

Kentish Glory

Endromis versicolora

A large, conspicuous moth; wingspan up to 90mm. The forewings are brown, marbled with white and other colours, crossed by two wavy lines. Males have feathery antennae, and fly by day. The larvae are large and green, with a point towards the hind end, resembling some hawk-moth larvae.

Habitat Moorlands and open Birch woodland. The larvae feed on Birch.

Status and distribution In the UK, now confined to the Scottish Highlands; widespread though local on the Continent.

Season 3–5.

Geometers, Family Geometridae

Small or medium-sized moths with small bodies and relatively large wings, held either spread out or in a triangular shape. Female antennae simple. Caterpillars have only 2 pairs of legs, and move in a looping fashion – they are known as 'loopers'.

Orange Underwing

Archibearis parthenias

A medium-sized moth; wingspan of 35–40mm. Forewings dark, blotched paler, but the underwings are bright orange and black. Day-flying.

Habitat Open or lightly wooded areas with Birch trees. Males may visit Sallow flowers.

Status and distribution Widespread and frequent throughout.

Season 3–4.

Similar species

Light Orange Underwing *A. notha* is slightly smaller, with paler hindwings and less variegated forewings.

See also the underwings in the Noctuid family (p.184).

Large Emerald

Geometra papilionaria

A distinctive, medium-large moth, with a wingspan of 50–65mm. Basically greenish-blue with numerous scalloped white marks on all wings.

Habitat Woods and hedgerows. The larvae feed on Birch, Beech and other trees.

Status and distribution Widespread and moderately common throughout.

Season 6–8.

Similar species

Most other emeralds (see below) are smaller.

Light Emerald *Campaea margaritata* is almost as large, but paler yellowish-green, with an unscalloped line across the centre of the wings. It is actually in a different family. Widespread throughout.

Blotched Emerald

Comibaena pustulata

A distinctive little moth, with a wingspan of about 30mm. The emerald-green wings are blotched with brown and white, unlike any other Emerald.

Habitat Oakwoods. The larvae feed on oak.

Status and distribution Absent from N Britain, locally common further south; widespread and common on the Continent.

Season 6–7.

Similar species

Common Emerald *Hemitea aestivaria* is similar in size, but has white uneven lines across the wings, not blotches. Similar habitats and distribution.

Small Emerald *Hemistola chrysoprasaria* is larger (it is only 'small' in relation to Large Emerald!), up to 40mm across, with straight, unbroken white lines. Local on limestones, feeding on Wild Clematis.

Little Emerald

Jodis lactearia

A small moth; wingspan about 25mm. Very pale green, with only faint white lines on the wings.

Habitat Woods, hedges and anywhere with trees and shrubs. Larvae feed on various trees and shrubs.

Status and distribution Widespread and common throughout.

Season 5–7.



Kentish Glory



Orange Underwing



Large Emerald

Blotched Emerald



Birch Mocha

Cyclophora albipunctata

A small to medium moth, with a wingspan of 25–30mm. The wings are pale greyish-white, often suffused with red, and each has a central dark-edged dot.

Habitat Woodland and heathland, where Birch occurs.

Status and distribution Widespread in S Britain, general on the Continent.

Season 5–8.

Similar species

Dingy Mocha *C. pendularia* is very similar, but darker and more heavily speckled; local, mainly southern, on Sallow.

False Mocha *C. porata* is more yellowish, with darker lines across the wings. Widespread, though mainly southern.

Blood-vein

Timandra griseata

A medium-small moth; wingspan 30–35mm. The wings are pearly-grey, beautifully marked with a red stripe that runs in a single wave when the wings are held at rest. The margins of the wings are also red in colour.

Habitat A variety of open habitats, where docks, sorrels and related plants occur.

Status and distribution Widespread in the south, becoming rarer northwards.

Season 5–9.

Similar species

Small Blood-vein *Scopula imitaria* is smaller, with a yellower ground colour and less well-marked stripe. Similar distribution. The main food-plant is Privet.

Riband Wave

Idaea aversata

The wingspan of this moth is about 35mm. The ground colour is greyish-white to

yellow, marked with a broad angled stripe across all four wings. Flies by day if disturbed.

Habitat In a variety of habitats, feeding on numerous herbs and shrubs.

Status and distribution Widespread and common throughout.

Season 6–9.

Silver-ground Carpet

Xanthorhoe montanata

Wingspan about 30mm. A pretty little moth, with the characteristic triangular shape of other 'carpets' when settled. The greyish-white wings have a strongly marked central black, uneven stripe.

Habitat Woods, hedgerows and other undisturbed habitats.

Status and distribution Widespread and common throughout.

Season 5–7.

Similar species

There are many other 'carpets' with a broadly similar pattern. Among the most similar are the following:

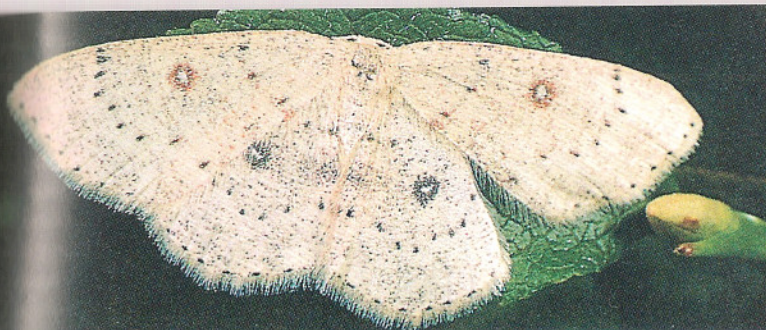
Garden Carpet *X. fluctuata* has a darker, more speckled ground colour, with the stripe less well marked. Common everywhere.

Flame Carpet *X. designata* has the black stripe replaced by red; widespread throughout.

Green Carpet *Colostygia pectinataria* has a similar pattern, but is mainly green. Widespread and frequent throughout.

Common Carpet *Epirrhoe alternata* has a reddish-grey stripe on a greyish background. Common throughout.

Purple Bar *Cosmorhoe ocellata* has a bluish-purple bar, and a dark spot towards the edge of the forewing. Common throughout.



Birch Mocha



Blood-vein



Riband Wave



Silver-ground Carpet



Garden Carpet

Green Carpet, faded specimen



Small Phoenix

Ecliptopera silaceata

A small to medium moth; wingspan 30–35mm. The forewings are dark, marbled with white and cream; the hindwings are pale, virtually unmarked.

Habitat Many open or semi-shaded habitats, where willowherbs occur.

Status and distribution Widespread and common throughout.

Season 5–8.

Similar species

Dark Marbled Carpet *Chloroclysta citrata* is similar, but has a more distinct angled pale bar across the tips of the forewings. Widespread and moderately common throughout.

Common Marbled Carpet *C. truncata* is extremely similar, usually rather darker. Widespread and common.

Argent and Sable

Rheumaptera hastata

A conspicuous medium-sized moth with a wingspan of 35–40mm. Both forewings and hindwings are boldly marked with black and white, with a clear white band crossing the middle of each wing (the northern race, *nigrescens*, has more dark markings on the wing). Partly day-flying.

Habitat A species of woodlands and moorland where Birches are present; they are the larval food-plant.

Status and distribution Widespread, but local and more frequent in upland areas.

Season 5–7.

Winter Moth

Operophtera brumata

This species has marked sexual dimorphism, as the females are flightless and virtually wingless. Males have a wingspan of about 30mm, and are pale yellowish-brown. The females are small and dark, and barely look like a moth at all. They crawl up the stems of trees to lay their eggs in crevices or on buds.

Habitat Woodlands, orchards, gardens.

Status and distribution Widespread and common throughout.

Season 10–3.

Similar species

Northern Winter Moth *O. fagata* is slightly larger, paler and shinier. Widespread, and not particularly northern.

Chimney Sweeper

Odezia atrata

A small moth; wingspan 25–30mm. Sooty-black all over, except for the margins of the wings around the tip, which are white. Day-flying.

Habitat Flowery places where the food-plant, Pignut, occurs.

Status and distribution Widespread and locally frequent throughout.

Season 5–7.

Similar species

Occasionally mistaken for a small butterfly, such as the Small Blue (see p.128). The antennae and detailed colouring are quite different.

Magpie Moth or The Magpie

Abraxas grossulariata

An attractive and distinctive moth; wingspan 42–48mm. The combination of white ground colour, heavily dotted black, with orange stripes is unmistakable. May cause damage to currant bushes.

Habitat Woods, gardens and scrub, where currants, gooseberries or Hawthorn occur.

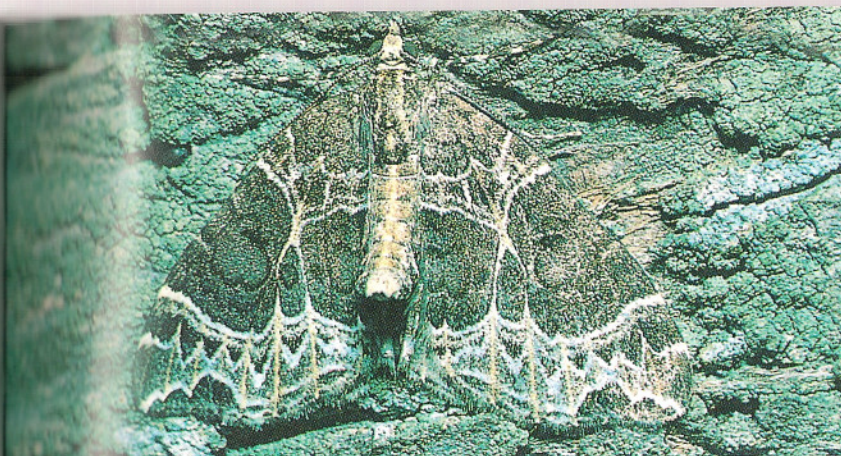
Status and distribution Widespread and common throughout.

Season 6–8.

Similar species

Clouded Magpie *A. sylvata* is similar in size and shape, but lacks the black dots and has reduced orange and grey patches. A local woodland species.

Clouded Border *Lomaspiis marginata* is smaller, mottled deep grey and white. Common in wooded areas. See also the unrelated Small Magpie, p.198.



Small Phoenix



Chimney Sweeper



Magpie Moth

Magpie Moth, larva



Latticed Heath

Semiothisa clathrata

An attractive little moth; wingspan about 30mm. Distinctively patterned chequered brown and white wings. Male antennae not feathery. Day-flying.

Habitat Many types of open habitat, including heaths and downs. The food-plants include various legumes.

Status and distribution Widespread and common throughout.

Season 4–9.

Similar species

Netted Mountain Moth *S. carbonaria* is darker, less distinctly chequered. A moth of mountain areas, in Scotland, and widespread in N Europe.

Common Heath *Ematurga atomaria* is similar in size and colour to Latticed Heath, but lacks the strong transverse lines. Common in heathy places and open woodland throughout.

Brown Silver-line

Petrophora chlorosata

An undistinguished pale brown moth; wingspan about 35mm. Forewings are brown, with 2 darker stripes across; hindwings paler. Of interest as one of the relatively few insects to feed on Bracken.

Habitat Heaths or moors, wherever Bracken occurs.

Status and distribution Widespread and locally frequent, throughout.

Season 5–7.

Speckled Yellow

Pseudopanthera macularia

A small but unmistakable moth. Wingspan about 30mm. Wings yellow, speckled with black. Day-flying, especially in sunny weather.

Habitat Open woods, scrub and rough grassland. Food-plants include various Labiates (Mint family).

Status and distribution Widespread and locally common throughout.

Season 4–7.

Brimstone Moth

Opisthograptis luteolata

A distinctive moth, with a wingspan of 35–45mm. The wings are yellow (like a male Brimstone butterfly), and the forewings are edged with 3 red-brown blobs.

Habitat Hedges, gardens and open woods.

Status and distribution Widespread and common throughout.

Season 5–10.

Canary-shouldered Thorn

Ennomos alniaria

Wingspan 38–40mm. An attractive moth, with pinkish-yellow wings, and a furry yellow head-thorax area. The legs are furry, and the males have feathered antennae.

Habitat Woods, fens and other unimproved habitats. Food-plants include Alder and Birch.

Status and distribution Widespread and common throughout.

Season 7–10.

Similar species

Large Thorn *E. autumnaria* is larger, with thorax hairs pinkish-yellow. Forewings dark towards the tip. Common throughout.

August Thorn *E. quercinaria* is similar in size to Canary-shouldered, but duller in colour and lacking the bright yellow thorax hairs. Common throughout.

Early Thorn

Selenia dentaria

Wingspan 45–50mm, rather smaller in second-generation specimens. A greyish-brown moth, though very variable in colour, with (usually) 4 bands of deeper colour across the forewings. Rests with wings held above body, or partly raised.

Habitat Woodland, hedges and scrub.

Status and distribution Widespread and common throughout.

Season 3–9, with a gap in the middle.

Similar species
Lunar Thorn *S. lunularia* has much more jagged wing margins. Widespread but local.



Latticed Heath



Common Heath



Brown Silver-line



Speckled Yellow



Brimstone Moth



Canary-shouldered Thorn

Swallowtailed Moth

Ourapteryx sambucaria

A beautiful and distinctive moth, with a wingspan of 55–65mm. Pale yellow overall, with 2 greyish lines across each forewing, and spots of red next to the 'swallow tails' on the hindwings. The larvae closely resemble twigs, especially Ivy.

Habitat Woods, hedges and gardens. Food-plants include Ivy and Hawthorn.

Status and distribution Widespread and moderately common throughout.

Season 6–8.

Belted Beauty

Lycia zonaria

Males have a wingspan of 30–35mm, females are wingless. Males have attractive brown-grey wings striped with white, hindwings paler. Females are small and dark.

Habitat Sand-dunes and grassy areas. Food-plants include Bird's-foot Trefoil, clovers and Burnet Rose.

Status and distribution Rather local, though widespread. Mostly coastal.

Season 3–5.

Peppered Moth

Biston betularia

A largish moth; wingspan up to 62mm. Famous because of its wide variety of colour forms, shown to have evolved in relation to pollution-darkening of tree bark.

Habitat In a wide variety of wooded or lightly treed sites; a wide range of food-plants includes trees and herbs.

Status and distribution Widespread and reasonably common virtually throughout.

Season 5–8.

Scarce Umber

Agriopis aurantiaria

Males have a wingspan of about 40mm, females are wingless. Male forewings are yellowish-brown, with darker markings; the hindwings are very pale. Females dark brown.

Habitat Wooded areas and unimproved farmland.

Status and distribution Widespread and moderately common throughout, except in the far north.

Season 10–12.

Similar species

Dotted Border *A. marginaria* is similar in size and shape, but has a row of dots along the back of all wings. Similar habitats and distribution.

Mottled Umber *Erannis defoliaria* is more strongly marked and mottled, and has a spot in the centre of each forewing. Widespread and common throughout.

Great Oak Beauty

Boarmia roboraria

A large moth; wingspan up to 70mm. Variable in colour, but essentially grey mottled with white and some black, forming a lacy pattern.

Habitat Oak woodland; the larvae feed on oak.

Status and distribution Rather local and mainly southern.

Season 6–8.

Similar species

Pale Oak Beauty *Serraca punctinalis* is smaller and lighter in colour. Similar habitats and distribution.

Black-veined Moth

Siona lineata

A small to medium moth; wingspan up to 50mm. It is creamy-white in colour, and the undersides have a strongly marked pattern of black veins. The moths fly by day, with a weak fluttery flight.

Habitat Limestone and chalk grassland, where Tor Grass occurs.

Status and distribution Very rare in UK, where it is found only in Kent. More widespread on the Continent, commonest towards the south.

Season 5–7.

Similar species

Could be confused with some of the white butterflies (see p.120) but the general differences between moths and butterflies (see p.118) should distinguish them.



Swallowtailed Moth



Belted Beauty, mating



Peppered Moths, pale and dark forms



Great Oak Beauty

Scarce Umber

