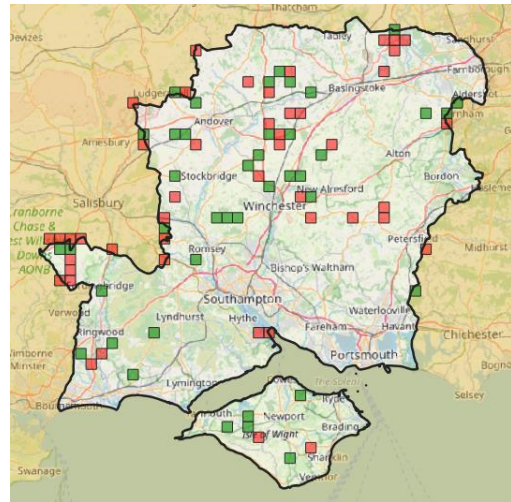


Butterfly Conservation Hampshire & Isle of Wight Branch e-Newsletter

June 2021

2021 Tetrad Challenge – Bob Annell

As the 2020 Annual Butterfly Report shows, records were received from 84% of the 1,246 tetrads (2kmx2km squares) embraced by our Branch Boundary. This is the highest coverage we have ever achieved and a tribute to the efforts of all our butterfly recorders. An interrogation of our dataset has revealed that over the five years 2016-2020 our record coverage is a little over a staggering 92%.



So, what of the unrecorded squares? Some of these are squares with only a small portion within our boundary; these have been omitted on the map which shows the more significant unrecorded squares in red. In addition, those squares where less than five records have been received in the same period are shown in green.

Now it may be that some of these areas are on private land, but it would be good to investigate as many accessible areas as possible this year to see if some of these 'gaps' could be filled. If you are interested in searching any of these squares, please let me know and I will provide a larger scale map to help you ensure you are in the right place.

Good luck and please submit your records in the usual manner e.g., Branch Spreadsheet, iRecord, Living Record etc.

Good Luck!
Bob Annell
County Butterfly Recorder

2020 Garden Butterfly Survey – Bob Annell

Thank you to everyone who took part in the 2020 Garden Butterfly Survey; an incredible 7,251 records were received, amounting to 11,622 butterflies of 34 different species. Small White was once again the most abundant species recorded, followed by Large White in second place. Holly Blue jumped up to third from thirteenth in 2019, meanwhile Painted Lady dropped to twenty-first, its lowest ranking since the current recording system commenced in 2016. With coverage in 2020 amounting to just 6.6% of Hampshire & Isle of Wight tetrads, it would be fantastic to improve upon this in 2021, so please continue to record your sightings, preferably via the [Garden Butterfly Survey](#) website.

You can find the full results on the [branch website](#).

Working to help some of Hampshire's Highest Priority Butterflies & Moths – Steve Wheatley

The 2021 season is our opportunity to get out and catch up on surveys for some of our rarest and most threatened species.

Special surveys already underway or completed in 2021:

- Drab Looper moth – June searches in the woods of West Hampshire. We are looking for dense stands of Wood Spurge, the foodplant of this lovely day-flying moth.
- Pearl-bordered Fritillary – extensively covered by our brilliant and dedicated butterfly transect walkers. Grizzled Skippers and Dingy Skippers have also already been extensively counted.
- Duke of Burgundy – Ashley Whitlock & Tim Bernhard are currently undertaking surveys and collecting invaluable data across many Hampshire sites.
- Barred Tooth-striped moth – Use of a pheromone lure to survey sites with dense Wild Privet. Contact me if you know of a suitable area and would like to try this next March/April.
- Sloe Carpet moth – Night-time searches of unmanaged Blackthorn thickets in North Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight

Here are some of the butterflies and moths we'll be searching for in the coming months. If you would like to get involved in any of these searches and surveys, please contact me - Steve Wheatley swheatley@butterfly-conservation.org.

June

- Glanville Fritillary – surveys along the southern coast of the Isle of Wight for this special butterfly.
- Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary – surveys in Bentley Wood for this rarest butterfly in South East England

June into July

- Silver-studded Blue - Arthur Greenwood and others will be surveying key sites on the Greensands heaths. The Thames Basin Heaths Partnership are leading searches in the north east of the county.

July into August

- Striped Lychnis – Counts of the caterpillar and the flower spikes of its foodplant (Dark Mullein)
- Shoulder-striped Clover – Surveys of areas in the north of the New Forest.

Magdalen Hill Down and Yew Hill – Fiona Scully

Reserves Update

With long, light-filled days again and lock down restrictions eased, butterflies have emerged at last – despite the cold – and so have people! The best thing over the past few months has been meeting people on site who walk their daily and have known the reserves over many years.

Magdalen Hill Down

Spring is starting to show the richness and abundance that Magdalen Hill provides. It's good to see the effects of the winter grazing, with Path field (which I think of as Skylark field) and particularly the Extension covered with an extraordinary number of cowslips, thanks to the cows!

Grazing – We have reduced the 52 sheep down to 26, which will graze the original reserve over the summer months. This will of course depend on rainfall. If there isn't much grass growth, we may need to reduce the number of sheep further. There are many rabbits too which are munching the grass down to a lawn effect in places.

We have 5 small cows which are currently in the Allotments. Although only the Lower section needs grazing, the gate has been left open so the cows can get to the water trough. Previously only sheep were grazed here, as there are big rabbit holes. With Ned from the Wildlife Trust examining every hole, he was satisfied they wouldn't be a problem for the cows. The grass had got away and was too long to appeal to sheep, so this was ideal.

The parched ground from such a dry April has held back the usual lush spring growth. Despite this, the butterflies have braved the cold and wind, but perhaps disappointing in numbers. I think we were all thankful Grizzled Skipper, Green Hairstreak and the Dingy Skipper made an appearance, along with Holly Blues, Small Copper, Orange Tips, Peacocks, Small Tortoiseshell, and plenty of Brimstones. It will be interesting to see what the transects show, especially in comparison to last year when spring was utterly spectacular.

There are a pair of surprisingly friendly stoats which seem to be setting up home along the hedgerow beside the Cemetery. They are quite bold and wonderful to watch.

There was some vandalism to a gate and fence by trail bikers trying to access the site one evening. It was reported by a walker and the Hampshire police were informed of the damage.

School Groups

Kate Barrett is able to run about 8 school visits this summer which is really good news, and St. Swithuns Forest School can also resume using Rosebay Corner in Extension field. Winchester College are starting their community group and providing students to help with practical tasks every Wednesday afternoon during term time.

Yew Hill

This site is a real gem, and although it's not been grazed for some time, the grassland sward still seems to be in relatively good condition. The Hampshire Conservation Volunteers did an excellent job clearing scrub last November. We are looking to graze the main reserve and Hill Top with sheep from August if possible.

The meadow near the Reservoir at the 'Triangle' along the bridleway, is looking a little neglected. We are looking at management to ensure its condition is maintained to benefit the diverse range of species that Yew Hill is renowned for. We will probably need some volunteer help in the coming months to tackle hawthorn and dogwood scrub which is invading the grassland.

Any queries please contact me on fscully@butterfly-conservation.org / 07918073651

Isle of Wight Group News – Jim Baldwin

Sadly, Stuart Read decided to stand down as Isle of Wight Group Leader in April due to other commitments. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Stuart for all his hard work in this role and I feel honoured to take over alongside my County Moth Recorder duties.

We are launching “Spot a Tiger (Moth) on the Isle of Wight” to encourage the public to record sightings of the Tiger moth family. While this is primarily a project to raise awareness of moths, it can also help with abundance and distribution mapping. For more details and how to record your sightings, please see the [branch website](#).

The group are starting a long-term project to assess the population of the White-letter Hairstreak on the Isle of Wight. I would welcome details of elm tree locations or WLH sightings (email wightmoths@gmail.com)

I.W Field Meetings Organiser Kay Shaw has arranged an interesting programme of walks, details of which can be found on the branch website at <http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/fieldtrips.php> . In line with the present guidelines, numbers are likely to be restricted to 30 per walk, for the initial walks at least, so please contact Kay to book for the walk while these restrictions apply (tel. 07562 974343 or email kay1950shaw@btinternet.com)

Jim Baldwin
Isle of Wight Group Leader
Tel. 07528 586683

Butterfly transects in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight – Linda Barker

Anyone who walks a butterfly transect will know how difficult it can sometimes be to find a suitable spell of warm sunny weather to carry out the survey. Much of April 2021 was just too cold, and May didn't prove much better. For transect walkers reading this, who may have been frustrated by the cold, cloudy and wet weather, don't give up, but please remain optimistic for better conditions. June is already proving much better. Remember that in 2020, even though Covid restrictions meant we didn't start until week 7, we still had an excellent set of data for the rest of the year.

In 2020, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight had 160 active butterfly transects, involving 333 walkers. In 2021, we are aiming to walk 175 transects, seven of which are completely new, six are restarting after a Covid-related break in 2020, and two restarting after a gap of several years. The new transects include three on the Isle of Wight, plus others at Whitchurch, East Meon, Shawford Down, and near Winchester.

Update on the New Forest Butterfly Transect Group (NFTG) – Bob Taylor

The NFTG was established in 2011 by Bob Ansell and has been run by him and his wife Jean for the last ten years. It has grown substantially during this time thanks to Bob and Jean's tireless efforts. The NFTG is now responsible for more than 50 transects across the New Forest and the south west Hampshire. At the end of the 2020 transect season Bob and Jean decided that enough was enough and handed over the reins to a small group of volunteers to continue running. We would like to take this opportunity from all in the NFTG to thank them for all their efforts, help, advice and support and occasional coercion. They both continue to walk transects and give help and advice in identification and Bob continues in his role as County Recorder

The group has been given the responsibility for several new transects in recent years at the request of Butterfly Conservation, Natural England, The National Trust, and the Forestry Commission (now Forestry England). In addition, we have recently started specific monitoring of scarcer species to aid their conservation, including Grayling and Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Sadly, the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary has not been recorded in the New Forest for a few years, however we keep looking. Any butterfly and moth sightings that you make and send in on your own in and around the New Forest will be much appreciated as there are still parts of the New Forest and South West Hampshire that need better coverage, especially if it one of the scarcer species.

The group coordinates the recording rota, reporting and record checking for the transects it is responsible for. Each transect is walked once per week for 26 weeks from April 1st, by a team of up to 6 walkers. If you would like to join one of these teams or for more information, please contact the New Forest Transect Group at: nftg-inbox@googlegroups.com.

Upcoming events:

Butterfly Walks 2021

Join us for Wednesday Wanders and Friday Forays as we celebrate the wildlife found on our special nature reserves. Find out about the chalk grassland flowers and lives of the different butterflies, insects and birdlife that live on the reserves. These walks are to observe, share and find out fascinating facts about our incredible local wildlife.

Wednesday 23 June 11am – 1pm Magdalen Hill Down

Leader Fiona Scully + special guest tbc

A summer walk exploring in detail the wildlife and hidden history of the reserve. Bring a packed lunch and drink to enjoy at the end – weather permitting.

Friday 9th July 11am – 12.30 Yew Hill

Leader Fiona Scully + special guest tbc focusing on **Chalk Hill Blues**

Wednesday 21 July 11am – 1pm Magdalen Hill Down

Leader Fiona Scully + special guest tbc **find out which butterflies are most abundant this summer**

Friday 6 August 11am – 1pm Magdalen Hill Down

Leader Fiona Scully + special guest tbc

Wednesday 18 August 11am – 12.30 Yew Hill

Leader Fiona Scully + special guest tbc

Meeting points

Magdalen Hill Down

Meet at the car park opposite the cemetery entrance on Alresford Road SU512295 / SO21 1HE

Yew Hill

Meet at the end of Old Kennels Lane at junction with Port Lane and Millers Lane, Oliver's Battery. SU451269

Social Media Links

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/ButterflyConservationHampshireAndIsleOfWight>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/HantsIoWBC>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/hampshire_iow_butterflies/

Website: <http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk>