

MOTH MUMBLINGS – FORESTER MOTH SPECIAL

FORESTER MOTHS

I have unconfirmed reports of **Forester Moth flying** at Chorleywood Common in the last 2 days, though unclear if this is in Herts or Bucks. This is one of our three main target species for 2022.

Those of you who received the experimental pheromone lures for this species from me should please now spring into action. The weather forecast looks good for the next few days so please get out there if you can in afternoon sunshine. If you find the moth, do please tell me so we can double our efforts elsewhere the next day.

Please try to use the lures at more than one site if you can. All and any grassland sites are worth a look as may well be some field margin areas. If you absolutely cannot get out and use them, please post them back to me first class so others can have a go.

The rest of you, without lures, please try to get out there on suitable sites during the daytime; the moths are often quite conspicuous when at rest on flowers or other vegetation. Look at a picture in a book if you are not familiar with this moth. You cannot possibly confuse it with anything else (apart from two even rarer forester species that simply will not be present in our area), but do feel free to take photos as evidence.

Here is a modified table of flight dates recorded for our summer 2022 target species to take account of this year's earlier date:

Species	Recorded dates	Habitat
Heart Moth	25 th June – 26 th July	Veteran oaks in open grassland (wood pasture habitat); possibly also in woodland with long-standing oak trees.
Pale Shining Brown	11 th June – 28 th July	Arable field margins
Forester	16 th June – 5 th August	Larger areas of grassland that supports the foodplant (Sorrel)

OTHER STUFF

There are widespread reports of **Six-belted Clearwing** (*Sesia ichneumoniformis*) commencing in the third week of June. Remember to always check the antennae of males (only males will come to pheromone lures, of course) as Raspberry Clearwing can be confusingly similar in general appearance. Raspberry has slightly feathered antennae; six-belted does not.

John Chainey tells me that there has been an increasing number of appearances of **Lunar Yellow Underwings** (*Noctua orbona*) in north-east Herts. This is most interesting – one wonders if this rare moth might undergo a range expansion in the way so many other species have done. In “the old days” (which I clearly remember – so not *that* olden), we used to travel miles to find this species – notably to the entomologically famous “Ickenham Triangle” where it was the thing to sweep net larvae from the grasses at night. I believe that after a while, residents of the houses around the triangle became less than happy about strange people creeping about at night!

One of the micros caught by me in my garden at Bishops Stortford on that cracking good night of 17th June is worth a mention. It was recognised immediately as a *Cosmopterix* species, but this genus is tricky so I set the moth aside for later examination. A couple of days later I pulled it out again and discovered that it is in fact *Cosmopterix scribaiella* – a moth that is **NEW TO HERTFORDSHIRE**. The larvae mine leaves of reeds. Wetland moths do sometimes turn up in odd places on “good” nights and there was some evidence (if minimal) of such movement across eastern Herts that night. If anyone is interested in finding this species, do take note – there are many places between here and Harlow that appear to my eye to be eminently suitable as breeding sites.

Enjoy!

Colin

Colin W. Plant
Herts & Middlesex Counties Moth Recorder
14 West Road
Bishops Stortford
Hertfordshire
CM23 3QP

Landline: (after midday only): 01279 - 507697

E-mail: colinwplant@gmail.com
