



Butterfly News

*The newsletter of the South Wales Branch of
Butterfly Conservation*

Autumn 2005

Rare moth caterpillar re-discovered in Wales

Caterpillar of the rare Silurian moth re-discovered in Wales.

The Silurian moth was recorded for the first time in Wales in 1972 by Dr Neil Horton. It is confined to the bleak moors near Abertillery in Blaenau Gwent, South East Wales. As a breeding species, the moth has not been found anywhere else in the UK. The Silurian is so-called because it is found in that part of South Wales once occupied by the Celtic Iron Age tribe the Silures.

The caterpillars were rediscovered by a team of local enthusiasts, led by moth expert Dr Paul Waring. Earlier this spring, shortly after the last snows had cleared, they formed an expedition and hiked into the hills to scour patches of moorland.

The caterpillars were found by torchlight as they emerged just after dark to feed on Bedstraw and Bilberry. Subsequent searches found further caterpillars. It remains a mystery why, with Bilberry widespread on the hills in the area, the caterpillars only seem to occur in particular situations.

The discovery could only be confirmed this week when four Silurian moths emerged.

Russel Hobson, Senior Conservation Officer for Butterfly Conservation Wales, said: "Finding this elusive species is fantastic news. This discovery should enable us to find out why the moth does not seem to be more widespread and ensure we can care for it in the long-term."

Moths are key indicators of the health of our environment and an important part of the food chain on which we ultimately depend. Many species are known to have declined. The continuing fragmentation of natural habitats combined with changes in farming and forestry, development and unsympathetic management of amenity areas are threats.

The survey was organised by Butterfly Conservation Wales thanks to funding from the Blaenau Gwent Biodiversity Action Grant Scheme.



*Dr. Paul Waring during the search for the Silurian moth caterpillar.
Photo: Martin Anthoney*

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DATA EXCHANGE AGREEMENT WITH SEWBRcC

Background to SEWBRcC

SEWBRcC is the new local biodiversity records centre (or LRC) covering the South East Wales area. After an 18 months establishment phase it began to function fully in August 2005. It currently has three staff and a board whose Chairman is Steve Moon and Deputy Chairman Martin Anthony. The main functions of SEWBRcC are:

- Acting as the focus for local wildlife information
- Promoting and coordinating the gathering, collation, management and dissemination of wildlife information
- Making appropriate information available to those who need it
- Supporting the efforts and safeguarding the interests of data suppliers
- Providing high quality, good value services to users

Data Exchange Agreements

The main purpose of a Data Exchange Agreement (or DEA) is to set out the terms of the relationship between SEWBRcC and a data provider. In the case of Butterfly Conservation (S. Wales Branch) data, the approach being proposed is for SEWBRcC to hold separate but complimentary DEAs with both the Branch and the Vice County recorders. Martin Anthony, Monmouthshire Vice County Recorder for Lepidoptera has already signed such an agreement. The remainder of this paper looks at the specific issues covered by these draft agreements. Full copies of the draft DEAs may be obtained from SEWBRcC (see contact details at the end) or via Martin Anthony (Branch Chairman).

KEY POINTS OF PROPOSED DATA EXCHANGE AGREEMENTS

The data

The data to be exchanged is the annual data set of Lepidoptera distribution records collated, verified, computerised and validated (on behalf of BC (S. Wales Branch) and other groups) by the VCRs.

Data flows

SEWBRcC will pass any Lepidoptera records it receives for the South East Wales area to the appropriate VCR for verification and incorporation into the relevant Lepidoptera database.

Timescales

Data will be supplied to SEWBRcC by the VCR retrospectively on an annual basis, normally by May of each year for the previous year's records.

Data format

Data may be supplied in any appropriate electronic format. SEWBRcC can support data exchange with a wide range of software packages including Excel, Access, MapMate and Recorder 2002.

The licence

The VCR and BC (S. Wales Branch) each grant SEWBRcC a non-exclusive licence to use and distribute the data they supply, including:

- Holding copies of data for the purpose of its supply to third parties, subject to approved SEWBRcC policies on 'controlling access to data'
- Copying and/or processing the material into other formats to aid data dissemination and use.

SEWBRcC will normally act as the first point of contact for all enquiries regarding access to and use of the data.

Data ownership

The VCR and BC (S. Wales Branch) confirm that they are either the owner of the copyright of the data or have authority to act on behalf of the data owner. The DEAs confirm that ownership and copyright of the data will remain with the original recorder, who therefore remains free to make available, use or publish the data elsewhere. SEWBRcC will acknowledge the VCR, BC (S. Wales Branch) or the original recorder wherever possible in copies of data supplied to third parties.

Data release restrictions

SEWBRcC will never pass the Lepidoptera dataset in its entirety to third parties.

Sensitive species or sites

Schedule 2 of the DEAs allows the VCR and BC (S. Wales Branch) to identify sensitive species and sites. It goes on to outline how such data should be handled by SEWBRcC, including any restrictions on the release or use of sensitive data.

Data quality

The VCR and BC (S. Wales Branch) confirm that they have taken reasonable steps to maximise the quality of the data they supply. The DEAs also include clauses which disclaim the VCR, BC (S. Wales Branch) and SEWBRcC from liability for any damage or loss arising from the use of the data in question.

Support services for recorders and data providers

Schedule 3 of the DEAs sets out a 'menu' of support services that SEWBRcC can offer, at no cost to members, in return for supply of data. These include provision (under licence) of biological recording software (plus help with installation, training and technical support), computerisation of paper records, assistance with the production of publications and provision of base-mapping to support survey efforts. SEWBRcC will publicise BC (S. Wales Branch) and its events and notify us of opportunities which may arise for paid or unpaid survey work

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Data Exchange Agreement with SEWBRcC

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Charging

SEWBRcC will not sell any of the data, but may make appropriate administration charges to cover the cost of supply (predominantly staff costs and overheads).

Data protection

SEWBRcC is registered as a data manager under the Data Protection Act and will comply with the terms of the Data Protection Act and any other relevant legislation or regulations

Your chance to input views

There is still time for you to influence the precise terms of these Data Exchange Agreements, as SEWBRcC. Please pass any comments you may have to Martin Anthoney so that they can be taken into account in working towards finalising DEAs. Copies of the full agreement and schedules are available on request.

SEWBRcC contact details:

Adam Rowe (Manager):

adam.rowe@sewbrec.org.uk

David Slade (IT and Biodiversity Data Officer):

david.slade@sewbrec.org.uk

Rebecca Davies (Data and Enquiries Officer):

rebecca.davies@sewbrec.org.uk

SEWBRcC, 13 St Andrews Crescent, Cardiff,
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Based on a paper prepared by Adam Rowe, 29 March 2005, updated by Martin Anthoney, Aug 2005.

SPBF campaign: Damp unimproved meadows yield records of small fritillaries

Our campaign this spring & early summer, to target searches for the apparently vanishing small pearl bordered fritillary (SPBF) has produced some useful results, despite an indifferent flight period. The butterfly is difficult to find as an egg, larva or chrysalis (which together occupy 11 months of its annual life). So we rely on sightings of the adult insects, which last just a few days for each individual, during the flight period. This normally runs from second half of May to end of July, depending on location. As the butterfly breeds in damp meadows with marsh violet, rhos pasture is a good target habitat in Wales. It also breeds on dry grassland in bracken, where dog violet grows, but this is a scarcer habitat across most of south Wales.

Our colour leaflet sheet "Out in the countryside?" provides a simple, attractive message to walkers and other countryside users on the species and includes easy to use photographic identification and a reply section to report sightings. SPBF often occurs up in the hills around wet flushes, even where sheep graze, as well as more lowland unimproved damp pastures, commons and fields. In addition to distributing leaflets locally, we also put together some local initiatives in Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Neath, Port Talbot, Gwent & Carmarthenshire, working with local biodiversity partnerships (LBAPs) and volunteers.

In Merthyr, Caerphilly, NPT and Ystradgynlais area, we were fortunate to have available habitat data from marsh fritillary habitat surveys, which also included locations of marsh violets. Using this targeted approach, we added new SPBF records for three 1 km squares including upper half of Cwm Bargoed (SO0903), Nelson Bog (ST1195) and west Merthyr (SO0206). Curiously, we didn't find SPBF in any of the NPT sites (although we did get them a first marsh fritillary record for several years, a new site near Crynant, together with another 3 new sites, part of the same metapopulation, in Powys just to the north around Ystradgynlais!). John Sherwood and Richard Smith did most of the searches, covering about

20 sites, although we are grateful to Steve Bromley for the west Merthyr record. Thanks also to Ben Williams for searching sites in Brecon Beacons and RCT, producing good SPBF numbers at a site near Tonyrefail. Andrew King in Brecknock also organised some targeted searches, with little success at sites of old records, but revealing some new sites, including two on the Epynt ranges.

We especially wanted to focus on Carmarthenshire, as records over the last 5 year period appear to show a reduction of over 50% in occupied 10 km squares! We knew, from earlier reports, that SPBF was late on the wing this year, so organised our group outings in good weather on 9th and 23rd June to sites in SN41, 50, & 51 (between Llanelli & Cross Hands). Although we had a good turn out of volunteers, SPBF proved elusive on both occasions. We had to settle for marsh fritillaries at two of the seven sites, the owner's description of SPBF which he had found himself after our first visit, a new county micro-moth and a new site for forester moth! Thanks to Julian Friese, Isabel Macho, John Sherwood, Martin White, Jo Horsley and Jon Baker for their help. Jo still hadn't seen an SPBF, when she very kindly searched the very overgrown and tussocky parts of Cors Farlais (SN6734) in the north of the county for us and seemed to have the first positive county result of the season in mid June. This was confirmed by a co-incidental visit by Sam Bosanquet whilst carrying out work for CCW in early July. From early July, SPBF started to appear at other sites in the north of the county with records for Cefn Blaenau (SN5841 & 5741), Rhos Wen (SN5338) and others. Thanks are due to George Johnson, Martin Lovell and Alan Clarke in this respect.

We'll try to include a summary of SPBF activity in other areas within south Wales in our next newsletter. Meanwhile, thanks to all who participated and do encourage any friends or family regularly out walking in June & July to participate next year, as our campaign and leaflets will hopefully be continued. Also if reading this reminds you that you saw one this year, it's not too late to tell us!

Richard Smith, September 2005

Butterfly and Moth Recording - County Recorders in South Wales

Brecknockshire:

Andrew King, Heddfan, Pennorth, Brecon, Powys. tel: 01874 658351 (Butterflies)

Norman Lowe, 6 Tai Canol, Llangorse, Brecon. Tel: 01874 658453 (Moths)

Ceredigion:

Ms Lin Gander, Conservation Officer, The Wildlife Trust South & West Wales, Penwalk, Llechryd, Cardigan, Ceredigion, SA43 2PS, tel: 01239 682405

Carmarthenshire:

Martin Lovell (Butterflies), Gelli Isaf, Rhydcymerau, Carmarthenshire, SA19 79Y, tel: 01558 685060.

Jon Baker (Moths), 14 Job's Well Road, Carmarthen, SA31 3HG, tel: 01267 221681

Glamorgan:

Barry Stewart, 36 Pencaerwn Road, Penyrheol, Gorseinon, Swansea SA4 4FU, tel: 01792 539447, e-mail: moonmoths@ntlworld.com

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Joyce Gay, c/o Radnorshire Wildlife Trust, Warwick House, High Street, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6AG, tel: 01597 823298 (Butterflies)

Caroline Moscrop, Floor 3, Gwalia, Ithon Road, Llandrindod Wells, Powys, LD1 5RP. Tel: 01597 827400, e-mail: c.moscrop@ccw.gov.uk. (Moths)

Contributions

Contributions to this newsletter are always welcome. They can be on any subject relevant to the Branch's activities.

Please send them to me at either 10 Flemish Court, Lamphey, Pembroke, SA71 5PA or direct by e-mail to pembs.leps@tiscali.co.uk.

**R. Elliott,
Editor**

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Electronic Newsletter

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R. Elliott, Editor.



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