



Butterfly Conservation

# Brighton Wainscot

*Oria musculosa*

### Conservation status

Priority Species in UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Untidy cereal field margins may be more beneficial

This moth's English name results from two main factors. The first British example of this moth was found at Brighton in 1843, and the moth's wing patterning is thought to resemble a type of wood panelling called wainscot. The moth was established in the Brighton area until around the end the 19th century. During the 20th century, it was recorded over central southern and south-eastern England, though was probably resident only in central southern England. It is now severely restricted and in recent years has been reported from just a single site in Wiltshire.

### Foodplants

The larvae feed on the inner stems and seeds of wild grasses and cereal crops such as Winter Wheat, Summer Rye, Oats and Barley *Poaceae*.

### Habitat

The moth is primarily associated with cereal fields and grassy margins beside cereal fields.

### Life cycle

The species is single-brooded. Eggs are laid in rows within the lower sheaths of grasses and cereals in late summer, where they remain over the winter. The larvae hatch in late spring/early summer and feed in the stems of wild grasses before moving on to feed on cereals. Pupation takes place in a flimsy cocoon in the soil between June and July, with the adults flying from late July to mid August. Adults fly at night.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Egg	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Larva	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Pupa	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Adult	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

- Larval record 1999 to 2004
- Adult record 1999 to 2004



## Habitat management for the Brighton Wainscot

The exact reasons for this species' decline are poorly understood and several factors have been put forward. It is thought to be a combination of changes in farming practices, such as stubble burning, changes in crop varieties and a reduction in the quantity and quality of field margins.

- ◆ It is not yet possible to recommend specific management to encourage the species. However, on sites where the species is currently found, it is recommended that no changes should be made to the current management, particularly in terms of crop cultivated, time of sowing and pesticide application.
- ◆ It is thought that permanent grassy margins bordering cereal crops could be beneficial for this species. Adjacent conservation headlands would also be beneficial to provide an unsprayed crop edge and reduce spray drift into field margins.
- ◆ It is possible that spring-sown crops are preferable to autumn-sown ones as this allows encroaching rough grass margins in summer and autumn when eggs are laid.

**Please contact Butterfly Conservation if the species is suspected to be present on a site.**

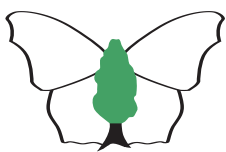
### How to survey/monitor

Light-traps can attract adults if located adjacent to cereal crops where the species occurs, though adults are also known to wander from breeding areas.



above Larvae: third instar (left), final instar (top and bottom) and first instar (right)

below Ideal habitat in a field margin



**Butterfly  
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats

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