

April 2011

A series of increasingly warm nights at the start of the month brought a significant change. **Pine Beauty**, **Early Thorn** and **Powdered Quaker** were recorded on the 2nd and the following night brought **Angle Shades** and the earliest **Dark Swordgrass** to have been recorded at the Bay. **Shoulder-stripe**, **Herald**, **Brindled Pug** and **The Chestnut** appeared on the 6th and **Emperor**, **Grey Shoulder-knot**, **Least Black Arches** and **Ruby Tiger** were recorded on the 7th. A **Pale Prominent** was caught on the 8th and the first **Oblique Striped** of spring were on the wing on the 11th, but numbers remained desperately low.

However, a **Muslin** was recorded on the 16th and things took a distinct turn for the better on the 19th, when 68 moths were trapped, including **Flame Shoulder**, **Bright-line Brown-eye**, **Chinese Character**, **Brimstone** and, best of all, 2 **BLOSSOM UNDERWINGS** ; a species never previously recorded at the Bay. Another good night on the 20th produced six more new species for the year - **Pebble Prominent**, **Clouded Border**, **Poplar Grey**, **Common Carpet**, **Spruce Carpet** and **V-Pug** - and **Maiden's Blush**, **Common Wave**, our first **Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet** since 2002 and **Red Twin-spot Carpet** were recorded on the 21st, with a **Cinnabar** by day on the 22nd. Highlights of the next couple of nights included **Small Elephant Hawkmoth**, **Chocolate-tip** and the Bay's first ever **SERAPHIM** on the 22nd and only our second ever Oak Nycteoline on the 23rd, by which time the list of macros recorded this year so far had reached 59, only two of which were recorded later than last year. Four more species were added to the list on the 24th, including **Puss Moth** and **Poplar Hawkmoth** and the next night **Nutmeg** and **Chamomile Shark** were recorded, as the spell of warm weather came to an end.

Despite cool and windy conditions, **Cabbage Moth** was recorded on the 26th and **Eyed Hawkmoth** on the 27th, but a calm, warmer night on the 28th produced four new species, including **White Ermine**, **Treble Lines**, **Turnip Moth** and a real surprise in the shape of a **NORTHERN DRAB**; a new species for the Observatory. The trend of early emergence continued and by the end of the month no fewer than 85 macro species had been recorded, many more than in 2010 when 52 had been recorded by the end of April. Highlights of the last few days were **Orange Footman** and **Pinion-spotted Pug** on the 30th; the latter was unrecorded last year.