



Dear All

Welcome to the Spring edition of Butterfly Conservation Wales' Newsletter, produced by our Wales team.



For those (probably everyone!) itching to get out, there are lots of opportunities to get involved. Wales staff have completed our Review of Priority Species and now appeal for your help to locate sites where four Priority Species have not recently been recorded, if ever. If you're in Montgomeryshire you could help fill the gaps in the Distribution Map for Orange-tip. And, of course, all contributions to Frits About are very welcome.

Holly Blue: G Tordoff

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Volunteers' help needed with Priority Species



by Clare Williams (Senior Conservation Officer)
and Andrea Rowe (Conservation Officer)

Priority Species Review completed

The review of Butterfly Conservation's work on High Priority butterflies and moths in Wales, ([Wales eNews, January 2021](#)) looked at:

- what BC Wales have delivered for these species (six butterflies and twelve moths)
- what has worked well
- what we need to do to improve their conservation status.
- factors limiting conservation delivery and how to tackle these barriers

We have a small staff team in Wales and the list of actions required to conserve threatened butterflies and moths is very long! Nevertheless, by working in a well-co-ordinated and focussed way alongside our volunteers and in partnership with other organisations these actions become significantly more achievable.

The review identified opportunities where BC's volunteers are well placed to fill delivery gaps for particular species. Priorities for 2021 are summarised below. Please read the following five pages for details.

We hope you'll get involved

Volunteers will help us achieve our goals for these species whilst spending much-needed time back in nature. We'd like you to look in **particular sites**, many (but not all) within the **Priority Landscapes** shown in the map below, for these four species: [Grizzled Skipper](#), [White-spotted Sable Moth](#), [Narrow-bordered Bee-hawkmoth](#) and [Forester](#).

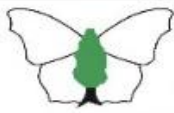
And a big thank you!

to everyone who responded to our request for help with establishing more [transects](#) in Wales (particularly those targeting priority butterflies) and with signing up to the [Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey](#) (WCBS).

We now have a new transect set up to target the [Small Blue](#) on the Gower and help offered with a remote WCBS square in north Wales, amongst others.



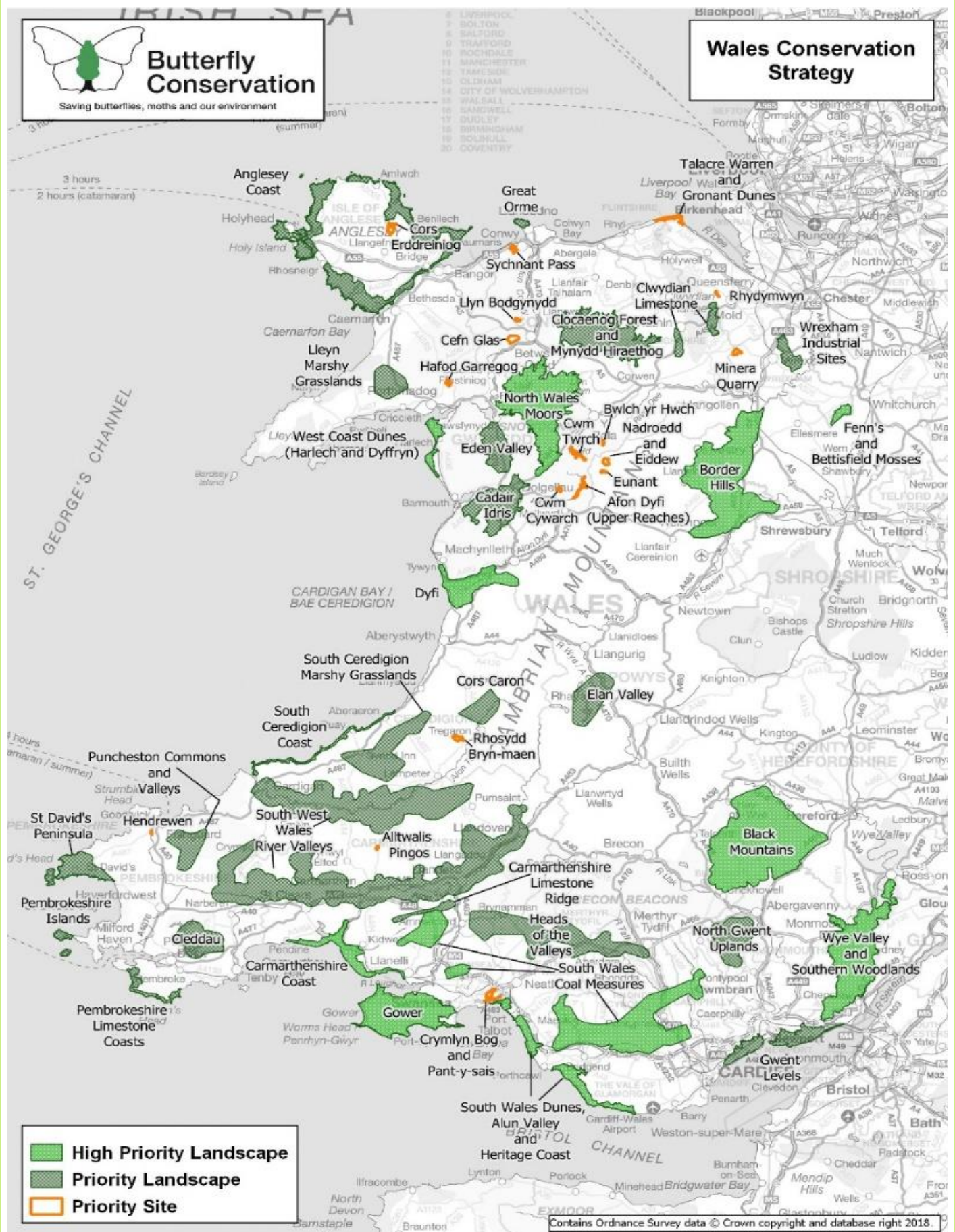
Small Blue: Ben Williams



Butterfly Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Wales Conservation Strategy



1. How you can help Grizzled Skipper

We would like people to use their knowledge of their local landscape to identify **other sites where Grizzled Skipper may occur, outside of known sites** and to visit them during the butterfly's flight period. This will help us better understand whether current sites sit within a wider site network. **BC priority landscapes** (see map) are a good place to start, with the butterfly occurring in the following:

- **Wye Valley and Southern Woodlands (Wales)** - known sites include Slade Wood and MoD Caerwent in the south of the landscape.
- **Carmarthenshire Coast** – known sites at MoD Pendine, MoD Pembrey and Pembrey Forest.
- **Border Hills (Wales)** – known site at Llanymynech Rocks (Wildlife Trust Reserve).
- **North Gwent Uplands** – single known site on private land in the south of the landscape.
- **South Wales Dunes, Alun Valley and Heritage Coast** – known from Merthyr Mawr National Nature Reserve.
- **Puncheston Commons and Valleys** – known from a private site in the west of the landscape.
- **Clwydian Limestone** – known from BC's Eyarth Rocks reserve but no records since 2010. Also known from Loggerheads Country Park and adjacent land (last record 2014). Visits to these two sites in addition to any other suitable habitat in the landscape would be very helpful.
- **Wrexham Industrial Estate** – known from a number of sites on the Wrexham Industrial Estate.

Useful information

Distribution (known sites in Wales)

Ten current colonies (records within the last ten years) are known, thinly spread through the vice counties of Monmouthshire, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Denbighshire, Glamorgan and Montgomeryshire. There are a small number of sites with no recent records, which require resurvey to confirm continued presence. Single individuals have been recorded at a small number of other sites but breeding colonies have not been confirmed.



Find out more about [Grizzled Skipper](#)

Grizzled Skipper on Wild Strawberry, with bare ground: G Tordoff

Flight period: Adults usually fly between the **end of April and the beginning of June**, so visits to suitable habitat during these spring months are the best way of confirming the butterfly's presence.

Habitats: In Wales, it occurs on sites with disused artificial substrates (spoil tips, quarry waste and derelict industrial sites), unimproved grasslands, sand dunes and woodland rides and clearings.

Requirements: All these need to be present in close proximity to allow the butterfly to successfully complete its life cycle.

- An abundance of one or more key caterpillar food plants. **Wild Strawberry** is the main food plant on many sites with **Creeping Cinquefoil**, **Barren Strawberry** and **low-growing Bramble/Dewberry** being the dominant food plant on others.
- These food plants need to be growing in **short vegetation** and/or on **bare ground** in sunny, sheltered locations.
- The adult butterflies need taller grassland areas for basking and roosting and scrub to provide both shelter and focal points for mate location.



Example of habitat with abundant Strawberry, bare ground and taller stems: G Tordoff

Please let us know when you have visited a site, whether or not you saw Grizzled Skipper. Please email us via our [webpage contact form](#) with subject line 'Grizzled' or via this link [email](#). For positive sightings you can use the [iRecord](#) app.

Thank you

2. White-spotted Sable Moth *Anania Funebris*

How you can help

There are a small number of sites with no recent records, which require resurvey to confirm the continued presence of the moth:

- **Carmel Cairns** Grid Ref. SN583157 (BC Priority Landscape: Carmarthenshire Limestone Ridge). Approximately 5m north-west of Ammanford and just south of Carmel village.
- **Pwll Du Head/Point** Grid Ref. SS5786 (BC High Priority Landscape: Gower)
- **North Pembrokeshire Coast** – Goodwick Cliffs (Grid Ref. SM950395) and Strumble Head (Grid Ref. SM895412).
- **Aberbargoed Grasslands** Aberbargoed Grasslands National Nature Reserve is situated on the eastern side of Aberbargoed. Grid Ref. ST163995 (<https://greenspacescaerphilly.co.uk/aberbargoed-grasslands>).

Distribution in Wales

Historically this moth was widespread in Wales, recorded from all vice counties except Anglesey, Breconshire and Radnorshire. The moth appears to have declined in Wales with post 2000 records from 18 sites and post 2010 records from only 10 sites.

Find out more about [White-spotted Sable Moth](#)

Flight period: This beautiful little moth flies by day, between May-July, in a spinning motion that can be difficult to follow.

Photo: Anania funebris: Chris Manley



Habitats and foodplant: It is associated with a sole foodplant, Goldenrod which can be found in woodland glades and margins and also rough hillsides and cliffs, particularly on limestone. Goldenrod flowers between June and September making identification of suitable areas for the moth difficult within the moth's flight period. View/download [Goldenrod](#) pdf.



Goldenrod basal rosette and flowers

Please let us know when you have visited a site, whether or not you saw White-spotted Sable Moth. Please email via our [webpage contact form](#) with subject line 'White-spotted Sable moth', or via this link [email](#). Thank you.

3. Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth

How you can help

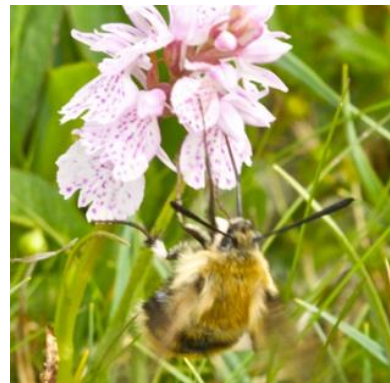
We would like to encourage people to use their knowledge of their local landscape to identify and survey **sites that support suitable habitat in Priority Landscapes** and anyone surveying or visiting **sites that support the Marsh Fritillary butterfly** to keep a look for this species. If you have seen this moth at a site before, we would also encourage you to revisit to see if it is still present. This will help us better understand the current status and distribution of this moth.

Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth, Cwm Cadlan 2019: Paul Dunn

BC priority landscapes (see map) are a good place to start – these are where this species occurs:

- **West Coast Dunes (Harlech and Dyffryn)** – known site at Morfa Harlech
- **Dyfi** – known site at Aberdyfi
- **Gower** - known sites include Fairwood and Welshmoor Commons
- **Carmarthenshire Coast** – known sites include Pembrey Forest
- **Llyn Marshy Grassland** – known site at Cors y Wlad

Other sites this species has recently been recorded outside Priority Habitats include Mynydd Selen (Carmarthenshire), Lavernock Point (Glamorganshire) and Cwm Cadlan (Breconshire).



Distribution in Wales

This species was historically recorded all over Britain but is now mainly confined to the south-west and Scotland, with scattered sites in Wales. It is identified by Butterfly Conservation Wales' as a High Priority moth.

It is recorded from the following Welsh vice-counties: Anglesey, Cardiganshire, Caernarvonshire, Carmarthenshire, Glamorganshire, Merionethshire.

In 2019 multiple sightings were made over multiple days from Cwm Cadlan NNR in Breconshire - the first records in the vice-county for nearly 100 years.

Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth, Cwm Cadlan 2019: Ben Williams



Identification: A day-flying moth. The adults are powerful fliers and can cover large distances at speed, hovering periodically at flowers to feed, making this species tricky to survey. It has transparent wing patches and a furry body that resembles a large bumblebee, however compared to a bumblebee it is a much more agile flyer, flies straighter and hovers when nectaring, whilst a bee lands on flowers to feed.

Flight period: from late April into July, but the peak is mid May to mid June. They nectar on a variety of flowers, but seem to prefer Lousewort, Bugle, Bluebells and Bird's-foot Trefoil growing in sunny, sheltered positions.

Habitat and larval food plant: it favours rhos pasture and lowland moorland where the caterpillars' sole foodplant, Devil's-bit Scabious, grows in abundant patches in open situations. This is also the habitat that supports the Marsh Fritillary butterfly.

Find out more about [Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth](#)

Please let us know when you have visited a site, whether or not you saw Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth.

Please email via our [webpage contact form](#) with subject line 'Narrow-bordered' or via this link [email](#).

Thank you

4. Forester *Adscita statices*

How you can help

The Forester is day-flying moth, so it is often recorded by chance. It flies in sunny weather and rests on vegetation when conditions are overcast. We would like to encourage people use their knowledge of their local landscape to identify and survey **sites that support habitat and plant species where this moth may occur. We also want to encourage anyone who currently walks a transect to look for this species while undertaking their transects.** If you have seen this moth at a site before, we would also encourage you to revisit to see if it is still present. This will help us better understand the current status and distribution of this moth.

BC priority landscapes (see map) are a good place to start – these are some where the Forester occurs:

- **West Coast Dunes (Harlech and Dyffryn)** – known sites include Harlech
- **Elan Valley** – known site at Gilfach Farm Meadows
- **Wye Valley and Southern Woodlands (Wales)** - known sites include MoD Caerwent
- **Carmarthenshire Limestone Ridge** – known sites include Mynydd Llangynderyn
- **South Wales Coal Measures** – known sites include Mynydd Meio and Caerau

However, we would encourage anyone out for a daytime walk in sunny conditions to keep an eye open for the Forester in suitable habitats.



Top and middle: Forester, G Tordoff

Distribution in Wales

This species was formerly widely distributed throughout Wales, but recorded distribution has declined. It is identified by Butterfly Conservation Wales' as a High Priority moth. It is still recorded throughout Wales from Harlech in the north to Caerwent in the south and recently on the Pembrokeshire coast.

Flight period: The Forester adult flies from mid May to end of June with the flying peak in mid June.

Identification: The male's wingspan is 25-31 and the female's 22-25mm. It is a small beautiful, distinctive moth with a strong submetallic green sheen to forewings and body. There are three British Forester moths, the Forester Moth, Cistus Forester and Scarce Forester. These species are superficially almost identical and difficult to distinguish from each other, but the Scarce Forester is not found in Wales and the Cistus Forester is confined only to the Great Orme area of north Wales and is generally smaller than the Forester.

Habitats and food plants: Despite its name, the Forester uses a variety of open habitats such as damp grassland, limestone grassland, heathland, coastal sand dunes and has recently been found on colliery spoil tips. Females lay eggs in June and July on host plants Common Sorrel and Sheep's Sorrel. Adults are known to nectar on a variety of plants including Bramble, Ragged Robin, Scabious, clovers and Viper's-bugloss (but probably use an even wider variety including willowherb).

Find out more about the [Forester](#)

Forester habitat at Rhydcymerau: G. Tordoff



Please let us know when you have visited a site, whether or not you saw Forester Moth. Please email via our [webpage contact form](#) with subject line 'Forester', or via this link [email](#). Thank you

Operation Orange-tip

by Douglas Boyes, Montgomeryshire County Butterfly Recorder

The Orange-tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*) is a fairly common species over much of the UK, including Montgomeryshire. The butterfly could occur anywhere in the county where the foodplants are found. Yet, my new [digital atlas of the county's butterflies](#) reveals a rather patchy distribution, which almost certainly does not reflect the species' true range. As a result, I'm launching 'Operation Orange-tip', an initiative to encourage recording of this species to better understand its distribution in the county.



Orange-tip: D Boyes



Orange-tip underside (male):

The first males are often seen in late March, as they establish and patrol their new territories, awaiting the emergence of the rather less colourful females. The gaudy coloration of the males warns birds that it would not make a good snack, as it is highly distasteful. To achieve this, it is thought the caterpillar accumulates mustard oils from its foodplant. The females preferred plants for laying eggs are cuckooflower and garlic mustard. At night, the adults can often be seen at rest on these plants. They hold their wings shut, displaying a beautiful green mottled underside that serves as excellent camouflage.

I need your help to send in any sightings of this butterfly. It doesn't matter where these are from: gardens, nature reserves, road verges, even supermarket car parks! With your help, we can build up a better picture of where this species occurs in Montgomeryshire. The species is usually on the wing from late March/early April and can be seen flying right through until June.

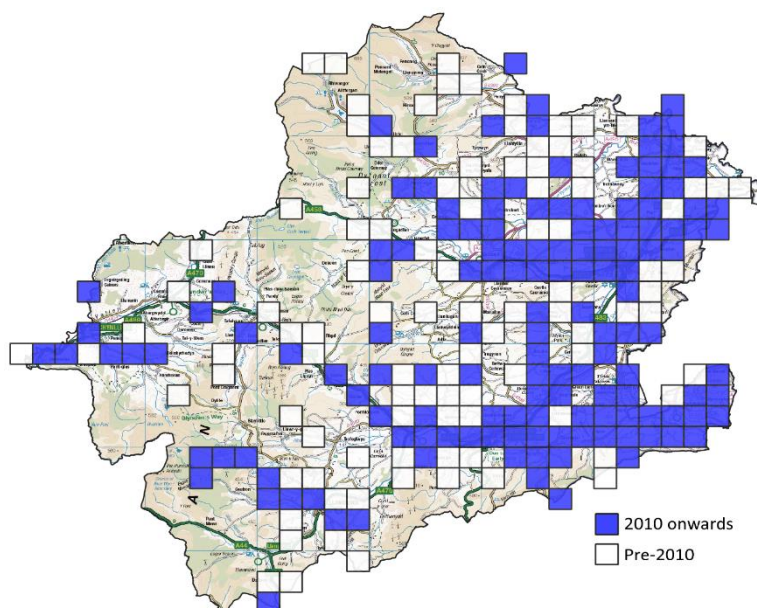
If you happen to spot any other spring-flying butterflies whilst out and about, please do send in these sightings too. I just need the basic information that forms a biological record (the four 'W's): who (the recorder's name), what (the species seen), where (a site name plus an OS grid reference), and when (a date).

The atlas map shows the blue 2km x 2km squares where the species has been recorded recently, as well as white squares in which the species has not been seen for over a decade. Let's see how many squares we can find Orange-tips in this Spring! Whilst all sightings are important, it would be particularly exciting if you were able to find Orange-tips in completely new squares or those tetrads with only old records. If exploring new areas, remember to stick to public footpaths or gain the landowner's permission.

For more details about Operation Orange-tip and how to get involved check out:

www.douglasboyes.co.uk/orangetip

My digital atlas detailing all 43 butterfly species that have been seen in the county can be accessed here: www.douglasboyes.co.uk/atlas



Other Nature News Roundup

[Wales Nature Week](#), 29th May – 6th June The week kicks off with [Wales Garden BioBlitz 2021](#) - record all the species seen in your garden or park in the 24 hours from mid-night to midnight on Saturday 29th May.

It's [No Mow May](#) – discover how to attract 10 times more pollinators to your lawn with Plantlife's campaign.

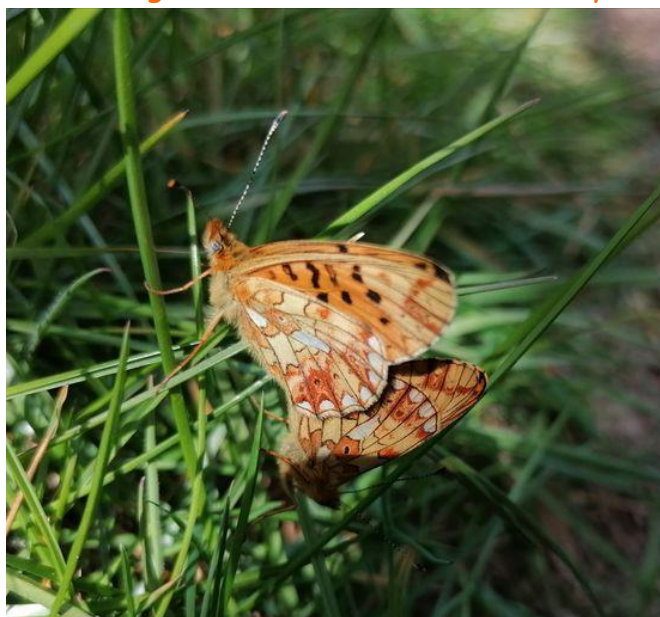
FRITS ABOUT, 2021 - No.1

Richard Smith Writes:

Welcome. This is our first, albeit brief, "Frits About" of 2021 which includes 19 new reports received in 2021 up to 1st May.

Due to (you know what related) travel restrictions, the numbers of reports have continued to be limited so far this year, as BC wished to align with regulations in Wales and not encourage travel simply to see or record butterflies. However, as restriction on numbers of people in outdoor situations eases, hopefully more people will get out and about and reports will soon increase. Back in March, there was evidence of large numbers of Marsh Fritillary caterpillars but as these were all related to specially licenced translocations by professionals, there is not much here for Frits About. Meantime, however, Wales has moved into PBF flight season and it is encouraging already that positive reports have flowed from many of the Montgomeryshire sites, Cwm Soden/Silio in Ceredigion and (almost Wales) Ewyas Harold Common. Eyarth Rocks and a possible new site near Ewyas Harold (but in Wales) are yet to be visited.

Mating pair of Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Cwm



Soden/Silio, 23 April 2021: A Rowe

[Please click here](#) to read Frits About No. 1 in full

Butterfly Conservation is a charity registered in England and Wales (254937) and in Scotland (SCO39268)
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Gwarchod Glöynnod Byw Butterfly Conservation Wales, Gardd Fotaneg Genedlaethol Cymru, (Stafell Wallace), Llanarthne, Sir Gaerfyrddin / c/o National Botanic Garden of Wales (Wallace Room), Llanarthne, Carmarthenshire SA32 8HG

