

Butterfly Conservation Cambridgeshire & Essex

BRANCH NEWSLETTER



Spring 2022

Issue 82

Butterfly Conservation Cambridgeshire & Essex Newsletter – Spring 2022

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You then have an option to ask Amazon to make a contribution to the charity of your choice. They are giving Butterfly Conservation a percentage of the sale, not you. Please have a look, and if you choose Butterfly Conservation...

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newsletter@cambs-essex-
butterflies.org.uk

Editor's notes...

Welcome

Welcome to the Spring edition of Cambridgeshire and Essex Butterfly Conservation newsletter.



I am leaving the job as editor 😊 which creates a vacancy for someone.

I'll run a remote video call on Monday 9th May 2022 at 8pm for anyone who would like to know more about this very interesting (and important) role. Please don't feel over-faced at the prospect. I can assure you I know the least about the subject amongst the committee, have very few computer skills and had no experience in this type of work at all. You'll get a lot of help if you need it.



Scan this QR code (using your smartphone) on Monday 9th May to join the meeting or visit our Facebook page for the link.

Recorders reports

Ed Pollard, the Cambridgeshire recorder, has given us a very thorough report.

The weather always plays a big part on butterfly statistics and the truth is that, because of this, very little can be read into long term trends by examining the sightings over a one year period.

However, we are always on the lookout for opportunities to be optimistic ...

After 2020 saw Cambridgeshire receive the biggest ever number of butterfly recordings, 2021 (by the time of the AGM) already had more than six thousand

records with some more submissions still to come. Records came from transects, Twitter, our own sightings pages, the 'Big Butterfly Count', and the 'iRecord' App. Collectively, they give us a very good idea of what's going on in the County, but they also highlight that some of the most important areas have very few reports... so there is room for improvement, which Ed is working hard to highlight.

If you live or visit the Fens area, then any records from there will be welcomed like ... a rare butterfly that settles long enough to be photographed 😊.



The Dingy Skipper in Cambs had a good year with very good numbers counted along Devil's Dyke and the other locations in the north of the county and the part of old Huntingdonshire which is our patch.

The Grizzled Skipper also did quite well in its northern strongholds – if that word doesn't overstate their numbers – but at its most southern location, at Over old railway cutting, no adults were seen flying. Maybe they were missed, but no one is very optimistic about the future of this colony.

The Hairstreaks in general had a good year. Black Hairstreak numbers were high (the 6th best year ever), which, even if this can be attributed to good weather conditions for their flight period, is still in line with the positive trends for this butterfly. The count at Brampton Wood was 66 against 21 last year.

Another point that was made is that many people are getting more used to searching and finding this and the other more elusive Hairstreak species which is leading to more sightings in places where they have previously been overlooked. The spread of White letter and Green Hairstreak has been noticeable.

Ed threw down a challenge – that at Monks Wood, and maybe other locations – it might well be possible to see four Hairstreak species on the same day.

The Small Blue colonies south of Cambridge were all surviving, if not thriving, and at Magog Down there was plenty of habitat and that was under a good management regime organised by the Beds, Cambs, and Northants Wildlife Trust.

Well done to all the volunteers who do this work for all our benefit.

The colony of Adonis Blue of Devil's Dyke (adjacent to the racecourse) was described as 'fairly abundant' during the first brood, but numbers were drastically lower for the second brood. Numbers seen were 'single figures' but it may be that they were missed by our recorders. It was a distinctly bad year for many of the blues, especially the Common Blue, and as a species, the numbers of Adonis Blue have always fluctuated sharply.

The most threatened species in Cambs is the Wall. It was reported as doing 'OK' – seen mostly in the fens area, but this is the least visited area in the county and the lack of reports makes it difficult to know its status for sure.

The highlight for Cambridge butterfly enthusiasts might well be the huge numbers of Chalkhill Blue being seen around our managed areas of Devil's and Fleam Dykes. Last summer a maximum of 2,600 were recorded on Devil's Dyke which was obviously a magnificent spectacle.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the figures by sending in your sightings, and specially to Ed Pollard who collated and forwarded them to Head Office who put together the national picture.

While in Cambridgeshire, please note that they have a new 'Cambridge Moths' website.

Essex

Rob Smith starts his report noting all the hibernating species

were seen early in the year through February and March. The earliest of our 'small' species, Small Copper and Small Heath had a good start. But the sighting which stood out was the Wall, photographed near Brentwood, which was the first seen near that location for almost thirty years.



One of Essex biggest concerns is the last colony of the Grizzled Skipper at Laingdon. Last year, the numbers of adults seen were in single figures so this year the total of twelve different adults – three female – could be seen as an improvement and the fact the flight period covered several weeks gives us the merest flicker of optimism.

The summer weather seemed to benefit some species more than others. It was perfect for White Letter Hairstreak and their extended flight period allowed numerous new sites to be discovered.

The Nymphalids all had a good year. Warm and wet is good for the food plant – nettles – and there were many reports of large numbers of Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell and Red Admiral at various times.

Two of the species that missed out on this generally good year were the Common Blue and Brown Argus. Both had poor second broods, probably due to excessively good/high grass growth which overwhelmed its more delicate caterpillar food plants. The Ringlet also had a poor year, if slightly improved on 2020.

A few standout sightings were a Large Tortoiseshell seen in Romford, a Wall Brown seen in Roxwell and a Dark Green Fritillary seen on the south side of Colchester. This Fritillary is one of the species which has been expanding nationally over the last few years.

Heath Fritillary

Essex is one of only five counties where this butterfly is found. Kent is certainly its English stronghold, with the colonies around Blean Wood currently thriving. At the other end of the country, in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset, the butterfly isn't in such a sound position. The single colony in Cornwall is on a few 100m of disused railway cutting, which is maintained for the butterfly by a handful of local volunteers. It is more widely spread in Devon but certainly restricted to specific habitat, and Somerset it is only found in small numbers on a couple of sites. It is interesting that the 'West Country' Heath Fritillary is very much an open heathland specialist whereas in Kent and Essex it survives only in coppiced ancient woodland. The caterpillar food plant is Cow-wheat. According to Jeremy Thomas, in Devon and Cornwall, Ribwort Plantain and Germander Speedwell are the main food.

In Essex, they live in a handful of fragmented ancient woodland habitats, as you can see from the map opposite... they are being closed in from all sides by the encroaching conurbation.

To make matters a little more awkward for us, there are six different owners of the woodland, and it becomes quite a time consuming exercise to liaise with them and establish dates and parameters of habitat work for the work parties.

This winter we had two very successful work parties where some good old fashioned coppicing was done (thank you to everyone who attended these) and our regime of management will hopefully continue uninterrupted.

The chart below shows the situation from the previous five years.



PEAK ADULT COUNT SUMMARY TABLE

Site Ref.	Site Name	Area (ha) (wood/ heath)	The Sites & Peak Counts (includes potential sites not previously colonised)					
			Peak Counts					
			2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
1	Hockley Woods	130.0	146	78	193	166	102	43
2a	Hadleigh Great Wood	33.0	75	121	148	56	7	7
2b	Dodds Grove	3.8	1	2	0	2	0	2
2c	Belfairs Park	29.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	Pound Wood	23.0	120	175	61	68	22	40
4a	Tile Wood	6.8	0	0	0	0	0	0
4b	Whyburns Wood	7.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	Little Haven (Starvelarks Wood)	7.9	0	0	2	5	0	0
6a	West Wood	31.8	0	0	0	0	0	1
6b	Valerie Wells Wood	7.0	0	0	0			
7	Thundersley Great Common	14.8	0	0	0			
8	Oakwood Reservoir	0.1	1	1	1			
X	Thrift Wood (Danbury)	48.0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The larger areas of woodland support the biggest populations, and ‘occasionals’ are spotted ‘here and there’ but it’s isn’t a ‘wandering’ species which is likely to expand out of its pre-prepared habitat.

The transect that covers the ‘Heath Fritillary Woods’ also holds White Admiral and Silver Washed Fritillary. Richard Bond has been doing the ‘transect’ monitoring here for many years but feels he needs some help. If anyone would like to offer that help, and assist Richard from this summer,

then it will be most appreciated. Please drop an email to Keith Winch who can arrange a meeting with Richard at the woods.

transects@Cambs-Essex-butterflies.org.uk

Rob has updated our (Essex) red data list for the first time in several years and has now included Wall Brown and Small Heath to the list, while removing the Purple Emperor, White Letter Hairstreak, Marbled White and Silver-washed Fritillary.

One of our most interesting, and rarest moths, the Fishers Estuarine, is also monitored closely as Essex is one of the few locations where it is found. Numbers for the annual count at Beaumont Quay jumped from 42 (2020) to 61 this year.

I am also pleased to report that Rob has also found some extra support for his Essex monitoring work. **Keith Winch** is the new county transect coordinator, and **Chris Gaby** will help with some of the recording work.

Essex received some 20,000 sighting reports and **Tony Roberts** is undertaking to assist in the transcribing these for Head Office.

In addition, we are also pleased to announce that **Joe Yarker** has undertaken the role of 'Conservation Officer' in Essex.

Many thanks for volunteering and I very much hope you enjoy your new role ... and your time on the committee.



Heath Fritillary
Melitaea athalia



Facebook
BCCambsEssex



Instagram
CambsEssexBC

We now have social media groups for members to visit and share observations and photographs. Please have a look and contribute – anything butterflies and moths. This isn't replacing our 'sightings' page, but is intended as a vehicle for members to share pictures and to be 'interactive' with other members.

White Admiral

In 1995 a report was written – The Ecology and Conservation of Butterflies – to commemorate the silver jubilee of Butterfly Conservation.

One thing the report noted was that, the range of most of our breeding butterflies was contracting, but there were five whose distribution range was expanding. These were the Orange-tip, Speckled Wood, Gatekeeper, Comma and lastly White Admiral.

The White Admiral occurs widely in southern Britain and has spread rapidly since the 1920s, after an earlier contraction.

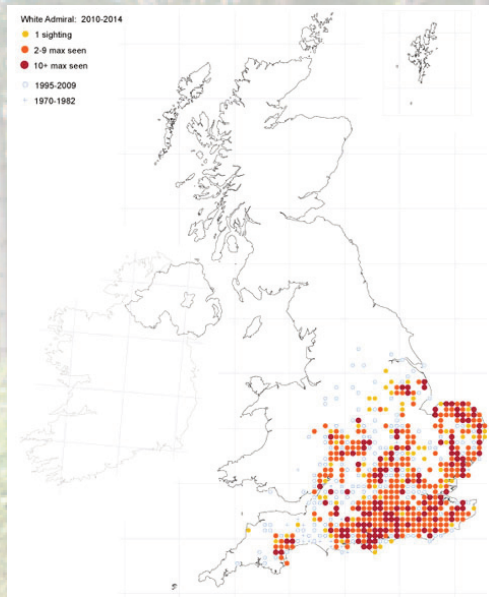
It continued to spread in the 1980s and 1990s but within its range populations have decreased since the 1990s.

The current map at Butterfly Conservation shows a rather colourful south-east but gaps, basically in Cambridgeshire, caused almost entirely by habitat fragmentation and the lack of large, suitable woods.

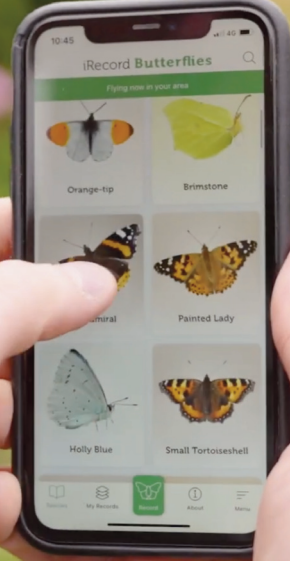
Some research was done to try and establish a cause for its numeric decline, and muntjac deer eating the lower growth of Honeysuckle plants was found to a contributing factor.

It is a spectacular butterfly which is rarely seen without searching for it, but there are some woods open to the public where it is found and these include Epping Forest, Stour Woods, and Hadleigh Great Wood in Essex, and Brampton and Belfairs in Cambs.

It is a Priority Species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.



iRecord Butterflies monitoring system



The iRecord Butterflies app was developed by Natural Apptitude thanks to funding and support from the Biological Records Centre at the NERC Centre for Ecology and Hydrology.

iRecord Butterflies is a free app that will guide you through the identification of any butterfly that you see in the UK and allow you to add your sighting to millions of other valuable records that inform the work of Butterfly Conservation.

Download the app **iRecord Butterflies** for free for both iOS and Android

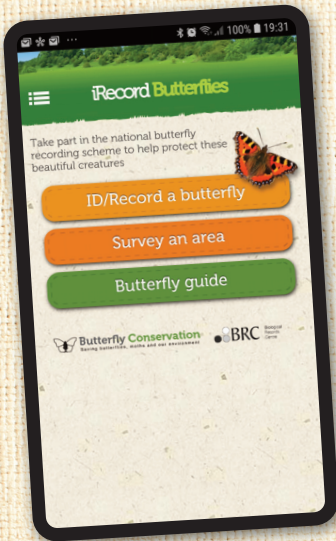
How does iRecord work?

1. Identify your sighting

You can compare your own photo with those from the app's extensive image library, filter species by colour, pattern and size, and see distribution maps and identification tips for each butterfly.

2. Tell us what you've seen

Add your butterfly sightings to Butterfly Conservation's long-running national recording scheme. Such sightings (termed 'records') provide the essential foundation for much-needed conservation work to help the UK's declining butterflies.

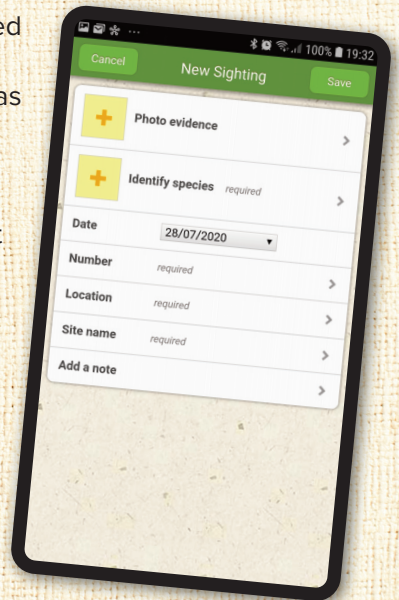
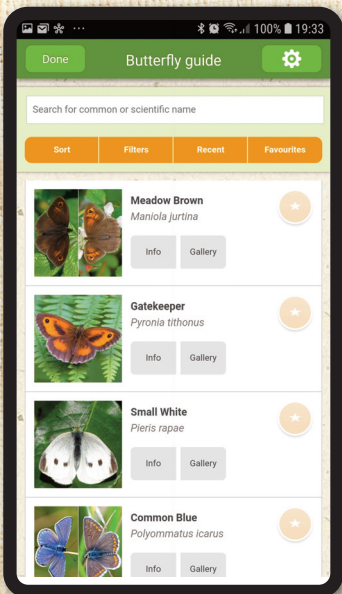


Records show how butterflies are faring so conservation effort can be targeted at those most at risk of extinction. They can help reveal the impact of climate change and other environmental issues on our butterfly populations. The data you send via **iRecord Butterflies** will be used to underpin the management of important butterfly sites, help protect habitats through the planning system and enable Butterfly Conservation to produce regular State of the UK's Butterflies reports, local and national atlases and Red Lists of priority species.

Simply by sending in some basic information about the butterflies that you enjoy watching, even if just from your garden, you can make a real contribution to their conservation.

The **iRecord Butterflies** app makes submitting your sightings really easy. Once you've identified the butterfly, enter a few simple pieces of information, such as

the number that you saw and a place name (important so that the sightings can be checked on maps) and submit. The app will automatically calculate where you are (using the GPS in the Smartphone) and provide a grid reference for your sighting.



Trees in wrong places...

There is much debate concerning tree planting in our branch area, particularly in Essex. There is a desire at county and district council level to 'do our bit' for carbon sequestration by planting lots of trees. However, in our eyes, some of these schemes are highly questionable as they are destructive to valuable grassland habitat.

There are some success stories, such as the 1,000-tree scheme at Boreham near Chelmsford, sensitively planted as native hedgerow around the perimeter of amenity grassland that will provide valuable habitat for moths and nesting birds.

Less sensitive however, were the thousands of Douglas Fir and Monterey Pine planted at St Faith's Country Park in Brentwood. Although these conifer species are excellent for carbon sequestration, they have cut a swathe across the wildflower meadows and conflict with a key aim of the management plan to enhance the native hedgerows at this registered Local Wildlife Site. On the other side of Brentwood, another scheme was partly thwarted to 'block out' the meadow areas of Tylers Wood, another Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (a similar Greater London designation).

The troubling aspect is often a lack of consultation with local or county conservation groups; and so it was heartening to be contacted regarding the arable reversion planting scheme on the east side of Hainault Forest that was recently featured on Countryfile. This site is much more appropriate for tree planting as the ex-arable land was agriculturally improved and lacked the diversity of our disappearing wildflower meadows.

But schemes are emerging all the time, such as the proposal for a new copse at Wanstead Flats. This would be planted on grassland that is acid in character, a precious resource in Essex and the UK. This would reduce habitat for species such as the Small Copper and Green Hairstreak, the latter species having only recently colonised this part of London.

At Carver Barracks in north-west Essex, there are plans for another small copse, this time on valuable calcareous grassland. This is for a mere 1,000 trees, which is 'small beer' compared with the 80 hectares of precious calcareous boulder clay grassland lost when nearby Wethersfield Airfield was planted at 1,600 trees per acre.

Planning objection

The sell-off of MoD land leads us onto our greatest current fight – the battle to save the Middlewick Ranges in Colchester.

This is a 70 hectare registered Local Wildlife Site, principally of lowland acid grassland; a UKBAP Priority Habitat. It is host to many rare invertebrate species, particularly mining bees and wasps, but also Green Hairstreak and Small Heath butterflies and several UKBAP moth species such as the Lunar Yellow Underwing and Broom-tip. It is also home to nationally scarce beetle species, including Stag beetles and *Carabus monilis*, the fastest-declining ground beetle species in the UK.

Over the past 3 years, we have visited the site over 30 times, moth-trapping and conducting field surveys with the Essex Field Club. Together, we have gathered enough evidence for Natural England's invertebrate specialist to conclude that the site would merit inclusion as an extension to the existing Site of Special Scientific Interest that includes Friday Woods and the Roman River Valley. And yet, it appears that the site will be included in Colchester's new Local Plan and be allocated for 1,000 homes.

The fight continues and also illustrates the need to keep our butterfly records up to date. Planning decisions are only taken using the previous 5 years data, and so it is vital that you survey your local sites regularly in case they too become threatened.

It's important to point out... we don't get into planning objections lightly. They are hugely time consuming for individuals and are ultimately often quite depressing as our objections only carry so much weight. We always prefer to get involved alongside other organisations, such as Essex Wildlife Trust.

Butterflies in flight

As the cameras on our phones get more sophisticated, perhaps we can allow our interest in lepidoptera to explore new options. The easiest way is to take a video clip and then check the frames one at a time for the best shot.

Green Hairstreak
Callophrys rubi



Sadly, I don't know who took this photograph – the only 'open wing' of a Green Hairstreak I've seen.

Orange-tip
Anthocharis cardamines



photo: Ian Watts

Orange-tips
Anthocharis cardamines



Pic from Chris Marshall

While quietly concentrating on photographing the open wings of this female Orange-tip that had settled on a cuckoo flower, along came a colourful male. With a sequence of high-speed

multi-bursts in the sun I managed to capture 23 images of the orange delight fluttering around and coming together several times trying to mate. Here's a small selection of flying shots stacked on top of each other in Photoshop by using masking and rubbing through technique.

Chris is a keen wildlife photographer with his own superb blog
www.scoopsimages.co.uk



Silver-washed Fritillary
Argynnis paphia



Brimstone
Gonepteryx rhamni



Common Blue
Polyommatus icarus



Peacock
Aglais io



Large Yellow Underwing
Noctua pronuba

Pic from Connelly Connelly

I was trying to photograph a bat...!

There is something fabulously eccentric about this. I applaud you! Ed

Shifting Baseline Syndrome

With ongoing environmental degradation at local, regional, and global scales, people's accepted thresholds for environmental conditions are continually being lowered.

In the absence of past information or experience with historical conditions, members of each new generation accept the situation in which they were raised as being normal. This psychological and sociological phenomenon is termed shifting baseline syndrome (SBS), which is increasingly recognised as one of the fundamental obstacles to addressing a wide range of today's global environmental issues.

Every generation of salmon anglers think the fish was 'common' when they were young and started fishing, but by the time they retire, have become much rarer. The word 'common' is the problem – every generation has accepted lowered expectations as normal.

This is an easy example and the concept is transferred, and reversed, from the natural world to other areas of society. Street crime, pollution and presumably, some time in the future, space junk.

It's the same for butterflies

Until the 'transect' system was established – and one reason why our records are so important – we didn't know as historic fact, or have any true measure of the relative abundance of butterflies that there were at a particular time in history. The range of each individual butterfly species is more reasonably well recorded and the 'contraction' of most (but not all) is known because there is so much documentary evidence. Early records are full of 'abundant', 'common', 'generally dispersed', 'prodigious' and similar descriptions but is there anything to help us de-code these words more scientifically?

This is a bit of fun

I have collected some instances, admittedly themselves unusual occurrences, which have made them note worthy, that might give a clue.

White-letter Hairstreak – ‘...but the boundless profusion with which the hedges for miles, in the vicinity of Ripley, were enlivened by the myriads that hovered over every flower and bramble-blossom last July exceeded anything of the kind I have ever witnessed. Some notion of the numbers may be formed when I mention that I captured, without moving from the spot, nearly two hundred specimens in less than half an hour as they approached the bramble which I had taken up my position’. *(Newman)* *It doesn’t say the year but I guess in the 1860’s ...*

Common Blue – ‘I have seen two dozen on the same stem’ *(F.W. Frohawk.)*

Purple Hairstreak – ‘I took more than 50 individuals with one sweep of my net’. *(Newman)*

Glanville Fritillary – ‘I have taken as many as two dozen without moving from the spot where I stood as they successively visited the stems of the grass around me’. *(Newman)*

Purple Emperor – ‘They were so numerous that I have had no less than seven under a small net at one time’ *(Newman)*



Purple Hairstreak
Favonius quercus

Silver-washed Fritillary –

‘Miss Lawless informs me it is wonderfully abundant in Recess Woods, Connemara, settling in thousands on the brambles’. *(Newman)*

‘It used to be in such profusion that it was common to see forty or more assembled on the blossoms of a large bramble bush, in company with many White Admirals, Meadow Browns, Ringlets When the congregation was disturbed they would rise in a fluttering mass and the majority would again settle to continue their feast on the sweet blossoms of the bramble.’

(F.W.Frohawk)

Marsh Fritillary – ‘This butterfly has been known to increase so prodigiously that whole fields and roads became blackened by the moving myriads of larvae. An instance of this was observed by the Rev S.L. Blakey, near Ennis, Co Clare, where he drove out to see a reported ‘shower of worms’, and found as

the above described, the larvae being so multitudinous in some fields that the black layer of insects seemed to roll in corrugation as the migrating hosts swarmed over each other in search of food. The images that resulted from the starved survivors were extremely small and faded in colour'. (R. South)

Painted Lady – ‘The last fifty yards of the hedge on the right hand side of the lane is covered by a mantle of ivy, which, on the 9th of October, was in full blossom, but the flowers were almost hidden from sight by a countless multitude of butterflies and moths. It was one of the most beautiful sights I ever beheld. The multitudinous host only compromised two species of butterfly. Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) and Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*). Scores of the former but hundreds of the later.’ (Newman)

I couldn't find any moth numbers, but this was the closest ...

Garden Tiger Moth – ‘... you cannot pass along a sunny hedge-bank without observing it on the various kinds of dead nettle, of which it seems particularly fond; in gardens it is equally abundant on the leaves of hollyhocks, and, indeed, nothing comes amiss to it’. (Newman)

‘... they occurred in such myriads that no vegetation escaped them, and that they devoured anything from stone-crop to the foliage of shrubs of various kinds. Every path and roadway was dotted all over with their crushed bodies’. (Richard South)


varied from one year to the next. There would be occasional years when its population exploded and vast numbers of its stumpy, black-spiked caterpillars appeared on the move. In Church Stretton the roads and fields were ‘blackened’ by countless caterpillars one year in the 1880s.⁸³

In nineteenth-century Ireland, these mysterious caterpillar plagues could be even more extreme. In County Clare, they spoke of a ‘shower of worms’, while the Rev. S. L. Brakey found them ‘so multitudinous that a black layer of insects seemed to roll in corrugations as the migrating hosts swarmed over one another in search of food’.⁸⁴ After an outbreak in County Fermanagh, which was reported in Parliament, people were barricading their doors with peat bricks and burning shovelfuls of spiky caterpillars on bonfires.



Garden Tiger moth
Arctia caja

Tales from the Dark Side



Interest in moths in Essex continues to increase with another 100 new members joining the Essex Moth Group Facebook page in the last year with the Group now at 400 members. The Facebook group is a great source of help and information for experts and beginners alike and is a useful way of seeing what moths have been reported across Essex.

The mothing season followed the trend of recent years with some poor weather at times, the continuing decline in moth numbers and a lack of many immigrant moths. However several species are on the increase as populations colonise the county. The main talking point in late summer and early autumn was the number of places across Essex where the spectacular Clifden Nonpareil was recorded with an unprecedented 17 noted at Bradwell. The Dark Crimson Underwing is gradually increasing too but at a much slower pace. Records of Jersey Tiger have continued their spread out from the London area with one or two individuals reaching the north-east of the county. Hawk-moths seemed to have had a mixed season with some recorders seeing good numbers while others having low numbers. Small Elephant Hawk-moths had another good summer while lots of Spurge Hawk-moth caterpillars were found again at Jaywick Beach suggesting a small colony has established itself on the dunes here in recent years.

Other species spreading and increasing include Lunar Yellow Underwing, Toadflax Brocade, Clancy's Rustic, Dewick's Plusia, Plumed Fanfoot, Buttoned

Snout and Waved Black. There was also an increase in reports of Oak Rustic in the autumn mainly along the eastern side of the county. It was a better year for records of the migrant Gem in late summer and autumn. The “pest” species of Gypsy Moth, Oak Processionary and the Box Moth have continued their spread north and east across the county.



Spurge Hawk-moth
Hyles euphorbiae

Micro moths with increased records were species such as the adventive Golden-brown Fern Moth *Musotima nitidalis*, Beautiful Pearl *Agrotera nemoralis* in woodlands, Marbled Grass-veneer *Catoptria verellus*, there were more



Waved Black
Parascotia fuliginaria

The larva of the beautiful and rare moth eat fungi. It is about the size of a Common Carpet

reports of the migrant Vagrant Piercer *Cydia amplana* while Scarce Oak Knot-horn *Acrobasis tumidana* appears to be getting established in some places.

The use of pheromone lures has increased in recent years and has led to many interesting records of moth species to gardens that might otherwise have been missed. There have been a lot more Clearwing records of several species and several more Emperor Moths were recorded

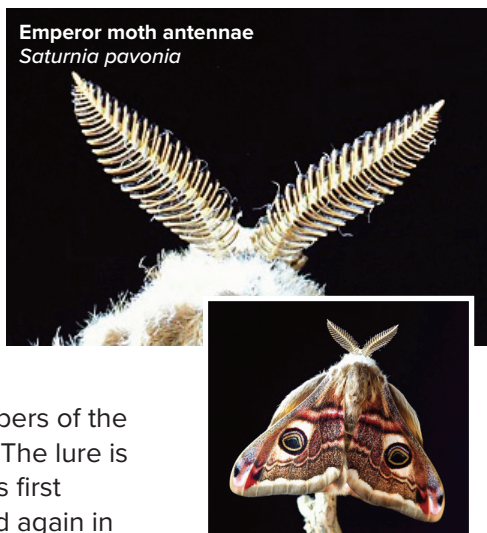
across the county thanks to lures. Some species rarely visit light traps but appear to be easier to detect and record using pheromone lures. *Dougal Urquhart, Essex Moth Group co-ordinator*

The lure of moths... *(Bill Gardener – Cambs moth group)*

It is likely nothing new to most of us, that moths use chemical attractants called pheromones to attract mates. Anyone who has been lucky enough to see a female Emperor moth (*Saturnia pavonia*) would have witnessed the many males flapping around her. And certainly, you would be familiar with the large feathery antennae of the male Emperor Moth. This feather like structure creates a larger surface area for the detection of the pheromones released by the female. Other examples are the Vapourer Moth (*Orgyia antiqua*) and the

Winter Moth (*Operophtera brumata*) in which the females are flightless and so must rely on the males finding them!

There are synthetic pheromone lures available. These lures were made to use in pest control which has a big economic benefit. An example of this is the Gypsy Moth (*Lymantria dispar*). This moth can defoliate orchards and woodlands and be a huge problem. A synthetic lure was made, and huge numbers of the moth can be trapped and exterminated. The lure is incredibly affective. The Gypsy Moth was first recorded in Cambridgeshire in 2020 and again in 2021 (to both light and lure). It is likely in 2022 we will see more records and more coverage and an increase in the use of the lure.



As moth recorders we can take advantage of these commercially available Pheromone lures to help us trap and record moths we are unlikely to come across otherwise. There is a growing list of commercially available lures and of the moths attracted to them. Some lures made for specific targets can attract some non-target moths which are not pests and are more interesting to moth recorders. A quick look at [Pheromone_lures_non_target_species_caught.pdf](#) (angleps.com) show some of the lures available and some of the targets species they attract.

Pheromone lures are nothing new to most of us. The EMP (Emperor Moth) lure and the “Classic six” clearwing moth lures have been sold for many years.

Recent additions to the clearwing lures are the Hornet Moth (*Sesia apiformis*) and Lunar Hornet Moth (*Sesia bembeciformis*). Both previously recorded in Cambridgeshire, but with the use of the lures the records have been greatly added to over the last couple of years. Records of the Hornet moth were previously split 50:50 with adult and emergence sites now we are seeing more adult recorded and a wider distribution. The Lunar Hornet Moth we have seen a 500% increase in records all to lure.

There is now a Facebook group

www.facebook.com/groups/483245199514418 and more and more information being shared. Throughout the last two years, people have had

more opportunity than usual to be at home or out in the field with the time to employ the lures and wait and record what shows up and share the findings.

This kind of cannonballed in 2021 with one moth in particular:

Pammene giganteana, a small Tortrix moth. This moth was is said to be local in the field guides. It had been recorded in Cambridgeshire once to light and dissected for identification. The moth lives on Oak galls and is active in Spring.



The lure was deployed in 2021 and a dozen new sites and records were added. Even more have been recorded in 2022.

Using pheromone lures it is quite easy likely to record a first for county or a first modern day record of a moth. Below are a few examples of moths recorded using lures in the last couple of years.

Grapholita lobarzewskii SKI lure, first recorded in Cambridgeshire to lure 2020. *Pammene albuginana* MOL lure, 2nd record for Cambridgeshire 2021 (50% increase in records). *Pammene suspectana* FUN Lure 1st and 2nd records for Cambridgeshire 2021

Below are some examples of moths that have no recent records but have been recorded in Cambridgeshire in the past. These moths have been attracted to pheromone lures in other vice counties and so there is no reason to believe they cannot be recorded again in Cambridgeshire.

Dasystoma salicella adult recorded in Peterborough 2022 to *Ephestia/Plodia* lure. No record in the last 10 years from Cambridgeshire. *Psychoides fillicivora* adult recorded in Peterborough in 2021 SAL lure 2021. Not recorded yet in Cambridgeshire *Eulia ministrana* adult recorded from Peterborough in 2021 to Chamomile Shark lure. No record in the last 10 years from Cambridgeshire. *Pammene rhediella* adult recorded in vc37 to POM lure. No recent day records from Cambridgeshire.

These last two moths are examples of moths that can be first records of Cambridgeshire in 2022. All we need to do is deploy some pheromone lures and wait. Fingers crossed and good luck.

Tuta Absoluta adult recorded in vc19 in 2021 to ABS lure. No records for Cambridgeshire. Sallow Clearwing (*Synanthedon flaviventris*) adult recorded in vc32 and vc30 in 2020. No records for Cambridgeshire.

Some common Pheromone lures are available to purchase from Jon Clifton at Anglia Lepidopterist Supplies www.anglesps.com. A more comprehensive collection is available from Pherobank in the Netherlands www.pherobank.com

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This Branch magazine is printed on recyclable paper, but rather than recycle it in the bin, please hand it to a neighbour or someone else who might be interested, or leave it in a waiting room or other such place where it might get picked up.



Butterfly Conservation is a national charity with over 40,000 members and clear aims.

- 1) Recover threatened butterflies and moths
- 2) Increase the numbers of widespread species
- 3) Inspire people to understand and deliver species conservation
- 4) Promote international conservation actions.

In addition to this, it manages 30 separate sites around the country, home to some of our rarest species. All the actions and activities of Butterfly Conservation ultimately support the delivery of these core aims.

www.butterfly-conservation.org

2022 Summer Field Trips

We have expanded our range of field trips to cover more excellent locations, including two 'just over the boundary' into the Beds area, looking for the Duke of Burgundy and Dark Green Fritillary.

Please also note, the first for many years, an opportunity to enjoy a guided trip to see **Heath Fritillary** with Rob Smith in Hadleigh Great Wood, and **Black Hairstreak** in Brampton Wood.

May 15th

Gunpowder Park
EN9 3GP

Green Hairstreak and spring species

Led by Ian Watts

May 22nd

Dunstable Downs
LU6 2GY

Duke of Burgundy, Green Hairstreak and Spring Skippers

Led by Dave Chandler

May 24th

Old Sulehay
Ring Haw near Yarwell

Grizzled and Dingy Skippers

Led by Sharon Hearle

June 3rd

Devil's Dyke
July Racecourse

Adonis Blue and Spring chalk species

Led by Ian Watts

June 12th

Brampton Wood
Black Hairstreak
Led by Ian Watts

June 19th

Hadleigh Great Wood
SS7 2LJ

Heath Fritillary

Led by Rob Smith

July 3rd

Sharpenhoe Clappers
MK45 4SH

Dark Green Fritillary

Led by Dave Chandler

Wednesday July 6th

Rowney Wood
CB10 2YA

Purple Emperor & White Admiral

Led by Ian Watts

July 24th

Trumpington Meadow
Summer grassland species, Small Blue, Marbled White

Led by Ed Pollard

Aug 14th

Canvey Wick
Wall Brown and Clouded Yellow

Led by Dave Chandler

Let us know if you can make it...

email info@cambs-essex-butterflies.org.uk

If numbers reach too many, we'll run a second guided walk to the same location. Check for location, meeting, parking etc details on www.butterfly-conservation.org (Cambs and Essex area). Scan this QR code on your smartphone!

