



Macro-moths of Carphin

S.T. Buckland

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I have included images of the 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 ones! I'm also grateful to Stuart Paul, Briony Marcus, Ross Stuart and Billy Walker for welcoming me to Carphin, and giving me free access.

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Contents

Angle shades	5	Common carpet	39	Garden tiger	71
Anomalous	6	Common footman	40	Ghost moth	72
Antler moth	7	Common marbled carpet	41	Gold spangle	73
Autumnal rustic	8	Common pug	42	Gold spot	74
		Common rustic	43	Gold swift	75
Barred chestnut	9	Common quaker	44	Golden-rod pug	76
Barred red	10	Common white wave	45	Green arches	77
Barred straw	11	Confused	46	Green-brindled crescent	78
Barred yellow	12	Convolvulus hawk-moth	47	Green carpet	79
Beautiful golden Y	13	Copper underwing	48	Grey pine carpet	80
Black rustic	14	Coxcomb prominent	49		
Bordered white	15			Heart and club	81
Brick	16	Dark arches	50	Heart and dart	82
Bright-line brown-eye	17	Dark chestnut	51	Heath rustic	83
Brimstone moth	18	Dark sword-grass	52	Hebrew character	84
Brindled pug	19	December moth	53	Hedge rustic	85
Broad-bordered yellow		Dotted border	54	Herald	86
underwing	20	Dotted clay	55		
Broom moth	21	Double square-spot	56	Ingrailed clay	87
Brown-line bright-eye	22	Double-striped pug	57	Iron prominent	88
Brown rustic	23	Dun-bar	58		
Brown silver-line	24	Dusky brocade	59	July belle	89
Brown-spot pinion	25	Dwarf pug	60		
Buff ermine	26			Knot grass	90
Buff footman	27	Early thorn	61		
Buff-tip	28	Early tooth-striped	62	Large ear	91
Bulrush wainscot	29	Ear moth	63	Large wainscot	92
Burnished brass	30	Elephant hawk-moth	64	Large yellow underwing	93
				Least black arches	94
Canary-shouldered thorn	31	Feathered thorn	65	Lesser broad-bordered	
Centre-barred swallow	32	Flame	66	yellow underwing	95
Chestnut	33	Flame carpet	67	Lesser swallow prominent	96
Cinnabar	34	Flame shoulder	68	Lesser yellow underwing	97
Clay	35	Flounced rustic	69	Light arches	98
Cloaked minor	36	Foxglove pug	70	Light emerald	99
Clouded-bordered brindle	37			Lime-speck pug	100
Clouded drab	38			Lunar thorn	101
				Lunar underwing	102
				Lychnis	103

Contents

Map-winged swift	104	Sallow kitten	142	Tawny speckled pug	176
Marbled minor	105	Sandy carpet	143	Triple-spotted clay	177
March moth	106	Satellite	144	True lover's knot	178
Merveille du jour	107	Satin beauty	145	Twin-spot carpet	179
Middle-barred minor	108	Scallop shell	146	Twin-spotted quaker	180
Miller	109	Scalloped hazel	147		
Mother shipton	110	Scalloped oak	148	V-pug	181
Mottled beauty	111	Scorched wing	149		
Mottled grey	112	Scotch annulet	150	Water carpet	182
Mottled rustic	113	Setaceous hebrew character	151	White ermine	183
Mouse moth	114	Shoulder-striped wainscot	152	White-line dart	184
Muslin footman	115	Shuttle-shaped dart	153	Willow beauty	185
		Silver-ground carpet	154	Winter moth	186
Narrow-winged pug	116	Silver Y	155	Wood tiger	187
Northern winter moth	117	Single-dotted wave	156	Wormwood pug	188
November moth	118	Six-striped rustic	157		
Nut-tree tussock	119	Slender brindle	158	Yellow-line quaker	189
		Small dotted buff	159	Yellow shell	190
Oak beauty	120	Small fan-footed wave	160		
Orange sallow	121	Small phoenix	161		
Orange swift	122	Small quaker	162		
		Small rivulet	163		
Pale brindled beauty	123	Small square-spot	164		
Pale pinion	124	Smoky wainscot	165		
Pale-shouldered brocade	125	Snout	166		
Peach blossom	126	Spectacle	167		
Peppered moth	127	Spruce carpet	168		
Pine beauty	128	Square-spot rustic	169		
Pink-barred sallow	129	Straw dot	170		
Plain golden Y	130	Streak	171		
Poplar hawk-moth	131	Streamer	172		
Purple bar	132	Striped twin-spot carpet	173		
		Suspected	174		
Red chestnut	133	Svensson's copper			
Red-green carpet	134	underwing	175		
Red-line quaker	135				
Riband wave	136				
Rivulet	137				
Rosy minor	138				
Rosy rustic	139				
Ruby tiger	140				
Rustic	141				



Angle shades

A common moth that is relatively large and showy. Numbers are often boosted by migrants.





Anomalous

A widespread summer species in a range of habitats, although it is uncommon in Fife.





Antler moth

A common grassland species that can often be seen during the day feeding on flowers.





Autumnal rustic

A common species of open habitats, occurring in late summer and autumn.





Barred chestnut

A locally-distributed species of moorland and broadleaved woodland on acid soils. This worn individual was a few yards up the Norman's Law path from the western boundary of Carphin Farm in late August 2025.





Barred red

Common, especially in conifer plantations.



Barred straw

A common summer species where cleavers or other bedstraws grow.





Barred yellow

A fairly common species where dog-roses or other roses grow.





Beautiful golden Y

A fairly common species across a range of habitats.





Black rustic

A common autumn species.





Bordered white

A common species of pinewoods and conifer plantations.





Brick

A relatively scarce autumn species of broadleaved woodland.





Bright-line brown-eye

A common species in a range of habitats.





Brimstone moth

A common moth, especially where hawthorn or blackthorn grows.





Brindled pug

A spring species, appearing earlier in the year than most pugs. Associated with oak and hawthorn. This one was at Carphin in late March.





Broad-bordered yellow underwing

A common species in broad-leaved woodland.





Broom moth

A common species of open habitats.





Brown-line bright-eye

A common grassland species.





Brown rustic

Common in late spring and early summer across a range of habitats.





Brown silver-line

A common species where bracken occurs.





Brown-spot pinion

A fairly common but declining autumn species, occurring in a range of lowland habitats.





Buff ermine

Rarely recorded in eastern Scotland north of the Firth of Forth. This one was on Berry Brae in mid-June 2025.





Buff footman

A southern species that has been spreading northwards quite rapidly, and is now widespread in Fife.





Buff-tip

A large moth of open woodland that looks like a broken birch twig. It is becoming more common in Fife.





Bulrush wainscot

Relatively common in areas with bulrushes.





Burnished brass

A common species where nettles grow.





Canary-shouldered thorn

A common species in late summer and autumn, occurring mostly in broadleaved woodland.





Centre-barred swallow

A common species in late summer and autumn wherever mature ash trees are present.





Chestnut

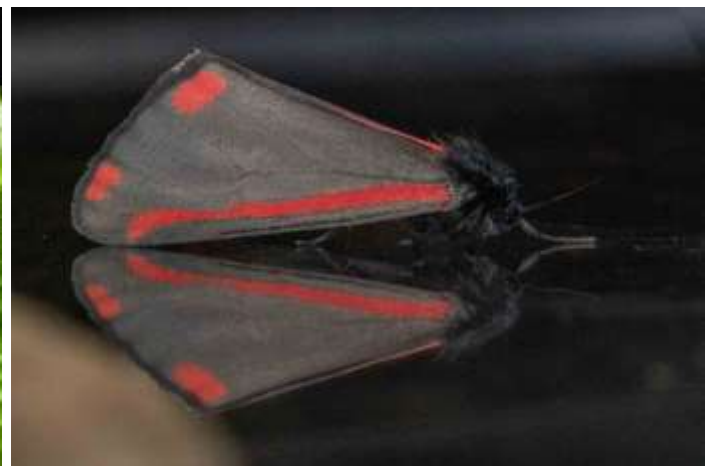
A common autumn species that overwinters as an adult and reappears in early spring. It can also be seen on mild nights through the winter.





Cinnabar

A common autumn species that overwinters as an adult and reappears in early spring. It can also be seen on mild days through the winter.





Clay

A fairly common grassland species.





Cloaked minor

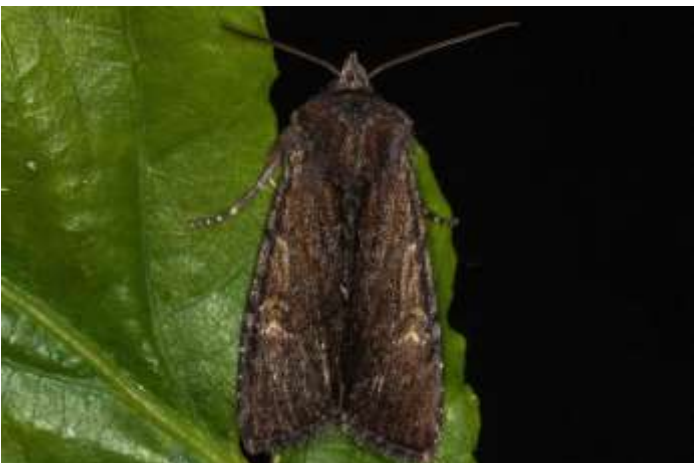
A locally-distributed grassland species that occurs mostly at or near the coast. These were at Carphin in early July 2023 and late July 2025.





Clouded-bordered brindle

A common grassland species in late spring and early summer.





Clouded drab

A common spring species, most numerous in woodland.





Common carpet

A common species, often occurring in gardens.





Common footman

A species that is spreading northwards. In Fife, it occurs mostly at or near the coast. However, they now seem to be fairly common at Carphin.





Common marbled carpet

A common summer species with widely-varying markings, occurring across a wide range of habitats.





Common pug

A widely-distributed species of late spring and early summer.





Common quaker

A common spring species in lowland habitats, and can be very numerous in woodland or other areas with trees and shrubs.





Common rustic / lesser common rustic

Two species that cannot be separated from photos. They are common in grassland habitats.





Common white wave

A common woodland species.



Confused

Rarely seen in Fife, I recorded four in mid-July 2025, one by the path between Black Craig and Berry Brae, and the other three just off Carphin estate, by the path up to Norman's Law.





Convolvulus hawk-moth

This huge moth is a scarce migrant. This one was on the crag east of Norman's Law, about 200m west of the boundary to Carphin estate, in early September 2025.





Copper underwing

Very similar to Svensson's copper underwing, and like it, this is a southern species that has spread northwards into Fife.





Coxcomb prominent

A fairly common woodland species that also occurs in gardens.



Dark arches

A common summer species of grassland habitats.





Dark chestnut

Recorded in late autumn and into winter, the dark chestnut is a southern species that is spreading north in Scotland. It is still very scarce in Fife. This one was on Berry Brae in early November 2025.





Dark sword-grass

A scarce migrant species. This one was on Berry Brae in early September 2025.





December moth

A common moth of late autumn and early winter, most numerous in broadleaved woodland.





Dotted border

A common species of late winter and spring, mostly in woodland habitats.





Dotted clay

A common species in a variety of habitats.





Double square-spot

A common summer species in a wide range of habitats.





Double-striped pug

A common species in a range of habitats.





Dusky brocade

Widespread in grassy habitats.





Dun-bar

A common woodland species.





Dwarf pug

Most often in areas with introduced conifers. The flight season is mostly May and June.





Early thorn

A common spring species, especially in deciduous woodland.





Early tooth-striped

A fairly common spring species of broadleaved woodland, especially in damp woodland.





Ear moth

Although mostly a coastal species in Fife, a few occur at Carphin.





Elephant hawk-moth

A large, attractive moth that is relatively common.





Feathered thorn

A fairly common autumn species occurring mostly in broadleaved woodland.





Flame

A common species in a range of habitats in Scotland.





Flame carpet

A common species in a range of habitats.





Flame shoulder

A common species across a wide range of habitats.





Flounced rustic

A common species of late summer in grassy habitats.





Foxglove pug

This species occurs in late spring and summer where foxgloves grow.





Garden tiger

Still a common species, though declining. Below right is one of its “woolly bear” caterpillars.





Ghost moth

A fairly common grassland species. This is a male. Males performing a ghost-like dance, swinging back and forth.





Gold spangle

A northern species that is scarce in Fife. This one was at Carphin in late July 2025.





Gold spot

This species is sparsely distributed in Fife, occurring mostly in or around wet habitats.





Gold swift

A locally-distributed species associated with bracken.



Golden-rod pug

A common species, first appearing in late April or May.





Green arches

A fairly scarce species of broadleaved woodland.





Green-brindled crescent

A common autumn species of broadleaved woodland.





Green carpet

A common summer species across a range of habitats.





Grey pine carpet

A common species where pines grow.





Heart and club

A variable species, occurring in open, dry habitats. It is relatively scarce in Scotland. This one was on the estate in early June 2025.





Heart and dart

A common species across a wide range of habitats.





Heath rustic

A locally-distributed species of heath and moorland. These were on Black Craig.





Hebrew character

A spring moth that is common and often abundant.





Hedge rustic

A scarce grassland species that has seen large declines in recent decades. These were at Black Craig and just off Carphin Farm on the east slope of Norman's Law.





Herald

A fairly common species where willows or poplars grow.





Ingrailed clay

A common species with variable markings. It occurs mostly on moorland.





Iron prominent

Occurs in broadleaved woodland and heathland where birches or alders grow.





July belle

A locally-distributed species, mostly on heathland and moorland. Its flight season is July and August. The one below left was in mid-October, indicating a second generation, which is rare in the UK.





Knot grass

A widespread species of open habitats that is seldom numerous.





Large ear

A locally-distributed species of wet, acid moorland. This one was on Black Craig in early September 2025.



Large wainscot

A locally-distributed and mostly coastal species where reeds grow. These were near one of the wildlife ponds (Nancy's Pond) in September 2025.





Large yellow underwing

A common summer species, often flushed from grass during the day.





Least black arches

A woodland species that used to be rare in Scotland, but is now widespread.



Lesser broad-bordered yellow underwing

A common species in a range of habitats.





Lesser swallow prominent

A common species where birches grow.





Lesser yellow underwing

A variable species, common across a range of habitats.





Light arches

A common grassland species though much less numerous than the dark arches.





Light emerald

A common summer species in broadleaved woodland.





Lime-speck pug

Mostly a coastal species in Fife, this one was on Black Craig in July 2025.



Lunar thorn

A species of late spring and early summer, occurring mostly in open woodland.





Lunar underwing

A common autumn species in grassland habitats.





Lychnis

A common species where red or white campions grow.





Map-winged swift

A species that is widespread and fairly common in Fife.





Marbled minor

This species cannot usually be separated from two rarer species from photos, so the identity of these is not certain. The species is in decline, and becoming relatively scarce.





March moth

A common species in spring, most numerous in open woodland.





Merveille du jour

A relatively scarce autumn species of broadleaved woodland.





Middle-barred minor

A common summer species, often seen in daylight on flowers.





Miller

A locally-distributed summer species, associated with a range of deciduous trees.





Mother Shipton

Not a common moth in Scotland. These were at Black Craig.





Mottled beauty

A common woodland species.





Mottled grey

A widespread spring species of moorland and other open non-agricultural habitats, though seldom numerous.





Mottled rustic

A relatively scarce moth in Fife, it occurs in a range of lowland habitats.





Mouse moth

A common species across a range of habitats.





Muslin footman

A sparsely-distributed species.





Narrow-winged pug

Common on heathland and moorland.





Northern winter moth

This late autumn and early winter species is similar to winter moth, but paler and usually larger. It is fairly widespread in Scotland, but not often recorded in Fife. This one was on moorland, by the path to Norman's Law, in early November 2025.





November moth

A very common moth of late autumn, especially in broadleaved woodland.





Nut-tree tussock

A common species of broadleaved woodland.





Oak beauty

A scarce species in Fife, with most records coming from the south-west of the county, where oak is more plentiful. These were at Carphin in late March 2025.





Orange sallow

A locally-distributed species of late summer and early autumn, occurring where lime trees grow.





Orange swift

A locally-distributed species in Fife. Male above and below left, female below right.





Pale brindled beauty

A common species of late winter and early spring, mostly in deciduous woodland.





Pale pinion

An autumn species of broadleaved woodland that re-emerges from hibernation in spring. It is a locally-distributed southern species that has spread northwards in recent decades.





Pale-shouldered brocade

A widely-distributed species of late spring and early summer.





Peach blossom

A relatively scarce species in Fife, occurring where brambles grow.





Peppered moth

A common species of woodland, parks and gardens.





Pine beauty

A fairly common species where pines occur.





Pink-barred swallow

A common autumn species where willows or poplars grow.





Plain golden Y

A fairly common species across a range of habitats.





Poplar hawk-moth

The most common hawk-moth in Fife, occurring where poplars, sallows or willows grow.





Purple bar

A common summer species wherever bedstraws grow.





Red chestnut

A spring species, occurring mostly in broadleaved woodland.





Red-green carpet

A common species, especially in broad-leaved woodland.





Red-line quaker

A common autumn species where willows grow.





Riband wave

Common across a variety of habitats.





Rivulet

Common wherever red champions grow.





Rosy minor

A locally-distributed grassland species in Scotland.





Rosy rustic

A common species across a range of habitats.





Ruby tiger

A fairly common species of open habitats.





Rustic

A common species that is difficult to separate from the appropriately-named uncertain.





Sallow kitten

A scarce species in Fife. It can occur where willows or poplars grow.





Sandy carpet

A common species where champions grow, though it is seldom numerous.





Satellite

A common species, especially of broadleaved woodland, that appears in autumn and again in spring after hibernation. It can also be found during mild winter weather.





Satin beauty

A woodland species that has increased its range in Scotland in recent decades.





Scallop shell

An uncommon species in Scotland. It is associated with willows, aspen and bilberry. This one was on Berry Brae in late June 2025.





Scalloped hazel

A common woodland species of late spring and early summer.





Scalloped oak

A fairly common species, mainly in woodland.





Scorched carpet

A southern species that has spread in Scotland, but which is still very scarce, especially in Fife. This one was at Carphin in mid-May 2025.





Scotch annulet

A mountain species. The colony at Black Craig and Berry Brae was first discovered in 2022. It is the only known colony in Fife. It extends onto the eastern slopes of Norman's Law, which is where the above moth was recorded in 2025.





Setaceous hebrew character

A common species, mostly in lowland habitats with rich herbaceous vegetation.





Shoulder-striped wainscot

A common summer species of grasslands.





Shuttle-shaped dart

A southern species that has spread rapidly northwards, and is now quite common in Fife.





Silver-ground carpet

A common summer species across a range of habitats. It can often be seen in daylight.





Silver Y

A common species, often seen nectaring during the day. Large numbers sometimes arrive from the continent.





Single-dotted wave

This species is close to the northern limit of its range in Fife, and is not numerous. These were recorded in June and July 2025.





Six-striped rustic

A common species, mostly in wet habitats.





Slender brindle

A southern species that has spread through Fife. Occurs mostly in woodland with grassy areas.



Small dotted buff

A common species in wet grasslands.





Small fan-footed wave

A common species where willowherbs grow.





Small phoenix

A common species where willowherbs grow.





Small quaker

A widespread woodland species but seldom numerous.





Small rivulet

A common species in lowland habitats.



Small square-spot

A widespread and common species, especially in damp habitats.





Smoky wainscot

A very common grassland species in summer.





Snout

Common wherever nettles grow.





Spectacle

The caterpillars feed on nettles. Adults are sparsely distributed through Fife.





Spruce carpet

A common species where conifers grow.





Square-spot rustic

A very common grassland species with variable markings.





Straw dot

A common species of grasslands.





Streak

A fairly common autumn moth in areas where broom grows.





Streamer

A common spring species where dog roses grow.





Striped twin-spot carpet

This species is associated with bedstraw and rocky outcrops. This one was on the north-east slope of Berry Brae on 10 May 2025. It is only the second record of this species in Fife.



Suspected

A scarce species in Fife, associated with birch. This worn one was at Black Craig in mid-August 2023.





Svensson's copper underwing

A southern species that is spreading northwards through Scotland, and is now fairly common in woodland habitats in Fife.





Tawny speckled pug

A fairly common species where yarrow or sneezewort grows.





Triple-spotted clay

A rare species in east Scotland. It is a species of open, wet broadleaved woodland. The above two were at Black Craig in late July 2022, and the one below was at the same site in early July 2023.





True lover's knot

A common species of heather moorland.





Twin-spot carpet

A mostly southern spring species that has spread northwards, and is now widespread in broadleaved woodland through much of Scotland.





Twin-spotted quaker

A mostly southern spring species that has spread northwards, and is now widespread in broadleaved woodland through much of Scotland.





V-pug

A small pug that is quite common in a range of habitats.





Water carpet

A common spring species where bedstraws or cleavers grow.





White ermine

A common species across a range of habitats.





White-line dart

A scarce species away from the coast. This one was at Black Craig in late July 2022.





Willow beauty

This species is typically most common in towns. This one was at Carphin in mid-July 2025.



Winter moth

A widespread and common species that flies in late autumn and early winter. These are males; females are flightless.





Wood tiger

An uncommon species in Fife. This one was at Black Craig in late June 2021.



Wormwood pug

A fairly common species in a range of habitats.





Yellow-line quaker

A common autumn species, especially in broadleaved woodland.





Yellow shell

A common species with several sub-species.

