



North East England Branch



President Sir David Attenborough CH. FRs DEDICATED TO SAVING WILD BUTTERFLIES AND THEIR HABITATS

Newsletter No. 31.

April 2015



Butterfly Conservation

Company limited by guarantee, registered in England (2206468)

Registered Office: Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 5QP

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Cover Photo: Brown Argus by Tim Nelson

Editorial

Hello.

I hope you enjoyed my first offerings as Newsletter Editor last autumn. I very much enjoyed the opportunity and am still here!

In November last year after two years collaboration across the North East branch, the new book 'Butterflies of North East England' was released to a very positive reception. An article subsequently appeared in The Journal (Saturday 13th December) and the Sunday Sun (Sunday 14th December).

With spring round the corner it would be a great time to consider taking on a few resolutions for 2015 that are easy to achieve and would help butterfly conservation.

- A BC organised local guided walk
- Reporting any adverse planning applications or other developments in your area that could affect butterfly or moths habitats
- Record and Report your sightings – details at the end of the newsletter

It has been brought to my attention that the email address for Dave Wainwright has been printed incorrectly; the correction has been made (see back cover).

Kind regards,

Helen Passey

Chairman's Report - Peter Webb

I read the article in last autumn's "Butterfly" magazine on the history of butterfly recording with considerable interest. For more than three hundred years there have been people who have shared our interest in these fabulous creatures. They have recorded which species were found in their era and so we read of collectors, as they were at that time, finding large numbers of butterflies of species which are scarce today. "Butterflies of North East England" produced by members of this branch follows in this tradition and is a source of advice and delight for all who have purchased their copy (Copies of Butterflies of North East England are still available from Dave Stebbings. Please see information on page 9).

Today as in the past the main reason for seeking out our beautiful and diverse butterflies and moths is personal enjoyment but by passing on our sightings (records) a fun pastime can also provide vital resources to underpin nature conservation. Recording can take as much or as little time as you like. You can do it anywhere you see a butterfly or moth that you can identify.

Continued recording is essential in order to gauge the extent of changes in populations. Despite the immense volunteer effort many areas still remain under recorded.

In "Butterflies of North East England" you will find a description of the changes in distribution of each of our local species but as Harry Eales observes in his article; "there are still vast areas of Northumberland and Durham which have never felt the tread of an entomologist's foot which still need exploring".

Many new members join Butterfly Conservation following their participation in the Big Butterfly Count. The most recorded butterfly last year was the Peacock, followed by the Gatekeeper which is rarely seen in the North East as we are currently just outside the northern edge of its range.

It is predicted that the Gatekeeper's range will expand into our region possibly making it a common sight, as it was in the hedgerows in Leicestershire where the picture below was taken last July.

Something for us all to look out for in the North East during the summer, but if you see a butterfly you think is a Gatekeeper please try and take a photograph for verification as it can be confused with the Meadow Brown.



Gatekeeper Butterfly (*Pyronia tithonus*) by Peter Webb

The big Butterfly Count this year will run from Friday 17th July to Sunday 9th August. We are holding a Big Butterfly Day at Gibside on Wednesday 29th July as part of the National Trust's Wildlife Wednesday programme. This will be an opportunity to collect recording forms and take part in butterfly recording activities or crafts.

Following on from the successful day last year we are holding this year's Members day at Gibside on Sunday 12th July the programme for the day and other details are included in this newsletter. Come along to meet like-minded enthusiasts and find out more about the branch. This is your day please support it.

The branch committee continues to have a number of vacancies including one for a butterfly recorder for Northumberland (See page 6). This is an important role if you are interested please contact me.

We are always looking for new committee members with fresh ideas on ways of increasing membership and encouraging an interest in moths and butterflies. We only meet three times a year and need more branch support.

Peter Webb
April 2015

North East England Branch of Butterfly Conservation

County Recorder for Butterflies for Northumberland

Key Tasks:

1. Co-ordinate butterfly recording (except transects) each season.
2. Co-ordinate the verification, computer input, validation, storage and supply of butterfly records.
3. Develop a local network of recorders and disseminating feedback.

Main Responsibilities:

1. Act as a focal point for butterfly recording within Northumberland, receiving, collecting and collating all records.
2. Disseminate standard recording forms at the beginning of the season or on demand.
3. Work with other branch committee members to verify all records.
4. Co-ordinate the computerisation of records using appropriate software.
5. Ensure that the database is maintained, backed up regularly, and that appropriate security considerations and Data Protection regulations are taken into account.
6. Validate data once computerised (i.e. check for input mistakes)
7. Supply a copy of the computerised data to Head Office annually.
8. Help to publicise the importance of butterfly recording and acknowledge the contributions of recorders

If you are interested in this role please consider the following comments from a previous county recorder:

During the spring and summer, there is little to do, apart from odd emails or occasional phone calls from people who have seen something exciting. Once October arrives, and the action outdoors winds down, observers turn to writing up their records and contributions start to trickle in. Most contributions are electronic in the form of spreadsheets which generally follow the layout in the back of the newsletters or annual report. Sorting the electronic contributions involves checking them for grid reference errors, and other odds and ends. Unusual species, dates, places or numbers seen need checking-we have a small records committee to help with that. Once the spreadsheets have been edited they can be loaded straight into the database, this takes only a few mouse clicks. A small number of paper record forms need to be entered by hand. Contributions are usually in by Christmas and the parallel database compiled for Durham is added to the Northumberland one. The Northeast's contribution for the year is then sent off as a zipped file to the national recorder by the end of March.

This post needs enthusiasm to collect records, see what everyone else is finding, and some fairly basic computer literacy.

If you are interested please contact the branch chairman Peter Webb (apwebb@uwclub.net or telephone 10833 650772)

News and Events

UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme 2013 summary -

- 46 of the 56 species assessed recorded an annual increase from 2012.
- Almost 630,000 more butterflies were counted than in 2012 on UKBMS sites, with each recorder seeing on average approximately 500 more butterflies per monitored site.
- Some of the largest improvements in fortunes were for summer species whose main/second broods coincided with the July heatwave. Chalkhill Blue had its best year on record.
- In spite of some positives, the year was still well below average, ranking only 25th in the 38 year series.
- It was a poor year for single-brooded, spring flying species, with eight of the nine species having below average years and the ninth barely above average. Grizzled Skipper had its worst year in the series.
- It was a late season, with 47 of 55 resident species peaking later in abundance than the series average.
- The mean emergence date for species was seven days later than the long-term average, whilst the mean flight date was five days later.

Report found at <http://www.ukbms.org/docs/reports/>

Big Butterfly Count

Big Butterfly Count at Gibside - 29th July:

The big butterfly count is a nationwide survey aimed at helping us assess the health of our environment. It was launched in 2010 and has rapidly become the world's biggest survey of butterflies. Over 44,000 people took part in 2014, counting almost 560,000 individual butterflies and day-flying moths across the UK.

www.bigbutterflycount.org

North East England Branch of Butterfly Conservation

Members' Day and AGM

To be held in the Stables Learning and discovery Centre at Gibside National Trust, Rowlands Gill on Sunday 12th July 2015

Programme

Arrive at 10.00am. The day is free but please tell reception staff you are coming to "the butterfly day". A shuttle bus is available if you don't want to walk up to the stables. Coffee or tea will be available at the stables on arrival.

10.30am. A quick look in the Gibside Moth Trap to see some of the moths which were attracted overnight.

11.00am. "The Mothing Scene in the North." A talk by Dr Charles Fletcher (One of the Moth Recorders for Yorkshire).

12.00 noon. North East England Moth Report.

12.30pm. Lunch. Bring a picnic or food available from the Gibside's Cafe.

1.30pm. The Annual General Meeting of the North East England branch of Butterfly Conservation . (Meeting to include the Annual Chairman's, Treasurer's and Conservation Officers Reports).

2.00pm. North East England Butterfly Report

2.30pm . Butterflies of Cumbria a talk by Steve Doyle.

3.45pm . Results of the photographic competition and closing comments.

All members are invited to bring or email original photographs of British Butterflies and Moths for a **photographic competition** to be judged by committee members voting on the day. The winner of the photo competition's picture will be on the cover of the next newsletter!

Photographs can be emailed to Jonathan Wallace

(jonathan@cherryburn.com) by 1st July or given to him before 11 am on the day (size no larger than 7"by 5").

Please notify Peter Webb (apwebb @ uwclub.net or 01833 650772) if you intend to attend.

Dear Member,

Butterfly Conservation North East England Branch has published a book called the Butterflies of North East England. This book gives a detailed account of the current state of each species of butterfly regularly seen in our region. Each species account is illustrated with photographs, line drawings, maps and graphs. There are other sections discussing the causes of changes in distribution, looking at what may happen in the future and a section on extinct and vagrant species.

The book is now available for members to buy at a price of £5 plus £1.60 postage and packing. If you would like a copy please fill in the request slip below and send it together with a cheque for £6.60 made payable to 'Butterfly Conservation North East England Branch' to :-

David Stebbings
20 Purley Gardens
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 3DJ



Butterflies
of North East England

Northumbrian Naturalist Vol 77 2014



Butterflies of North East England describes the status, distribution, habitats, life cycle, conservation and future outlook for 33 species of butterfly resident in the north east of England for the period 1995-2013. Additional information is provided for 17 extinct or vagrant species. Species accounts are accompanied by maps, graphs, photographs and artwork.

Butterflies of North East England has been produced by Butterfly Conservation North East and is published by the Natural History Society of Northumbria as Volume 77 of the Northumbrian Naturalist.

Butterfly Conservation would like to thank the following organisations for their financial support, without which it would not have been possible to print this publication.


WILDLIFE TRUSTS DURHAM
Since 1830


Natural History Society of Northumbria


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New Members

Welcome to all the following new members of the branch, we hope you enjoy the newsletters and look forward to any submissions you may have!

Miss R Wass--Sunniside,
Newcastle

Mrs J Wilson--Jarrow

Dr BN Rossiter--Hexham

DR D & Mr A Firnigi--
Newcastle

Dr M Rogers--Newcastle

Miss M Sbeksnyder--
Newcastle

Mrs C & Mr M Musgrove--
Whitley Bay

Mrs L Norris--Ashington

Mrs B Jones--Durham

Miss K Hinchcliffe--Newton
Aycliffe

Mr J Hawes & Mrs J Bulman
Hawes--Crook

Mrs S Zissler--Melsonby,
Richmond

Mrs K Davis-- Whitley Bay

Miss B Watson--Durham

Dr J E Jeans--Hexham

Mrs S & Mr D Friesner--
Lanchester

Mr D Egdell--Alnwick

Mrs M & Mr R Winship--
Hebburn

Mr R W & Mrs I M Birch--
Prudhoe

Mrs P Battersby--Cramlington

Mrs A Bettis--Gateshead

Mrs J Godson--Ryton

Dr S Bartlett—Newcastle

Mrs J Hanson--Consett

Mrs D Anderson--South
Shields

Mrs C Inskipp--Bishop
Auckland

Mrs S Bennett-- Newcastle

Mrs S C White--Durham

Mrs B Madigan--Darlington

Miss L Rule- Heaton

Mr & Mrs G Wadsworth-
Jesmond

Mrs J Godson-Ryton

Mr & Mrs S Hagen -
Washington

Mrs R Hepburn- Ushaw Moor

Mr & Mrs T Huggins-Cooper-
Rowlands Gill

Miss S Metcalf-Darlington

Miss J Patton & Mr C Bond-
Jarrow

Day-flying moth and caterpillar recording - Zoë Randle and Richard Fox

Butterfly Conservation would love butterfly recorders to record day-flying moths and moth caterpillars when they are out and about. In 2018, in collaboration with MothsIreland, we will be publishing a Macro-moth Atlas for Britain and Ireland. The majority of moth recorders use light-traps and, as a result, the many species of day-flying moths may be relatively under-recorded compared to nocturnal ones. Butterfly recorders can make a huge contribution to the forthcoming atlas by submitting records of day-flying moths such as Speckled Yellow (Figure 1) and indeed distinctive caterpillars (e.g. Cinnabar) that they encounter while out looking at butterflies.

The National Moth Recording Scheme run by Butterfly Conservation will provide the UK moth data for the forthcoming atlas. The scheme already holds over 17.3 million moth records and geographical coverage of the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man at 10km resolution is very good (97% have at least one moth species recorded).

There are only 113 10km squares for which we do not have any records from the year 2000 onwards (see figure 2). However, in addition to these, there are 613 10km squares which we consider to be under-recorded - they possess 50 or fewer records of 25 or fewer species.

You could really help by targeting these unrecorded or under-recorded squares for moth sightings during your butterfly recording. To find out what 10km squares, or tetrads, are under-recorded in your area or if you wish to venture further a-field, please contact the relevant County Moth Recorder, a list can be found the Moths Count website (www.mothscount.org).

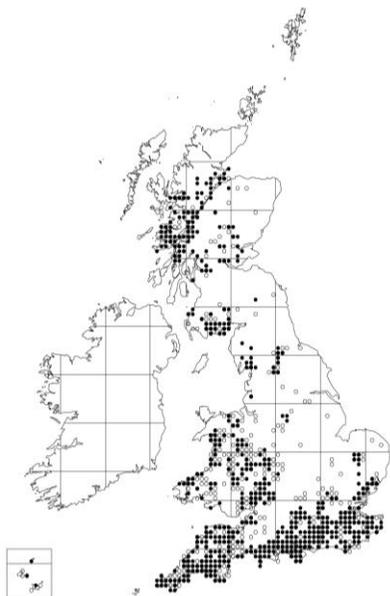


Figure 1: NMRS Provisional distribution map of Speckled Yellow at 10km resolution. Open circles pre 2000 records and solid dots 2000 onwards records

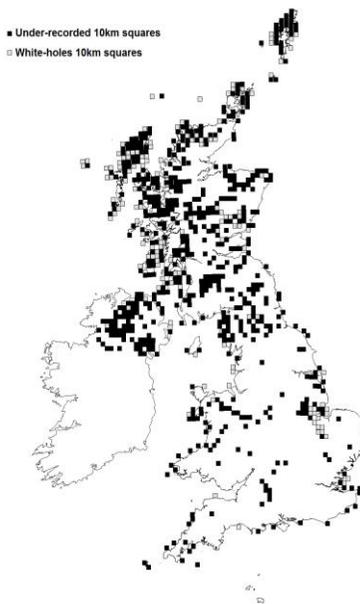


Figure 2: Map of National Moth Recording Scheme 'white-holes' and under-recorded 10km squares from 2000 onwards.

Many butterfly recorders already record the moths they see along their transects. In 2013, the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (BMS) team extracted moth records entered into Transect Walker software. The data extraction exercise revealed data for 109,485 individuals of 123 moth species, with 13,622 records from 403 sites. The five most frequently recorded species (in descending rank order) were Silver Y, Six-spot Burnet, Cinnabar, Burnet Companion and Speckled Yellow. These records will be re-patriated to County Moth Recorders in due course.

Participants in the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey are also encouraged to record day-flying moths in their squares. In 2014 a record of Blood-vein in Gloucestershire was only the second for SP10 and the first since 1974.

In the run up to the forthcoming Macro-moth Atlas for Britain and Ireland all butterfly recorders can help boost coverage by recording moths, whether on butterfly/WCBS transects, during 'casual' butterfly recording or by specifically targeting areas that are under-recorded for moths. Your help will be very gratefully received. Records are best submitted to your local County Moth recorder on an annual basis by the end of the year to enable incorporation into local datasets and ultimately the National Moth Recording Scheme.



Speckled Yellow, *Pseudopanthera macularia*.
Image credited to Pam Parsons

Projects in the North East

Reversing the decline of the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary butterfly in County Durham – Anne Porter

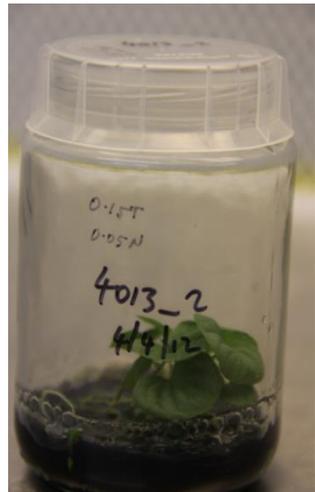


In 2011 the Small Pearl-Bordered Fritillary butterfly (SPBF) became the flag ship for Durham Wildlife Trust's Heart of Durham Project, pushing forward valuable work already done by Butterfly Conservation in habitat restoration aiming at reversing the decline of the SPBF. With

£120,000 from SITA Trust's Enriching Nature Fund and a Northumbrian Water Branch Out grant of £6,000 the Heart of Durham Project was able to focus on 10 sites, where the SPBF had historically been present or were still present, but at dangerously low numbers.

Conservation efforts centred on restoring habitats through scrub and gorse clearance allowing the regeneration of marsh violets and nectar plants, repairing dry stone walls and planting 2,360m of hedgerow to provide important shelter and fencing land to exclude cattle from sensitive sites at certain times of the year.

The marsh violet plant is crucial in the life cycle of the SPBF (the eggs are laid on the underside of the leaf and it is the staple food of the developing caterpillar). As so many marsh violets were needed to augment these 10 sites a serious plant breeding programme was needed. Help came from Durham Botanic Garden



A marsh violet growing in laboratory conditions

who grew hundreds of violets for the project and specialist technical help from the Royal Botanic Gardens of Kew, who micro-propagated thousands of marsh violets under laboratory conditions, (bioreactors, liquid media, constant temperatures and strict regimes of 16 hours light and 8 hours darkness!) As a result over 3 years more than 10,000 marsh violets and 5,000 nectar plug plants were planted by a tremendous team of volunteers.

A captive breeding programme commenced, but the incessant rain in the summer of 2012 washed out the developing caterpillars. To avoid a repeat performance in 2013, specially designed cages were built which could be closed under prolonged downpours and this along with a better summer resulted in 170 caterpillars surviving the winter.



A SPBF caterpillar

At approximately 2cm in length, (just prior to pupation), the first batch of caterpillars were put out on to a re-introduction site on the 8th of May. For all involved it was an incredibly stressful time until, on the 3rd of June, the first SPBF was spotted, by a Butterfly Conservation volunteer. On one single day in July, a fantastic 20 small SPBF were counted on this site.

The wait is now on for summer 2015 to see how the second generation fare. The breeding programme continues and at the start of the 2014/15 winter 500 tiny caterpillars were tucked beneath layers of bracken in the breeding cages at Low Barns destined for a new re-introduction site in the summer.

Since 2011 the Heart of Durham Project, along with partner organisations and land owners, has made a significant contribution to reversing the declining trend of the SPBF in County Durham. Existing colonies have increased by 20% with a projection increase of 40% for 2015.



Caterpillars released onto the reintroduction site



Volunteers plant out marsh violet plants

Creating new colonies of SPBF reduces the chance of random factors causing localised extinction and by spreading more colonies across the landscape in a variety of sites recruitment from adjacent colonies is more likely. Working on a landscape scale the Heart of Durham Project continues to restore and connect areas creating ecological corridors of suitable habitat that will allow the SPBF, as well as a range of other species, to move through the landscape in an attempt at buffering these localised extinctions.

Winter Work Parties 2014/15 - Dave Stebbings

The Branch continued with its programme of winter work parties over the 2014/15 winter. This year we tried something different by linking up with the National Trust to work on some of their sites on the Wallington Estate in Northumberland. Firstly, on a peat bog called Greenleighton Moss which is a Large Heath site on the edge of Harwood Forest. On a brilliantly warm and sunny day in early October a group of six of us pulled out hundreds of spruce and fir seedlings from the peat bog. It is important for peat bogs to remain waterlogged and removing the seedlings will prevent the trees becoming established and sucking water out of the peat thus drying out the bog. Other work days with the National Trust were held at Greenleighton Quarry and Rothley Lake north of Wallington Hall in November and December. Both of these were scrub and tree removal to create sunny clearings in woodland to allow more wild flowers to become established and make them more attractive for butterflies.

We had one of our regular visits to The Spetchells near Prudhoe in early February to continue with invasive gorse and cotoneaster removal. Last year we created a glade in a block of trees on top of the Spetchells and this year we created a second glade by removing some more trees, again to create a sheltered sunny spot for flowers to germinate and hopefully attract a range of insects.

Also in February Mike Harris organised a work day at Littlewood reserve near Coxhoe in County Durham as part of an ongoing programme of gorse removal from the limestone grassland on this important Northern Brown Argus site. Finally we had a work day at Paradise LNR on Scotswood Road in Newcastle in late February. It is two years since our last work day there and the buddleia and birch needed some chopping back to prevent them smothering the dingy skipper habitat.

There is a group of about six regular volunteers who come out on the work parties. It would be nice to see a few more members on

these days. If you can spare the occasional Sunday to come along to help us with the habitat maintenance work you would be most welcome. The work tends to be mostly scrub clearance but is not always strenuous work. It is quite satisfying and enjoyable and you simply work at your own pace. If you can I would encourage anyone to come along and try it out.



Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey 2015

2015 will be the fifth year of the WCBS and once again I am asking for volunteers to record butterflies on allocated 1 km squares. In 2014 only seven 1 km squares were recorded and it would be great to improve on this figure in 2015

The requirement is to make a minimum of two visits to your 1 km square during July and August with optional visits from May until August.

North East England Branch has been allocated 28 – 1 km. squares which have been chosen randomly to gain a representative sample of the branch regions and their habitats.

The survey is NOT designed to replace transects, but to compliment them by collecting different data on common and widespread species that we suspect are faring differently outside nature reserves and SSSI's and therefore the survey has to be random to get a representative picture of the countryside.

The basic requirement for surveying a 1 km square is to create two survey lines approx. 1 km long, 500 m apart and approx. 250 m in from the edge of the square. Pairs of survey lines to run N-S or E-W. It is appreciated that this is the ideal situation and most sets of survey lines will be an approximation of this requirement. The two survey lines are to be divided into 5 – 200 m. long sections and the butterflies seen and identified are recorded in the section in which they were seen.

It is important not to reject squares on the grounds that they appear uninteresting. Squares containing few species are just as valuable as squares with many species.

It is intended that the recorded data will be sent electronically to Butterfly Conservation via the website. However if you do not have access to a computer the data can be recorded on paper record

sheets, which will be supplied. At the end of the recording period the completed paper record sheets are to be forwarded to Brian Denham (See below for address) who will enter the data.

The above is a very broad outline of the survey method. If you decide that you would like to help in this survey then please provisionally select a suitable 1 km. square from the following list and inform Brian Denham of your decision and choice. I will then arrange for more detailed instructions to be sent to you.

Only when you have studied the detailed instructions and confirmed that you wish to carry on with the survey will we finally allocate the 1 km square you have selected

Should you decide, after studying the detailed instruction, that you do not wish to carry on with the survey, we would be sorry, but we would hope that you would continue recording a transect and/or sending in casual records.

The following is the list of Ordnance Survey four figure grid reference numbers of 28 – 1 km. squares we have been allocated.

NU 0934 – 0436

NT 9222 – 9935 .

NY 6869 – 7189 – 7482 – 8583 – 8974 – 9085 – 9796 – 6859 – 6869 – 9971 – 6662 – 8063 – 8961 – 9582

NZ 0825 - 2024 – 2075 – 2159 – 3934 – 0953 – 4234 – 1212 - 2712

Unfortunately where the survey work proves impossible in the square you have been allocated, e.g. because it is physically impossible to visit or access is denied, it is not possible to allocate another square unless it is listed on the above list

It's not difficult, does not take up a lot of time and the records are very useful to Butterfly Conservation – Please give it a try!

Contacts:-

Survey Co-ordinator

Zoe Randle

Butterfly Conservation

Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 5QP

survey@butterfly-conservation.org

Tel: 01929 406036

Mobile: 07990 591483

Survey Champion

North East England

Brian Denham

1 Swaledale Ave.

Darlington

DL3 9AJ

brian.denham@ntlworld.com

01325 263449

079 694 595 97

For more information there is also a website associated with this survey: <http://www.ukbms.org/wcbs.aspx>

Photography



Peacock butterfly by Jonathan Wallace



National Moth Night 2013 by Stephen Passey



Cinnabar moth by Peter Webb



Orange tip by Peter Webb



Mating pair of Northern Brown Argus by Tim Nelson

**Long-Tailed Blue (*Lampides boeticus*) - Keith Dover,
Chester-le-Street on 4th December 2014**



Long-Tailed Blue (*Lampides boeticus*)
(Map references of the sites are on the branch website).

After preparing vegetables for a stir-fry for our evening meal and pouring myself a large red wine I noticed what I first thought was a Winter Moth *Operophtera brumata* making its way across the kitchen work-top, as the back door had been open a short time perhaps it had just flown in. As I went to catch the intruder I immediately recognised it as a Long-tailed Blue *Lampides boeticus*. I keep my moth specimen tubs next to the back door so easily managed to get the butterfly potted up to have a closer look and to retain the insect for photographing next day.

As I am aware that this butterfly is now turning up in increasing numbers in packed vegetables, in particular pod bearing leguminous plants such as peas and mange-tout. As I had included mange-tout in my delicious stir-fry this is likely to be the source of the butterfly, although I did not see it leave the packet. A quick search in the

kitchen bin and the mange-tout packet was found with its label declaring the country of origin as Kenya.

So Kenya is now the main cause of introduction of this species to the UK. I must admit that I was disappointed not to have taken a migrant Long-tailed, unlikely in December but I suppose it does mean that the Kenyan product was well packed, fresh and pesticide free.

The stir-fry was excellent and the butterfly was photographed the next morning and to date is alive and well feeding on a weak honey/water mix with frequent flights around our living room.

“The Long-tailed Blue is an extremely rare migrant to the British Isles. It was first recorded from Brighton in East Sussex, and Christchurch in Hampshire, in August 1859. By 1939 a mere 36 sightings had been recorded - mostly of individuals. Between 1940 and 1988 another 85 sightings were recorded. The only major immigration was in 1945, a good year for migrants in general, when there were 38 sightings. A recent immigrant was observed in Hampshire in 2006.

The adult butterfly has a jerky and rapid flight that is very similar to a hairstreak, but flies closer to the ground. It is also a strong flyer, borne out by its ability to migrate over large expanses of land and water. This butterfly possesses a pair of "tails" that give this species its name, together with an eye spot where the tails meet the wings. These act to divert a predator, such as a bird, away from the essential body parts. When at rest, the butterfly will rotate the hindwings which causes the tails to move, diverting predators from the more-important parts of the body.”

Text from UK Butterflies:

(<http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/species.php?species=boeticus>)

North East Transect recording in 2014 - Brian Denham, Transect Co-ordinator for the North East

The total number of transects recorded in the North East in 2014 was 45. Three transects recorded in previous years were not recorded in 2014. There were two new transects in 2014.

As expected the total numbers of butterflies recorded on transects in 2014 was slightly down on 2013 with 36,952 recorded in 2014 and 40,395 in 2013.

Where transect records could be compared with 2013, 10 transects recorded almost the same total numbers of butterflies, 17 transects were down between 20 and 50% and 8 transects were up by between 20 and 50%.

Of the 45 recorded only five are in Northumberland the remaining 40 are in County Durham. Northumberland being the area between the Tyne and the Tweed and Durham being the area between the Tyne and the Tees.

Whilst we would always appreciate additional transects being recorded, additional ones in Northumberland would be of great help in increasing the coverage of the North East.

If you would like to record a transect all the relevant information is on North East England Branch web site – www.northeast-butterflies.org.uk or contact Brian Denham the transect co-ordinator.

Most transect data is now being entered by the individual recorders directly onto Butterfly Conservations “On Line” data base. Whilst I would obviously prefer that all data is entered this way I am still willing to enter the data from paper records if the recorder is not computer literate or not connected to the Internet.

Let's hope that 2015 is equal too or better than 2014.

A Summer spent surveying - Dave Stebbings

On Boxing Day 2012 a landslip cut one of the roads leading into Rothbury, and it has remained closed ever since. Work started in summer 2014 to stabilise the ground around the road in preparation for the main repair work. The collapsed section of road runs parallel to the River Coquet and the land between the road and the river is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which could be affected by the work. Before the main road repairs can begin the County Council required a full wildlife survey of the SSSI.

An ecological consultancy called EcoNorth, which is part of Northumberland Wildlife Trust, was contracted to do the surveys. Among the many animals and plants surveyed were butterflies and moths and I was asked by EcoNorth to help in these surveys. The site has alder along the river banks giving way to a broad marshy area away from the river and then drier steeply sloping banks, parts of which are broad leaf woodland with oak dominating and parts flower meadow, leading up to the road.

The butterfly surveys consisted of several visits through the summer months walking a similar route through the site and recording the butterflies seen. Good numbers of all the common species were seen in particular Ringlet (152 on 2nd July) and Small Skipper (52 on 24th July). Also I had good counts for Small Copper, which from my experiences elsewhere did not have a good summer this year. I had hoped to find Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary as the location is not too far from the good Small Pearl site at Debdon Forest. The marshy areas looked suitable in places but unfortunately I did not find them, perhaps a site to search again in the future. Altogether sixteen species of butterflies were recorded through the summer. Day flying moths were also recorded and the usual suspects were present such as Shaded Broad-bar, Common Carpet, Yellow Shell and Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet, but there were also good numbers of Chimney Sweeper and Straw Dot among many others. More interestingly for me was a Gold Spangle and the distinctive

micro moth *Evergestis pallidata*, this last one being recorded from only a few sites in Northumberland.

Two moth traps were also set up on several evenings through the summer and examined the next morning. One trap was set in the oak woodland and one in an open grassy area. Again a good range of moths were recorded. These included Pale Shouldered Brocade, Flame Shoulder, Flame Carpet, Drinker, Buff Arches, Canary-shouldered Thorn, Pink-barred Sallow and Merveille du Jour, again this last being rather local in Northumberland and confined to oak woodland. Over 50 species of moths were recorded in total.



Merveille du Jour

Altogether a very interesting experience: I was able to go to a site which was completely new to me to see what butterflies and moths were present, monitor numbers through the summer and see how the species changed as the season progressed.

How to Submit Butterfly Records 2014/15

Records are the bedrock of conservation and the North East Branch welcomes records of all species, for all dates and places, and of course for all forms. Your records will go into local databases and to the national recording scheme, Butterflies for the New Millennium.

From 2010 there will be two ways of sending your records in. For those without a home computer, the existing yellow paper casual record sheets will continue unchanged. However, if you have a PC, the Branch would urge you to send in your records using a spreadsheet such as Microsoft Excel. Each record should occupy one line and the format of the spreadsheet should look something like the following example:

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
|---|----------------------|----------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---|------------------|
| 1 | Name/s of recorder/s | NZ274423 | Palace Green, Durham City | 22-Aug-2015 | Large White | 7 | |
| 2 | Name/s of recorder/s | NZ196858 | Morpeth (riverside) | 24-Sep-2015 | Peacock | 2 | Very worn |
| 3 | Name/s of recorder/s | NZ2514 | Baydale Beck Darlington | 1-Jul-2015 | Comma | 1 | Hutchinsoni form |

Column A – Recorder/s names.

Column B - Grid reference, which should be two letters, (NT, NU, NY or NZ), followed by four or six numbers. The first two (or three) numbers are the Easting, read from the top or bottom of OS maps, the last two, (or three) numbers represent the Northing, read from either side of the map.

Column C - Site name. For obscure place names please include a nearby town or village.

Column D – Date (please try to follow the format shown)

Column E - The name of the species seen.

Column F - The number seen. The actual number is preferred rather than the letter system. For larva (L), ova (O), pupa (P) or mating (M) records, please use the code letter provided, optionally adding numbers seen.

Column G - For any comments you may wish to add.

Optionally, you can add a habitat code to column H if you wish.

A blank spreadsheet, with the date formatted, is available by contacting the recorders. Electronic records are most easily sent as an email attachment. However, you can also send them in by post on CD or memory stick. The deadline for records to be included, and credited, in the 2015 Annual Report is 30 November 2015. Depending on where you live, please send records to:

DURHAM

Steve Le Fleming
7 Albert Street
Durham
DH1 4RL
0191 386 7309

NORTHUMBERLAND

Arrangements for submitting records will be on the website and shown in the Autumn newsletter. Please direct any queries to the Branch Chairman.

How to Submit Moth Records 2014/15



Over 1200 species of moth have been recorded in our region, some common and widespread, others represented by very few, or in some cases, only a single record. Submitting records of moths helps to improve our understanding of the distribution and abundance of these fascinating insects and to enable potential problems they may be experiencing to be detected. Separate databases are maintained for Durham and Northumberland and records should be submitted to the appropriate recorder depending on where they are made. In all cases the following information should be recorded:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Species name: | Please indicate scientific and (where there is one) common names. |
| Location: | Where the moth was recorded. |
| Grid reference: | Ideally a six-figure grid reference for the location. |
| Vice County: | 66 for Durham, 67 for South Northumberland and 68 for North Northumberland. |
| Date : | For light trapping records the convention is that the date should be that of the evening when the trap is set rather than the morning when it is emptied. |
| Recorder: | Name of the person who caught/observed the moth(s). |
| Determiner: | The name of the person who identified the moth(s) (if different to the recorder). |
| Life cycle stage: | i.e. adult, pupa, caterpillar or egg. |
| Quantity: | The number of each species recorded. |
| Method: | Type of trap, field record, or how the moth was caught. |

Durham (Vice County 66)

Records should be submitted to either of the joint moth recorders for Durham:

Keith Dover

4 Lindisfarne Avenue
Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham
e-mail: k.dover879@btinternet.com

Tim Barker

Tap and Spile, 27 Front Street
Framwellgate Moor, Durham
e-mail: tim@tapandspile.co.uk

A spreadsheet for the submission of moth records for County Durham can be downloaded from www.northeast-butterflies.org.uk/recording

Northumberland (Vice County 67 and Vice County 68)

Records should be submitted to **Tom Tams**, the moth recorder for Northumberland, 191 Links Road, Tynemouth, Northumberland. Tel: 0191 272 8499
e-mail: tomsphotos@hotmail.co.uk or recorder@northumberlandmoths.org.uk

Full details for submitting records in Northumberland, including a downloadable spreadsheet are given at www.northumberlandmoths.org.uk.

Validation

It is important that records are accurate and based on correct identifications and one of the responsibilities of the County Recorders is to scrutinise submitted records and check that this is the case. For any records of rare species, easily confused species or records of species that are outside their usual geographic range or flight period they may ask for supporting evidence to be supplied before the record is accepted. Suitable evidence may include good quality photographs, or sight of the actual specimen (moths can be kept captive for a day or two in a pot in a cool place without being harmed).

Butterfly Conservation Safety Note

As with any other activity, there are hazards in the countryside and everyone taking part in a Field Trip or Working Party has a responsibility, for their own safety and that of others. We always ensure that our events present no greater hazard than any other walk in the countryside, but please note and act on the following:

1. The leader will provide a briefing on the trip before setting out, with details of any known hazards, and will give advice on what to do in an emergency. Please listen carefully.
2. At the briefing, let the leader know if a) you have a mobile telephone and are able to take it with you on the walk, and b) if you have a first aid qualification.
3. Wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Stout shoes are a minimum requirement for any walk.
4. In sunny weather take a hat, use sun cream or protection for exposed skin. Make sure that you have adequate food and liquid to drink with you.
5. When on a walk, look out for any hazards – rabbit holes, fallen or hanging branches, barbed wire, boggy areas etc.
6. Children are welcome on our walks, but if under the age of 16 must be accompanied by at least one adult for two children. It is the responsibility of the accompanying adult(s) to ensure that the trip is within the children's capability.
7. Dogs are normally welcome on our walks, but must be kept under control.
8. If you are uncertain about any details of the trip, ring the leader/contact in advance. If you decide to leave the trip early, please tell the leader.
9. Take care at all times and above all ENJOY YOURSELF.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this edition of our Newsletter. Our new members might like to know that there are two Newsletters each year and we are always delighted to include any articles, letters, photos or drawings that any member cares to submit.

If you have a question or observation on a butterfly or moth related subject, how about writing to our LETTERS PAGE; or if you are electronic, send an e-mail.

Copy dates are unquestionably:

1st March..... April Edition

1st October..... November Edition

Contributions should be sent to the Editor at this address:

E-mail: passiflora2710@gmail.com

The Committee of North East England Branch would be very interested to hear from any Members who have ideas and suggestions for site visits, conservation opportunities or anything of interest within the Branch area.

Any Member of the Branch who has a particular skill to offer, and feels able to give their services, would also be welcomed.

A list of Committee members can be found on the back page of this Newsletter.



North East England Branch

Serving Committee Members for 2014 - 2015

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Butterfly Conservation

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