
NORFOLK BRANCH of Butterfly Conservation



**Butterfly
Conservation**

NEWSLETTER 93 SPRING 2017

Butterfly Conservation

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**The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author(s)
and not necessarily those of the Society**

Front Cover Photograph: Purple Emperor grounded in Fermyn Woods. See details of field trip planned for 5th July on page 6 (Photo by Mike Gasson).

Inside Front Cover Top Left: Judy Dunmore's photo of Sharon Hearle with a 'Shrub Buster'. See page 9 for Judy's report on the Skipper work party.

Top Right: Swallowtail larvae by Kevin Radley from the 2016 Photographic Competition. See page 33 for Kevin's article on the black Swallowtail.

Bottom: Susan Week's photograph of a Purple Hairstreak from a butterfly walk on Mousehold Heath led by Andy Brazil. See page 25 for Andy's report on the species.

Part of the cost of printing this newsletter has very kindly been donated in memory of Mr John Edgar Mallett, originally of Stiffkey. The extra costs incurred to print colour pages have once again been kindly donated by Roland Rogers.

Chairman's Thoughts

Judy Dunmore

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all those new members who have joined us over the winter months. I hope you will enjoy your membership and that we will see you at some of the Events organised this summer. Please make yourself known to the leader when you come along.

For once, as I write this in early April, we seem to have been having some warm spring weather. Where we live is very exposed and our garden does not do well for butterflies. However, recently every time I have gone outside, I have seen something. Green-veined Whites have been in evidence, Small Tortoiseshells and plenty of Holly Blues, which seem to be reaching a peak year. Yesterday we had our first male Orange Tip – let's hope this all bodes well for a good summer. We are coming near the end of the next 10-year cycle for recording and need extra effort to cover the tetrads where we still have no or very few records since 2010. Andy Brazil has produced a map showing the gaps and I hope some of you will go out and see what can be found in these areas. Andy will also be putting this map on his website www.norfolkbutterflies.co.uk and will be updating the information during the summer, hopefully showing which species has been recorded in which tetrad.

Ann and Bob have again put together a full and varied programme of Butterfly Field Trips this summer. I hope everyone will find something of interest. Following the inspiring talk by Matthew Oates on Purple Emperor butterflies at our AGM, there is a trip to Fernyn Woods in Northamptonshire in the hope of seeing this magnificent butterfly. For those of you interested in Moths, Greg has organised lots of different events which should provide opportunities to see a great variety of species. The indoor winter meetings in Norwich have been well attended so we have re-instated a 'Show your Own' evening in December – bring along any wildlife photos or video you take this year to see on the big screen. We are delighted to once again welcome the well-known author and journalist Patrick Barkham as our main speaker at this year's AGM – details are on page 20. Make a note in your diary now so that you don't miss this.

We are constantly trying to increase our social media presence. Kiri has continued to place photos on our Facebook page, even throughout the winter months. If you do not wish to post direct to the page yourself, please send interesting photos to her and she will upload them. Neil works hard to keep our webpage up-to-date – you should always check there for any last minute changes to Events and for location maps. Wherever possible there will be a short write-up included afterwards. Neil is also now helping Dave with Twitter – so for those of you who use this, please keep adding anything of interest or send in to either of them so they can 'tweet' it.

Andy has started sending out his emails alerts as each butterfly species emerges. If you want to be on his mailing list you need to email him direct. Karen holds a separate members' list for her monthly reminders of up-and-coming events. She can also alert people if there are any late changes. Please consider getting yourself on her list - she will never share your details and normally only sends out one email per month.

Wishing you all a good butterfly and moth summer.

Field Trips and Events 2017

When organising the field trips we take every care to ensure that our events present no greater hazard than any other countryside walk. Stout footwear is usually needed and in hot weather bring sun screen, a hat, insect repellent and plenty of liquid. If the weather forecast is poor, contact the leader to check if the event is going ahead

Sunday 14th May - Field Trip to Cut-Off Channel at Stoke Ferry 10.30am-1.00pm

Target species – Dinky and Grizzled Skipper

Directions: From Mundford take the A134 to Stoke Ferry. At Stoke Ferry roundabout take 2nd exit into village, turn left just after the church, continue and turn left into School Lane and meet at the end. Grid Ref. TL696990 – see website for map

Contact: Ann Carpenter 01508 488337

Tuesday 23rd May - Field Trip to Mid Harling Heath. 10.30am -1.00pm

Walk to find Spring emerging butterflies.

Directions: Meet at Forestry Commission Ride Entrance to Mid Harling Heath on Garboldisham Road between B111 Junction and A1066 Junction. Grid Ref. TL 985 832.

Contact Ann Carpenter. 01508 488337.

Friday 9th June - Moth event at Dersingham Bog Reserve 10.00am

With thanks to Natural England for the first time we will be opening traps put out the previous night at Dersingham Bog, a site which has some exceptional and local species of moths.

Meet along the track at first gateway on A149 between Babingley and Dersingham TF682292 – see map on website. Note – there are friendly cows on the reserve which may be nearby – No dogs please

Contact Greg Bond 01263 579520

Sunday 11th June - Swallowtail Day at Wheatfen Nature Reserve from 10.00am

In conjunction with The Ted Ellis Trust - an opportunity to see Swallowtails, Norfolk Hawker dragonflies, Marsh Harriers etc. Guided walks all day. Reserve is tidal -wellies and insect repellent strongly recommended. Refreshments available. No charge, donations welcome. Sorry no dogs. Follow signs for parking at TG325057. Postcode NR14 7AL

Contact: www.wheatfen.org

Saturday 17th June - Field Trip to Beeston Common, Sheringham 10.30am-1.00pm.

Walk round this fine reserve looking for early summer butterflies and other wildlife. The ground can be very damp and uneven so sturdy footwear is advisable.

Directions: Meet in lay-by on A149 in Sheringham. Grid Ref. TG 166 425.

Contact Ann Carpenter 01508 488337.

Sunday 18th June - Catfield Open Day

Our Catfield Reserve will be open to members and the public for Swallowtails and moths. Moth traps will be opened in the car park at 9.30am. Water levels permitting there will be guided walks at 11am and 2pm. Unaccompanied access is only possible along the Rond on the western and southern fringes of the Reserve. Parking by kind permission of Dr and Mrs S Holburn at TG369215, Postcode NR29 5DD. No dogs please. Wellies and insect repellent highly recommended.

Contact Mike Gasson 01328 829307 Moths- Greg Bond 01263 579520

Tuesday 27th June - Field Trip to Holme Dunes 10.30am-1.00pm.

Walk round this NWT reserve looking for summer butterflies.

Directions: Meet in Reserve car park by visitor centre. There will be a charge for non NWT members. Grid Ref. TG 714 449. Post Code PE36 6LQ.

Contact Ann Carpenter 01508 488337.

Thursday 29th June - Moth event Cley NWT 10.15am

We will be opening several moth traps put out the night before around this important North Norfolk Nature Reserve courtesy of NWT

Directions: park in the NWT car park east of Cley village on the coastal A149 and walk up the slope to the veranda behind the reserve centre

Contact Greg Bond 01263 579520 or Cley NWT 01263 740008

Saturday 1st July - Field Trip to Buxton Heath. 10.30am-1.00pm

Walk round this Hevingham Fuel Allotment Charity Site which is managed by NWT, looking for Silver Studded Blues. Paths can be damp and uneven so sturdy footwear advisable.

Directions: Meet in Reserve car off B1149 Approx 5 miles North of Norwich Airport on Horsford to Holt road. Grid Ref. TG 171 214. Contact Ann Carpenter 01508 488337.

Wednesday 5th July - Field Trip to Fermyn Woods, Northants 10.30am

An out-of-county trip to look for Purple Emperor. Many of you will remember Matthew Oates talking about this site at our AGM. We can also expect to see other interesting species.

Meet at Grid Ref: SP964 859 (near orange 94 on large-scale OS map) between Oundle and Brigstock - see website for map. Be prepared to carry your packed lunch.

Contact Ann Carpenter 01508 488337

Thursday 13th July - Moth event Cley NWT 10.15am

We will again be opening several moth traps put out the night around this important North Norfolk Nature Reserve before courtesy of NWT

Directions: park in the NWT car park east of Cley village on the coastal A149 then walk up the slope to the veranda behind the reserve centre

Contact Greg Bond 01263 579520 or Cley NWT 01263 740008

Monday 17th July Moth event and Field Trip to Foxley Wood 9.00am-1.00pm.

We will be opening moth traps put out the night before courtesy of NWT, followed at about 10.30am by a walk round this reserve looking for summer butterflies including White Admiral. Paths may be damp and uneven so sturdy footwear is advisable.

Directions: Meet in car park Grid Ref. TG 049 229.

Contact Ann Carpenter 01508 488337 or Greg Bond (Moths) 01263 579520

Wednesday 19th July - Moth event Lynford Arboretum/Lakes. Trap opening 10.00am

Following on from last year a second visit to this location where we will be opening traps set locally the night before. With a variety of habitats this is a site with huge potential for interesting species. Afterwards, weather permitting we will have the opportunity to explore the area looking for scarcities such as Tawny Wave which are more commonly found flying by day.

Directions: Lynford Arboretum is along the Lynford Road off the A1065 north of Munford. Parking in the main car park at the Arboretum TL825935

Contact Greg Bond 01263 579520

Saturday 22th July - Moth Event North Norfolk Bioblitz – Cley

Sunday 23rd July - Moth event North Norfolk Bioblitz – Holkham

Butterfly Conservation will be helping Norfolk Wildlife Trust at Cley and the Holkham Estate on this extensive Bioblitz by running moth traps to be opened on 22nd (Cley) and 23rd (Holkham). Details including parking arrangements have yet to be finalised but we expect to be opening traps at 10.15 am. We also expect to be on hand to answer any questions regarding butterflies at each location.

Contact Greg Bond 01263 579520 or check the relevant websites for NWT and Holkham

Wednesday 2nd August - Moth event joint with NOA

We will be visiting Holme NOA to watch the opening of traps set the night before around this exceptional location, where we fully expect to see many of the moth species specialist to this part of the north Norfolk coast. The reserve opens at 10.00am with trap opening by the NOA buildings at 10.15am followed by guided butterfly walk.

Parking at approximately TF712448 in the NOA car park, for which a charge may be made
Contact Greg Bond 01263 579520

14th July to 6th August - The Big Butterfly Count

To get involved, please see the website www.bigbutterflycount.org

Thursday 3rd August - Field Trip to Winterton Dunes 10.30am -1.00pm.

Walk round this Natural England Reserve looking for summer butterflies including Grayling and Dark Green Fritillary. Paths can be very uneven so sturdy footwear is advisable.

Directions: Meet in car park by the fishing huts (charge applies). Grid Ref TG 499 199.

Contact Ann Carpenter 01508 488337.

Sunday 6th August - Butterflies in the Park, Eaton Park, Norwich

11.00am – 3.00p.m.

Visit our stand near the circular herbaceous borders where we hope to have some moths on display from the previous night's trapping. Last year we found 13 butterfly species in the park – help us try to equal or better this number and take part in the Big Butterfly Count. Refreshments are on sale in the Park Café.

Contact: Fay Jones 07854 272535

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Thursday 17th August - Magical Moths at Cley NWT

Thursday 31st August - Magical Moths at Cley NWT

10.15 am with moth trap opening at **11.15 am** on each of the above dates

Held jointly with NWT, after a session for children (and adults) in the new Visitor Centre to learn about the fascinating lives and behaviour of moths we will then be opening traps for the general public giving everyone a rare opportunity to see these incredible night flyers up close.

Please note NWT will be charging £3.00 for children (accompanying adults free)

Directions: meet at the Visitor Centre east of Cley village on the coastal A149

Contact Greg Bond 01263 579520 or Cley NWT on 01263 740008

Wednesday 6th September - 7.30pm at Blakeney Scout Hut HQ

A Taste of Thailand – an illustrated talk by Anne Mansfield covering different aspects of wildlife

Postcode NR25 7PQ – see website for map

Contact: Judy Dunmore: 01263-822550

Saturday 30th September AGM and Members Afternoon 2.00pm

Hethersett Village Hall – see page 20 for details

Saturday 7th October - Wild about Norfolk

10.00am – 4.00pm Visit our stand at this annual wildlife fair at Easton College. Postcode NR9 5DX

A full day of activities and events, especially suitable for children.

Contact: Judy Dunmore 01263-822550

Wednesday 1st November - 7.30pm at Blakeney Scout Hut HQ

Brazil's Pantanal – Jaguars and much more. An illustrated talk by John Geeson

Postcode NR25 7PQ – see website for map

Contact: Judy Dunmore 01263-822550

Friday December 1st - 7.30pm United Reform Church, Ipswich Road, Norwich

Members Open Evening - a chance to show your butterfly, moth and wildlife photos and videos (no sound available) from 2017. A max of 30 photos or 10 minutes video please to give everyone a chance. However you may bring along extra blocks and we will show if there is time.

The Hall is south of the ring road, access via Lyhart Road. Postcode NR4 6QR - see website for map.

Contact: Ann Carpenter 01508 488337

Norfolk Moth Survey Events

Saturday 24th June - Courtyard Farm, Ringstead. Meet 8.30 pm in the yard at TF729399

Saturday 1st July - Holt Country Park. Meet 8.30 pm in the car park at TG082375

Saturday 22nd July - Gramborough Hill. Meet 8.30 pm at TG081442.

Saturday 26th August - Brickyard Fen, Surlingham. Meet 7.30 pm at TG323061.

Organised in conjunction with the RSPB.

Wider Countryside Monitoring Scheme 2017

Judy Dunmore

As stated in the Autumn Newsletter, Julian Bull stood down as our Norfolk co-ordinator at the end of last season. We are urgently looking for someone who would be prepared to take on this role. There is no requirement to become a member of the Branch Committee, although this option is open if required. The job mainly involves contacting people at the beginning of the season, finding new recruits if members are unable to continue, giving support where needed, and occasionally helping set up new squares. When the national figures are produced a summary of the Norfolk results needs to be made for the Newsletter. In fact we have not received that information as yet for 2016 but hopefully we will be able to put this in the autumn edition.

In the short-term Alan Dawson is holding the reins but his expanding work as Transect Co-ordinator means that he is not able to take on this role permanently. Alan has recently made contact with most of those who walk squares. However, if you have not heard from him please get in touch immediately as some people may well have 'slipped through the net'. In the meantime please give consideration to helping with this important work. This is not an onerous job but one that it is very important and the Branch Committee is very keen that Norfolk should continue to provide such vital data.

Skipper Work Party

Judy Dunmore

On 8th March 14 people assembled at Leziat Country Park to undertake some scrub clearance in an area where Dingy Skippers have been found. This species thrives best in open areas with shelter belts and some bare ground. Sharon Hearle brought along two 'Shrub Busters' which were used to completely uproot small shrubs, creating bare patches. These amazing pieces of equipment made the work much less back-breaking and also reduced the need to treat stumps with chemicals. It was surprising how much could be achieved in a short time. Our thanks to all those who came along on the day. We will be returning in May to see the results of our efforts and the effect on Dingy Skipper numbers.

Norfolk UKBMS Transect Recording in 2016

Alan Dawson, Transect Coordinator

As with 2015, the Spring of 2016 was very cool, but in addition it was also extremely wet, and days when transects could be walked were few and far between. Although the late summer was warm and dry, numbers of butterflies never went above the numbers for 2015 (itself a very poor year). Overall, the index (total sightings corrected to 26 weeks) of butterflies in Norfolk was 36097 on a total of 38 full transects compared with 35324 on 34 transects in 2015. Figure 1 shows the overall numbers counted through the flight season in 2016 compared with 2015. In both cases Week 1 starts on April 1st. The numbers in the early Spring of 2016 lag behind even those of 2015, and although the numbers in 2016 recover and over-shoot the 2015 totals by about Week 10 (beginning of June) they never do more than track the previous year's numbers thereafter. These numbers are for all species and conceal species differences that will be dealt with later in the report.

Full 26 Week Transects

Given the number of transects that we now have in Norfolk, it is not surprising that not all of them ran without problems. Lack of recorder availability meant Pensthorpe was not done, and Cranwich Camp became so overgrown early in the season that it had to be abandoned for this year. The Swanton Novers transects also ran into problems that caused them to be stopped early in the season although I have included the data from there in Table 1. Six new full 26 week transects started in 2016. Foxley Wood and Redgrave and Lopham Fen got off to a flying start at the beginning of the season, then these were followed by walks at Natural Surroundings (the wildlife gardening centre at Glandford), Reffley Wood, Sculthorpe Moor 2 (restarting after a 2 year gap) and Burgh Doles (the latter being notable for Swallowtails on transect), bringing the total up to 38 (34 in 2015)

Table 1 shows the annual summary for the full 26 week transects. The recording software corrects the data for weeks missed, but in cases where a substantial part of the season was missed, such as in the Swanton Novers transects and ones that were started in mid-season, this correction will not be very accurate. The total number of species seen was 32 (down from 34 in 2015). White-letter Hairstreak, which is normally seen at Cranwich was not counted this year – the growth of Bracken there was so extreme that the transect became impassable before the White-letter Hairstreak flight season – so the absence of this species from the list does not have any sinister overtones. Indeed White Letter Hairstreaks were seen there in the usual place, but not on a transect walk. The other missing species is Dingy Skipper, again normally seen at Cranwich. This species was actually seen in increased numbers at Cranwich in 2016 before the Bracken got too high. However, see

below in the section on Single Species Transects for more information about the Dingy and Grizzled Skipper situation. Chalkhill Blue was seen again at Ringstead in small numbers and very good numbers of Silver-washed Fritillary and White Admiral were recorded at Holt Country Park and on the new transect at Foxley.

Table 2 is the Winners and Losers table for 2016 compared to 2015. This is based on the 29 transects which had comparable data sets in the two years. As usual, this sort of data comes with a serious health warning. In a way this is exemplified by the Purple Hairstreak, whose spectacular increase is driven by a (genuinely) spectacular increase on the Mousehold Heath transects, coupled with the loss of Swanton Novers (a previous stronghold) from the analysis. Elsewhere in the Table, nothing very significant stands out. Small Skipper is down, but the catch-all classification of Small/Essex Skipper is up, so the numbers probably in part reflect different recording styles, although total number of 'orange' skippers is down for the year. Grayling had a very good year at Winterton Dunes amongst other places. Otherwise, most species numbers were quite similar to the (very poor) numbers for 2015.

Single-species transects

As in previous years, we had single species transects for Swallowtail at Wheatfen Broad, Catfield Fen, Strumpshaw Fen and Ranworth Broad. There is a single species transect for Silver-studded Blue at Buxton Heath, and this year we started Dingy and Grizzled Skipper surveys at Narborough Railway Line and Foulden Common. These transects are only walked during the flight season and the numbers are not included in Table 1. They are reported below under the Red-list species section.

Red-list Species

The 10 red-list species in Norfolk were all counted on transect this year.

- Dingy Skipper: 27 at Cranwich (24 in 2015); 43 at Foulden; none recorded at Narborough Railway Line
- Grizzled Skipper: 31 at Foulden; none recorded at Narborough
- Silver-studded Blue: 407 (211 in 2015). Good recovery in the recently-managed areas
- White Admiral: recorded on 11 transects (compared with 6 in 2105). They were seen at Bure Marshes, Gaywood Valley and How Hill (all of which missed out in 2015) plus the 3 Swanton Novers transects, Holkham, Sculthorpe 3, Holt Country Park and Foxley Wood. They were recorded for the first time on Dersingham Village Railway in 2016.
- Wall Brown: seen at 10 sites (10 in 2015). However, there were three new sites (Redgrave and Lopham Fen, Sculthorpe 2 and Burgh Doles) while three transects that had previously recorded them in 2015, Gaywood Valley, Sutton Fen and Courtyard Farm, did not have any sightings in 2016. Overall, numbers were 26% down on 2015 - which was itself 46% down on 2014. Not a rosy picture.
- Grayling: 4 sites (6 in 2015). They were not seen at Holt Country Park or Weeting Heath this year although overall numbers were substantially up compared with 2015.
- Small Heath: seen at 11 sites (14 in 2015), although overall numbers were slightly increased compared with 2015. Redgrave and Lopham Fen was a new site.

- Chalkhill Blue: as in previous years a small number were seen at Ringstead Down. However, the timed-count record at Warham Camp showed a dramatic drop in numbers from 2239 in 2015 to 247 in 2016. There was a more detailed article about this in the last Newsletter.
- Swallowtail: The Norfolk Swallowtail surveys in 2016 were boosted by the important addition of another transect at Burgh Doles. The numbers on the various Single-species and full transects are shown in Table 3. Overall 2016 seems to have been a better year than 2015, with Bure Marshes and Wheatfen showing increases, although Sutton Fen is still running below its historical average.

Outlook for 2017

Last year I appealed for volunteers to walk single species transects for Dingy and Grizzled Skippers at Narborough Railway Line and Foulden Common. I was delighted that two excellent volunteers duly appeared. While the Foulden transect worked very well, the Narborough transect unfortunately drew a blank. Grizzled Skippers have not been reported there for a number of years and it now looks rather as if the Dingies may have gone the same way. However, a couple of years ago some eagle-eyed Norfolk BC members reported seeing Dingy Skippers at Lynford Lakes, so the plan is to discontinue the Narborough transect as being a poor use of person-power, and transfer the effort to Lynford Lakes. 2017 will also see the start of a new full 26 week transect near Quidenham, so the number of transects in Norfolk continues to increase at a most satisfactory rate.

As ever, my heartfelt thanks goes to all those dedicated recorders whose skill and persistence produces such valuable information about the state of our butterflies in Norfolk. A rough calculation suggests that together they walked substantially more than 2000 km during the season. If anyone reading this article feels that they would like to get involved in walking a transect or setting up a new one, please do contact me.

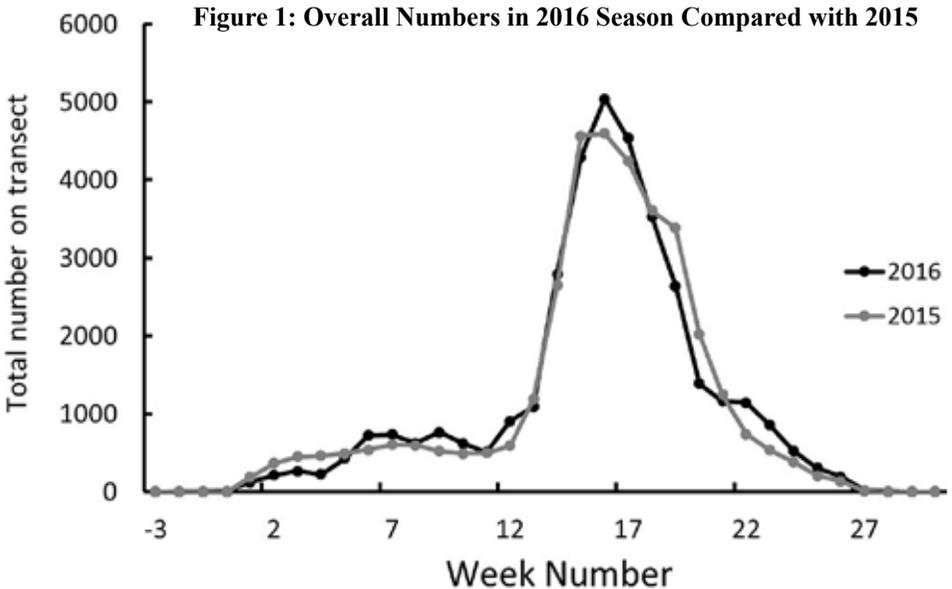


Table 1: Norfolk Transect Data as Indices (corrected to 26 weeks)

	Bure Marshes	Holkham	Holme Dunes	Mousehold Heath	Mousehold Heath East	Weeting Heath	Blakeney Point	Winterton Dunes	Strumpshaw Fen	Marston Narsh	Scott Head Island	Tomas' Pightle
Small Skipper		1	6		2				1	3	10	1
Essex Skipper			6	1						6		10
Sm/Es Skipper		6	195	1	7	201				31	5	
Large Skipper	5	27	17	3	12	12			5	11		
Swallowtail	13								5			
Clouded Yellow												
Brimstone	110	8	1		3	39			84	6		17
Large White	1	121	14	83	31	97	1		35	14	77	35
Small White	5	59	67	26	29	23	15	5	51	28	68	46
Green-v. White	183	24	2	19	24	56	1		94	274	24	14
Orange Tip	38	5	3	19	7	16			16	52		10
Green Hairstreak			3	7	2						32	
Purple Hairstreak				22	8							
Small Copper		78	14	12	31		28	38		15	14	
Common Blue		171	147	1	17	12	3		3	2	243	2
Holly Blue				37	13	18			10	5		18
Brown Argus		109	14			2	1					
Chalkhill Blue												
White Admiral	1	1										
Red Admiral	13	67	5	9	8		1		77	28	21	22
Painted Lady		93	3				8	3	1	2	46	4
Sm. Tortoiseshell	21	61	33	6	12	16	17	15	32	21	79	50
Peacock	89	94	19	13	6	52	2	9	170	31	13	70
Comma	27	55		17	8	2		2	12	16		5
S-w. Fritillary		2										
Dark G. Fritillary		46	2				3	10			8	
Speckled Wood	20	38	5	69	54	58		7	8	8		25
Wall Brown		71	24								54	
Grayling		20					65	494			69	
Gatekeeper	14	142	404	43	51	138	23	70	50	32	275	76
Meadow Brown	50	404	409	103	164	550	19	13	82	293	203	32
Small Heath		19	24			85		77			245	
Ringlet	35	124	141	32	72	146	1	28	15	85	33	28
Total (index)	625	1846	1558	523	561	1523	188	771	751	963	1519	465
No. of Species	16	26	23	20	21	18	15	13	19	20	19	18
Weeks Done	20	19	21	23	21	10	24	14	24	26	20	25
Transect Started	1976	1976	1978	2004	2012	2008	2008	2008	2008	2009	2009	2009

Table 1: Norfolk Transect Data as Indices (corrected to 26 weeks)

	Swanton Novers 1	Swanton Novers 2	Swanton Novers Little Wood	Roydon Common	Sutton Fen	Gaywood Valley	Marlingford	Middle Harling Heathly	Ludham Marshes	Barnham Cross Common	Dursingham Village R/way	Syderstone Common	Dersingham Bog
Small Skipper					21		20	117	2	82			6
Essex Skipper												2	
Sm/Es Skipper	76	2	4	16		42					1	246	21
Large Skipper	12	3	6	6	118	18		52	6	10	7	8	1
Swallowtail					24								
Clouded Yellow						3							
Brimstone	38	7	4	19	93	8	3	85	4	8	2	4	4
Large White	43	11	9	8	15	8	63	61	15	28	35	6	23
Small White	5			8	29	93	140	171	16	51	30	84	62
Green-v. White	42	23	19	3	142	47	2	1	122	15	38	2	3
Orange Tip	8	11	11		14	27	3	74		21	10	2	3
Green Hairstreak	2							9				3	3
Purple Hairstreak	2											2	1
Small Copper				74		8		9		37		26	34
Common Blue				7		16	6	31		18		5	2
Holly Blue				2	6	8		2	1		5	7	1
Brown Argus								37		1	1		
Chalkhill Blue													
White Admiral	2	5	2			1					2		
Red Admiral	2	6		15	29	18		50	11	2	24	4	19
Painted Lady	3		2	2	7			3	7	1	1		10
Sm. Tortoiseshell	2			15	129	102	6	1	47	8	22	9	80
Peacock	10	4	4	53	229	30	11	124	49	3	27	23	35
Comma	7	2	2	2	11	29	2	52	1	4	16	21	14
S-w. Fritillary	21	3	6										
Dark G. Fritillary													
Speckled Wood	28	36	26	2	44	64	65	23	4	14	58	26	10
Wall Brown				2					14				
Grayling													
Gatekeeper	11			75	250	46	21	73	70	4	28	238	79
Meadow Brown	56	10	2	153	336	103	102	1183	505	406	15	180	118
Small Heath							32	183		129		154	
Ringlet	465	89	81	67	396	183	192	188	40	7	59	310	89
Total (index)	835	212	178	529	1893	854	668	2529	914	849	381	1362	618
No. of Species	21	14	14	20	18	21	15	22	17	22	19	21	22
Weeks Done	11	11	11	15	26	23	18	26	19	23	25	22	14
Transect Started	1992	1998	1998	2010	2010	2011	2011	2011	2012	2012	2012	2012	2013

Table 1: Norfolk Transect Data as Indices (corrected to 26 weeks)

	Ringstead Downs	Seuthorpe Moor 3	How Hill New	Courtyard Farm	Blakeney Friary Hills	Holt Country Park	Felbrigg Hall	Foxley Wood	Redgrave & Lopham Fen	Natural Surroundings	Seuthorpe 2	Reffley Wood	Burgh Doles
Small Skipper		41	7	99	63			1	18	10	60		10
Essex Skipper			9	11	39				1	3	1		3
Sm/Es Skipper	162	85	4		64	2	3	11	29		51		2
Large Skipper	9	17		3	57			4	5	7	22	6	44
Swallowtail			4										4
Clouded Yellow	2												
Brimstone	5	5	33	4		37		23	14	1	1	12	
Large White	54	49	17	36	112	74	160	29	73	40	61	25	11
Small White	110	63	15	39	81	1	34	45	103	41	112		20
Green-v. White	26	115	25	76	19	8		40	47	17	23	278	158
Orange Tip	47	53	28	13	9	4	4	7	16	5		35	9
Green Hairstreak	6			38	5				1				
Purple Hairstreak									1				
Small Copper	5			2	2				4				
Common Blue	29	10		2	17	4			5		3		
Holly Blue		2	4	13	9				4	1	1	15	
Brown Argus	16												
Chalkhill Blue	2												
White Admiral		1	3			27		10					
Red Admiral	2	30	35	2	6	29	12	3	36	22	34	10	29
Painted Lady	14	2		12	15	1	26	3		5	6		3
Sm. Tortoiseshell	15	20	5	19	18	9	21	1	22	15	125		35
Peacock	19	20	98	31	6	13	5	37	86	18	21	48	41
Comma	22	19	24	9		14	2	32	19	25	11	32	10
S-w. Fritillary						102		44		2			
Dark G. Fritillary	1												
Speckled Wood		90	28	14	8	71	10	258	38	21	71	90	25
Wall Brown	3				5				4		1		6
Grayling													
Gatekeeper	125	101	22	44	114	16	16	71	23	36	69	2	49
Meadow Brown	294	179	21	409	136	273	18	65	96	93	124	44	55
Small Heath	6								1				
Ringlet	298	385	100	387	77	222	9	783	71	58	303	416	57
Total (index)	1272	1287	482	1263	862	907	320	1467	717	420	1100	1013	571
No. of Species	25	20	18	21	20	19	13	19	23	19	19	13	18
Weeks Done	22	13	24	19	16	27	17	24	23	12	12	10	16
Transect Started	2013	2014	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016

Table 2: Winners and Losers for 2016 Compared to 2015

	2016	2015	% change		2016	2015	% change
Purple Hairstreak	33	2	1550	Brimstone	582	609	-4
Grayling	648	422	54	Gatekeeper	2640	2766	-5
Green-veined White	1359	1028	32	Orange Tip	478	503	-5
Ringlet	3749	2847	32	Meadow Brown	6753	7176	-6
Small/Essex Skipper	1092	916	19	Essex Skipper	84	91	-8
Small Copper	427	366	17	Peacock	1344	1491	-10
Speckled Wood	823	738	12	Dark-green Fritillary	70	86	-19
Small Heath	954	883	8	Large Skipper	404	500	-19
Holly Blue	161	154	5	Common Blue	748	939	-20
Small Tortoiseshell	889	857	4	Wall Brown	173	234	-26
Green Hairstreak	108	105	3	Silver-washed Fritillary	104	146	-29
Small White	1449	1462	-1	Brown Argus	181	256	-29
Painted Lady	261	271	-4	Large White	1273	1882	-32
Comma	386	402	-4	White Admiral	36	54	-33
Red Admiral	539	564	-4	Small Skipper	482	935	-48

Table 3: Swallowtail Numbers

Site	Started	Swallowtail numbers						
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bure Marshes (Natural England)	1976	42	50	20	40	37	7	13
Strumpshaw Fen (RSPB)	2008	6	12	4	2	4	8	5
Sutton Fen (RSPB)	2010	78	123	30	76	118	26	24
Wheatfen (Ted Ellis Trust)	2010	2	10	6	14	8	5	31
Strumpshaw Fen (RSPB)	2010	13	18	6	14	8	5	3
Ranworth (NWT)	2010	2		0	3	0	0	0
Catfield Fen (BC)	2010	4		8	17	16	10	8
How Hill (Broads Authority)	2011		22	2	13	10	9	4
Burgh Doles	2016							4

Anne Oxenford 1925 - 2016

Roland Rogers

News of the death of Anne last November, after a long illness, saddened us all. She and John were founder members of the Branch and they set up and ran the North Norfolk Group from the early days. Anne worked very hard at organising the meetings and providing refreshments. The North Norfolk Group continues successfully to this day – some tribute to Anne!

She raised hundreds of pounds by organising street collections in various localities, every penny of which went to supporting the conservation of butterflies and moths. She and John also ran conservation work parties at a site at Bodham and in the garden of a lady who subsequently bequeathed her property to Butterfly Conservation. Their friendship with Keith McDougall, the owner of Catfield Fen, facilitated the sale to us of what is now our reserve. Anne was a kind and friendly person as well as being a good organiser. We have missed her during her illness and now even more so.

Alec Humphrey 1929 - 2017

Francis Farrow

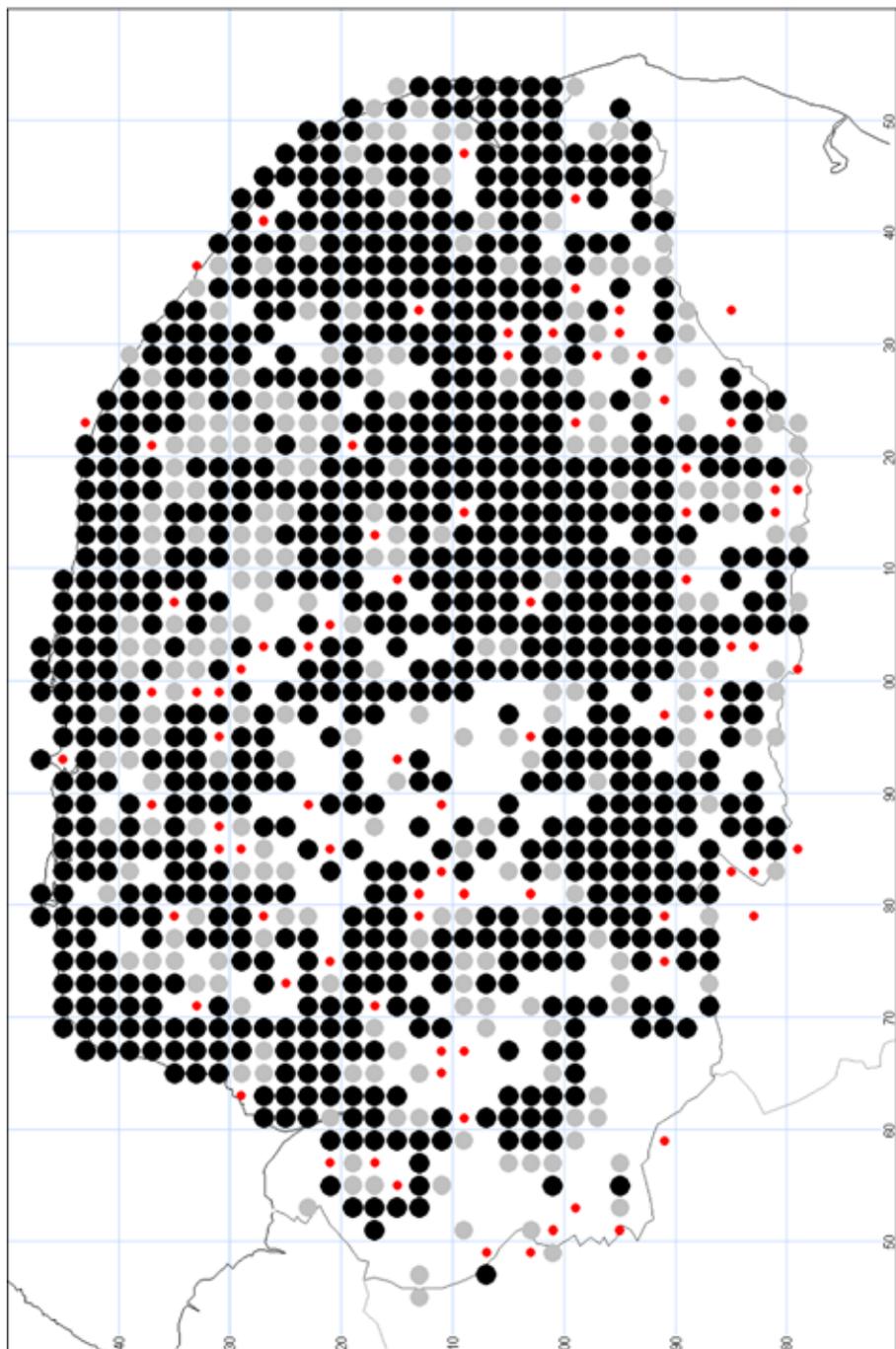
Some sad news has just reached me that my old friend Alec Humphrey died peacefully in his sleep, at home in Sheringham, on 9th April, 2017. Alec was within a few weeks of his 88th birthday and had been a long term lover of butterflies. For over 30 years he collected annual records from around North Norfolk, which I submitted to the County Recorders for the various Atlas projects on his behalf. His enthusiasm for all things natural and his prodigious listing of everything he saw made him a valuable resource for many County survey groups. In latter years his ability to get out and about was somewhat curtailed by ‘doggy legs’ but last year he still managed to send in almost 900 records. He will be missed but also remembered locally as the ‘butterfly man’.

The Norfolk Atlas Project 2011-2019

Andy Brazil

The map shows coverage to date. Grey dots have five or less species recorded, while small red dots show squares where only a single record exists. White areas are unrecorded. We now have at least one record for 1,164 of the 1,444 tetrad squares in Norfolk. Can you help fill in the blanks? Are there any gaps close to you? Can you spare an hour to pop over and write down the butterflies you see one day this summer?

“Tetrad bashing” can be a fun way to get to explore unknown and neglected bits of the county, and every square you can fill in will help us complete a full view of the state of Norfolk’s butterflies. (Of course we still want your records even if you live in a filled square. Many of the squares we do have records for are still missing common species, so we still want your records wherever you are.)



Be Nice to Nettles

Fay Jones

More often than not stinging nettles are considered a nuisance but they are, in fact, very important for lots of invertebrates (over 100 associated species) and several of our well-known butterflies in particular. The life cycles of four of our most loved garden butterflies, some of the Vanessaid or brush-foot butterflies, are inextricably bound to that of nettles as they provide the key larval food plant for the Red Admiral, Comma, Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock.



Caterpillars of Small Tortoiseshell (top) and Red Admiral (bottom) feeding on nettles

Photos by Fay Jones

From April onward it's a great time to look out for caterpillars in a nettle patch near you. Look for large clusters of Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock caterpillars on the tops of nettles, interwoven with silk to help protect them from predators. Red Admirals are also good fun to find once you get your eye in; keep a look out for a rolled-up leaf that is protecting the caterpillar inside. All these butterflies go through 4-5 moults over a 2-4-week period so once you've found an inhabited patch keep going back to check on their progress.

Nettle beds aren't just good for butterflies, The Snout as well as Mother of Pearl and Nettle Tap moths also use it as their larval food plant. Nettle beds provide a nursery for ladybird larvae and an aphid farm for ants besides a hunting ground for adult ladybirds, bush crickets and spiders.

Wherever you've got room for nettles in your garden it will be beneficial to someone! The larger the nettle patch in your garden you can maintain the better. Nettles in shade are favoured by Red Admirals, the centre of nettle beds by Peacocks and the edges by Small Tortoiseshells. Cut nettles back in early June so that they are the right height for Small Tortoiseshells to lay their second brood of eggs on (and also stop them running to seed) and add nettle cuttings to your compost or rot them down in water to make a good multi-purpose feed for your other plants that is high in iron, nitrogen and potassium.

Small Tortoiseshell Aberration

Francis Farrow

On 5th April 2017 I was walking across Sheringham Common when a Small Tortoiseshell butterfly flew past me. As I had seen around a dozen such butterflies this morning I was ready to dismiss it as a rather worn individual – how wrong I was for as soon as it settled nearby and spread its wings it revealed itself as a very strange-looking Small Tortoiseshell. For starters it was a bright orangey-red colour and lacked any white spots along its wing edges. Checking the internet I learned that there were some 150 named aberrations for Small Tortoiseshells.

The one this individual closely resembled was *Ab. semi-ichnusoides*, although the hind wings are normally black with very little orange present on the typical form. This aberration is caused when the pupal stage is exposed to high temperatures and in typical cases the orange on the hind wings is replaced by black. From information supplied by Andy Brazil (County Burtterfly Recorder), two aberrations of this type were sold for £2 5s and £2 10s in 1909, which is approximately £200 in today's money.



Aberrant Small Tortoiseshell resembling *Ab. semi-ichnusoides* on Sheringham Common
Photo by Francis Farrow

Saturday 30th September 2017

2.00pm-5.30pm

Hethersett Village Hall

Back Lane, Hethersett NR9 3JJ

‘The Wonder of Butterflies’

**An illustrated talk by Patrick Barkham
well-known author, journalist and butterfly enthusiast**

‘Conservation Projects in East Anglia’

**A short illustrated presentation by Sharon Hearle,
Regional Officer detailing some of the work she has been doing**

AGM

Photographic Competition

Further details on page 18

Free Parking

Refreshments

From North/Norwich

**At the A47/A11 Thickthorn roundabout take the HETHERSETT exit B1172.
After about 2 miles TURN RIGHT on CHURCHFIELDS & follow the road
through the estate and on to BACK LANE. The Village Hall is on your right.**

From South/Wymondham

**At Waitrose supermarket roundabout follow the signs for HETHERSETT on
B1172. After 3 to 4 miles look for CHURCHFIELDS on the LEFT. Follow the
road through the estate and on to BACK LANE. The Village Hall is on your
right.**

See website for map

**Please make a note in your diary of on your calendar
NOW!**

Photographic Competition 2017

The popular photographic Competition will again be held during the branch AGM on 30th September (AGM details are on the opposite page). Entry details follow:

1. There are two entry categories with a prize for both winners
 1. **British Butterflies and Moths, including immature stages.**
 2. **Overseas Butterflies and Moths, including immature stages.**
2. All entries must have been photographed during 2017.
3. Entries must be prints up to A4 size (297 × 210mm) including any mount.
4. Mark the reverse of entries with your full name, address, information on the subject and which category is entered.
5. You are limited to a maximum of three entries in each category.
6. Postal entries should be submitted to the address below to arrive by 22nd September. They can be collected after the competition at the AGM but will not be returned by post unless a stamped addressed envelope is provided with the entry.
7. Entries on the day of the competition must be provided 20 minutes before the start of the meeting.
8. Some entries will be published in the branch newsletter. Postal print entries can be scanned but it will be helpful to have digital files sent to the Newsletter Editor at: moorend@globalnet.co.uk. For entries submitted on the day to be considered for publication digital files must be provided.
9. By entering the competition you agree that your photographs can be used in the branch newsletter or on our website. Photographer credits will be given.

Everyone attending the Norwich meeting on September 30th will be encouraged to vote on the photographs; the winning entries will be announced on the day. Contact details for enquiries and postal entries:

Mike Gasson, Moor End Cottage, Moor End Lane, Stibbard, Norfolk, NR21 0EJ
01328 829307
moorend@globalnet.co.uk

Butterfly Report 2016

Andy Brazil

We received 18,359 records (17,514)¹ covering 721 tetrads (707) and representing 6,314 site reports (6,353). A number of records arrived late last year, and I received a quantity of historic records – the numbers shown for 2015 are the final figures, and so are different from those in the previous year’s report. As usual I have not included the data from the Big Butterfly Count in these totals, as it would prevent results being comparable to previous years. However, this year does include the records from the on-line Garden Butterfly Survey (www.gardenbutterflysurvey.org), which appears to have attracted more participation than the paper survey it replaced, and Migrant Watch (<http://butterfly-conservation.org/612/migrant-watch.html>). Use of the mobile phone app “iRecord Butterflies” also increased this year (although some submissions were quite imaginative and were disregarded). I have also included some details from the preliminary analysis of the national results. I have decided to no longer report highest counts for most species – the figures mostly reflect the area surveyed – the longer you walk the more you see – and thus they have no intrinsic meaning. I’ve retained them for some colonial butterflies where the area surveyed is mostly static.

In total 100 tetrads were visited for the first time this year, bringing surveyed squares to 1,164 (leaving just 263 unsurveyed tetrads remaining for the 2011-19 period).

Whilst globally it was the warmest year ever recorded, 2016 was a poor year for most butterflies: the spring was wetter and colder than average, June produced twice average rainfall, with the rest of the summer only gradually improving towards August. The warmer autumn² was too late for most species to see much benefit, although it did extend some species’ flight periods and produce second broods in some spring species. A recent paper³ links warm, wet winters to low population numbers in butterflies, and the winter of 2015-16 was indeed abnormally warm (warmest ever recorded in England) and wet (2nd wettest ever recorded)⁴. This produced some early records before the rain returned, resulting in some early first sighting dates in an overall late spring. Nationally, it was the fourth worse year on record (in fact if you disregard the migratory Red Admiral, Clouded Yellow and Painted Lady it was the second worse year!).

Actually I say the spring was cold, but it started warm, tempting some individuals out early, only to fall back into wintery conditions. This resulted in a stutter in emergence of some early species, where initial reports were followed by a gap before the main flight began. You can see this in the following species reports.

¹ In this report, where I give figures the following figure in brackets is the comparable 2015 result, while the initials in braces are the recorder – refer to the list of recorders for details.

² September was 2.7° warmer than the 1981 to 2010 average

³ McDermott Long, Osgur; Warren, Rachel; Price, Jeff; Brereton, Tom M.; Botham, Marc S.; Franco, Aldina M.A. (2017) Sensitivity of UK butterflies to local climatic extremes: which life stages are most at risk? *Journal of Animal Ecology*, 86 (1): 108-116. 10.1111/1365-2656.12594

⁴ <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate/uk/summaries/2016/winter> retrieved 26/3/2017

Species Reports

Grizzled Skipper

Nationally it declined by 24% from last year. Recorded from just 5 tetrads (6), representing just two sites: Foul登 Common and the Cut-Off Channel. A visit to Leziate failed to see any individuals but we do now have a new and sympathetic owner here. Highest count was 16 (13) at Foul登 on 8th May, seen between 4th May [MG] (22/4) and 28th May with a single late sighting 6th June [SG] (10/6). This remains the rarest butterfly in Norfolk, and the one most at risk of disappearing. (The situation is similar in Cambridgeshire, while Suffolk has already lost them). It may however, still exist at some of its historic sites – indeed with only a single visit to Leziate, it cannot be ruled out there.

I am struck by how many historic sites are close to defunct railways such as the Dereham to King's Lynn line, and I would speculate that at one time these would have acted as highways for the dispersal of the species. If undiscovered colonies remain in Norfolk, the remains of such lines are probably the best locations to start searching.

Dingy Skipper

Recorded from 13 squares (16) – but 3 were new to this period ⁵ (but all had been recorded there in previous periods). This species appears to be doing better than its Grizzled cousin, with sightings from Leziate, STANTA, Cold Harbour Wood, Narborough, Cranwich, and Lynford as well as the Cut-Off channel and Foul登. Earliest sighting 4th May [PD] (1/5), last 10th June [CG] (11/6). Highest count 20 (12).

Large Skipper

First seen on the 29th May [IW], but then not until 9th June (4/6) then constant until 16th August then 5 sightings from 28th August until 10th September [SW] (21/8). Recorded from 132 tetrads (113), of which 36 were new.

Small Skipper

Recorded from 142 Tetrads (134), of which 47 were new. First sighting 23rd May [PM] (23/5) was an outlier, next seen 15th June (7/6), then regular till 27th August (28/8). There were then two sightings: 15/9 and 18/10.

Essex Skipper

Recorded from 58 Tetrads (75), 26 new. First sighting 17th June [RS] (24/6), but then not recorded until 29th June. Then regular until 21st August [SP] (22/8).

My impression is that all the golden skippers had a poor year. In total there were 656 records for the three species this year, as against 703 last year – which had far fewer records overall. Nationally, they all declined against the previous year: LS -38%, SS -46%, ES -52%; and last year was itself very poor. While they are still widespread – at least one species being reported from just under half of all surveyed tetrads – they are no longer quite as common as they once were.

Swallowtail

A strange Facebook report (with photo) from a garden in Wisbech in very early May might have emerged from Norfolk thatch on a nearby house or might have been bred indoors. Similarly a report of 10 in a woodland glade in Hindolveston in July is baffling, as the site is well away from the broads. Again I doubt the occurrence was natural.

⁵ A new tetrad square is one where the species has not previously been recorded in the period 2011-15.

Of more conventional reports it was first seen 20th May [TS](13/5), then regular until 20th July. There were then just 5 reports between 4th August and 23rd August [DC] (15/8). A very poor second brood might just reflect a later start, and more individuals opting to over-winter. Certainly a report from Hethersett on 21st August and Bradwell on 23rd August shows that some individuals were searching for a mate over considerable distances in this period. Recorded from 23 tetrads (17), of which 5 were new.

Brimstone

First seen 31st January [PJH] (17/2), but that was an outlier, main emergence was 13th March. Last was 25th December [AB,CGr] (17/12). Recorded from 256 squares (219). This is fast becoming an all year butterfly – February was the only month in which it wasn't seen flying. Although national numbers were slightly down from last year that had been a very good year and so was to be expected. This species seems better able to resist the temptation to come out of emergence early than the other adult hibernators: In the last two years there have been 8 Small Tortoiseshell, 16 Peacock and 9 Red Admiral sightings before March to only 3 Brimstone. This might suggest that this species will be more resilient to the warm, wet winters that seem to be becoming the norm.

Large White

First seen on 2nd April [AW] (10/3), but then not again until 12th April. Last on 1st November [AK] (1/11), recorded from 374 tetrads (289), 101 new. No records of major summer migration this year, and nationally it did poorly, possibly as a result. I received 10% fewer sightings this year than last, while transect counts fell by 32%.

Small White

First seen 22nd March [KH, SP] (24/3) until 29th October then a very late 13th November [JC](9/10). Recorded from 368 squares (251), 113 new. Sightings were up 35%, while transects were essentially static, suggesting that the decline in the Large White was largely the lack of migration: since any 'home-grown' problems would probably have affected both species equally – while the Small White historically has seen much smaller migrations, and thus would show a smaller affect from their lack.

Green-veined White

298 (205) squares, 83 new. The first on 5th March (LB) was an outlier, not seen again until 2nd April (9/4) then regular till 6th October (MPF) (9/10). Sightings in this non-migratory species again up 40% (transects +32%).

Orangetip

First reported on 5th March [LB] but not then seen again until the 25th (21/3), it was then regular until 2nd July (21/6). But then 12 reports from 18th July to 6th September [MR] showing a significant second brood – I have to go back to 1998 to find a similar number of records of a second brood. Recorded from 256 squares (212), 72 new.

Small Copper

Recorded 130 tetrads (95), 46 new. First 10th February [JL] is another exceptionally early sighting, as was one on 5th March (LB), not seen then until 10th April(AT)(17/4). The last was 31st October [AB & MC] (26/11). Interestingly, a few other counties are now beginning to see anomalously early sightings, so it's no longer just Norfolk. Sightings increased by 28%, transects by 17% so it seems like a better year – although I still found them scarce, and since 2015 was their worst year ever, the increases were from a very low baseline.

Common Blue

First 4th May [ABu] (22/4). Last 11th October [AB & MC] (3/10) was an outlier, 27th September the previous sighting. Recorded from 136 squares (148), 33 were new. Sightings declined 16%, transects 20% – a very poor year.

A recent paper⁶ links declines in some species to plant community changes driven by nitrogen pollution, and it is tempting to speculate that this may be a factor in the long term decline in both this and Small Copper.

Holly Blue

Recorded from 229 tetrads (166) of which 75 were new. First 31st March [JM] (13/3) was late by recent standards. Last seen 17th October [DL] (6/10). Population growth may have peaked, but it remains the most ubiquitous blue in the countryside.

Chalkhill Blue

Recorded from 3 tetrads (3). This represents the two sites: Warham, and Ringstead Downs; plus a single sighting from Hainford on 19th July – there had been recent planting of wild flowers at the site (Woodland Burial Park) so this might have been inadvertently imported as a larva on a plant.

First seen 7th July [KSC] but this was an outlier, not seen again at Warham until 19th July (15/7), last 1st September [NO] (22/8). The BC annual count at Warham this year was 247 – a dramatic drop from last year's 2,239. This was a bad year nationally, with some sites further south also recording falls, but of around 50% not nearly 90%. However, as the most northerly colony we might reasonably expect it to be more affected by climate; it is also possible however, that specific site conditions may have played a part in the decline.

Silver-studded Blue

First reported 19th June (12/6), last 6th August [MGI] (9/8). It still hangs on at Cawston, where five were seen, but the three main colonies are Buxton Heath, East Ruston Common and Kelling Heath. All three saw peak counts improve on last year, and overall they were 33% higher than 2015. There was also pleasing evidence of spread within sites. One slight cloud on the horizon is the current plan to run the cables for the Hornsea Project Three wind farm through Kelling Heath. Hopefully this should not be a problem.

Brown Argus

Nationally a 27% decline, 29% decline on Norfolk transects – it seems clear this was weather. First seen 6th May [SP](10/4), then regular to 21st June(7/6). Second brood 18th July to 21st September (27/6-10/9), there was only one third brood sighting this year 4th October [AB & MC] (8/10-1/11). Clearly having got off to a late start it couldn't recover – but ironically, if third broods are wasted broods (as they seem to be in Wall Brown for instance), then we might see an improvement next year. Recorded from 41 tetrads (41), of which 10 were new.

Green Hairstreak

The first sighting was a very early 5th March [LB]. Then not seen until 20th April (17/4) then regularly until 15th June (15/6). Then seen 25th and last 6th July [i] (3/7). Highest count 7(10). Recorded from 32 squares (28), 6 were new.

⁶Feest, A., van Swaay, C., & van Hinsberg, A. (2014). Nitrogen deposition and the reduction of butterfly biodiversity quality in the Netherlands. *Ecological Indicators*, 39, 115–119. DOI: 10.1016/j.ecolind.2013.12.008.

Purple Hairstreak

Recorded from 32 Tetrads (30) of which 10 were new. First 6th July[i] (9/7), last 7th September [KL] (3/9). It seems to have settled on this flight period for the moment, possibly a result of similarly cold springs in both 2015 and 16. Still very under-recorded, it's been reported from 14% of surveyed squares.

White-letter Hairstreak

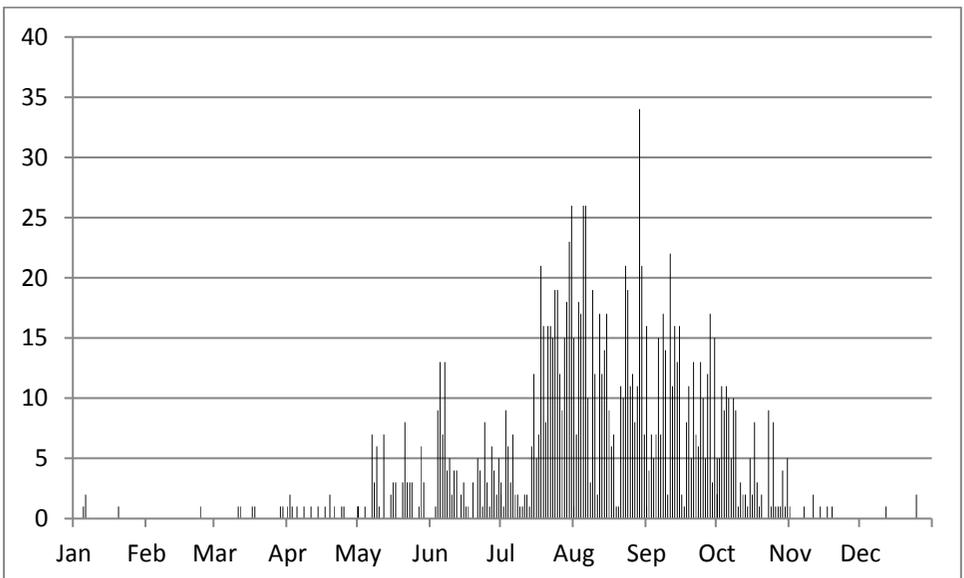
Recorded from 14 squares (20) of which 3 were new. First seen 6th July [DR] (3/7) last 12th August [SP, WS] (10/8). Nationally down 42% from 2015 (and that was a poor year). This species has declined 97% since 1976, so it can't really afford too many poor years. Beeston Common produced a number of sightings, while a new colony on the slopes at Burgh Castle is hopeful, so there's two new sites for those seeking a sighting. Meanwhile one actually turned up at County Hall this year right in front of the District Ecologist! Given that in previous years they've turned up in the NWT car park and on a BC field trip you have to say that they're doing their bit to not be under-recorded!

White Admiral

Recorded from 39 tetrads (51) of which 9 were new. First 1st July [BC] (26/6), and last 29th August. [PC](17/8) Highest count (40). No second brood, despite the warm autumn, perhaps a result of the late start – in years with a second brood the flight season usually starts in late June. I have no records for this species between Dereham, Watton and Attleborough, but I refuse to believe there's nothing in this particular triangle given populations in Ashwellthorpe, Hockering and Cockley Cley.

Red Admiral

Recorded from 374 Tetrads (321) 84 were new. First seen 5th January [i](9/1), but that and others on 6th, 20th January, 24th February were anomalies – it wasn't until 11th March that it began to be seen regularly. Again the last sightings on 25th December [RJ, DT] (29/12) were a reflection of that day's weather. Regular sightings however continued to 19th November. A plot of the number of sightings is informative:



It is clear that numbers shot up in August and again in September. (The numbers reported bear this out, no one saw more than ten until 31st July, then no more than 30 until 13th September when counts of “hundreds” and 50+ were reported.) A similar pattern was reported elsewhere in the country, suggesting that immigration is the major source of UK individuals initially, with home-grown emergence not playing a major part until the autumn, and over-wintering individuals not having a significant impact. We shall have to hope that Brexit doesn’t scare them away.

Small Tortoiseshell

First 27th January [i](9/2) was an extreme outlier – not then seen until 3rd March. Similarly the last on 27th December [FF](7/12) was extreme. Sightings were continuous from 3rd March to 31st October. Then 28th November, 4th December. Plotting the number of reports shows a significant increase in sightings immediately following the BC press release reporting their national decline. This was in some part a response to the publicity – I got a considerable number of emails telling me we were wrong – but there was a genuine increase – no-one reported more than 30 until the 24th August but from then until the 1st September I had at least one such count almost daily. However the national decline is real – 47% down on the previous year, a fact I attribute to a wave of decline moving through the country. Our own poor years were not mirrored elsewhere at the time, but as we recover other counties are now falling. It does look very like something spreading through the country moving east to west – and I suspect some new sort of egg parasite. As to the late August boom, it might have been local emergence – but in previous years I’ve seen a lot more caterpillars prior to such a boom, and high counts did slightly tend to cluster in coastal or near coastal localities, so I am inclined to tentatively adopt migration as a working hypothesis. (I’d feel happier if anyone had seen any flying in though). In any case a welcome recovery and one that gives some hope to the rest of the country. Recorded from 328 tetrads (273) of which 105 were new.

Peacock

First 4th January [AB & MC] (4/1), last 25th December [KS] (29/12). Nationally it recorded a 46% fall from 2015, which was itself a 45% fall from 2014. However, again not mirrored here, where transects only fell 10% and sightings 12%. So not a great year but not as bad as elsewhere. Unlike Small Tortoiseshell, I received a number of sightings of larvae in late June early July, with high counts of adults in August which slowly declined until the end of October, suggesting a home-grown second brood and no significant influx. Recorded from 343 Tetrads (311) of which 82 were new.

Painted Lady

The first sighting was a late 3rd May [RB] (13/4), last an exceptional 4th December [LC] (1/11) Recorded from 254 Tetrads (230). There was an exceptional surge in reports from 4th to 7th June with nearly a quarter of all reports coming in those four days. However Blakeney only reported 140 for the 4th, suggesting a widespread but not large movement. August again brought a surge of reports, but with most being of singletons I am inclined to ascribe this to local emergence.

Comma

Reported from 262 squares (211), of which 65 new. First 10th March [BP] (4/3). Hibernators were over by 17th May (20/5), first brood 24th June (26/6) blended into second brood with no clear separation, sightings continuous until 9th October (14/10) with irregular sightings then through till 30th October. Then nothing till a last 25th December [AB & MC] (16/12). Sightings and transects were broadly as last year.

Dark Green Fritillary

Recorded from 11 squares (12) but 2 were new and inland, both again in TF62. First seen 23rd June [PT] (22/6), last 24th August [PT] (9/8). Highest count of 44(61) on 17th July at Horsey [PT]. Numbers on the north coast remain low, only one report from there got into double figures, while seven from Horsey were in this category. I received only 35 sightings in all – while transect counts fell 19%. Given the recent storm surge in January 2017 north coast populations are likely to fall even lower this year I fear. However, I note that historically results were even worse in 2000-2002 and yet 2003 was a bumper year.

Silver-washed Fritillary

Recorded from 32 Tetrads (25) of which 16 were new to this period. The species continues to spread, with first records from five 20km squares. (TG00, TG23, TF80, TF72 and T52). Its strongholds remain Holt, Foxley and Swanton Novers, but there must be many woods as yet unrecorded. First seen 2nd July [CG] (29/7), last seen 31st Aug [BP] (30/8). Numbers were down this year but it still produced several valezina at Holt CP.

Speckled Wood

Recorded from 285 tetrads (226), 65 new. First sighting 30th March [KHu] (13/3), last 31st October [AB & MC] (26/10). It had a good autumn, with some reports of abundance, but otherwise people mostly saw ones or twos. So an improvement on last year but a species that still has some recovering to do after a poor couple of years.

Wall Brown

Recorded from 47 tetrads (52), 10 new. First seen 8th May [Many] (4/5), that brood ended 17th June (16/6). Second 17th July (31/7) to 7th September, (6/9), then possibly a third 21st September till 6th October and a final late 25th October [AS]. Last year I had hopes for a better year this year, but with a 26% decline in transect counts in Norfolk, 31% nationally (the worst year recorded) clearly my hopes were in vain.

Grayling

First 3rd July [RP] (1/7), last 24th September [PT] (10/9). Recorded from 27 tetrads (20), 4 new, of which one was at Grimston Warren, a long way from any other record. A good year for this species. Transects were up 54%, while many recorders reported higher numbers than last year, particularly at Winterton.

Gatekeeper

First 23rd May [BO] then not again till 9th June and then not seen until 1st July (16/6). Then seen regularly until 13th September (16/9). Then a final sighting 8th October [JL].

Transect counts were fairly stable, as were the number of records but it felt like there were fewer of these around, possibly an affect caused by their late start. Recorded from 290 tetrads (243), 81 new.

Meadow Brown

First 21st May [BYA] (30/5), but then not until 9th June. Regular until 11th September (12/9) but then two 4th October and 8th October [JL](4/10). Recorded from 384 squares (289), 102 new. A strange symmetry in dates between these two species, probably due to

weather conditions. I suspect rain deterring recorders rather than a genuine absence in the missing fortnight at the start of their flight periods.

Ringlet

First 6th June [EH] (15/6), last 8th October [JL] (1/9) was an outlier, otherwise sightings ended 1st September (23/8). Recorded from 315 tetrads (229), 107 new. Again I thought there far fewer than the figures show, reports were actually up 25% (and transects up 32%) while I was stomping around wondering where they all were. (Not where I was, clearly). It just shows the benefits of actually counting rather than relying on impressions (and makes me wonder about all those historic population assessments in Victorian journals).

Small Heath

First reports 6th May [SP] (10/5) until 15th September [PT] (8/10). Recorded from 53 tetrads (55), 15 new. Interestingly, the new squares were from all over the place, suggesting that it may have been a better year than the transect figures suggest. I have never been able to decide if this is a species that can remain at a site at a density that makes it near invisible (and so only appears in the record in good years) or if it actually exists as a meta-population, with local extinctions and recolonizations going on all the time. The effect is the same, in that it seems to pop up at sites and then disappear, only to turn up again some years later.

Incidentals and Migrants

Clouded Yellow

I received 25 reports (17) covering 23 tetrads (15) so a slightly larger influx. Interestingly, 15 sightings were between 21st August and 31st August and were mainly in the west of the county between King's Lynn and Ringstead. Nearly all those outside that period were in the east, mostly around the broads. The first was 7th July [MRi] (14/4), last 4th October [AB & MC] (13/9)

Purple Emperor

Two sightings in Sheringham Park this year of what might have been the same insect. 31st July [RW] in the park, and 17th August photographed from the gazebo [RCo]. With the nearest Suffolk colony now only 15km south of the Norfolk border it seems inevitable that we will have a breeding colony soon. However, I don't believe we have one yet, and the source of the Sheringham insects remains mysterious.

Marbled White

Two sightings this year. 23rd June at Dersingham Bog [JB] fits the pattern of other years of sightings in the north-west of the county. The second 9th August at Salhouse is unusual in being so close to the Emperor in space and time. Did they arrive together I wonder? A visit to the Devil's Dyke at Newmarket I made this year had this as the most abundant butterfly (just outnumbering Meadow Brown) and with its current expansion into Suffolk and Cambridge I would expect more sightings in the future.

Large Tortoiseshell

A single sighting 9th June [FF] at Beeston. Clearly an insect that had had a hard life by the time it was photographed (see page 35). This was at the same time as the major invasion of Diamond-back moths. (*Plutella xylostella*), which prompted alarmist headlines about the destruction of crops.

Camberwell Beauty

A single sighting reported. Houghton Hall 24th August [SPa] was somewhat early by historical standards and its provenance must be at least slightly suspect. I wonder if they'd had a wedding?

Common Eggfly (*Hypolimnas bolina jacintha*)

No doubt about this one's provenance! Photographed at Rockland St Peter, 28th September [via IT] this must have escaped from a breeder. Interestingly, Essex also had two sightings this year – must have been a sale on!

And that was 2016, yet another poor year – we must be due a good one soon. We can only hope. It just remains for me to thank all the recorders who submitted data this year. Their records will now go forward to the national database, to be used in research, conservation and the production of the next national atlas in 2020. Without their time and effort none of this would be possible.

Incidentally, one trend I notice is that where grid references were supplied, and the site description was precise enough for me to check (such as a churchyard or school), in a number of cases from a number of users the grid reference supplied was displaced by c100m to the east of the actual location. This is consistent with the use of a GPS system with an incorrect geodesic setting: without getting technical it should be set to OSGB 36 and not WGS 84. In most cases this didn't matter as the reference was still in the same 1km square, but I recommend calibrating your device by getting a readout at a specific location and then checking it at www.bnhs.co.uk/focuson/grabagridref/html/ to see how accurate it is. (of course if you use your phone set to OSGB then Google Maps will show you 100m to the west of where you actually are – the joys of technology).

List of Recorders

J Abbott, A Abbs, A Adams, C Aldersey, D Allan, C Allen, B & Y Anderson[BYA], S Anderson, T Anderson, M Andrews, J Appleton, A Archer, D Arthur, C Athowe[CA], D Atkin, J Attwood, D Austen, D Austin, S Austin, J Bacon, R Baillie-Sparkes, R Baker, G Baldock, D Balmer, S Bamber, H Bannister, A Banwell, P Barkham, C Barlow, J Barrett[JB], L Bashforth, S Bashforth, D Bean, P Benson, A Berryman, K Betts, A Billett, J Billmen, A Bimpson, A Blackburn, A Blackham, S Blanks, J Blofield, T Blumire, D Bolam, J Boniwell, I Boston, L Bovey[LB], F Bowe, A Brazil, K Brett, D Brice, D Briggs, M Bright, L Brightman, R Briscombe, S Brooke, A Brown [AB], R Brunton[RB], A Buchan, D Buckingham, R Bufton, J Bull, M Bullen, K Bundock, M Burdett, J Burdon, A Burkin[ABu], H Burrell, R Burrell, J Burton, T Burton, D Bye, A Cain, S Cain, N Calbraide, M Callow, C Campbell, A & B Carpenter, A Carrington, A Carroll, S Carter, P Cartledge, M Casey[MC], P Cawley, C Chapman, J Chase, A Chick, K Chilton, D Clark, N Clark, A Clarke, R Clarke[RC], M Clay, L Clayden[LC], K & M Claydon[KMC], M Clements, Dr P W L Clough, P Cobb, B Cobbold, R Cole, P Coleman[PC], R Coleman[RCo], S Colk, A Collins, H Collins, J Collins, G Corfield, M Coupe, M Crick, E Crookenden, D Crosby[DC], J Crouch, A J Culshaw, J Cummings[JC], P Curson, E Dack, A Dawson, V Day, G Dean, L Dean, D Devanche, C Devoran, N Di Mino, P Dolton[PD], P Donovan, J Dossetor, P Douch, M Dove, C Doward, M Dowland, G Drown, A Duff, J & G Dunmore, J Dunmore, J Dunn, C Durdin, S Dye, J Eborall, M Eeles, V Egan, B Ellis, J Emerson, K Evans, C Everitt, L Evers, D Fairhead, R Fairhead, S Fairhead, E Fairweather, J Fairweather, F Farrow[FF], R Farrow, A Farthing, T Fawcett, P Feakes,

S Field, M Finnemore, G Fletcher, K Flowerday, M & P Fogden[MPF], D Folkes, A Ford, K Forster, R Fox, A Franco, M French, W French, B Frewin, S Fry, J Furse, Dr G Fyfe, T Gallant, C & E Gambrell[CG], S Gantlett[SG], M Garlick, K Gay, M Ghullam, T Giles, D Gilham, P & M Gluth, R Godfrey[RG], H Goody, E Goodyear, C Green[CGr], L Green, I Greenhill , M Greenland[MGI], M Gregory, L Griffiths, M Gurney, K Hadley, M Hadley, L Hague, A Hall, J Halls, A Hammond, P Hampson, M Harcup, S Harris, R Hartgrove-Hewitt, M Harvey, S Hathaway, A Hayden, C Haywood, S Heal, S Hearle, P J Heath[PJH], K Henry[KH], H Hepburn, E Hibberd[EH], L Hill, D Hipperson, M Hoar, M Hoare, D Hodgkinson, R Hoe, R Hoffman, J Hogg, M Hoit, M Holmes, R Holmes, D Holt, H Honey, S Hookway, M Hooper, D Howie, D Howson, D Hudson, M Hughes, J Hulme, K Husband[KHu], C Hutchinson, F Inglis-Reeves, H Insley, I Iosson, D Jakeways, P James, J Jarman, A Jenkins, R Jenkins, S Jesudason, F Jolliffe, B Jones, D Jones, R Jones[RJ], G Keeble, J Kelly, T Kemp, T Kent, A Kerr[AK], P Kerrigan, C Kerton, C Kettle, T Kettle, A Keyse, L Kindleysides, C King, L King, S King, D Knight, J Knightbridge, J Lake, S Lake, M Laker, J Lamb, K Langdon, S Laskey, L Lawes, P Leeder, D Lester, S Levene, R Lewis, C Leybourn, K Limb[KL], J Lines[JL], H Livesey, Lockwood, D Longden, D Longe[DL], L & S Lonsdale, P Lorber, P Lucas, S Ludkin, A Lumbard, C Lyus, J Macready, T Maguire, A Manon, A Mansfield, J Marchant, M Rowe, N Marsh, S Marshall, B Martin, K Martland, J Masala, D Mason, P Mathews[PM], J Matthews, J McCallum, G McColl, T McKie, S McManus, J Mee, C Melhuish, J Metcalf[JM], S Miller-Smith, A Milner, F Mitchell, R Mitchell, S Mitchell, T Mitchell, T Money, A Monteath, B Moore, N Moran, H Morris, D Moss, A Mullenger, S Munden, C A Murray, D Murrell, C A Murrey, A & C Naden, C Neal, T Needham, L Nicholson, C Nobbs, D Nobbs, A Oakes, A Oakley, S Oliver, B Osborne[BO], N Owens[NO], S Page[Spa], B Palmer[BP], T Pankhurst, K Parker, M Partridge, T Peach, S Pennell[SP], K Pennington, C Porter, L Porter, R Porter[RP], C Poulson, J Powley, L Prekopp, T Preston, C Pritchard, I Pritchard, S Pritchard, J Prochera, M Pygott, M Radford, K Radley, S Ramsey, B Rasberry, K Read, H Richards, M Riches[MR], D Richmond[DR], R Richmond, A Roberts, S Roberts, C Robson, M Rooney[MR], J Rowe, N Rye, T Sabin, J Sadler, K Sales, M Sanders, A Sandfield, J Santler, K Saul[KS], E Saunders, J Saunders, J Savage, A Sayer, A Scrivener, A Sharp, J Sharp, C Sharpe, L Sheldrake, N Shepherd, G Sherwin, E Shilland, S Short, A Simpson, L Simpson, S Skipp, A Smith, D Smith, E Smith, P Smith, R Smith[RS], J Speed-Andrews, C Spinks, C Springall, A Steele[AS], R Steele, I Stemp, N Stevens, CR Stevenson, K Stevenson, R Stewart, W Stewart[WS], J Stockdale, M Stolworthy, T Strudwick[TS], K Stuart-Clarke[KSC], J Stubbley, I Tart[IT], D Taylor[DT], P Taylor[PT], A Tegala[AT], D Thomas, A Thurston, S Tily, A Tipper, C Tunmore, R Turner, D Tyler, Prof. G J G Upton, G Upton, A W Humphrey, D W Longden, A Wakeham, P Walton, A Ward, C Ward, I Ward, L Wardle, J Warham, K Warner, M Warren, I Watt, I Wedge, S Weeks, E Wells, J Wells, P Wells, S West, D Westlake, T Wiley, D White, I White[IW], S White, A Whittaker[AW], M Whittley, R Wilby, H Wilcock, T Willey , R Williams, C Willmoth, L Wilshaw, T Winter, S Witham[SW], I Wood, M Woodcock, C Woodley, A Woodrow, P Woods, V Woods, A Woodward, I Woolner, D Wright, H Wright, M Wright[MW], E Wyatt, D Yaxley, D Yeomans

Records were also received from Bug Alert, The National Trust, NBIS, Norfolk Bryophyte Group, Norfolk Flora Group, Norfolk Wildlife Trust and various internet forums (shown as i in the text above).

Moths Matter

Greg Bond

As I write in early April the generally mild and dry spring has provided many of us with some excellent catches, mostly of the commoner *Orthosia* species such as Common Quakers and Hebrew Characters but also including scarcer species such as Pale Pinion. This is a relatively recent colonist to Norfolk from the south which now appears increasingly commonly at both ends of the year, overwintering between times. Rarer still, there have been several reports this year of Small Eggar, a scarce species more often recorded from larval spinings in Blackthorn/Hawthorn hedging in summer than flying as an adult in early spring.

There have also been reports of apparent migrants, unusual in the county so early, such as the micro Diamondback moth and a couple of Gems, so perhaps we are in the running for an excellent year all round. This will be good as the settled dry weather gives moths a chance to have a decent breeding season, topping up what have been generally declining numbers in recent years.

The spring weather also meant BC could survey for adults of one of our rarest moths, Barred tooth-striped. First found locally in the Brecks in 1980, numbers of this moth are usually assessed by larval counts but trapping overnight in mid-March in beautiful warm weather we recorded an unprecedented 14 adults. Sites for this species in the Brecks remain confidential as it seems to be at best extremely rare in the county and not much commoner in its main areas of distribution in the south. Incidentally, one bonus of the lovely weather at the time was the numbers of butterflies, particularly Brimstones brightening up our visit.

119,000 records were submitted to Norfolk Moths in 2016. Many thanks to all those who do submit them, as they form a growing local database helpful for conservation purposes and are also submitted to BC nationally. Amongst other purposes these will then go towards finalisation of the new Macro moth Atlas due for publication later this year. There is also a second atlas, for micro moths in preparation but as yet no provisional publication date has been announced – no surprise really given the size of the task!

As a plea, please do submit your records via the County recorder, Jim Wheeler ideally via the website or electronically, rather than direct to Butterfly Conservation as this helps with record flow and they are, as mentioned, sent on anyway. We are lucky in Norfolk having such an excellent resource as the Norfolk Moths website so please do use it.

National Moth night this year is scheduled for 12th-14th October with the theme of Ivy. One of the more interesting ways of recording autumn moths is searching ivy flowers at night with torches to see what might be nectaring on them, so if you've got flowering ivy near you and you fancy a go, good luck and please let us know how you get on. If it helps, moth eyes tend to glow red in torch light.

Finally, once again we are arranging a number of moth orientated events this summer so please do come along. We always set traps the night before and try to ensure that everyone sees what has been caught, with friendly identification advice to hand if you need it. It is usually also possible to photograph specimens *in situ* before they are released. A full schedule of relevant events can be found elsewhere in this newsletter, as can several events being arranged by Norfolk Moth Survey.

The Curse of the Black Swallowtail

Kevin Radley

At the Norfolk Branch BC AGM in October, the delightful guest speaker, Matthew Oates, proclaimed almost in passing, that somewhere in the room someone probably had an almost unhealthy desire to see a Black Swallowtail. An overwhelming self-consciousness propelled me back to my schooldays whereupon some mischievous misdemeanour had occurred and to a class-full of pupils the teacher put the accusation forward that the perpetrator was someone in close proximity. An almost involuntary response, in both instances, was to sink lower into my chair as imagined flashing neon lights appeared above me illuminating my guilt. Matthew has his demons, namely the all purple aberrant form of the Purple Emperor (*Apatura iris*) ab. *iole*. Mine is indeed the all black Swallowtail (*Papilio machaon*) ab. *niger/nigra*; and though I'd never met or communicated with Matthew before that moment, he clearly suspected another lost soul suffering the same allurements.

Although equally attributed to the German naturalists Alexander Hayne in 1895 and Carl Reutti in 1853, (these specimens almost certainly being aberrations of *gorganus* species, whereas later English recorded specimens being of *britannicus* sub species) it was not until 1921 that the first ab. *niger* was recorded in this country – in fact caught by an angler in his landing net at Ranworth, Norfolk. This melanic form of Swallowtail with all the pale ground colour on its wings clouded with black scales, the only remaining colour is a crescent of blue scales on the hind wings, caused such a stir in an era when collecting butterflies, especially varieties or aberrations, was probably at its peak, that it was mentioned in a daily newspaper. Lord (Walter) Rothschild, an avid collector, on hearing about the specimen paid £65 to acquire it for his museum collection, a record amount paid for any butterfly at that time.



In his book 'Butterfly Farmer' L Hugh Newman (1953), recounts how his father, Leonard Woods Newman, breeder and supplier of butterflies and moths to collectors great and not so great, heard of this remarkable Black Swallowtail and made a trip to Norfolk to collect up some larvae from the vicinity of its capture. Some ten years elapsed when in June 1930, a schoolboy wrote to them complaining that a 'nasty black thing' had emerged from his purchased chrysalides and could he please have his money back. The creature was subsequently packed carefully (dead) and returned. It turned out to be, as hoped, a melanic specimen. He sent the boy £7 and two 'normal' Swallowtails as recompense and the 'nasty black thing' was offered to Lord Rothschild for £25, a bargain which was readily accepted.

The Black Swallowtail
original drawing by Kevin Radley

Mention is made of a further seven of these melanic butterflies, attributed to a recessive gene, bred at that time on the 'farm' in Bexley, Kent. Not all of them being equally black, in some examples the patterning on the wings could still be seen "as though through smoked glass", as figured by F W Frohawk in his book 'Varieties of British Butterflies', labelled *ab. obscura* alongside a true *ab. niger*. In his book, simply titled 'Butterflies' (published in 1945 and which started the massive New Naturalist series of books) E B Ford includes a whole chapter on the genetics and breeding of butterflies, talking in depth about the science behind the Black Swallowtail form. It concludes that, as mentioned earlier, a recessive gene is responsible, as opposed to an outside influence – heat/cold on the larval/pupal stage of its life-cycle being the cause of aberration, as is the case in some other species.

Always extremely rare, only 17-30 Black Swallowtails have been recorded as being bred or 'taken' in history, depending on reference sources. By 1965, in E A (Ted) Ellis' book 'The Broads' (New Naturalist series No 46) he states "Too many of Norfolk's black or dusky Swallowtails have been snatched away as prizes for collections for any honest estimate of the survival value of their melanistic tendencies to be made".

Although most of these recordings, or 'captures', appear to have the Ranworth area as a nucleus, an intriguing short article by Ted Ellis, entitled 'Black Swallowtails' published in the book 'Ted Ellis a Tapestry of Nature' (1998 Eastern Daily Newspapers), which was printed after his death, mentions an individual insect that he saw at Wheatfen Broad in the Yare Valley on May 29, 1944. Since seeing that individual, he had not heard of any further sightings until in June 1979, when two children found a 'rather tattered large black butterfly' in their garden in Horsey. It was taken to a Mr John Buxton for identification and it proved to be a melanistic variety of the Swallowtail.

The wonderful monograph entitled 'The Swallowtail Butterfly' published by Butterfly Conservation in 1993 – which incidentally contains most beautiful black and white illustrations by artist Douglas Hammersley – contains an equally fascinating tale of how the author, Ivan West, and a certain Dr Bernard Watts, went to Martham Broad in July 1985, having received a 'phone call telling of a "large black butterfly that looked rather like a Swallowtail" having been observed. The sight of it nectaring on Valerian then disappearing over the embankment, never to be seen again, is a vision that I covet. This possibly being the last reported sighting of *ab. niger*.

Further sightings are conspicuous by their absence; even though the topic is sometimes re-vitalised on the internet. Has the gene responsible now died out? Most of our butterfly species are in a much poorer state now than in its apparent heyday of 1930s. Maybe somewhere out there an insect with that special gene is just waiting for the right moment to make an appearance. Could it be possible that the next sighting of a large dark butterfly caught out of the corner of my eye, sending my heart racing, prove to be a true 'Lord of the Broads', the Black Swallowtail, not a large, usually female, Peacock Butterfly (sizes and distances are deceptive over reed beds) and in so doing, lift a curse that seems to have been put upon me by this imperious butterfly.

Top: Barred tooth-striped trapped mid March in the Brecks during a BC survey. See Greg Bonds report in Moths Matter on page 32. Photo by Greg Bond.

Bottom: A rather tired Large Tortoiseshell photographed by Francis Farrow at Beeston. See Andy Brazil's report on page 28.



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Before (top) and after (bottom) the skipper work party at Leziate
Photo by Judy Dunmore (See article on page 9)