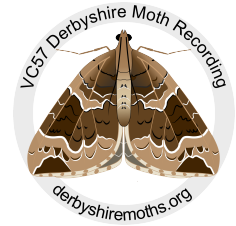


NATIONAL MOTH RECORDING SCHEME

Macro-moth Verification Guidelines Introduction

VC57 - Derbyshire

November 2024



An introduction to the National Guidelines.

The following 'Verification Guidelines' were devised and compiled to help recorders, verifiers and County Recorders (CRs) decide which macro-moths need careful consideration before records should be finally verified and submitted to the National Moth Recording Scheme/ iRecord. In some cases the Regional, or even the National panels, that have been put in place to support the County Recorders may need referring to.

There are many macro-moths, where the moths can be easily identified and where no similar looking species occur. Typically, these records will be accepted as submitted and only those which occur outside their usual flight period, habitat or geographical range are likely to be questioned. However, it will help the verifier if these checks are made to rule out any potential misidentifications before submitting the record.

This sort of information is readily available in books and on-line facilities. Once experience has been gained with the different families there will be many species that can be accepted without further evidence being required. If a recorder has had the species checked before, it is unlikely that subsequent records of the same species will need querying again (unless dissection is required or, perhaps, the species is very scarce). It is also important to remember to consider poorly marked or worn specimens, as these may require a higher level of confirmation.

The Derbyshire Recording Team promotes in the first instance that records are submitted directly to iRecord or via the National Moth Recording Scheme (NMRS), but not both, in order to avoid duplication of records. If records are submitted directly to the joint CR's, or via the Records Team, then we would need to obtain permission off the recorder in order to be able to submit to iRecord on the recorders behalf. This is not our preferred method of submitting your moth records.

Remember that in some cases macro-moths are not straightforward to determine. In these cases it is best to assume that species that have not been encountered before will be best retained as a photograph (or in some cases a specimen, see the guidelines/ categories) for examination by the Derbyshire Recording Team or in certain cases, by an experienced macro-moth recorder.

When taking photographs of macro-moths, ensure that the moth is not too worn (this can make identification by this means difficult or impossible). It is important that the moth is clearly visible, that the picture is not blurred and that, preferably, two images from different angles are submitted. An idea of scale should be included in the image if possible.

All new VC57 species records should be supported by one or more good quality images or, in some cases, a specimen. Please bear in mind many species cannot be determined without a specimen (see guidelines). If a scarce or very scarce species is suspected and a

specimen is likely to be required for accurate determination, please ensure that only one, or at most a very few, specimens are retained.

Your records should include a full level of supporting detail, which would need to include: Date of trapping (if evening then the date of the evening/collecting method was stated, state if it is a daylight record), type of light trap used, location with a suitable grid reference (six figures), any additional supporting evidence such as a photograph, if the “specimen is retained “ or “specimen is provided”, a gen det has been completed and who undertook and verified the “ gen det.

The criteria which is contained in these guide-lines aims to provide a framework for the verification of macro-moths for the National Moth Recording Scheme. These criteria cover the adult moths and also species more regularly recorded as leaf-mines or as larval cases.

The criteria are applicable at the UK level, but at local level we can adapt individual species gradings. The grading assumes that moths identified were in a good or adequate condition when originally determined.

Adult Macro-moth Verification Grade Categories - VC57 Derbyshire

Category 1: Distinctive species unlikely to be confused with others

Species that can be relatively easily identified even by inexperienced recorders with the use of up-to-date field guides. Such records would be accepted without the need for additional evidence if they conform to the normal flight period and geographical range of the species.

Category 2: Can be confused with other species

Species where care is needed for identification. Should not present any difficulty for experienced recorders, but inexperienced recorders may be expected to provide additional evidence in the form of photographs of reasonable quality that show as many of the identification features as possible or, alternatively, a specimen. Even experienced recorders may be expected to provide additional evidence if the record is outside of the normal flight period or geographical range of the species.

Category 3: Difficult to identify /Very rare/ Scarce species (includes very scarce adventives/immigrants) / County level first records

A voucher specimen may be required by the Recording Team (seek advice before releasing the moth). A good set of photographs showing all critical identification features clearly, may suffice in some cases.

Category 4: Dissection required

Species that cannot be reliably identified as adult by external features/characteristics alone. Dissection is required to confirm records to full species. Where appropriate, species pairs can be recorded as 'aggregates' (e.g. Copper Underwing / Uncertain/ Rustic/ Grey & Dark Dagger) if not dissected.

Category 5: Ungraded

