

Saturday 4th November 2006

A note from Matthew Oates:

Just to warn you folk about the Great British Summer: BBC1, Sunday evenings from 8pm from Sun 5th Nov to Sun 26th inclusive - just before Planet Earth. It's not a natural history programme but a celebration of the Summer of 2006 through the eyes of a diversity of people, not all of whom are particularly sane. They wanted a 'butterfly man'... It does feature Oates and some serious butterflies -

- 5th Nov: Marsh Fritillary larvae on the Cerne Giant's willy (in Latin, with Latin sub-titles), very uncooperative Large Blue at Collard Hill, sublime Heath Fritillary in Bin Combe (+ Health & Safety on ticks).
- 12th Nov: The 2006 Purple Emperor season from Alice Holt Forest (1), plus visit to Arnside Knott for Scotch Argus, High Brown Fritillary etc.
- 19th Nov: The definitive Chalkhill Blue show from Dorking North Downs and visit to Upton House garden (NT).
- 26th Nov: The return of Adonis to the Cotswolds, plus Bentley (no relation) the Purple Emperor larva and more MF larvae, and Oates going into hibernation in Broadmoor.

Wednesday 1st November 2006

Wednesday 1st November sees the first of the winter conservation work parties. These sessions are of immense importance in achieving work that improves the habitat for butterflies and the plants on which they depend. Of course lots of other species benefit too.

The majority of work that we undertake is the clearance of scrub. Those not familiar with conservation work might wonder what on earth this entails! Scrub is the term we use to describe unwanted trees, shrubs and things like bramble. Without the work that we do these would grow rapidly & the flower rich grassland that butterflies depend upon would become overgrown. We do however value native shrubs and trees, not least as they are the plants that the caterpillars of several butterfly species and many moth species need, and so many are carefully managed as hedgerows or as blocks of shrubs, coppiced on a rotational basis.

Newcomers do not need to have any particular skills or training, we will help you with all you need to know & do.

Please bring a drink and a snack/lunch with you & a pair of tough gardening gloves.

Details of dates are given in the events section.

We are a friendly group & you are assured of a warm welcome. Ring me if you need any more information.

Lynn Fomison 01962 772251

8th October 2006

Members of the branch were out in force again today manning our stand and cutting up apples and pears for visitors to taste at this year's Apple Tasting Day at Blackmoor Farm near Selborne.

Fortunately, for all of us, the weather was fine and dry and the event very well attended as usual. There was a stream of visitors to our stand where we were giving away information leaflets and had a display featuring Bentley Station Meadow. Many of the visitors lived locally and were interested in knowing more about this particular reserve, which is quite close by. We had a family game and butterfly colouring to amuse younger children. Patrick Fleet brought along a selection of moths that he had trapped the previous evening. People are always interested in seeing moths, and are invariably surprised to see how different they all are - not just 'brown things'.

Many people had questions for us and talked about the butterflies they had seen in their gardens this year. One lucky lady told us about the Camberwell Beauty she found in her garden and how she was trying to

photograph it. As soon as it opened its wings she lifted her camera to snap it and, of course, it promptly closed up again. A familiar story to a lot of us...

Several purchases were made of the very popular Field Studies Council butterfly ID chart and several people showed a serious interest in joining BC, taking away with them details of the special membership offer currently available.

All in all it was a very enjoyable day and we have spread the word a little further and, hopefully as a result, we may have a few new members.

- Janet Jones



7th October 2006

Introduction of Natural England on 1 October 2006

On 1st October 2006 a new non-departmental public body called Natural England will be created. This new organisation will bring together English Nature (EN), the landscape, access and recreation elements of the Countryside Agency (CA) and the environmental land management functions of the Rural Development Service (RDS).

Natural England will work for people, places and nature, to enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, -urban, coastal and marine areas; promoting access, recreation and public wellbeing, and contributing to the way natural resources are managed so that they can be enjoyed by future generations.

The following schemes now come under Natural England

- Energy Crops Scheme (Establishment Grants)
- Environmental Stewardship (Entry Level, Organic Entry Level and Higher Level) . Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Countryside Stewardship Scheme
- Habitat Scheme
- Farm Woodland Premium Scheme*
- Farm Woodland Scheme*
- Organic Farming Scheme
- Reserves Enhancement Scheme
- Sheep and Wildlife Enhancement Scheme
- Wildlife Enhancement Scheme

6th October 2006

Matthew Oates really believed he should have been on Page 3 of the latest National Trust magazine (Autumn 2006). And he made it - well 23 pages later! For those of you who do not know, Matthew was the joint founder of the Hampshire Branch along with Chris Holt after a chance encounter in Micheldever Wood. So as we are just on the brink of our 25th year I think it is just so fitting that Matthew's love of and devotion to butterflies is celebrated in a great picture & wonderful set of questions and answers that distil the essence of what being mad about butterflies is all about. Long may Matthew continue to inspire and educate us all. And PS watch out for Matthew in The Great British Summer on BBC in November.

- Lynn Fomison

20th September 2006

Butterfly Conservation - spreading the word

Throughout the summer Butterfly Conservation has had displays at various events - Sparsholt, New Forest Show, Romsey Show - to name a few.

Last weekend two of us, Janet Jones & I, were at Forest Lodge Garden centre near Farnham. We were promoting Bentley Station Meadow from the angles of acquiring new volunteers and getting bookings for educational visits. We were also encouraging new members and helping people with queries about gardening for butterflies and moths. The garden centre had a stock of super plants & were giving a 20% discount on many of them as part of their special Wildlife Weekend.

Another pleasing aspect of the weekend was that a number of members and friends of the reserve came along to say hello.

The next event that BC will be at is Blackmoor Apple Day on Sunday 8th October. Do come along - its a good day out anyway - but those manning our display are always pleased to meet members who we might not otherwise see.

Photo of Lynn Fomison below.



21st August 2006

146th Email Newsletter 21 August 2006

Dear Moth Recorder

Here are the latest UK BAP moth records....

- Argent & Sable Rheumaptera hastata: Larvae were found at a new site in East Inverenss-shire on 14th and at a new site and new 10km square in Wester Ross on 13th August. On 14th in Staffordshire 31 leaf-folds were found at a known site for the species.
- Buttoned Snout Hypena rostralis: An adult was recorded at a new site in Cambridgeshire on 6th August. Chalk Carpet Scotopteryx bipunctaria: The moth was recorded in Surrey on 6th, in Dorset on 9th and Sussex on 15th August.
- Common Fan-foot Pechipogo strigilata: In Staffordshire on 13th, 3 larvae were recorded on the shrivelled leaves of a wind-blown oak tree.
- Dingy Mocha Cyclophora pendularia: Single adults were recorded at two gardens in Hampshire, at one on 5th and the other on 8th August.
- Drab Looper Minoa murinata: A single moth was seen at a known site in Gloucestershire on 7th August. Straw Belle Aspitates gilvaria: Adults were recorded at two sites in Kent on 16th August. Striped Lychnis Striped Lychnis: Larvae were found at a site in Hampshire last week. Square Spotted Clay Xestia rhomboidea: A single adult has been confirmed at a new site in Brecknockshire on 28th July. On 5th August, 2 adults were recorded at a site in Norfolk. On 12th and 13th, 3 and a single were caught at a known site in Argyll at sugar and actinic light respectively from a known site. Another was recorded in a garden in Wester Ross on 13th. Whilst on the 14th one came to sugar at a new site in Argyll. It has been recorded at a new site in Bedfordshire on 15th and also a

new Suffolk site on 18th August.

- National Moth Recording Scheme jobs Just a reminder that the closing date (25th August) is fast approaching for applications for the new Butterfly Conservation posts being recruited to set up and run the National Moth Recording Scheme. Details can be found on the Butterfly Conservation web site, and information/application packs can be obtained from 0870 7744309 or info@butterfly-conservation.org.

With thanks & best wishes Kelly Thomas, Tony Davis & Mark Parsons

9th August 2006

145th Email Newsletter 9th August 2006

Dear Moth Recorder

Thanks to everyone who contributes records to these newsletters. If you record any UK BAP moth please do send us the full record, including a grid reference, and wherever possible please state the vice county to help ease the production of future newsletters.

Here are the latest records...

- Argent & Sable *Rheumaptera hastata*: On 4th August, 25 leaf-folds were found quite easily, with some larvae also be recorded, at a site in Staffordshire. Two larvae were found on Bog Myrtle at a new site in East-Inverness-shire on 6th August.
- Chalk Carpet *Scotopteryx bipunctaria*: Adults were seen at a known site in Cambridgeshire on 23rd and 25th July. A single moth was recorded at light near a known Surrey site on 25th. On 26th, 10+ were recorded at a known site in Surrey. During a butterfly monitoring transect in Surrey, 6 were recorded on 24th July and 1 on 1st August. At various sites in Dorset, the moth was recorded at two sites on 2nd, 4 on 4th and 6 on 6th August. On 4th August the moth was recorded at sites in Kent. Chalk Carpet was also recorded in Glamorgan on 6th August.
- Clay Fan-foot *Paracolax tristalis* : The moth was recorded in a garden trap in Sussex on 28th July. Cousin German *Protolampra sobrina*: On 28th July, 2 were recorded at two known sites in Invernesshire. One was caught at a known site in East-Inverness-shire on 4th August. One was caught at a new site in East-Inverness-shire on 7th August. Has also been recorded at a known site in east Perthshire on 30th July and on 3 dates in early July.
- Dingy Mocha *Cyclophora pendularia*: An exciting record for Wales with a single Dingy Mocha being recorded in Glamorgan on 28th July. In Dorset 2 moths came to light on 24 July and it was also recorded at a known site on 4th August. In North Devon, 4 were recorded on 4th and 3 on 5th.
- Drab Looper *Minoa murinata*: At a known site in Hampshire there was 1 on 29th and 7 on 30th July. On 3rd August, 3 Drab Looper were seen at a site in Herefordshire.
- Four-spotted Tyta *luctuosa*: One adult was recorded at the site in Northamptonshire on the 3 August at 17.10hrs, nectaring on one of the few Field Bindweed flowers that was not half closed. The moth was also recorded in Lincolnshire on 7th August.
- Northern Dart *Xestia alpicola*: The Northern Dart weekend based in Kingussie (29th/30th July) was a victim of the weather. 20 mothers with 18 generators and 46 traps were lined up to visit 12-16 sites but a front moved through with rain low cloud and increased wind about 7pm and lasted most of the night. As a result few hill sites were checked. However, one Northern Dart was caught at a new site and 10km square at the south end of Glen Feshie (East Inverness-shire). Also one was caught at a known site in south Aberdeenshire on 27th July.
- Straw Belle *Aspitates gilvaria*: Straw Belle is still about, and may be having a good year at some sites, although numbers at one of the Surrey site are still low. In Kent a total of 51 were recorded at 4 sites in between 26th and 28th - this is much higher than ever recorded, although this is the first full survey, it was still flying on 31st with 5 males seen in poor weather. At another Kent site 27 were recorded during a co-ordinated sweep on 27th. On a butterfly transect in Kent a single male was recorded on 4th August and 4 were recorded at a separate site on the same date. At one of the Surrey sites, 6 were recorded on 26th July and 19 Straw Belle (record count?) in a timed count on 4th August. At the other Surrey site 4 were recorded on 8th August.
- Toadflax Brocade *Calophasia lunula*: A singleton was recorded at light in Surrey on 28th July. Striped Lychnis *Striped Lychnis*: In West Sussex 12 larvae were recorded on 22nd July, there have

been further reports from Hampshire on 22nd July and Buckinghamshire on 4th August. The larvae can be found by searching Dark Mullein plants (see attached Striped Lychnis factsheet for further information).

- Square Spotted Clay *Xestia rhomboidea*: On 26th July, 4 were trapped at a known site in Wester Ross and one was caught nearby at a new site and new 10km square. One was caught in Argyll on 4th August. It was caught from a new part of the site. Another at a previously recorded site on in Wester Ross on 3rd August. An adult came to light at a site in Cambridgeshire on 28th July. A single moth was recorded at a known site in East Suffolk on 2nd August. A single moth was recorded on 4th August in Lincolnshire.
- Waved Carpet *Hydrelia sylvata*: At the end of July the moth was found at a new site in Glamorgan. White-line Snout *Schrankia taenialis*: The moth was reported from a site in Dorset on 6th August. White-spotted Pinion *Cosmia diffinis*: The first White-spotted Pinions of the year were seen in Huntingdonshire, with 4 being recorded on the 21st. There is a report of the moth from Cambridgeshire on 22 July. Also in Cambridgeshire the moth was recorded on 2nd August at two separate sites and 16 at an additional site on 8th. The records of this moth are from light traps placed near stands of Elms.

Chalk Carpet Survey 2006

There is still time to help with this years Chalk Carpet survey. Please find attached an updated list of 10k squares which need to be surveyed for the moth. The Chalk Carpet factsheet is also attached for further information about the moth.

With thanks & best wishes Kelly Thomas, Tony Davis & Mark Parsons

31st July 2006

144th Email Newsletter 28th July 2006

Dear Moth Recorder

Here are the latest UK BAP moth records for a very hot July.....

- Argent & Sable *Rheumaptera hastata*: Larvae were recorded at two sites in Staffordshire on 17th.
- Chalk Carpet *Scotopteryx bipunctaria*: A single moth was recorded in Somerset on the 16th. In Dorset on the 18th, 2 were recorded at one site, and 7 to 8 at another. In Devon on the 19th the moth was recorded at three sites. In Dorset on the 21st the moth was recorded at light, it was recorded at two further sites in Dorset on 24th. On the 23rd, it was recorded at four sites on the Isle of Wight.
- Dingy Mocha *Cyclophora pendularia*: On 21st, 3 pristine moths were recorded at light at a known site in Dorset. Four-spotted *Tyta luctuosa*: The moth was recorded on 21st in Northamptonshire and it was also reported from Norfolk last weekend.
- Northern Dart *Xestia alpicola*: A single moth was recorded in South Aberdeenshire on the 11th. Straw Belle *Aspitates gilvaria*: In Kent, during mid July, 7 individuals were recorded from a known site. Waved Carpet *Hydrelia sylvata*: Approximately 30 moths were recorded at a new site in West Sussex on 19th. White-line Snout *Schrankia taenialis*: The moth was recorded at a site in Monmouthshire on 11th.
- The British Birdwatching Fair, 18th - 20th August. Butterfly Conservation will have a stand at this years British Birdwatching Fair in Rutland (<http://www.birdfair.org.uk/>). If you are attending the event why not come and say hello. We will be offering one years free membership to anyone who joins on the day. We hope to see you there!

With best wishes Kelly Thomas, Tony Davis & Mark Parsons

24th July 2006

143rd Email Newsletter 19th July 2006

Dear Moth Recorder

Here are the latest UK BAP moth records....

- Argent & Sable *Rheumaptera hastata*: On 15th, at a known site in Shropshire 5 larvae were found in 1 hour of searching. On 18th, over 20 larvae were recorded at the Somerset site.
- Buttoned Snout *Hypena rostralis*: At a site in Hampshire 2 almost full grown larvae were beat from Hop on 14th. Chalk Carpet *Scotopteryx bipunctaria*: At a known site in Warwickshire, 45 males and 2 females at light on 4th July. At a known site in Glamorgan on 11th, 5 Chalk Carpet were recorded in 15 minutes. On 12th, 8 were found at a new site in Bedfordshire and 21 were recorded at a new site in Gloucestershire. It has been recorded at a new site in Somerset on 14th, at a known site in Dorset on 18th. The moth has also been recorded today (19th) at a site in Dorset and two sites in Devon.
- Clay Fan-foot *Paracolax tristalis*: On 8th, a single moth was recorded in a garden and 2 were recorded at a separate site, both in Sussex. A number of Clay Fan-foot were also recorded at a site in Sussex on 15th.
- Common Fan-foot *Pechipogo strigilata*: In West Gloucestershire, on 29th June, 2 adults were recorded at a known site. Dark Bordered Beauty *Epione vespertaria*: The annual search day was held on 12th July, with 15 people attending. Following the standard method of a police cordon style search 58 adults (39 male, 10 female, 9 unsexed) were counted. Other areas were searched, but just 1 other adult being found, making a total of 59 for the day. During a meeting to discuss management issues on 14th, 51 adults (46 male, 5 female) were recorded in one area. Another 8 were recorded in other areas, bringing a total of 59 for the day. The adults appeared quite fresh suggesting it is near the beginning of the flight period for the moth.
- Double Line *Mythimna turca*: The moth was recorded on 26th and 30th June at sites in Carmarthenshire. On 6 July, 3 were recorded in Devon, 3 were recorded at a new site in Glamorgan on 11th and it was also recorded in Hampshire on 17th.
- Heart Moth *Dicycla oo*: In Berkshire a female was recorded on 18th. Olive Crescent *Tristateles emortualis*: On 8th, 2 adults were recorded in Sussex. Pale Shining Brown *Polia bombycina*: One individual was recorded on 15th at a known site in Oxfordshire. Scarce Merveille du Jour *Moma alpium*: Several moths were recorded in Sussex on 8th. Silky Wave *Idaea dilutaria* : On 4th, 32 Silky Wave were recorded from the Great Orme. Straw Belle *Aspitates gilvaria*: In East Kent, 3 adults were recorded on 17th. Toadflax Brocade *Calophasia lunula*: An individual was recorded at light on 23rd June in Middlesex. Waved Carpet *Hydrelia sylvata*: In the vice-county Westmorland with North Lancashire, a Waved Carpet has been recorded at a new site on 26th June. In Pembrokeshire, the moth has been recorded at a new site on 5th July and at a separate site during mid July. On 6th a single adult was recorded in Devon. The moth was also recorded in numbers at a site in Sussex on 15th and on 16th at a site in Monmouthshire.
- White-line Snout *Schrankia taenialis*: On 6 July, 4 moths were recorded in Devon. An individual moth was swept from herb rich grassland in Somerset on 11th. On 16th, at a site in Monmouthshire, at least 10 were recorded.
- Reminder of Forthcoming Events
- Argent & Sable larval workshop Tuesday 25th July 2006, Cheshire. Meet at 10.00am, Village Hall car park (SJ 697499) on the south side of Main Road, Wybunbury. Adults were recorded here in 2005, the only recent Cheshire record, and this workshop will provide training in identifying potential breeding and searching for larvae. Access permitting, other nearby sites will be surveyed. This event has been organised by Butterfly Conservation's Northern England Regional Office. Please contact Sam Ellis to book a place on 0191 3789216 or sellis@butterfly-conservation.org.
- Rosy Marsh Moth Following the rediscovery of this moth in England after an absence of 150 years, several workshops have been organized at Roudsea Woods and Mosses NNR (SD 330827) for 2006. Adult searches will be held on Friday 28th July, Saturday 5th August and Wednesday 9th August 2006 (all 9.30pm onwards). Workshops will also be held at Meathop Moss (SD 447821) on Wednesday 26th July and at Nicholls Moss (meet at Derby Arms SD 442830) on Friday 11th August (both at 9.30pm onwards). For further details please contact Rob Petley-Jones at rob.petley-jones@english-nature.org.uk or 015395 31604
- Scottish Northern Dart Survey There has been a significant increase in records of all UKBAP Priority Moths in Scotland over the last four years primarily due to the increased profile species have enjoyed and targeted survey work. However, the Northern Dart is an exception to this statement but we believe it is probably still widespread in the Highlands of Scotland and simply under-recorded due to the remoteness of its habitat.
- This year we will be attempting to survey sites where the moth has previously been recorded as well as new sites containing suitable habitat. Access is being arranged to mountain sites via 4-wheel drive vehicles and in addition we will aim to survey sites accessible from roads.
- The event will take place on the evening of Saturday 29th July and will commence with a get

together and briefing on that afternoon in Kingussie. We will aim to re-convene on the following morning to gather everyone's records and ensure that everyone gets to see the species (provided we have caught one!).

- The weather at high elevation in Scotland can be unpredictable so we will hold the following Saturday evening (5th August) as a reserve date that will be used if we are unsuccessful on the 29th.
- If you are interested in attending or want more information about Scottish Northern Dart sites please contact: Adrian Wander, Email aw371@yahoo.co.uk <<mailto:aw371@yahoo.co.uk>>. Or Tom Prescott, Butterfly Conservation Scotland, Mill House, Mill Road, Kingussie, Inverness-shire, PH21 1LF. Tel 0870 77061539. Email tprescott@butterfly-conservation.org <<mailto:tprescott@butterfly-conservation.org>>. This event is being organised by Butterfly Conservation Scotland and sponsored by Anglian Lepidopterist Supplies.

Once again we would like to thank all of you who have submitted records for this newsletter. With best wishes Kelly Thomas, Tony Davis & Mark Parsons

16th June 2006

140th Email Newsletter

16th June 2006

Dear Moth Recorders

- Here is a brief update on the latest offerings of UK BAP moths.... Argent & Sable *Rheumaptera hastata*: There is excellent news for this moth as it has been recorded at a site in Warwickshire where it has not been recorded since 1997, there is also a report of the moth in Radnorshire which is awaiting confirmation.
- Other records are for a mating pair on 10th pair in North Ebudes. In Staffordshire on 10th an adult came to a moth, it didn't enter the trap but fell 18 inches short on to the sheet and remained there, this was approximately at 00.00am. There is a record from West Ross on 11th. At 8.00am on a known site in Shropshire, 30 Argent & Sable were counted, suggesting early morning visits might be a good time to target them in this hot weather. At a separate site in Shropshire later that day just a single adult was recorded. A solitary moth was recorded in Staffordshire on the 13th and on the same day a female was observed egg-laying on a very small birch at a known site on the Hampshire/Wiltshire border. A total of 16 adults at the known site in Somerset on 15th.
- Buttoned Snout *Hypena rostralis*: A very worn adult was netted after dark at Hop in Middlesex on 10th June. Common Fan-foot *Pechipogo strigilata*: A total of 25 Common Fan-foot at a known site in Surrey on 9th June. Double Line *Mythimna turca*: On the 10th June, 5 Double Line were recorded at a known site in Devon. Drab Looper *Minoa murinata*: At a site in Hampshire 10 were seen on 10th June. Four-spotted *Tyta luctuosa*: Four-spotted was recorded in Dorset on 11th. Lunar Yellow Underwing *Noctua orbona*: Three adults were recorded on 11th and one individual was recorded on 13th in Suffolk.
- Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth *Hemaris tityus*: There has been a report of the moth in East Glamorgan. One adult Narrow-bordered Bee-Hawk and one tiny larva at a known site in Hampshire on 10th.
- Scarce Merveille du Jour *Moma alpium*: At a known Sussex site there were 6 adults, with a further 7 being recorded at a known site in Hampshire, both on 10th June.
- Slender Scotch Burnet *Zygaena loti*: This month the moth has been confirmed on wing at colonies in the mid Ebudes with counts slightly up on 2005.
- Toadflax Brocade *Calophasia lunula*: An adult was recorded in Kent on 11th. Waved Carpet *Hydrelia sylvata*: In Pembrokeshire, one adult was taken on 9 June 2006 at a new site, it was also recorded at a previously recorded site on 12th.
- White Spot *Hadena albimacula*: In Dorset 6 were recorded at light on 10th, with a further individual at a separate site in Dorset on 11th.

With best wishes Kelly Thomas, Tony Davis & Mark Parsons

18th May 2006

The *Hampshire and Isle of Wight Butterfly and Moth Report 2005*, edited by Linda Barker and Tim Norriss, is now available.

It is 144 pages, colour illustrated throughout. Mail order price is £6 (includes p & p). Please make cheques payable to 'Butterfly Conservation Hampshire Branch' and send to Linda Barker 13 Ashdown Close, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh. SO53 5QF together with the address you would like the report to be sent to.

16th May 2006

Press Release
Changing fortunes of Hampshire's butterflies
Janet Jones
Press officer 01252 842174
janet@mauvedrop.com

Changing fortunes of Hampshire's butterflies

Butterfly enthusiasts across Hampshire have contributed tens of thousands of observations over the last five years as part of a national recording scheme run by the charity Butterfly Conservation.

The *State of Britain's Butterflies in Britain and Ireland*, published this week, incorporates these records as part of a new butterfly atlas. It reveals some worrying trends, but positive news as well.

Simultaneously, the *Hampshire & Isle of Wight Butterfly & Moth Report 2005* launched at an event in Winchester last week-end, documents the fortunes of Hampshire's butterflies and moths in 2005, and presents analysis over recent decades.

Hampshire is fortunate in having a rich diversity of beautiful butterflies, but profound changes are taking place. Research by Butterfly Conservation and partner organisations has shown that butterflies are extremely sensitive to environmental change. Indeed, even more so than other well-known groups such as birds and flowers.

At a time of rapid climate change, water shortages, and challenging targets for housing, it is more important than ever to keep track of what is happening to our wildlife and countryside.

One of the most spectacular successes over the last decade is that of the Silver-spotted Skipper. This is one of Britain's rarest butterflies, and was reduced to just four chalk downland sites in Hampshire in the early 1990s.



Silver-Spotted Skipper

The recent surveys show that it is now established at more than a dozen sites in Hampshire, including a return to the Winchester area after an absence of 40 years. Although many sites are nature reserves managed specifically for wildlife, the Silver-spotted Skipper has also benefited from recent warm summers, and Defra-funded agri-environment schemes promoting less intensive farming practices.

The *State of Butterflies in Britain and Ireland*, was launched in London on Monday 15th May, by new Biodiversity Minister, Barry Gardiner.

Mr Gardiner said: "This evidence that Government policy is helping to restore our biodiversity is exciting and encouraging. It shows very clearly that by working together we can make a difference where it counts".

"However, there is still a long way to go."

The State of Butterflies in Britain and Ireland reveals that more than three quarters of Hampshire's butterflies have suffered a decline in the number of colonies since the 1970s. Overall numbers of several species are down by more than two thirds.

Andy Barker (Chairman of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Branch of Butterfly Conservation) said that:

"Hampshire has the greatest butterfly diversity of any county in England, but has not been immune to the rapid declines shown by many of these species. Woodland fritillary butterflies have fared particularly badly, as traditional coppice management has declined. Even so, the upturn in fortunes for the Silver-spotted Skipper is extremely encouraging"

The State of Butterflies in Britain and Ireland presents distribution maps and analysis of trends based on 1.6 million records gathered by thousands of volunteer recorders for the period 2000-2004.

Mr Gardiner said: "It's only through the work and time given by ordinary people that we are making a difference, and I want to thank the thousands of volunteers who have been involved in this project and who continue to give their time to schemes like this."

"The results they bring back tell us not just about what is happening to butterflies. Because butterflies are so sensitive to change, they can tell us what is happening in entire habitats around the countryside, and how much difference we are making through our work to safeguard and enhance the natural environment."

Contacts

For further information regarding The State of Butterflies in Britain and Ireland contact:

- Dr Tom Brereton, Head of Monitoring, Butterfly Conservation Work 01929 406019; Home 01308 423682; Mobile 07816 786173
- Dr Martin Warren, Chief Executive, Butterfly Conservation Work 01929 406013; Mobile 0775 590750
- Penny Fox, Press Officer, Rural Affairs, Landscape and Biodiversity, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Work 01207 238 5334; Mobile 07768 607594
- For further information regarding *Hampshire & Isle of Wight Butterfly & Moth Report 2005* contact:
- Janet Jones, Publicity Officer, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Branch, Butterfly Conservation. Home 01252 842174
- Linda Barker, Co-Editor, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Butterfly & Moth Report 2005. Home/Work 02380 270042

Notes for editors

- The State of Butterflies in Britain & Ireland (120 pages) costs £12.00 plus £2.50 p&p. It can be ordered online at www.butterfly-conservation.org
- Hampshire & Isle of Wight Butterfly & Moth Report (144 pages) costs £5.00 plus £1.00 p&p. Details of how to order can be found on this website
- Butterfly Conservation is the UK charity taking action to save butterflies and moths. Butterfly Conservation staff and volunteers manage habitats to ensure their survival, with particular attention being given to threatened species.
- Butterfly Conservation has 12,000 members (820 members in Hampshire & Isle of Wight Branch) and is the largest organisation of its kind in Europe.

27th February 2006

Press Release
Butterfly Conservation – Hampshire & Isle of Wight Branch

Janet Jones
Press officer 01252 842174
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Britain's moth population is in serious decline, especially here in the South, causing concern for the future of many species of birds, bats and several small mammals that feed on them. "Butterfly Conservation" has revealed this worrying fact in a new Report, 'The State of Britain's Larger Moths', published last week. The precise reasons for the decline have not yet been determined, though habitat loss and climate change are highly implicated. Startlingly, the number of common moths has fallen by a third since 1968, when the scientific research by Rothamsted Research, on which this Report is based, began.

The Hampshire & Isle of Wight branch of "Butterfly Conservation" will be continuing to monitor the state of moths in these two Counties to help with on-going research. Moth, as well as butterfly, species and numbers are regularly recorded at all three of the Branch's Natures Reserves, Magdalen Hill Down and Yew Hill, in the Winchester area, and Bentley Station Meadow, to the north-east of the County. Their habit and feeding needs are always taken into account in the management of these Reserves. Sir David Attenborough, who opened an extension to the Magdalen Hill Down Reserve in 1999, writes in his forward to the Report that "Moths are valuable indicators of what is happening in our countryside." The results of this Report are just another indication of how much needs to be done if we are to save our natural heritage.

Moths have always suffered from bad PR, most of which is totally unfounded. One myth is that all moths are drab and only fly by night. You have only to look at species such as Jersey Tiger and Cinnabar, and the stunning, aptly named, Hummingbird Hawkmoth, to see just how colourful these insects can be. All of these moths can be seen flying by day. Perhaps most of us might best remember finding moths as children in their larval form. The scary looking Elephant Hawkmoth caterpillar with its huge "eyes" or the Privet Hawkmoth, with its pink and white strips, found feeding on privet hedges.



Cinnabar
Photo © Ian Kimber



Jersey Tiger
Photo © Dave Green

"Butterfly Conservation" hopes that this Report will not only inform conservation bodies but also the general public through the extensive coverage given to it by the national press and BBC radio, as well as other media reporting. The Hampshire & Isle of Wight Branch, under the guidance of Tim Norriss, their Moth Officer, will continue to do all they can to conserve moths in the two Counties and promote these beautiful and fascinating creatures that are so important to the health of our native fauna and flora.

For more information please ring Jenny Mallett, Branch Organiser, on 01329 83217 or Tim Norriss, Branch Moth Officer, on 01264 354944. For more details on the Report, or to purchase a copy, please go to www.butterfly-conservation.org.