

# British Insects: the Plume moths (Pterophoridae and Alucitidae)



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## Conventional key

If you are serious about identification, you should use the [interactive key](#). It is far superior, with flexible choice of characters, character notes and illustrations, error tolerance, full taxon descriptions, and taxon illustrations.

- 1(0).
  - Forewings conspicuously patterned with contrasting bars or fasciae ... [2](#)
  - Forewings relatively plain or merely dotted... [12](#)
- 2(1).
  - Hindwings with a large black scale-tooth in the dorsal cilia of the posterior segment ... [3](#)
  - Hindwings with two large subapical black scale-teeth conspicuous in the dorsal cilia of the posterior segment, these separated by a white one, and with white scales along the dorsum of the lobe ... *Capperia*
  - Hindwings without large black scale-teeth in the the posterior segment... [6](#)
- 3(2).
  - The large scale-tooth in the posterior hindwing segment located in the middle of the dorsum ... *Platyptilia*
  - The large scale-tooth in the posterior hindwing segment located much beyond the middle of the dorsum... [4](#)
- 4(3).
  - The base of the fissure preceded by a white fascia ... *Cnaemidophorus*
  - The base of the fissure preceded not associated with noticeable marking... [5](#)
- 5(4).
  - Forewings cleft from about the middle; forewing vein 10 out of 8; labial palps ascending; adults not hibernating ... *Oxyptilus*
  - Forewings cleft from beyond the middle; forewing vein 10 separate; labial palps sub-ascending; adults (those of the second brood) hibernating ... *Amblyptilia*
- 6(2).
  - Hindwings similarly coloured to the forewings ... [7](#)
  - Hindwings differently coloured from the forewings... [9](#)
- 7(6).
  - Tibiae simple ... [8](#)
  - Tibiae thickened with scales at the origins of the spurs ... *Pselnophorus*
- 8(7).
  - Forewings cleft from about the middle; the lower lobe tapering distally or more or less parallel-sided; face smooth (neither tufted nor with a horny prominence); forewing venation exhibiting the cell produced into points; forewing vein 3 absent ... *Pterophorus*
  - Forewings cleft from beyond the middle; the lower lobe expanded towards the apex; face with a horny prominence; forewing venation exhibiting the cell apically truncated; forewing vein 3 present ... *Stenoptilia*
- 9(6).
  - Forewings 2-segmented; hindwings 3-segmented ... [10](#)
  - Forewings 6-segmented; hindwings 6-segmented ... *Alucita*
- 10(9).
  - Forewings cleft from before the middle ... *Buckleria*
  - Forewings cleft from about the middle... [11](#)
  - Forewings cleft from beyond the middle ... *Oidaematophorus*
- 11(10).
  - The lower lobe tapering distally or more or less parallel-sided; face smooth (neither tufted nor with a horny prominence); forewing venation exhibiting the cell produced into points; forewing vein 3 absent; the second hindwing lobe 2-veined veins ... *Pterophorus*

- The lower lobe expanded towards the apex; face tufted; forewing venation exhibiting the cell apically truncated; forewing vein 3 present; the second hindwing lobe 3-veined ... *Marasmarcha*

- 12([1](#)).  
  - Forewings entire; hindwings entire ... *Agdistis*
  - Forewings conspicuously cleft; hindwings conspicuously cleft... [13](#)
- 13([12](#)).  
  - Hindwings similarly coloured to the forewings ... [14](#)
  - Hindwings differently coloured from the forewings... [15](#)
- 14([13](#)).  
  - Forewings cleft from about the middle; the lower lobe tapering distally or more or less parallel-sided; face smooth (neither tufted nor with a horny prominence); forewing venation exhibiting the cell produced into points; forewing vein 3 absent ... *Pterophorus*
  - Forewings cleft from beyond the middle; the lower lobe expanded towards the apex; face with a horny prominence; forewing venation exhibiting the cell apically truncated; forewing vein 3 present ... *Stenoptilia*
- 15([13](#)).  
  - Hindwings with a large black scale-tooth in the dorsal cilia of the posterior segment; forewing venation exhibiting the cell apically truncated; forewing vein 9 present; the second hindwing lobe 3-veined ... *Oxyptilus*
  - Hindwings without large black scale-teeth in the the posterior segment; forewing venation exhibiting the cell produced into points; forewing vein 9 absent; the second hindwing lobe 2-veined veins... [16](#)
- 16([15](#)).  
  - Forewings cleft from about the middle ... [17](#)
  - Forewings cleft from beyond the middle... [19](#)
- 17([16](#)).  
  - Forewing vein 3 present; forewing vein 8 present; labial palps ascending; feeding concealed ... *Adaina*
  - Forewing vein 3 absent; forewing vein 8 absent; labial palps sub-ascending; feeding exposed... [18](#)
- 18([17](#)).  
  - The lower lobe tapering distally or more or less parallel-sided; forewing vein 10 present ... *Pterophorus*
  - The lower lobe expanded towards the apex; forewing vein 10 absent ... *Merrifieldia*
- 19([16](#)).  
  - Forewings with 2-3 small dark dots on the posterior margins of the lobes near their apices ... [20](#)
  - Forewings without posterior marginal dark dots ... *Hellinsia*
- 20([19](#)).  
  - Wing-span up to 20 mm ... [21](#)
  - Wing-span 20 to 24 mm ... *Euleioptilus*
  - Wing-span 25 to 32 mm ... *Emmelina*
- 21([20](#)).  
  - Forewings with a blackish costal dot towards the apex ... *Ovendenia*
  - Forewings without a blackish costal dot towards the apex ... *Euleioptilus*

To view the illustrations with detailed captions, go to the [interactive key](#). This also offers full and partial descriptions, diagnostic descriptions, differences and similarities between taxa, lists of taxa exhibiting or lacking specified attributes, and distributions of character states within any set of taxa.

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