

Micro-moths of Carphin

S.T. Buckland

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I have included those species that I have been able to photograph on Carphin Farm. My thanks go to Nigel Voaden for identifying the more difficult species — and some of the less difficult species! I'm also grateful to Stuart Paul, Briony Harcus, Ross Stuart and Billy Walker for welcoming me to Carphin, and giving me free access.

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Water veneer *Acentria ephemerella*

A local species in Fife, but it can be numerous where it occurs. This was one of several by one of the wildlife pools.





Small rufous tortrix *Acleris aspersana*

A species of grassland and heathland. One of its foodplants is rock-rose, and this one was at the top of the church track, not far from a large patch of rock-rose, in mid–August 2026.





Scalloped tortrix *Acleris emargana*

A fairly common species, especially where willows grow, although the larvae also occur on some other species of deciduous tree.





Netted tortrix *Acleris forsskaleana*

A locally-distributed species in Scotland, occurring in areas with sycamores.







Heath tortrix *Acleris hyemana*

A scarce species of heathland and moorland, recorded as an adult mostly in autumn and spring. This one was on Black Craig in late October 2025.



Dark-marked tortrix *Acleris laterana*

A common species of gardens, hedgerows and woodland.





Rhomboid tortrix *Acleris rhombana*

A common hedgerow species.







Lead-coloured tortrix *Acleris sparsana*

Common where beeches or sycamores grow, occurring mostly in autumn.





Garden rose tortrix *Acleris variegana*

Fairly common in gardens, hedgerows and woodland margins.



Hawthorn knot-horn *Acrobasis advenella*

Fairly common where hawthorns grow.







Green longhorn *Adela reaumurella*

A locally-distributed species, occurring mostly in broadleaved woodland. The males above and below right were on Berry Brae in mid-May 2025, and the female was there in late May 2026.







Thistle straw *Aethes cnicana*

A common species where thistles grow.







Garden straw *Agapeta hamana*

Common in areas with thistles.







Brindled buff *Agonopterix arenella*

A widespread species that can occur throughout the year.







Common brindled brown *Agonopterix heracliana*

A very common species, often found wintering in garages or outbuildings.







Burnt-tip buff *Agonopterix nervosa*

A common species of woodland, heathland and hedgerows.







Red-eyed buff *Agonopterix ocellana*

This species occurs almost throughout the year where willows grow.





Broom buff *Agonopterix scopariella*

This species is relatively scarce species in Fife, occurring in areas with broom.





Gorse buff *Agonopterix umbellana*

A scarce species, seldom recorded in Fife. Most Scottish records are from coastal areas. These were recorded at Carphin in late February 2025 and early March 2026.







Barred grass-moth *Agriphila inquinatella*

A locally-distributed species in Fife, occurring mostly at or near the coast. This was the second record from the Howe of Fife and surrounding area, and was at Black Craig in mid-August 2022.



Straw grass-moth *Agriphila straminella*

A very common summer moth of grasslands.







Common grass-moth *Agriphila tristella*

A very common summer moth of grasslands, first appearing later in the year than the smaller *Agriphila straminella*.







Rattle pearl *Anania fuscalis*

A common species mostly of open habitats.





Heath hook-wing *Ancylis unguicella*

A locally-distributed species of heathland and moorland. These were at Black Craig.





Nettle-tap *Anthophila fabriciana*

A very common species associated with nettles.







Bee moth *Aphomia sociella*

A fairly common species. Its caterpillars live in bee and wasp nests, feeding on detritus and larvae.





Birch marble *Apotomis betuletana*

A common species where birches grow.





Least marble *Apotomis sauciana*

A rare species in Fife. This one was in a patch of bilberry on Black Craig. It is only the second record for Fife, and the only recent record.







Hawthorn tip moth *Argyresthia bonnetella*

A common species where hawthorns grow.





Apple fruit moth *Argyresthia conjugella*

The common name indicates that apple is a foodplant of the caterpillars of this species. However, these were in areas with rowans, which is an alternative foodplant for the species.







Brassy Y *Argyresthia goedartella*

Common and sometimes numerous on birch trees.





Cherry fruit moth *Argyresthia pruniella*

A scarce species in Scotland. This one was on one of the geans that are in the hawthorn hedge above Carphin Farmhouse.





Marsh lance *Bactra furfurana*

A locally-distributed species occurring at bogs, ponds and marshes. This one was at the pond where the path from Luthrie to Norman's Law departs from the track to Carphin farmhouse.



Common lance *Bactra lancealana*

A common species in damp and wet habitats where rushes grow.







Common masoner *Blastobasis adustella*

A common species in a range of habitats.







Large pale masoner *Blastobasis lacticolella*

A common species in a range of habitats.







Grizzled moss-moth *Bryotropha senectella*

A local species in Scotland, occurring in areas with moss growing on rocks or walls.







Brown moss-moth *Bryotropha terrella*

A common species in a range of habitats.





Rufous stilt *Caloptilia rufipennella*

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



Stitchwort groundling *Caryocolum fraternella*

A rare species in Scotland. These were at Carphin in early August 2026.







Chequered grass-moth *Catoptria falsella*

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







Pearl-banded grass-moth *Catoptria margaritella*

A locally-distributed species, mostly in upland areas. These were on Black Craig.





Pearl grass-moth *Catoptria pinella*

A fairly widespread species, but generally in low numbers.







Speedwell longhorn *Cauchas fibulella*

A common species in grassland with patches of speedwell.







Thyme marble *Celypha cespitana*

A locally-distributed species that is mostly coastal in Fife. The one below was on Black Craig in mid-August 2022, while the one above was on Berry Brae in late July 2026.





Common marble *Celypha lacunana*

A common species, often seen in daylight.







Silver-striped marble *Celypha rivulana*

A locally-distributed species.







Reed veneer *Chilo phragmitella*

Seldom recorded in Scotland. This one was at Carphin in mid-June 2026, and was surprisingly far from suitable habitat.





Garden grass-moth *Chrysoteuchia culmella*

A very common species of grasslands.







Buff grey tortrix *Cnephasia longana*

This is a rare species in Scotland, and especially so at inland sites. These were at Carphin in July 2025. Female above, male below.





Black-fronted straw *Cochylichroa atricapitana*

A scarce species in Fife. Its food plant is ragwort.









Gorse case-bearer *Coleophora albicosta*

Common wherever gorse, its food plant, is plentiful.







Clothed case-bearer *Coleophora mayrella*

Common wherever gorse, its food plant, is plentiful.





Meadow grass-moth *Crambus lathoniellus*

A very common moth in grassland habitats.







White-banded grass-moth *Crambus pascuella*

A widely-distributed grass-moth, but not recorded from many sites in Fife. These were on Black Craig.





Marbled piercer *Cydia splendens*

This species is not often recorded in Scotland. The main foodplants of the caterpillars are oaks and sweet chestnuts. This was one of two recorded at Carphin in late July 2026.







Common gorse moth *Cydia ulicetana*

Common wherever gorse is abundant.







Parsnip moth *Depressaria radiella*

A common species through most of the year, occurring where hogweed or wild parsnip grows.





Early reveller *Diurnea fagella*

A common woodland moth in spring.







Dotted cloak *Eana osseana*

A common species of rough grassland and moorland.





White-headed grass-miner *Elachista albifrontella*

A species that is seldom recorded in Fife. This one was in the hawthorn hedge that is above Carphin Farmhouse.



Silver grass-miner *Elachista argentella*

A common grassland species.





Cock’s-foot miner

Elachista atricomella

A common species of grasslands.









Common grass-miner *Elachista canapennella*

A common species of grassy habitats.



Brown china mark *Elophila nymphaeata*

A fairly common species in wet habitats. This species benefits from the wildlife pools.







Common plume *Emmelina monodactyla*

A locally-distributed species in Scotland. The foodplants of the larvae are bindweeds.







White-shouldered house-moth *Endrosis sarcitrella*

Common, both in houses and in a range of other habitats.







Common ridge-back *Epermenia chaerophyllella*

Fairly common across a range of lowland habitats.





Birch tortrix *Epinotia immundana*

A common species where birches or alders grow.



Black-marked tortrix *Epinotia ramella*

A common species of birch woods.





Nut bud moth *Epinotia tenerana*

A common species where alders or hazels grow.





Pied tortrix *Eucosma campoliliana*

A locally-distributed species in Fife, occurring in areas with ragwort.







Hoary tortrix *Eucosma cana*

Common where thistles or knapweed grow.







Common knapweed tortrix *Eucosma hohenwartiana*

A fairly common species where knapweed grows.





Tawny grey *Eudonia lacustrata*

A common species of open habitats where mosses grow.





Garden grey *Eudonia mercurella*

A fairly common species in gardens, parks and other mossy habitats.







Peppered grey *Eudonia truncicolella*

A fairly common species of open habitats where mosses grow, occurring in summer and autumn.







Dark-barred straw *Eupoecilia angustana*

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





Yarrow plume *Gillmeria pallidactyla*

A common species of grasslands.





Cocksfoot moth *Glyphipterix simpliciella*

A tiny species that is abundant in grasslands where cocksfoot grows.







White-underwing piercer

Grapholita internana

A locally-distributed species that occurs in areas with gorse.









Brown house moth *Hofmannophila pseudospretella*

A common species, often occurring in houses or outbuildings.





Slender rufous tortrix *Lathronympha strigana*

A scarce species in Fife. These were at Carphin in mid-June 2026. The caterpillars feed on St John's wort, bird's-foot trefoil or rosebay willowherb.





Broom stem-miner *Leucoptera spartifoliella*

A locally-distributed tiny species, around 4mm long, associated with broom.







Bulrush down moth *Limnaecia phragmitella*

A locally-distributed species in Scotland, occurring where bulrushes grow.





Apple leaf-miner *Lyonetia clerkella*

Many of the Scottish records for this tiny moth are from Fife. This one was in the hawthorn hedge that is above Carphin Farmhouse.







Burdock seedhead moth *Metzneria lappella*

A scarce species in Scotland, restricted to the east, in areas where burdock grows.





Knapweed seedhead moth *Metzneria metzneriella*

A locally-distributed species in Scotland.





White-line pollen-moth

Micropterix aruncella

A common species.









Yellow-barred pollen-moth *Micropterix aureatella*

Common on heathland and moorland.





Gorse streak *Mirificarma mulinella*

Common on heathland and moorland.







Burnished sorrel moth *Monochroa tenebrella*

A locally-distributed species.







Skin moth *Monopis laevigella*

A common species. Its larvae feed on animal products, in bird nests, owl pellets, wool, etc.





Carrion moth *Monopis weaverella*

A common species of woods and gardens.





Cork moth *Nemapogon cloacella*

The tiny cork moth is relatively common in areas where bracket fungi grow.







Sandy longhorn *Nematopogon schwarziellus*

A fairly common species in a range of habitats. From this photo, *N swammerdamella* cannot be ruled out, but it is much rarer in Fife.



Heather grey *Neofaculta ericetella*

A common species of heather moorland. These were on the slopes of Black Craig.







Rush veneer *Nomophila noctuella*

A common migrant moth, mostly at the coast, which cannot survive the winter in Fife. This one was at Carphin in mid-August 2026.





Large rose shoot moth *Notocelia roborana*

A locally-distributed species in Scotland. This one was netted at dog-roses.







Hawthorn shoot moth *Notocelia trimaculana*

A locally-distributed species in Scotland.





Bramble shoot moth *Notocelia uddmanniana*

A locally-distributed species in Scotland.







Beautiful china mark *Nymphula nitidulata*

A locally-distributed species that has benefited from the creation of wildlife pools.



Bull’s-horn stem moth *Ochsenheimeria urella*

Not often recorded in Scotland, these were on Black Craig in early August 2024.







Oak gall moth *Pammene argyrana*

A locally-distributed species closely associated with oak. This one was at oaks on the north-east slope of Berry Brae.





Barred fruit-tree tortrix *Pandemis cerasana*

A common species of gardens, hedgerows and open woodland.





Dark fruit-tree tortrix *Pandemis heparana*

As for *P cerasana*, a common species of gardens, hedgerows and open woodland.





Hawthorn drab *Paraswammerdamia nebulella*

A locally-distributed species in Scotland, occurring where hawthorns grow.





Mother of pearl *Patania ruralis*

Common wherever nettles grow.





Phycitodes sp.



A group of species that cannot be reliably separated from images. There are a few records from Fife, mostly at or near the coast. The one above and below left was at Berry Brae in early September 2023, while the one right and below right was near the farmhouse in mid-June 2025.







Common oak leaf-miner *Phyllonorycter quercifoliella*

A tiny moth that is common where oaks grow but which is not often recorded.





Triangle plume *Platyptilia gonodactyla*

A fairly common species where colt's-foot grows.





Heath streak *Pleurota bicostella*

These moths were at Black Craig. 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 widespread and common moth, with numbers boosted by migration.







White plume *Pterophorus pentadactyla*

A locally-distributed species in Scotland, occurring where bindweeds grow.





Northern diamond-back *Rhigognostis incarnatella*

A scarce grassland species, with a patchy distribution across northern Britain. These were at Carphin in late March and early April 2025.





Small bilberry marble *Rhopobota myrtillana*

A rarely-recorded species that is associated with bilberry. Between 2016 and 2024, the only Scottish records were from the Lomond Hills. This one was on Black Craig in late May 2025.





Holly tortrix *Rhopobota naevana*

Not restricted to holly, this tiny moth can occur in a wide range of habitats. This one was high up on Black Craig.





Common grey *Scoparia ambigualis*

A common species where mosses grow.





Brown-spot grey *Scoparia pyralella*

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







Common thistle miner *Scrobipalpa acuminatella*

A common species in habitats with thistles.





Scrobipalpa sp.

Species of this genus can be difficult to identify, and this one is too worn to take to species.



Brown plume *Stenoptilia pterodactyla*

A locally-distributed species of woodland margins and dry grassland. It is common on the slopes of Black Craig.





Dark-barred tortrix *Syndemis musculana*

A common species of late spring and early summer in open woodland, parks, gardens, hedges and moorland.







Common groundling *Teleiopsis diffinis*

Except at Tentsmuir, this is considered a rare species in Fife, but they seem to be relatively common at Carphin.







Orange-tipped nest moth *Tinea semifulvella*

A common species. Its caterpillars usually feed on the detritus in bird nests.







Oak blotch-miner *Tischeria ekebladella*

A rare moth in Fife, with just two or three previous records. This one was in the area above Carphin Farmhouse where several oak trees grow, in mid-June 2026.





Spring harbinger *Tortricodes alternella*

A locally-distributed species in Scotland, associated with deciduous trees and especially oaks. It flies in late winter and early spring.





Green oak tortrix *Tortrix viridana*

A rare species in Fife. This one was recorded in late June 2025.





Rusty-dot pearl *Udea ferrugalis*

A migrant species, seldom recorded away from the coast in Fife. These two were at Carphin in late October 2026, feeding at a strip of corn marigold.





Pale straw pearl *Udea lutealis*

A common species across a range of habitats, often seen in daylight.







Garden pearl *Udea olivalis*

A fairly common species, often occurring in gardens and town parks.







Spindle ermine / apple ermine / orchard ermine

Yponomeuta cagnagella / malinellus / padella

These three species cannot be separated from images of adults. The larvae have different foodplants: spindle, apple and blackthorn or hawthorn respectively.



Bird-cherry ermine *Yponomeuta evonymella*

A common species which is sometimes numerous. It can occur well away from bird cherry. The caterpillars form communal webs on bird cherry.







White-shouldered ochre *Ypsolopha parenthesella*

A late summer and autumn species of broadleaved woodland.





Pied rabbit moth *Ypsolopha sequella*

A locally-distributed species in Fife, occurring where field maples or sycamores grow.





Timothy tortrix *Zelotherses paleana*

This species is widespread, but not particularly common away from the coast in Fife.



