

Rare moth boosts tally

500th species is first for Norfolk



A tiny moth with a wingspan of just 12mm has claimed the title as the 500th different moth species recorded on the reserve.

The moth *Bactra robustana* is nationally rare and has not been recorded in Norfolk before.

Moth expert Jon Clifton has been surveying moths between April and October at Sculthorpe Moor since 2004. Visitors keen to learn more had booked on a moth course with Jon at the reserve and the evening was spent identifying moths attracted to light traps.

Jon was delighted to find the tiny moth, which has a wingspan of only 12mm. He needed a microscope to confirm identification.

Bactra robustana belongs to the family *Tortricidae* (it is a micro moth) and the larval food plant is Sea Club-rush (*Scirpus maritimus*) so it is believed to be a migrant from the coastal area somewhere in the south-east of England. It is very close in appearance to other *Bactra* species.

Reserve warden and Conservation Officer Nigel Middleton said, "This moth may be tiny but it is an important part of the rich biodiversity at Sculthorpe Moor supporting the wild birds of prey that are top predators on the reserve."

The variety of different habitats on the reserve is the reason for the large number of different moth species found there and Jon predicts that the number of species he records will continue to increase in future.