



Micro-moths of the Howe of Fife

S.T. Buckland

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I have included those species that I have been able to photograph in and around the Howe of Fife, including the high ground that largely surrounds the Howe. (I have taken the 'high ground' to extend as far east as Lucklawhill.) My thanks go to Nigel Voaden for identifying the more difficult species — and some of the less difficult species!

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Water veneer *Acentria ephemerella*

A locally-distributed species of ponds and lochs. The caterpillars feed on pondweed underwater, and the adult females often stay in the water.





Fir tortrix *Acleris abietana*

The first British record of this species was in Perthshire in 1964. Although spreading, it remains a rare moth. This one was at Kedlock Feus in late October 2022. This is only the third site in Fife where the species has been recorded. Its foodplants are noble and grand firs.





Yellow rose tortrix *Acleris bergmanniana*

This species is very local in Scotland. Its foodplant is roses. This one was at Kedlock Feus in mid-July 2022.



Scalloped tortrix

Acleris emargana

A common woodland and hedgerow species.





Netted tortrix *Acleris forsskaleana*

A locally-distributed species of woodland, hedgerows and gardens.





Dark-marked tortrix *Acleris laterana*

A common species of woodland, hedgerows and gardens.





Lichen tortrix *Acleris literana*

Seldom recorded in Fife, the one shown above and below right was at Kedlock Feus on 1 May 2022, while the one below left was there in mid-April 2021.





Rhomboid tortrix

Acleris rhombana

A common hedgerow species.





Lead-coloured tortrix *Acleris sparsana*

A common species of woodland and gardens.





Garden rose tortrix *Acleris variegana*

A common species of gardens, hedgerows and woodland edge.



The cinereous *Acompsia cinerella*

This species has only very rarely been recorded in Fife. This one was at Elmwood Golf Course in late June 2022.





Hawthorn knot-horn *Acrobasis advenella*

In Fife, a locally-distributed species of hedgerows, woodland and gardens, where hawthorn is available.





Green longhorn *Adela reaumurella*

A scarce 'longhorn' moth. This is a female, which was at Gaddon in late May 2022. Males have antennae more than twice as long as their body.





Thistle straw *Aethes cnicana*

A common species where thistles grow.





Burdock straw *Aethes rubigana*

A locally-distributed species in Scotland, dependent on its foodplant, burdock. This one was at Kedlock Feus in mid-July 2022.



Garden straw

Agapeta hamana

A common species where thistles grow.





Hemlock moth *Agonopterix alstromeriana*

A scarce species in Fife occurring mostly at or near the coast. Its foodplant is hemlock. This one was on Lucklawhill in early May 2024.





Brindled buff *Agonopterix arenella*

A widespread species that can occur throughout the year.





Banded brindled brown *Agonopterix ciliella*

A widespread species that is very similar to *Agonopterix heracliata*, but larger.



Common brindled brown

Agonopterix heracliana

A common species that can occur throughout the year.





Burnt-tip buff *Agonopterix nervosa*

A common species of woodland, heathland and hedgerows.





Red-eyed buff *Agonopterix ocellana*

Fairly common in locations with willows. This one was at Gaddon Loch.



Broom buff *Agonopterix scopariella*

A locally-distributed species that occurs where broom is common.





Barred grass-moth *Agriphila inquinatella*

A locally-distributed species in Fife, occurring mostly at or near the coast. This is the first record from the Howe of Fife and surrounding area, and was at Kedlock Feus in late July 2022.





Straw grass-moth *Agriphila straminella*

An abundant species of grasslands.





Common grass-moth

Agriphila tristella

Another common grassland species.





Beautiful plume *Amblyptilia acanthadactyla*

A common species, occurring in a range of habitats.





Rattle pearl *Anania fuscalis*

A widespread species, common in suitable habitat. These were at Auchtermuchty Common.





Small magpie *Anania hortulata*

A fairly common species, occurring in a range of habitats.





Meadow hook-wing

Ancyliis badiana

A common species of grasslands.





Heath hook-wing *Ancylys unguicella*

A locally-distributed species of heathland and moorland. These were at Black Craig near Norman's Law.





Nettle-tap *Anthophila fabriciana*

A very common species.





Bee moth *Aphomia sociella*

A common moth, whose caterpillars live in bees' or wasps' nests.





Birch marble *Apotomis betuletana*

A fairly common species where birches grow.



White-shouldered marble *Apotomis turbidana*

A common moth where birch or alder trees grow.



Rose tortrix *Archips rosana*

A species that is declining rapidly in the UK, and a rarity in Fife. The male below right was at Kedlock Feus on 17 Aug 2021, while the female was there on 15 Aug 2023.





Dark blackthorn tip moth *Argyresthia albistria*

A fairly common species where blackthorn grows, although it has only been recorded from two locations in Fife previously. These were at Elmwood Golf Course in August 2022.





Hawthorn tip moth *Argyresthia bonnetella*

A common species where hawthorns grow.





Gold W *Argyresthia brockeella*

A common moth where birch or alder trees grow. The above is the more common colour form.





Apple fruit moth

Argyresthia conjugella

A common moth where rowans or apples occur.





Brassy Y *Argyroresthia goedartella*

A common species where birches or alders occur.





Cherry fruit moth
Argyresthia pruniella

A scarce species in Scotland.





Sallow tip moth *Argyrethsia pygmaeella*

A scarce species in Fife, occurring in woodland with willows or poplars.





Purple-washed tip moth *Argyresthia semifusca*

A locally-distributed species that has only been recorded from one location in Fife previously. This one was at Elmwood Golf Course in mid-August 2022.





Triple-barred tip moth *Argyresthia trifasciata*

A locally-distributed species that is increasing its range. Caterpillars are leaf miners of cypress or juniper.





Marsh lance *Bactra furfurana*

Seldom recorded in Fife, this species usually occurs in marshes and bogs. This one was recorded near the clubhouse of Elmwood Golf Course in mid-June 2022.



Common lance *Bactra lancealana*

A common species of wet habitats.





Common masoner *Blastobasis adustella*

A common species of woodland, heathland and gardens.





Large pale masoner

Blastobasis lacticolella

A common species that is increasing its range.





Hawthorn berry moth *Blastodacna hellerella*

A locally-distributed species, occurring in habitats with hawthorn. This one was at Kedlock Feus.



Dingy concealer *Borkhausenia fuscescens*

The tiny moth above was at Kedlock Feus in mid-August 2021. This was the first record of the species in the area covered here, probably because it has been overlooked. The one below was at Elmwood Golf Course in early August 2022.





Dark moss-moth *Bryotropa affinis*

A locally-distributed species associated with moss on buildings.





House moss-moth *Bryotropa domestica*

A locally-distributed species that mostly occurs in gardens where moss grows on walls.





Grizzled moss-moth *Bryotropa senectella*

A locally-distributed species that mostly occurs in gardens where moss grows on walls.



Brown moss-moth

Bryotropha terrella

A common species in a range of habitats.





Daisy tuft *Bucculatrix nigricomella*

A scarce species in Fife. These were by Gaddon Loch in late May 2022.





Birch stilt *Caloptilia betulicola*

This is a scarce species that occurs where birches grow. This one was at Elmwood Golf Course in early August 2022.





Alder stilt *Caloptilia elongella*

An uncommon species that occurs where alders grow. This well-marked individual was at Gaddon Loch in mid-October 2022.





Rufous stilt *Caloptilia rufipennella*

A scarce species in east Fife. It is associated with sycamores and other maples. This one was at Kedlock Feus in early September.





Wood sage plume *Capperia britanniodactylus*

An uncommon moth in Fife. This one was at Elmwood Golf Course in late June 2022.



Chequered grass-moth

Catoptria falsella

A locally-distributed species in Scotland, associated with moss on rooves.





Pearl-banded grass-moth *Catoptria margaritella*

A locally-distributed species, mostly in upland areas.





Pearl grass-moth *Catoptria pinella*

A fairly common species, occurring in wet grassland, moorland and open areas in woodland.



Speedwell longhorn *Cauchas fibulella*

Seldom recorded in Fife, this moth can be found at patches of speedwell. These three were at Heggie's Muir Wood by the Wilderness in June 2022.





Double-barred needle-miner *Cedestis gyssemiella*

A pinewood species seldom recorded in Fife. These were alongside the railway line down from the clubhouse at Elmwood Golf Course in early August 2022.





Barred needle-miner *Cedestis subfasciella*

As for the previous species, a pinewood species seldom recorded in Fife. They were also alongside the railway line down from the clubhouse at Elmwood Golf Course in early August 2022.





Thyme marble *Celypha cespitana*

A locally-distributed species that is mostly coastal in Fife. This one was on Black Craig by Norman's Law in mid-August 2022.



Common marble *Celypha lacunana*

A common species, often seen in daylight.





Silver-striped marble *Celypha rivulana*

Not common, but occurs in a wide range of habitats. This one was at Auchtermuchty Common.



Garden grass-moth *Chrysoteuchia culmella*

A common grassland species.





Rufous tortrix *Clepsis consimilana*

In Fife, this is a locally-distributed species of hedgerows and gardens.





Flax tortrix *Cnephasia asseclana*

A common species, very similar to the next species, but less clearly marked.





Light grey tortrix *Cnephasia incertana*

A common species. Identification not certain!





Buff grey tortrix

Cnephasia longana

A locally-distributed species occurring mostly at or near the coast. These were all recorded at Kedlock Feus.





Common grey tortrix *Cnephasia stephensiana*

A fairly common species in Fife.





Gorse case-bearer *Coleophora albicosta*

Common wherever gorse, its food plant, is plentiful.





Clothed case-bearer
Coleophora mayrella

Common where white clover is plentiful.





Common case-bearer *Coleophora serratella*

A common species of broadleaf woodland. While this image probably shows this species, its identity is not certain.



Meadow grass-moth *Crambus lathoniellus*

A common grassland species.





White-banded grass-moth *Crambus pascuella*

A widely-distributed grass moth, but not recorded from many sites in Fife.





Pea moth *Cydia nigricana*

A scarce grassland species in Scotland. These were at Auchtermuchty Common in late June and early July.





Common gorse moth
Cydia ulicetana

Common wherever gorse is abundant.





Pignut brown *Depressaria pulcherrimella*

A grassland species that is seldom recorded in Fife. This one was at Gaddon Loch.





Parsnip moth *Depressaria radiella*

A common species where its foodplants occur, common hogweed and wild parsnip.





Chervil brown *Depressaria sordidatella*

This moth was at Elmwood Golf Course on 7 July 2022, only the second location in Fife for this rare grassland species to be recorded.



Dingy daisy moth / northern yarrow moth

Dichrorampha aeratana / *alpestrana*

Two species that are very difficult to separate. *D alpestrana* is the more common species and is widespread in Scotland.





Red-barred tortrix *Ditula angustiorana*

A locally-distributed species in Scotland, occurring in woodland, hedgerows and gardens.





Early reveller *Diurna fagella*

A common species of deciduous woodland.





Dotted cloak *Eana osseana*

A common species of rough grassland and moorland.





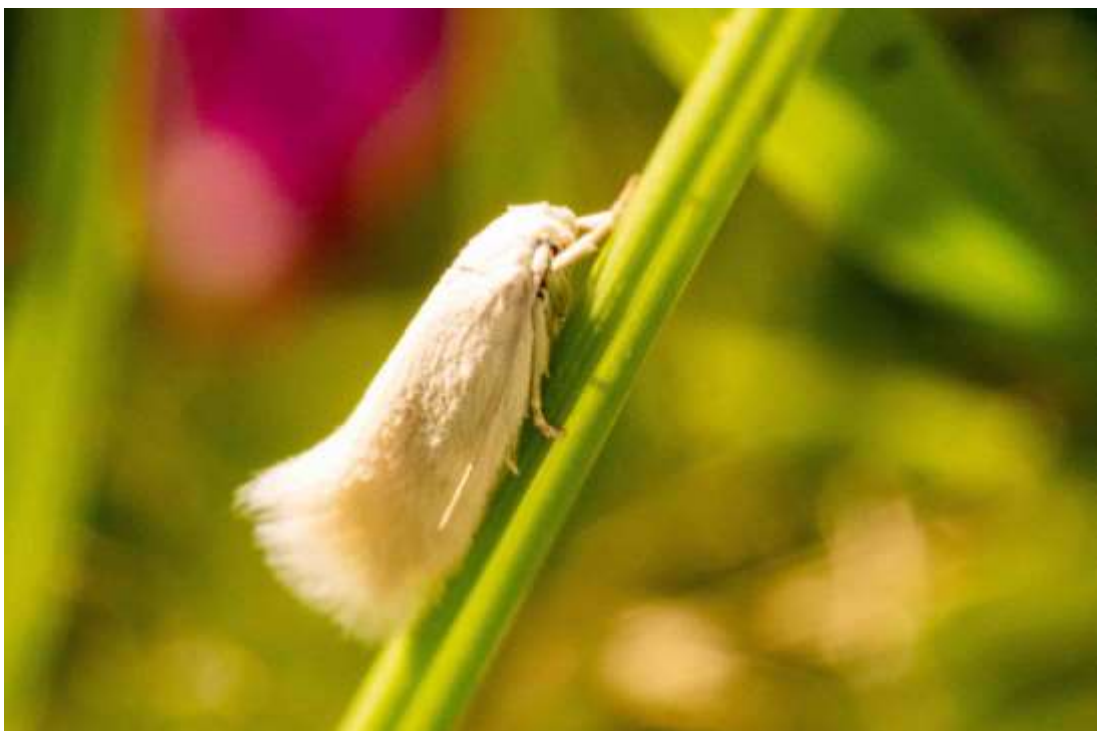
White-headed grass-miner *Elachista albifrontella*

A common grassland species.



Silver grass-miner *Elachista argentella*

A fairly common grassland species.





Cock's-foot miner *Elachista atricomella*

A common species of woodland and grassland.



Yellow-headed grass-miner *Elachista luticomella*

A fairly common species in grassy habitats.





Triple-spotted grass-miner *Elachista triatomea*

This species has only rarely been recorded in Fife. These two were by the pools at Elmwood Golf Course in late June 2022.





Brown china-mark *Elophila nymphaeata*

A fairly local species in Scotland. The one above was at Clatto Reservoir in mid-August 2020, while the one below is a dark form, at Elmwood Golf Course in July 2022.





Common plume *Emmelina monodactyla*

Despite its name, it is not especially common in Fife, or elsewhere in Scotland.



Cherry bark tortrix *Enarmonia formosana*

A very local species in Scotland, occurring in gardens, parkland and hedgerows.



Marsh marble *Endothenia quadrimaculana*

A locally-distributed species, occurring mostly in wet habitats.





White-shouldered house-
moth *Endrosis sarcitrella*

Common and the most easily recognised species of 'clothes moth', with its familiar white head and shoulders.





Common ridge-back *Epermenia chaerophyllella*

A tiny moth that occurs in a wide range of habitats. In Fife, it has seldom been recorded away from the Firth of Forth coast. The one above and below left was at Gaddon Loch in mid-October 2023, while the one below right was at Elmwood golf course in early May 2022.





Knapweed root-borer *Epiblema cirsiiana*

A common species. Identity not certain!



Ragwort root-borer *Epiblema costipunctana*

A common species. Identity not certain!



Thistle root-borer *Epiblema scutulana*

A common species of wet, rough grassland. Identity not certain!



Brown elm tortrix *Epinotia abbreviana*

A locally-distributed species of woodland and hedgerows.



Birch tortrix *Epinotia immundana*

A common species of open woodland and heathland with birch or alder.



Small spruce tortrix *Epinotia nanana*

A tiny tortrix, about 4mm long. This one was at Elmwood Golf Course in July 2022.



Brindled poplar tortrix

Epinotia nisella

A species of woodland, hedgerows and gardens, locally distributed in Fife.





Black-marked tortrix

Epinotia ramella

A common species of woodland and heathland.





Nut bud moth *Epinotia tenerana*

A common woodland and garden species.



Light brown apple moth *Epiphyas postvittana*

A naturalised species from Australia that has become fairly widespread in the UK. This one was at Kedlock Feus in late September 2022.



Sulphur bark moth *Esperia sulphurella*

A common species, although less common in Scotland than further south.





Pied tortrix *Eucosma campoliliana*

Locally-distributed in Fife, this species occurs where ragwort grows.



Hoary tortrix

Eucosma cana

A common grassland species.





Common knapweed tortrix *Eucosma hohenwartiana*

Not widely recorded in Fife, this one was at Auchtermuchty Common. Its food plant is common knapweed.





Narrow-winged grey

Eudonia angustea

A locally-distributed species of shingle, woodland and gardens.





Tawny grey *Eudonia lacustrata*

A common species of open habitats and woodland.





Garden grey *Eudonia mercurella*

A fairly common species of woodland, moorland and grassland.





Peppered grey *Eudonia truncicolella*

A fairly common species in habitats with moss.





Dark-barred straw *Eupoecilia angustana*

A fairly common species of open woodland, meadows and heathland.



Yellow-dotted stilt *Euspilapteryx auroguttella*

A fairly common species of rough grassland.





Chequered pearl *Evergestis pallidata*

A locally-distributed species in Scotland, occurring in damp woodland.





Yarrow plume *Gillmeria pallidactyla*

A common species of dry grassland.





Cocksfoot moth *Glyphopterix simpliciella*

A tiny, very abundant species.





Garden stilt

Gracillaria syringella

A tiny, common species of woodland and gardens.





White-underwing piercer *Grapholita internana*

A locally-distributed species associated with gorse. This one was at Rossie Bog.



Hawthorn piercer *Grapholita janthinana*

A rare species in Scotland. This one is worn, making it difficult to be certain of the identification. It was at Elmwood Golf Course in July 2022.



Beautiful crescent *Grapholita jungiella*

A locally-distributed species associated with gorse. This one was at Rossie Bog.





Marbled orchard tortrix *Hedya nubiferana*

A locally-distributed species mostly of woodland and gardens in Fife.





Plum tortrix *Hedya pruniana*

Rarely recorded in Fife, this species was probably attracted to Gaddon Loch by the large area of blackthorn. This is one of several recorded there in summer 2022.



Brown house-moth *Hofmannophila pseudospretella*

A common species, often occurring in houses and buildings.





Slender rufous tortrix *Lathronympha strigana*

A local species of grassland in Scotland. These were at Auchtermuchty Common in late June and early July.





Broom stem-miner *Leucoptera spartifoliella*

A tiny moth that is common where brooms grow.





Bulrush down moth *Limnaecia phragmitella*

A local species in Scotland, occurring where bulrushes grow.





Knapweed seedhead moth *Metzneria metzneriella*

A local species in Fife. It occurs where its foodplant, common knapweed, grows, such as grassland and road verges.





White-line pollen-moth *Micropterix aruncella*

A tiny species that can be common in grassland and woodland. Can appear anything from black to golden depending on the light. The male (above) has two white stripes.





Yellow-barred pollen-moth *Micropterix aureatella*

Common on heathland and moorland.





Plain pollen-moth *Micropterix calthella*

A tiny species that can be abundant.





Gorse streak *Mirificarma mulinella*

Common on heathland and moorland.





Great mompha *Mompha conturbatella*

A common species where willowherb occurs.





Amber mompha *Mompha ochraceella*

This one was at Elmwood Golf Course in July 2022 — only the third location in Fife where this species has been recorded. Its foodplant is great willowherb.



Burnished sorrel moth *Monochroa tenebrella*

A locally-distributed species. These males were at Auchtermuchty Common.





Carrion moth *Monopis weaverella*

A common species of woods and gardens.





Cork moth *Nemapogon cloacella*

A common species of woodland and gardens.





Sandy longhorn *Nematopogon schwarziellus*

This species of longhorn moth is not often recorded in Fife. Its caterpillars feed on dead leaves. This one was at Gaddon Loch in late May 2023.





Heather grey *Neofaculta ericetella*

A common species of heather moorland. This one was at Black Craig by Norman's Law.





Rush veneer *Nomophila noctuella*

A scarce, mostly coastal species in Fife. This one was at Kedlock Feus in late September 2022, and is the first record from the area covered here.





Black cloak *Notocelia cynosbatella*

A common species.





Large rose shoot moth *Notocelia roborana*

A scarce species in Fife. The foodplant of the caterpillars are roses. This one was at Kedlock Feus in late July 2023.





Hawthorn shoot moth *Notocelia trimaculana*

A locally-distributed species of open woodland in Fife.





Double orange-spot *Pammene aurana*

Generally local in Scotland, but can be common in the Howe of Fife. Often seen on flower-heads, especially of its foodplant, common hogweed.





Barred fruit-tree tortrix *Pandemis cerasana*

A common species of woodland, hedgerows and gardens.





Dark fruit-tree tortrix *Pandemis heparana*

A common species of woodland and gardens.





Hawthorn drab *Paraswammerdamia nebulella*

A locally-distributed species in Scotland, occurring in areas with hawthorn or rowan.





Rowan parornix *Parornix scoticella*

This tiny species is not often recorded in Fife. This one was at Gaddon Loch in early June 2022.





Mother of pearl *Patania ruralis*

A common species of woodland and gardens.





Phycitodes sp.

A group of three species that cannot be reliably separated from images. There are a few records from Fife, mostly at or near the coast. This one was inland, at Black Craig near Norman's Law, in early September 2023.





Firethorn leaf miner *Phyllonorycter leucographella*

This is a species that has spread into Fife from the south. Its caterpillars live within leaves of *Pyracantha*.





Triangle plume *Platyptilia gonodactyla*

A common species of wasteland and rough grassland.





Heath streak *Pleurota bicostella*

These moths were at Black Craig by Norman's Law. Although common where heather occurs in parts of the country, this is only the second location in Fife where this species has been recorded.





Diamond-back moth *Plutella xylostella*

A common species in a wide range of habitats.





Ash bud moth *Prays fraxinella*

A species rarely recorded in Fife. It can occur in woodland, hedgerows and gardens with mature ash trees. The one above and below right was at Kedlock Feus in early September 2021, and the one below left was there in mid-August 2022. These are both the dark form of the species, or might possibly be *Prays ruficeps*.





Yellow-spotted tortrix *Pseudargyrotoza conwagana*

A common species of woodland and gardens.





Northern diamond-back *Rhigognostis incarnatella*

Previously rare, this species is becoming more common in Fife.





Holly tortrix *Rhopobota naevana*

Not restricted to holly, this tiny moth can occur in a wide range of habitats. The one above was high up on Black Craig, by Norman's Law, while the one below was at Kedlock Feus.





Spotted shoot moth *Rhyacionia pinivorana*

The moth below left was at Kedlock Feus in mid-July 2021. It was the sixth record of the species from Fife, and just the second record away from Tentsmuir. The moth above and bottom right was at Elmwood Golf Course in late June 2022.





Common grey *Scoparia ambigualis*

A common species occurring in a variety of habitats, wherever moss occurs.





Brown-spot grey *Scoparia pyralella*

A locally-distributed species of open habitats, where ribwort plantain grows.





Large grey *Scoparia subfusca*

Locally distributed away from the coast in Fife.





Common thistle miner *Scrobipalpa acuminatella*

The identity of this moth is not certain, as there are other very similar moths in the same genus as *S acuminatella*. It is a fairly common grassland species dependent on thistles.





Twin-spot plume *Stenoptilia bipunctidactyla*

A locally-distributed species of grassland, where field scabious or devil's bit scabious grows. This one was at Kedlock Feus in early September 2021.





Brown plume *Stenoptilia pterodactyla*

A locally-distributed species of woodland margins and dry grassland.





Dark-barred tortrix *Syndemis musculana*

A common species occurring in a variety of habitats.





Common groundling *Teleiopsis diffinis*

Except at Tentsmuir, this is a rare species in Fife. This one was at Black Craig near Norman's Law in early September 2023.





Orange-tipped nest moth *Tinea semifulvella*

The caterpillars of this species feed on the debris in bird nests.





Triple-spotted nest moth *Tinea trinotella*

This species is seldom recorded in Fife. This one was on Elmwood Golf Course in mid-May 2022. The caterpillars of this species feed on the detritus in bird nests.





Spring harbinger *Tortricodes alternella*

Fife is on the edge of the range of this species. It is an early-season species that occurs mostly on or near oak trees, and these were at Gaddon Loch (right) and Auchtermuchty Common.





Pale straw pearl *Udea lutealis*

A common species of woodland, hedgerows and gardens.





Garden pearl *Udea olivalis*

A common species of woodland, hedgerows and gardens.





Dusky pearl *Udea prunalis*

A locally-distributed species of woodland, hedgerows and gardens.





Bird-cherry ermine *Yponomeuta evonymella*

A common species, even away from where bird-cherry occurs. Its caterpillars make communal webs on bird-cherry.





Orchard, apple and spindle ermines

Yponomeuta padella / *malinellus* / *cagnagella*

These three species cannot be separated from images, but these are most likely to be orchard ermines.





Honeysuckle moth *Ypsolopha dentella*

A common species of woods and gardens.





Varied ochre *Ypsolopha ustella*

A highly-variable species of oak woodland. This one was at Auchtermuchty Common in late February 2022.





Spruce bud moth *Zeiraphera ratzeburgiana*

A fairly common species of conifer plantations, mixed woodland and gardens.





Ash spinner *Zelleria hepariella*

A scarce species of woodland. This one was at Kedlock Feus in late April 2023, and was the first record for east Fife.





Timothy tortrix *Zelothereses paleana*

A fairly common species of damp, rough ground.

