

Early in 2010 I discovered moths and moth recording. The passion that has developed since is in no small measure due to the loan of a Skinner Trap from Glasgow Natural History Society. The most marvellous aspect of this world was that I could discover it in my own garden, a very normal suburban garden in Newton Mearns. Following an excursion to Mugdock Country Park with John Knowler I was hooked! Support from Neil Gregory, my local County Moth Recorder, Richard Weddle, GNHS, as well as from a Yahoo online group where experts throughout Scotland pool their knowledge and pass on advice to each other and to novices like me, have all helped to build my confidence and inspire me. This initial support has led me to buy my own trap which I continue to run regularly.



I quickly learned some key points: for example, best not to trap two consecutive nights in the same place to avoid catching the same moths; care needs to be taken when releasing the moths to prevent them becoming a ready meal for local birds; some species are spectacularly easy to identify while others are only distinguishable by examination of their genitalia (a procedure I have not yet attempted!).

There is an indescribable anticipation every morning approaching the trap. Often moths will have settled in surrounding vegetation, on nearby walls or on the ground. Once inspection of the outside of the box has

taken place, there is the excitement of opening it and lifting each egg box. My most breathtaking moment must have been the first time I turned over a box to find a Poplar Hawk Moth beneath! It is huge!

There is of course disappointment when few or no moths are present. But any morning might produce something new. The wide variety and beauty of species is a continually eternally wondrous aspect.

Of course the benefits of moth recording are significant not just to the recorder. National data is a vital tool in the observation and measurement of changes in vegetation, habitat and climate. The presence, migration, movement and numbers of moth species are indicative of changes within other populations. The more information that is available, the more is contributed to our knowledge of biodiversity.



I have continued trapping in Crieff since I moved here (a garden on the edge of the town) and to date have already had 165 species with another new one added this morning. I am no less excited every time I set the trap! I'm beginning to learn about life cycles, food plants, migrations etc. as well as identification. There is much to discover! So many thanks to GNHS for getting me started on this road!