



Butterfly Conservation

factsheet



# Dingy Mocha

*Cyclophora pendularia*

### Conservation status

Priority Species in UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

The name *Cyclophora* refers to the circular or ring markings found on the fore- and hindwings of many members of the genus. The name *pendularia* has in the past been applied to the Birch Mocha *C. albipunctata* and this, together with the similarity between some forms of the two species, has led to many erroneous records. The Dingy Mocha appears now to be confined to Dorset and western Hampshire, occurring on the Purbeck heaths around Studland and Wareham, the Blackmoor Vale in North Dorset and in southern parts of the New Forest.

### Foodplants

The larvae feed on small-leaved willows *Salix* spp., also referred to as sallows, such as Eared Willow *S. aurita* and Grey Sallow *S. cinerea*.

### Habitat

The Dingy Mocha occurs on heathland and damp grassland where sallow bushes occur. It seems to prefer smaller, isolated bushes between one and three metres in height that are open to the sun on at least two sides and are not overshadowed by other trees. Larvae are sometimes found on larger sallow bushes where small plants are not available, and on sallow scrub and hedgerow sallows. This preference probably reflects a need for a sunny, warm microclimate for growth and development.

### Life cycle

The species is double-brooded. Eggs are laid in May/June and in July/August. The larvae occur from mid-June to mid-July, and the second brood from late August to the end of September. The second brood overwinters as a pupa. The adults fly at night from May to early June and again in July and August.

I = 1st brood      II = 2nd brood

|       | J  | F  | M  | A  | M | J | J  | A  | S  | O  | N  | D  |
|-------|----|----|----|----|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Egg   |    |    |    |    | I | I | II | II |    |    |    |    |
| Larva |    |    |    |    |   | I | I  | II | II |    |    |    |
| Pupa  | II | II | II | II |   |   | I  |    | II | II | II | II |
| Adult |    |    |    |    | I | I | II | II |    |    |    |    |

■ Larval record 1999 to 2004  
● Adult record 1999 to 2004



## Habitat management for the Dingy Mocha

The main aim is to provide a continual supply of small (up to c.3m high), isolated small-leaved Sallow bushes that are not heavily shaded.

Ideal grazing levels require further investigation as the detailed effects of browsing on willow bushes or coppiced willow regrowth are not well known. Heavy browsing on some heathland sites has removed the leaves from many suitable willow bushes and is thought to have severely restricted populations of the moth. Therefore, any grazing on known sites should be either very light during the summer or just over the winter. Burning is a potential further threat on some sites.

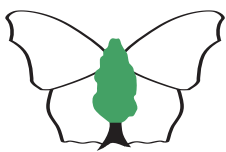
- ◆ When scrub clearance is undertaken on any potential site for this moth care should be taken to ensure that enough suitable small willow bushes in the open remain to maintain populations. Periodic coppicing of a few willows on rotation to produce a continuity of young regrowth may be appropriate on some sites.
- ◆ Populations on ride sides and hedgerows are known to occur when there are good populations of the moth nearby. These habitats should be managed to maintain a continual supply of the foodplant. Any cutting should take place during the winter and not all of the ride side or hedgerow should be cut in any one year.
- ◆ Note that flowering willows are also a valuable nectar source in spring for a wide range of insects.

### How to survey/monitor

The best method is to search for second generation larvae in early September by beating small willow bushes using a beating tray. Adults will also come sparingly to light-traps, although care is sometimes needed to distinguish this species from dark forms of the closely-related Birch Mocha.



above right Ideal willow bush in damp grassland  
right Ideal damp heathland habitat



**Butterfly  
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats

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