

SUFFOLK BRANCH NEWSLETTER

The

Suffolk Argus

Volume 90

Summer 2024



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment



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Butterfly Conservation

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Editorial

Trevor Goodfellow

Welcome to volume 90 of The Suffolk Argus. Within these pages are varied items of interest especially James Corton's (County Recorder) 2023 Butterfly Report. The weather has been frustrating for me as my annual Dingy Skipper count was made difficult to plan. May was more like old fashioned April weather, so the early flying Dingies emerged slowly though surprisingly early, and after surviving an extra wet winter and forestry work last year, their fate seemed sealed. Numbers were very low in fact I saw more Marsh Fritillaries in Suffolk than Dingy Skippers!

As I write this, a few Common Blues have been seen, so not long before Large Skippers and Meadow Browns etc.

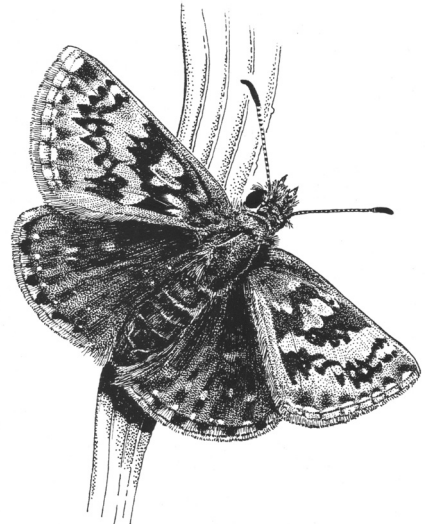
Marham Park on the outskirts of Bury St. Edmunds has amazing wildflower verges and wild spaces. At the moment it is well managed, and over the last few years I have been impressed with the population of butterflies and moths that are thriving there. It would be good to have a local member that could do some recording there. Our local housing development is now

finished, and the landscaping looks good, with many native and ornamental trees together with sown wildflower meadows in common areas around water filled run-off lagoons. I shall be monitoring these areas unless anyone would like to take on the task?

Please keep your Argus contributions coming in, observations and photos or questions for experts, all help to make this your newsletter. (suffolkargus@gmail.com)

**Copy date for the next issue is
September 22nd 2024**

Cover image: Marsh Fritillary and back cover: Marbled White by Trevor Goodfellow



*Dingy Skipper
by Douglas Hammersley*

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Members' Afternoon and the Annual Business Meeting

Saturday 19th October

Earl Stonham Village Hall

IP14 4BG (please note this year's change of venue)

A short AGM will precede talks by BC Eastern Region Officer

Sharon Hearle

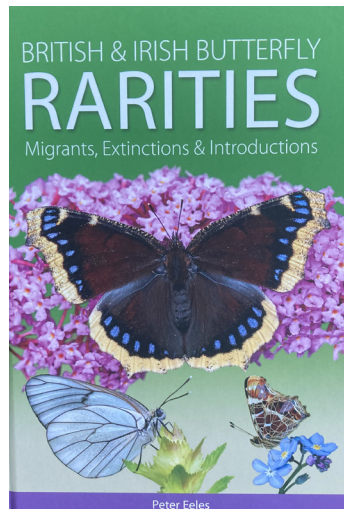
who will tell us about the work she has been doing in her geographically large area.
and

Peter Eeles

Pete spoke to us in 2019 when his book *Life Cycles of British and Irish Butterflies* had just been published. His most recent title is *British and Irish Butterfly RARITIES Migrants, Extinctions and Introductions* which will be the subject of this afternoon's talk.

There will be refreshments, our annual Photographic Competition and a Raffle

During the short AGM we will be electing members to the committee. At present we are few in number and we need help to cover the projects and tasks that we want to take part in. If you can spare some time to help with the running of the Branch, please get in touch with me prior to the meeting.



Trudie Willis - an Appreciation

Richard Stewart

I first met Trudie after Wilfrid George contacted me as Trudie was concerned about plans for a second Aldeburgh caravan site at the bottom of her garden. Trudie probably knew Wilfrid as they only lived about a mile apart and I'm sure she knew about the superb footpath maps he had created. Wilfrid asked me to accompany him as Trudie was well aware of the rich biodiversity in her garden, especially butterflies. I was at that time the County Butterfly Recorder. I was expecting to find a small back garden which would be adversely affected by such a development. Instead, there was a ten acre garden but we pursued the matter and the application was rejected. To show her thanks Trudie included our Suffolk Branch of Butterfly Conservation in her Open Days and over the years we have received many thousands of pounds from donations on these days. Those with long memories may remember Trudie writing an article about the great variety of buddleias in the Spring 2005 edition of the 'Suffolk Argus'. I was too busy on our Open Days to get to know Trudie very well but that changed on the many visits I made while researching 'The Wildlife Garden at Aldeburgh'. Trudie had an infectious enthusiasm and at the end of our Open Days Peter Maddison and I had to count up all the money donations and reach an agreement about the total. Trudie's excitement grew as the total mounted and this was just one small example of the abundant energy she had and a fine sense of humour, often at her expense. Perhaps the best way to describe her character and the wonderful garden she created is to repeat the readings from my book which I gave at a packed funeral service at

Aldringham church on 8th February 2024: 'I like to think of the garden as a series of rooms and hope that the odd surprise will appear around a corner. To me it is like painting a picture with a forever-changing landscape. The garden usually dictates to me rather than vice versa'. The garden was designed for all ages and wheelchair friendly: 'One lady in a wheelchair the other day stood up and gave me a lovely big hug. She told me there was more love and peace in the garden than anywhere else she had been, and I thought that was wonderful'. Trudie was also quick to improvise, one example being the two converted railway carriages giving a wealth of information about the garden's wildlife. Trudie also discovered that an old fishing boat in an Aldeburgh boatyard was being converted into modern use and the old wooden wheelhouse was being replaced. This is where opportunism, initiative and imagination combined, with Trudie seeing this redundant item as ideal for her daughter's playhouse. Again in Trudie's words: 'Maybe you can't spot it now but try a walk up the tunnel behind the tree ferns and you will come upon it covered in honeysuckle. Take a peep inside and see the old framework, working windows held up with original wooden wedges, the old switchboard and all my flowerpots and watering gear. Cost? Just a huge amount of elbow grease from David and I'. David was Trudie's husband but subsequently died. The ever expanding manure heap is easily overlooked and its importance was explained in Trudie's 'Ode To A Rubbish Heap'. The load mentioned was calcified seaweed:

‘When our first load arrived from Cornwall we were advised that it was an excellent accelerant for making compost...the proof was in the pudding when our vegetables swelled up and I took the local Flower Show cup and best box of vegetables from the unbeatable Spud Murphy’. Wildlife attracted to the heap have included lizards, wood mice, voles, frogs, toads, a variety of insects including butterflies and the generated heat being ideal for eggs of grass snakes to hatch out. Birds also visit for nesting materials. Back to Trudie again: ‘For the rest of you, good luck with filling your brown bins and putting them in neat rows outside your houses, but for me I’d rather have cheaper council taxes and a touch of countryside magic’. Trudie’s self-deprecating sense of humour, which Peter reminded me about on the way home from the funeral service, was evident when a teenager emerges from her toilet, whose walls were covered with the many prizes won at local horticultural events. Not aware of Trudie’s close presence he said, ‘What a poser!’ Trudie also told me of an overheard conversation during the 2009 Open Day. Butterflies were so abundant that we could literally not count accurately on some of the buddleias. Trudie was behind

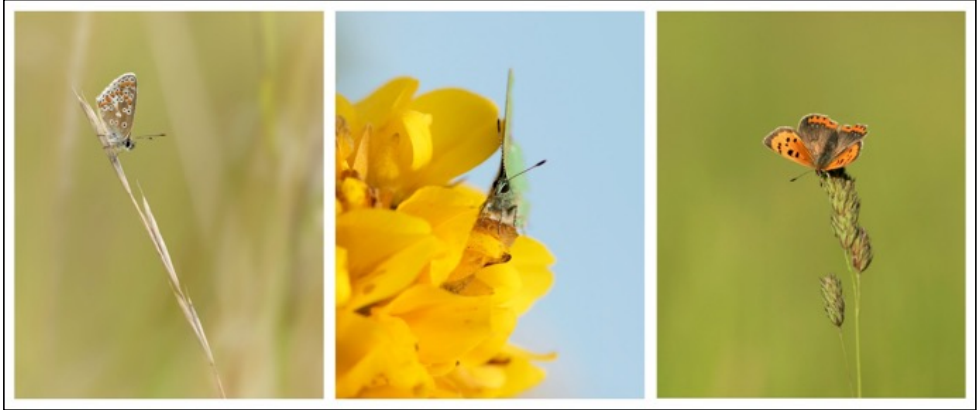
two visitors, one of whom commented on the abundance of butterflies. The other agreed, adding that Trudie had probably released them just before the visitors arrived. Trudie was anxious that I included everyone who had helped her when I wrote the book and I made sure her gardener Paul was given space for an in-depth interview. Finally, just one example of Trudie’s generosity. This was told to me by Nigel Smart, who with his wife Joy was part of a group from the Needham Market Horticultural Society. Nigel mentioned that he would love cuttings from two particularly fine hydrangeas and one thriving buddleia. Trudie had them ready for him later on, wrapped in polythene and wet cotton wool. All three are doing well in their new garden. On the funeral order of service booklet, a photo of Trudie was surrounded by butterflies. Perhaps the most fitting tribute was the title in that order of service: ‘Celebrating A Life Very Well Spent’.



Peacock on Buddleia by Trevor Goodfellow

SUFFOLK BUTTERFLY REPORT 2023 (SUMMARY)

James Corton



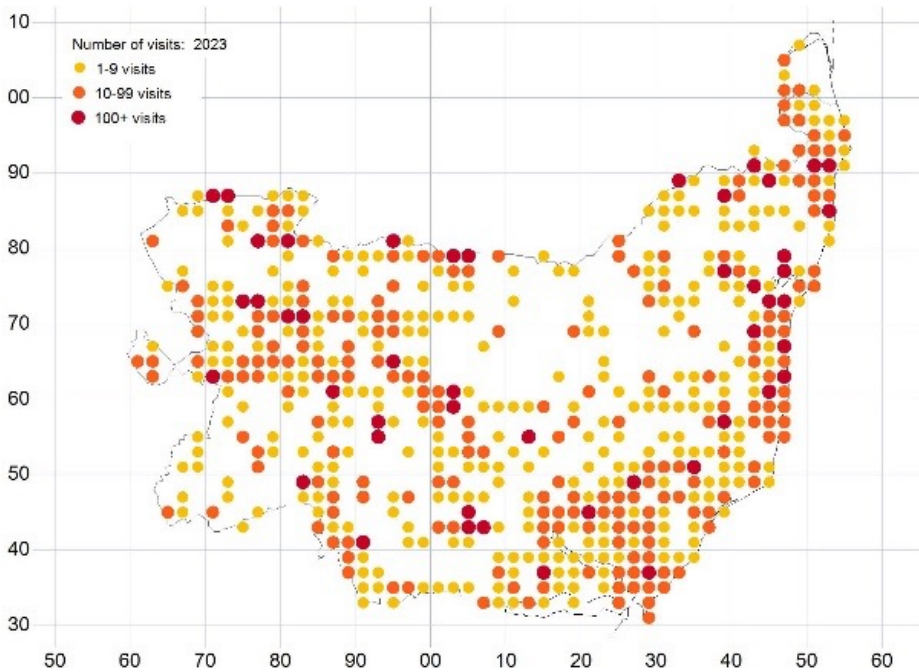
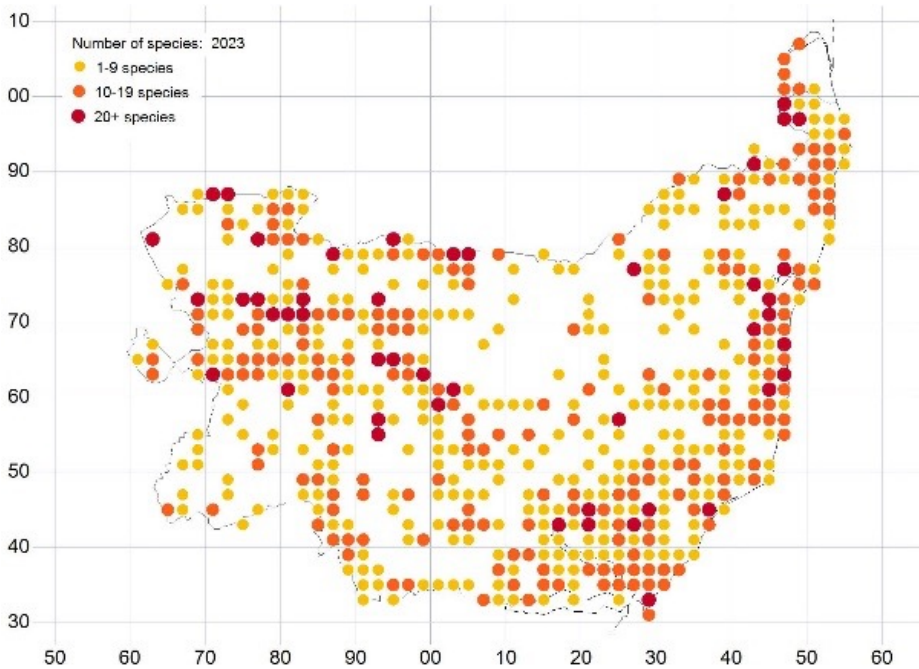
From left to right; Brown Argus roosting, Green Hairstreak along Minsmere beach and Small Copper basking in a 'no-mow' site ©James Corton

Introduction

Since the 2022 report there has been sad news in the passing of Trudi Willis, a member who held an open garden day annually, raising funds for Suffolk Branch and providing a chance for members to meet and socialise. My Norfolk counterpart, Alan Brazil, also passed away. He had encouraged me as I began this County Butterfly Recorder role. Both will be missed. The first butterfly sighting of 2022 came on 2nd January, a Brimstone, in Long Melford and the last sighting was of a Peacock on 27th December in Woodbridge. Between these dates, well over 100,000 sightings were reported from over 30,000 recording trips. This is slightly more than in 2022. iRecord data only is commented upon in this Summary report. The full report to be published in SNS will contain

additional spreadsheet and paper-based records, making up about 10% of total records. It is not expected to affect distribution maps or flight dates greatly except, perhaps, some Hairstreak species.

This report uses data from species level identification for accuracy i.e., doesn't incorporate indeterminate species identification such as, Small/Essex Skipper or 'Pieris' for unknown white butterflies. These records can still be used elsewhere by Butterfly Conservation Head Office and other organisations, so please continue recording them. Further information on recording is available at <https://www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk/recording.html> Special thanks go to the photographers who supplied pictures for this report; *Mark and Hazel Brewster, Liz Cutting, Jane Ferguson, Kevin Ling and Robert Quadling.* Thanks



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also to *Richard Perryman* for all of his work keeping the Suffolk Branch website up-to-date with information and sightings. I intend using photographs from the Sightings page to illustrate future reports.

I also wish to thank *Butterfly Conservation (Suffolk Branch) Committee*, *Trevor Goodfellow (BC Suffolk Argus Editor)* and *Suffolk Naturalists' Society (especially Martin Sanford)* for their support as well as all the many individuals who reported their Suffolk butterfly sightings. Finally, a mention for *Robert Quadling* and *Andrew Hickingbotham* of *Suffolk Wildlife Trust* who have been monitoring the Wall Brown population in the north-east of our county and devising conservation plans for this Endangered species. Thank you both.

Weather Patterns and Extreme Events

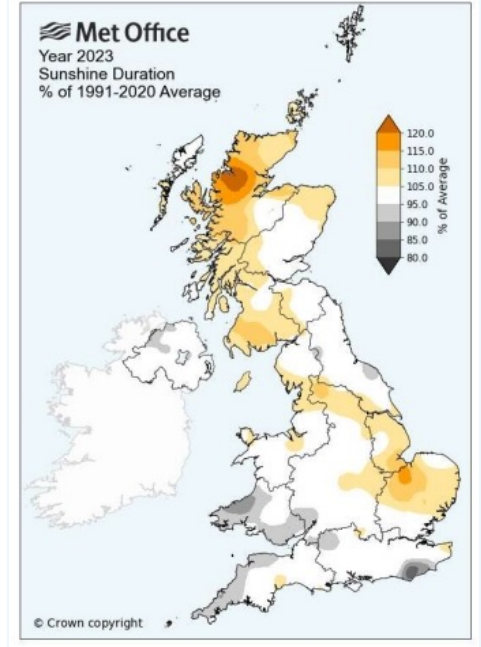
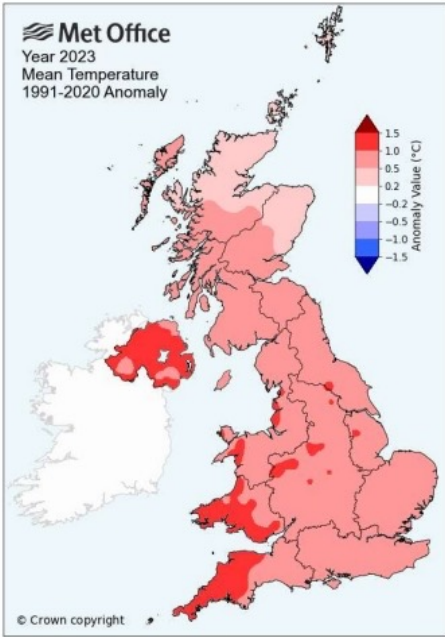


Meadow Brown butterflies copulating, the female is above. One of the 'June' species to benefit from the sunny days of June 2023.

©Kevin Ling

Following the record-breaking year of 2022 where 40.3°C was recorded and drought affected much of the nation, 2023 was not as dramatic. The butterfly season was relatively unaffected by cold snaps in January, early March and again in November/December. June was very hot and sunny – over eight hours sunshine per day on average. However, the hottest day of the year was in early September during an Indian Summer when, undoubtedly, many late season butterflies benefitted from the warmth. It was a wet year, too, the sixth wettest on record for England. Storms began early in August and rolled in throughout the autumn and winter, fuelled in part by a strong El Nino event in the Southern Oscillation System.

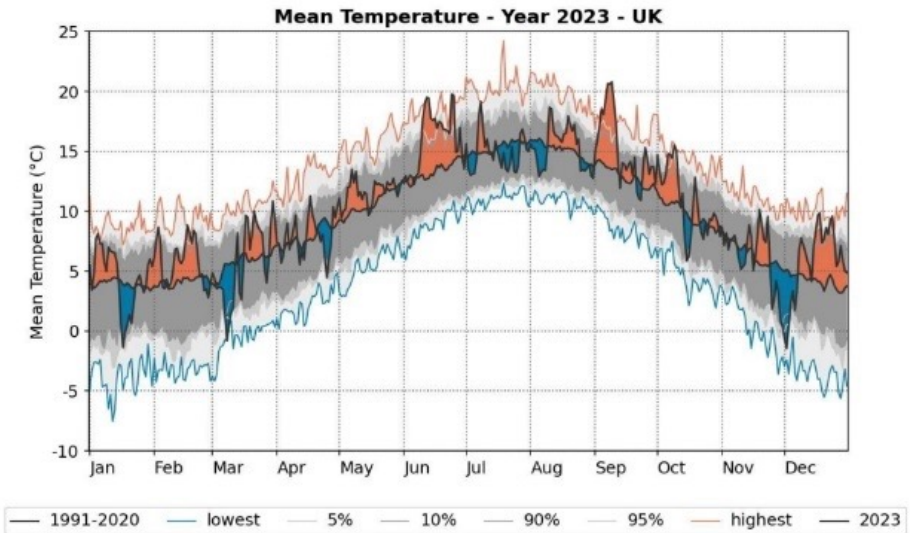


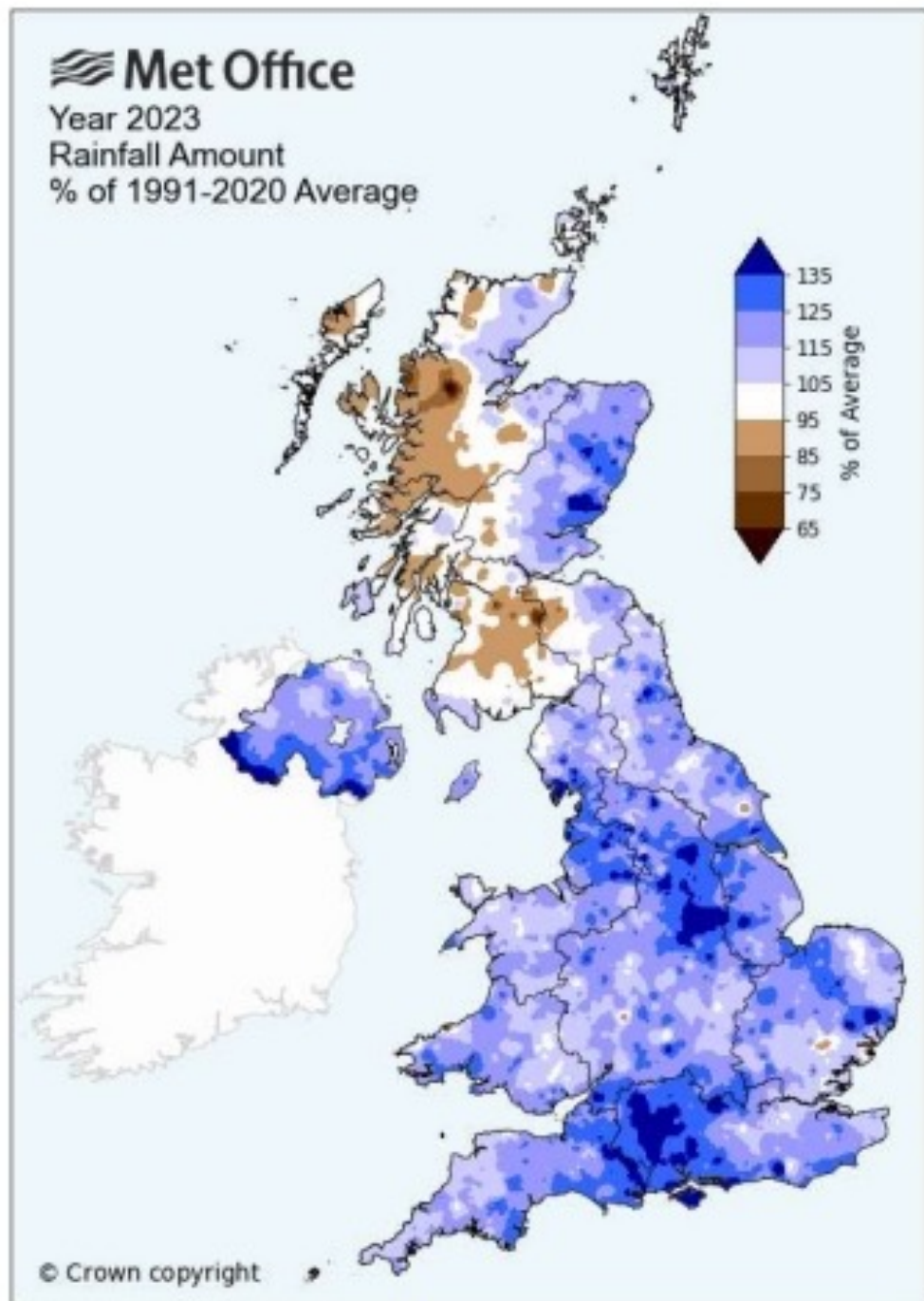


Met Office

Source: HadUK-Grid 01/01/2024 11:08

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Unusual Sightings

Early April brought a Camberwell Beauty to Little Stonham, the only record of the year for this species. A Large Tortoiseshell was seen and photographed in Wenhaston a few days later, on 9th April and another sighting came in from Covehithe on 9th May. On 20th August, a Long-tailed Blue was reported from the coastal village of Kessingland. These are all very migratory species; the sighting dates are typical, and they are likely to be genuine wild migrants (the Long-tailed Blue is sometimes brought in on horticultural imports).



Large Tortoiseshell at Wenhaston, spring 2023. ©Jane Ferguson

Following 2022’s exotic list of species, many due to releases, I would have preferred to draw attention to naturally occurring rare sightings in 2023 but, as is the trend these days, much of the unusual butterfly action was about introductions. 2022’s single specimens of Glanville Fritillary and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary proved to be just that, and no further specimens were sighted thereafter. A large number of Queen of Spain Fritillary were reported in July from the East Bergholt area with an autumn brood individual being seen some distance away at Sutton Hoo in September. A small colony of Marsh Fritillary has been present on a fen in the north of the county since 2021. This is now seen as self-sustaining, with both mating and egg-laying being witnessed and increasing numbers of adults being reported. The Marsh Fritillary is one of six UK species to have full protection, including capture and

release. The colony is on a Suffolk Wildlife Trust and SSSI nature reserve which, again, confers an element of protection. Introductions are seldom successful and the one near Hopton is an exception to the rule, well thought through and successful but illegal for the above reasons. As Head Office have said, unofficial introductions make butterfly records less reliable e.g. for planning against climate change and habitat loss. We need to have an accurate picture of the state of our butterflies, so I urge people to refrain from introducing protected species, habitat specialists, non-UK species without consent from Butterfly Conservation. Common species and widespread migrants, such as Painted Lady, are often used in educational activities and subsequently released. There is no issue with this. I take a common-sense approach and welcome any information, including anonymous, regarding releases, including number originally released and any top ups. The most bizarre sightings of all were of three Scotch Argus in the Somerleyton Estate during July. This is an alpine species restricted to the far north of England and, more commonly, Scotland. It is not expected to establish, even if pairing occurred. The record is considered reliable and undoubtedly a result of released butterflies.

Swallowtail (Papilionidae)

Swallowtails of neither subspecies (native has more extensive black markings) were sighted in our county during 2023, so there is little to say. For those who like to see this majestic species in its Norfolk Broadland habitat, it is typically on the wing from mid-May until mid or late June. First sighting was submitted on 13th May 2024 from RSPB Strumpshaw Fen. Hickling Broad and How Hill are also good places to view them. Last year’s fungal attack on the Milk Parsley foodplant was successfully confined to one site, Wheatfen – there were real concerns for the Swallowtail’s survival if the fungus had spread to all sixteen UK breeding sites. This is another of the six fully protected

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UK species that, despite huge conservation efforts, is still very vulnerable to extinction.

Whites and Yellows (Pieridae)

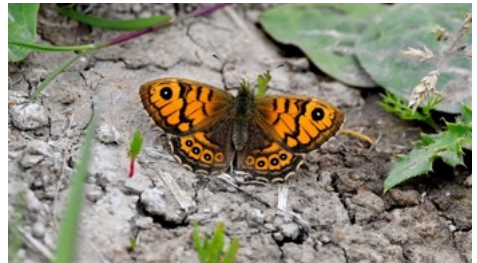
No reports of the eagerly anticipated Southern Small White have been received from any UK site. The expert opinion is that the English Channel is too large a physical barrier for them. This is a little surprising since both Small and Large Whites have often been seen immigrating along southern and eastern coasts from Yorkshire to Cornwall. Perhaps when it reaches Calais this will change as it faces a 20-mile sea crossing as opposed to its current 100-mile crossing from the Netherlands. An increase in Brimstone sightings in the Lowestoft area in the past few years may well be due to the Buckthorn Project where a number of gardens, including mine, have one or more bushes planted to make up for the shortage of wild specimens. Even small bushes are selected for egg-laying. Clouded Yellows were spotted, mostly as singletons and near coastal areas, with a few seen inland around Lakenheath and Cavenham. Overall, not a brilliant year for seeing them and no Pale Clouded Yellow were reported, as far as I know in the whole UK.

Browns, Fritillaries and Aristocrats (Nymphalidae)



An early instar Orange-tip larva preparing to moult ©Hazel Brewster

Marbled White continued to spread east and north into the county. Naturally occurring colonies are now found five miles within the county border, from Brandon through to Newmarket, Haverhill and Sudbury. The 2008 introduced colony at Ipswich is now only 15 miles from naturally occurring colonies and, although many of these are small, it is likely that the species will continue to expand into suitable habitat further east and north. It prefers long grassland with ample flowering plants for adults and Red Fescue for its larvae – a very common species of grass.



A female Wall Brown. ©Robert Quadling

Previous summer droughts had relatively little effect on many species. One that seems to have been adversely affected is the Ringlet. A damp grassland preferring species, numbers were significantly down on previous years. The wet but warm weather in July and August appeared to suit this species very well and it is hoped that it will resurge in 2024. Other Brown species were recorded in numbers to be expected for normal years, showing that the 2022 drought had not affected them so greatly as widely feared. This was particularly good news for our Brown BAP species, Small Heath, Grayling and Wall Brown. Grayling had been noted moving into woodland during 2022's drought, a survival strategy that clearly worked. Small Heath have larvae that are dependent on finer and perhaps less drought-resistant grass species but they, too, proved resilient. Perhaps it's because they are continuously brooded and at least some of their offspring were able to develop in good grassland? Wall Brown continued to hold on along our coastal boundary around the River

Waveney and Sudbourne Marshes areas. Numbers recorded were similar to 2022, a relief that such an endangered butterfly survived the drought in its marshland habitat. A small third brood bodes well for 2024 with many caterpillars reaching a size that enables winter survival. This species has fluctuated in the past and its exact requirements are not fully understood. Silver-washed Fritillary had another good year. It has now colonised every part of the county and existing populations have grown in many cases. There is some evidence of a decline in the past five years which may be due to its preferred mature woodland habitat becoming overly mature and shaded. Apart from this it seems to be benefitting from climate change, at least for now.

Our two most commonly encountered migrant nymphalids had contrasting fortunes. The Red Admiral was widely found in good numbers whereas the Painted Lady was sparsely observed. These species are very dependent on migration and factors such as winter weather conditions in North Africa and European summer conditions play a large role in determining how many turn up in Great Britain each year, probably greater than the presence of a few adults successfully overwintering.

Peacock had a slightly below average year but nothing out of the usual. Comma did better and was more commonly seen than in normal years. After a little respite in 2022, the Small



A freshly emerged Peacock taking nectar before aestivating in late summer ©Mark Brewster

Tortoiseshell continued its alarming decline with another well below average year. In fact, nationally it recorded its lowest transect levels since records began in 1976. The reasons have been discussed in a previous report and, unless it can find a way to breed without the tachinid parasite *Sturmia bella* decimating its broods, the future looks bleak in southern counties. Perhaps a change to univoltine breeding or a hyperparasite of *Sturmia bella* will avert it becoming a rarity?

White Admiral had another good year and there was a very small partial second brood in some locations. Purple Emperor was recorded in its well-known sites but is undoubtedly present in more woods than the species map suggests. This is one of the species which people congregate at certain sites or even individual trees in order to maximise viewing potential. It would be helpful if people could check mature woodland habitat with Goat Willow for this elusive species that is expanding its range.

Coppers, Hairstreaks and Blues (Lycaenidae)

Hairstreaks are elusive and under-reported butterflies, so it is hard to make any dogmatic statements about their abundance. Purple Hairstreak showed well in some areas but there was a drop in records for White-letter and Green Hairstreak species. Part of this is due to at least one recorder supplying records manually from the Lowestoft area where several White-letter and Purple Hairstreak colonies are known to exist. These records should be included in the full report. Only one Brown Hairstreak was reported, from Ipswich on 5th September. It is not known yet whether this is due to a reduction in recording or a decline in the introduced population. It is arguably our most elusive species of butterfly.

Small Copper were recorded from across the county in good numbers except for the far south-west. Numbers were significantly higher in second and third broods than in the spring generation, a quite normal phenomena for multi-brooded lycaenid species.

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Brown Argus continued the upward trend and, while Common Blue started well, the summer brood did not build as much as hoped for. This is another pair of similar species, at least in the field, and identification issues mean that it is hard to be certain just how good a population exists in any one site. Holly Blue have enjoyed a run of good years and 2023 was another such year. Some early records for Silver-studded Blue may be Holly Blue or Common Blue. At times, it appears that Holly Blue are also recorded as Small Blue. Given the introductions that have occurred in Suffolk it is plausible but impossible to verify these accurately without photographs due to the similarity between the species and resultant confusion. Our very small population of Chalk Hill Blue in the west of the county held on with similar numbers being reported compared to 2022 (this is distinct from the Devil's Dyke colony which is just over the border in Cambridgeshire).

Skippers (Hesperiidae)

The golden skipper species had a good year with the slightly unusual feature of Small Skipper being observed before any Large Skipper had emerged (typically a week or two behind). The difficulty separating Essex and Small Skipper in the field makes it hard to produce accurate maps and data for each species. Both should be quite common in areas with long grass that is allowed to stand throughout winter.

Our rarest skipper, the inappropriately named Dinky Skipper, is now confined to one tetrad in the King's Forest district of north Suffolk, around Wordwell village. Forest work and adverse weather has led to a decline in their current sites. Our hope is that the species is quite mobile within the forest and capable of finding new and suitable breeding habitat. Its status in Suffolk remains critical and all records received are very appreciated in giving a picture of the population's strength and position in the forest.



Small Skipper showing its diagnostic orange-tipped antennae ©Mark Brewster

Looking Forward

This season has begun wet and mild due in part to the now fading El Nino. The pattern of emergence seems to be a little earlier than normal for early spring species but aligning with normality in late spring emergences. The Marsh Fritillary colony goes from strength to strength with forty or more individuals seen flying in mid-May. No sightings of spring brood Queen of Spain have been reported yet. It would appear to be another failed introduction attempt although it should be noted that it is a highly mobile species and showed signs of dispersal last summer. Hence, it could be worth looking for in suitable locales. Dinky Skipper are very scarce so far this year and a cause for concern.

Further reading is available. Butterfly Conservation has published, *'The State of Britain's Butterflies'* and *'The Red List of Butterflies in Great Britain'*. Both of these can be viewed via the BC website at <https://www.butterfly-conservation.org/butterflies>



A Silver-studded Blue showing its silvery-blue 'studs' adjacent to the orange band.

©Liz Cutting

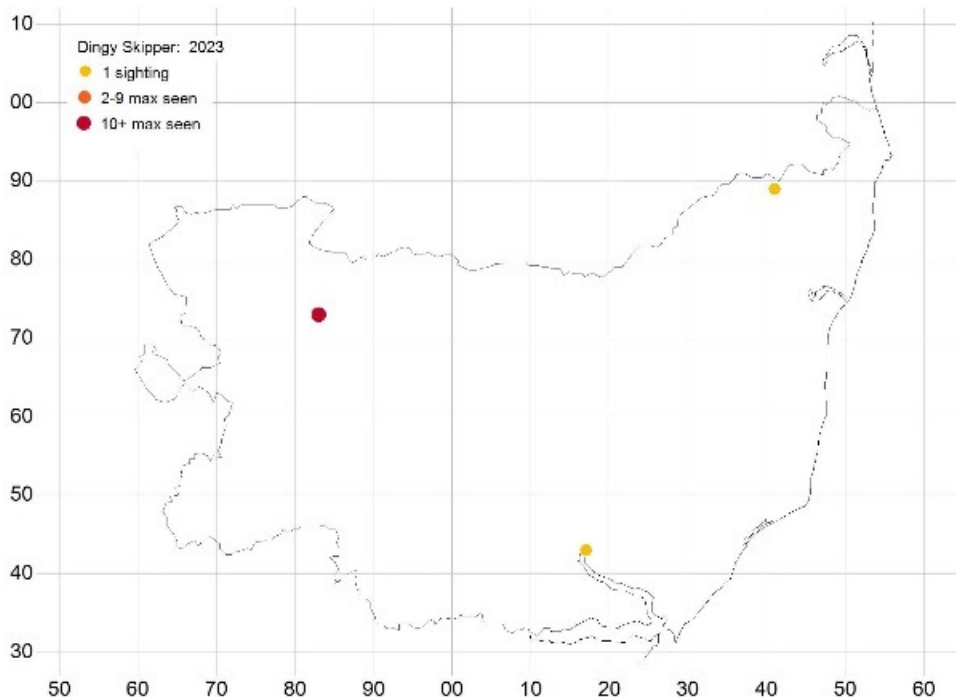
Appendix 1: Summary of UK Changes for Species at National Level

Key: * P < 0.05 (significant), ** P < 0.01 (highly significant), ***P < 0.001 (very highly significant). Red text has been used to highlight those species that had their worst year of the series in 2023, and blue text for those species that had their best year of the series in 2023.

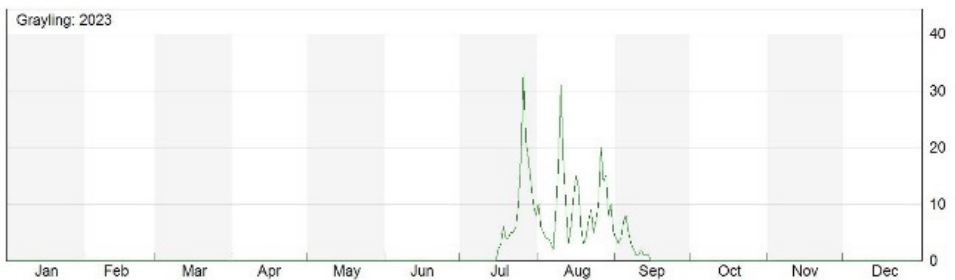
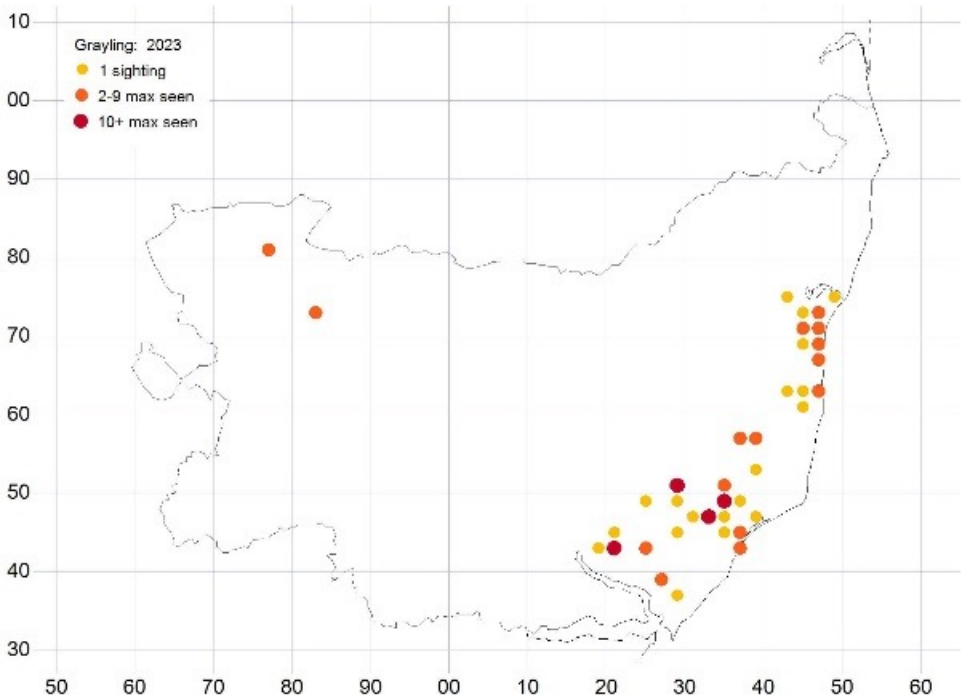
Species	Start Year	No. years with Index in 2023	No. sites monitored in 2023	2023 rank	% change 2022-2023	Series trend (%)	10-year trend (%)
Dingy Skipper	1976	48	737	40	-42	-4	-7
Essex Skipper	1977	47	1271	25	37	-20	-22
Small Skipper	1976	48	2298	31	17	-71***	-29
Large Skipper	1976	48	2271	36	14	-26	-37*
Orange-tip	1976	48	2229	15	-11	40**	5
Large White	1976	48	2889	22	19	-31	23
Small White	1976	48	2905	19	27	-14	53
Green-veined White	1976	48	2763	46	-12	-23	-36
Clouded Yellow	1979	45	1017	28	-82	514*	-59
Brimstone	1976	48	2226	1	59	43**	16
Wall	1976	48	911	41	-25	-84***	20
Speckled Wood	1976	48	2761	14	3	94***	-7
Small Heath	1976	48	2083	30	29	-43**	52
Ringlet	1976	48	2702	35	-37	296***	-42*
Meadow Brown	1976	48	2931	7	48	3	18
Gatekeeper	1976	48	2532	9	52	-37**	34
Marbled White	1976	48	1595	3	26	85***	2
Grayling	1976	48	366	44	-13	-71***	17
Silver-washed Fritillary	1976	48	1181	10	-7	271***	-10
White Admiral	1976	48	429	30	0	-60***	6
Purple Emperor	1979	45	143	12	-38	133**	28
Red Admiral	1976	48	2907	1	289	318***	110
Painted Lady	1976	48	2464	28	-50	90	46
Peacock	1976	48	2859	18	51	5	-8
Small Tortoiseshell	1976	48	2720	48	-46	-82***	-66*
Comma	1976	48	2560	3	41	186***	21
Marsh Fritillary	1981	43	233	9	55	2	-5
Small Copper	1976	48	2424	24	76	-40*	32
Brown Hairstreak	1983	41	205	31	-9	-12	-21
Purple Hairstreak	1976	48	821	15	48	-18	81
Green Hairstreak	1976	48	850	42	-31	-31*	-10
White-letter Hairstreak	1976	48	363	36	-5	-78***	40
Small Blue	1978	46	405	13	-13	29	87*
Holly Blue	1976	48	2337	3	151	174*	148
Silver-studded Blue	1979	45	147	14	-13	70*	84**
Brown Argus	1976	48	1468	2	168	32	47
Common Blue	1976	48	2593	39	-13	-22	-27
Chalk Hill Blue	1976	48	329	37	-49	-1	44

Appendix 2: Distribution Maps and Flight Seasons for Suffolk BAP Species (2023)
(Appendix 3 Distribution Maps for Selected Species available in the full report)

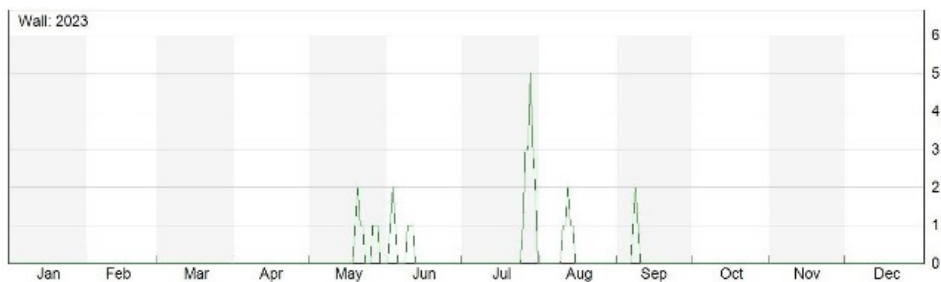
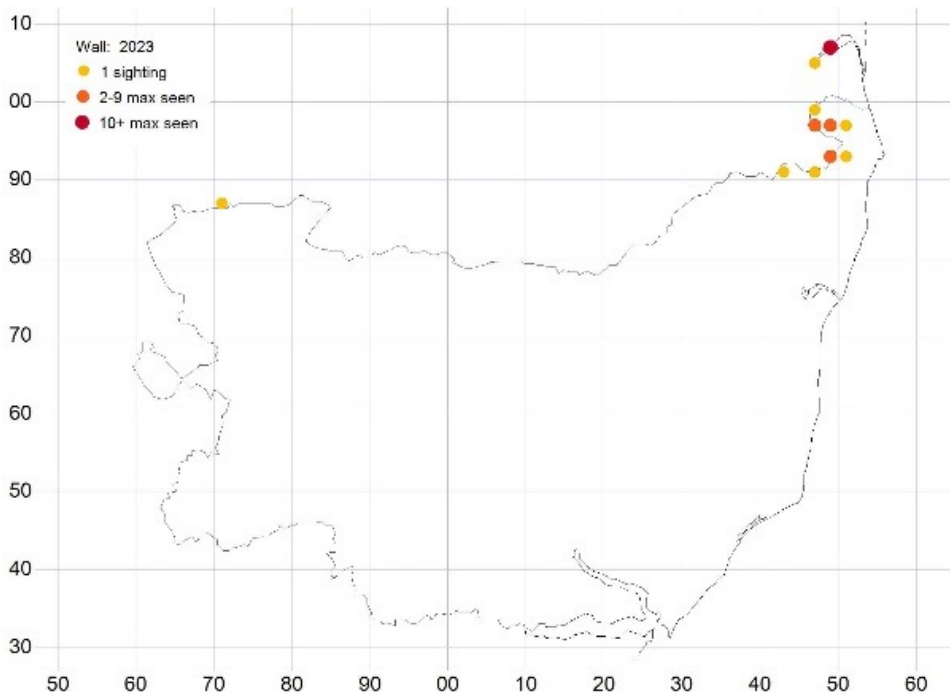
Dingy Skipper



Grayling

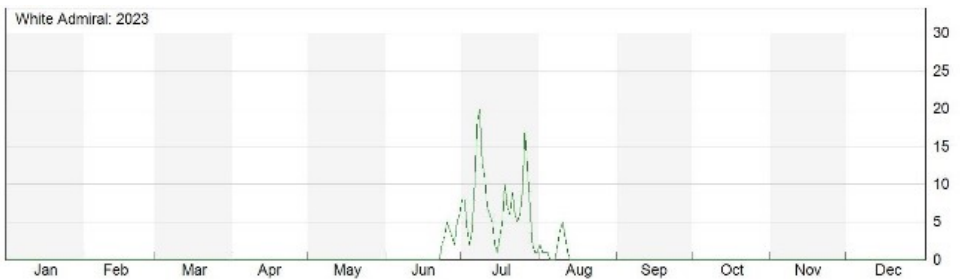
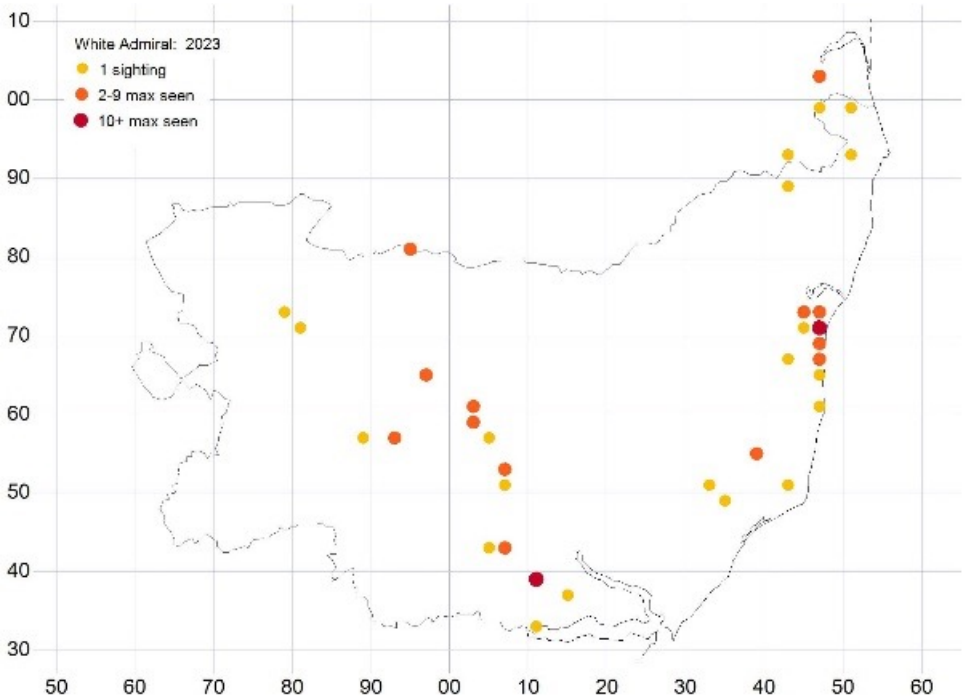


Wall

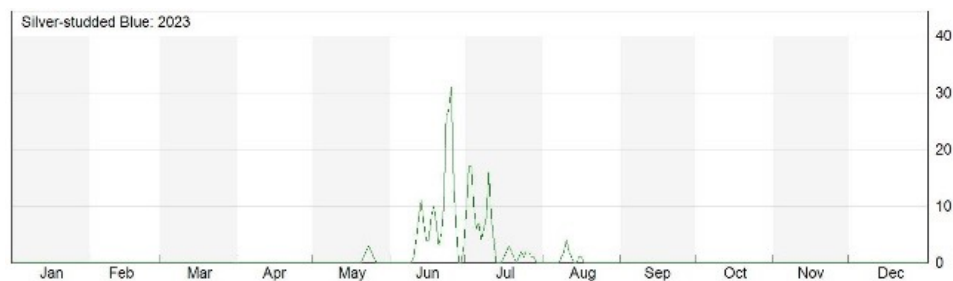
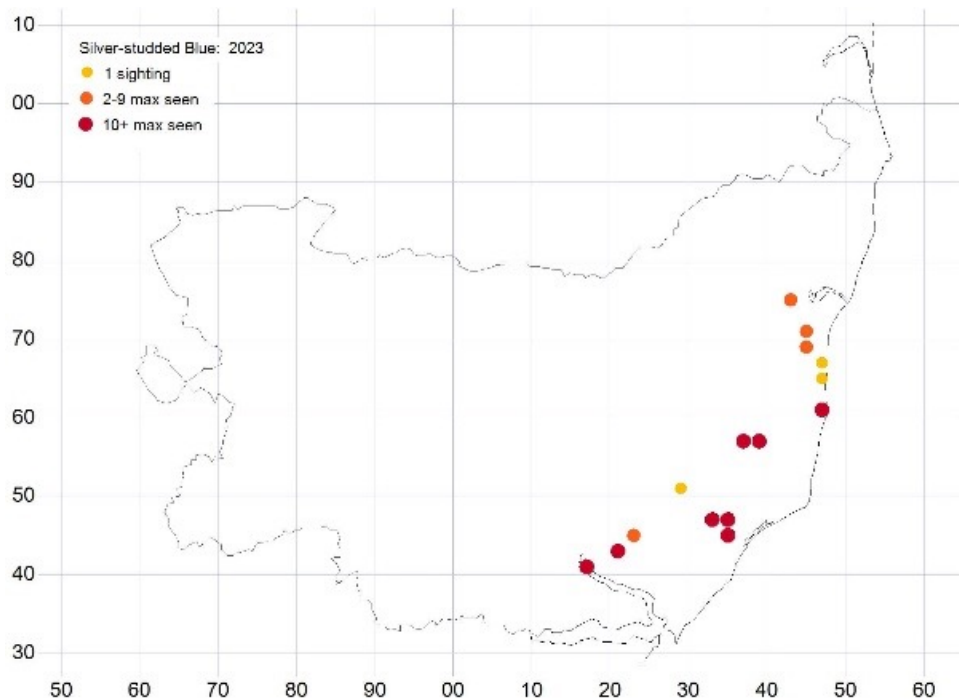


Appendix 2 (contd.)

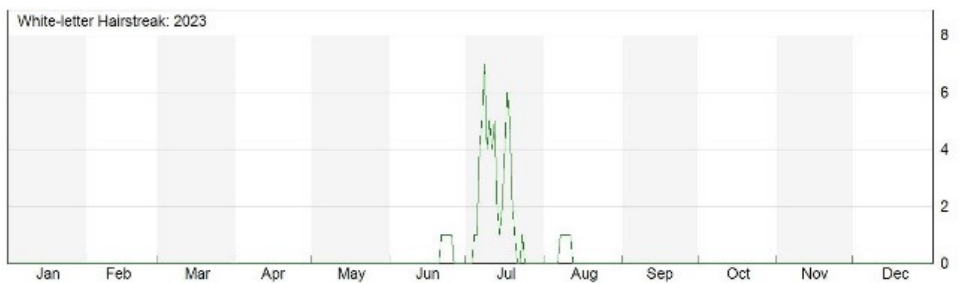
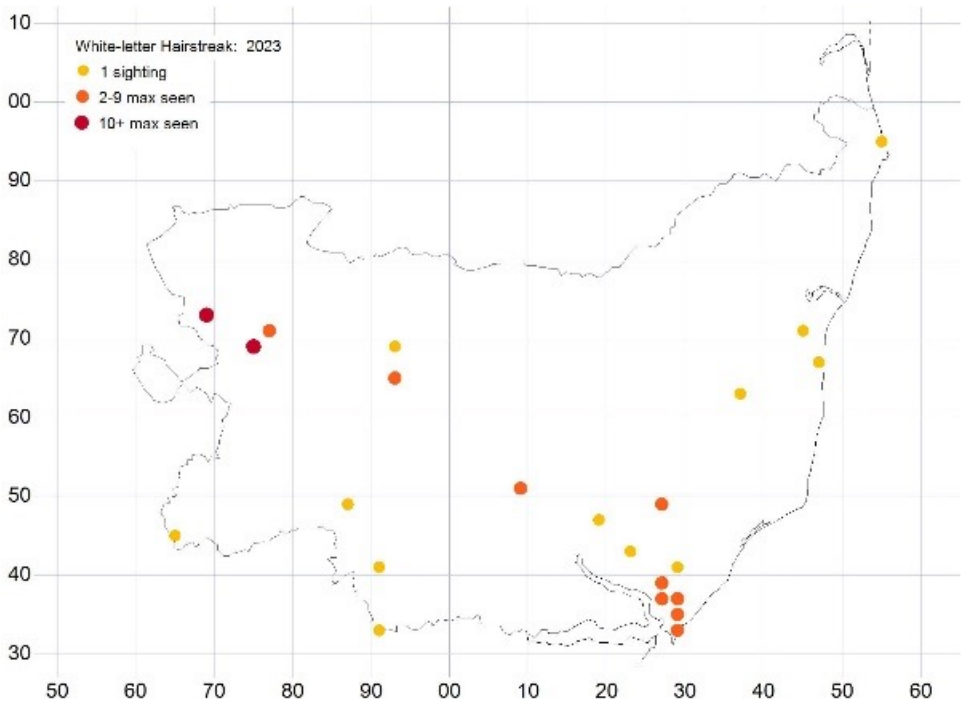
White Admiral



Silver Studded Blue



White-letter Hairstreak



Graphic Content

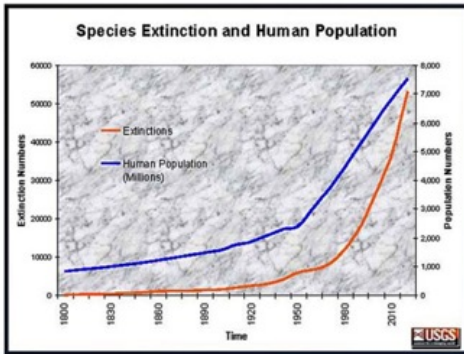
Editor

Montclair Highschool Blog webpage features an interesting graph that shows human population increase relative to species extinctions worldwide.

For those that believe in reincarnation, this is no surprise. One could indeed see that when an animal dies, it ‘comes back’ as a human.

Or is it more likely due to human impact on the environment and habitat?

The study says that the previously natural losses of 1 in 5 species per year has increased to 12 species per day! I wonder if there will be any significant happen when the 2 lines on the graph cross over?



support the Goldenrod, which is a native plant. Rebecca Levey, Kent’s Magnificent Moths Conservation Officer at Butterfly Conservation, said: ‘As part of the project, we have been working to protect and increase two populations of this rare moth in Kent, including one at Blean Woods NNR, which is where we think the moths have travelled from’.



White-spotted Sable (Bob Eade)

The moth is now only found in some areas of Scotland, Wales, Lancashire and Kent, with other very small populations potentially clinging on in Surrey and Sussex. Loss of habitat has caused the moth to become nationally scarce, becoming locally extinct in some areas.

Moth Discovery

Editor

The White-spotted Sable moth – *Anania funebris* has been found near Canterbury in Kent, according to Butterfly Conservation. It was discovered during conservation work in Clowes Wood during summer 2023. Larvae were found on their sole foodplant Goldenrod which grows in this Forestry England wood. Teams of volunteers have worked to improve conditions to

Forestry England have been managing woodland at Clowes for 20 years to encourage the dispersion of the rare Heath Fritillary butterfly by widening rides and creating short-rotation open space. Another interesting moth: A photo was emailed to me for identification and at first, I thought ‘What the heck is that?’ I assumed it was an insect but what sort? I quickly suspected that it was a flightless female moth species. I checked *Geometridae* in my books and hey presto, there it was – Rannoch Brindled Beauty - *Lycia lapponaria*, a nationally scarce moth only found in the Central Scottish Highlands. Neil

Sherman (County Moth Recorder) confirmed the i.d. A copy of the photo which was found on 'X' (formerly Twitter) is shown below.



Nectar Sources for Garden Butterflies - Y is for Yarrow

Richard Stewart

Two important nectar sources starting with W have already been covered in edition 74, Spring 2019. These were buddleia Weyeriana and Wallflower Bowles Mauve. That leaves Yarrow, which in Margaret Vickery's top two hundred garden nectar sources attracted seventeen different species. I left about a dozen Yarrows to flower in the summer of 2023, but no butterflies were attracted. I always associate this plant with Small Coppers and given the seventeen species already mentioned it would certainly merit a place in a wildflower meadow.

That completes my alphabetical list, but I am aware that it would be helpful to give a final seasonal list of my personal 'top twenty', ranging from early spring to late autumn. Hopefully I can do that in a future edition.

The Long Roost

Richard Stewart

On Sunday 14th April my wife Anne-Marie noticed a male orange tip clinging to a stem of the wallflower Bowles Mauve. The wings were almost completely closed but with the orange tip just visible. This was at 3.50 pm and it was still there at 9.05am the next morning. It then had to endure some strong gusts of wind and driving rain, eventually moving to a lower stem of the same plant. Eventually the sun came out and its wings opened. It was last seen at 1.10pm and had definitely gone by 1.25pm. This makes a total of 21 hours and twenty minutes minimum, and we were amazed at how it held on during those strong winds and heavy rain.

On the Web

Editor

Bernadette Shrubshall sent me some photos of masses of webs in a hedgerow. Readers may have seen these on their travels, sometimes catching your eye as you are driving along the road. Ermine moths (and others) feed from within tubes and tents of spun silk to protect themselves from predation. This strategy must be successful as thousands of larvae can strip the foliage from hundreds of metres of hedgerow and can eventually kill a young hedge. Spindel Ermine, and Apple Ermine, feed in a similar fashion though only on their specific foodplant.



Ermine Moth webs

True Blue

Editor

Derrick Poole photographed an early Holly Blue in April. We agreed that this year, the first Holly Blues seemed extra blue, leading to misidentification as a Common Blue. The Derricks photos below show this very well.



Holly blue

Captain Peacock

Editor

My neighbour sent me a photo of a moth asking me what it was, 'It's huge' he exclaimed. My first thought was that it was an unusual Emperor moth but soon concluded that it was a Great Peacock - *Saturnia pyri*, Europe's largest moth. I was visiting friends at the time and was ready to zoom home until he told me he was in Spain.

Great Peacock by Guy Le Mar



Events Reports

Tuesday 6th April - A Talk about Butterflies for Elmswell Gardening Club.

Mark Brewster and Trevor Goodfellow

A well-attended private gathering of gardeners keen to learn about butterflies and moths with references to foodplants, wild spaces, and dealing with pests. A learning curve for us too as novice speakers.

Friday 17th May - Moth Trapping Session for Bury Water Meadows Group.

Trevor Goodfellow

As part of an organised bio-blitz, 2 UV moth traps were placed on private land consisting of ancient meadows, wet woodland, and water meadows. The following morning the two traps: one battery actinic heath trap and the other a battery UV LED Skinner trap, were checked to reveal four species of moths and

various Caddis and Cockchafer for example. Poplar Hawk, Swallow Prominent, White Ermine and Buff Ermine recorded plus Spindle Ermine larvae nearby. These useful records were uploaded to Suffolk Moths website.

Sunday 28th April – Wildlife Day at Pakenham Water Mill.

Mark Brewster and Trevor Goodfellow

Weather forecast was not looking good for days ahead and for once the Met office got it right. Rain for most of the day and very little sunshine didn't dampen the atmosphere too much and although attendance was well down on last year, we had lots of interest on the BC stall. Mark was in top form and got more folk to register Wildspaces and promoted at least one new member. I did my best to answer young people's questions while avidly supporting the on-site barbeque. A successful day despite the weather.



Trevor with a customer (top) and Mark keeping warm (above)

Tuesday 21st May – Dingy Skipper Count.

Trevor Goodfellow

Preliminary surveys in King's Forest revealed single figures of emerging adult Dingies. Best count was 10 on the 19th. The changing weather scuppered any organisation making volunteers' coordination unworkable. As time had passed since the first sighting, I decided that, like last year, giving notice and weather windows, the Tuesday count would go ahead after already rescheduling. Keith Winch was thankfully at hand to do a quick walk around before the rain came. We saw Just one DS, Common Blues, Small Heath and Small Copper, plus a few day flying moths including a Cream-spot Tiger, a consolation prize it seemed.



Dingy Skipper *Erynnis tages* by Tony Fox



Cream-spot Tiger - *Arctia villica* by Trevor Goodfellow

If you have ideas for events or would like to get involved, please contact a committee member via details on page 3.



Marbled White by Trevor Goodfellow