



Sandhill Rustic Moth

Local Biodiversity Action Plan

SANDHILL RUSTIC MOTH (LUPERINA NICKERLII GUENEEI)

Associated Habitat Action Plans:

- [Coastal Sand Dune](#)



Ecology

Appearance

The Sandhill rustic moth has a wingspan of 32-42mm and is usually pale grey in colour with subtle mottled patterns on its forewings and clear white hindwings.

Habitat

This moth inhabits sand dunes and beaches.

Food

The main food plant for this moth is sand couch grass (*Elytrigia juncea*), which is also the plant they lay their eggs on.

Life Style

- * Sandhill rustic moths are nocturnal and are single-brooded.
- * Sandhill rustic have an impressive ability to survive submersion in water. They are in fact good swimmers and are known to crawl down plant stems into the water.
- * The adults lay their eggs in sand couch grass sheaths between August and September.
- * After hatching (usually 2-4weeks after the eggs are laid), the caterpillars burrow down into the



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crown of the plant. They usually reach the base of the plant by spring where they continue to feed moving to the roots as they get larger.

- * In July the caterpillars pupate a few centimetres below the ground's surface.
- * Adults emerge in August or September and hide in the dunes during the day.

Current status

This race is confined to sand dune systems in North Wales and North West England. Listed as Vulnerable in the RDB.

Confined to one site on Wirral between West Kirby and Hoylake. Only one current other Merseyside site, (Altcar) where it has not been seen for 2 years, but found in reasonable numbers across the Dee at Talacre & Gronant.

Found in Sand Couch, mainly that lapped by the highest tides. Eggs are laid in sheaths of Sand Couch Grass in August and September. The larvae feed down the shoot and reach the root crowns and stem bases by early spring where they feed, also feeding along rhizomes until July when they pupate. The pupa is found a few cm down. The adults emerge in August and September hiding in the dunes during the day.

Most adults are found exposed on the plant for the first half of the night and are easy to observe and record; flying takes place mainly later in the night.

This race occurs at Newborough, Malltraeth, Gronant, Talacre, West Kirby; in past few years also at Altcar, in past few decades also at Ainsdale; early 20th century at Conwy, Southport and St. Annes. [Other races occur in Cornwall, Kent/Essex and SW Ireland].

Apart from the general provisions of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, Sandhill Rustic Moth is not specially protected by European or British legislation.

The Sandhill Rustic was added to the UKBAP priority list in 2007.

Threats

Recreational disturbance of habitat.

- * Beach engineering works. Potential threat from beach engineering works designed to prevent natural development of pioneer dunes.
- * Sea level changes as it is in a habitat that is a pioneer, dynamic and short-lived and it is thus vulnerable to storms and other climate and tidal influences.
- * Erosion of strandline / dune edge.



* Successional changes in vegetation of strandline.

How are we helping to conserve the Sandhill Rustic Moth in the Cheshire region?

* There has been an annual survey since 1996, when the colony was discovered; surveys in previous years had not found the moth.

Objectives, targets and actions

Objectives, targets and actions to help conserve the sandhill rustic in the Cheshire region can be found on the [Biodiversity Action Reporting System \(BARS\)](#) along with full details of our progress so far.

How to find out more about the Sandhill Rustic Moth

UK Moths Sandhill Rustic species data - <http://ukmoths.org.uk/show.php?bf=2354>

Contact details

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References and Glossary

HMSO (1995): Biodiversity: The UK Steering Group Report, Volume 2: Action Plans, London.

HMSO (1995): Biodiversity: The UK Steering Group Report, Volume 1: Meeting the Rio Challenge, London.

http://www.arkive.org/species/ARK/invertebrates_terrestrial_and_freshwater/Luperina_nickerlii_leechi/
<http://www.conwy.gov.uk/upload/public/attachments/48/SandhillMothv2.pdf>
<http://ukmoths.org.uk/show.php?bf=2354>

