

FIELD NOTES FROM IN AND AROUND FSC MILLPORT, ISLE OF CUMBRAE, IN SPRING

D. SKINGSLEY

Department of Biology and Biomedical Sciences, Staffordshire University, ST4 2DF

Staffordshire University has been running a spring undergraduate marine and terrestrial field course at Millport Field Centre since 2009. These field notes will focus on the terrestrial records (non-avian) that cover a period in late March (24th March) to mid-April (19th April). These notes started as casual observations linked to our marine focus but over the years we have grown this provision. We hope this short list will provide a stimulus to more observations related to this overlooked aspect of the fauna of the Isle of Cumbrae.



FIGURE 1. Farland point (NS171540), Isle of Cumbrae, in spring.

SPECIES LIST

Mammalia

As we have expanded our investigations of terrestrial fauna, we have employed Longworth trapping (first used in 2013) and bat sonogram detection (first used in 2012). So far we have identified the following: Pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and Soprano pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) from both the Farland crags and Millport Cathedral grounds (NS166551). Wood mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) from the FSC Millport grounds. Very common across the island is the common rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) and we have seen them with evidence of myxomatosis infection.

Reptilia

Common lizards (*Lacerta vivipara*); are common across the entire island with good accessible populations seen on Farland point (NS171540) on the garden escaped *Crocsmia* in spring (Fig. 2). The earliest time adults have been seen is the 25th of March when they were seen basking on browned *Crocsmia* clumps.

Amphibia

Two species of newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris* and *Lissotriton helveticus*) have been recorded in and around the marshy areas associated with Farland Point (NS171540). On warmer, damper evenings they can be seen wandering across the main road into Millport.

Lepidoptera (butterflies)

These are often chance encounters and are dependent on sunny spells. So far we have recorded two of the common adult overwintering butterflies: Peacock (*Inachis io*) and the Small tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*).



FIGURE 2. Two for one shot of basking common lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*) being crawled over by a glow worm (*Lampyrus noctiluca*) on a background of browned *Crococsmia*. (Farland point NS171540).

Lepidoptera (moths)

We first ran an actinic moth trap in the grounds of the FSC Millport (NS175543) in 2011 and have been running this every year since, providing a growing list of spring moths being attracted to the trap. So far we have recorded: Clouded drab (*Orthosia incerta*); Common quaker (*Orthosia cerasi*); Hebrew character (*Orthosia gothica*); Northern drab (*Orthosia opima*); Powdered quaker (*Orthosia gracilis*); Early thorn (*Selenia dentaria*); Early tooth striped (*Trichopteryx carpinata*); Shoulder stripe (*Anticlea badiata*); Red chestnut (*Cerastis rubricosa*); Chestnut (*Conistra vaccinia*); Early grey (*Xylocampa areola*); V-pug (*Chloroclystis v-ata*); Brindled pug (*Eupithecia abbreviata*); Herald (*Scoliopteryx libatrix*); Oak-tree pug (*Eupithecia dodoneata*); Water carpet (*Lampropteryx suffumata*); Square spot (*Paradarisa consonaria*); Emperor moth (*Saturnia pavonia*; Fig. 3); Engrailed (*Ectropis bistortata*); Dotted border (*Agriopsis marginaria*); March moth (*Alsophila aescularia*); 20-plume moth (*Alucita hexadactyla*).

Also recorded, but not by trapping, was the Ruby tiger (*Phragmatobia fuliginosa*) at Farland point. Drinker moth caterpillar (*Euthrix potatoria*) in the grounds of FSC Millport.

Coleoptera

Seven spot ladybird (*Coccinella septempunctata*) seen at the Glead Stone (NS168570); Flag iris flea beetle (*Aphthona nonstriata*) on Farland Point (NS172540). One of the most exciting discoveries made by our students was the presence of the larvae of the Glow worm (*Lampyrus noctiluca*; Fig. 2) on Farland Point (NS172540).

Hymenoptera

Red-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus lapidarius*) queen seen on the FSC Millport site (NS175543) and the White-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus lucorum*) queen on other heathy sites on the island. Interestingly there are no bumblebee records for the Isle of Cumbrae on the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Gateway and very few other hymenoptera.

Diptera

The light trap run by us at the FSC Millport (NS175543) also attracts some spring flies including: *Tipula vitata* (a crane fly); *Tipula olracea* (a crane fly); *Sylvicola fenestralis* (an anisopodid fly); *Scathophaga stercoraria* (dung fly); *Eristalis tenax* (drone fly).



FIGURE 3. Male Emperor moth (*Saturnia pavonia*) (Millport FSC light trap NS175543) (left). Gorse shieldbug (*Piezodorus lituratus*) from a flowering gorse stand on Farland Point (NS172540) (right).

Hemiptera

A close look at the stands of gorse on Farland point regularly reveals the presence of the Gorse shieldbug (*Piezodorus lituratus*; Fig. 3). There are no shieldbug records on the NBN Gateway for the Isle of Cumbrae.

Collembola

The high shore pools of static brackish water attract an interesting collembolla (*Anurida maritima*) that often forms rafts on the water surface (Fig. 4).



FIGURE 4. *Anurida maritima* on a brackish high shore pool at Farland Point (NS172540).

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(NBN Gateway: <https://data.nbn.org.uk/>)