



Recommendation for interceptions and findings of *Parapoynx polydectalis* (Lepidoptera: Crambidae), a species of moth whose caterpillars are aquatic

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This is the result of a brief assessment of readily available literature which indicates that statutory action against this organism is unlikely to be appropriate.

Species / Taxonomic group	<i>Parapoynx polydectalis</i> (Lepidoptera: Crambidae)
Reason for assessment	An adult moth of <i>Parapoynx polydectalis</i> has been reared from an aquatic caterpillar intercepted on 27 August 2012 on <i>Cabomba</i> (an aquatic plant) from Singapore. It has previously been recorded in the UK in 1978 and 1979, (a total of 4 specimens, over 2 years) at aquatic nurseries in Middlesex (as <i>Oligostigma polydectalis</i>). There are a further two records of incidental single specimens from 1988, one a dead specimen on the windowsill of a tropical aquatics shop in Devon, and the other inside a tropical fish aquarium in Cambridgeshire. There have been several interceptions of caterpillars from this genus, several consisting of more than one larva, in the past two years, though few have been successfully reared for species identification. All consignments originated in Indonesia or Singapore and consist of plants for planting, potentially allowing the pest to complete its development.
Pest distribution	<i>Parapoynx polydectalis</i> is native to Australia and South-East Asia.
Hosts	<i>Parapoynx</i> sp. are part of the sub-family Acentropinae (formerly Nymphulinae), a group of moths whose larvae are almost all aquatic. Caterpillars of <i>Parapoynx</i> spp. have been associated with 25 plant species in 17 families in Florida including <i>Ludwigia</i> spp., <i>Polygonum</i> spp. and <i>Nymphaea odorata</i> .
Pest status	Caterpillars of this species feed on their host plants underwater. There is a record from 1977 of an aquatic nursery in England carrying out fumigation treatments to control the adult moths of aquatic caterpillars such as <i>Parapoynx</i> spp. because the caterpillars were reported to cause a lot of damage when numbers built up.
Potential distribution and impact	The native distribution of <i>P. polydectalis</i> suggests that they would be unable to survive outdoors in the UK. There are no recent reports of aquatic moths causing damage at aquatic nurseries and any damage that does occur is likely to be very localised.
No statutory action is recommended because:	
The species is unlikely to establish outdoors	
Impacts are likely to be very localized	
The potential for spread is low	