



Macro-moths of the East Neuk

S.T. Buckland

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I have included images of the species that I have been able to photograph in and around the East Neuk. My thanks go to Nigel Voaden for identifying the more difficult species.

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1/April/2024

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Angle shades

Common across a range of habitats and through most of the year. Autumn numbers are boosted by immigrants.





Anomalous

A rare species in Fife. This worn one was at Fleecefaulds in late August 2023, and is the first one recorded in the area covered here.





Antler moth

A common species with antler-like markings, often seen feeding on flowers such as ragwort during the day.





Autumnal rustic

A common autumn species of open country.





Barred chestnut

A locally-distributed species of broadleaved woodland and moorland. This one was at Keil's Den.





Barred straw

Common in a variety of lowland habitats.





Barred yellow

A pretty species that can be fairly common where wild roses grow.





Beautiful carpet

A scarce woodland species. This one was at Fleecefaulds in late July 2023.





Beautiful golden Y

A fairly common species in a range of habitats.





Black rustic

A common autumn species of open habitats.





Blair's shoulder-knot

Not a native of Britain, this species first arrived in Scotland in 2001. Its caterpillars feed on cypresses, so that it is most likely to occur in gardens and parks. This one was at Lower Kilminning in early October 2023.





Blue-bordered carpet

A scarce species in Fife, occurring mostly in damp woodland. This one was at Keil's Den.





Bordered white

Common where pines grow.





Brick

An autumn species of broad-leaved woodland, not numerous in Fife. Those above and below were at Lower Kilminning in late October 2022, while the one on the right was at Keil's Den in early October 2023.





Bright-line brown-eye

A summer species that occurs in a wide range of habitats.





Brimstone moth

A common woodland species.





Brindled pug

A common spring species where oaks grow. This one was at Keil's Den.





Broad-bordered yellow underwing

Common in broadleaved woodland.



Brown rustic

A common species of broadleaved woodland, and occurs in a range of other habitats.





Brown silver-line

A common species of early summer, wherever bracken occurs. The one above was unusually early, at Keil's Den in mid-April.





Brown-spot pinion

A declining autumn species, but still quite common in Fife.





Buff footman

This species is a recent arrival in Fife, spreading from the south. These were at Bankhead moss.





Buff-tip

This moth of open woodland is uncommon in Fife. When at rest, it looks like a broken birch twig. These were at Fleecefaulds in early June 2023.





Burnished brass

A common species, especially anywhere that nettles grow.





Canary-shouldered thorn

A common woodland species in autumn.





Centre-barred sallow

A common autumn species where ashes grow.





Chestnut

Chestnuts overwinter as adults and are usually seen in autumn and early spring.





Clay

A fairly common grassland species. These were at Keil's Den and Fleecefaulds.





Clouded border

A common woodland species.





Clouded-bordered brindle

A common species of broadleaved woodland.





Clouded drab

A common woodland species in spring. Its markings are variable.





Clouded silver

A woodland species that is expanding its range in Scotland.





Common carpet

A common summer species in a range of habitats.





Common footman

This species is becoming more common in Scotland. In Fife, it occurs mostly at or near the coast. This one was at Keil's Den in mid-July.





Common lutestring

A sparsely distributed species in east Fife. These were at Bankhead Moss, where there are plenty of birches to provide food for the caterpillars.





Common marbled carpet

A variable species that is common in summer and autumn in a range of habitats.





Common pug

A common summer pug in a range of habitats.





Common quaker

A very common spring moth.





Common rustic / lesser common rustic

Two common grassland species with variable markings that cannot be separated from images.





Common swift

A common grassland species.





Common wainscot

Very similar to the more common smoky wainscot, but with white underwings instead of smoky.



Common wave

A common species of damp woodland, especially where willows or poplars grow.





Common white wave

A common woodland species, especially where birches, alders or willows grow.





Copper underwing

As with the very similar Svensson's copper underwing, this is a southern species that has spread into Scotland, and is now fairly common in Fife.





Coxcomb prominent

A fairly common woodland species.





Currant pug

Occurs where wild hops or garden currants grow. These were at Fleecefaulds and Bank-head Moss.





Dark arches

A common species of grasslands, and wherever grasses grow.





Dark chestnut

A rare species in Fife, these were at Lower Kilminning in October 2023. They may have arrived from across the Firth of Forth.





Dark marbled carpet

A common species of woodland and moorland.





Dark sword-grass

A migrant moth from southern Europe in small numbers, mostly coastal. The one above was at Fleecefaulds in mid-August 2023, while those below and on the right were at Lower Kilminning in late October 2022 and early October 2023 respectively.





December moth

A common species in late autumn and early winter.





Dotted border

A common early spring species, most numerous in woodland.





Dotted clay

A common summer species in a range of habitats.





Double lobed

This species has expanded its range, but is still very scarce in Fife. This worn individual was at Bankhead moss in early August 2023.





Double square-spot

A common species occurring in a range of habitats.





Double-striped pug

A small pug that is common across a range of habitats.





Dun-bar

A common species, especially in woodland.





Dusky brocade

A common grassland species.





Dwarf pug

A fairly common pug, mostly associated with conifer plantations.



Early grey

A spring species, occurring mostly in woodland. Relatively scarce in east Fife.





Early moth

These two were at Keil's Den in late January 2023. This is only the second record of this species in Fife.





Early thorn

This attractive moth is common in woodland in late spring.





Early tooth-striped

A fairly common spring species, mostly of broadleaved woodland.





Elephant hawk-moth

This large, showy moth is quite common, especially where willowherb grows.





Engrailed

A fairly common woodland species, mostly of spring and early summer.





Fan-foot

A fairly common species of broadleaved woodland, where the caterpillars feed on dead or dying leaves.



Feathered thorn

A common autumn species of broadleaved woodland.





Flame

A fairly common species across a range of habitats.





Flame carpet

A common species across a range of habitats.





Flame shoulder

A common species across a range of habitats.





Flounced rustic

Common in grassy habitats.





Garden carpet

Common in a range of habitats.





Garden dart

This species is declining rapidly, and is a rare species in Fife. This one was at Fleecefaulds on 28 August 2023.





Garden tiger

Common in open habitats.





Ghost moth

A fairly common grassland species. Female above, male below.





Gold spangle

A scarce species in Fife, occurring on moorland, upland pasture and woodland. This one was at Fleecefaulds in late July 2023.





Gold swift

A locally-distributed species, but can be quite abundant where it occurs. It is often associated with bracken.





Golden-rod pug

A fairly common species that occurs in a range of habitats.





Grass rivulet

A locally-distributed grassland species.





Green arches

A large, impressive species of broadleaved woodland.





Green-brindled crescent

A common autumn species of broadleaved woodland and hedgerows, wherever hawthorns grow.





Green carpet

A common species that occurs in a range of habitats. The faded individual bottom left was at Keil's Den in early October.





Grey dagger

A fairly common species across a range of habitats.





Grey pine carpet

A common species where conifers grow.





Grey pug

A common species that occurs in a range of habitats.





Heart and club

A scarce species in Fife that is becoming more common. The one above was at Fleecefaulds in early July 2023, and the one below at Keil's Den a few days later.





Heart and dart

Common in a very wide range of habitats.





Hebrew character

A very common spring species across a wide range of habitats.





Herald

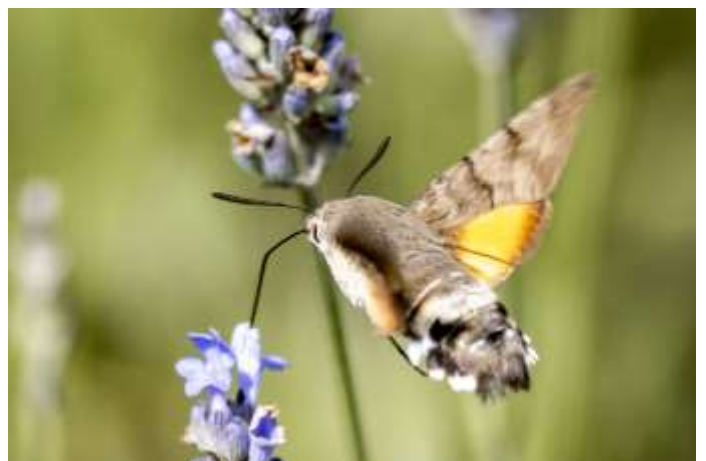
Occurs in small numbers where willows or poplars grow. This one was hibernating in St Filian's Cave at Pittenweem.





Hummingbird hawk-moth

A scarce migrant to the East Neuk from southern Europe and northern Africa. These were at Balcomie in mid-September 2022.





Ingrailed clay

A fairly common and very variable species of woodland and moorland.





Iron prominent

A woodland species of late spring and early summer that is becoming more common.





July highflyer

Common in a range of habitats.





Knot grass

A species of open habitats that is fairly scarce in Fife.





Large emerald

A fairly common and impressive woodland species.





Large yellow underwing

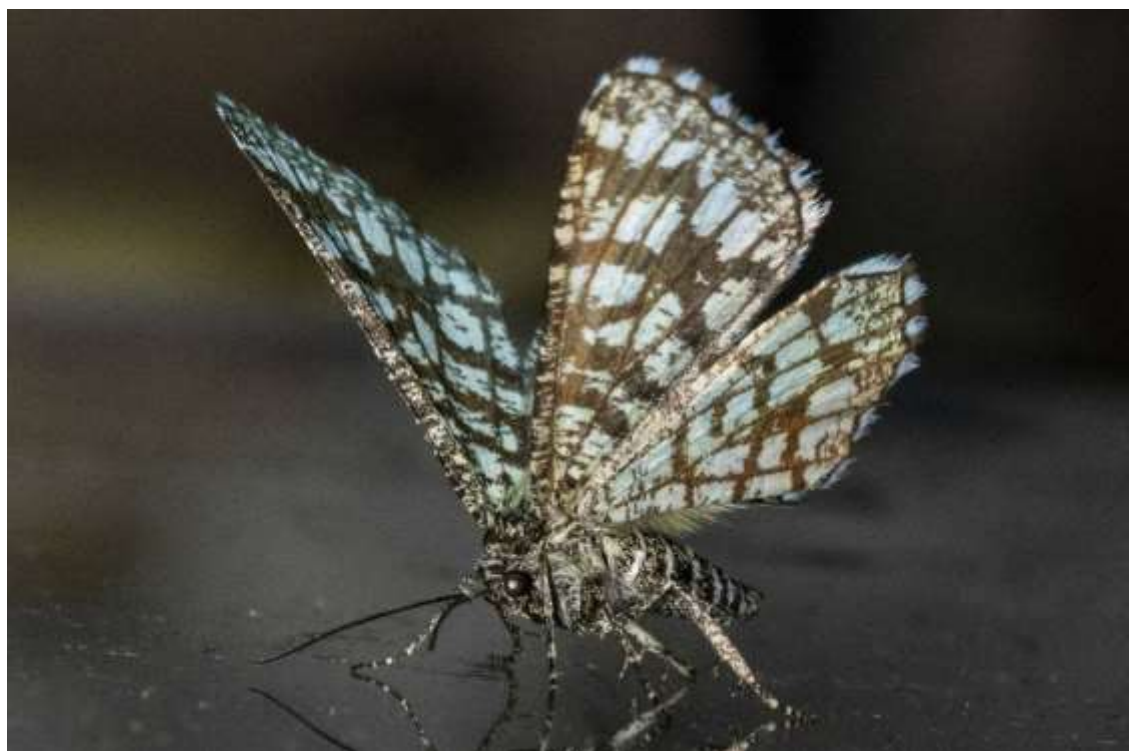
A large, variable and very common grassland species.





Latticed heath

This species is widely-distributed but not especially common in Fife.





Least black arches

A woodland species of late spring and early summer that is becoming more common.





Lempke's gold spot

A locally-distributed species of damp habitats. This one was at Bankhead Moss in early July.



Lesser broad-bordered yellow underwing

Common and sometimes abundant across a range of habitats.





Lesser swallow prominent

A fairly common species where birch trees grow.





Lesser yellow underwing

This variable species is common across a range of habitats.





Light emerald

A common species, especially in broadleaved woodland.





Lunar hornet moth

The larvae live in willow trunks for two years. The species has seldom been recorded in Fife. This male was at Cameron Reservoir in early July 2023.





Lunar thorn

A locally-distributed woodland species.





Lunar underwing

A common autumn species in grassland habitats.





Lychnis

Common wherever white or red campion grows.





Map-winged swift

A common species in areas of Fife with bracken.





Marbled coronet

This species is scarce and mostly coastal in Fife, although this one was at Fleecefaulds on 20 June 2023.



Marbled minor / tawny marbled minor / rufous minor

These three species cannot be reliably separated from photos. Marbled minor is the most common. These two moths are darker than most marbled minors and rufous minors, which increases the chance that they are tawny marbled minors.





March moth

A common early spring species, most numerous in woodland.





Middle-barred minor

A common summer species of grasslands, often seen on flowerheads in daylight.





Miller

A scarce species in Fife, occurring where birches or alders grow.





Mottled beauty

A common species, especially in woodland.





Mottled grey

An early spring species, occurring in small numbers in mostly open habitats. This one was at Bankhead Moss in mid-March 2024.





Mottled pug

A local species of woodland and scrub in Fife. These were at Keil's Den in late May and early June, and Fleecefaulds in early June.





Mottled rustic

Occurs in a range of habitats. It is scarce in Fife. This one was at Keil's Den in early June.





Mouse moth

A common and widespread species. When threatened, it scuttles like a mouse, hence its name.





Narrow-bordered five-spot burnet

This species arrived in Fife a few years ago, and has been spreading east along the Forth. These are the first to be recorded in the East Neuk, and were at Lower Kilminning on 11 July 2022.





Narrow-winged pug

This is mostly a species of heathland and moorland, but this one was at Fleecefaulds in early July 2023.





November moth

A common autumn species, occurring in broadleaved woodland, hedgerows and gardens.





Nut-tree tussock

A common species of broadleaved woodland.





Oak beauty

An uncommon species in Fife, especially in east Fife. This one was near a patch of oaks in Keil's Den in mid-March 2023.





Oak nycteoline

Not often recorded in Fife, this one was at Keil's Den in late March 2023.





Old lady

An unmistakable moth with very large wings. It is very sparsely distributed, occurring mostly in river valleys. This one was at Keil's Den in late August 2023.





Orange sallow

A scarce species of deciduous woodland in Fife. This one was at Bankhead Moss in early September 2023.





Orange swift

Fairly scarce in Fife. It occurs in areas with rough grass.





Pale brindled beauty

A common species of late winter and early spring. These were at Keil's Den in late January. The one below is the uncommon melanic form.





Pale pinion

A local spring species that is spreading north through Scotland. This one was at Keil's Den in late March 2023.





Pale-shouldered brocade

A common woodland species.





Peach blossom

A scarce species in Fife. These were at Keil's Den in mid-June 2023. Although a big, showy moth (above), it is remarkably difficult to spot when it folds its wings around a twig (below).





Pearly underwing

A migrant moth that is rarely recorded in Fife. These were at Lower Kilminning, two on 27 October 2022 and two on 23 October 2023.





Pebble prominent

Occurs where willows or poplars grow.



Peppered moth

A fairly common species in woodland.





Phoenix

A scarce species in Fife, occurring in gardens and woodland. Its foodplants are black- and redcurrants and goose berries. This one was at Fleecefaulds.





Pine carpet

Appreciably less common than the grey pine carpet in Fife, occurring where pines grow. These were at Fleecefaulds in mid-September.





Pinion-streaked snout

A scarce species of damp habitats. The one above was at Fleecefaulds in late July 2023, and the one below at Bankhead Moss in late September 2023.





Pink-barred sawfly

A common autumn species, especially in broad-leaved woodland and marshes.





Plain golden Y

Fairly common across a range of habitats.





Powdered quaker

A scarce species in Fife, occurring mostly in wet habitats. This worn individual was at Fleecefaulds in mid-May 2023.





Purple clay

A fairly common species of broadleaved woodland and wooded heathland.





Red chestnut

In Fife, a scarce spring species of broadleaved woodland. This one was at Keil's Den in late March 2023.





Red-green carpet

A common autumn species, and again in spring, when it emerges from hibernation.





Red-line quaker

A common autumn species where willows grow.





Red-necked footman

A scarce woodland species in Fife. These were at Bankhead Moss in late June and early July 2023.





Red sword-grass

A widely-distributed but scarce species of moorland, rough pasture and damp woodland. The one above was at Bankhead Moss in early April 2023, while the others were at Kilminning in late October 2022.





Riband wave

Common across a range of habitats.





Rivulet

A common species where red campion grows.





Ruby tiger

A fairly common species of open habitats.





Rustic

A common species in lowland habitats.





Rustic shoulder-knot

A fairly common species in habitats with grass.





Sandy carpet

A common species in a range of habitats.



Satellite

A common species in autumn and spring.





Satin beauty

This species is most common in conifer plantations, but also occurs in ancient broadleaved woodland, such as at Keil's Den, where the above male was recorded. The male below was at Flecefaulds.





Scallop shell

A species of damp woodland. On the edge of its range in Fife, and uncommon.





Scalloped hazel

A common woodland species of late spring and early summer.





Scarce umber

Despite its name, a common species of broadleaved woodland in late autumn and early winter.





Setaceous hebrew character

A common lowland species.





Shaded broad-bar

Common in grassy habitats, and often disturbed during the day.





Shoulder stripe

A common spring species of woodland.





Shuttle-shaped dart

A southern species that has spread into Scotland, occurring in a range of habitats.





Silver-ground carpet

A common and often abundant species in a range of habitats. Often seen in daylight.





Silver Y

An abundant migrant moth, occurring in a wide range of habitats.





Single-dotted wave

This species is close to the northern limit of its range in Fife. It occurs in woodland and damp habitats.





Six-spot burnet

A day-flying moth that occurs in areas with flowery grassland, especially at or near the coast.





Six-striped rustic

A common species of wet and damp habitats.





Slender brindle

A fairly common woodland species.





Small angle shades

A fairly common species of woodland, moorland and gardens.





Small clouded brindle

A common species of broadleaved woodland.





Small dotted buff

A species of wet grassland. Not numerous in the east of Fife. These were at Bankhead Moss.





Small fan-foot

A common species of broadleaved woodland.





Small fan-footed wave

A common species, mostly in broadleaved woodland.





Small phoenix

A common species, especially in woodland.





Small quaker

A woodland spring species that is towards the northern edge of its range. The one above was at Bankhead Moss, while the one below was at Keil's Den.





Small rivulet

Very similar to the rivulet. It is common, occurring in a range of habitats.





Small square-spot

A common summer species in a range of habitats.





Small wainscot

A locally-distributed species of damp habitats.





Smoky wainscot

A common grassland species.





Snout

A common species where nettles grow.





Spectacle

This species is not numerous in east Fife. The foodplant of its caterpillars is nettles. These were at Bankhead Moss.





Spruce carpet

A common species where conifers grow.





Square-spot rustic

A common grassland species.





Straw dot

A fairly common grassland species.





Streak

A locally-distributed species in Fife, occurring where broom grows. These were at Lower Kilminning.





Streamer

A common and attractive woodland species in spring.





Suspected

A scarce species. These rather worn individuals were at Bankhead Moss in mid-August 2023.





Svensson's copper underwing

A southern species that has spread into Scotland, and is now fairly common in Fife.





Swallow prominent

Fairly common where poplars or sallows grow.





Swallow-tailed moth

A large, butterfly-like woodland species that is fairly common.



Tawny-barred angle

Common, occurring mostly in conifer plantations.





Tawny speckled pug

A fairly common species of grasslands, open woodland and coastal habitats.





Twin-spot carpet

A fairly common species occurring in a variety of habitats.





Twin-spotted quaker

A common species of woodland that has spread from the south through Scotland in recent years. These were at Keil's Den.





V-pug

This species is becoming more common and widespread. It occurs in a variety of habitats.





Water carpet

A common spring species, occurring mostly in April and May. The one below is the dark form.





Welsh wave

A locally-distributed species of moorland and woodland. This one was at Keil's Den in mid-July.



White ermine

Common in a wide range of habitats.





Willow beauty

The caterpillars of this species feed on a variety of trees and bushes, many of which are common in gardens, so this species is perhaps more likely to be encountered in towns and villages than in rural areas.





Winter moth

A widespread and common species of late autumn and early winter.





Yellow-barred brindle

A scarce species of broadleaved woodland. These were at Keil's Den and at Fleecefaulds.





Yellow horned

An early spring species that can be numerous in birch woodland. These were two of 29 recorded at Magus Muir in one evening in early March.





Yellow-line quaker

A common species of broad-leaved woodland, moorland and hedgerows.





Yellow shell

A common summer species across a range of habitats.

