to light in Worcester SO83085546 on 19/7/24 by D. Martin was only our second record of a moth which is commoner in western Britain.

69.006 Privet Hawk Moth *Sphinx ligustri* Linnaeus still remains a local resident with 3 records at; Tibberton SO90645790 on 17/6/24 (R. Scase), Bransford SO79355269 on 18/6/24 (K. Falconer), and Evesham SP047432 on 24/6/24 (J. Boon)

69.007 Pine Hawk Moth *Sphinx pinastri* Linnaeus is now widespread right across the county in increasing numbers including some larval records (23 records in 2024).

70.023 Mullein Wave *Calothysanis marginepunctata* (Goeze) 1 in Malvern SO77764778 on 12/8/24 (N. Rowberry) is the first record away from urban eastern Worcestershire.

70.145 Bilberry Pug *Pasphila debiliata* (Hubn.) Neil Gregory found a larva on bilberry on the Lickey Hills at SO99687638 on 6/5/24 which is the first larval record away from the Wyre Forest area, and it seems surprising that it has not been found there in ideal habitat previously.

70.211 Peacock Moth *Macaria notata* (Linn.) There have been few records of this moth in the county despite there being good birch woodland in many sites. There were 2 records in 2024; Bishop's Wood SO839632 on 11/5/24 (Sue Wright) and Trench Wood SO923586 on 15/5/24 (Carol Taylor).



S. Wright

72.011 Gypsy Moth *Lymantria dispar* (Linn.) single moths seen in Worcester on city walls road at SO85195445 on 24/7/24 (R. Terry), Stourport SO805727 on 8/8/24 (Ian Machin), and Berkeley Pendesham SO883570 on 23/8/24 (Steve Whitehouse).

72.012 Brown-tail *Euproctis chrysorrhoea* (Linn.) still only a few records; Malvern SO77764778 on 19/7/24 (N. Rowberry) and Blackhouse Wood SO73325260 on 11/8/24 (S. Pugh).

72.030 Jersey Tiger *Euphagia quadripunctaria* (Poda) continues to slowly spread with records at; Bromsgrove SO96277065 on 17/7/24 (E. Henderson), Malvern SO77764778 on 28/7/24 and another on 27/8/24 (N. Rowberry), Berkeley Pendesham SO833570 on 5/8/24 (Steve Whitehouse), Moseley SP090827 on 8/8/24 (K. Livings), and Stone SO846756 in 8/24 (J. Cox).

72.081 Dark Crimson Underwing *Catocala sponsa* (Linn.) 1 on 6/9/24 at Headless Cross SP03816563 (P. Taylor)

73.059 Toadflax Brocade *Calocasia lunula* (Hufn.) a larval record from Aston Fields in Bromsgrove SO966698 on 18/9/24 (P. Lewis).

73.214 White-spotted Pinion *Cosmia diffinis* (Linn.) Richard Comont had one at light on 12/8/24 at Lower Wyche Malvern SO772443. Interestingly there had been another record at West Malvern in 2020 suggesting that there may be an unknown colony in the area, as well as the known site near Defford.

A number of species of the larger moths which have entered VC37 in recent years and that seem to have become resident have been increasing in 2024:

70.083 Cypress Carpet *Thera cupressata* (Geyer) 35
72.004 Buttoned Snout *Hypena rostralis* (Linn.) 7
73.010 Dewick's Plusia *Macdunnoughia confusa* (Steph.) 10
73.082 Tree-lichen Beauty *Euthales algae* (Fabr.) 40
73.295 Delicate *Mythimna vitellina* (Hubn.) 14
73.297 White-point *Hyphilare albipunctata* (D. & S.) 26.
72.076 Clifden Nonpareil/Blue Underwing *Catocala fraxini* (Linn.) 21
73.300 L-album Wainscot *Hyphilare l-album* (Linn.) 6

Migrants;

There were more in VC37 in 2024 than in recent years, with a number of rare and uncommon species in August, September and October and early November. There were no Vestal, Pearly Underwing or Bordered Straw recorded.

Numbers of commoner migrant species recorded:

63.031 Rusty-dot Pearl *Udea ferrugalis* (Hubn.) 31
63.048 Olive-tree Pearl *Palpita vitrealis* (Rossi) 26
63.052 Rush Veneer *Nomophila noctuella* (D & S) 28
69.010 Hummingbird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum* (Linn.) only 2
73.015 Silver Y *Autographa gamma* (Linn.) 132
73.076 Scarce Bordered Straw *Helicoverpa armigera* (Hubn.) 18
73.087 Small Mottled Willow *Spodoptera exigua* (Hubn.) 5
73.327 Dark Sword-grass *Agrotis ipsilon* (Hufn.) 29

Rare and uncommon migrants, other than those mentioned already under new species:

49.343 *Cydia amplana* (Hubn.) 1 in Malvern SO7764778 on 11/8/24 (N. Rowberry)

63.002 *Loxostege sticticalis* (Linn.) 1 in Stourport SO805727 on 5/9/24 (Ian Machin)

63.028 European Corn-borer *Ostrinia nubilalis* (Hubn.) 1 in Malvern SO77764778 on 11/8/24 (N. Rowberry)

63.047 *Spodalea recurvalis* (Fabr.) 1 in Eastham SO66696850 on 28/10/24 (Tony Simpson)

69.004 Convolvulus Hawk-moth *Agrius convolvuli* (Linn.) Little Witley SO77636341 on 4/9/24 (M. Mulcahy), Blakedown SO8678 on 4/9/24 (J. Sharp), Norchard SO84686949 on 9/9/24 and 15/9/24 (M. Southall).

69.015 Striped Hawk-moth *Hyles livornica* (Esper) 1 in Malvern Wells SO773420 on 21/7/24 (Peter Holmes)

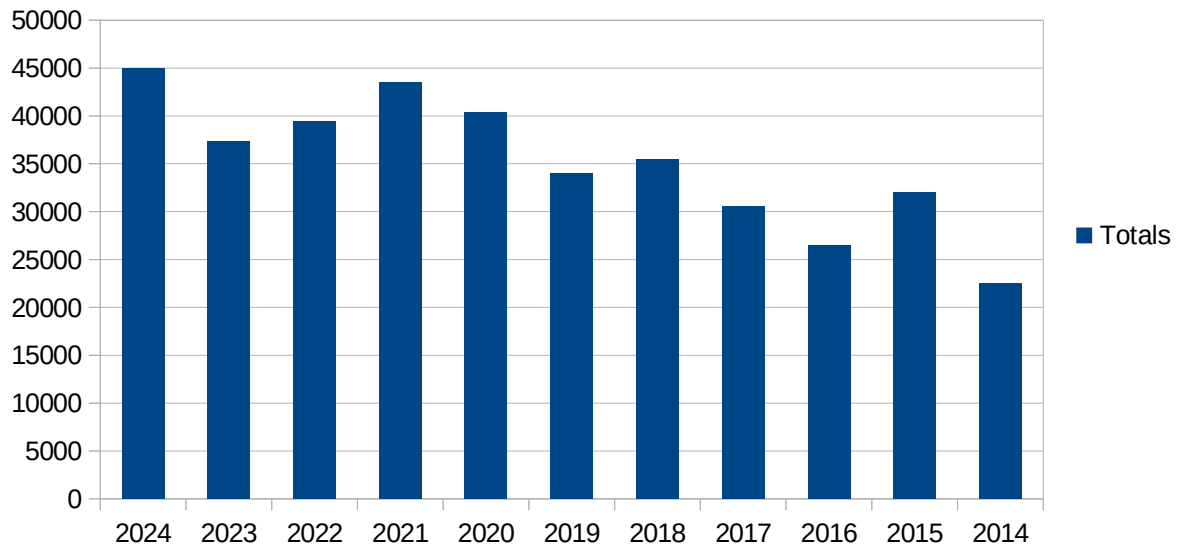
70.047 Gem *Nycterosea obstipata* (Fabr.) Eastham SO66696850 on 6/11/24 (Tony Simpson), Hanley Swan SO80344282 on 10/11/24 (P. Clarke)

72.041 Four-spotted Footman *Lithosia quadra* (Linn.) Leigh Sinton SO78145067 on 5/8/24 ((S. Pugh)

73.330 Radford's Flame Shoulder *Ochropleura leucogaster* (Freyer) Norchard SO84686849 on 4/10/24 and 7/10/24 and 15/10/24 (M. Southall), Hanley Swan SO80344284 on 2/11/24 (P. Clarke), Eastham SO66696850 1 on 1/11/24 and 2 on 2/11/24 (Tony Simpson), Malvern SO772443 on 8/11/24 (R. Comont)

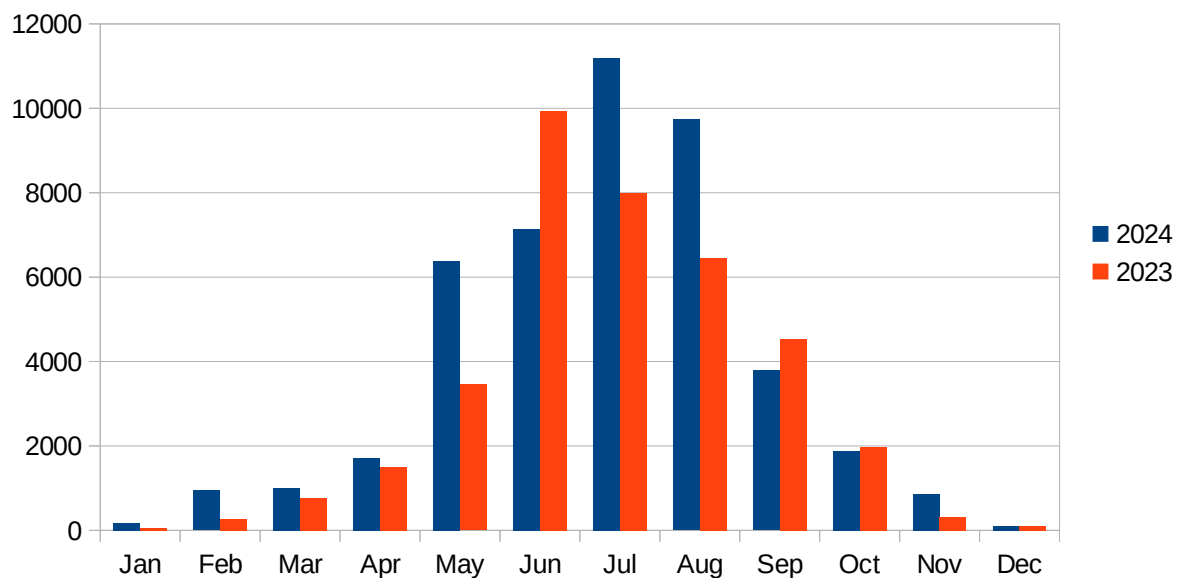
A very wet spring and poor summer, even by UK standards, produced very low numbers of insects on the wing. Anecdotal reports throughout the year suggested that numbers of butterflies, in particular, were well down from normal levels. The recording effort in 2024, as shown by a record number of 45000 records received, was a significant increase and went some way to compensate for the weather. A respectable 1087 species were seen over the year.

Total records received each year



Comparing records received each month to the previous year, June stands out as a particularly poor month with nearly 3000 fewer records received in 2024 compared to 2023 despite the general increase in recording effort. Most other months show a slight increase, but May produced nearly twice as many records compared to the previous year.

Monthly record totals 2023/4



Moth Identification by dissection.

If you have specimens that need dissection, we have several recorders in the county who are willing to take on this work. In the first instance, please email Tony or Oliver.

Last winter a day long tutorial on this subject was held at the Wyre Forest study centre. It may be possible to repeat this if there is enough interest. If you are interested in joining such a course please let Oliver Wadsworth know via email.

As always, many thanks to all the recorders who sent in their records for the last year. The data you provide is greatly valued, not only at this county level, but also as it goes forward to the National Database held by Butterfly Conservation.

The West Midlands Moths Website:

<https://westmidlandsmoths.co.uk/>

is going from strength to strength and has been updated again with the records from 2023. Photos are continually being added making it an excellent identification resource as well as a distribution atlas. If you make use of the site, do please consider subscribing to it. Subscribers gain more detailed information on the records and help keep the site going by covering the running costs.

Recorders should be aware that their name is associated with their records and will be visible on the website. If anyone is concerned about this do please let us know and we can remove your records if needed.

The website's data policy is available here:

https://westmidlandsmoths.co.uk/West_Midlands_Moths_Data_Policy.pdf.

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