



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats

The **Suffolk** *Argus*

*The Newsletter of the **Suffolk** Branch of Butterfly Conservation*

Silver-washed Fritillary by Matt Berry



Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moth



Photo Neil Sherman



Larval leaf damage on honeysuckle



Larva



Typical habitat

Photos Tony Prichard

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New Members

We welcome the following new members who have joined the Branch and we look forward to meeting them at our events this year.

Mr Steve Aylward	Woodbridge
Mr Hawk & Mrs Joanne Honey	Ipswich
Mr Richard & Mrs Esme Wanner	Kesgrave
Mr Andrew & Mrs Sarah Thompson & Family	Rushmere St Andrew
Mrs Gillian Campbell	Weston
Miss Susie Mellor	Ashfield Cum Thorpe
Mr Ron Taylor	Bury St Edmunds
Ms Louise & Mr Daniel Gallegher	Bury St Edmunds
Mr Terry & Mrs Glenys Riley	Mildenhall
Mrs Valerie Sherwen	Woodbridge
Miss Naomi Rose	Ipswich
Mr Mark Jackson	Ipswich
Mrs Juliet Hymphrey	Benhall
Miss Amelie Cutter	Ipswich
Mrs Genine & Mr Gary Harrison & Family	Bury St Edmunds
Miss Zara Pulchan	Ipswich
Miss Zhang Pulchan	Ipswich
Miss Naomi Pulchan	Ipswich
Mr Gary Murphy	Reydon
Mr J A Bedwell	Ilkeshall St Andrew
Mr D Grieco	Ipswich
Mr P De'ath	Glemsford
Mr Gary & Mrs Murriekah	Walpole
Mrs Val & Mr Ivan Lockwood	Ipswich
Mr K B Beattie	Martlesham Heath
Mr Richard J Crosby	Ipswich
Mr Ashley M & Mrs Susannah Grimson & Family	Bury St Edmunds

Editorial

Peter Maddison

The Orange-tip is such a reliable butterfly. Once again it has brightened up the early season and during the extended period of sunshine and warmth in May the butterfly flourished. First seen was the orange tipped flutter of the males and later, the females with their clearly mottled underwings, distinctive in their low to the ground flight where they search out garlic mustard on which to lay their eggs. We've had more than our usual number of Holly Blues in the garden too, and visits from the whites, a Comma and a couple of Peacocks were a seasonal delight. Then, at the beginning of June, the rains came and with cooler weather the butterflies took shelter. At that time BC released a press statement reporting the results of the 2011 WCBS. The headline 'Butterfly numbers in the UK countryside fell by almost a quarter last summer' foretold a disappointing story in which species such as Small Tortoiseshell and Common Blue, that were once ubiquitous, have shown significant declines. Last year's cold summer and the ongoing deterioration of suitable butterfly habitat are seen as causes for the fall in numbers. Our Suffolk records agree. In this newsletter Peter Dare's analysis of Suffolk's WCBS shows the decline of common species and in the newsletter's lead article Rob Parker, in his 2011 Butterfly Report, shows how both casual recorders and transect walkers observed a similar fall in numbers. Do not think that all is doom and gloom. Several of our less common species and BAP species had a relatively good year! Read the report to find out how our White-letter Hairstreaks, Silver-studded Blues and White

Admirals fared.

What will this year bring? Well, for our first event of the year it brought us rain, but the re-scheduled walk in west Suffolk was much more successful, see Stella Wolfe's report, and the first Dingy Skipper survey took place on a cool day when hail fell. Later within the flight season the sun shone and these early skippers were counted in the King's Forest. Now to look forward to the Large, Small and Essex Skippers, and the summer species: Ringlet, Gatekeeper and Meadow Brown. We have a busy programme of field events in which all members are invited to take part. We welcome many new members to the Branch: 27 individuals and families are welcomed in this issue of the newsletter and a similar number were welcomed in the Spring issue. Whether you are new to butterfly watching or experienced lepidopterists we hope that you will be able to take part in our events programme.

Moths may take your interest - there are more day flying species than there are butterfly species - and in Tony Prichard's article he shows how to search out the Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moth. Details of the Suffolk Moth Group can be found at: www.suffolkmoths.org.uk

The new national website is under development and to the Branch committee we welcome Richard Perryman who, in due course, will be helping to develop our website.

Events July – September

Friday 6th July 2012

Pakenham Wood for Silver-washed Fritillary Meet : Pakenham Church car park
Map Ref: TL930670 Time: 10:00 am Leader: Rob Parker Tel: 01284 705476

Saturday 7th July 2012

Butterflies & other wildlife at Purdis Heath, Ipswich Meet: Ipswich Golf Club car park
Grid Ref: TM205429 Time: 10.00 am Leader: Matt Berry Tel: 07599243026

Wednesday 11th July 2012

Rendlesham and Tangham Forest for White Admirals a.m. Upper Hollesley Common p.m.
Meet: Rendlesham Forest Centre (car park charge applies) Map Ref: TM353484
Time: 10.30 am Bring packed lunch Leader: Peter Maddison & Richard Stewart Tel: 01473 736607

Saturday 14th July 2012

A Survey of the under-recorded tetrads in the Cookley and Walpole area.
Contact Peter Maddison for details. Tel: 01473 736607

Tuesday 17th July 2012

Flowton Farm Survey. A walk on John Cousin's 350 acres farm to survey for butterflies.
Meet: Farm visitors car park Map Ref: TM084457
Time: 10:00am Contact Peter Maddison to book Tel: 01473 736607

Thursday 26th July 2012

Big Butterfly Count at Orwell Country Park, Ipswich Meet: Pipers Vale car park Map Ref: TM178420
Time: 11.00am & 2.00pm Contact IBC Wildlife Rangers Tel: 01473 433994 (free to BC members)

Sunday 29th July 2012

An invitation from B.C. member Mrs Trudie Willis, to visit her 10 acre garden, including a Buddleia & Honeysuckle collection
Meet: Park car at Priors Oak, Leiston Road, (B1122), Aldeburgh Map Ref: TM452591 Time: 10.30 am

Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th August 2012

A Weekend in Sussex - Highlights include chalk downland species such as Silver-spotted Skipper, Adonis Blue & Chalkhill Blue, plus Silver-washed Fritillaries & Brown Hairstreak
Contact Paul Johnson to book places. Tel: 01892 516384

Sunday 5th August 2012

Wildlife gardening at Flatford Mill RSPB wildlife garden.
A joint event with The RSPB. There will be butterfly displays plus information and advice about gardening for butterflies & other wildlife. Meet: RSPB wildlife garden at Flatford Mill
Map Ref: TM077332 Time: 10.30am Leader: Matt Berry Tel: 07599243026

Saturday 11th August 2012

RSPB Minsmere butterfly walk with Nigel Cuming (special access to non-public areas)
Meet: RSPB visitors car park - at the west end of the main car park Map Ref: TM472672
Time: 10.30am Tel: Matt Berry for more details 07599243026

Saturday 22nd September 2012

A.G.M. & Members' Evening at Bucklesham, near Ipswich Venue: Village Hall in Levington Lane
Map Ref: TM244419 Time: 6.00 pm for 6.30 pm
The A.G.M. will be followed by light refreshments and members' slides.

Details are on the Branch website: www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk/events.html

Suffolk Moth Group events can be found at: www.suffolkmoths.org.uk/events/fieldevents.shtml

2011 Butterfly Report

Rob Parker

2011 was a very confused season, with extremes of weather causing unseasonal flowering of many plants and inevitable knock-on effects for insect life. New earliest-ever emergence times were registered for 8 butterfly species, whilst autumn brought latest-ever sightings for 5 different species. On the other hand, there were long blank weeks mid-season, with practically nothing flying. Not only did Purple Emperor, Silver-washed Fritillary and Marbled White all remain in evidence, but unexpected appearances by 3 other species made an unusually high count of 38 species, although several of these were possibly released specimens. It was another year of poor outcomes for our commoner butterflies, but good news for several UKBAP species. Good recording effort has resulted in decent coverage for the second year of the current

5-year period.

Weather. A second cold winter started with snow before Christmas 2010, and 35 frosty days reduced the survival rates of butterflies and parasites alike. Spring was not particularly early, but it was warm and dry. Judged by historic averages (see Table 1 below) it was 2 degrees warmer, with only 27.8% of an average spring's rainfall. Larvae feeding up did well, and flew early. Drought was a frequently heard word in spring and autumn, and East Anglia was much drier than the rest of UK. Although late June and early July were fine, and suited Silver-washed Fritillary and White-letter Hairstreak, the rest of summer was below par. An extended autumn was warm and sunny, yet many species produced disappointing second broods.

2011 Weather for East Anglia

Season	Mean Temp	Anomaly	Sunshine	Anomaly	Rainfall	Anomaly
	Deg C	Deg C	hrs	%	mm	%
Winter 10/11	3.5	-0.8	121	69	132.1	90
Spring	10.6	2.1	563	125	27.8	21
Summer	15.7	-0.2	528	90	179	119
Autumn	12.9	2.4	402	124	81.3	47

Source: www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate/uk/2011

Anomalies are measured against the 1971 to 2000 averages [as last year].

Residents - Winners & Losers. Once again, many garden recorders remarked on the poor showing of their regular species. Yet a high proportion of early sightings were Small Tortoiseshells, with rather less Peacocks and good numbers of Brimstones emerging from hibernation on fine days from March onwards. Counts of most

species over the whole season from transect walks showed poor attendance, with notably weak numbers for Essex and Small Skippers, Common Blue, Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock. Many of our common species were found in less than 80% of the tetrad count achieved in 2010 - itself a mediocre year.

Early & Late. The spring heatwave seemed to suit developing species, and earliest-ever records were noted as follows:

Over wintering stage

Pupa: Green Hairstreak.

Larva: Common Blue, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary, Ringlet.

Ovum: Purple Hairstreak, White-letter Hairstreak, Silver-studded Blue.

This suggests that larval feeding and development was considerably accelerated by the warm, sunny conditions before the drought had desiccated the larval host plants. All of the single brooded species above had a successful season, but the double-brooded Common Blue, despite its early emergence, had a thoroughly poor year. Conditions in late summer/early autumn were also warmer, sunnier and drier than average, and this resulted in the following latest-ever records:

Voltinism ("Broods")

Single-brooded: Silver-washed Fritillary.

Double-brooded: Holly Blue, Small Heath.

Multiple-brooded: Large White, Speckled Wood, Small Copper (equalled latest).

It is most unusual to log so many early/late records (8 early and 6 late) in one season, although early and late claims for Silver-washed Fritillary are not significant since it is such a new species to the county.

Monitoring the BAP Species. There are 7 Suffolk BAP species, including 2 in the "for study only" category.

Silver-studded Blue. The early emergence of the first few caused us to bring forward the annual survey and, with hindsight, we brought it a bit too far forward and missed the peak at Minsmere by a few days. As a result, the number counted – over 4000 at 33 sites – was less than last year. In the

Dunwich Forest, where the Westleton Heath population has re-colonised a former forest compartment, it was pleasing to note an expansion in numbers. The colony translocated to Blaxhall Common in 2007 again had its best-ever year, with its longest-ever flight period (11 weeks) and a highest single-day count of 45 butterflies. The colony on Walberswick NNR is a fresh cause for concern, as none was found there this year, following an abrupt decline over the past 3 seasons. Habitat improvement work at Purdis Heath reflects a more active approach to conserving the isolated colonies on the Ipswich heaths.

Dingy Skipper was not found at RAF Barnham for the sixth year in succession, and the colonies there and at Center Parcs have evidently been lost. Happily though, it turns out that there is still a colony in the pits on the adjacent Thetford Heath nature reserve, which had not been searched previously due to the presence of nesting stone curlew. This is very close to the recently planted compartment of the Thetford Forest where a few were seen last year. In the King's Forest, decent numbers are still breeding around the archery site. None were found at the southern end of the forest, but the prospects are promising, as felling has opened the rides to more sunlight.

White-letter Hairstreak was one of the species that had a good year. The long spell of hot sunny days in June encouraged White-letter Hairstreaks down from the elm canopy to find nectar at bramble and thistle.

White Admiral also had another good season, though not as good as 2010. The colony in Bradfield Woods has now been present for 7 consecutive seasons.

Grayling is in general decline across Suffolk, although this years West Suffolk results were rather better than 2010. 5 recorders saw Graylings in 9 different locations. Fortunately, it continues to fare well at its haunts in the Sandlings, including Dunwich Forest, where it is now monitored on 2 transects.

The UK BAP list includes 2 study species for enhanced monitoring. In both cases, Wall and Small Heath, the larval host plant is grass.

Wall is in decline in the UK and in Suffolk, and for that reason, a single species survey was undertaken in 2011. The results were disappointing; for the second year in succession, none was found in West Suffolk, and many of the target tetrads did not yield any records in places they had been present 4 or 5 years previously. Results from the 2011 survey are to be found in a separate article in this edition of The Suffolk Argus.

Small Heath is in a less critical situation than the Wall, but is losing ground on farmland amongst fertilized grass. It was recorded from 234 tetrads in the last 5-year survey (24% of 994 recorded tetrads), but numerical counts are falling at the few transect sites which still support it, and is presently found in 17% of surveyed tetrads.

Purple Emperor. The introduced Purple Emperors were still flying in Theberton Woods, and on one occasion, a mating pair was photographed in the canopy. This year, singles were also seen at Minsmere and further afield at North Warren.

Migrants. 2010 was another poor year for migrants, with just 8 Clouded Yellow all

year, and Painted Lady recorded from only 83 tetrads (12% of the recorded squares); most of them along the coast in September. Large White numbers were generally low, and it may be that there was no significant immigration for it either. The Red Admiral, a migrant species now successfully overwintering here, was widely recorded, largely due to breeding here, and partly thanks to the September immigration.

Silver-washed Fritillary. The spread of Silver-washed Fritillary continued during 2011, and it appears to be breeding in at least two of the 12 woods from which it has now been recorded. This year, no less than 34 different recorders saw this new arrival, and hopefully it is now going to stay in Suffolk. This has to be the best possible news. Encouragingly, Essex, Cambs and Norfolk have all experienced an upswing in Silver-washed Fritillary sightings too.

Unusual Sightings. 2011 was an odd year in many ways, and the number of non-resident species appearing was higher than ever. A single Monarch on the Shotley peninsula is assumed to have been an escape from the butterfly house at Jimmy's Farm. Two separate Swallowtails remain unexplained, as does a single Queen of Spain Fritillary in Dunwich Forest. There were also 2 separate Dark Green Fritillary sightings, one at Pakefield Cliffs (south of its Norfolk habitat) and the other at Barnhamcross Common, (further from its closest Norfolk localities). An autumn Long-tailed Blue turned up close to the coast at Lowestoft, which like the September 2010 example could have been a stowaway in fresh vegetable produce. Finally, the Marbled Whites seen in Ipswich's Landseer Park were present in larger numbers this

year, so these appear to have bred there, whatever their origins. Discounting the Monarch, that still leaves 5 unusual visiting species, any of which could have been natural arrivals. Added to our regular species, this would bring the total species count for the year to 38. Is that a biodiversity record, or a freak year?

Recording and Geographic Coverage.

Despite the poor showing by butterflies, this was a good year for records. A total of 677 tetrads were visited, bringing the season's cover to 62%. After 2 years of the current five-year period 807 tetrads (74%) have been visited. For the first time, the results of BC's "Big Butterfly Count" were incorporated. This was an exercise in popular science, with many novice recorders searching for 15 minutes in one location, so the contribution was mainly common species, often from tetrads that were already well recorded. Having said that, it has involved fresh enthusiasm, and we have recruited a number of new recorders. The Wall survey is updating our knowledge of its decline, but sadly not adding to our records. The area covered most thinly remains the agricultural land in High Suffolk, where both the human population and the butterfly density are inherently low. Targets for 2012 include extending the SNS Wall survey and visiting the remaining 26% of the county.

Species Maps. Distribution Maps for individual species have been prepared for our 31 regular species, and these are available for reference as required. The average number of species recorded per tetrad was just 8.7, reflecting the shortage of migrants and the poor showing of a handful of common species.

Transects. Analysis of transect results gives a sharper view of trends than distribution maps. The 19 full transects walked this year indicate the progressive decline of several species including Small/Essex Skippers, Common Blue, Small Tortoiseshell, Small Heath and Grayling (where monitored). These species are also noted to be in long-term decline nationally, according to the UK BMS results. Peacock also had a poor showing in what was an average year overall for most of the Suffolk transects. New transects began at Nowton Park and Black Heath, and thanks are due to the following, who put in dedicated monitoring effort at:

North Warren (Dave Thurlow), Minsmere (Robin Harvey), Bradfield Woods (Steve Hunt), Center Parcs (Graham Hersey-Green), Cavenham Heath (Michael Taylor), Walberswick (Will Russell), Spring Lane (Rob Parker), Ramsey/Hintlesham and Wolves Wood (Mark Nowers), Newsoms Farm (Frances Bee), Upper Abbey Farm (Trudy Seagon), Alton Water (Simon Waters), Manor Farm (Brenda Hudson), Tythe Farm (Peter Vincent), Dunwich Forest 1&2 (Dayne West), Arger Fen (Kerry Vaughan), Black Heath (Linda Hammond) and Nowton Park (Fay Jones). Single-species transects for Purple Hairstreak (Steve Hunt) and Silver-studded Blue (Terry Peake) also produced useful results. In almost every case, additional volunteers (not named individually) assisted the lead walker. At present the Combs Wood transect is vacant and awaiting a volunteer walker.

Wall Brown Survey: 2011 Results

Rob Parker

The joint Suffolk Naturalists' Society and Butterfly Conservation Single-species Survey started by selecting 15 paired tetrads, one which had Wall records in the previous 2 years, paired with an adjacent tetrad with records from 4 or 5 years back, but none since. The idea was to get surveyors to find them flying in the primary good site, and then (ideally on the same day) to search the secondary tetrad in the hope of finding that they were still resident there too. 15 volunteers enrolled to provide cover of those squares, and some late additions extended the original plan with 4 extra unpaired tetrads. Inevitably, a few surveyors were unable to visit for various personal reasons, whilst many others recorded Walls without being allocated survey squares. A total of 55 people contributed records, from their own gardens, in a couple of cases.

2011 Results

The bad news is that, for the second year in succession, not a single Wall was recorded from West Suffolk (TL tetrads). Five paired tetrads were thoroughly searched.

Results for TM were also disappointing, with most sightings being close to the coast, and in known strong colonies. At least, the survey has improved our understanding of where the best remaining coastal habitat is still occupied. It appears that the Wall is only hanging on close to the sea or river estuaries, usually where unkempt grasses grow unmown on embankments and sea walls. The most westerly record was from Thorpe Bay on the Orwell estuary (TM2537), and the most inland was Bredfield (TM2753).

The northern areas of Lowestoft & Gorleston (TG) were not target tetrads, but the Wall is holding on there relatively well.

In all, Wall was recorded from 30 tetrads in 2011, as against 27 in 2010 - so the considerable extra recording effort produced

mostly negative results, without the surge of sightings that might have been expected.

34 target tetrads were selected, and 30 of these were visited at least once, but 4 went unvisited.

Only 2 primary "promising/strong" squares had Wall sightings (but in neither case were they found both in 1st and 2nd generations). None of the secondary squares had any Wall sightings (all of these had Wall 5 or 6 years ago). The 4 extra unpaired squares were surveyed by volunteers joining after the main allocation, but none were seen in these squares either.

The majority of sightings came in from roving recorders, plus a few from the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey and the Big Butterfly Count. A total of 66 Wall records were noted, many from Shingle Street, Bawdsey & Boyton areas. A total of 30 tetrads had Wall records. Most sightings were of singles; the highest number seen together was 6. This in itself reflects a declining population. The map below shows how coastal the distribution has become.

Conclusion.

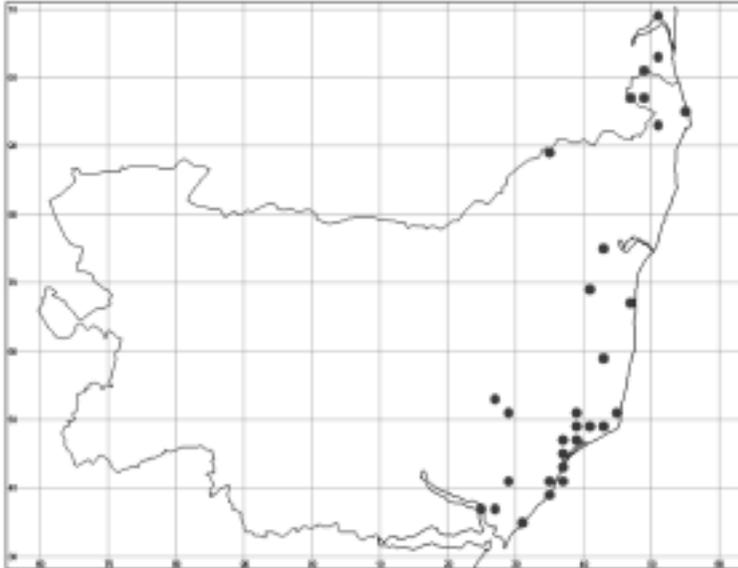
Was the 2011 survey a failure then? Far from it; the survey sadly confirmed that the Wall is moving east even faster than we already knew. Our objective now must be to identify the extent of the remaining colonies, with a view to preserving the habitat.

Plans for 2012

Monitoring the Wall remains a priority, and recorders will continue searching in 2012. The survey will continue, but using different ground rules. Last year's targets were clearly optimistic. So apart from checking 2 missed tetrads, there will be no set targets in TL in 2012. Infill targets will be set for coastal tetrads in TM and TG. Continued monitoring of last year's TM targets will be welcome. In 2011, the butterfly deviated

from its anticipated flight periods. There were early fliers in late April, low numbers in May but some into June; the 2nd generation started in late July rather than waiting for August, and there were only 2

sightings in September. The outcome was that it was possible to survey as planned in May and August and to miss them entirely. Intensified hunts with more repeat visits will be planned to tighten the net.



2011 Wall in 30 tetrads (4.4% of 677) – and still none in TL (West Suffolk)

Coastal Work

The Environment Agency has conducted a lot of coastal defence work during 2011, some of it disturbing good Wall habitat. In some cases, hopefully the EA work could prove beneficial in the long term. For the

future, the preliminary Environmental Information Summary for the proposed East Anglia ONE offshore wind farm reveals that its undersea cables are likely to come ashore at Bawdsey - the site of one of our strongest Wall colonies.

The decline of the Wall over successive 5 year surveys										
Survey from:	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	
to:	1999	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
Period	5 yrs									
Tetrads	1089	878	865	868	879	918	994	1003	1003	
Tetrads from which recorded										
Wall	350	200	183	163	160	136	120	115	100	
and for successive single years to date										
Year		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
Period		1yr								
Tetrads		536	500	557	509	549	645	575	677	
Tetrads from which recorded										
Wall		66	39	44	27	28	36	27	30	

Wider Countryside Butterfly Surveys, 2009–2011

Pete Dare (Suffolk co-ordinator)

Summary of Results

Over the last three summers some of our members have been participating in this national assessment of butterfly diversity and abundance in the general countryside, and away from the reserves and special sites where scarcer species have been monitored annually for many years. The WCBS surveys are based on randomly preselected 1x1 km squares of Suffolk’s open, and mainly agricultural, countryside. In each square the surveyor counts all butterflies seen along a 2 km transect route on one suitable day in July and another in August, the two dates being arbitrarily chosen according to local weather conditions and personal convenience. Counts are sent, mostly online, to the national BC organiser for analysis; and a list of original counts is then sent in late winter to the Suffolk co-ordinator. From these raw data the summary tables (below) has been compiled to provide a ‘broad brush’ picture of the Suffolk survey effort and the butterflies recorded in the three seasons.

Field effort, shared with British Trust for Ornithology members, initially was high but, as nationally, has fallen gradually - from 21 surveyors (27 squares) to 15 surveyors (17

squares). The larger table shows only the totals of each species counted. Not all squares were surveyed in both months each year. As a result, direct comparisons between years cannot be made here without detailed knowledge of, and allowing for, differences in count dates, weather, habitats, land use and other variables. BC will be able to do this using complex statistical methods. Scarcer resident species (Brimstone, Wall, Grayling) were localised, being found in just a few squares. Most surveyors encountered only the widespread ‘bread & butter’ resident and migrant species (Painted Lady, Red Admiral). Most of these are known to show large annual variation in numbers. Some of this variability is evident in the tables. As a consequence, we shall need at least 10 years of data before any long term trends in species abundance may become discernible. To maintain the momentum of this survey more volunteers are needed. If you are interested in participating this July and August, for just two days of field work, then please contact Rob Parker or me. peterxema@aol.com

	Average numbers per square		
	2009	2010	2011
Large White	22	4	11
Small White	21	25	24
Small/Essex Skippers	25	10	16
Gatekeeper	27	31	19
Meadow Brown	23	17	26
Ringlet	15	10	6
Peacock	6	<1	2.5
Small Tortoiseshell	4	1.5	1
Speckled Wood	8	0.5	9
Red Admiral	2	1	8
Common Blue	5	3	2

WCBS Results 2009-2011 July + August counts combined

	2009	2010	2011	Totals
No. counters - SB	14	13	10	
No. counters - BTO	7	4	5	
No.squares	27	19	17	
No. species	25	22	23	
Total butterflies	4900	2221	2530	9651
Average no. per square	181	117	149	
Small Skipper	50	151	210	411
Essex Skipper	39	15	19	73
Small/Essex Skipper	592	30	42	664
Large Skipper	32	36	17	85
Clouded Yellow	6	0	0	6
Brimstone	24	9	7	40
Large White	598	71	194	863
Small White	577	470	415	1462
Green-veined White	160	72	82	314
Purple Hairstreak	1	0	0	1
Small Copper	42	30	51	123
Brown Argus	39	13	16	68
Common Blue	134	70	28	232
Holly Blue	11	29	19	59
Red Admiral	43	26	139	208
Painted Lady	196	11	1	208
Small Tortoiseshell	106	31	15	152
Peacock	162	11	44	217
Comma	74	15	25	114
Speckled Wood	206	10	161	377
Wall	8	0	12	20
Gatekeeper	736	584	332	1652
Meadow Brown	614	321	442	1377
Small Heath	38	31	85	154
Ringlet	398	184	103	685
Grayling	14	1	71	86

Searching for larvae of the Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moth

Tony Prichard

countryrecorder@suffolkmoths.org.uk

Over the last year or so I have had comments from a few people based on the idea that the Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moth is a scarce moth in Suffolk. The moth flies during the day and can be seen most commonly as an adult nectaring at flowers in May and June in normal years. I would typically expect to see the adult nectaring at bugle or honeysuckle in some of the woods in south Suffolk. If the status of the moth was based on sightings of the adult, it would appear to be a quite scarce species, but my impression, from looking for the larvae in the past and other larval records received, is that the moth is probably not that uncommon.

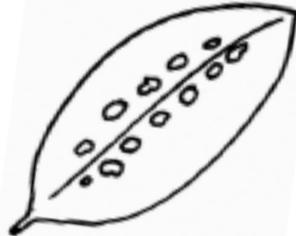
As it has been some time since I intentionally looked for the larva and, given the concerns of others about its scarcity, it seems a good idea to have a targeted search for the larva this year and if others can help search it would be of great assistance. At the end of the year we should have a clearer idea of its status in the county based on up to date information.

The larvae are relatively easy to find when they are small in late June and July as they make characteristic feeding signs on leaves of honeysuckle. The larva sits on the underside of the leaf along the mid-rib and eats a parallel series of holes either side of the mid-rib as shown in the figure opposite.

These holey leaves can be spotted quite easily with a little searching on honeysuckle bushes. As the larva gets bigger it tends to feed in a more irregular pattern and the holes may not be so neat and may also tend to spend the day deep in the clump of honeysuckle. If you do find a green larva on a honeysuckle it can be identified as the right species by its characteristic hawk-moth 'horn' on its tail end.

Don't just restrict yourself to searching for this species in woodland and clearings, as I have tended to find this moth more commonly on heathland or grassland habitats where clumps of low-growing honeysuckle can be found in full sunshine.

Collect or photograph the holey leaves and send them to myself with details of your name, location and date. I will be posting updates on the Suffolk Moths blog (suffolkmoths.org.uk/blog/) as the year progresses.



Honeysuckle leaf damage

The Butterfly Isles by Patrick Barkham

A review by Richard Stewart

This is one of the best butterfly books I have read. It is a substantial hardback, the text covering 337 pages. There is a further 32 pages listing species seen in 2009, outlining butterfly families, giving details of recommended sites to visit and expanding notes from the text. In addition to acknowledgements and the index, a comprehensive list of 'recommended reading' covers a wide range. I was pleased to see *The Great British Butterfly Survey* included. Written by Robin Page it covers a similar year's quest but in a very different style. Two sections of colour plates are included, one of mounted specimens and the other of the author's photos. Attractive line drawings of different species, by Helen Macdonald, preface each chapter.

The text is eloquently written. I particularly enjoyed the succinct but memorable description of some species; the English Wood White is described as 'an elegant drop of pearl'. The challenge of seeing all of Britain's 59 species in one year is interspersed with much humour and many references to the often bizarre actions of the 'old collectors'. Here there is a ready acknowledgement of his source, the two books by Michael Salmon, *The Aurelian Legacy* and *The Aurelian's Fireside Companion*. The on-off relationship with his girlfriend adds a further dimension and right from the start the author admits he is not a butterfly expert. His skills have declined since childhood forays with his father, who gets lavish praise throughout as 'the best butterfly companion of all'. His quest in 2009 was a fine balancing act between his job as a features writer at *The Guardian* and the need to travel widely. However, this literary connection probably helped in enlisting the

active help of 'the great and the good' lepidopterists, in particular those from Butterfly Conservation. He also made a wise decision to utilise the great strength of BC, its active and well-informed Branch members, in his search for rarer species. In fact he starts in winter, getting 'his eye in' again, searching for Brown Hairstreak eggs under the expert guidance of David Redhead. From here chapters chronologically cover the challenge, with a numbered list of species seen at the end of each chapter. Jeremy Thomas and Matthew Oates feature frequently, with a very full account of the Large Blue's complicated life cycle, its extinction as a native species and the ongoing successful reintroduction.

Many pages are devoted to 'The Curse of the Purple Emperor', possibly too many, as sometimes I felt the author was astride the 'Britain's premier butterfly' bandwagon, to the detriment of other species. The elusive Purple Hairstreak gets peripheral attention and the Grayling, a nationally declining species with one of the most intriguing and sophisticated courtship displays, is covered in just five lines. Obviously a book of this length will have some errors but I only found a few. Twice the difference between Essex and Small Skipper was wrongly described: it's not that the former's clubbed antennae are black, but rather their undersides. I also found the comment that 'barely 500 people' had seen the Queen of Spain Fritillary in Britain in the last 300 years to be a puzzling underestimate. For example, when two were at Minsmere for some time, the staff transported visitors to the private area where they were. On the day I went there was a steady stream of visitors and over the whole period I would

estimate probably a hundred different people saw them. He also perpetuates another myth about this species, by stating it definitely bred at Minsmere in the mid nineties, for two years. In reality the word 'probably' needs to be added: I should know, I was the Suffolk Butterfly Recorder at the time and was desperate to include it as a new breeding species.

My main concern was Patrick Barkham's comments about our largest butterfly, the Swallowtail. Admittedly he does state that there is 'something wrong about my relationship with this stunning butterfly', but to see just one at Hickling Broad, in the company of friends 'for whom butterfly watching was definitely a novelty' was unfortunate, as were comments describing it as 'weedier' and 'enfeebled', adding the final criticism by asking 'Are Swallowtails showy but shallow?' I wish he had gone instead, by himself, to the meadows at How Hill, where Swallowtails nectar on marsh thistles, or watched them feeding high up on

buddleia at Strumpshaw Fen, their sunlit wings like panels in a stained glass window. I also found the book's sub-title peculiar: *A Summer in Search of Our Emperors and Admirals*. The search in reality took at least three seasons to complete, with 60 species seen, not three. That sixtieth one was a Queen of Spain Fritillary, then a mating pair. The author certainly picked a good year, with millions of Painted Ladies and thousands of Heath Fritillaries at Blean Woods.

Despite my criticisms, the book is highly recommended. I liked the fine but successful balance between his frustrations, disappointments, hard-earned sightings and sudden unexpected discoveries. As a final, more mercenary, incentive to buy this book, it is currently available at Amazon and other outlets for less than half price.

Details: ISBN 9781 847081278 pub. Granta, 2010, £20 hardback.

Black hole survey for tetrads TL9034 & TL9036 planned for April 22nd, but postponed till May 1st

Stella Wolfe

A weather forecast favoured an afternoon visit to this site north of Bures. The chosen tree-lined track was flower-rich with plenty of nectar sources, but any insects had been inhibited by the damp. After avoiding a path through sodden oil seed rape and finding our way barred by lying water we retreated after an hour of fruitless searching and decided to cut our losses and enjoy the bluebells at nearby Arger Fen.

There we had an interesting flora trip finding moschatel, opposite leaved golden saxifrage, ransoms, as well as the bluebells

in flower. As we spotted some cuckoo flowers we noticed the temperature had risen. In no time we had seen a couple of male orange tip butterflies and looking close beneath the cuckoo flower heads we saw that females had been about as well depositing their orange coloured eggs. There was also a comma spreading its wings to absorb the warmth at the gate as we left.

Despite a quick return to our target tetrad area it was still not sheltered enough for any butterflies and all we found was a pair of waterproof overtrousers dropped on our earlier visit!

Olympic Stadium wildflower meadows - sown to flower gold this summer

More than 10 hectares of annual and perennial meadows have been created in the Olympic Park, designed and sown to flower during the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The annual meadows around the Olympic Stadium are a vivid combination of tickseed, cornflower, corn marigold, star of the veldt from South Africa, Californian poppy and plains coreopsis, which moves from yellow and blue in July to gold in August. The meadows, which are sown on an annual basis, have been trialled during the last two years to perfect the extensively researched technique of irrigation, late sowing and cutting back that will ensure the flowers peak for the Opening Ceremony.

A combination of shorter and taller perennial meadows, which require only a single seeding, were sown two years ago across the Olympic Park to allow plenty of time for them to establish before the Games.

The shorter meadows on drier sunny slopes are a colourful mix of thyme, calamint, organum, viper's bugloss and wild carrot. The taller meadows on shadier slopes include musk mallow, meadow cranesbill, devil's bit scabious, red clover, bloody cranesbill and great burnet.

The meadows have been designed to be nectar- and pollen-rich, diverse, and with a long flowering season to encourage a range of bees, butterflies, birds, moths and other insects. Specific plants and flower species have been selected to encourage particular wildlife – for example, Burnet Moths congregate around knapweed flowers and many species of butterflies will take nectar from this plant.

The meadows have been sown in specially designed low-nutrient soil, with a high sand content, to ensure a diverse mix of flowers and to discourage weeds. After the Games the meadows will gradually incorporate a range of grasses, naturally and through oversowing, so they become self-sustaining and support particular butterfly larvae such as Meadow Brown.



Meadow Brown
by Beryl Johnson

Editorial copy date

Contributions for the Autumn edition of our newsletter are very welcome and should be sent to the Editor, Peter Maddison, no later than Saturday 22nd September, 2012.

Any piece of writing considered to be of interest will be published and we also welcome line drawings, prints and photographs.

Contributions (preferably electronic) can be sent to the address on page 24 or by email to: prmaddison@yahoo.co.uk

Butterfly Nets Again

Wilfred George pens a 'poetic reposte' in reply to Richard Stewart's article **Butterfly Nets Again**, published in the Spring 2012 edition of *The Suffolk Argus*

Why Are We Netting?

I'm sorry Richard gets upset
when thinking of my insect-net.
I do respect his point of view,
but feel that nets are useful, too.

The damage done to wings and scales
is pretty slight – and clearly fails
to stop them breeding – for, I spy
that almost every butterfly
which suns itself in front of me
is damaged somewhere – that I see.

This surely is not due to nets –
just that their normal lifestyle gets
them blown past twigs, or pecked by birds.
Does this stop breeding? That's absurd.

Besides I think we need to turn
to other insects, and to learn
more about those with simpler wings,
which nets don't damage (lucky things.)

We need to study more of these –
the flies and gnats and bumble-bees.
Without a net, we might well miss
an opportunity for this.

I dreamed last night, a law was passed
and into the dungeons I was cast.
"The use of insect nets must cease."
So Richard informed the secret police.

I realised, when I awoke,
that Richard's quite a decent bloke.
However worried he might be,
he'd never sneak on chaps like me.
(I hope)

Wilfrid George

Butterflies of Europe for iPhone

by Chris Manley, Matt Rowlings, Peter Eeles and Guy Padfield

Published in the EIG Newsletter, Issue 10, this review, written by Simon Spencer, is reproduced with his permission.

Just occasionally technological change makes it possible for people to do something completely new. Not long ago the idea of having a complete photographic guide to the butterflies of Europe on your mobile phone would have been inconceivable. Today it is a reality. What makes it possible is the iPhone or, if you prefer, the phoneless and cheaper iPad. For £11.99 you can download 3000 images including maps for the 400 odd butterflies that occur in Europe. This package totals 400 mb. The human interface is remarkably intuitive and makes full use of the capabilities of the Apple operating system. You navigate quickly by icons. A quick tap takes you to the next level and you can bring up crystal clear photographs of virtually every butterfly in Europe. You can check against similar species. In many cases you can bring up annotated diagrams telling you what to look at. You can also bring up a map which covers northern Morocco to Arctic Scandinavia and eastwards to European Turkey showing the distribution. There are also notes on food plant and life cycle. This is all in your pocket.

What makes this special is collaboration between some of the best butterfly

photographers and experts in Europe with someone who has contributed to a similar but somewhat inferior product on Moths. This butterfly App makes full use of the Apple graphic interface which the moth App failed to do. It also uses the very latest Taxonomy using the list available on the EIG website. Hopefully the next edition will have a complete set of photos but most island endemic graylings all look the same. I could have done with a bit more text as that takes very few megabytes compared to pictures.

I can leave behind the field guide and even the GPS but I still need to take my notebook. What is required now is a facility to record in the field, building up a list of species with an abundance code and to send it by email to BC with the date, location and coordinates before leaving the site!

Published by Lepidapp @ £11.99

www.lepidapp.co.uk

See it on the iTunes store

<http://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/butterflies-of-europe/id499848412>

'Greek Island Odyssey'

26th April – 3rd May

Matt Berry writes about the recent tour to Rhodes

This April, a small number of branch and committee members joined me for a tour of the island of Rhodes in Greece. The focus for the holiday was not just butterflies; rather it was to enjoy any kind of interesting flora and fauna. For instance, Rhodes has almost 1,500 different plant species, including over 70 orchids. That is roughly equal to the UK. What makes Rhodes special though is that those 1,500 plants are all together on a very small island and, I would argue, are far more numerous than in the UK, due to over development and intensive agriculture in the UK.

With 3 botanists in our group, plants were always to be on the menu. However, as several of the group were also butterfly enthusiasts we naturally spent considerable time on them too. We also spent time at archaeological sites, discovering some of the fascinating history of Rhodes, as well as enjoying the diverse wildlife that often frequents such places, due to low levels of interference or management.

The tour of the island was literal in the sense that we covered all of the north, east, west and south extremities of it! The itinerary had been designed to allow the visitor to experience the broad range of habitats present on the island – beach and sand dune, phrygana, lake, river and dry riverbed, forest, mountain forest and glade, olive grove, other typical farmed countryside and sites of an archaeological or cultural interest. We had warmth and sun for the entire week,

with temperatures escalating as the week went on, up as high as 26-28 degrees Celsius – stark contrast to the extended spring of gloom in England!

On Rhodes there has been 48 species of butterfly recorded, either resident or migrant. We managed to positively identify and record 24 of those, plus a few noted as uncertain records for Grass Jewel, Purple Hairstreak, Large Tortoiseshell and Wall Brown.

One of the most often encountered species during the week was the, rather ironically named, Scarce Swallowtail *Iphiclides podalirius*. This large and visually stunning butterfly was seen at almost every site we visited and on each day of the week. Their graceful gliding flight was mesmerizing to watch, as they floated from flower to flower. Some of the group were also lucky enough to observe a female egg-laying, on the species favoured larval host plant on the island – Almond Pear *Pyrus spinosa*.

Another highlight was the Cleopatra *Gonepteryx cleopatra*. They are similar to the Brimstone (they share the same genus, *Gonepteryx*). The males though are adorned with a blushing of orange on their forewings, a joy to see when the butterfly is in flight. We saw several of these during the week, but they were not easy to photograph as they were almost always on the wing or took flight quickly when approached. I was fortunate to see a female egg-laying at one

location, on Mediterranean Buckthorn *Rhamnus alaternus*. Interestingly, on Rhodes the Cleopatra is an endemic subspecies (*fiorii*). The wings of the females are all completely yellow, as opposed to the more regular form where particularly the forewing upper side is greenish white.

We also encountered Eastern Festoons *Zerinthia cerisy* at a few locations on the island. Their presence hint at the geographical position of Rhodes, one of the most eastern parts of the Aegean, closer to Turkey than it is to mainland Greece. Similarly named species that are present in more eastern regions of Europe were also encountered, like the commonly seen Eastern Dappled White *Euchloe ausonia* and the less frequent Eastern Bath White *Pontia edusa*.

One of my favourite species on the island is the Lesser Fiery Copper *Lycaena thersamon*. I was keen to show the group these pretty little butterflies during their stay on Rhodes. I was confident they would be on the wing, but with an unusually dry winter and incredibly dry March, things weren't quite so clear cut. I was therefore pleased when on visiting my most reliable site for them we quickly encountered reasonable numbers of fresh individuals, despite, upon arriving, my shock at seeing parts of the meadow being cut by a small tractor! I had known this meadow would be cut, as it is every year, but never so early – it seems the dry conditions had accelerated not only flowering times but harvest times too! Nevertheless, the whole group got to see both the stunning almost all tangerine males and the attractively marked females. The females often have hindwing tails, generally more so in the second brood, whilst the

males as a rule lack them altogether. At the same site there were also several Large Wall Brown *Lasiommata maera*. This was hardly surprising, given that we were at a site of ruined temples and an ancient stadium, with no end of stone walls and rocks for them to sit on! Plus of course, unlike what would happen here in the UK, vegetation on the site was largely unmanaged and so, intermingled amongst the ruins were a plethora of wild flowers for the Wall Browns and other species to nectar on.

At one particular site we enjoyed seeing numerous Green-underside Blue *Glaucopsyche alexis*. This is a striking species, males bright on the upperside and both sexes with large black spots on the underside forewings, plus the tell-tale identification feature of the greenish blue suffusion in the basal area. We saw it in fairly typical bushy phrygana habitat, where one of its favoured food plants, Spiny Broom *Calicotome villosa*, is fairly common. Along with the Green-underside Blue, sharing the same habitat and possibly the same food plant, were also numerous Green Hairstreaks *Callophrys rubi*. In Greek "Callophrys" means "beautiful eyebrow". I can't quite see the reasoning behind this name and would suggest something along the lines of stripey socks or boots would seem more apt a description!

As mentioned earlier we recorded 24 species of butterfly, they were: Lulworth Skipper, Pigmy Skipper, Mallow Skipper, Eastern Marbled Skipper, Hungarian Skipper, Eastern Festoon, European Swallowtail, Scarce Swallowtail, Clouded Yellow, Cleopatra, Black-veined White, Large White, Small White, Eastern Bath White, Eastern Dappled White, Green Hairstreak, Small Copper, Lesser Fiery Copper, Long-tailed

Blue, Green-underside Blue, Chapman's Blue, Common Blue, Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Aegean Meadow Brown and Large Wall Brown.

To list and describe all the plants seen and enjoyed would take another article (a book even!) but here are just a couple of the highlights. There were several orchid species seen, for example the Sombre Bee Orchid, Holy Orchid, Lax-flowered Orchid, Violet Bird's Nest Orchid and a special endemic called Colossus Orchid *Ophrys colossaea*. This particular species is named after the famous Colossus of Rhodes, the huge bronze statue that once stood on the island and was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The orchid is also large and statuesque, hence the name *colossaea*. It was found growing in an olive grove, so basically agricultural land. At this particular location there used to be thousands of them, but due to the grove being ploughed nearly all have been lost. The only ones that remain are those near trees or around the edges of the grove. It is a case of ignorance rather than malice that the farmer has done this. Wild plants generally succeed quite well in agricultural areas due to the fairly low intensiveness of the cultivation and the very low use of herbicides. It would be great to try and start up a dialogue with the local farmers and see if more sympathetic management could be adopted in more olive groves, that would help further the conservation of species like the orchid.

Another plant that stands out is the Dragon Arum *Dracunculus vulgaris*. It is an impressive plant that can stand a metre or more tall, but it is the flower which gives it a dramatic appearance! The deep purple

spathe and even darker, elongated spadix combine to produce a very striking bloom. It also has attractive finely cut leaves with white markings and the stem features a striped pattern. One cannot fail to be impressed by it and we saw lots of large plants in flower, some of which were particularly large and definitely over one metre tall.

Overall the holiday provided an ample dose of butterfly and botanical interest, with a sprinkling of birds, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates. I would like to thank everyone who came on the holiday, for making it both enjoyable and memorable. I am also pleased to say that some of the profits from the holiday will be donated to Butterfly Conservation, a trend I hope to continue with future tours.

For more photos from Rhodes and information about future tours please visit www.greenwings.co



Black-veined White

Greek Island Odyssey May 2012



Green-underside Blue



Mallow Skipper



Aegean Meadow Brown



Lesser Fiery Copper



Ophrys colossaea

Captioned photos
by Matt Berry



Scarce Swallowtail

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