

# My Other Half

LAST YEAR

THIS YEAR



# **GB has 58 regular butterfly species**

## **EXCLUDING**

**Ireland**      Cryptic Wood White

**Irregulars**    Long-tailed Blue  
                    Large Tortoiseshell

# 2023

I had photographed 57  
of the 58 regulars  
One more GB species  
to photograph

## **Northern Brown Argus**

But after I had booked  
my 2023 trip  
to **Durham**  
further research revealed  
the true position . . .

**Northern Brown Argus**  
in Northern England  
is a **HYBRID**  
with Brown Argus  
It is only **HALF NBA**

## **NBA id features**

become more evident further north,  
notably in Scotland

### **Upper forewing**

- White spot
- Reduced lunulation (orange spots)

### **Underside**

- Reduced pupilation (black spots)
- Paler

**NBA in Durham**  
male (left) & female



*White spots  
hardly visible*

This year I decided to  
take no chances.

I wanted Britain's  
**Northern-most**  
Northern Brown Argus



**Then I noticed  
this advert**

# Dragonflies & Orchids of the Highlands

- |         |   |                                    |
|---------|---|------------------------------------|
| Day 1   | ● | Arrive in Aviemore                 |
| Day 2   | ● | Loch Garten area; Uath Lochan      |
| Day 3   | ● | Transfer to Gairloch via Loch Ness |
| Day 4/5 | ● | Loch Maree & Gairloch area         |
| Day 6   | ● | Arrive Inverness                   |

**MONDAY, Jun 24: Gatwick to Inverness DULL**



**Northern Damselfly**

ONE only, Loch Garten pool, en-route to hotel

The start of seven days of poor weather!

**TUESDAY rain**

**Orchids only**

# WEDNESDAY a few bright spells



**Brilliant Emerald, Loch Bran, east of Loch Ness**

**THURSDAY** cold, windy, showers. Loch Maree



**Common Hawker fem**  
blue form  
(NOT Azure Hawker)



**Golden-ringed Dragon**  
male eating bee

# FRIDAY rain: Benn Eithe visitor centre



Lurking in the Myrtle: million-to-one discovery













**Northern Emerald Dragonfly sheltering under Bog Myrtle**

**SATURDAY dull & damp. Last day with NatureTrek**

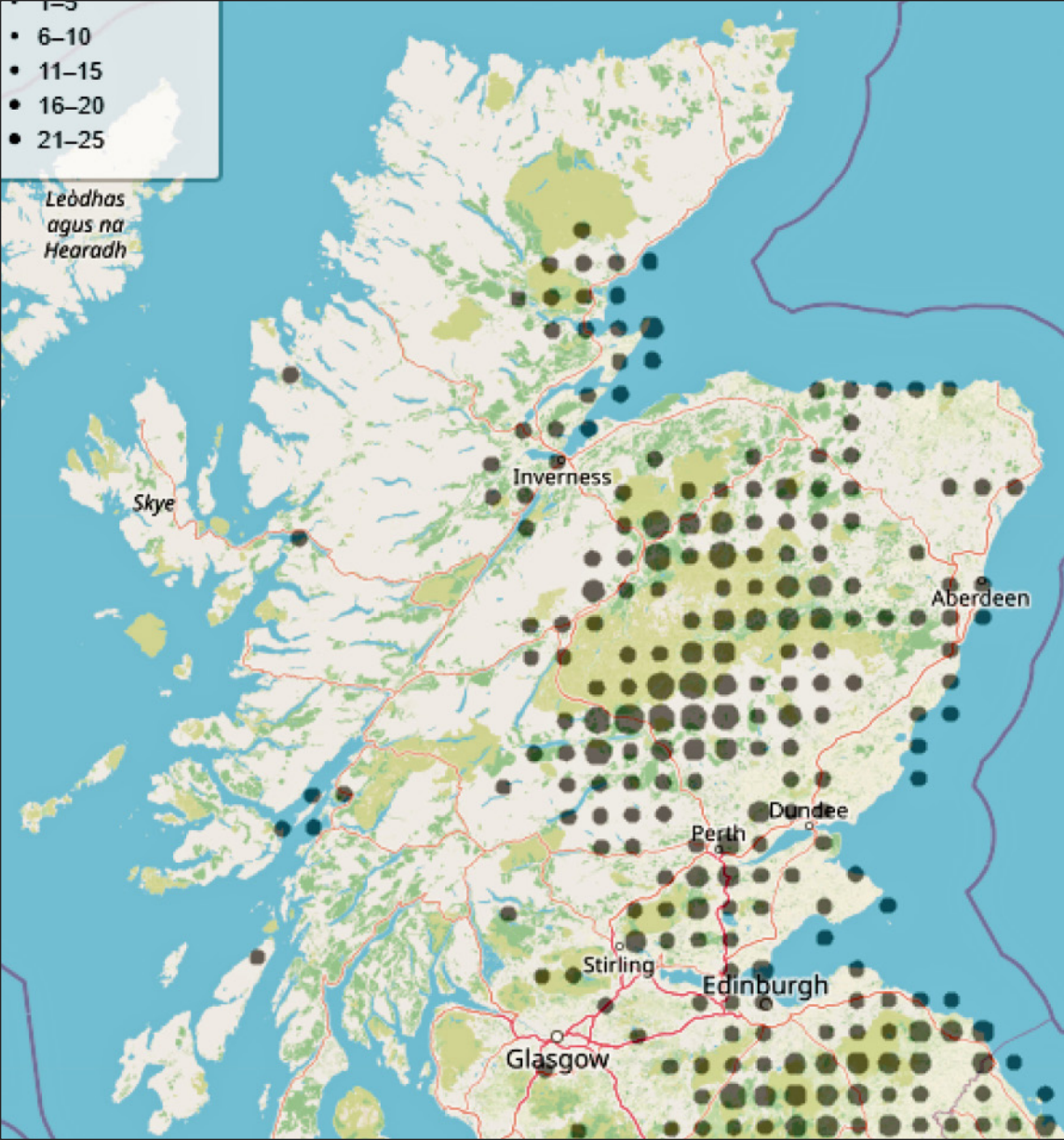


**White-faced Darter shows for 2 mins, Loch Garten pool**

**SUNDAY dull**

**NatureTrek tour has finished**

I stay on for  
two extra days to find  
**Northern Brown Argus**



# Rock-rose tetrads in Scotland

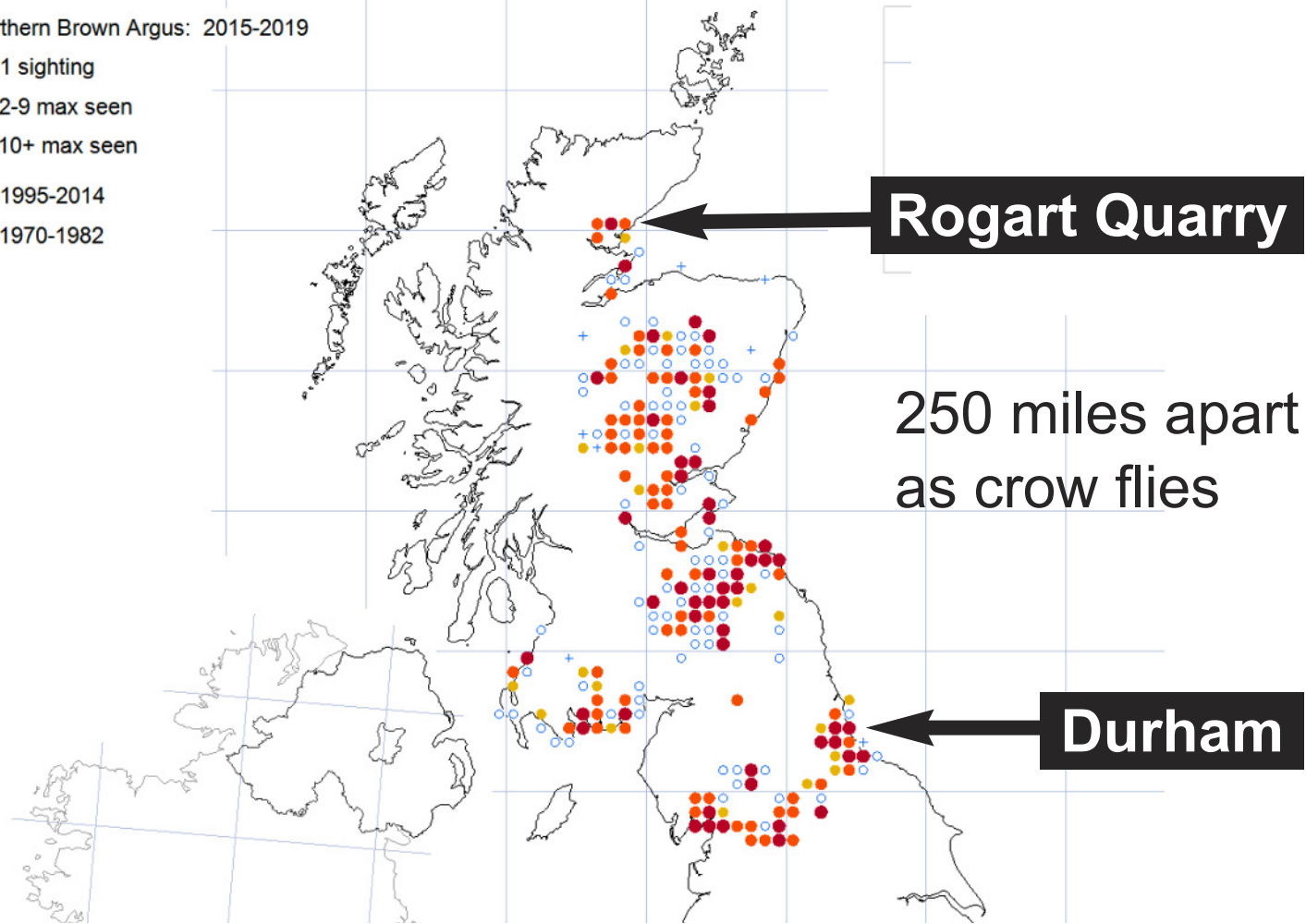
LHP of NBA

Extends up the  
east coast to  
Sutherland

So too does  
Northern  
Brown Argus

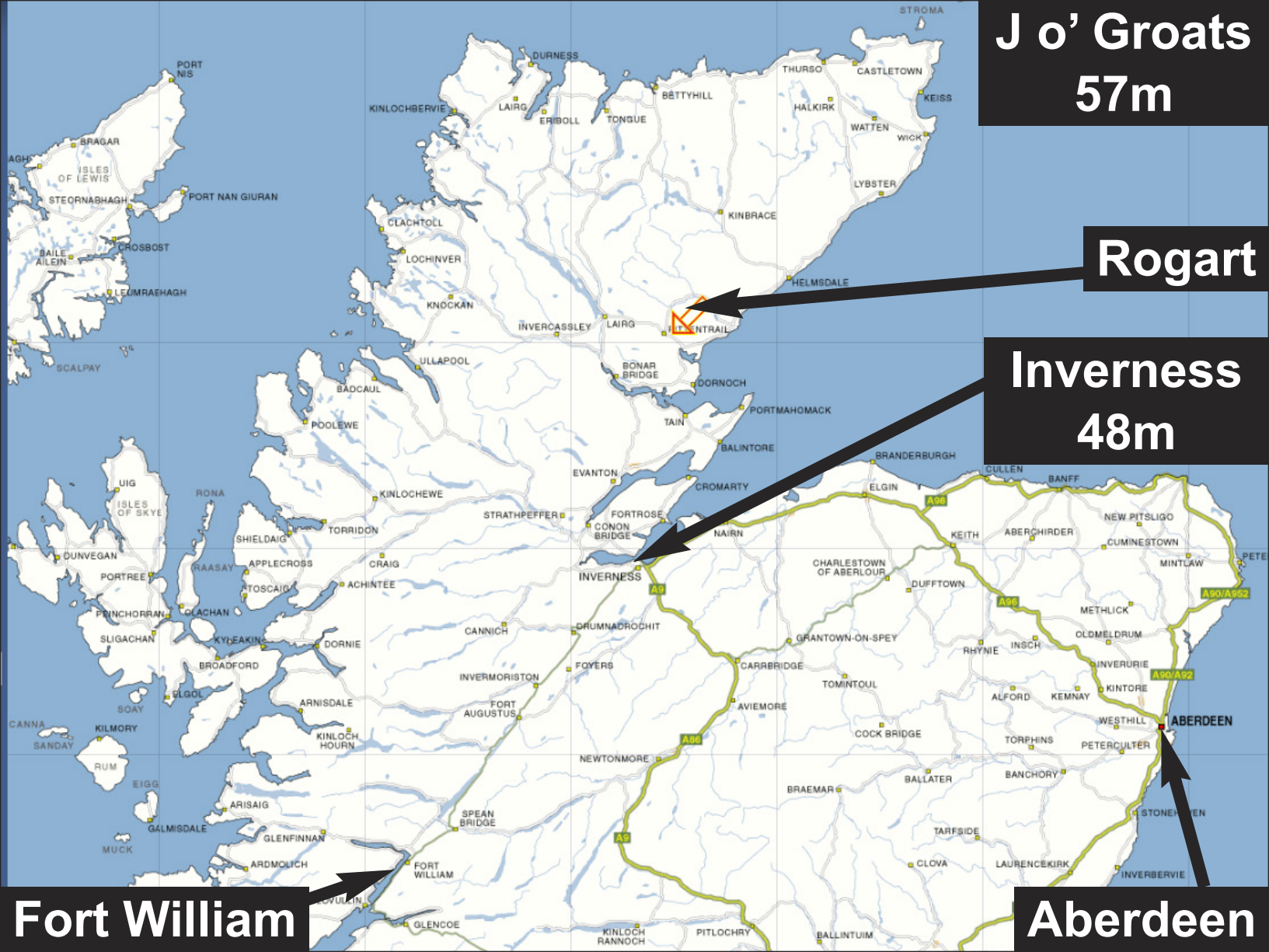
Northern Brown Argus: 2015-2019

- 1 sighting
- 2-9 max seen
- 10+ max seen
- 1995-2014
- + 1970-1982



**Northern Brown Argus 2015-19**  
 BC's latest quinquennial map





**J o' Groats**  
**57m**

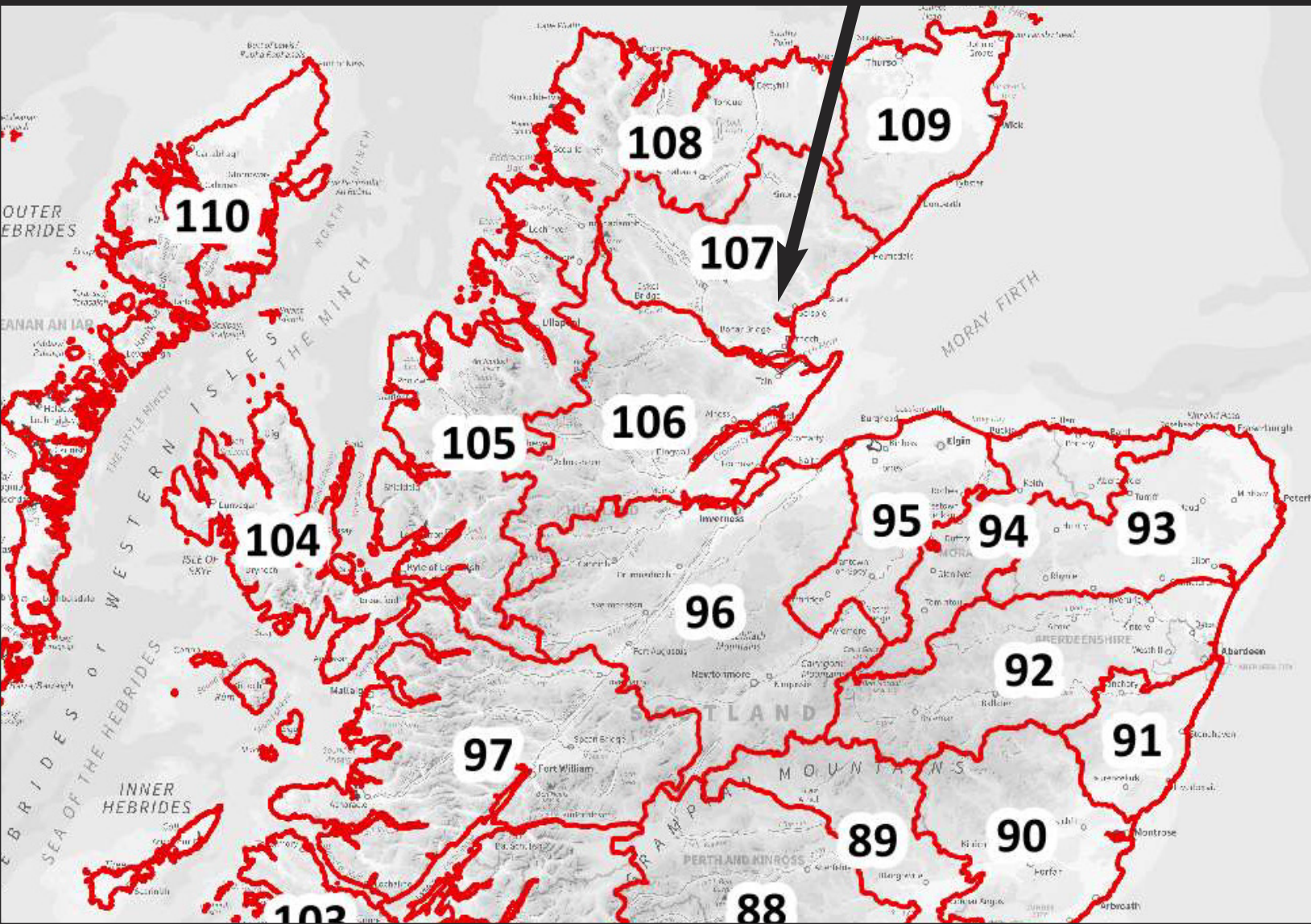
**Rogart**

**Inverness**  
**48m**

**Fort William**

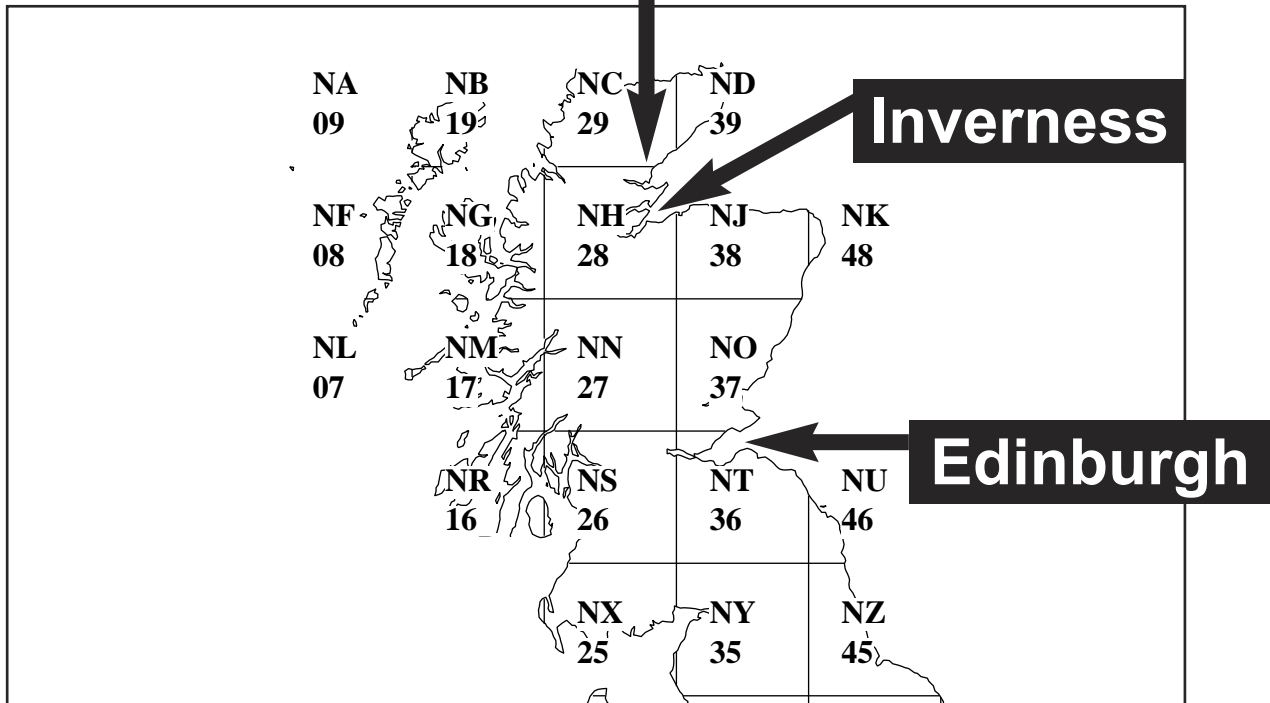
**Aberdeen**

# Vice-county: Rogart is in VC107: East Sutherland



# Grid reference

Rogart is just in NC29 (100km sq)



# My 50 mile trek north from Inverness involved

- Four bridges
- Otter crossing
- Wild goats
- Cliff face

# Bridge 1: Kessock, Inverness

1,056m across Beaully Firth





**Bridge 2: Cromarty Firth, 1,464m**



**Bridge 3: Dornoch Firth, 892m**



**Bridge 4: Loch Fleet – almost there**





**Should I be concerned?**



**Rogart Quarry: looks rather steep!**



**Oh no: the wild goats!**



**Where is the Rock-rose?**



**On the rocks, 30 feet up!**



**Rock-rose: NBA larval host-plant**

**NBA yet to make its first flight: ONE only**



**Note reduced pupilation**



**Coaxed out onto Rock-rose: it's a female**



**White spots gleaming – pure NBA**



**Orange lunules reduced compared to fem BA**

**Brown Argus**



**Durham**



**NBA Scotland**



**The further north**

Underside paler

Pupilation reduces (to nil)



**NBA female** (above) has weaker lunulation than **Brown Argus female** (left)  
*Lunules are weaker in males.*

# NBA male in Durham



**ZERO lunulation upper forewing**

**MONDAY 1 JULY dull**

# **Black Isle & Dornoch**

Nice habitat

Nice views

**NO sightings**

**20.50** dep Inverness

**22.35** arr Gatwick

20 years after  
my first field trip  
in 2004

I have photographed  
all GB's 58  
regular butterflies

**My full list is 61**

■ Long-tailed Blue

■ Queen of Spain Fritillary

■ Black-veined White!

# Still hoping for

- Camberwell Beauty

- Large Tortoiseshell

Or even some of Pete Eeles's  
other rarities



# Odonata (Damsels & Dragons)

This year in Scotland  
I photographed

- Northern Damsel
- White-faced Darter
- Northern Emerald
- Common Hawker

I have now photographed 43  
of GB's 44 regular odonata

Excluding Irish Damsel  
& Vagrant Emperor (rare migrant)

Still missing **Azure Hawker**

So it's back to NW Scotland  
next summer.

This time I plan a late booking  
to give myself the best chance  
of some sunshine!

**Thank you**