



Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire
Entomological Society



Moth recording in Derbyshire – what should I do with my moth records?

Current situation:

Since the death in 2022 of Dave Budworth, Derbyshire County Moth Recorder (CMR), Derbyshire has lacked a county recorder. This has led to uncertainty amongst moth-ers about what to do with their records, and how to get interesting sightings verified. A large backlog of unverified records had built up on online platforms like iRecord, and elsewhere many records were left in spreadsheets awaiting action. This task was too big for one person to deal with!

The action plan:

After discussions with Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Entomological Society (DaNES), the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT), the Derbyshire Moths Facebook Group (DMFG) and the Sorby Natural History Society (“Sorby”), and with assistance from Butterfly Conservation, a framework was drawn up. A team of experienced moth recorders were formed into the Joint Derbyshire Moth Verification and Recording Team (or “Recording Team” for short). These volunteers were given “Verification Assistant” status on iRecord (which permits them to verify observations subject to certain rules) and they have now worked through the backlog of online records. They are now turning their attention to other records, mainly in spreadsheets, which need to be processed. This is a long task, but at least the process is underway. A key priority now is to ensure future records are dealt with efficiently, promptly, and feedback given to those submitting records.

How should I submit my Derbyshire moth records?

The preferred route is that they be entered directly into the online system iRecord. This is a web-based database recording system that anyone can access, once they have registered. Individual records can be entered directly, or alternatively, a series of records held in a spreadsheet can be uploaded “en masse”

It is recognised that not all moth recorders will be comfortable with using this method, so this document intends to describe alternatives to suit differing levels of technical ability and desire. Ultimately, all moth records will end up in one place, so that everyone can see them. The iRecord system allows that functionality, as both DaNES and DWT will be able to download any data from there for analysis and report generation, and the average lay-person will be able to quickly find out the status of any moth species.

The Recording Team want to enable as many people as possible to self-upload their own records, thereby reducing the burden on the Recording Team and reducing any potential backlog. Guidance and assistance in using iRecord is available both on the site and from the Recording Team.

Please note that any records entered on to iRecord are in the public domain, and visible to anyone searching on the site. Whilst this is beneficial for research etc., if your records are from your home address, you might want to consider whether to give your full address as part of the record – for example maybe just give the road name rather than the house number as well. In this case, a 100 metre grid reference would be more appropriate than a 10 metre one. Further details regarding this are available at <https://irecord.org.uk/about> and click on “Privacy notice”.

Benefits of using iRecord:

- when records are entered frequently, the recorder will get prompt feedback on their observations.
- the burden of data-entry is not just the responsibility of a small number of volunteers, and so a back-log of records awaiting processing is less likely.
- all moth names are standardised and made clear.
- it allows for aggregate species, for those tricky to identify.
- it allows for different ages such as leaf mines, larva and adults.
- it provides spatial distributions of species, or records, so variations and status can be seen easily.

How to enter records:

iRecord allows the moth recorder to enter a single entry (such as a casual record), or multiple entries from a single moth-trapping session. There is also the option to import records using a spreadsheet which is rapid and works for those that have many records. Ideally in this situation moth-ers are encouraged to send records in every month so as not to overload the verifiers at the year end.

Q: What if I don't want to use iRecord, and prefer using my own spreadsheet or other system?

A: The Recording Team still want your records! However, this will mean they have more work to do, as they will have to manipulate them into a form suitable to be uploaded to iRecord. In this case, if possible, the recording team would prefer you to use a standardised form spreadsheet, to ensure the amount of post-entry work is reduced. A preferred template spreadsheet is available from any of the contacts listed in this guide. Ultimately, however, all records, in whatever form are wanted.

Q: What if I need advice on how to record my observations and submit records?

A: We know some people want to deal with a real person! So, feel free to contact Tony Davison (tony.davison@btinternet.com) or Steve Thorpe (ornithom@hotmail.com – 07815 784642) to discuss recording options available to you. They will assess your technical knowledge and suggest something that will make it as easy as possible for you and for the team of verifiers.

Q: What about moth records for Nottinghamshire or the wider Sorby area, and what about other insect orders?

A: This guidance is only about Derbyshire moth records. Records of moths from elsewhere, and records of all other insect orders should be sent to the relevant county recorders. If you are unsure of where to send these records, please forward them to the DaNES records coordinator, Kieron Huston (morelemurs@talktalk.net).

Q: What other tools are available to help me?

A: We recommend the Moth Validation Spreadsheet. This can be used to ensure your records fit with the import requirements of iRecord, so that your work is reduced as much as possible. The validator requires you to have saved your records in a spreadsheet previously which can be uploaded to the moth validator, and it will process your records and produce an output that you can save. The final step is to import to iRecord. It is recommended that anyone uploading records to iRecord use this validator first to ensure their records are standardised. It also gives you a visual check on things like whether a moth is a difficult identification grade (mostly for micros), whether a moth might be a rarity, whether you ought to supply photos to make the verification easier, whether a moth is brand new for Derbyshire plus a few other useful checks.

Moth Validator webpage - <https://butterfly-conservation.org/in-your-area/east-scotland-branch/moth-and-butterfly-spreadsheet-validators>

You can download the Moth Validator spreadsheet from here to your computer. There are instructions with the validator but if you need any help, please contact Steve Thorpe (ornithom@hotmail.com) who will be happy to offer any guidance.

Summary

We hope this document has provided some useful guidance on what to do with your Derbyshire moth records. Remember:

- Upload your casual sightings to www.iRecord.org.uk
- Upload your single moth trapping session to www.iRecord.org.uk
- For those with many records - firstly, use the moth validator to check your records are fit for iRecord

Import your validated moth records spreadsheet to by pasting <https://irecord.org.uk/import/v2> into your browser and follow the instructions – please try to complete this at least once a month to prevent a backlog of records for the verifiers.

- **Important:** If you are unsure about using iRecord or want to do this another way then please contact Tony/Steve to discuss how to deal with your records

For any help, advice or guidance please contact Steve Thorpe (ornithom@hotmail.com – 07815 784642) or Tony Davison (tony.davison@btinternet.com)

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