

## Moths to look out for in July 2020

*from Mary Atkinson*

### **Yellow Shell**

A summer moth I was very familiar with as a kid in Hertfordshire. It is a bright yellow/orange moth but here in Cornwall I see much less of it. The book describes it as unmistakable, common and widespread. It is most often seen by day as it is disturbed from the vegetation.



The caterpillar feeds on the bedstraw family as well as other low-growing plants.

I was foxed by the first adult Yellow Shell I saw in Cornwall as it was brownish but still with the distinctive but often unobtrusive cross-lines.

Brown examples and sub-species occur further north in the UK.

### **Barred Straw**

This moth will come to light and may also be disturbed by day. It is distinguished by its unusual resting position, with lower wings tucked up behind the fore-wings, and the abdomen curled upwards.

It is single-brooded, emerging from late May to the end of August and is well distributed and quite common. The new Atlas tells us the often-repeated story; Its distribution is spreading northwards but its abundance is considerably reduced. Two things going on here, climate change and degrading habitat presumably. The caterpillar feeds on cleavers and other bedstraw species.



### **Scallop Shell.**

This pretty and very distinctive moth is always pleasing to see when it occasionally comes to light at this time of the year.

The caterpillar feeds on willows as well as aspen and whortleberry, so the moth's relative unusualness doesn't mirror the abundance of its food plant in Cornwall. The factors determining abundance must be more complicated than just the availability of the food supply.

