

Mapmate

Lepidoptera Record Entry - Guidance Notes

There are now well over 170,000 lepidoptera records in the Staffordshire Mapmate database. This is an incredibly valuable resource for us all. However as the database grows and particularly as the number of people entering data increases, then there is a growing need for some common systems of data entry used by all Mapmate users if possible. This is particularly important with large popular sites such as Cannock Chase, but also with recorder names where different people entering the records to Mapmate (CUKs) use a different place name or recorder name for the same site or recorder. This has led to some duplicate records on the database and confusion over site names etc. So really we need to recommend common forms of data entry to eliminate most of these problems. If you are recording butterflies or moths in your back garden then there shouldn't be a problem with data entry, either you enter the records to Mapmate or you ask someone else to. Similarly if you go on a butterfly walk on your own or go moth-trapping on your own then the data entry is down to you or someone else that you ask to do it.

If you are on a butterfly walk or moth-trapping night with others then please make sure before you go home that you have agreed between you, as to who should enter the records. (This has not always happened in the past and has caused duplicate records put in twice by different people.) Usually the best system is to nominate one person to collate records from everyone present and then to input a list as agreed by the group. Records are usually credited to a recorder as the person whose trap catches the moth.

For all future entry of lepidoptera records to Mapmate then please use the following system. Once this is standardised across recorders then we can look back at records already entered by recorders and through use of queries can alter whole batches of records to the correct format. (but, ask for help with this editing of data already in the data-set as care is needed if large numbers of records are not to be accidentally deleted!) Whatever you do, never delete a site or recorder name - even if you don't want to use it any more, as someone somewhere might have used it and you will leave all their records with blank site, recorder or method etc. fields (and that might leave them with hundreds of records to correct!).

Please try and be as accurate as possible with all records entered, you never know what details might be useful in the future. Always try and count numbers of individuals seen if possible rather than just using 'present' or estimating numbers. Try not to use a general site name such as Cannock Chase or Hanchurch Hills, try and use a specific site name. Always try and use an accurate grid reference for your record - 4 figure grid references are needed for a record to appear on a Mapmate map, but really 6 figures should always be used for accuracy and if a GPS is used, then 8 figure references should be entered (unfortunately Mapmate isn't set up to cope with 10 figure grid refs). If you use more than one moth trap on a night then please try and count each one separately and record a grid reference for each - this can help with site management to benefit individual species in the future.

Guidance for data-entry is as listed below (this is not a full instruction of how to do data-entry in Mapmate - it is just a guide of how to enter lepidoptera records in Staffordshire):

Taxon

Several species are unidentifiable in the field and should therefore be always entered in an aggregate form **unless the moth has been dissected**. The species that should be handled this way are as follows;

- 1038 *Acleris laterana* and 1039 *Acleris comariana* should be entered as 1038x *Acleris laterana/comariana*.
- 1044 *Acleris ferrugana* and 1045 *Acleris notana* should be entered as 1044x *Acleris ferrugana/notana*.
- 1795 November Moth, 1796 Pale November Moth and 1797 Autumnal Moth should be entered as 1795x November Moth agg.
- 1947 Engrailed and 1948 Small Engrailed should be entered as *Ectropis* sp., as Mapmate has not yet provided an x species number form for this aggregate. Identification of this species pair seems to be based purely on flight periods - even dissection doesn't help!
- 2283 Dark Dagger and 2284 Grey Dagger should be entered as 2284x Dark/Grey Dagger. (in addition this species pair can be safely identified as larvae, but in this case it is important to put larval in the stage field of data entry.)
- 2337 Marbled Minor, 2338 Rufous Minor and 2339 Tawny Marbled Minor should be entered as 2337x Marbled Minor agg.
- 2343 Common Rustic, 2343a Lesser Common Rustic and 2343b Remm's Rustic should be entered as 2343x Common Rustic agg.

Other species groups can be very difficult to ID as well, including micros such as the *Scoparias* and macros such as the pugs and ear moths. Also Essex Skippers and Light Orange Underwing should only be identified with certainty if netted or photographed. (These groups may need further evaluation for possible aggregate data-entry)

Quantity

Always try and count everything you see. If you are one of those people that thinks that Large Yellow Underwing will always be common and therefore it doesn't matter, then please can you humour us and record exact numbers up to 100 in your trap and if you record more than 100 then please estimate to the nearest 10. An estimate of 170 is more valuable than just listing the species as present. (But accurate counts are still preferable even when over 100 are seen!) If you have estimated the quantity then please say this in the comments field of the record. Always use the sex terms m for male and f for female if the specimen has been dissected. In addition "genitalia checked" should be entered in the comments field. (If you enter 2m!g in the quantity field for 2 males dissected, then this will automatically add the words "genitalia checked" in the comments field.)

Stage

This should usually be entered as adult with most field work, but do make sure you remember to enter egg, larval, mine, pupal etc if it is not an adult - otherwise it will mess up adult flight period data! (eg. If a Grey Dagger is seen in September)

Site

Standardisation of site names is very important and possibly is the biggest cause of duplicate entries in the database when poorly entered. The site name needs to be clear and make sense to all users. Also it needs to help us locate a site (the grid reference also helps, but it is not unknown for people to get a grid reference wrong!). Avoid using such 'friendly terms' as Dave's trap or Dave Emley's garden as a location.

For large sites, that can be easily found on a map then a site name can be simply Baggots Wood with a grid reference for each trap or location where the lepidoptera species was found. For larger sites it helps to subdivide the name and the standard practice is to list the larger site first, with a hyphen separating the names. So the recognised site would be Cannock Chase – Brocton Coppice and not Brocton Coppice, or Brocton Coppice, Cannock Chase. This might seem fussy, but to the computer it is not and if you want to for instance search for all records for Brocton Coppice or all records for Cannock Chase then you will realise the value of this system. Try not to just use local names e.g. Forest Park could be almost anywhere in the county.

For garden records, it is best not to use exact house name or house number wherever possible for data protection reasons. So for a particular Stafford garden the site name might be; Stafford - Alexandra Road. For big cities such as Birmingham then it helps to have three parts to the site name e.g.; Birmingham - Kings Heath - Grange Road (But please don't ever use more than three parts in a site name).

There are currently far too many site names on the data-base for the same places and this will need some serious editing soon. Please help by not introducing new site names unless you really need to - always check before you add a new site name that there isn't already another site name with the same grid ref. (also check that if there is, then it is in the correct hyphenated form) If in doubt always check for standard site names with the county moth recorder Dave Emley.

Do please try and take care with entering grid references correctly - if you have a GPS then you should enter an 8 figure grid ref whenever possible. If not, then please use a detailed map carefully and fill in a six-figure reference. (several websites such as Multimap can now help you to locate grid refs.) Please try and avoid using 2 or 4 figure or tetrad information unless unavoidable.

Please also check that if you are entering a new site, that Mapmate gives it the correct Vice County name and number. In some cases close to county boundaries, Mapmate is slightly inaccurate.

Date

This should be straightforward, again try and give the exact date and not just the week or month or year. Remember that one record of Poplar Grey present in 2005 in your garden is nowhere near as useful as listing all the dates the moth was seen with an exact count of how many were seen on each of these dates as several records. You might say that this doesn't matter as the species is common, but if you don't record how common it is now and on which dates, then if it declines suddenly we will have no figures to show how much the decline has been.

For moth-trapping, the date should always be for the day the moth trap is switched on and not for the following morning when the trap is switched off.

Status

This field is not really very relevant to lepidoptera recorders, most people just fill in either Unknown or Not recorded in this field. In theory it could be useful if Mapmate used it for Lepidoptera to record Red Data Book, Nationally Notable or UKBAP statuses for rare species, but this often changes with time, so it is best not to use this in data entry. If you need to find out this information for a species then just check under Analysis, Browse Tables, Browse Taxa for species status.

Recorder

It is important to standardise recorder names. Then it is easy to look up which species and records a particular recorder has seen. If there are several versions of one recorder's name then this is not possible. The exact positions of full stops is vital, for instance the computer counts Emley, D. as a different recorder to Emley, D so great care is needed. If I want to list all of my records then they should all use one version of my name!

So, standardisation of recorder name is vital and after consultation with other common Mapmate users it has been concluded that the best form of your name should be surname <comma> initial. For instance Emley, D. (make sure you have a comma and space after the surname and make sure you have a full-stop after the initial). If you need to use more than one initial after your surname then check that everyone entering records for you uses the same form of your name. Don't just add a new version of your name every time you enter a record!!

In the rare event of another recorder already existing with the same surname and initial, then please use a second initial to distinguish recorders. If this still doesn't separate duplicate recorders then please use the first name, e.g. Emley, Dave. If this still doesn't solve the problem, e.g. if there are two recorders called Smith, John, then please get in touch with one of the local Mapmate lepidoptera recorders and a solution will be found using the location field.

Also when entering a recorder name then Mapmate confusingly insists on you entering another field called location (this is not needed by us - as location is adequately handled by the site field, but we have to fill it in!). Unknown location this is probably the best location to use but it is important that it is the **only** location used for your recorder name!

If you are on a group moth-trapping night then it would be nice to list everyone present on the event as recorder for all the traps. However Mapmate struggles to identify names among this list of names, so the best thing to enter in the recorder field is the name of the person that owns this particular trap. Therefore recorder name is linked to trap owner for following up records.

If more than one name is used in the recorder field then they should be listed in alphabetical order e.g. Prior, A. & Weston, V. or West, A. & West, M. (Note in order to standardise entries then West, A. & West, M. is used in preference to West, A. & M.) Do try and keep to a maximum of two recorders in this field, as otherwise it becomes unwieldy. If you want to mention additional recorders then please list their names in the comments field.

Determiner

This will usually be the same name used as recorder, even with group events - for instance if a Garden Carpet is recorded. For rarer species then this might be a county recorder such as Emley, D. if he happens to be present on the same night of survey to confirm for example a Curren Pug record. For difficult species then it is useful to put the name of an experienced recorder or county recorder down under determiner to allow easy acceptance of the record, if they have seen the record. Specimens may need to be kept for an expert to determine them (i.e. confirm ID). This may also require photographs to be taken. If the determiner has identified a record from a photograph then this should be noted in the comments field. If a specimen is confirmed by dissection, then the name in the determiner field should be the name of the person carrying out the dissection.

Method

As with recorder and determiner there is quite a confusion of methods in the Mapmate database due to people entering the same method in several differently worded ways! For instance 125 W MV trap, 125W MV trap, MV Light Trap (125w), Skinner Trap (125W MV), Skinner Trap (125W). I would suggest that the best standardised form for Skinner traps (or those of a similar construction is to use the form Skinner Trap (125W MV). If there is collective data for several of these traps then it should be in the form Skinner Trap (125W MV) x 4 - if there are 4 traps used. In the same layout then the listing should be for; Skinner Trap (15W Actinic) or Skinner Trap (80W MV). Other trap types are best listed under Heath or Robinson traps etc - see the list of methods. As with the other fields, only enter a new method if it is essential.

Reference

This field should help people to be able to look up records if needed. In its simplest form this could be for instance Emley, D. 2005, Lepidoptera Field Notes or Emley, D., 2005, Excel spreadsheet for site, but it could also be a reference to a record in a published book.

Comment

As mentioned above, this field should be used for reference to any record which has been dissected to determine identification. Also it should be used to indicate records that belong to the garden moths scheme, with a different year code for each year - eg. GMS2005 or GMS2006. Other important features can also be entered in this field such as weather conditions or extra recorder names.

One final check that you can do with the data that you have already entered is to look for duplicate records entered by yourself (and lets face it we all make this mistake!!) if you open Mapmate then click on Analysis, click on Database Info, click on Show Duplicated Records entered here and a list will appear then carefully view all fields of both records in each record pair and if they are completely identical then right click on the record to be removed and click on Remove selected records. Do be careful if dissection has been done then Mapmate thinks separate records of males and females for the same date and site are duplicates - **do not delete these!**

Apologies that this is a long and complicated looking list of instructions, but I hope that you will find it useful. Do please get back in touch if you need any more help with any of the above. Please make sure that you use the above format for entering all future records. We will revisit your records that have been entered in previous years and edit them at some future date.

Dave Emley 1/10/2007 (with thanks to Dave Grundy – 26/9/07)