CLOUDED YELLOW
Upperside rich-yellow with broad black wing borders – very rarely shows upperside when at rest

LARGE WHITE

SMALL WHITE

GREEN-VEINED WHITE

ORANGE-TIP

MARBLED WHITE

SMALL COPPER
No blue on wings

BROWN ARGUS
Female Common Blues can be brown with orange spots – but always have some blue on the wings

COMMON BLUE
Underwing pale blue with no trace of orange

HOLLY BLUE
Antennae tips orange on underside

BRIMSTONE
Always rests with closed wings

SMALL COPPER
Underwing brown – black hindwing spots in no shape

BROWN ARGUS
Underwing grey to brown – black hindwing spots in 'D' shape

COMMON BLUE
Underwing pale blue with no trace of orange

SMALL COPPER

ESSEX SKIPPER
Antennae tips all black

WINGS WITH FAINT CHEQUERED PATTERN

SMALL SKIPPER
LARGE SKIPPER

RINGLET
Smaller and brighter than Meadow Brown

GATEKEEPER

MEADOW BROWN

SCOTCH ARGUS
Grayling has a similar underside

WALL BROWN

SMALL TORMOISESHELL

PAINTED LADY

COMMA
Can look like a fritillary in flight

SMALL HEATH
Beige-orange upperside (less golden than skippers) obvious in flight – always rests with closed wings

Farmland butterflies identification guide
Where and When

The distribution and flight period of each of the species illustrated is shown here in alphabetical order.
Flight times are a guideline, showing peak abundance as the darkest shade of green. Note that species may be on the wing earliest in the south/west, and latest in the north/east.

Farmland butterflies identification guide

Butterflies are excellent indicators of the health of the countryside as they respond rapidly to both habitat and climate change. Butterflies are also easy to identify making them a good way to assess the positive effects of wildlife friendly management on the farm.

This guide can be used to identify the 26 species that are regularly seen on farmland across the UK. Not all of the 59 resident and regular migrant species are included. Therefore if you are unsure of a species’ identity then use a guide book or take a photo and identify it later. You can find a full guide on our website.

Many butterflies are in steep decline and need our help. Butterfly Conservation is taking action to reverse these losses and create a healthy environment for us all to live in. You can help by:
Becoming a member
Helping record and monitor butterflies
Making a donation
Remembering Butterfly Conservation in your will.

To find out more about butterflies and how you can help, please visit www.butterfly-conservation.org or telephone 01929 400209.


Photos: Henk Bosma/Dutch Butterfly Conservation
Maps: Rob Still/WildGuides Ltd