

9 October 2025

FIRST SIGHTING OF MOTH SPECIES IN OVER 30 YEARS ON TRUST NATURE RESERVE

Two different species of moths, which haven't been spotted at Grey Mare's Tail nature reserve in over 30 years, have reappeared over the summer.

A recent moth trapping session at the National Trust for Scotland reserve in Dumfries & Galloway discovered a host of furry flying visitors including the Anomalous and Autumnal Rustic species, which hadn't been recorded at the reserve since 1993.

Alongside the Anomalous and Autumnal Rustic, the reserve's seasonal ranger and moth specialist, Ishbel Hayes also found four new species not previously recorded at the Tail, including the Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing, Flounced Rustic, Pale Eggar and Mouse Moth. The moth trap that was set in August found a total of 119 individuals from 22 species of moths, representing a bumper summer for the insect at the reserve despite the overall population declines and last year's cool, wet summer.

Ishbel, whose role is supported from funding raised by players of People's Postcode Lottery, said: "Moths are often thought of as the brown and boring cousins of butterflies, and despite our high numbers at the Tail this year, sadly, they are dwindling in numbers in general. There was a 30 percent drop in the abundance of the insects over the last 50 years, with two thirds of common species found to be in decline.

"We have over 2,500 different species of moths in the UK, which is vast compared to 59 species of butterfly. What many people don't realise is that moths are an important pollinator, helping to keep our food chains going in a similar fashion to bees, where they help pollinate flowers by transferring pollen between plants after feeding on their nectar. Some have argued that they are more efficient pollinators than bees due to the short summer nights limiting their active hours, so it's important we help protect them for the future. They are a key food source for many species of birds and bats as both adults and caterpillars, so they are vital to the overall biodiversity of our ecosystems.

"We carry out moth trapping at the reserve to observe the health of the moth populations and our habitats, with the data recorded added to national databases. These are used to develop moth atlases that show the distribution of different species across the UK, which help to identify trends for the insects over time.

"As a result of climate change, we are seeing moth distributions changing, with those previously only found in the warmer climes of the south of England expanding further north, and those which prefer the damper, cooler Scottish weather restricted to fewer areas.

"Moths are being impacted by several environmental factors including habitat loss and light pollution. We are also starting to see moths emerging earlier in the year causing desynchronisation with food sources and causing knock-on impacts for feeding birds

and bats. Our work is vital to help maintain healthy habitats for the moths and other insect species in our care. It is thanks to the continued generosity of our members and supporters, including players of People's Postcode Lottery, that we're able to continue our vital work to protect Scotland's natural heritage at these special places for everyone to enjoy, now and into the future."

Players of People's Postcode Lottery have supported the conservation charity's Love Our Nature project since 2022, which benefited from £900k last year. Further funding will support nature conservation work across a variety of different habitats including coastal and marine areas, peatlands, wetlands, woodland, and the eight National Nature Reserves cared for by the Trust.

Head of Charities at [People's Postcode Lottery](#), Laura Chow, said: "Players of People's Postcode Lottery are helping the National Trust for Scotland protect important moths and insects across some of the country's most treasured nature reserves. Through ongoing monitoring and data gathering, the Trust's work is enhancing biodiversity and protecting the precious species that call these habitats home."

The Love Our Nature project supports the National Trust for Scotland's vision to care for, protect and share Scotland's nature, beauty and heritage for everyone, as outlined in its 10-year strategy, launched in 2022. For more information on the National Trust for Scotland, visit www.nts.org.uk.

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Notes to Editors

Moths in decline figures based on research published in the State of Britain's Larger Moths in 2021.

Images: <https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/DAE6zyvK58>

About the National Trust for Scotland

Established in 1931, the National Trust for Scotland is Scotland's largest conservation charity and cares for, shares and speaks up for Scotland's magnificent heritage.

Over the last 90 years the Trust has pioneered public access to and shared ownership of some of the most magnificent buildings, collections and landscapes in Scotland. It cares for more than 100 sites, from ancient houses to battlefields, castles, mills, gardens, coastlines, islands, mountain ranges and the plants and animals which depend upon them.

In March 2022 the National Trust for Scotland launched *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*, its ten-year strategy which sets out the ambitions of the charity over the coming decade. From speaking up for Scotland's heritage which doesn't have a voice, to improving the lives and wellbeing of people across the country, and responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis, the Trust will build on its work in recent years to grow its

impact and conserve and restore more of Scotland's heritage, as it moves towards its centenary in 2031.

Scotland's largest membership organisation, the National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work.

For more information on the National Trust for Scotland visit www.nts.org.uk.

The National Trust for Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC 007410.