

Top sites to see butterflies in Lomond and Rural Stirling

Choose warm, sunny days to look for butterflies, when they are more active. Always take a map and in more remote sites, a compass. Many of the paths are uneven so wear footwear with good ankle support and for longer walks take warm, waterproof clothing as weather conditions can change quickly. A mobile phone, snack and drink are good safety precautions. Remember to take a notebook and pen too, to record your butterfly sightings!

Get involved! Send in your butterfly sightings!

Contribute to Butterfly Conservation's general recording scheme for butterflies - 'Butterflies for the New Millennium' (BNM). Records of all butterflies are important, even of the most common species, so we have up-to-date information on the locations of butterfly colonies to help to direct conservation priorities and action in Scotland. All you need to do is send in your records to the relevant BNM Co-ordinator. You must provide details of which butterflies you saw and roughly how many, the site name and grid reference from an Ordnance Survey map, your name, and the date. More information is available from Butterfly Conservation Scotland (see contacts on back page) or visit www.butterfly-conservation.org.

BNM Co-ordinator for Scotland:

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Quick guide to flight periods												
Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Clouded Yellow												
Large White												
Small White												
Green-veined White												
Orange-tip												
Green Hairstreak												
Purple Hairstreak												
Small Copper												
Common Blue												
Red Admiral												
Painted Lady												
Small Tortoiseshell												
Peacock												
Small Pearl-b'd Fritillary												
Pearl-bordered Fritillary												
Dark Green Fritillary												
Mountain Ringlet												
Scotch Argus												
Meadow brown												
Ringlet												
Small Heath												
Large Heath												

Site name	How to get there	Main interest	OS grid ref and map no. of car park and other location details	More information
1 Ben Lawers NNR	Follow signs off the A827 east of Killin	Mountain Ringlet (above about 500m)	National Trust for Scotland Mountain Visitor Centre at NN609379 (51) - take nature trail track up the hill	National Trust for Scotland Ph 01567 820397 or 820988
2 Tyndrum Community Woodlands	Take the road to Dalrigh off the A82 between Crieanlarich and Tyndrum	Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	Car park just off the A82 at NN343292 (51)	Strathfillan Development Trust Ph 01838 400545
3 Acharn Forest	From Killin take the road towards Lix Toll	Variety of butterflies along track verges - esp first km from parking area up hill	Use the small parking area just east of the bridge at NN554309 (51)	None available
4 Glen Ogle cycle track	The cycle track is between Lochearnhead and Lix Toll off the A85	Range of butterflies including Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	Glen Oglehead at NN559284 or Lochearnhead at NN592239 (51)	National Park Breadalbane Area Office Ph 01567 830430
5 Inversnaid	At the west end of Aberfoyle Main Street, take the B829 signposted to Inversnaid	Range of butterflies including Scotch Argus, Large Heath, Green & Purple Hairstreak, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	For woodland use Inversnaid Hotel at NN337088 (56). For hill ground use Garrison Farm car park at NN348097 (56)	RSPB Glasgow Office Ph 0141 3319093
6 Little Drum Wood	Take the A84 from Callander, then the A821 for c5 miles along Loch Venachar 1 mile before Brig o'Turk	Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	Little Drum car park at NN549062 (57)	Woodland Trust Scotland - visit www.glen-finglas.info
7 Callander Meadows	The site is in the middle of Callander, next to the Riverside car park	Range of butterflies, especially Ringlet and Orange-tip	Riverside car park: NN627079 (57) (site is wheelchair accessible)	National Park Trossachs Area Office Ph 01877 382034
8 Aberfoyle Wildlife Site	The site is in the centre of Aberfoyle, west of the main car park next to the Tourist Information Centre	Range of butterflies including Ringlet and possible Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	Tourist Information Centre car park NN522009 (57)	National Park Trossachs Area Office Ph 01877 382034
9 Burnside Wood, Kippen	Park in Kippen and walk down Oakwood to the football pitch from where access can be gained	Eleven species including Orange-tips, Ringlets and Painted Lady	Anywhere in Kippen NN6694 (57)	Kippen Community Woodland Group Ph 01786 870247
10 Salloch	Follow the B837 from Drymen north along Loch Lomond, Salloch is on the left three miles north of Balmaha	Purple Hairstreak - need a sunny day!	Forestry Commission car park NS379958 (56). Then walk south on the West Highland Way for c. 20 mins to a boulder outcrop at NS 387951 which overlooks oak canopy	Forestry Commission Scotland Ph 01877 382383
11 Cashel	Follow the B837 from Drymen north along Loch Lomond, Cashel is on the right two miles north of Balmaha	Scotch Argus, Green Hairstreak, Small Pearl-bordered and Dark Green Fritillary,	Follow track to buildings and pull off at NN440941 (56)	National Park Balmaha Area Office Ph 01360 870470
12 Balloch Castle Country Park	Follow signs off the A811	Variety of species including Orange-tip and Ringlets	Park in main car park at NS392822 (56). Best place is north of the castle	Country Park Ranger Service Ph 01389 758 216
13 Loch Ardingning	Off the A81 between Strathblane and Milngavie	Green Hairstreak and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	Layby at NS564779 (64)	Scottish Wildlife Trust Ph 0131 3127765
14 Mugdock Country Park	Follow the signs from the A81 Glasgow to Aberfoyle road to the Craigend Visitor Centre	Range of butterflies esp. in late summer.	Visitor Centre car park NS547779 (64) Peitches Moor for Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Mugdock Wood for Purple Hairstreak	Mugdock Country Park Ranger Service Ph 0141 9566586



Butterfly Conservation Scotland

butterflies of Lomond and Rural Stirling

an identification guide



Purple Hairstreak

Butterflies are beautiful insects and a joy to observe as well as identify. This guide will help you identify all 22 species of butterflies which occur in the Lomond & Rural Stirling area. It also provides a table so you can easily see what is "on the wing" at a given time, and a section on the best places in the area to see butterflies.



WHITES AND YELLOWS

1 Clouded Yellow
m 52 - 58mm, f 54 - 62mm
 A migrant to the UK from the Continent, this butterfly is well-known for its mass immigrations when they arrive in huge numbers in "Clouded Yellow years". Less common in Scotland, but in good years may be seen between May and September.

2 Large White
m 58mm, f 63mm
 Our largest white butterfly and a strong flier. Feeds on brassica crops as caterpillars and is therefore disliked by gardeners. Distinguishable from the Small White by its larger size, darker black wing tips extending down the wing edge, and bolder spots. Flies June - September.

3 Small White
38 - 57mm
 The caterpillars feed on brassicas, but they cause less damage than those of the Large White. Easily confused with the more common Green-veined White which is similar in size, but the upperside has dark tips to the forewings, and it lacks the "green veins" on the underside of the wing. It is often one of the first butterflies to be seen and flies all summer.

4 Green-veined White
40 - 52mm
 The most common of the whites, this species feeds on wild crucifers and is not a garden pest. The green veins on the underside of the wing distinguish this from other white butterflies, but they can fade with wear and are less distinct in second generation butterflies. Flies all summer.

5 Orange-tip
40 - 52mm
 Feeds on wild crucifers such as cuckoo flower and garlic mustard. Males are unmistakable with their bright orange wing-tips, but females have no orange so could be confused with Small or Green-veined Whites. However, Orange-tips have distinctive mottled green undersides that can also be seen faintly from above through the upperwing. Flies mid April to early June and occasionally again in late August.

HAIRSTREAKS, COPPERS AND BLUES

6 Green Hairstreak
27 - 34mm
 Despite the bright green appearance of this small butterfly, which always sits with its wings closed, it is often difficult to spot. It prefers warm, sheltered sites on open birch woodland, moorland and edges or clearings of conifer plantations where its caterpillar food plant, blaeberry (bilberry), is found. Flies in May and early June.

7 Purple Hairstreak
m 33 - 40mm, f 31 - 38mm
 A striking butterfly which feeds on honey dew in the upper canopy of oak trees. Colonies usually favour a particular tree, and the butterflies are best looked for in late afternoon or early evening on sunny days when they can be seen "fridgiting" in the canopy, and are best seen by lying on the ground and scanning the tops of the oak trees with binoculars. Occasionally they fly down to the ground to nectar on flowers. Flies late July to mid September. It is certainly under-recorded in the area.

8 Small Copper
m 26 - 36mm, f 30 - 40mm
 This dainty butterfly is a widespread species found in a range of habitats. Its caterpillars feed on common and sheep's sorrel. It can be seen in May and June with a second generation in August and September.

9 Common Blue
29 - 36mm
 A widespread butterfly found in a variety of grassy habitats from sea level to mountainsides, almost anywhere that its caterpillar's foodplant, bird's-foot-trefoil, occurs. The brightly-coloured males are conspicuous, but females are browner, often with little or no blue. In Scotland it usually has one generation a year, the adults flying between June and September.

VANESSIDS AND FRITILLARIES

10 Red Admiral
m 64 - 72mm, f 70 - 78mm
 A familiar and distinctive garden butterfly that migrates to the UK every year from southern Europe and North Africa. It can breed in Scotland but cannot survive our winter. The major influx starts in late May and is re-enforced until August, with adults being seen until November. The caterpillars feed on stinging nettles.

11 Painted Lady
m 58 - 70mm, f 62 - 74mm
 Another migrant, this species is unable to over-winter in any part of the UK and re-colonises each year from mainland Europe, sometimes in spectacular numbers (such as in 1995 and 2003). They can often be seen congregating in areas with thistles, which serve as both a foodplant for the caterpillars and a nectar source for the adults. The peak of immigration usually occurs in June, and adults can be seen until October or November.

12 Small Tortoiseshell
m 45 - 55mm, f 52 - 62mm
 This well-known butterfly can be seen in any month of the year in almost any habitat. It is familiar in gardens and feeds on stinging nettles as a caterpillar. It over-winters as an adult and is one of the first butterflies to emerge in the spring. Adults are regularly found in houses, sheds and outbuildings seeking hibernation sites.

13 Peacock
m 63 - 68mm, f 67 - 75mm
 An unmistakable butterfly and a regular garden visitor, feeding on nettles as a caterpillar. Its range has expanded northwards in Scotland in recent years following widespread immigration from the south in the mid 1990s. Often one of the first butterflies to be seen in the Spring, having over-wintered as an adult, its offspring can be seen from July to September, in much larger numbers.

14 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary
SoCC
m 35 - 41mm, f 38 - 44mm
 This species occurs in damp, grassy habitats, woodland clearings and moorlands. The caterpillars feed on marsh violet. It can be confused with the much rarer Pearl-bordered Fritillary or the Dark Green Fritillary (see below). Flies from late May to late July/early August.

15 Pearl-bordered Fritillary
PS m 38 - 46mm, f 43 - 47mm
 This is a rare species in the area. It can be distinguished from the much more common Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary by close observation of the underside of the hind wing: it has a smaller central spot, two (not seven) white central cells and all cells have a much paler border compared to the black border of the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary. In addition, this species has more specific habitat requirements, only being found in dry glades, on south-facing slopes with bracken. It flies earlier in the season (late April to the end of May) and its main food plant is common dog violet.

16 Dark Green Fritillary
58 - 68mm
 This is a large butterfly that feeds on violets as a caterpillar. It is widespread and is often found in flower-rich habitats with patches of scrub. It can be confused with the other two fritillaries in the area but is a more powerful flier, is much larger and has a green background to the underside of its hind wing. It flies during July and August.

BROWNS
17 Mountain Ringlet
SoCC, LBAP
m 28 - 36mm, f 28 - 38mm
 Our only true montane butterfly, this species is found above 350m, usually on south-facing slopes where the caterpillars feed on mat grass. It only flies in bright sunshine, but can be disturbed from the ground in quite dull weather. It is similar to the larger and brighter Scotch Argus, but does not have white eyespots. It is found in the Breadalbane Hills and Ben Lomond usually from late June to early August.

18 Scotch Argus
m 44 - 48mm, f 46 - 52mm
 This butterfly is widespread in Scotland but has declined in the southern part of its range. It can be found in the north and west of the area up to an altitude of about 500m. The Scotch Argus breeds in tall, damp grassland where the caterpillars feed on a variety of grasses. In sunshine males can be very active, but cloudy weather can cause them to stop flying completely. It flies late in the season, from late July to early September.

19 Meadow Brown
m 40 - 50mm, f 42 - 60mm
 One of the most common butterflies in the area, the Meadow Brown can be seen in many grassy habitats flying even in dull weather when most other butterflies are inactive. The caterpillar feeds on a variety of grasses. Males tend to be much darker than females, but the amount of orange on both is variable. The spotting pattern on the underside of the hindwing is also variable. Flies from late June to early September.

20 Ringlet
m 42 - 48mm, f 46 - 52mm
 The Ringlet has a very dark, velvety appearance when newly emerged. Males tend to be smaller and darker than females with hardly any markings on the upperwings. The "ringlets" on the underwings vary in number and size and can be virtually absent. It favours tall grassland on damp, heavy soils, where the caterpillars feed on coarse grasses. It flies, even in dull conditions, in July and August.

21 Small Heath
m 33mm, f 37mm
 A bright but inconspicuous butterfly that flies only in sunny conditions and always keeps its wings closed at rest. It occurs on grasslands in dry, well-drained situations where the sward is short but sparse and there are fescues, meadow grasses and bents upon which the caterpillar feeds. In Scotland it only has one generation from late June to the end of August.

22 Large Heath
SoCC, LBAP 35 - 40mm
 The Large Heath is restricted to wet, boggy habitats where its main food plant, hare's-tail cottongrass grows. It always sits with its wings closed and can be distinguished from the Small Heath by its duller colour, spots on the hind wing, and larger size. Flies in June and July.

About Butterfly Conservation

Butterfly Conservation is the UK charity taking action to save butterflies, moths and their habitats. We work with a wide range of partners to conserve butterflies, moths and their habitats by:

- Advising landowners and managers on conserving and restoring important habitats
- Purchasing and managing land for threatened butterflies, moths and other wildlife
- Carrying out surveys, monitoring and other essential research
- Lobbying government and its agencies to influence land use policy

Join Butterfly Conservation!

You can directly support us in this vital work by joining Butterfly Conservation. With an annual membership you will receive an interesting and informative welcome pack, a colourful magazine Butterfly three times a year and membership of your local branch of Butterfly Conservation. Our local branches carry out practical conservation work as well as running public moth and butterfly events. For a membership form or for further information, please contact us.



Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats

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Codes
PS Priority Species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP)
SoCC Species of Conservation Concern in the UKBAP
LBAP Local Biodiversity Action Plan species
 Wing spans, m = male, f = female