

Pyraloid moths of New Zealand: an end to the suffering?

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The superfamily Pyraloidea is very well represented in New Zealand with over 250 species in the two families Crambidae and Pyralidae, including 25% of the world's named species of Scopariinae. Though generally treated as 'microlepidoptera', pyraloids are mostly medium-sized and quite conspicuous moths: many species fly naturally or can be disturbed by day, many come in good numbers to light traps, and several are widespread and extremely abundant. The superfamily contains a number of notorious stored products pests, especially in the family Pyralidae, as well as numerous migratory species of greater or lesser economic importance. Revisionary work on the Crambinae of New Zealand dates back to the work of Gaskin in the 1970s; since this time several new endemic species have been discovered. Other groups have not been revised for many years, and the Scopariinae especially present numerous problems of identification, especially in the alpine zone. Even sturdy entomologists have been driven to distraction. A new online image gallery of New Zealand Pyraloidea boldly aims to help identification of these conspicuous insects. This talk touches on some of the wonders and horrors encountered by the pyraloid student.

