

MOTH MUMBLINGS – EARLY NOVEMBER 2020

DEWICK'S PLUSIA – WILD BREEDING CONFIRMED FOR MIDDLESEX

There has been some discussion in the last few years about whether or not the increasing number of Dewick's Plusia (*Macdunnoughia confusa*) indicates residency in Britain. Until very recently it was certainly known here only as a primary immigrant. In the past ten or twenty years, numbers of this formerly very rare migrant increased in light traps so leading to the speculation that it might have become established.

I have not researched other areas of Britain, but I can now report that Dewick's Plusia is a resident breeding species in Middlesex. At the end of October 2020, Barbara Mulligan was preparing cabbage leaves for a meal when she found a noctuid pupa. This was put into a pot (not the cooking pot!) and after a short while an adult Dewick's Plusia emerged. The cabbage had come from Peter Edwards' allotment at Hanwell (London W7) – not from a shop, and so the pupa must have resulted from a female moth laying eggs on this site.

I just checked my Brussels Sprouts (almost cabbages), but so far have been unable to find any pupae in my garden (perhaps too much competition from all those Cabbage White butterfly larvae that latched on to the fact that I don't use pesticides?). Nevertheless, if you are growing Brassica of any kind it may be worth checking.

ALARM BATTERIES STILL WANTED

In my last mailing I mentioned that I am looking to get hold of 20 second-hand rechargeable motor-bike type batteries (sort used in fire/intruder alarms systems). The type needed are sealed units (so they don't spill in a rucksack) approximately 150 x 65 x 90mm tall (about 6 x 3 x 4 inches in old money), 12volts, 7.2 amp-hour (or near), gel or lead/acid accumulators.

I am very happy to report that so far I have managed to obtain 10 such batteries. This means I can run all 10 of my newly constructed 8-watt actinic bucket traps. If I can just find 10 more, I will be able to have 10 in use and 10 on charge at any given time, so that next time I am allowed out of my hermit cave (the Spanish flu a hundred years ago lasted for 4 years) I can trap every night instead of alternate nights!

My ten new batteries are all from fire alarm systems (batteries are changed annually, regardless of condition). Thanks to a local fire alarm service engineer for rescuing these from the rubbish skip.

I will pay a reasonable price for singles or for several, BUT the money is coming from my own pocket (i.e. my pension!). If anyone has the odd battery knocking about, or perhaps knows someone who services alarm systems, please get in touch by e-mail at cpauk1@ntlworld.com. I can, of course, collect.

OAK RUSTICS

So, if Dewick's Plusia can do it, what about the Oak Rustic (*Dryobota labecula*). We have reported captures in the last week of October this year in the far west of Herts and in western London (Middlesex) there are a very few older (though still quite recent) reports from the Barnet area and elsewhere. Could it be that this species is also now resident in our area? Its caterpillars feed on Evergreen Oak (*Quercus ilex*). Adults fly from October until December.

NOVEMBER MOTHS

Thanks to all of you who have already sent me November moths to look at. I will examine these this week. The moth is only just getting started, so I hope more of you will send me samples in the next

few weeks so we can work out the relationship between November and Pale November moths, which can only be reliably separated as adults by their terminalia.

INSECT JOB OPPORTUNITY - £65k PER YEAR

The Royal Entomological Society is looking for a new Chief Executive to develop and deliver a strategy which will take the Society forward. He or she should be someone who can inspire the team, lead change, and be the voice of the Society. As conversations about biodiversity and environmental conservation continue, the Society needs to ensure that their expertise has a part to play in this.

The Role

- Providing leadership to the Society and being responsible for its management and administration.
- Leading the review and development of a medium to long-term strategy for the Society.
- Leading, inspiring and motivating staff and volunteers to achieve high performance to contribute to the aims of the Society.
- Being responsible overall for the assets and financial health of the Society including developing, overseeing and monitoring an effective programme of income generation.
- Fostering good communications throughout the Society and externally; developing, as appropriate, the Society's public profile.
- Together with President, enabling the Council to fulfil its duties and responsibilities for the proper governance of the Society.

The Candidate

- Recent senior management experience of being accountable to and working alongside a committed and engaged Board including responsibility for implementing and advancing their strategic objectives.
- A proven track record of leading and delivering change and organisational improvement
- Experience of management of all or a significant part of an organisation's operations.
- Excellent leadership skills with an ability to lead diverse teams by example.
- Demonstrable commitment to equality and diversity combined with the ability to generate trust and confidence.
- Strong commitment to the aims and objectives of the Society, including an interest in the field of entomology.
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For an informal and confidential discussion, please speak with our advisors at Berwick Partners; William Pringle or Leia Clancy on 020 7529 3090.

BUG LIFE NEWSLETTER

Not a lot on moths, but still of interest to anyone interested in insects ... read their latest newsletter at https://www.buglife.org.uk/?mc_cid=859cb13e15&mc_eid=def7dbe399

That's all for now.

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