

PROJECT NEWS

Bog Squad restored!

The Bog Squad has received a welcome funding boost that will enable us to continue with our peatland restoration work, and we will be running volunteer work parties on bogs from South Lanarkshire to Glen Affric in Inverness-shire.

Since the establishment of the Bog Squad project in early 2014, 100 volunteers have helped restore around 60 hectares of peatland, clearing 27 hectares of scrub and installing 125 ditch-blocking dams. These measures re-wet the peaty habitats enabling specialist plants, such as Sphagnum mosses and Hare's-tail Cotton-grass, to flourish.

In the Central Belt the Bog Squad is working to protect these special places that cling on in landscapes dominated by housing, roads, industry and forestry, providing homes for scarce species such as the Large Heath, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Wood Tiger moth.



Wood Tiger - Roy Leverton



Large Heath - John Knowler



David Hill

These amazing peatlands also lock up carbon (much more than forests), help prevent flooding and are peaceful havens to discover and escape to, away from the day to day hustle and bustle.

We are very grateful for the support of the Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) Peatland Action programme, charitable trusts and our members. And of course to our wonderful Bog Squad volunteers. For details about upcoming work parties see bogsquad.weebly.com

Urban Butterflies



Green Hairstreak - Jim Black

The Urban Butterfly Project officially launched in April 2016, and through the summer over 70 people came to the butterfly identification and recording workshops. Many then went on to survey their local urban greenspaces for butterflies, as well as record butterflies further afield.

Over 700 records have been submitted by these recorders, who will hopefully keep up the survey work and even become involved in butterfly transects this year.

One of the starkest findings from the survey was that our urban areas seem to be almost devoid of Common Blue and Small Copper butterflies. Common Blue caterpillars feed upon Bird's-foot Trefoil, so we are working with Glasgow City Council to increase the extent of this attractive native wildflower. Some plants are being grown by volunteers at Pollok Country Park's new wildflower nursery, and these will be planted out in the spring.



A joint work-party with Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network at Commonhead Moss removed birch scrub that was encroaching on patches of Blaeberry. This is the food-plant of Green Hairstreak which is found at the site, and they will benefit by the opening up of the woodland rides.



This year the project moves into Edinburgh and North Lanarkshire, with the first training events taking place in May, and work parties later in the year at St. Maurice's Pond near Cumbernauld. Here we will be improving the habitat for Small Pearl-Bordered Fritillary and their foodplant, Marsh Violet.

In Edinburgh the 'Square Metre for Butterflies initiative' is already taking off, a collaboration with 'Edinburgh Living Landscapes', which will see the caterpillar foodplant of several species planted on green roofs and roof gardens. The official launch was at the whiskey distiller Glenmorangie. Even the Scottish Parliament will be getting planted up! These patches of wildflowers should benefit species such as the Northern Brown Argus, Common Blue and Small Copper.

If you want to get involved contact **Anthony McCluskey** on amclluskey@butterfly-conservation.org or via the Stirling office.

The project is funded by SNH, Heritage Lottery Fund and Butterfly Conservation members.

VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION

Once you pop – you can't stop!

Much of our conservation action on the ground involves removing scrub to create all-important warm, sunny microclimates upon which many threatened butterflies and moths depend. However, on being cut, most trees regrow and ironically often come back with extra vigour and more shoots.

One answer is to apply herbicide, but cut stumps can easily be missed, non-target species can be affected, trained personnel are required, and it cannot be applied during or before wet weather. One solution is the 'Tree popper' - this innovative tool simply clamps onto the base of a sapling which is then levered or "popped" up out of the ground, roots and all, as pressure is applied to the long handle.

Tree poppers come in three sizes to suite both a range of users and scrub, and they are proving to be very effective and fun to use!

More at www.treepopper.co.za



Jim Asher 'popping' gorse from a site for Northern Brown Argus, Galloway - Paul Kirkland

SPECIES IN THE NEWS

Small Dark Yellow Underwing

In October we teamed up with Network Rail to improve the habitat of one of the UK's rarest moths, the day-flying Small Dark Yellow Underwing and its larval foodplant, bearberry.

In the absence of grazing, careful cyclical burning or other forms of disturbance, heathers and scrub can shade-out the creeping, mat-forming bearberry and this was happening on an embankment on the main Inverness to Perth railway near Newtonmore. That was until a team of volunteers from our Highland branch, clad in high-visibility bright orange, cleared scrub and heather to protect the bearberry and allow it to spread.



Small Dark Yellow Underwing - Dave Grundy



Highland branch volunteers working with Network Rail staff - Tom Prescott



Transparent Burnet - Tom Prescott

Transparent Burnet

Andrew Masterman has been busy surveying Transparent Burnet sites in mainland Argyll, collecting vegetation data to help build a picture of the moth's requirements.

This highlighted the moth's preference for very steep, south-west or south-facing slopes, short turf, with plentiful wild thyme and bare ground. It has also resulted in the discovery of at least one new site as well as sites which are in poor condition and in need of conservation action.

We will be making contact with the owners of these sites over the next couple of years to see if we can improve the habitat for this beautiful rarity.



Kentish Glory female - Tom Prescott

Kentish Glory

Kentish Glory is a large and spectacular moth that, despite its name, is confined in the UK to the Cairngorms, the Moray coast and Highland Perthshire. It is reliant on birch woodland and plantation clear-fell where birch up to 2m grows in an open woodland structure. In 2016 targeted conservation action focussed on survey work and management advice.

The latter resulted in management proposals being drawn up for two important sites on the National Forest Estate at Culbin and Inshriach Forests, as well as at Granish just north of Aviemore. Surveys were undertaken across the species range by a combination of light trapping for adults as well as daytime searches for adults, egg batches and caterpillars, and trialling the use of pheromone lures.

Flying high for the New Forest Burnet

In last year's newsletter we reported the threat to the New Forest Burnet posed by sheep gaining unhindered access to the UK's sole colony, and decimating its caterpillar foodplants, Meadow Vetchling and Bird's-foot Trefoil. It is, therefore, very pleasing to announce that we have secured funding through the Landfill Communities Fund, via EB Scotland, for a new fence.

It will be a very challenging task given the very steep slopes, rugged terrain and remoteness of the site, and it is likely that the materials will have to be helicoptered in. Our 'Matchpot' appeal will help fund this work, as a cash contribution of 10% is required, so many thanks to all of you who have contributed.



New Forest Burnet - Stuart Read

For more information on this appeal, go to butterfly-conservation.org/13330/saving-landscapes-with-landfill

RECORDING MATTERS

UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme: Forty years young!

In November 2016 the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS) celebrated 40 years at the Headquarters of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) near Oxford.

The eminent speakers included the originator of the butterfly transect, Dr Ernie Pollard and international butterfly experts Dr Chris Van Swaay, Prof Jeremy and Prof Chris Thomas, as well as our own Prof Tom Brereton and Dr Martin Warren. Concerns about insecticides such as DDT in the environment led to the scheme being set up in 1976, in parallel with other environmental monitoring schemes.



For many years just 100 transects were walked, mainly by wardens on nature reserves, but with Butterfly Conservation's involvement the scheme has grown rapidly to now over 4,400 sites monitored annually through butterfly transects and other methods. This adds up to around 850,000km walked each year and nearly 30 million butterflies counted – almost all by volunteers!

The dataset is of world importance and has contributed to more than 150 peer-reviewed papers, including one in Nature led by Martin Warren which has more than 1000 citations. Butterfly indicators derived from the data are now used by the Scottish and UK Governments to monitor biodiversity, and further indicators are in development representing geographical areas and land use types.

The data is being used to analyse how effective agri-environment schemes are, how climate change is affecting adult emergence dates, and whether neonicotinoids are affecting butterflies. In the future butterfly data may be incorporated into 'quality of life' indicators.



The Orange-tip is now flying on average 3 weeks earlier than it did in 1976 - Jim Black

Butterfly monitoring has also taken off in Europe and there are now schemes in more than 25 countries, with Hungary, Slovakia and Serbia coming 'on stream' in 2016. Adding in the UK transects, there are now over 9000 transects across Europe, and discussions are currently taking place to include butterfly data into the global 'Living Planet Index', managed by WWF International and the Zoological Society of London www.livingplanetindex.org.

So butterflies counted in Scotland eventually find their way into national and international indicators. You can help! We still need more transects in Scotland to get a better representation across the country. What could be better than counting butterflies in the sunshine? If you would like to start butterfly monitoring, please get in touch with the Stirling Office or your local Butterfly Conservation Branch.



SPREADING THE MESSAGE

Moth Night 2017 will be held between 12 – 14 October 2017 with the main theme of Ivy. The aim is to raise awareness of moths with the general public and also to target particular species and habitats.

For events in Scotland, go to www.mothnight.info



Herald - John Knowler

Do you want to learn to identify butterflies?

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to start recording butterflies and moths. If you are a complete beginner try our Big Butterfly Count (right).

If you want more of a challenge and want to record the butterflies and moths that you see out and about, download a copy of one of our free regional guides at butterfly-conservation.org/2258/butterfly-and-moth-identification-guides.html.

Our 'iRecord Butterflies' app can help you identify butterflies as well as record them, and is free for both Android and iPhones.



big butterfly count

14th July - 6th August

Big Butterfly Count

Our annual Big Butterfly Count kicks off this summer on Friday, 14 July and will run for three weeks until the 6 August. Everyone can take part!

Simply choose a sunny spot and use the downloadable id chart to note how many of the butterflies you see over a 15 minute period, then log your sightings online at www.bigbutterflycount.org or via the **Big Butterfly Count app**. You can repeat the count as many times as you like.

In 2016, it was the whites that took centre stage in the Big Butterfly Count with Green-veined White being the most abundant species recorded in Scotland and Large White taking first place in England.



Green-veined White - Stuart Graham

SCOTLAND'S TOP TEN FOR 2016 WERE:

- 1 – Green-veined White
- 2 – Ringlet
- 3 – Small White
- 4 – Meadow Brown
- 5 – Speckled Wood
- 6 – Small Tortoiseshell
- 7 – Six-spot Burnet
- 8 – Large White
- 9 – Common Blue
- 10 – Red Admiral

Keep up to date with our e-newsletter

Once every quarter we send out a newsletter by email. They are always choc-a-bloc with butterfly and moth news from our Branches, Project staff and volunteers from across Scotland and are a great way of keeping up to date with what's going on.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list please email Shona Greig at sgreig@butterfly-conservation.org. You can of course unsubscribe at any time.

SPREADING THE MESSAGE



Social Media

We have well over 2,200 friends on our Facebook page and it's a great place to keep up with all the latest butterfly and moth sightings, as well as our news, workparties, projects and events. Follow us at www.facebook.com/bcscotland

Our Twitter feed is going strong now too with almost 700 followers! It's a really good space to have your say so if you enjoy a tweet now and again, follow us at www.twitter.com/BC_Scotland



Painted Lady - Stuart Graham



Gardening Scotland 2017

We are delighted to be taking a stand at this year's Gardening Scotland. As Scotland's biggest plant fair, there is something here for everyone and you can find out more about the creatures that share our gardens with us in the Living Garden area.

Taking place over three days from 4th to 7th June if you are planning a visit, we would love if you would come and say hi! See www.gardeningscotland.com

Join us!

If you've enjoyed reading your Newsletter but you're not already a member, join Butterfly Conservation today and start receiving Butterfly - the brilliant members-only UK magazine. Help save butterflies, moths and money to boot with our Half Price Membership Offer. Just select Single, Joint or Family membership when you join online for the first time, and enter promotional code **HERALD17** when you choose to pay by Direct Debit.

Your new member welcome pack is bursting with colourful information about moths and butterflies, a guide to our reserves, collectible postcards and a car sticker. Plus, your local Branch (we have three in Scotland) will keep you up-to-date with projects in your region and opportunities to join guided walks and talks or volunteer.

For other ways to support our work, record your sightings, garden for butterflies or shop online visit our website at www.butterfly-conservation.org.

Or if you're an existing member, why not pass this code to your friends and family so they can enjoy Butterfly Conservation too? For further information please call our Membership Team on **01929 406015**.

To find out how a gift in your Will can help butterflies and moths thrive for future generations to enjoy, please visit <http://butterfly-conservation.org/leaveagift>

About us

Butterfly Conservation is the UK charity dedicated to saving butterflies, moths and our environment. Butterflies and moths are important because they respond quickly to change, revealing the health of the countryside.

Seven out of ten butterfly species in the UK are in decline. This early warning to all wildlife cannot be ignored. We advise landowners, managers and other organisations on conserving and restoring important habitats in the countryside, towns and cities. We carry out surveys, monitoring and research, manage nature reserves and promote wildlife friendly gardening. With your support we can help struggling butterflies and moths recover and thrive.

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