



© Butterfly Conservation

Buttoned Snout Moth *Hypena rostralis*

The buttoned snout is a curious little brown moth which is identifiable by its long 'snout'.

Larvae (caterpillars) of the buttoned snout feed exclusively on hop. It is one of the longest-lived British moths.

1.0 Description

The English name derives from the moth having particularly long palps which look like a 'snout'. In addition, the forewings have small tufts of scales that look like buttons.

The buttoned snout breeds in a range of urban and rural habitats. Sites include hedgerows, fences, along footpaths and around industrial premises. Suitable overwintering sites are needed for adults, e.g. garden sheds, cellars, or tree hollows. Hibernation sites need to be cold, dry and undisturbed. The availability of nectar sources is likely to be important for adult moths.

This species is single-brooded. Eggs are laid on hop plants in summer, and larvae feed nocturnally on hop leaves (and will readily eat 'garden hop' and 'golden hop' varieties as well as wild hop). Hop is also used as a foodplant by larvae of comma, angle shades, dark spectacle and currant pug. The currant pug causes very similar patterns of feeding damage to hop leaves as buttoned snout. Larvae can be found throughout June and well into July. Typically, they hide from predators on the undersides of leaves during the day. When fully grown, the larva pupates among fallen leaves of the foodplant. The adult moth emerges after a few weeks. It can be seen in almost any month of the year. Adult moths will only come to light traps occasionally, so the best way of surveying for this species is to beat hop plants for larvae during June and July.

2.0 Current status

This moth was formerly widespread throughout much of England and Wales. It has declined markedly, and current records of buttoned snout moth are largely from central southern England, the Thames region, southern East Anglia and parts of south-east Wales. The Thames Basin is a national stronghold, and there are records from a significant proportion of London Boroughs.

Local distribution

In the borough of Westminster the buttoned snout moth has only been recorded at London Zoo. However, it is highly likely that it is present at other sites in the borough. Currently, there are hop records only for London Zoo (in the borough of Westminster), but again it is likely that hop is under-recorded in the borough. Railway tracks and canals are likely sites for hop, because habitat conditions are often ideal for hop and they are neglected and are not subjected to over-zealous tidying. Railways and canals could be excellent habitat corridors for buttoned snout in Westminster, facilitating dispersal throughout the borough.

In addition, there are recent records of both buttoned snout and hop from East Finchley Cemetery (a Westminster City Council managed site).



Hop, *Humulus lupulus*, © Nigel Reeve

3.0 Current factors affecting the species

The main cause thought to be responsible for this species' decline is the redevelopment of derelict urban sites (source: UK Species Action Plan 1999). Its decline may also be related to the decline in the practice of growing hops at public houses and local breweries. However, it is likely that buttoned snout is under-recorded in Britain as adult moths do not readily come to light (light traps are the main method used for surveying moths).

4.0 Current action

There is currently very little specific action for buttoned snout moth in Westminster.

- 4.1 Moth surveys – Moth surveys are carried out throughout the UK (including London). Several moth light-trap surveys have been carried out in Westminster in recent years, but none of these have recorded buttoned snout (unsurprisingly, as adults do not usually come to light). ZSL has carried out annual surveys for buttoned snout larvae for the past few years at London Zoo and has successfully recorded buttoned snout larvae.
- 4.2 Habitat management and creation – ZSL has planted several new areas of hop at London Zoo in recent years to create more habitat for the buttoned snout moth.

5.0 Action Plan Aims

- Audit and monitor buttoned snout moth distribution.
- Raise awareness of the need for buttoned snout conservation by focusing attention on the decline in the buttoned snout numbers and its importance in Westminster.
- Increase buttoned snout distribution in Westminster by encouraging creation of suitable habitat (including hibernation sites).

6.0 Links with other Action Plans

- Westminster Habitat Action Plans for Churchyards and Cemeteries; Parks and Green Spaces; Private Gardens.
- London Species Statement for buttoned snout moth.
- London Habitat Action Plan for Wasteland.

7.0 Lead partner organisation and working group members

The lead partner for this Plan is Zoological Society of London (ZSL).

Working group members include Butterfly Conservation (BC); Westminster City Council (WCC); London Moth Recorder; Dr Tim Freed (moth expert).

Contact:

Zoological Society of London

Regent's Park
London NW1 4RY

Telephone: 020 7449 6446

action plan: Buttoned Snout Moth, *Hypena rostralis*

NB For a full list of acronyms see page 64 of the 'Westminster Biodiversity Action Plan'.

Target 1: Audit and monitor buttoned snout moth distribution.

Action number	Action	Lead partner	Contributing partners	Start date	End date	Cost
1	Collate and map all existing buttoned snout records for Westminster and adjacent boroughs.	WCC	BC, GiGL, ZSL,	Spring 2007	03/08	SLA
2	Encourage residents to record buttoned snout sightings in the borough through partner magazines, newsletters and websites.	GiGL	All action plan partners	Spring 2007	Ongoing	Free
3	Disseminate guidelines on surveying for buttoned snout (e.g. best time of year for surveys).	ZSL	All action plan partners	Autumn 2007	Summer 2008	£250
4	Organise targeted surveys for buttoned snout larvae in the borough to enhance knowledge of its distribution.	BC	ZSL, WCC	Summer 2007	Summer 2009	£2k
5	Collate and map all existing hop records for Westminster.	BC	GiGL, WCC	Spring 2007	End of 2007	SLA
6	Carry out habitat surveys of City Council sites recording buttoned snout moth and hop.	WCC		Spring 2007	Ongoing	-
7	Organise a targeted survey for hop in Westminster, focusing on Regent's Canal, Grand Union Canal, and railway trackside areas next to Paddington Station.	BC	LNHS, GiGL All action plan partners	Summer 2007	End of 2008	£2k
8	Create a buttoned snout zone map on GIS for planners and developers (prompting need for protection/enhancement).	WCC		2008	2008	-

Target 2: Raise awareness of the need for buttoned snout conservation by focusing attention on the decline in the buttoned snout numbers and its importance in Westminster.

Action number	Action	Lead partner	Contributing partners	Start date	End date	Cost
9	Provide guidance to residents and land managers with buttoned snout populations on how to conserve them (e.g. by planting hop).	ZSL	All action plan partners to help disseminate existing guidance	Spring 2007	Ongoing	£250
10	Hold a seminar (or seminars) for land managers in Westminster on managing sites for priority species (including buttoned snout).	TRP	ZSL, WCC	2008	2008	£1k

Target 3: Increase buttoned snout distribution in Westminster by encouraging creation of suitable habitat (including hibernation sites).

Action number	Action	Lead partner	Contributing partners	Start date	End date	Cost
11	Encourage land managers to create habitat for buttoned snout by planting hop in suitable areas.	WCC	BC, ZSL	01/08	Ongoing	-