

# Butterflies for the New Millennium

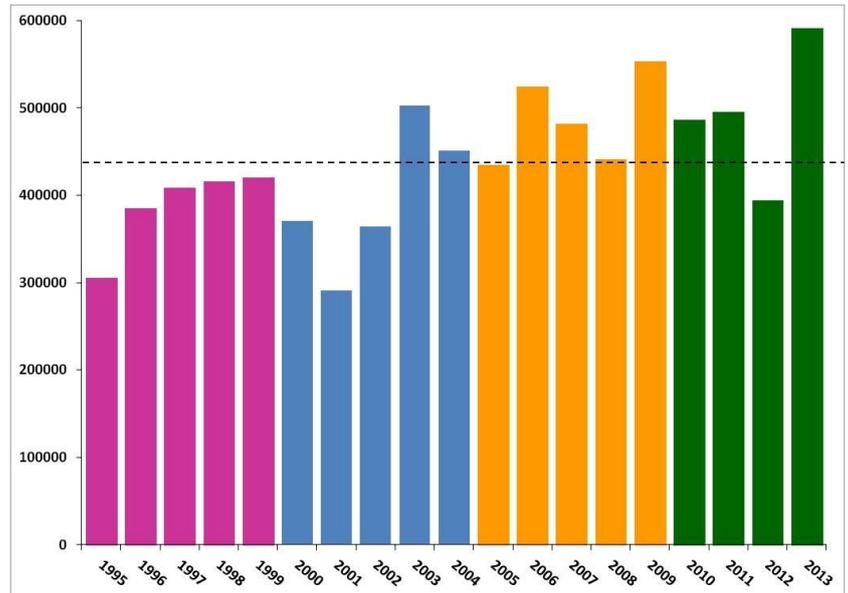


**Butterfly Conservation**  
in association with the  
Biological Records Centre

## Winter Newsletter 2015

### Introduction

We are now in the final stages of the fourth 5-year Butterflies for the New Millennium (BNM) survey. That will be 20 years of fantastic, sustained effort that has generated millions of butterfly records (averaging well over 400,000 records per year, shown as the dotted line on the graph, right) and yielded two books, three 'State of' reports, a Red List, and over 30 scientific papers so far! It is a huge achievement for all involved and Butterfly Conservation is extremely grateful to the thousands of recorders and BNM Local Co-ordinators who have made it possible.



As you can see from the graph, the data from 2013 set a new record for the BNM.

Local Co-ordinators/County Recorders are currently working flat out to verify, computerise and collate all of the 2014 records prior to the 31 March deadline. Meanwhile, the days are getting longer, the sun is noticeably warmer (down here in Devon anyway) and butterfly sightings are becoming increasingly common. After the warmest year on record last year, it will be fascinating to see how butterfly populations fare in 2015.

### 10 Million Records

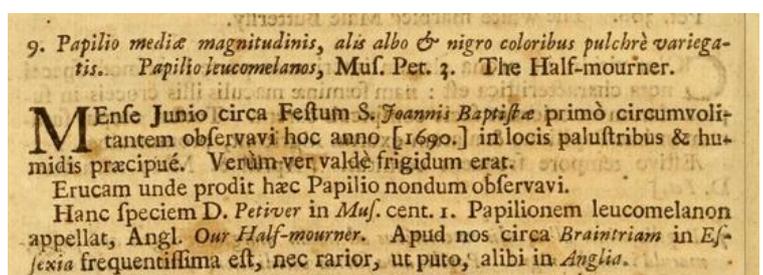
The BNM recording scheme passed a magnificent milestone recently with the addition of the 10 millionth butterfly record to the database. This landmark observation, of three Speckled Woods, was made by Mark Wood, a retired farmer, in his wildlife garden at Great Yeldham, Essex in Sept 2013.

By strange co-incidence, this sighting was just 10 miles north of another significant record in the BNM database; that of Marbled Whites (or Half-mourners as the recorder knew them) near Braintree, Essex. This record was by John Ray, one of the first British naturalists, in the year 1690 and is the earliest sighting in the BNM scheme.



Speckled Wood (Peter Eeles)

Nowadays there are easy and quick ways to submit your BNM sightings (e.g. via Branch websites, smartphone app etc). Things took longer in John Ray's era. His 1690 sighting (shown right) was only recorded for posterity in his book *Historia Insectorum*, published 20 years after the observation and, indeed, five years after Ray himself had passed away!



## National Butterfly Recorders' Meeting Saturday 28 March 2015

The ever-popular national meeting, the 18<sup>th</sup> of its kind since the BNM scheme commenced, takes place once again at the [Birmingham and Midland Institute](#) in central Birmingham, on Saturday 28 March and all are welcome.

Despite the long tradition of such meetings and the regular attendance of over 100 butterfly recorders and enthusiasts each time, there still seems to be some confusion over who can attend. The national meeting is open to anyone interested in butterflies, their recording, monitoring and conservation. You do not need to be an active or long-term recorder and you do not have to be a member of Butterfly Conservation.

As always there will be an exciting programme of talks for the day, including Matthew Oates (picture, right) one of Britain's leading butterfly experts, conservationist, author, broadcaster and Purple Emperor fanatic. There will be feedback on butterfly recording and monitoring, including the first announcement of the official UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme results for 2014, as well as lots of time to mingle and chat with fellow butterfly enthusiasts. The full programme can be found on the [BC website](#).



The day will start with a meeting of BNM Local Co-ordinators / County Butterfly Recorders at 10.00, with the main programme starting at 11.00.

The day costs just £7.50 per person (payable on the day), including lunch and refreshments, but you must book your place in advance via [info@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:info@butterfly-conservation.org) or 01929 400209.

### Benefitting farmland butterflies

Agri-environment schemes, government payments made to land managers to benefit wildlife and the environment, are a key mechanism for maintaining or restoring suitable habitat management for many threatened butterflies. Recently, Butterfly Conservation staff have been heavily involved in the development of the new Countryside Stewardship scheme in England via the Farmland Butterfly Initiative. As part of this work, the BNM butterfly records collected since 2005 have been used by Natural England to indicate which farms should be prioritised for bespoke management for 10 key specialist butterflies. Furthermore, on the ground, the BNM data are also being used to help Natural England advisers create individual agri-environment agreements with landowners that are well tailored for the target butterfly species. Moth records from our National Moth Recording Scheme are being used similarly to target agri-environment scheme grants for 24 priority farmland moth species. A great example of how distribution records collected through national recording schemes are being put to use to help with the conservation of threatened species.

### Important dates for your diary

- **7 March 2015 Scottish Recorders' Gathering** Scottish Natural Heritage, Battleby
- **28 March 2015 National Butterfly Recorders' Meeting** Birmingham & Midland Inst., Birmingham
- **31 March 2015 Data deadline** for verified county datasets to be submitted by BNM Co-ordinators
- **11 April 2015 Northern Ireland Recorders' Day** Peatlands Park, nr Dungannon

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We are very grateful to Forest Services, Forestry Commission England, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, RSPB and Scottish Natural Heritage who are helping to fund the BNM project at present. Feel free to pass copies of this newsletter on to others, post it online or to incorporate the information into your own newsletters, so as to help promote butterfly recording. Please contact me if you want to be added to or taken off the mailing list.

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