Macro-moths of Magus Muir

S.T. Buckland

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I have included images of all the species that I have recorded at Magus Muir. All photos were taken at Magus Muir in 2024, apart from the hummingbird hawk-moth, which was there in 2019.

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Angle shades

A common moth, with many migrants arriving in summer and autumn.

Barred chestnut

A scarce species of broadleaved woodland and wooded heathland. This one was at Magus Muir in late August 2024.

Barred straw

A common summer species wherever bedstraws grow.

Beautiful carpet

Occurs in small numbers, mostly in established woodland. This one was at Magus Muir in late July 2024.

Brick

A relatively scarce autumn species of broadleaved woodland in Fife.

Brimstone moth

A common summer species of woodland, gardens, scrub and hedges.

Brindled pug

A common spring species where oaks grow.

Brown silver-line

A common spring species where there is bracken.

Brown-spot pinion

A common autumn species, especially in broadleaved woodland.

Buff footman

This species is a recent arrival in Fife, spreading from the south.

Canary-shouldered thorn

A pretty moth that is common in woodland in autumn.

Chestnut

A common autumn and spring species, that can also be recorded in winter on mild nights. These were recorded in mid-February and early March.

Cinnabar

Mostly coastal in Fife, this one was at Magus Muir in late June 2024. Its main foodplant is ragwort.

Clouded border

A common species of woodland, wetland and heathland habitats.

Clouded-bordered brindle

A species of grassland and moorland. These images show two common colour forms.

Clouded drab

A common spring species with variable markings. The variation below left is unusual for Fife, occurring mostly further north.

Common carpet

A very common species across a wide range of habitats. Often seen in daylight.

Common footman

Like the buff footman, this species is a recent arrival in Fife, spreading from the south.

Common lutestring

Locally-distributed in Fife, occurring mostly in birch woodland.

Common marbled carpet

A species with variable markings. Common across a range of habitats.

Common pug

A fairly common species across a range of habitats.

Common quaker

A spring species that is very common, especially in woodland.

Common swift

A common species of grassland, and of other habitats where grass grows.

Common wave

A common species of woodland and carr.

Common white wave

A common woodland species.

Copper underwing

A southern species which, like the very similar Svensson's copper underwing, has spread into Fife. Now fairly common, especially in broadleaved woodland.

Coxcomb prominent

A common species of woodland and scrub.

Dark arches

Common across a wide range of habitats.

Dark marbled carpet

A fairly common species, mostly in woodland, heathland and moorland.

December moth

A common woodland species, occurring from late October into December.

Devon carpet

A southern species of damp woodlands, which first arrived at the south coast of Fife in 2022. The one above was at Magus Muir in late May 2024, while the worn individual below was there in late August. Magus Muir is only the second location in Fife at which the species has been recorded.

Dotted border

An early spring species, common in woodland. This male was near the car park in early March. In common with many early spring species, the female is flightless, and difficult to find.

Double lobed

A locally-distributed species in Scotland, occurring in damp habitats. This one was at Magus Muir in late July 2024.

Double square-spot

A common species across a range of habitats.

Double-striped pug

A widely-distributed species, occurring in a variety of habitats.

Dun-bar

A common species of late summer.

Dwarf pug

A common species of conifer plantations.

Early grey

A spring species that is relatively scarce in east Fife. This one was at Magus Muir in mid-March 2024.

Early thorn

A common species in spring in woodland, parks and gardens.

Early tooth-striped

A common spring species of broadleaved woodland and heathland.

Engrailed

A species with two generations per year, the first appearing in March, and the second in June. It is most common in broadleaved woodland. The image below left shows how well camouflaged the moths are when resting on a tree trunk. They seem to align their edges and markings with markings on the trunk.

Feathered thorn

An autumn species, common in broadleaved woodland.

Flame carpet

A common summer species across a range of habitats.

Flame shoulder

A common summer species across a range of habitats.

Garden carpet

Common in gardens, but occurs in a wide range of habitats.

Green-brindled crescent

A fairly common autumn species, especially in broadleaved woodland.

Green carpet

Common in a variety of habitats.

Green silver-lines

An unmistakable species of broadleaved woodland which is scarce in Fife. This one was at Magus Muir in mid-June 2024.

Grey pine carpet

Common where conifers grow.

Grey pug

Common across a number of habitats.

Hebrew character

A common spring species that can occur in large numbers.

Hummingbird hawk-moth

A scarce migrant to Scotland. This one was at Magus Muir on 29 July 2019.

Ingrailed clay

A common and very variable species of woodland and heathland.

Iron prominent

A fairly common species where birches or alders grow.

July highflyer

Common in summer and through to autumn, occurring in a range of habitats.

Large emerald

A fairly common and impressive woodland species.

Large yellow underwing

A large, variable and very common grassland species.

Least black arches

A tiny moth for a 'macro'. It is widespread in broadleaved woodland, although never numerous. It has become more common in recent years.

Lesser broad-bordered yellow underwing

A common species across a range of habitats.

Lesser swallow prominent

A common species where birches grow.

Light emerald

A common species, especially in broadleaved woodland.

Map-winged swift

A common species where bracken occurs.

Marbled minor

The most common of three species that cannot reliably be separated from photos. The other two are rufous minor and tawny marbled minor.

March moth

Common from mid-February to mid-April.

Mottled beauty

A common species, especially in woodland.

Mottled grey

A fairly common spring species that occurs mostly in open habitats, but not usually in intensively farmed areas. This one was at Magus Muir in late March 2024.

Mottled pug

A scarce species in Fife, which is towards the north of its range. The caterpillars usually feed on hawthorn or blackthorn.

Muslin footman

A locally-distributed species, occurring mostly where stone is available, as it feeds on lichens that grow on stone. These were at Magus Muir in mid-July 2024.

Northern spinach

Magus Muir is not ideal habitat for this species, whose foodplant is bilberry. It occurs mostly on moorland, heathland and open woodland. This one was at Magus Muir in late July 2024.

November moth

A common autumn moth, closely related to two less common species, the pale November moth and the autumnal moth.

Nut-tree tussock

A common species of broadleaved woodland.

Pale brindled beauty

A common species of broadleaved woodland in February and early March. The one below right is a dark form.

Pale November moth

A scarce species of broadleaved woodland, most often recorded in late October. Very similar to November and autumnal moths.

Pale prominent

A distinctive moth with its pale colour, huge palps sticking out at the front, and unusual tail. A scarce species in Fife, occurring where poplars or willows grow.

Pale-shouldered brocade

A fairly common species, occurring mostly in woodland.

Peach blossom

A relatively scarce species in Fife. Its foodplant is bramble.

Pebble prominent

A fairly common species where willows, sallows or poplars grow.

Peppered moth

A very distinctive species of woodland. It is fairly scarce in Fife.

Pinion-streaked snout

A locally-distributed species of damp habitats.

Pink-barred sallow

A pretty autumn species, occurring where sallows or poplars grow.

Poplar hawk-moth

Common where poplars or willows grow.

Purple clay

A common species of broadleaved woodland.

Red-green carpet

A fairly common species of broadleaved woodland. The adults emerge in autumn and again in spring, when they come out of hibernation.

Red-line quaker

A fairly common species, occurring where willows grow.

Red-necked footman

A locally-distributed southern species that has dramatically increased its range, spreading through northern England and Scotland. It occurs mostly in woodland, especially if conifers are present. This caterpillar came to the light of a moth trap in late September 2024.

Riband wave

Common across a range of habitats.

Rivulet

Common where red campion grows.

Rustic shoulder-knot

A common species of grassland and farmland.

Sandy carpet

A common species where campions grow.

Satellite

Common in autumn and spring, and sometimes recorded in winter. These were at Magus Muir in mid-February (above) and early April.

Satin beauty

Formerly a scarce species in Scotland, becoming more common because of the availability of conifer plantations.

Scallop shell

A rather rare species of damp woodland and carr in Fife. This one was at Magus Muir in mid-July 2024.

Scalloped hazel

A common woodland species.

Setaceous hebrew character

A common lowland species.

Shoulder stripe

A spring species, fairly common in woodland.

Silver-ground carpet

A very common species of a range of mostly damp habitats. It is often seen flying during the day.

Silver Y

A common migrant, that often occurs in good numbers across a range of habitats.

Single-dotted wave

Near to the northern limit of its range in Fife, low numbers occur in woodland and damp habitats.

Six-striped rustic

This common species occurs mostly in damp habitats, including damp woodland.

Slender brindle

A common species of woodland with grassy areas.

Small angle shades

A relatively scarce species in Fife, occurring in a large range of habitats.

Small fan-foot

A fairly common species of broadleaved woodland, scrub, hedgerows and gardens.

Small fan-footed wave

Occurs mostly in broadleaved woodland, where it is common.

Small phoenix

A common species where willowherbs grow.

Small quaker

A spring species that is spreading northwards, and is now fairly common in Fife.

Small square-spot

A common species that can be abundant, especially in damp woodland.

Snout

Common where nettles grow.

Spruce carpet

Common, especially in and around plantations.

Straw dot

A common species, especially in tall, damp grassland.

Streak

A relatively scarce species in Fife, occurring where broom grows. This one was at Magus Muir in late October 2024.

Streamer

A pretty moth that occurs mostly in rough, weedy places.

Swallow-tailed moth

This large and striking moth is widely distributed in woodland, parks and gardens, but not numerous in Fife.

Tawny-barred angle

A fairly common species where conifers grow.

Twin-spot carpet

A common species, most numerous on moorland and upland woodland.

Twin-spotted quaker

This species flies in March and April. It is becoming more common, having spread from the south.

V-pug

Fairly common in a range of habitats.

Water carpet

A common spring species in damp woodland and other damp habitats. The one on the right is the dark form, *piceata*.

Welsh wave

A locally-distributed species of moorland and open woodland, occurring mostly where rowans grow.

White ermine

A widespread species, common in a variety of habitats.

White-pinion spotted

A southern species that has started to spread into Fife. This one was at Magus Muir in late May 2024, and is the first record from east Fife.

Yellow horned

An early spring species that can be numerous in birch woodland. These were two of 29 recorded at Magus Muir in one evening in early March.

Yellow-line quaker

A common autumn species, especially in broadleaved woodland, heathland and moorland.