



Identify 100 Species – Common Moths

10 species you are likely to find in Leicestershire and Rutland

How easy is it to identify?

Easy



Care needed



Target species

Cinnabar – *Tyria jacobaeae* ●

ID: Black with red stripes and spots on the forewings and all red hindwings. May-July.

Similar species: [6 Spot Burnet](#) (spots only).

Where to look: Meadows, verges. Caterpillars on Ragwort.

About: Both the caterpillars and the adult accumulate toxins from the Ragwort. Warning colours advertise this to predators.

Recording: Photo needed.



Nettle Tap – *Anthophila fabriciana* ●

ID: 10mm. Mottled brown/grey. Triangular shape.

Similar species: None.

Where to look: Abundant around Nettles. May-September.

About: The caterpillars make silken tents on Sting Nettles, their food plant.

Recording: Photo needed.



6 Spot Burnet – *Zygaena filipendulae* ●

ID: Black forewings with six spots. Hindwings red with black border.

Similar species: [Narrow-bordered 5-Spot Burnet](#) (5 wing spots)

Where to look: Meadows, verges. June-August.

About: xx

Recording: Photo needed. Be careful to distinguish from the Narrow-bordered 5 Spot (inset) as this is equally common.



Other common Leicestershire moths to check out:

[Yellow Shell](#), [Light Brown Apple Moth](#), [Middle-bar Minor](#), [Common Carpet](#), [Riband Wave](#)

Silver Y – *Autographa gamma* ●

ID: 25mm. Brown/grey with a striking silver Y on the forewings. April-September.

Similar species: None.

Where to look: Anywhere. Numbers often boosted by migrants.

About: The Silver Y is day-flying. It has very fast wing beats so is impossible to identify until it rests!

Recording: Photo needed.



To find out more about the [100 Species Challenge](#), how to submit records of your sightings and lots more about the wildlife of Leicestershire and Rutland, visit www.naturespot.org.uk.

Straw Dot – *Rivula sericealis* ●

ID: 15mm. Buff/pale yellow with paired dark spots.

Similar species: None.

Where to look: Meadows, verges. June-September.

About: Caterpillars feed on a range of grasses. There are two generations each year with the June emergents breeding in August.

Recording: Photo needed. Like all moths, the colours fade as it ages so it may appear pale brown with very faint eye-spots. Though flying from dusk into the night it is easily disturbed in grassland.



Elephant Hawkmoth – *Deilephila elpenor* ●

ID: 40mm. Spectacular pink and brown moth. May-July. Caterpillars to September.

Similar species: None.

Where to look: The adult is nocturnal but comes to light. Caterpillars feed on willowherb and fuschias.

About: The huge, mature caterpillars are often mistaken for small snakes when they are wandering and searching for a pupation site.

Recording: Photo needed.



Garden Carpet – *Xanthorhoe fluctuata* ●

ID: 20mm. Pale grey with dark patches. Triangular shape.

Similar species: None.

Where to look: Gardens, allotments. Resting during the day on walls around buildings. Apr-September.

About: Caterpillars feed on Garlic Mustard, Shepherd's Purse, cultivated cabbages and other similar plants.

Recording: Photo needed.



Silver-ground Carpet - *Xanthorhoe montanata* ●

ID: White background with brown cross-band.

Similar species: Other Carpet Moths.

Where to look: Woodland edges, hedges. Nocturnal but often disturbed by day. May-July.

About: Caterpillars feed on Cleavers, other bedstraws and Primrose.

Recording: Photo needed.



Chimney Sweeper – *Odezia atrata* ●

ID: 20mm. Black with white, rounded wing tips.

Similar species: None.

Where to look: Meadows where Pignut grows. June-July.

About: Very active during the day, particularly when sunny. Only feeds on Pignut to restricted to meadows with this plant.

Recording: Photo needed.



Mint Moth – *Pyrausta aurata* ●

ID: 15mm. Red/purple with gold spots. Apr-Sept.

Similar species: [Pyrausta purpuralis](#) (3 gold spots)

Where to look: Gardens, damp meadows with mint.

About: Flies actively in sunshine. Caterpillars feed on wild mints (*Mentha* sp.) as well as garden cultivars.

Recording: Photo needed.

