

day-flying moths

a brief guide

A surprising number of moth species are active by day and are often as brightly coloured and beautifully patterned as butterflies.

Moths in this leaflet

There are about 2,500 moth species found in Britain and Ireland, traditionally separated into about 900 larger moths (macro-moths) and the smaller or micro-moths. This leaflet covers those macro-moths that are naturally active during the daytime, which are often mistaken for butterflies. It does not include all those nocturnal moths which will fly if accidentally disturbed from their daytime resting places. Owing to space restrictions some day-flying moths have been omitted, particularly those that are difficult to distinguish from similar species (for example not all burnets and clearwings are shown). The leaflet can only provide a general introduction to day-flying moths and for more comprehensive information the suggested additional sources should be consulted.



Scarce Vapourer

Jun-Oct (England)

Moth conservation

Many UK moth species are in decline. Butterfly Conservation works to conserve butterflies, moths and their habitats and, in partnership with other organisations, has established the Moths Count project to raise awareness and improve knowledge and conservation of moths. The project has developed the National Moth Recording Scheme to support moth recorders and utilise the information they collect to monitor all the larger moths in the UK and guide conservation efforts. You can contribute to this by sending sightings of day-flying species to your County Moth Recorder.

For more information about the Moths Count project, moths, moth recording, County Moth Recorders' contact details and free activities to join in, visit www.mothscount.org or contact Butterfly Conservation.



Oak Egger (female and male)

May-Aug (Widely distributed)

Key to images

The species illustrated are not to scale or in order of size. Moths are grouped by general geographical regions; some are found widely throughout those ranges but others have more limited distribution. Very localised species are marked ●. Guidance on flight period is given, but this is likely to vary towards the north or south of a species' range, and climate change is altering the flight period of some species.

Widely distributed (Britain and Ireland)

Fox Moth

May-Jun



Currant Clearwing

Jun-Jul



Chalk Carpet

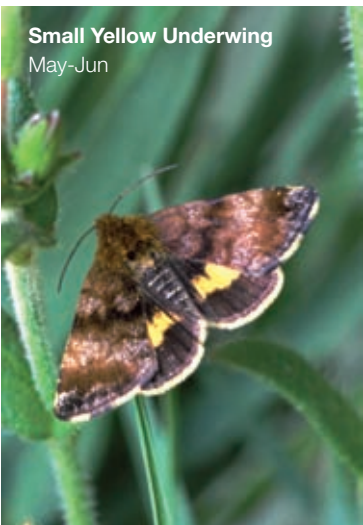
Jul-Aug



(Eng & Wales)

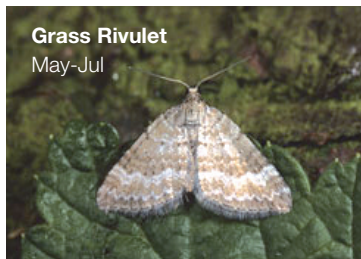
Small Yellow Underwing

May-Jun



Grass Rivulet

May-Jul



Pretty Pinion

May-Aug



Forester

May-Aug



Vapourer

Jul-Oct





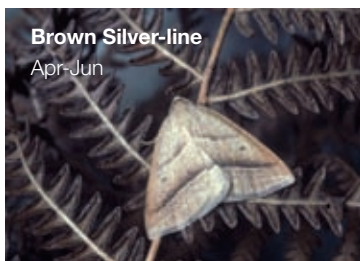
Small Purple-barred
May-Aug



Hummingbird Hawk-moth
Mar-Nov



Wood Tiger
Ma-Jul



Brown Silver-line
Apr-Jun



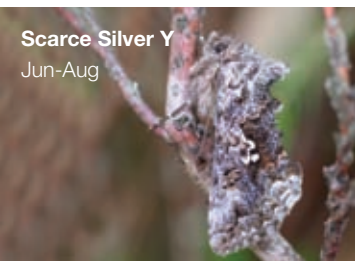
Argent & Sable
May-Jun



Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moth
May-Sep



Clouded Buff
Jun-Jul



Scarce Silver Y
Jun-Aug



Treble-bar
May-Sep



Small Argent & Sable
May-Aug

Silver Y
May-Oct



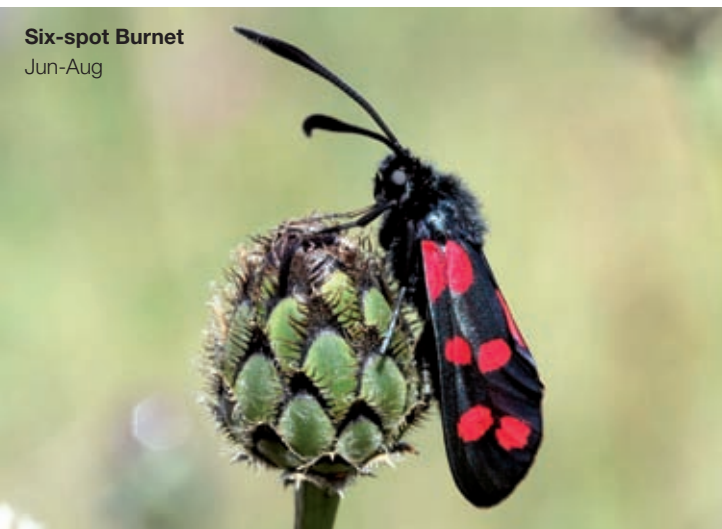
Burnet Companion
May-Jul



Bordered White
May-Aug



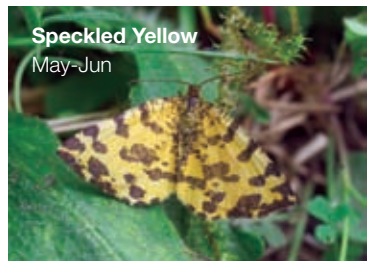
Six-spot Burnet
Jun-Aug



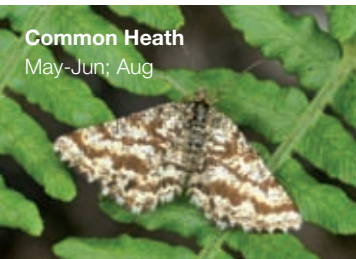
Red-necked Footman
Jun-Jul



Speckled Yellow
May-Jun



Common Heath
May-Jun; Aug



Dew Moth
Jun-Jul



Shaded Broad-bar
Jun-Sep



Latticed Heath

May-Sep



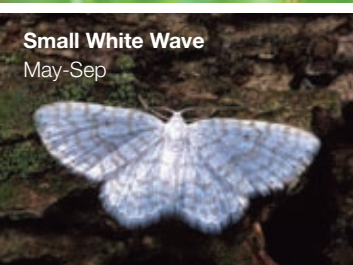
Cinnabar

May-Aug



Small White Wave

May-Sep



Mother Shipton

May-Jul



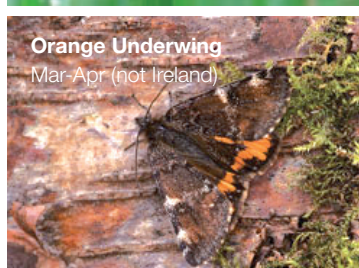
Chimney Sweeper

Jun-Aug



Orange Underwing

Mar-Apr (not Ireland)



Belted Beauty

Mar-Apr



Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth

May-Jul



Southern England and Wales

Scarce Forester

Jun-Jul



Yellow Belle

May-Jun, Aug-Sep



Black-veined Moth

May-Jul



Silver Barred

May-Aug
(also Ireland)



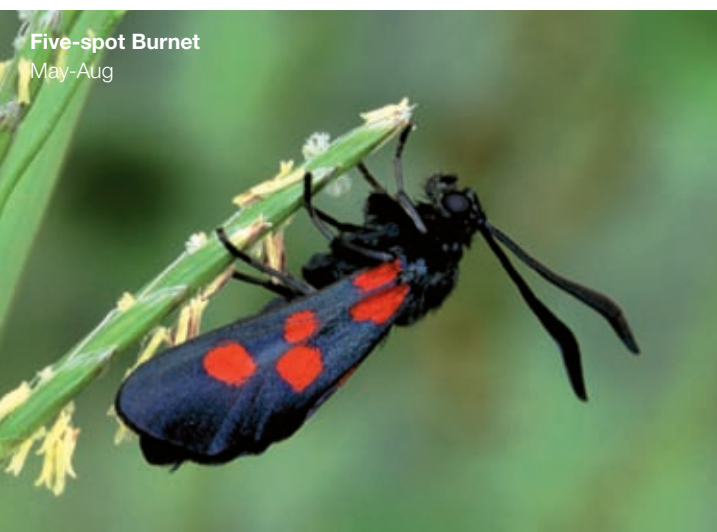
Four-spotted

May-Sep



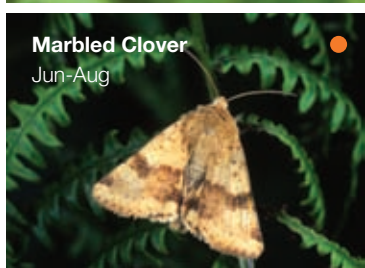
Five-spot Burnet

May-Aug



Marbled Clover

Jun-Aug



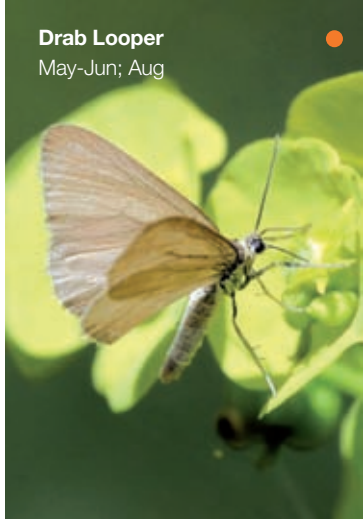
Jersey Tiger

Jun-Sep



Drab Looper

May-Jun; Aug



Shoulder-striped Clover

Jun-Jul



Lace Border

May-Sep



Little Thorn

May-Jun
(also Ireland)



Straw Belle

Jun-Sep (also Ireland)



Northern England and Scotland

Heath Rivulet

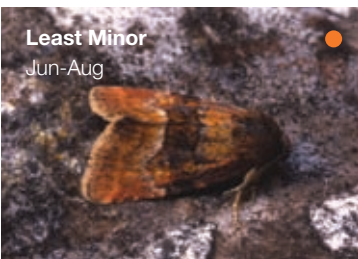
Jul-Aug

(also Ireland)



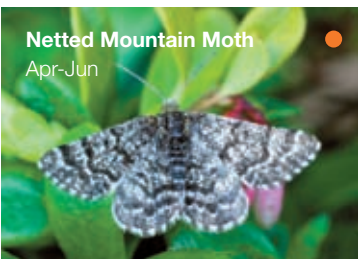
Least Minor

Jun-Aug



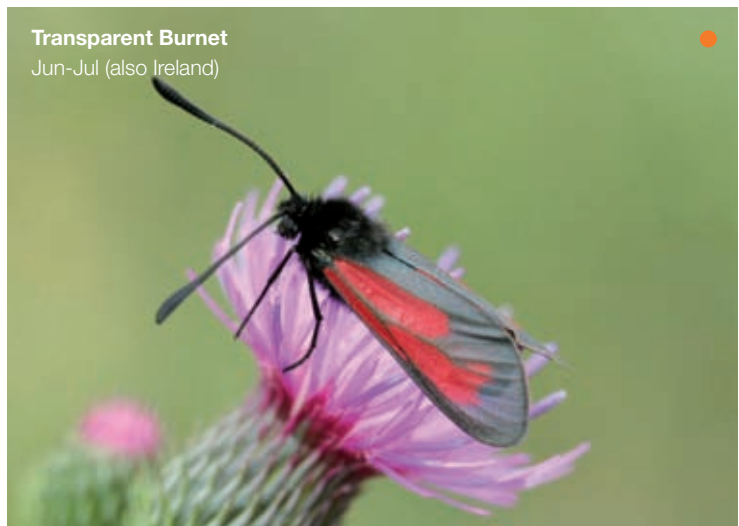
Netted Mountain Moth

Apr-Jun



Transparent Burnet

Jun-Jul (also Ireland)



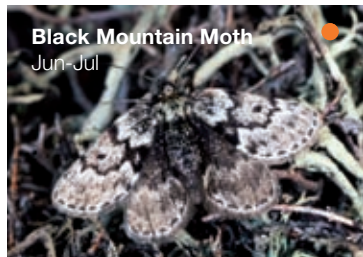
Kentish Glory

Apr-May



Black Mountain Moth

Jun-Jul



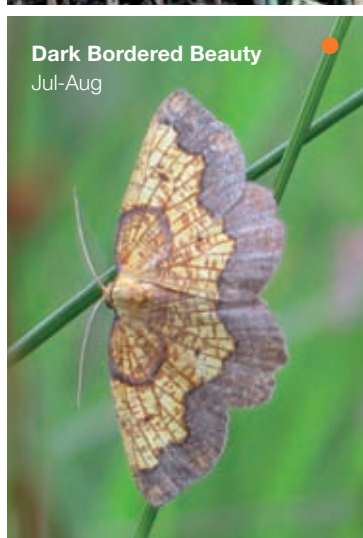
Broad-bordered White

Underwing May-Jun



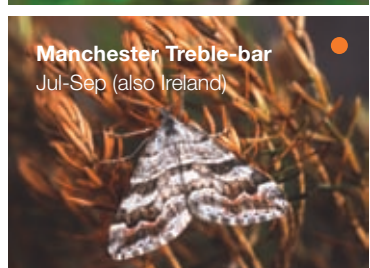
Dark Bordered Beauty

Jul-Aug



Manchester Treble-bar

Jul-Sep (also Ireland)



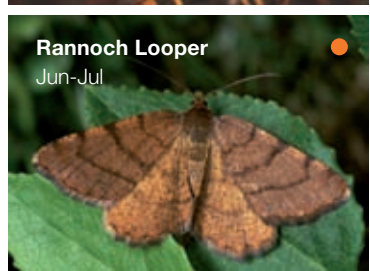
Scotch Burnet

Jun-Jul



Rannoch Looper

Jun-Jul



Further information

There is plenty of help to identify moths, and other information, on the Moths Count website at **www.mothscount.org**, plus links to further sources. The following books are good identification guides:

Concise Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland.

Townsend, M., Waring, P. & Lewington, R.
2007 (British Wildlife Publishing)

Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland.

Waring, P., Townsend, M. & Lewington, R.
2003 (British Wildlife Publishing)

The Colour Identification Guide to Moths of the British Isles.

Skinner, B. 1998 (Viking)

Butterfly Conservation is working to save butterflies, moths and their habitats.

Why not become a member?

More information at

www.butterfly-conservation.org

Moths Count is a partnership of many organisations, individuals and businesses, led by Butterfly Conservation. Principal funders include the Heritage Lottery Fund, Butterfly Conservation, British Entomological and Natural History Society, City Bridge Trust, Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency, Natural England, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Royal Entomological Society, RSPB and Scottish Natural Heritage. Many other organisations are involved, providing support and helping to host events. Full details at:

www.mothscount.org

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Butterfly Conservation

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Registered Office: Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 5QP

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