

A CHECKLIST OF THE LARGER MOTHS OF WILTSHIRE

This list of the larger moths (macrolepidoptera) of Wiltshire draws upon that produced by Baron Charles de Worms in 1962. The intention has been to list all the larger moth species that have ever been reliably recorded from Wiltshire which is defined as vice-counties 7 and 8. It includes records going back to the mid-nineteenth century and it follows that some of the species listed are no longer present in the county. For the post-1960 records I have drawn on those sent to the Biological Records Centre for its moth recording scheme which ran from 1967 to 1982, the Rothamsted Insect Survey, Butterfly Conservation's National Moth Recording Scheme and the records sent to the past and present county moth recorders. Where possible records have been verified and doubtful records have been rejected. This is relatively easy for modern records but difficult for historic records unless specimens survive. So, in accepting historic records, consideration has been given to the reputation of the recorder, habitat, time of year, and existing knowledge of distribution. With the exception of the 1888 record of the Alder Kitten, all the records in the de Worms list have been accepted as correct. The Baron was one of the leading authorities of his time and I have not sought to challenge his judgement. The Wiltshire records for the *Atlas of Britain & Ireland's Larger Moths* (Randle et al, 2019) are likely to be deficient in regards to historic records from the county and thus species may appear in this list that may not appear in the *Atlas*.

The current status in the county of all moth species on the list has been reviewed using the MapMate database of county moth records maintained by the county moth recorder, Wayne Clinch. The category 'no recent records known' covers species for which there appear to have been no records for the past 20 years. All other species have been recorded at least once in the past 20 years. The national status of the species can be judged from the distribution maps and species accounts in the *Atlas* and in recent field guides.

This list includes 647 species including two adventives. Six new species have been added to the list produced in 2021, these are the Portland Ribbon Wave, Channel Islands Pug, Banded Pine Carpet, Eastern Bordered Straw, Blair's Wainscot and Dotted Fan-foot. These are all migrant species although some may be established in the southernmost counties of the UK and so could become regular visitors to Wiltshire. The first record of Blair's Wainscot is from 2018 but had been overlooked until it was found in the same location this year. Baron de Worms (1962) listed 582 species and so just over one species a year has been added in the last 60 years. It would seem then that de Worms did a thorough job. Until recently, however, the county has had very few resident lepidopterists and it is probable that it is under-recorded. The 2019 *Atlas* covers 893 species so our county total is some 70% of that.

The listing of the moths follows the taxonomic order and scientific names of the Agassiz *et al* 2013 checklist and its updates. For the benefit of cross-referencing and traditionalists the numbers from Bradley's 2000 checklist are also shown.

Details of potential new species for the list should be sent to Wayne Clinch, the County Moth Recorder (wayne.clinch@googlemail.com) and copied to me (jmuggleton@aol.com). The list will be updated annually.

Finally I should like to thank Wayne Clinch, Dave Brotheridge and all those who have knowingly or unknowingly contributed the records that have made this checklist possible. Any errors or omissions are mine.

John Muggleton, 12th November 2022

References

- Agassiz, D.J.L. *et al*, 2013. *A checklist of the Lepidoptera of the British Isles*. Field Studies Council
Bradley, J.D., 2000. *Checklist of the Lepidoptera recorded from the British Isles*. Second Edition (revised). Self published.
Randle, Z. *et al*, 2019. *Atlas of Britain & Ireland's Larger Moths*. Pisces Publications.
de Worms, Baron, 1962. *The Macrolepidoptera of Wiltshire*. Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society.