

MOTH MUMBLINGS APRIL 2021

FLYING TODAY

Not sure if it is warm enough, but the sun is currently shining and so it could be worth a trip out this afternoon to look for *Adela cuprella*. This was added to our county list in 2012, but there are still only 3 records to the end of 2020. The larvae feed in willow catkins. *Adela cuprella* rarely flies below the tops of catkin-bearing willows early in the spring; most easily seen with binoculars and usually out of net range. Don't confuse with *Adela reaumurilla*, which is abundant (and larger), but almost always flying over lower level bushes (reachable with a long-handled net).

Christine Penn saw a **Humming-bird Hawk moth** in Welwyn Garden City last Tuesday afternoon (30th March).

Several people are reporting male **Brindled Beauties** at light traps in their gardens. It has always been around, but became numerically scarce in the last 20 – 30 years – it now seems to be on the increase again.

Many people have been trying out the various new pheromone lures for several species of tortrix moth. This has proved amazingly successful for one species in particular ... *Pammene giganteana*. Associated with galls on oak trees, it was formerly considered rare with us, it has been reported across all of Hertfordshire (and also in Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and elsewhere – including Dorset to my knowledge). [Has anyone tried in Middlesex?]. Interestingly, the “MOL” lure (designed for *Cydia molesta*) has proven to be the most effective.

Several different pheromone lures are available from Jon Clifton at Anglian Lepidopterists Supplies. Order on line for near-immediate delivery by post. If you order now you could be ready for the heatwave that may well follow the current cold snap!

HOW LONG SHOULD PHEROMONE LURES BE LEFT OUT?

If you are carrying the lure around in a net bag (e.g., a loose fruit bag from Sainsbury's), and using a net to catch attending moths, this may not apply. If your lure is within a trap (by far the best method) then for the purposes of distribution mapping, the shorter the time the better – otherwise true distribution may get blurred by attracting specimens from some considerable distance rather than the local area. In any event, it is probably not a good idea to leave traps out for days on end: They are very efficient, assuming the target species is present, and you could easily take a significant part of the male population out of circulation. If you do catch big numbers, it would be sensible to release at least some of them. I have a report that in an oak woodland in southern Hertfordshire just before the current cold spell, an “MOL” lure attracted 30 males of *Pammene gigantea* within 30 minutes.

COLIN'S CALOPTILIA CAMPAIGN

I am having a close look at the genus *Caloptilia* this year. More next time – because I want you out this afternoon looking for *Adela cuprella*. However, please note that I would like to see all of your *Caloptilia* material this year – live or dead. Several species are already flying this year.

That's all for now. Get out there and enjoy!

Colin

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