

**THE DOTTED RUSTIC (*RHYACIA SIMULANS* (HUFNAGEL),  
LEPIDOPTERA: NOCTUIDAE) IN THE WEST OF SCOTLAND**

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A SINGLE dead example of the Dotted Rustic, *Rhyacia simulans* (Hufn.) was brought to the museum from inside a cottage at Lochranza, Isle of Arran in the Firth of Clyde, in August 1988, by Prof. Norman R. Grist. The latest distribution map (Heath, 1979) shows no records of the Dotted Rustic *Rhyacia simulans* (Hufn.) between the Solway Firth and the Outer Hebrides in the west of Scotland. In fact there are several literature records, which are catalogued in the Scottish Insect Record Index (SIRI) held in the Royal Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh. This valuable source of information contains numerous observations on this moth from the north-east of Scotland but there were only four which can be added to the present record for the west. Despite there being ten published references to the occurrence of the Dotted Rustic in the west of Scotland these prove to relate to only four known occasions. These are Canna (Campbell, 1956 and 1970; Haggett, 1968), Rhum (Harrison, 1946; Steel & Woodroffe, 1969; Wormell, 1982), Ayrshire, Monkton (King, 1876; Dalglish & Ord, 1901) and Arran (Leech, 1964; Coxey, 1969). In each of these four cases the first reference gives the details, the others repeat them, of the capture of this species. Except the Arran experiences of Leech and Coxey only one example was recorded.

The purpose of this note is to highlight these records. There does not seem to be any obvious reason why the Dotted Rustic should not occur over a wide area of suitable ground in Scotland. It seems to provide another example of the severe lack of recording north of the border. There is another potential factor affecting its recording in that it is unlikely to be noted simply by dashing about the landscape using a portable light trap. The records are of single specimens recorded by resident naturalists except for those spending some time in one area and using techniques such as described by Leech (1964). This entailed searching heather flowers near the rocky coastline of Arran at night with the aid of a torch. In this respect this species has similar habits and tendencies to its close relative the Northern Rustic, *Standfussiana lucerneae* (Linn.), which I believe is under recorded for the same reason (Hancock, 1982).

The geography of Scotland, which makes it such an attractive place, acts against the mobility of visitors. An additional factor which unbalances distribution maps is the tendency for naturalists to head for the classic localities, mainly established by our nineteenth century predecessors. One of the more obvious examples of this is the great lack of records within the southern uplands of Scotland through which everyone drives at 70 mph (including myself!) in order to get to Glasgow, Edinburgh or the north.



There are not sufficient resident entomologists to cater for all these gaps because of the low population. Can I urge visiting entomologists to spread more widely and having done so to let the museums in the area have a list of their records for furthering local knowledge?

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### *Dystebenna stephensi* (Staint) (Lep.: Cosmopterigidae) in N.W. Kent (v.c.16)

Michael Chalmers-Hunt told me that the late L.T. Ford used to find *stephensi* on a large old oak tree near Bexley Village in Kent, about 40 - 50 years ago. During the 1970s I lived at Bexley in a house previously owned by L.T. Ford's son Richard and I remembered that almost opposite the house stood, all alone, a very old oak tree, perhaps 500 or more years old.

I wondered if this was the tree on which Ford had found *stephensi* so on 22nd July 1990 I resolved to find out. Arriving at the tree I soon found *stephensi* in very fresh condition. In all I counted 19 specimens sitting in the chinks in the bark on the shady side of the tree, plus a good many more caught in spiders' webs.

It was a great satisfaction to find that this elusive species is still present as a strong colony on the tree which, I am now certain, Ford obtained it nearly half a century ago.— D. O'KEEFFE, 50 Hazlemere Road, Petts Wood, Kent BR5 1PD.



Hancock, E G. 1990. "The dotted rustic (*Rhyacia simulans* (Hufnagel), Lepidoptera: Noctuidae) in the west of Scotland." *The entomologist's record and journal of variation* 102, 285–286.

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