

Roy Goff

A life long amateur naturalist from the UK now living in The Gambia. I spent 25 years mostly ringing birds but also studying all aspects of natural history, I have conducted many surveys and projects on Amphibians, reptiles, wild flowers, trees, dragonflies and butterflies as well as almost everything else I could find and identify. For the past twelve years I have switched my emphasis to moths, firstly in the UK and now in Africa.

I came to The Gambia in 2007 for a one week collecting trip to sample an African environment. Finding it almost impossible to identify any of the species I caught (just 30 out of 250 species) from either books or the internet, I decided to launch my own web site modelled upon the UKMoths site which I had found so useful in the UK. I eventually gave up working for a living and moved to The Gambia permanently to concentrate upon moths and relaxing on the beach. The web site has grown from the initial few hundred species to over 2,000 identified species arranged by picture thumbnails to aid identification. All other sites list everything by the species name which is of little value when you have yet to determine the species or even genus. I have been lucky to get advice and assistance from some of the worlds moths experts and also gain contributions from a wide range of sources.

I am keen to improve the level of moth interest and recording within the African continent which is why I have embraced this project. I helped some friends set up a conservation organisation for Gambia called The Wildlife and Conservation Trust,(The Gambia) and it is under their umbrella that I wish to operate this collaboration to give it a better profile than if I worked as a private individual. I have also agreed to help the Lepidopterist's Society of Africa establish a recognised list of African species with a standardised name for each species, they also eventually want to collect records of moth species from all Africa so I will maintain the African records from the International Moth Week to be added to this database in due course.

In much of the world the moth fauna is very well known, certainly at the adult stage, but here in Africa we are really just beginning. I have found species new to science sat on my front door in the morning, Almost every caterpillar has never been properly studied and very few have been photographed. To be able to raise the profile of moths will be an enormous benefit to all of this work.