

Notable Lepidoptera from Barking, Essex

On 4.viii.1990, 29.vii. 1992 and 5.viii.1992 two mercury-vapour (m.v.) lights (one Robinson trap and one over a sheet) were operated at Thames-side Park, Barking, South Essex, VC18 (OS grid reference TQ 4682). The site, adjacent to the River Thames, was much disturbed in the past, being used as repository for the pulverised fuel ash (PFA) generated by the nearby Barking Power Station (now demolished). The PFA, mixed with water, was pumped into a number of man-made "lagoons" which, since the closure of the power station in the 1960s, have dried out to varying degrees. A varied vegetation structure has developed with dry, damp and water-logged grassland, Birch *Betula* and Willow *Salix* scrub, areas of bare ground and an extensive network of ditches, of varying widths, dominated either by *Phragmites*, *Typha* or both.

The m.v. lights were operated in an open area, sheltered by Birch/Willow scrub and in close proximity to a ditch dominated by *Phragmites* with some *Typha*. The following moths, considered to be nationally scarce (Notable category Nb: species which are thought to occur in between 31 and 100km squares of the National grid) by Waring (1993, *National Moth Conservation Project, News Bulletin 5*, Butterfly Conservation) or by Parsons (1993, *A review of the scarce and threatened pyralid moths of Great Britain*. UK Nature Conservation No. 11, JNCC, Peterborough) were recorded, with numbers given where noted.

Eupithecia millefoliata (Rossl.), Yarrow Pug.

Nb. 29.vii.1992, one; 5.viii.1992. Local in the London area, but locally abundant, most records in close proximity to the Thames (Plant, 1993, *Larger Moths of the London Area*, LNHS, London).

Cucullia absinthii (L.) The Wormwood.

Nb. 4.viii.1990, 1 ♂; 29.vii.1992, 1 ♂. In London, very local, but locally common (Plant, *op. cit.*).

C. asteris (D.&S.), Star-wort.

Nb. 29.vii.1992, 1 ♂. Very local, but locally abundant in London (Plant, *op. cit.*).

Archanara sparganii (Esp.), Webb's Wainscot.

Nb. 4.viii.1990, 1 ♀; 5.viii.1992, 2 ♂ ♂ 1f. Extremely local and rare in London (Plant, *op. cit.*).

Earias clorana (L.), Cream-bordered Green Pea.

Nb. 4.viii.1990, one; 29.vii.1992, one. Extremely local in London (Plant, *op. cit.*). Very local and scarce on the Essex coast (Emmet & Pyman, 1985, *The larger moths and butterflies of Essex*, Essex Field Club).

Calamotropha paludella (Hb.), Reed-mace Grass-veneer.

Nb. 4.viii.1990, one. Local in South-Eastern England (Parsons, *op. cit.*).

Evergestis extimalis (Scopoli), Marbled-yellow Straw Pearl.

Nb. 4.viii.1990, several seen, four retained; 29.vii.1992, two. Although

recorded from 23 vice-counties Parsons (*op. cit.*) considers this species to be breeding only in the Breckland and the Thames estuary area.

Other species, considered by Plant (*op. cit.*) to be local or uncommon in the London area, include the following:

Cyclophora albipunctata (Hufn.), Birch Mocha.

5.viii.1992. A widespread but very local resident in the London area (Plant, *op. cit.*). Local and generally scarce in Essex (Emmet & Pyman, *op. cit.*).

Perizoma bifaciata (Haw.), Barred Rivulet.

4.viii.1990, one; 5.viii.1992, two. The distribution map in Plant (*op. cit.*) shows a concentration of records in the North Downs area of London, but very few records north of the Thames. Local and generally scarce in Essex (Emmet & Pyman, *op. cit.*).

Aspitates ochrearia (Rossi), Yellow Belle.

4.viii.1990, one at rest. Locally common in East London, in the vicinity of the Thames, rare elsewhere in the London area (Plant, *op. cit.*). Locally common on the coast of Essex (Emmet & Pyman, *op. cit.*).

Lacanobia suasa (D.&S.), Dog's Tooth.

4.viii.1990, several; 29.vii.1992, 1 ♂; 5.viii.1992, 1 ♂ 1 ♀. Widespread and locally common along Thames; uncommon elsewhere in London (Plant, *op. cit.*).

Mythimna straminea (Treit.), Southern Wainscot.

27.vii.1992, two; 5.viii.1992, 1 ♀. In London, very local in *Phragmites* beds along the Thames, mostly in the east (Plant, *op. cit.*).

Amphipoea fucosa (Freyer), Saltern Ear.

4.viii.1990, common, 6 ♂ ♂ 9 ♀ ♀; 29.vii.1992, 2 ♂ ♂; 5.viii.1992, 3 ♂ ♂ (vouchers retained and genitalia examined). Last recorded in the London area at Mitcham Common, Surrey in 1969 (B. Skinner; Plant, *op. cit.*). Locally fairly common on the coast and estuaries of Essex (Emmet & Pyman, *op. cit.*). No other members of this genus were recorded.

Archana geminipuncta (Haw.), Twin-spotted Wainscot.

4.viii.1990, 1 ♀; 5.viii.1992, 2 ♂ ♂. Extremely local in London (Plant, *op. cit.*).

Arenostola phragmitidis (Hb.), Fen Wainscot.

4.viii.1990, one. In London, very local but locally abundant in *Phragmites* beds (Plant, *op. cit.*). Locally common in Essex (Emmet & Pyman, *op. cit.*).

Pyrhria umbra (Hufn.), Bordered Sallow.

29.vii.1992, 1 ♂; 5.viii.1992, 1 ♀. Very local and generally uncommon in London (Plant, *op. cit.*). Local and scarce in Essex (Emmet & Pyman, *op. cit.*).

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