

All hatched in approximately five days (at about 25°C) and ate the empty egg shells in their entirety. The larval stage lasted about 20 days, feeding on a mixture of *R. crystallina* and *E. versicaria* (at about 20°C). The resulting pupae were initially green in colour and transparent with pointed heads, but after about three days they had become straw coloured and opaque. Four later turned brown and appeared to have been parasitised by a tachinid fly. To date (14 March 2002), none of the remaining pupae have emerged and may well have entered diapause.

*Colias crocea* (Geoffroy) was observed occasionally in both 2000 and 2002, around Tinajo and near Teguisse respectively. The two migrant Vanessids, *Vanessa cardui* (L.) and *V. atalanta* (L.) were seen occasionally. *V. cardui* was present in some numbers in gardens at Playa Blanca feeding on *Limonium* sp. in February 2000, but rarely seen in more than ones or twos in 2002. One specimen was seen on Graciosa, near Caleta on 15 February 2002. *V. atalanta* was not seen in 2000 but single specimens were recorded from Guatiza and Orzola, respectively, on 13 and 14 February 2002. A number of large *Cassia didymobotrya* bushes were noticed on arrival in Lanzarote, planted in the gardens at Arrecife airport. These were inspected closely on 17 February for any signs of the presence of *Catopsilia florella* (Fabricius) but the leaves showed no signs of having been chewed, no ova were seen and there was no sightings of the adults or other bushes of *C. didymobotrya* on the island. Thus, it would appear that this species, which had been reported from Lanzarote in 1976 (see Tolman and Lewington, 1997, Butterflies of Britain and Europe, Harper Collins p. 50) is not currently resident on the island. However, we have no doubt that sometime in the future a female from the African mainland (or Fuerteventura?) will find these plants and this island will be recolonised by *C. florella*.

On 29 February 2000 a small white Pierid was observed (MG-P) flying fast along the coastal path at Playa Blanca; unfortunately it evaded capture and thus was not identified with certainty. In spite of this it was probably a species not seen before on Lanzarote and thus it would be worth searching this area more thoroughly; a suggestion for other Entomologists wanting some winter sunshine in the future. — MARTIN GASCOIGNE-PEES, 2 Barretts Close Stonesfield, Oxfordshire OX8 8PW, DAVID HALL, 5 Curborough Road Lichfield, Staffordshire WS13 7NG & PETER J.C. RUSSELL, Oakmeadow Wessex Avenue East Wittering, West Sussex PO20 8NP.

### **White-spotted Pinion moth *Cosmia diffinis* (L.) (Lep.: Noctuidae): Results of searches for larvae in 2001**

At one stage it appeared that access restrictions due to the Foot & Mouth disease epidemic would prevent further searches for larvae in May and June 2001, but fortunately these were lifted just in time to hunt for larvae in a couple of the key sites in Huntingdonshire before pupation. A programme of beating was carried out, as in 2000 (*antea*: 84-89), and again no White-spotted Pinion larvae were found. Searching by eye for the larval spinings proved marginally more successful in that



one larva was discovered. The purpose of this note is to place on record the exact details of the breeding situation and the appearance of the spinning, to help others find and conserve this moth.

Plate F shows the larval spinning on the day it was found (6 June 2001), containing a final instar larva. The spinning consists of two flat overlapping elm leaves one spun on top of the other, the upper surface of one to the underside of the one above. These have been parted to reveal the larva, which was 3 cm in length. Note the series of small feeding holes made by the larva in both leaves on either side of spinning. The spinning was found amongst epicormic growth on the upper side of a bent-over trunk of English Elm *Ulmus procera* (Plate G), growing within a woodland compartment almost entirely of elm, and was 20 metres from the nearest ride. The spinning was in the highest point of the epicormic growth and was 2 metres above ground level and heavily shaded by the canopy. This breeding site was about 50 metres from the trap-site where we have recorded the adult moth on a regular basis and is in the centre of the wood. It is worth noting that this is quite a damp wood and at the time of the discovery the microclimate was distinctly humid, with an abundance of biting mosquitoes. There was lots of elm foliage at low levels, indicating that light penetrates the canopy. The ground cover was mainly Dog's Mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, with some Cleavers *Galium aparine* and Stinging Nettle *Urtica dioica*. The bent over stem was no more than 10 cm in diameter and could be grabbed with one hand. It was from the same rootstock as an adjacent larger vertical trunk, but this was only about 26 cm in diameter – neither could be described as mature trees.

The discovery of this caterpillar demonstrates that breeding is not confined to the tree canopy. The situation has some similarities to that in which the larva reported by Waring (2001. *Ent. Rec.* 113: 135-138) was found, but differs in two major ways – first in that it was deep in woodland rather than in a shelterbelt only a few trees deep and second in that this one was on English Elm. The larva found at Boxworth in 2000 was amongst elm leaves which were large, shiny and with an upper surface smooth to touch. The trees have since been confirmed as a form of the Small-leaved Elm *Ulmus minor minor*. This confirms that the White-spotted Pinion will use both species in the wild.

Finally, as a guide to the stage in the season at which this final instar larva was found, larvae of the Winter moth *Operophtera brumata* (L.) were largely over, but there were still a few Sprawler *Brachionycha sphinx* (Hufn.) about (at 4.5 cm in length), a full grown Lunar-spotted Pinion *Cosmia pyralina* (L.) was found on the same day and Dunbar *Cosmia trapezina* (L.) and Common Quaker *O. cerasi* (Fabr.) were frequent and between 2-4 cm in length. I hope these tips lead to further discoveries of the larva in other sites in 2002.

I am grateful to David Evans, Tree Officer for Cambridgeshire, who identified the elm trees. The work was conducted as part of the Butterfly Conservation Action for Threatened Moths Project with funding from English Nature as a contribution to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.— PAUL WARING, 1366 Lincoln Road, Werrington, Peterborough PE4 6LS.





**Plate F.** Larva and spinning *C. diffinis*.

Photograph © P. Waring



**Plate G.** *C. diffinis* breeding site.

Photograph © P. Waring





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