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## "FRITS ABOUT, 2021 - No.2"

177 new reports - received from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021 to 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021

### Welcome.

Apologies that this second issue of 2021 has been very late emerging - even moreso than some of Wales's fritillaries this year! Not sure of the butterfly' excuses, but mine involved a long slow recuperation after surgery in early May. Good to see that Facebook nature groups are still a great source of information and being fairly accessible (to those prepared), is a good way of keeping very up to date, without having to put up with social sagas & trivia of rest of social media. Thank you, nonetheless, to all those "faithfuls" who have sent Judy or myself e-mail contributions. We've had an impressive number of reports, although as it happens, covering the flight periods of all Welsh frit species. Notably in 2021 so far, there are few if any new sites found, in contrast to 2018 & 2019 in particular.

Of the three earliest flying species (PBF, SPBF, MF), apart from late starts, there hasn't been much trend of note - in some ways a very average year perhaps. That said, numbers were modest at best, whether a factor of the general late 2021 emergence or not, isn't clear. Ben Williams' timed MF counts around Hirwaun were encouraging at close to 100 on each of two regular sites. Liam Olds did send a report (not to hand) from Castlemartin in Pems, (where adult numbers are often high) suggesting good numbers on day of his visit.

DGF, HBF & SWF also emerged later generally in 2021, with most 2 to 3 weeks later than last year and a week to 10 days later than last decade average. DGF haven't been reported in big numbers on sites but there have been reports from many coastal sites as usual. HBF has shown much lower sightings than 2020 (best year to date of last 25), being about 40% down and with a slightly shorter flight period. SWF is expected to be reported for a few weeks yet.

Our next mission in South Wales at least will be **MF larval web searches**. We may not make up for all time lost in 2020 but we'll be doing our best at branch, BC staff and working with partners and volunteers. The task annually becomes larger as MF occupied sites increase - a measure of success?

**Richard Smith**

*As always, contributions to Frits About are very welcome - but don't forget to send in your records to [County Butterfly Recorders](#) as well. Please keep Frits About contributions coming to me at my e-mail address [rgsoverton@gmail.com](mailto:rgsoverton@gmail.com) Contributions to Frits About are the views of the individuals concerned and do not necessarily represent the views of Butterfly Conservation Wales. There is also a [Facebook discussion group](#), [North Wales branch's Facebook page](#) and [BC Wales Facebook page](#).*

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## 1. Pearl-bordered Fritillary (PBF) 23 new reports Flight period normally late April to end May. (14 reports already in 2021, No 1)

### Almost Wales (Herefordshire/Monmouthshire border)

Ian Hart advised that (at **Ewyas Harold Common**): "40+ on the wing today (4<sup>th</sup> May), despite the blustery weather".

Gareth Tonks: "I managed to visit **Ewyas Harold** on the 7<sup>th</sup>. "Not bad numbers of PBF, about **20 or more** in about half an hour in not bad condition".

The 2020 report of what would be a **new PBF site** in far north of VC35, near **Llanthony**, is waiting to be confirmed by photographs, although a visit there by Paul Dunn on 5<sup>th</sup> May revealed no butterflies at all. Some 2021 photos then sent by Nicola Davies (BBNP), although poor quality, appeared most likely to be **SPBF**.

### Ceredigion

Paul Dunn visited the Ceredigion site on 19<sup>th</sup> May and said that he saw about **30** small frits of which 70/30 SPBF to **PBF**

### Montgomeryshire

Tammy Stretton advised on 8<sup>th</sup> May: "Unfortunately the weather yesterday was very variable within a very small area! Whilst surveys were completed at Y Frochas & Y Figyn, there was too much cloud at Fron Hydan (and I visited twice at different times during the afternoon!). Tim's surveys at Y Figyn were quite informative, with 3 PBF in 16 minutes at West (the first there this season) and only 2 PBF in 13 minutes at East. This combined with my 1 very fresh PBF in 37 minutes at Y Frochas, provides our clearest picture so far of the season. It would seem that despite the recent poor weather, the early sites, Y Golfa, Y Figyn East and probably Fron Hydan are all past their peak. This is very frustrating, as we do not have satisfactory peak counts for Y Golfa and Fron Hydan and it also means that spotting any at Llanymynech this year now seems extremely unlikely.

To summarise, these are the results for each site so far this year (highest count from W walk survey):

- Y Golfa - 18 PBF/hr on 25<sup>th</sup> April - FAIL (5 visits, but only two completed surveys);
- Y Figyn East - 94 PBF/hr on 26<sup>th</sup> April - PASS (3 surveys);
- Y Figyn West - 11 PBF/hr on 7<sup>th</sup> May - FAIL (2 surveys);
- Y Frochas - 1 PBF/hr on 7<sup>th</sup> May - FAIL (3 visits, 1 survey);
- Fron Hydan - 14 PBF/hr on 23<sup>rd</sup> April - FAIL (1 survey);
- Middletown Hill - 4 PBF/hr on 26<sup>th</sup> April - FAIL (4 visits, 3 surveys);
- Llanymynech Rocks - NO PBF seen in 4 visits (2 surveys);
- Llanymynech Hill - NO PBF seen in 1 survey."

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### Pearl-bordered Fritillary cont.

#### Montgomeryshire cont.

Tammy again on **27<sup>th</sup> May**. Some good news for **Y Figyn West** this afternoon, where I counted **9 in 33 minutes = 16 PBF/hr = PASS J**. Fabulous weather today, just a shame it has come too late for most of the sites.

#### North Wales

Alun Williams posted with photo (right) on **1<sup>st</sup> May**: "**Pearl-bordered Fritillary, May 1st, Craig Adwy Wynt**".

Graham Parry on **9<sup>th</sup> May** posted: "Persistence was crucial this afternoon with the average weather. **1 x Pearl Bordered Fritillary** up on **Eyarth Rocks**. I needed 45 mins or so to find this beauty but I eventually did!".

Jan Miller commented: "The **first sighting** was on **1st May** this year! Earliest ever. So I have been trying to guess when the peak flight period is going to be before I go up, but as you say, cold and rain at present".

Steve Andrews posted on **18<sup>th</sup> May**: "Was really lucky at **Eyarth Rocks** today - saw **4 pearl bordered fritillaries**. If the 1st was outside the gate though - does it count? Last 1 was very accommodating - posing for quite a while 😊 before the rain hammered down! 🌧️"

Clare Williams advised re **timed transect counts** undertaken at **Eyarth Rocks** this year: "Four visits by BC's Clare Williams carried out to undertake the timed transect at BC's Eyarth Rocks reserve.

Counts as follows: 11.05.21 - 5 in 44min (7 PBF/hr), 18.05.21 - 8 in 35min (14PBF/hr), 27.05.21 15 in 35min (26PBF/hr), 01.06.21 20 in 42 min (29PBF/hr). No visits undertaken after 1st June due to resources but likely peak close to 1st June; peak usually around 3rd week of May so later in 2021. Peak count much lower than peak in 2019 (89PBF/hr). Management continues at Eyarth Rocks this year with works including bracken and bramble management, clearance of scrub from limestone pavement and woodland coppicing below the cliff due to be undertaken".

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*Pearl-bordered Fritillary: Steve Andrews*

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## 2. Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary (SPBF) – 32 new reports

Flight period normally mid May to end June (dry grassland/dog violet habitat) or end May to mid July (rhos pasture habitat and/or uplands). Second broods some years during August.

### Breconshire

Ben Mullen & Steph Coates: "We think we saw SPBF on Sunday (13<sup>th</sup> June) above **Cwm Oergwm** in the bracken wet glades. They were so fast moving we only saw glimpses of orange, but they looked small. At least 2, maybe 3 in 2 glades. There are records for the next valley west in 1990. We hope to go back on Saturday with nets! Wasn't able to confirm SPBF at Cwm Oergwm on 19 June as we didn't see any..... So just the 3 possibles (*Ed- most likely*) on 13/06/2021 in SO0523."

### Carmarthenshire

Paul Dunn & RGS, on 16<sup>th</sup> June, were delighted to be able to confirm with the enthusiastic landowner **near Capel Gwynfe**, that the large wet field where we found MF larval webs in 2019, yielded a count of > 40 MFs and 10 SPBFs basking or flying in weak sunshine. SN7020.

### Caerphilly

Andrea Rowe noted "Around 50 MF & 20 SPBF at **Aberbargoed 17/6**"

### Ceredigion

Paul Dunn visited the **Cwm Soden/Silio** site on 19<sup>th</sup> May and said that he saw about 30 small frits of which 70/30 SPBF to PBF.

Rosie Hemsley posted via FB group photo of an SPBF taken at **Cwm Soden** on 22<sup>nd</sup> June....."which are becoming a lot fewer in number now".

### Gwent

**1st June:** 2 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary at **Ebbw Vale** (Aneurin Bevan Stones) (Martin Anthoney and Roger James).

**9th June:** 20 Small Pearl-bordered fritillary at **Blaenserchan** (Rupert Perkins).

**12th June:** 30 Marsh Fritillary, 4 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary flying at **Aberbargoed** Grasslands (Rupert Perkins).

**15th June:** 18 Small Pearl-bordered at **Blaenserchan** (Martin Anthoney and Roger James)

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### Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary (SPBF) cont.

#### Heads of Valleys

Paul Dunn encountered **several SPBF** at **Cwm Cadlan**, covering the whole of the suitable habitat in hazy sunshine on **9<sup>th</sup> June**.

#### Monmouthshire

A Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary at **Blackrock Quarry, Clydach** (Martin Anthoney and Roger James). **4** were present on **4<sup>th</sup> June** (Mike Hoults and Val Deisler).

Nicola Davies (BBNP) e-mailed on **15<sup>th</sup> June**: "I went up to **Cwm Bwchel, near Llanthony**, today in search of Himalayan balsam but it was an excellent day for butterflies. We saw two species of fritillary. *(ed- from poor quality mobile phone pics, it looked to both Paul Dunn & myself likely these were some SPBF and some DGF).*

Simon Bazeley posted his photo (right) of **Small pearl bordered fritillary** at **Aberbeeg** on **6. 7. 21**

Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary: Simon Bazeley



#### North Wales

Scott Saunders posted on **18<sup>th</sup> May**: "**Llanddwyn** - rather blurry shot of **SPBF**".

Alison Sanderson posted from **Barmouth** on **22<sup>nd</sup> May**: "Managed to get an underside shot of this. **Small Pearl-bordered fritillary** I think".

Scott Saunders posted on **5<sup>th</sup> June**: "(**SPB**) Fritillary, today at **Newborough**".

Oswyn Williams posted on **5<sup>th</sup> June**: "**Aberffraw** yesterday (**4<sup>th</sup> June**)" with photos of **SPBF**.

Paul Board posted on **6<sup>th</sup> June**: "My first frit of 2021, on my Bryn Euryn Transect today".

Tony Pope on **26<sup>th</sup> June** posted: "**Small Pearl bordered Fritillary** in **Clocaenog** today".

Richard Hughes posted photos: "We think **Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary**. All close to **Brenig** this morning (**28<sup>th</sup> June**)".

Alun Williams posted: "**Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** at **Pont y Brenig, June 30<sup>th</sup>**, the flower is bird vetch, *Vicia cracca*."

Grotty Shots posted: "Some of the Butterflies seen and photographed on a walk around **Llanddona** and **Bwrdd Arthur** yesterday (**10<sup>th</sup> July**). *(Ed: photos including three good quality shots of SPBF).*

Andrew Graham commented that "I would add that **SPBF** is so **common** in **North Wales** that sightings are unremarkable and hardly worth listing individually. I've seen hundreds myself, including on both my farms". *(Ed. - long may that "common" status remain, but I do think there is merit in people reporting all sightings - records anyway).*

Kim Lengyel Taylor posted on **12<sup>th</sup> July**: "**A small Pearl-Bordered Fritillary**, I was made up". *Ed. Presumably from somewhere around Bodfari?*

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#### Pembs

David Redhead reports: "This morning (**13<sup>th</sup> June**) John Steer & I spent nearly 2.5 hours counting Marsh Frit adults at Waun Lwyd Common (SN1531). Halfway up the eastern side we spotted a **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary at SN15513146**".

"SPBF in the last few years John & I have done a coastal walk from Porthmynawyd to Solva and picked up a couple at most - this year (**4<sup>th</sup> June**) it was **6** and now we have yesterday's. **5 more SPBFs** John S & I saw yesterday (**22<sup>nd</sup> June**): **4** on the lower slopes of **Garnwrda** - one of Pembrokeshire's rocky volcanic outcrops in SM9339. I am pretty certain Jane Stone has seen them here before. **1** on the coast nearby at **SN931404**".

#### Rhondda Cynon Taff

Paul Denning; "I had a walk around Unit 29 (of Rhos Tonyrefail SSSI) with Carys this morning (**14<sup>th</sup> June**). It was quite odd - No MFs were seen, but we had **three SPB Frits** including a tatty worn one!".

Nicola Broadbridge noted **an SPBF** on **Cwm Gwrelych Heritage Trail** at SN894060 in first half of June (reported to LERC with date).

#### Vale of Glamorgan

Paul Dunn made numerous visits to the **Alun valley**, including Old Castle Down and Dave Johnson also counted around **20** near ford on **3<sup>rd</sup> June**. The first sighting this year by Paul was on **15<sup>th</sup> May**. **Peak numbers** seemed to be on **3<sup>rd</sup> June**, when Paul counted **105** across Alun valley transect routes, plus Old Castle Down.

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### 3. Marsh Fritillary (MF) – 62 new reports Flight period normally mid May to late June.

*Marsh Fritillary: Gwilym Roberts*

#### Caerphilly

Mark Allen on 27<sup>th</sup> May: "Saw our first marsh frits today at **Aberbargoed Grasslands**. Saw about **ten** in total".

**12th June: 30 Marsh Fritillary**, 4 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary flying at **Aberbargoed Grasslands** (Rupert Perkins).

Andrea Rowe noted "Around **50 MF** & 20 SPBF at **Aberbargoed 17/6**"

#### Carmarthenshire

Maybe first adult MF to emerge in Wales.... Gwilym Roberts at Tŷ Llwyd Fâch, **Cwmgwili**, posted: "Spotted our **first Marsh Fritillary** butterflies today!". **12<sup>th</sup> May**. (*Ed, then no more until 27<sup>th</sup> May at Aberbargoed?*).

Amanda Evans summarised her visits for us:

"CMM site **Cwmgwili: 4 MFs on 12/05/21**. CCC agreement field in SN5711.

CMM Site **Maesybont near Llyn Llech Owain CP: 7 MFs on 8/06/21**. in SN5714.

CMM Site **near SAC: 5 MFs, 12/06/21**. CCC agreement fields in SN5712.

CMM Site **Tycroes: 7 MFs, 15/06/21** SN5708. CAEAU AFON GWILI SSSI.

CMM Site **Penygroes: Many (unconfirmed records - from Adam Jones)**. BRYN MELYN, CCC OWNED SITE, SN5713.

CMM Site **Gorslas, near Llyn Llech Owain CP: 3 MFs, 18/06/21**. CCC agreement fields in SN5514.

CMM/ WTSWW Site **Llannon: 3MFs, 21/06/21**, with Becca on WTSWW RESERVE. **Rhos Cefn Bryn**

SSSI **Caeau Afon Gwili: 1 MF, 22/06/21**. STANDING STONE part of site in SN5808 (with Pat & Barney Gill). Likely to be first MF record for several years.

**Capel Dewi**. Sue Otley reports (25<sup>th</sup> June): "saw the **first Marsh Frits** on **4th June**. There were **2 seen** that day. **3 seen on 6th June** and **3 again on the 8th**. We were busy with other things after that, but I saw **one** on the **22nd**."

**Treiorwg** - owners have seen **MFs this year in SN6420**, whereas none yet this year at another enthusiastically managed field in SE corner of that grid square.

Paul Dunn (with RGS) counted **25 MFs** flying on a north-facing wet slope (now an SSSI) overlooking Cwm Cennen and Carreg Cennen on **16<sup>th</sup> June**.



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### 3. Marsh Fritillary (MF) cont

Carmarthenshire cont.

Earlier that day, we were delighted to be able to confirm with the enthusiastic landowner near **Capel Gwynfe**, that the large wet field where we found larval webs in 2019, yielded a count of > **40 MFs** and 10 SPBFs basking or flying in weak sunshine. We even found a Succisa leaf with two separate MF egg batches underneath, which judging by colour differences were probably laid one batch earlier that day and the other the day or so before. SN7020.

Ruth Watkins had seen her **first MF near Llandeussant** in late May/early June.

Jen & Paul Howells saw had a good sighting of **an MF** in one of their two suitable fields at 150m+ asl, near **Pencader** on **30 June**.

Ceredigion

David Woolley reports: **30<sup>th</sup> May** - Greetings from **Llawrcwrt**. I went round the transects and counted **11 MF's** on the wing. These were the first I've seen this year.

Paul Taylor reports: "I went to **Rhos Lawr Nature Reserve** (NRW site) this afternoon (**15<sup>th</sup> June**), eventually meeting up (not intentionally) with David Woolley, who very kindly showed me around the site, and I was able to record **21 Marsh Fritillary** flying".

Paul Taylor reported: "**3 Marsh Fritillary** at **Rhos pil Bach LNR, Plwmp**, on Tuesday **8th June**."

Paul Taylor reports: "I have just had a couple of sightings - complete with photos, of Marsh frits in an area that I don't think we have had records from in the past, one is somebody's garden at **Tal-sarn**, and then 5 sighted (put onto iRecord and just verified them), slightly north of Tal-sarn at **Llangeitho**. Perhaps the Marsh Frits in Ceredigion are more widespread than we originally thought?"

*(Ed - I'd think that's highly likely. I've not got involved much in VC46 MFs, but worth a chat with Clare or Andrea. Paul is seeking help with sightings in Ceredigion and keen to get more sites on MF map for county.)* Paul then explained that he'd received three interesting records:

- The one Marsh Fritillary was recorded and photographed in a private garden on **13/6/21** in **SN5559**.
- The second record, **15 Marsh Fritillary** recorded in **SN 6060** on **14/6/21** (these from a different recorder)
- Another record submitted today (**15<sup>th</sup> June**) with photographic evidence was at **SN 5459** (again a different recorder).

Doug Lloyd, new WTSWW officer for Ceredigion, suggested to Paul, that these sightings may relate to two SSSIs locally which appear likely to have habitat - Rhosydd Bryn maen and Cors Nantcwnlle.

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### 3. Marsh Fritillary (MF) cont

#### Heads of Valleys (NPT-RCT-BBNP)

Andrea Rowe noted: "Around **20** at **Cwm Cadlan** on **6<sup>th</sup> June**", when a small group from BC's West Midlands branch, visited Cwm Cadlan (with Andrea) and were lucky enough to see and photograph Narrow bordered Bee Hawk moth, as well as plenty of MFs.

Paul Dunn encountered **40+ MFs at Cwm Cadlan** by covering the whole of the suitable habitat in hazy sunshine on **9<sup>th</sup> June**. Also several SPBF seen.

Ben Williams reported: "I went to **Cors Bryn y Gaer, Hirwaun** on Tuesday (**8<sup>th</sup>**) and found **99 MFs in 12mins** in the west field and **74 in 8 mins** in the east field, all fresh and newly emerged. I went to a private site (managed by RCT/Tidy Towns/BC) in **SN9706** and found **105 in 10 mins** but these were a week or 10 days older. There were mating pairs and females laying eggs all over the place".

#### Ystradgynlais area (including Crynant, Seven Sisters, Tairgwaith - where Carms, NPT & Powys come together).

Paul Dunn & RGS visited **Seven Sisters** on **4<sup>th</sup> June**. The forest entrance barrier is now moved to main road by old phone exchange building, but we parked in Marigold Place. Between parking spot and stream to south, we estimated **10 MFs**, but didn't have time (or my fitness!) for rest of the site.

On **5<sup>th</sup> June**, RGS with Pauline Hill estimated about **25 MFs** flying on the large **WTSWW reserve** in Ystradgynlais, during a WTSWW Bridgend group visit.

Andrea Rowe noted: "**10MF at Seven Sisters 6/6**".

On **14<sup>th</sup> June**, Paul Dunn and RGS also visited both an SSSI and an adjoining field (which is in a management agreement with BC) near Rhos Common, finding **10 MFs** in latter and (by then with Nicola Broadbridge's help) **40+** on SSSI.

In the middle part of the same day (**14<sup>th</sup>**), the three of us found **25 MFs in 30mins** on a field in **Tairgwaith** close to the trotting track. The field seems to be in NPT ownership and improved drier part of what is a big field is mown, whereas the wet (M24'ish but possibly revegetated over coal spoil in distant past) is left intact or at least not cut in spring or summer. We hope to discuss management further with NPT Nature Partnership.

#### North Wales.

Andrew Graham comments: Bad news is that **no one could find any Marsh Fritillaries on Anglesey** despite searching for them throughout the flight period. They have been in decline for years and may now be extinct on the island. A recent visit to the last inhabited colony area found it to be heavily grazed by horses. In Merioneth the various marsh frit sites are enjoying varying fortunes. **Llwyn-iarth** is badly overgrazed. **Tir Stent**, in contrast, has recovered well and there were **large numbers of butterflies** present. **Cae Pencefn, Dolgellau** saw the usual **huge numbers** with egg batches seemingly present under every other leaf. There were also reports from **Bwlch Derwin, Nant Noddfa** and a **single individual at Harlech**.

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### 3. Marsh Fritillary (MF) cont

#### Pembs

Maggie Sproule "Went to look for Marsh Frits today (22<sup>nd</sup> May) on **Waun Lwyd Common near Mynachlogddu**. Cool and sunny, with Orange Tips and Green veined Whites flying but no sign of Marsh Frits or Small Pearl Bordered Frits. Last year both were in good numbers on 24th, 27th and 30th May. But it (that) was a very warm, sunny time. Is the cold, damp weather slowing emergence this year?" (*Seems very much the case this year - Ed*)

Paul Grennard reports on **31<sup>st</sup> May**: "A visit to **Puncheston Common**, Pembrokeshire today produced **7 Marsh Fritillaries** along the bridle path."

Maggie Sproule reported: "Marsh Fritillaries have emerged about 10 days later than usual on **Waunlwyd Common** near Mynachlogddu. SN 15411 31653. There were small numbers, all freshly emerged, when I checked on **8th June**. Another check on Saturday **12th** rewarded me with a great population in several areas of the Common. Best year ever. Literally hundreds on the wing".

David Redhead reports: "This morning (**13<sup>th</sup> June**) John Steer & I spent nearly 2.5 hours counting Marsh Frit adults at **Waun Lwyd Common** (SN1531). Our total was **65** which compares extremely well to the only other adult count I can find for the site - 27 in 2014. Three web counts appear to have been carried out in the past - 96 in 2014, 80 in 2013 and zero in 2011. The site appears to be totally unmanaged with no evidence of winter burning or grazing but suitable *Succisa* is abundant. Scrub invasion is occurring but only significantly at the southern end. It is marked as open access on the map and a poorly defined footpath runs west to east near the northern edge. We started in the north-west corner using the footpath access point and headed for the centre point of the southern edge and then came back up the eastern side eventually turning west to get back to our starting point - so you could say we triangulated the site. Must admit moving in a north-south direction was much easier going than moving east to west when we seemed to be going against the knap or it could just have been we were approaching exhaustion. We left the site about 12.45 deciding one Marsh Frit site in a day was enough for two septuagenarians".

David also muses: "Two of my three excursions this year in pursuit of the beast (MF) have produced good counts - yesterday 65 (at Waun Lwyd Common) versus a previous 27 and **Wallis Moor (31st May) 38** versus 8 in 2015 & 11 in 2017. My third was **Puncheston Common (7th June**, the footpath from near the layby to the stream) which produced **3** whereas similar in 2015 produced 28 but in 2018 only 2. Another PCPNA employee, Brian Southern, has managed **7** there but not sure what ground he & Paul Grennard covered. Julie has been to the "new" last year site of **Penrallt nr Letterston** and seen **7** against Katy Fox's 5 last year. Not such good news from **Hendrewen** where Julie found **none** - the last positive visit was 2014 (webs) but there have now been at least 3 negative visits since, looking for both webs and adults. Also **Jeffreyston Pastures** - yesterday (**17<sup>th</sup> June**) morning John & I could only find **one** slightly faded female in the SSSI as opposed to 49 adults two years ago. Actually based on visits I have made since moving to Pembs the 49 is the exception rather than the 1".

Mary Chadwick adds: "After several fruitless outings, I found some marsh frits at **Trefach** caravan site, **Mynachlogddu**, at both ends of the site. There's lots of good habitat there with plenty of *Succisa*. The owner is in the process of getting it all fenced so cattle grazing can be introduced. There's no public access but I could put you in touch with the owner if you'd ever like to visit".

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Sarah Mellor adds: "I visited **Knapps farm** yesterday (22<sup>nd</sup>) - wow what a site. Terry was singing your praises Jon so if your ears were burning that is why! Anyhow his peak count was **72** so a good number for there I think".

#### South RCT

Paul Denning: "I had a wander around unit 16 (of Rhos Tonyrefail SSSI) yesterday (2<sup>nd</sup> **June**). I saw **3 male Marsh Frits** at the bottom of the field alongside the road. I normally see MFs around the top of the site, but yesterday I saw **none**. In one of the now fenced off areas where I usually see the MFs, the grass was quite short cropped from the horses that were present. There was also large amount of horse manure dumped in one of the drainage ditches, and on one of the tracks nearby. Access is not easy now because it has been fenced off, but I will have another walk there next week and see if I can locate any MFs around the top part of the site.

Update! I had a walk around the top end of unit 16 this morning (4<sup>th</sup> **June**), and I was relieved to find **three fresh MFs**, so the grazing regime is probably ok. I had a walk around Unit 29 with Carys this morning (14<sup>th</sup> **June**). It was quite odd - **No MFs** were seen, but we had three SPB Frits including a tatty worn one!".

The latest edition of Natur Cymru updates the **INCC** led initiative to re-introduce MFs to a site near Llantrisant.

## 4. Dark Green Fritillary (DGF) - 32 reports

Flight period normally early June to mid July.

#### Ceredigion

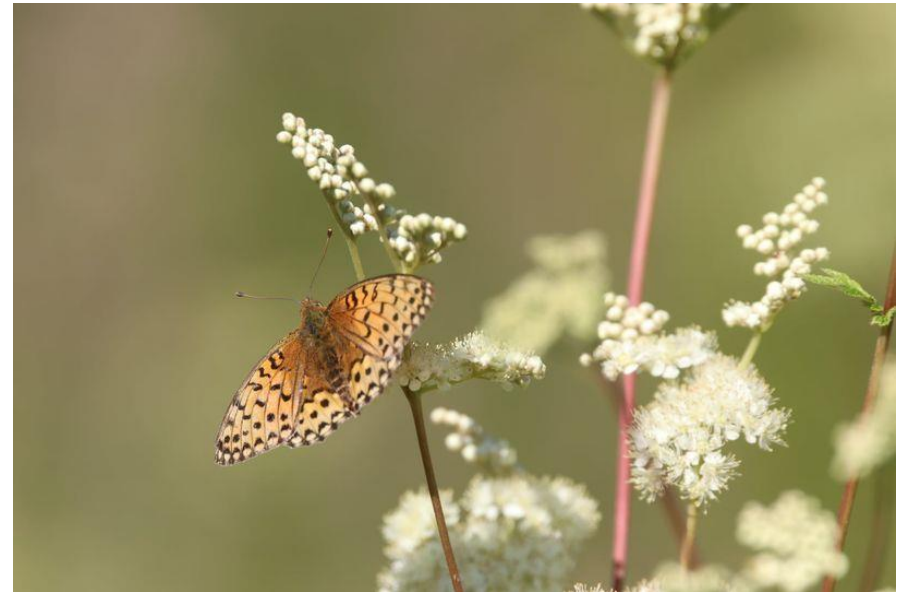
The Dark Green Fritillary photographed on **6th June** at **Foel Fawr, Nr Borth**, on the Ceredigion Birds and Wildlife FB page, appears to be **first adult DGF record this year for whole of UK**.

Jane Beck posted a delightful photo (right) of a DGF sitting/nectaring on Meadow Sweet at **Cwm Silio** on **14<sup>th</sup> July**.

Rosie Hemsley photographed another **DGF** at **Cwm Silio** on **15<sup>th</sup> July**.

And again on **31<sup>st</sup> July**. Rosie Hemsley: "A few more from **Cwm Soden** and surrounds, walking with the hound. **Dark green** fritillary.....".

Hazel Pittwood posts: "Butterflies on the **coast path near Mwnt** today (12<sup>th</sup> **July**): **dark green fritillary**".



Dark Green Fritillary: Jane Beck

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### Dark Green Fritillary (DGF) cont

#### Ceredigion cont.

Sarah Jones posted on **9<sup>th</sup> July**: "Wow, so many questions from our Coast Path section yesterday from Aberporth to Mwnt.....absolutely loads of **Fritillary** Butterflies on the wild thyme mounds, **just North of Mwnt** a tiny way. We couldn't get a good look at their underwings as they were so active but the closest we could guess were the Dark Green or Silver Washed. (Ed. DGF mostly likely but could be SWF around near wooded areas).

Paul Taylor posted: "Dolphin Watch at **Mwnt** this morning (**27<sup>th</sup>**), a few dolphins around, but not so many birds today. Large numbers of butterflies.....inc **DGF**".

#### Monmouthshire

Nicola Davies (BBNP) e-mailed on **15<sup>th</sup> June**: "I went up to **Cwm Bwchel, near Llanthony**, today in search of Himalayan balsam but it was an excellent day for butterflies. We saw two species of fritillary. (ed- from poor quality mobile phone pics, it looked to Paul Dunn & myself likely these were some SPBF and some DGF).

**30th June: First Dark Green Fritillaries of the year at Blaenserchan** (Rupert Perkins) and at **Slade Wood** (Martin Anthoney and Roger James). MA commented: "A very late date for Dark Green to appear".

#### North Wales

Paul Board posted on **15<sup>th</sup> June**: "My first **Dark Green Fritillary** of 2021, at **NWWT Gogarth**".

Anna Griffiths encountered "....**some dark green fritillaries.....above Llanddulas**" on **19<sup>th</sup> June**.

Scott Saunders posted: ".....seen on the **path to Aber Falls** today (**22<sup>nd</sup> June**)".

Anna Griffiths posted on **6<sup>th</sup> July**: "A few from today on **Great Orme** and **2nd July** on **Bryn Pydew**" with two photos of **DGF** (right).

Dan Gorton posted a photo of a **Dark green fritillary** from **Bryn Euryn** today (**17<sup>th</sup> July**).

Victor Hutchings posted a photo and "Fifteen species on the transect walk at **Mynydd Marian** today (**14<sup>th</sup> July**). **Several Dark Green Fritillaries**".

Jon Wainwright: **SWF** at **Marford Quarry** today (**13<sup>th</sup> July**).

Dave Chandler was at **South Stack** on Anglesey last Friday (**2<sup>nd</sup> July**) and saw a **Dark Green Fritillary** near the RSPB cafe.

Andrew Graham adds: "**DGF** seems to be **having a good year**. I've seen them at quite a few sites including both farms. Warm weather may be helping dispersal."



Dark Green Fritillary: Anna Griffiths

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## Dark Green Fritillary (DGF) cont

### Pembrokeshire

Frank Sengpiel posted on 4<sup>th</sup> July: "**Dark Green Frit** at **Martin's Haven**, Pembs (02/07/21)".

David Redhead tells: "Yesterday, (16<sup>th</sup> July) during a 2km walk along the Pembrokeshire Coast Path north of St Brides.....& Dark Green Fritillary (1).

### Powys

Simon Spencer reports: "No DGF found at Y Golfaf (on 19<sup>th</sup> July) this year. We saw one probable DGF on Middletown Hill (fast flying large Frit) and a single Silver washed".

Katherine Eilbeck posted: "Lovely **Dark Green Fritillary** at **Penwyllt** this afternoon (1<sup>st</sup> August) with splendid views down the Swansea Valley".

### RCT

Rhiannon Bevan posted a photo on 6<sup>th</sup> July of a DGF near Tylorstown Tips.

### Vale of Glamorgan.

Our **first** definite DGF was noted by Paul Dunn on south-facing slope on 9<sup>th</sup> June.

Phil Andrews 3/7 OCD 2 HBF, DGF & 1 SWF seen.

David Sellick noted 3 DGF at **Merthyr Mawr NNR** on 13<sup>th</sup> July.

During the two transect weeks, w/c 20<sup>th</sup> June & 27<sup>th</sup> June, a total of 39 definite DGF sightings were made across Alun valley (all 5 transect routes).

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## 5. High Brown Fritillary (HBF) – 8 summary reports

Flight period normally early June to early August. Only one current site in Wales; in **Vale of Glamorgan**.

### **Vale of Glamorgan.**

Our **first definite HBF** was noted by Paul Dunn on south-facing slope on **12<sup>th</sup> June**.

Phil Andrews: **3/7 OCD 2 HBF**, DGF & 1 SWF seen.

**Transect sightings: w/c 20<sup>th</sup> June:** The results are very promising with 106 definite HBF sightings across the five routes. Very few DGFs were identified (16 definite sightings) with overall ratio of 7:1 of HBF:DGF id'd. Taking account of the 62 unid, that gives an estimated HBF sightings total for week of 166 HBF during 6.61hrs = index of 25 HBF sightings per hour of observation.

Another interesting discovery by Paul was that he recorded **12 HBF sightings on Thursday of week 2** at the top of the steep slope next to Pant Quarry where we've run work parties on Sunday mornings for last three years. Then during **week 5** Hugh Lansdown counted **25 large frits in 10mins** in the very same area. This is not part of any transect route (very steep and RGS single visits last two years produced only singleton HBF obs). Habitat there looks good and sheep keep scrub down - it may be that HBF now breeding there, so maybe a fully restored extra habitat area. **So many thanks to all involved in those work parties, often starting 8.30 on Sunday mornings. It's worth it!**

**w/c 28<sup>th</sup> June:** 84 definite HBF sightings across the five routes. Slightly more DGFs were identified (21 definite sightings) with overall ratio of 4:1 of HBF:DGF id'd. Taking account of the significant 199 unid, that gives an estimated HBF sightings total for week of 200 HBF during 6.45hrs = index of 22 HBF sightings per hour of observation.

2021 for this species was unusual in that it was about a week later than usual starting to fly, then had two very good weeks before numbers appeared to tail off rapidly. Indeed just comparing our peak week numbers (either w/c 20<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup> June) with the small amount of data to hand from sites in England, it seems we did very well. However, latter figures available were just suspected peak week for Exmoor site and 5 Dartmoor sites, so by no means a complete picture. Our numbers at its only Welsh site may have been higher but in weeks 3 to 5 we were somewhat hampered in making sightings by massive bracken growth (well above head height in many places) before we could get resources in to cut the 6kms of transect route paths.

Grateful to all our winter volunteers and to several who helped Paul Dunn & I with transect counts in difficult conditions. It looks like "Natur am Byth" (Back from Brink) funding will be available later this year for a 15 month development phase for the HBF project in Wales.

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### High Brown Fritillary (HBF) cont.

Below is the (provisional) fuller details of adult sightings this year.

#### **ALL TRANSECTS (Alun Valley, Old Castle Down & Pant St Brides) combined 2021**

Week no	Date	Hours spent	SPBF	SWF	Definite HBF	Definite DGF	Unid. HBF/DGF	% ID'd	Est. total HBF	Est. HBFs per hour
1										
2	20 <sup>th</sup> June to 26 <sup>th</sup> June	6.61	18	1	106	16	62	65%	166	25.11
3	27 <sup>th</sup> June to 3 <sup>rd</sup> July	8.38	5	1	84	21	199	38%	200	22.31
4	4 <sup>th</sup> July to 10 <sup>th</sup> July	5.11	0	0	21	2	85	23%	89	17.41
5	11 <sup>th</sup> July to 17 <sup>th</sup> July	6.57	0	2	5	2	119	5%	90	13.70
6	18 <sup>th</sup> July to 24 <sup>th</sup> July	4.63	0	0	7	2	39	19%	37	7.99
7	Not operated									
<b>Total 2021 wks 2 - 5</b>		<b>31.30</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>18.59</b>
<i>Total 2020 weeks 1 - 6</i>		<i>32.04</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>670</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>402</i>	<i>66%</i>	<i>1,039</i>	<i>32.43</i>

**2021 Average HBFs per hour = 18.59**

*Proportion of all 2021 sightings definitely identified to DGF/HBF species = 35% (66% in 2020)*

**43% decrease on 2020, making 2021 still the 6<sup>th</sup> best year of last 26 years.**

**2020 Average HBFs per hour = 32.43 (over 6 weeks) or 36.02 (weeks 2 to 6) or 31.39 (over first 5 weeks – weeks 1 to 5) \***  
**Minimum 63% increase on 2019 index of 19.15 for five weeks, making 2020 the projected best year of last 26 years.**

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### High Brown Fritillary (HBF) cont.

Year	Average HBFs per hour	Time period (number of weeks)	Week numbers	Notes
2021	18.59	5	2 to 6	43% decrease on 2020, making 2021 still the 6 <sup>th</sup> best year of last 26 years.
2020	32.43	6		or 36.02 (weeks 2 to 6) or 31.39 (over first 5 weeks – weeks 1 to 5) * Minimum 63% increase on 2019, making 2020 the projected best year of last 26 years
2019	19.15	5	2 to 6	
2018	6.37	5	2 to 6	Over 5 best weeks
2017	10.83	5	2 to 6	Over 5 best weeks
2016	14.29	6	3 to 8	Over 6 best weeks
2015	27.00	6	2 to 7	Over 6 best weeks
2014	23.00	6	1 to 6	Over 6 best weeks
2013	25.00	6		
2012	5.40	6		
2011	17.00	8		Over 8 best weeks

(For comparison: 2010 @ 12.86; 2009 @ 10.28; 2008 @ 5.69; 2007 @ 14.8; 2006 @ 9.39 & 2005 @ 8.46 HBFs/hour)

## 6. Silver-washed Fritillary (SWF) – 20 reports

Flight period normally, late June to early September. 31 previous reports in 2020, including several new sites.

### Carmarthenshire

Ian Morgan reported: "I had a male silver-washed fritillary this afternoon (16/7/21) at Stradey Woods, Llanelli SN 48802 01794, feeding at bramble flowers and patrolling around a sunny glade".

Ceri May noticed a large orange butterfly in her trees near Llanpumsaint on 18<sup>th</sup> July and which was identified from photos as an SWF.

Belinda Jackson posts (29 July): "A successful trudge (farmer hasn't mown access or meadow) to see the **Silver-washed Fritillary** and managed to snap these ones with the phone and saw another individual, possibly male, with slight wing damage". Ed: Presumably near **Abernant** village?

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## Silver-washed Fritillary cont.

### Ceredigion

Anne Addicott posted on Ceredigion Birds & Wildlife FB group: "I've been concerned about a colony of Silver-washed Fritillary near Trebedw as their habitat has been wiped out by building work. Today I spotted one about 1/4 mile along the valley & was pleased to see they have a new home. Almost immediately though a Meadow Brown decided he was less than impressed to have one in his territory! Once the Frit responded to the swooping & flapping they were too fast to photograph! A second Meadow Brown joined in & eventually the Frit flew off."

Simon Bramwell: "Managed to capture this image with my point and shoot camera on the lane that leads down to Cwmtedu from Llwyndafydd today (July). I've seen quite a few orange butterflies while walking here over the last several days but this is the first time one has settled". *Ed: Photo is of an SWF, but DGFs are nearby.*

Paul Taylor posted: "Dolphin Watch at **Mwnt** this morning (27<sup>th</sup>), a few dolphins around, but not so many birds today. Large numbers of butterflies.....inc **DGF** (photo).



*Silver-washed Fritillary: Anne Addicott*

### Gwent

**30<sup>th</sup> June: 6 Silver-washed Fritillary** flying near **Wentwood Gate**. "Unusual for Silver-washed to appear in numbers before Dark Green". (Martin Anthoney and Roger James)

Anna & David Sellick: "popped into **Slade Wood** near Caldicot this morning (5<sup>th</sup> July) on the way to driving up to North Wales. We saw **4 SWF** for your information. I could not get close enough to get a decent shot of this beauty but sending you a copy of what I managed to achieve".

Emily Broughton posted **7<sup>th</sup> July**: ".....eastern side of **Slade Wood**.....Also a **couple of Silver-washed frits** along the main path".

Frank Sengpiel posted: "I visited southern part of **Parc Cwm Darran** morning of 19<sup>th</sup> July (south of Deri, north of Groesfaen).....Silver-washed Frits seen no photos".

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### Silver-washed Fritillary cont.

#### Neath Port Talbot

Several local observers have commented on an increased number of SWF sightings this year in the Afan valley.

#### North-east Wales.

Dan Gorton posted a photo (right) on 11<sup>th</sup> July: "**Silver washed fritillary from Marford Quarry**".

Steve Andrews posted on 6<sup>th</sup> July: "Frits about! Now where have I heard that before? 😞😏 Went to **Marford Quarry** today after all the rain and .... success ..... a **Silver Washed Fritillary** on the brambles 😊".

Graham Parry posted on 9<sup>th</sup> July: "**3 Silver Washed Fritillary** spotted at **Marford Quarry**".

Steve Andrews posted on 10<sup>th</sup> July: "Went back for another look for the **Silver-washed Fritillaries** in **Marford Quarry** this lunchtime. Saw 2 🦋😊. They seem to zoom around a circuit including treetops, reappearing every 5-10 mins but only settling every other pass or so."



*Silver-washed Fritillary, Marford Quarry:  
Dan Gorton*

#### Pembrokeshire

David Redhead posted: "My first Silver-washed Fritillaries of the year in **Minwear Wood** (Pembs) today (13<sup>th</sup> July) - a **mating pair** 15 feet up in red oak tree with another male flying about at high speed".

#### Powys

Simon Spencer reports: "We saw a **single SWF** on **Middletown Hill** on 19<sup>th</sup> July."

#### Vale of Glamorgan

Phil Andrews 3/7 **OCD** 2 **HBF**, **DGF** & 1 **SWF** seen.

**Several** seen on BC South Wales branch transect routes around **Alun Valley**.

**This newsletter was compiled from reports received or available up to 10pm on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021.**

**Richard Smith, 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021.**

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