

## Codwyd yr erthygl hon o Nature in Wales Mawrth 1977 (Cyfrol 15, Rhif 3)

### INVERTEBRATES

*All entomological notes and records and those dealing with any other invertebrates should be sent to Mrs. M. J. Morgan, Department of Applied Zoology, University College of North Wales, Bangor.*

#### HIGHLIGHTS OF 1976

The glorious weather of last summer had a marked effect on insect life in many places. The 7-spot ladybird (*Coccinella 7-punctata*) was reported in vast swarms in many parts of Britain to the extent of becoming a considerable nuisance. Even where there was no marked population explosion, the familiar red beetles were to be found everywhere in greater numbers than usual. With the continuation of the long dry spell the aphid numbers fell markedly and many of the ladybirds must have died of starvation. It will be interesting to see how many have survived the winter hibernation and reappear in the spring to attack the next outbreak of greenfly and other pests.

The arrival of migratory Lepidoptera from the continent varies markedly from year to year but 1976 proved to be exceptionally interesting from this aspect. A rare visitor was the Camberwell Beauty (*Nymphalis antiopa*), reported from several places in Britain. Not unexpectedly, there were various sightings in Kent, but it was also seen in North Wales, for the first time since two were seen at Penmaenmawr in August 1950 by Captain Dannreuther. In Anglesey one was seen near Beaumaris on 24 August and another on the same day by voluntary wardens at Newborough, where a further sighting occurred on the 25th. (pers. comm. R. W. Arthur).

The Clouded Yellow (*Colias croceus*) is another migrant which appears sporadically. Two were seen at Penllech cliffs in the Lleyn Peninsula, on 8 August and again on the 10th (D. Hunter). This is the first sighting in the county since 1947. It was also seen in south and west Brecknock from July onwards (J. P. Sankey-Barker) and in south Carmarthenshire (I. K. Morgan).

The numbers of Painted Lady butterflies (*Vanessa cardui*) fluctuate considerably, 1976 proving a good year for the species. Groups of up to 20 were seen at Towyn Burrows (I.K.M.); several in Cardigan (?) August (F. H. Alderson); 2 on cliffs near Strumble Head 8 June, one near Dinas, Pems. 6 June (T. A. W. Davis); one at Bodorgan, Anglesey 13 June and several between 17 and 22 August (L. S. V. V.); and single ones at Tregarth, Bangor at Buddleia, 7 and 22 August (M. J. M.).

The Comma (*Polygonia c-album*), was at one time extremely scarce but in recent years has become more widespread. Occasional specimens have been seen in the Bangor area in past years and one appeared in Tregarth on 24 July 1976. During the previous week 2 had been seen in Anglesey, one in Menai Bridge 15 July and one in Llanfair P. G. 18 July (L. J. Rees). These appear to be

the first records for Anglesey. In south Carmarthenshire it was seen more frequently than usual and the various records include 5 at Towyn Burrows on 10 August (E. J. Smith).

Several of the larger Hawk moths are rare visitors to Wales, especially the northern counties. A *Convolvulus Hawk* (*Herse convolvuli*) was found near Beaumaris, Anglesey, on 4 October (P. Peregrine). The Death's Head Hawk (*Acherontia atropos*) arrives from the continent in the early summer and will breed if weather conditions are suitable. Chrysalids were found under potato plants at Dyffryn Ardudwy and Talybont, Merioneth, in late September and early October (Duncan Brown). It is unlikely that they would survive the cold of a British winter. An adult moth was seen on a gate at Newborough Forest, Anglesey, 10 September by Dr. Colin Fairhurst.

1976 was a good year for the Humming-bird Hawk moth (*Macroglossum stellatarum*), a species which flies in warm sunshine, extending its long tongue into flowers while still on the wing, to reach the nectar. Mrs. H. Smeeton of Aberdyfi saw about 8 of them feeding on a cluster of late flowering Valerian in September, and one single one was still around on 6 October, on Sedum flowers. From 28 August — 2 October Reg Arthur was able to watch one almost every day in his garden near Newborough, and nearby at Bodorgan, 20 August, one was feeding on *A nemone japonica* (L. S. V. V.). Other records include one feeding at honeysuckle flowers, Guilsfield, near Welshpool, 14 September (Mrs. D. Bennett); one at Plas Llangattock, Crickhowell, 26 June (J. P. S.-B.); and one (? August) in Cardigan (F. H. Alderson).