

## Somerset Lepidoptera.

---

AN APPENDIX TO THE COUNTY LIST PRINTED IN THE  
"VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY OF SOMERSET," Vol. I.

---

Edited by ALFRED E. HUDD, F.E.S., F.S.A.

SINCE the publication of the first volume of the *Victoria County History of Somerset*, in 1906, several additions have been made to the list of Somerset Lepidoptera, printed on pp. 87-115, and some further records have been made of rare and interesting species, previously recorded only from one or two localities in the County. Most of this additional information has been furnished by members of the Entomological Section of the Society, recently established, and it is hoped to print in the *Proceedings* lists of additions to the other orders of Insecta. We commence with the first part of the Lepidoptera, and hope to continue with further records of local Pyralides, Pterophori, Crambi, and Micro-Lepidoptera.

The Coleoptera and other orders will follow.

Those marked with an asterisk (\*) below are species not previously recorded from the County.

*Papilio Machaon*. A number of Somerset records of the "Swallow-tail butterfly" are given in the *V.C. History*, and there can be little doubt that it was at one time a native of the County. The latest record is from Weston-super-Mare, where a specimen was observed on the wing by Master Eric Dingwall, in the summer of 1906. Mr. Henry Slater informs me that he has searched in vain for

the larvæ on every plant of *Peucedanum palustre* he could find on the turf-moor. I am afraid we must regard the recent records of specimens seen in the county as "escapes from confinement," and not as true natives.

*Thecla betulae*. The brown hair-streak has only been recorded previously from near Bath, Brockley and Taunton. Mr. Doidge has taken some specimens recently, at Rock Hill, near Taunton, and Thurlbear.

*Deilephila livornica*. Two specimens were taken by Mr. W. W. Macmillan at Castle Cary, May 31st and June 1st, 1906, and one at Hadspen House on May 30th, 1912. Mr. Doidge took a number of larvæ at Burnham in 1912.

*Macroglossa fuciformis* and *bombylifformis* have both been taken by Mr. Doidge at Thurlbear and Castle Neroche, near Taunton. The latter has been found "in some numbers" by Mr. Slater, on the turf-moor, near Ashcott.

*Sesia culiciformis*. Mr. Doidge has taken a few "amongst birch-stumps on the Quantocks." Previously recorded only from Bedminster and Stoke.

— *asiliformis* (*cynipiformis*). Previously only recorded from Leigh Woods; has been taken by Mr. Doidge at Orchard Portman.

*Zygaena trifolii* var. *confluens*. "Not rare at Thurlbear" (Doidge).

— var. *palustris*. In some numbers on the turf-moor, near Shapwick, by Mr. Slater, who writes: "they are large in size and on the wing in July and August, instead of May and June, as the type."

*Nudaria senex*. Not uncommon on the turf-moor; comes to light (Slater).

\**Lithosia sororcula* (*aureola*). Not previously recorded from the County. One was taken at Thurlbear by Mr. Doidge in 1901. Two were taken by Mr. Slater at Withycombe a few years ago, and one on the turf-moor, Shapwick,

June 4th, 1912. One by Mrs. Slater, near High Ham, May 28th, 1912, and some, "beaten from Scotch firs, near Castle Cary," by Mr. Macmillan, in 1908 and following years.

*Spilosoma urticae*. A specimen has been bred by Mr. Doidge from a larva found at Lyng. Previously recorded only from Bath and Taunton.

\**Bombyx quercus*, var. *callunae*. Mr. Slater writes: "Not uncommon on the heather covered ground on the spur-hills of Exmoor"; and Mr. Doidge "common on the Quantocks."

\*— *trifolii*. Specimens have been bred by Mr. H. Corder, from larvæ taken in the county; Burnham (Doidge).

*Stauropus fagi*. Mr. Macmillan records a fine specimen at Castle Cary, June 3rd, 1911. Several of the lobster-like larvæ have been taken in Leigh Woods.

\**Acronycta menyanthidis*. Two specimens were taken by Mr. Slater, in June 1912, on the turf-moor, where the food plant of the larvæ, *Myrica gale*, is abundant.<sup>1</sup>

\**Leucania vitellina*. A specimen has been taken "at light," at Taunton, by Mr. Doidge. (An interesting addition to the County list).

— *littoralis*. Previously recorded only by Mr. Crotch and Mr. Harding from the coast of the Bristol Channel; has been taken recently in some numbers by Mr. Doidge and Mr. Slater, at Burnham.

*Coenobia rufa* (*despecta*). Recorded previously from Brislington and Walton Moor. Several have been taken on turf-moor, by Mr. Slater, "at light."

\**Tapinostola hellmanni*. Seven specimens of this very local species were taken at Watchet, by Mr. W. A. Bogue, in 1910.

1. The most southerly record hitherto for this species in Britain is "North West Monmouthshire."

\* *Hydroecia nictitans*, var. *paludis*. This variety, which is thought by Mr. Pierce and others to be a distinct species, has been met with by Mr. Slater, in a salt-marsh, near Withycombe.

*Luperina cespitis*. Previously recorded only from Clevedon and Leigh; has been taken by Mr. Doidge,—“a few specimens, flying at dusk, in lanes round Taunton.” Also taken on the hills round Withycombe by Mr. Slater.

*Apamea fibrosa*. Previously only recorded from Stoke and Bridgwater; has been met with, not uncommonly, on the turf-moor by Mr. Slater and Mr. Coney, in 1911.

\* *Stilbia anomala*. This curious species, not previously recorded from Somerset, has been met with, “local but not scarce on hills near Withycombe,” by Mr. Slater.

*Agrotis vestigialis (valligera)* and *A. ripæ*, have been taken at Burnham by Mr. Doidge.

\*— *lunigera*. Another addition to the County list; a female specimen was taken at sugar by Mr. Slater, near Dunster, July 30th, 1910.

— *cinerea*. Mr. Slater records “one taken at light at Stawell, June 8th, 1911,” and Mr. Tetley, “one at light at Taunton.” Previously reported from Clevedon and Weston only.

\*— *cursoria*. A few have been taken recently on the sands at Burnham, by Mr. Doidge.

— *agathina*. Previously recorded only by Mr. Corder, from the Quantocks; has been taken by Mr. Slater, who finds “the larvæ abundant on hills near Withycombe.”

*Noctua glareosa*. “Not uncommon on hills near Withycombe” (Slater).

\*— *ditrapezium*. One was taken at sugar near Dunster, July 3rd, 1908, and a second at light, July 22nd, 1908, by Mr. Slater.

\*— *castanea* (type); has been taken, at sugar, in the Taunton Valley by Mr. W. B. Butler, and by Mr. Slater around

Withycombe. The latter took one in Dunster Park, which he describes as "quite as ruddy as any northern specimen." The variety *neglecta*, previously recorded only from near Frome and Weston, is much more common in Somerset than the type, and is "not scarce on the Quantocks" (Doidge), and on Croydon and Grabhurst Hills (Slater).

\* *Orthosia suspecta*. The late Dr. W. W. Walter, in his diary of insects taken at Stoke-sub-Hamdon, twice records this species as taken in his garden there. It has since been found by the late Mr. Swayne at Glastonbury, and by Mr. Coney and Mr. Slater on the turf-moor.

*Tethea subtusa*. Recorded previously only from Clevedon and Weston; has been bred by Mr. Slater from larvæ found near Withycombe, June, 1910.

*Dianthæcia nana* (*conspersa*) has been taken by Mr. Doidge at Rock Hill, near Taunton. Previously only recorded from near Clevedon and Leigh Woods.

*Epunda lutulenta*. Taken by Mr. St. John, in August, 1884, at Crowcombe. Previously only reported from Weston.

*Cucullia chamomillæ*. "A larva at Stawell, July 16th, 1912" (Slater). A few at rest near Taunton (Doidge). Recorded previously only from Bath and Clevedon.

\* *Hadena glauca*. Several specimens have been taken "at rest on heather on the Quantocks" by Mr. Doidge, and by Mr. Slater, in May 1909, at Rodhuish, near Withycombe.

\* *Plusia moneta*. In June, 1908, Mr. Coney found some empty cocoons and later some larvæ, in the Batcombe district, from which insects were bred in 1909.

*Heliothis dipsacea*. Withycombe (Slater).

*Chariclea umbra* (*marginata*). Thurlbear, near Taunton (Doidge).

*Acontia luctuosa*. Blue Anchor Bay (Slater). Rock Hill and Aller Hill (Doidge).

*Aventia flexula*. Thurlbear Woods (Doidge); "not scarce near Withycombe, Sedgmoor, turf-moor at Shapwick, &c." (Slater).

- \* *Toxocampa craccae*. Five specimens were taken by Mr. Slater in August, 1907, "flying over flowers of *Teucrium*, near Withycombe; larvæ found later."
- Catocala fraxini*. The specimen taken by Mr. Griffiths in the Leigh Woods, in 1880, is still the only record for the county.
- Brephos parthenias*. Not uncommon on the turf-moor (Slater).
- \* — *notha*. Mr. Coney took nine specimens in Cogley Wood, Bruton, April 17th, 1911.
- Biston hirtaria*. Recorded only from near Bath and Stoke; has been bred by Mr. Slater from pupæ dug at Withycombe, and taken at rest near Cothelstone by Mr. Doidge.
- Cleora glabraria*. Previously recorded only from the Quantocks by Mr. Corder; has been taken in some numbers in the same district by Mr. Doidge "on fir trunks," and fifteen specimens were taken at light near Withycombe, in July 1908, by Mr. Slater.
- Boarmia abietaria*. Mr. Doidge writes "not rare at Thurlbear." Previously reported only from Leigh and Brockley Woods, near Bristol.
- \* *Tephrosia consonaria*. Mr. Coney took nine specimens off tree trunks, May 13th, 1908, in the woods near Alfred's Tower, Stourton, some of them on the Somerset side of the road. (An interesting addition to our list).
- Acidalia trigeminata*. Previously reported only from near Bristol and Taunton; is fairly common near Withycombe (Mr. Slater informs me), and in lanes round Minehead.
- *dilutaria*, and *A. subsericeata*. "Very common round Withycombe" (Slater).
- *fumata*. Previously recorded only from Stoke and the Quantocks; has been taken "on the higher heather-covered ground near Withycombe, but is rather local" (Slater).
- Macaria alternata*. Scarce near Withycombe and at Stawell. (Slater).

*Aspilates ochrearia* (*citraria*). Mr. Slater took six larvæ on *Ononis* at Burnham, which produced five imagines. Previously recorded only from near Bath and Wells.

*Pachynemïa hippocastanaria*. Taken in some numbers by Mr. Slater, near Withycombe. Previously only reported from Crowcombe.

\* *Oporabia autumnaria*. Not in the *V. C. Hist.* list; has been taken by Mr. Slater near Withycombe, and on the turf-moor, near Ashcott.

\*—*dilutata*, var. *christyi*. Of this insect, which some consider to be a distinct species, seven examples were bred by Mr. Slater from larvæ beaten at Withycombe in 1908, and four from Shapwick in 1911.

\* *Larentia caesiata*. A specimen was caught July 3rd, 1909, by Mr. Slater, at rest on heather, on Rodhuish Hill, Withycombe. The only recorded Gloucestershire specimen was taken by the late Mr. Clarke on Durdham Down, Bristol.

*Emmelesia unifasciata*. Previously recorded only from near Bristol and Weston; seems to be abundant near Withycombe. Mr. Slater writes:—"Hardly ever seen on the wing, or in the imago state, but larvæ abundant on *Bartsia*; I bred over seventy in 1908, from a small bundle of the plant." Mr. Doidge has taken specimens at Thurlbear, near Taunton.

*Eupithecia*. This genus still requires attention. Although several species not recorded in the *V. C. Hist.* have since been met with, bringing up the number of Somerset "pugs" to forty-two, many of these have been recorded from only one or two localities; probably some of these would be found elsewhere, especially if the larvæ were well looked for.

*Eupithecia consignata*. Previously recorded only from Portbury and Taunton, and not since 1865; has been taken at Stawell, by Mr. Slater,—“a male came to light in my study window, May 26th, 1911.”

- \* *Eupithecia pygmaeata*. Has been taken by Mr. Slater near Withycombe.
- *satyrata*. Previously reported only from Yeovil; has also been taken by Mr. Slater, at Withycombe.
- \* — *jasioneata*. A specimen was taken near Watchet, by Mr. Bogue. The larvæ are common in flowers of *Iasione montana* on the N. Devon coast.
- \* — *valerianata*. Mr. Slater reports this from the turf-moor and near Bridgwater; larvæ sometimes common.
- \* — *pusillata*. Four specimens beaten from spruce firs in Batcombe Wood, by Mr. Coney, May 25th, 1911. Two taken at Watchet, by Mr. Bogue, in 1912, and one by Mr. Doidge at Castle Neroche.
- \* — *irriguata*. Taken by Mr. Slater near Ashcott, in April, 1912.
- \* — *indigata*. Mr. Slater took a number of specimens in a fir-wood near Withycombe in 1908, some of which he kindly sent to me. He has also taken it at Stawell, and Mr. Doidge has met with it. This species will probably be found among Scotch firs in most parts of the county if looked for at the right time.
- *expallidata*. Previously recorded only by myself from Leigh Down; "larvæ on golden-rod" have been taken by Mr. Slater at Wych Wood, near Dunster, where larvæ were fairly common.
- *minutata*. Mr. Slater writes: "locally abundant near Withycombe," and Mr. Doidge, "not scarce on the Quantocks." Previously only reported from Bristol.
- *dodoneata*. Mr. Slater took a specimen at Stawell on April 3rd, 1912. Previously only recorded from Leigh Woods and Weston.
- *subciliata*. Mr. Slater writes: "locally not uncommon, near Withycombe, and Mr. Doidge has found it in plenty near Taunton; may probably be found in most places by beating maples when in flower."



*Eupithecia debiliata*. Recorded only from near Williton; has since been taken by Mr. Doidge on the Quantocks, and by Mr. Slater, who writes: "plentiful in woods near Withycombe, where *Vaccinium Myrtillus* is and *Formica rufa* is not."

Further localities are wanted for *E. subumbrata*, *plumbeolata*, *virgaureata*, *fraxinata*, *campanulata*, *constrictata*, and *pimpinellata*, at present only reported from one or two places in the county.

*Lobophora sexalisata*. Not uncommon at light on the turf-moor. Previous records from Clevedon and Sampford Arundel only.

— *viretata*. Taken at Staplegrove by Mr. Doidge, and by Mr. Slater at Stawell.

*Melanippe sociata* (*birivata*). Mr. Coney has called my attention to the absence of this species from the *V.C.H.* list. It is as common and universally distributed in Somerset as elsewhere.

*Anticlea cucullata* (*sinuata*). A single specimen has been recorded from Orchard Wood, and has since been taken by Mr. Doidge, "one at Rock Hill and one at Thurlbear."

*Scotosia undulata*. Castle Neroche (Butler) and near Ashcott (Slater).

*Cidaria picata*. Mr. Slater writes: "common in some seasons near Withycombe"; also taken by Mr. Doidge at Cothelstone and Bishop's Lydeard.

*Pelurga comitata*. One on the Quantocks by Mr. Doidge.

*Eubolia cervinaria*. Mr. Doidge writes: "very common in lanes round Taunton."

Several additions to the *Pyralides*, *Pterophori*, *Crambi*, *Tortrices* and *Tineæ* have been recorded, which we hope to print in a future volume of the *Proceedings*.

N.B. One species, recorded in error, has to be withdrawn from the list, namely, *Emydia cribrum*.