

Capperia britanniodactyla

(A Plume-moth)



STATUS & ECOLOGY

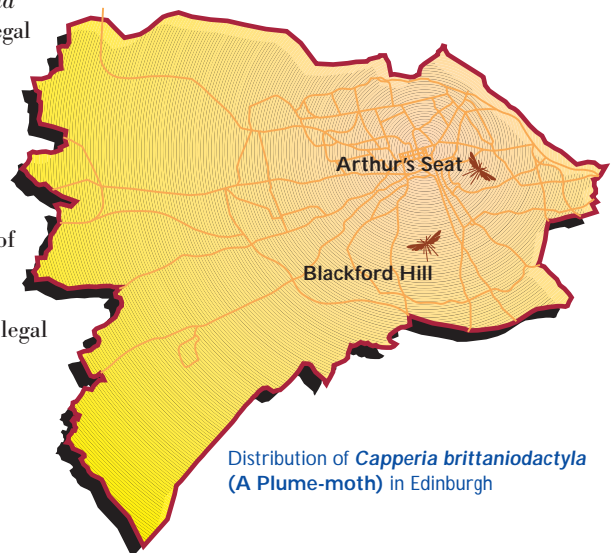
Capperia britanniodactyla is a beautiful small chocolate and white plume-moth whose larva feeds on woodsage. It is called a plume-moth because each wing is divided into several parts reminiscent of feathers or plumes.

The larva starts feeding in September, but soon stops, overwinters under a leaf and recommences feeding in the spring. The larva gnaws halfway through the stem of its foodplant just below the terminal shoot, then feeds on the withering shoot. Pupation in a cryptically coloured chrysalis occurs exposed on its foodplant in late May to early June. The elegant spidery moth is on the wing in the late evening in June and July.

The preferred habitat of *Capperia britanniodactyla* is rather stunted woodsage, growing in sunny, sloping, rocky situations. The species is widespread in Britain but very local due to the restricted distribution of its habitat. Colonies exist on both Arthur's Seat, Holyrood Park and on Blackford Hill.

The plume-moth *Capperia britanniodactyla* has no legal protective status but is classified as having a "National Notable Category B", which means that it is only found in 31 - 100 of the 10km recording squares of Great Britain.

This plume-moth has no legal protection.



"Micromoths that have feather-like wings and long barbed legs"
Bob Gibbons

FACTORS CAUSING LOSS OR DECLINE

Impacts

The specific habitat requirements of *Capperia britanniodactyla* have been the main limiting factors in its distribution.

Threats

The main threats to the continued presence of *Capperia britanniodactyla* in Edinburgh are smothering of its foodplant, woodsage, by the spread of gorse, encroachment of bushes and trees shading out preferred habitat, and potential trampling of the foodplant by grazing animals. Woodsage is unpalatable to herbivores and so grazing itself is not a threat. Also, the unusually stony, sloping nature of this plume-moth's habitat makes the risk from trampling relatively small.



CURRENT ACTION

Holyrood Park is managed by Historic Scotland. The plan seeks to maintain and enhance populations of rare flora and fauna by ensuring management fosters these; that numbers are regularly monitored and reacted to, and that information regarding life cycles and habitat requirements is collected.

ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES & TARGETS

Objective

To ensure the conservation of the plume-moth *Capperia britanniodactyla* at Holyrood Park, Blackford Hill and other locations in Edinburgh.

Targets

To ensure that habitat management at Holyrood Park and Blackford Hill favours the conservation of *Capperia britanniodactyla*. To undertake additional surveys for the plume-moth and introduce appropriate land management practices where found.

Actions

Prevent long-term encroachment of gorse and other shrubs onto the favoured habitats of *Capperia britanniodactyla* at Holyrood Park and Blackford Hill, from Summer 2000.

(Actioned by: Historic Scotland & City of Edinburgh Council Recreation Department)

Survey other suitable habitats in Edinburgh for the presence of *Capperia britanniodactyla*, from Spring 2001. Seek to implement appropriate management if the species is found.

(Actioned by: National Museum of Scotland, Lothian Wildlife Information Centre, Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership Invertebrate Group & Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership)

Key Contacts

Historic Scotland	Joe Muir & Bob Tevendale
City of Edinburgh Council (Recreation)	Carol Huston
National Museum of Scotland	Keith Bland
Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership	David Jamieson
Lothian Wildlife Information Centre	Bob Saville
Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership Invertebrate Group	Stephen Corcoran

CHAMPIONS

