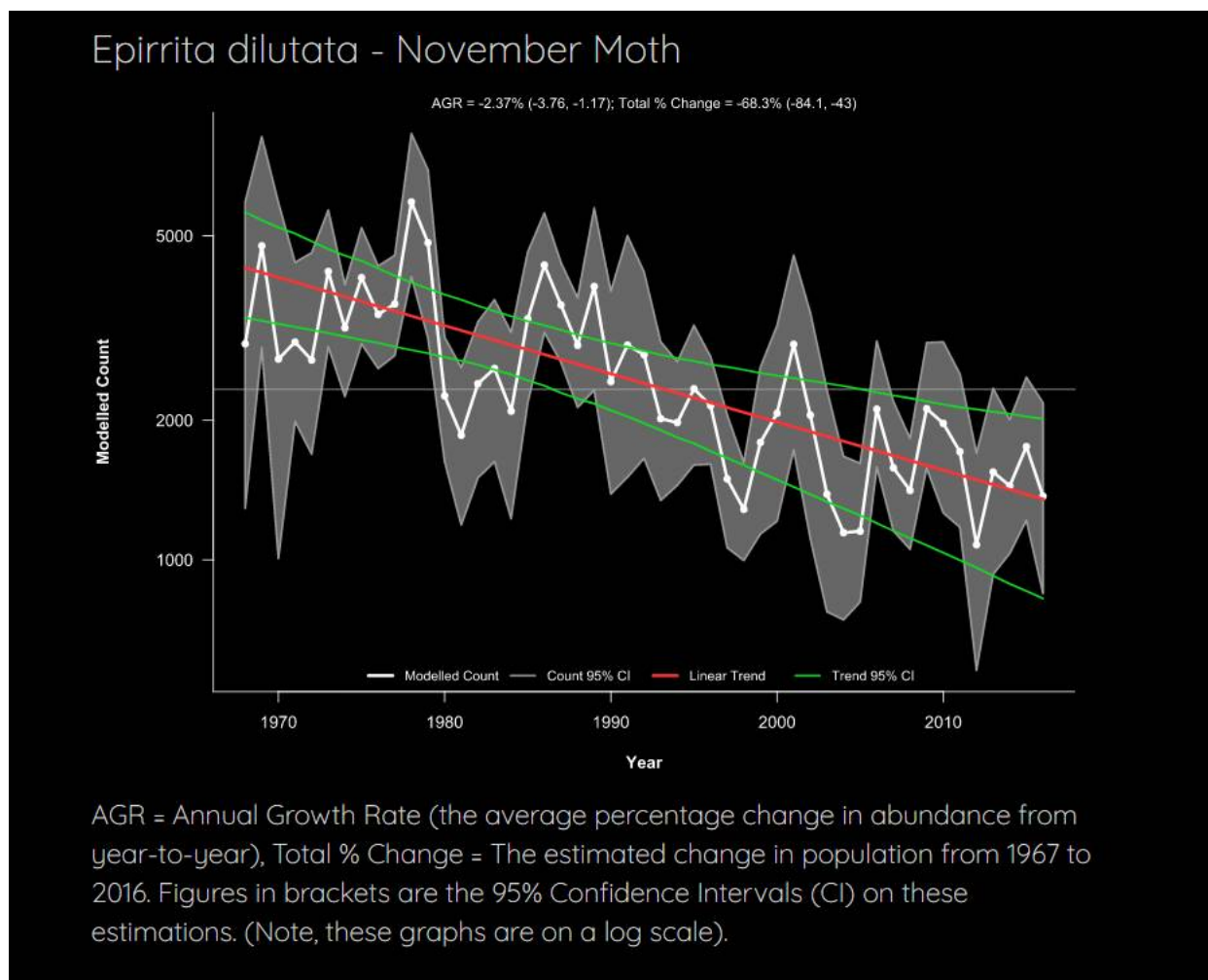


## MOTH MUMBLINGS late-October 2020

November Moths are now just starting to fly. But what about Pale November Moths? It is assumed that they fly at the same time – but is this true? The more records then the more accurate the flight charts – so please do take care to check the real ID of “novembers”. If in doubt, please send them to me for checking. **For the next month i specifically welcome samples of “november” moths from your garden other sites**, even if you already have both species listed – because this is about flight times rather than distribution. If you catch lots, either send them all or make a selection of different wing patterns. Ideally repeat at weekly intervals so we catch the whole flight period. Remember to include place name, date and your name in each separate package, please. For advice on posting please e-mail separately. If you prefer to deliver, there is a large black box by my front door. I check twice daily so just dump them if you don't have time to stop.

In the last newsletter I mentioned in passing that there was no particular concern for numbers of November moths. Turns out I was wrong - this graph was sent to me by Chris Shortall who works at Rothamsted Research in Harpenden. It is taken from <https://insectsurvey.com/trends> and so if, for some reason, it fails to transmit with this newsletter, go to that web site and take a look at this and several other graphs.



It is clear that we DO need to be concerned about November moths.

### INTERESTING RECENT REPORTS

**Clancy's Rustic**, Ware, 18<sup>th</sup> October 2020 (Liz Goodyear). Second Herts record, after one at Stevenage, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2018, (Ben Sale).

**Clifden Nonpareil**, Letchworth, the third example so far at this site, 120<sup>th</sup> October 2020 (Roger Millard); Bengoe, Hertford, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020 (Simon Knott). New to the site on a date that is tending towards being rather late. The same night also produced the first Dotted Chestnut of the season.

There are other records of note not listed here; I simply don't have time at the moment.

## OAK PROCESSIONARY MOTHS

Received 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020 from Jeremy Clarke, Tree Health Project Officer, Hertfordshire County Council

*Please find attached data [not attached in this newsletter- Colin] detailing confirmed OPM caterpillar/nest sightings from 2020, collated by Southampton University on behalf of the Forestry Commissions. 678 sightings which is a significant increase on last year (c. 30). This in part will be based on looking harder and therefore finding more. However, I should also note that based on the disparate clumping (see indicative map below) of many of the sightings we should assume that OPM is far more widespread but not observed. Further surveys are planned over the next two months and I may have an update on this list in November.*

*Happy to discuss further. As an update we are working with Defra, FC and Forest Research to produce an OPM management plan for Broxbourne Woods NNR (the two HCC owned compartments) which is expected to ensure spraying does not take place there in the future.*

Received 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020 from the same source

*I am contacting you to inform you of proposed changes to the management of oak processionary moth (OPM) at the County Council owned/managed sections of Broxbourne Woods National Nature Reserve (the NNR), namely Bencroft Wood and Broxbourne Wood. OPM is an invasive non-native pest which has become established in the southeast of England and which can be found almost exclusively on oak trees. More information about OPM is available on the [Forest Research website](#).*

### ***Adopting a risk-based approach to OPM management at Broxbourne Woods***

*The presence of OPM in Hertfordshire is increasing, with reported cases rising from 30 in 2019, up to 678 in 2020. While cases of OPM on County Council land have been relatively few to date, these have included a single nest which was recorded in the County Council owned parts of the NNR in 2019. However, following a Forestry Commission (FC) survey of the NNR in 2020, 23 trees were found to be newly infested.*

*Because OPM is a Quarantine species, the FC require landowners to control the population by issuing Statutory Plant Health Notices. Of the two typical control methods available (insecticidal spraying of oak trees within a buffer zone around infested trees, and/or manual removal of nests), the use of insecticide is undesirable within the NNR due to the detrimental impacts on biodiversity within this nationally important habitat. There are also concerns that manually removing all nests could become excessively costly, and because many oaks are not close to regular access routes, that this would be a disproportionate response to the limited risk to public health.*

*Consequently, the County Council's Countryside and Rights of Way team has secured agreement from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the FC to trial a risk-based approach to OPM management at the NNR, as part of a suite of trials which are expected to inform future national policy for OPM management. Consequently, an OPM Management Plan has been drafted which received positive feedback from Defra and the FC. This plan balances site objectives for biodiversity and public access with mitigating the small public health risk posed by OPM. If the trials are successful, it is anticipated that risk-based management of OPM will become a widely adopted approach, either replacing or accompanying the current system of Statutory Plant Health Notices. Engaging with this pilot programme is providing the County Council with an opportunity to influence the design of future management and funding models.*

*The County Council plans to implement this new approach from the beginning of the next OPM season (spring 2021) and further communications are planned to raise public awareness and mitigate the small public health risk posed by OPM.*

*If you have any question please do not hesitate to contact me.*

It is not clear to me [Colin] what a “risk based approach to control” involves? Nor is it clear how the “plan balances site objectives for biodiversity and public access with mitigating the small public health risk posed by OPM”. I asked for clarification and received the following reply this morning, 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

*I understand your concerns. For clarity, the risk based approach will involve NO spraying at all on the HCC owned sections of the NNR. The only control measure that will be used (apart from the communications / awareness raising component) will be manual nest removal. The risk based aspect of the plan means that we will not be removing all nests that exist within the NNR, but those that are in locations which pose a higher risk to the public. We have mapped OPM risk zones across the site and it is within the high risk zones that nest removal will take place. The main driving force behind our decision to explore this risk based approach is to avoid spraying at the NNR, as under the previous system it was difficult for us to prevent this. So this is a good result in terms of preventing fall-out on other Lepidoptera.*

You now know everything that I know.

#### **ALARM BATTERIES WANTED**

I am looking to get hold of some 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 informed that fire alarm systems have batteries replaced annually – the old ones would be ideal for my purpose as sudden failure is not an H&S risk. I will pay a reasonable price for singles or for several, BUT I need 20 units in total (10 in use on any given night, plus 10 on charge for the next) so there will be a cash limit per unit! 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](mailto:cpauk1@ntlworld.com). I can, of course, collect.

That's all for now.

Colin

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