



MONMOUTHSHIRE MOTH & BUTTERFLY GROUP

NEWSLETTER No 166 September 2020.

A monthly newsletter covering

Gwent and Monmouthshire Vice County 35

Editor: Martin Anthoney

September 2020

September started off unsettled with mainly westerly winds. There was a spell of generally dry sunny weather from the 12th to 21st associated with high pressure, and it briefly turned warm around mid-month. From the 22nd onwards it turned cooler and more unsettled. The mean temperature for the month was 0.2 °C above the long-term average. It was a dry fairly sunny month for much of the country with 65% of average rainfall and 120% of average sunshine.

With the Wales coronavirus restrictions becoming confusing due to specific area lockdowns, recording was uneven. 15 species of butterfly and 140 species of macro moth were recorded in Gwent during September, compared to September 2019 which had 17 butterflies and 129 macro moths while September 2018 had 15 butterfly and 147 macro moth species.

Clifden Nonpareil Update

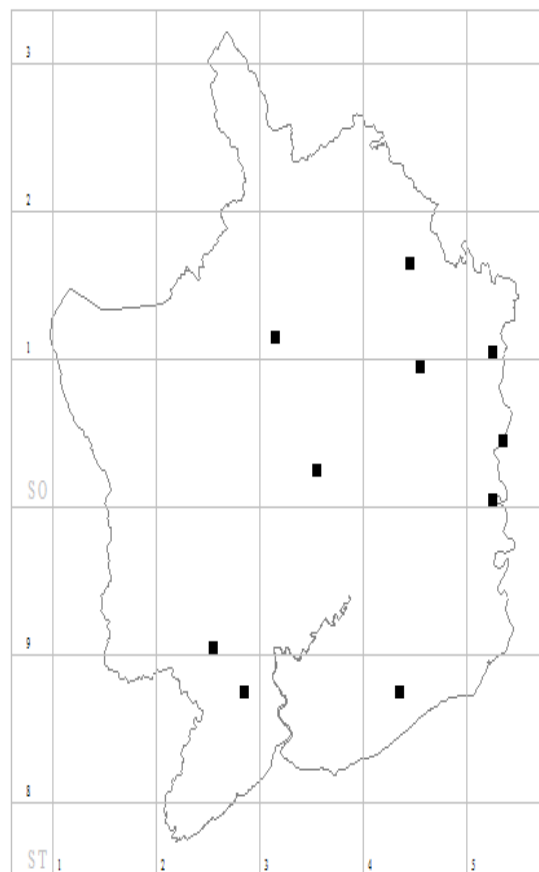
The remarkable spread of *Catocala fraxini* (Clifden Nonpareil) continues. Formerly resident in Kent and the Norfolk broads in the 1930s, it became extinct as a breeding species and for many years was only recorded as an occasional immigrant, with no records in Wales. Then for reasons unknown it started recolonising southern England from about 2007. The caterpillars feed on aspen and possibly other poplar species.

The first Welsh record was from Glamorgan in 2017 and the first Gwent VC35 record the following year at Undy on 25th Sept 2018. Five further Gwent specimens were recorded in 2019 between 10th September and 12th October, the localities being Tintern (3), Great Crwys Hendre(1) and Abergavenny(1). In 2020 the annual count for Gwent has jumped to 24 individuals between 14th August and 13th October, the sites being Newport (9 including 4 in one night), Tintern (7), Penallt (3) and singletons at five sites (Dingestow, Great Crwys Hendre, Llandogo, Usk and Risca).

In his latest newsletter for neighbouring Gloucestershire, Roger Gaunt reported 14 Clifden Nonpareil moths in Gloucestershire for 2019 with a prediction that the figure for 2020 will be in excess of 30. For our western neighbours in Glamorgan, George Tordoff reports that after the 2017 record, there were no more until 13th September this year when he caught one in his garden and another was caught on the same night in Vale of Glamorgan, with further individuals in Swansea and Bridgend the same week.



Clifden Nonpareil (Hazel Mitchell)
and the distribution of Gwent records 2018-2020



Wales Big Butterfly Count Results



Big Butterfly Count results – Wales

- In Wales 50,412 individual butterflies and moths were counted during the three-week Big Butterfly Count. A total of 5,196 counts were undertaken by 4,124 participants.
- The biggest winners were Large White and Small White. This is great news for these two species which suffered declines of -54% and -55% respectively in last year's Count. Large White has gone from 7th position to 1st place in the rankings, experiencing an impressive 80% increase in abundance. Small White has gone 5 places up the rankings to second place having experienced a 17% increase on 2019 levels.
- Holly Blue also showed a welcomed bounce back with abundance of this butterfly up by 80% on 2019 numbers. Despite a promising and early start to the 2020 season, all of the other species counted during the Big Butterfly Count were down on 2019. The average number of individuals counted in Wales was down by -51% compared with the previous summer.
- Painted Lady was the biggest loser, although this is not surprising considering the phenomenal numbers that arrived into the UK during the 2019 Big Butterfly Count.
- Some of the 'browns' appear to have fared relatively poorly this year, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Ringlet, and Marbled White all fell in abundance. However, the average numbers of these individual species seen per count were generally greater than the 2018 levels.

BBC 2020: Wales		Abundance	Ave per Count	% change from 2019
1	Large White	9,066	1.74	80%
2	Small White	8,048	1.55	17%
3	Meadow Brown	8,010	1.54	-8%
4	Gatekeeper	6,294	1.21	-28%
5	Peacock	3,856	0.74	-62%
6	Red Admiral	2,599	0.50	-55%
7	Small Tortoiseshell	2,224	0.43	-50%
8	Speckled Wood	1,971	0.38	-26%
9	Ringlet	1,559	0.30	-6%
10	Common Blue	1,484	0.29	-27%
11	Green-veined White	1,168	0.22	-17%
12	Comma	994	0.19	-47%
13	Six-spot Burnet	978	0.19	-37%
14	Holly Blue	747	0.14	80%
15	Small Copper	638	0.12	-32%
16	Painted Lady	386	0.07	-99%
17	Silver Y	150	0.03	-52%
18	Brimstone	131	0.03	-50%
19	Marbled White	109	0.02	-30%
Total		50,412	9.70	-51%

Other Highlights

September immigrants included 2 Clouded Yellow butterflies at Newport Wetlands, two Humming-bird Hawk moths, and a Convolvulus Hawk.

In keeping with the Big Butterfly Count results, Large White was abundant but only two Painted Lady butterflies were recorded, fewer than last month

- 3rd Sept. Bulrush Wainscot at Newport Wetlands, with another on 21st Sept.
Also Large Wainscot, Southern Wainscot, 4 Pinion-streaked Snout and a Latticed Heath.
(Kevin Hewitt)
- 5th Sept First Large Ranunculus and Sallow of the season at Blackwood
(Kevin Hewitt)
- 7th Sept Unusual second generation Lilac Beauty to light at Newport Wetlands.
Also a Red Underwing
(Kevin Dupé)
- Pink-barred Sallow and Purple Bar at Catbrook
(Richard Clayton)
- 8th Sept Clifden Nonpareil to light at Tintern, with 4 more on 16th, 19th, 22nd Sept and 7th Oct.
Also first Brindled Green and Oak Lutestring of 2020, with another Oak Lutestring
on 16th Sept.
(Hazel Mitchell)
- Maiden's Blush at Haisbro Avenue, Newport
(Sheila Dupé)
- Painted Lady at Cwmbran
(Bob Roome)
- 9th Sept New Clifden Nonpareil site at Penallt, with two more on 15th and 20th Sept.
Also L-album Wainscot, with another on 29th Sept.
Painted Lady at Llandogo
(Ian Rabjohns)
(Gail Reynolds)
- 10th Sept First Black Rustic of the year at Catbrook. A species which has occurred in good
numbers this year. Also an Oak Lutestring.
Richard Clayton)
- 11th Sept Clifden Nonpareil to light at Great Crwys, Hendre,
First Barred Sallow of the year at Blackwood.
Juniper Carpet to light at Risca
Humming-bird Hawk in garden of Melbourne Way, Newport.
(Wendy Tyler-Batt)
(Kevin Hewitt)
(Martin Anthoney)
(Roger James)
- 13th Sept Goat Moth larva wandering across the ground at Gaer Hill, Newport
(Angela James and Ceirwen Pearson)
- 14th Sept Brussels Lace at Penallt. A new site, the first away from the Gwent Levels.
Also a Buttoned Snout.
(Ian Rabjohns)
- Clifden Nonpareil flew into an Usk (Monkswood) house. (Angela Dodge per Joff Elphick)
- Beautiful Hook-tip to light at Newport Wetlands. A second generation this year (Kevin Dupé)
- A very unusual, second generation, Blotched Emerald to light at Dingestow. (Sam Bosanquet)



Goat Moth larva (per K Jones)



Oak Lutestring

14 th Sept (cont)	Humming-bird Hawk at Llandogo., with another on 20 th Sept.	(Gail Reynolds)
	First Brown-spot Pinion of the season at Catbrook.	(Richard Clayton)
	Heath Rustic to light at Abergavenny	(Andrew and Janet Cormack)
	Juniper Carpet to light at Pentrepod, Pontypool	(Rupert Perkins)
15 th Sept	Kent Black Arches at Tintern	(John Dawson)
16 th Sept	Bulrush Wainscot at Llandogo.	(Gail Reynolds)
17 th Sept	3 Clifden Nonpareil to light at Melbourne Way, Newport, with another 4 on 24 th Sept and a singleton on 26 th Sept.	(Roger James)
18 th Sept	New site for L-album Wainscot at Lone Lane, Penallt.	(Stephanie Tyler)
19 th Sept	Merveille du Jour and Feathered Ranunculus to light at Rogerstone.	(Arthur Pitcher)
20 th Sept	Cypress Carpet to light at Melbourne Way, Newport.	(Roger James)
	Merveille du Jour at Llandogo	(Gail Reynolds)
	Oak Lutestring at Haisbro Avenue, Newport.	(Sheila Dupé)
21 st Sept	New site for Clifden Nonpareil at Llandogo	(Gail Reynolds)
	Clouded Yellow butterfly at Newport Wetlands.	(Martin Anthoney and Roger James)
	First Blair's Shoulder-knot of the year at Caerleon. Only four records for this normally common species.	(Chris Jones)
22 nd Sept	Flounced Chestnut at Blackwood. Very few records of this moth in 2020.	(Kevin Hewitt)

- 23rd Sept Cypress Carpet to light at Risca (Martin Anthoney)
- 24th Sept New site for Large Ranunculus at Catbrook. (Richard Clayton)
- 82 Large White, 12 Speckled Wood and 11 Red Admiral at Rogiet Country Park. (Roger James)
- 26th Sept Clouded Yellow butterfly at Goldcliff lagoons. (John Marsh)
- Convolvulus Hawk to light at Melbourne way, Newport (Roger James)
- 27th Sept 5 late Common Blues flying at Rogiet Country Park (Martin Anthoney and Roger James)
- 29th Sept First Feathered Thorn of the season to light at Risca. (Martin Anthoney)
- Orange Sallow to light at Dingestow (Sam Bosanquet)
- A very late Yellow-tail moth to light at Penallt (Ian Rabjohns)

Late news

- 1st October A Convolvulus Hawk caterpillar found at Usk only five days after an adult was trapped at Newport. Presumably the offspring of an earlier immigrant. (Shona Woodbridge)



Convolvulus Hawk Caterpillar
(Shona Woodbridge)



Convolvulus Hawk

Wales Moth List 2019

An updated Wales Moth List, now including 2019 records, is available to download from the BC Wales website:

<https://butterfly-conservation.org/in-your-area/welsh-office/wales-moth-list-2019>

Dates for your Diary 2020

Saturday 24th October S Wales Branch of Butterfly Conservation annual Members' Day and AGM,
Meeting postponed due to coronavirus restrictions.

Keep up to date with the MMBG blog/ website

<http://gwentmothing.blogspot.co.uk/>

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