

Devon Branch

www.devon-butterflies.org.uk



Grizzled Skipper *Pyrgus malvae*
Dave Holloway at Dainton Common, 5.5.22

Newsletter



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Issue Number 114
Summer 2022

Butterfly Conservation



**BUTTERFLY
CONSERVATION**

Devon Branch Newsletter

The Newsletter of Butterfly Conservation Devon Branch published three times a year.

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Send articles and images to the Editor (contact details back of newsletter).

The Editor may correct errors in, adjust, or shorten articles if necessary, for the sake of accuracy, presentation and space available. Offerings may occasionally be held over for a later newsletter if space is short.

The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Editor or of Butterfly Conservation either locally or nationally.

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Do you have some time to spare?

Our Volunteers help the butterflies and people on their doorstep. They help to connect people to their local wildlife, encouraging people to take action for butterflies and moths.

VOLUNTEER GUIDES: Would you like to share your love of butterflies and moths with others? Show off a local site to wildlife enthusiasts? We are seeking passionate individuals to lead guided walks or moth trapping events. You can choose when and where to lead an event and we can provide training and support.

EVENTS VOLUNTEERS: Represent the branch at local events while promoting Butterfly Conservation and its activities. Events vary from a BioBlitz, to a county show, a village fete to a music festival. We ask for a commitment to help with at least two events in a year.

SOCIAL MEDIA VOLUNTEER: Do you have experience of social media, especially Instagram? If so, we are looking for a creative social media buff to promote the activities of our local volunteers through various channels. This role can be done from anywhere and the hours are flexible.

Full training will be provided.

For more information contact

Heather Nixon (field events) heathernixon19@gmail.com or

Mary Harold (events volunteers) maryjharold@gmail.com or

Amy Walkden (social media) amy.amy@me.com

Hello, I hope you are all okay? One thing I've found since becoming a member is that my increased but still extremely limited knowledge is frequently sought after by friends and family, (as if I know what I'm taking about!) They are interested though, and that's the most important thing. Hopefully I can spark enough curiosity in them that they are inspired to join us here at Devon BC and then we'll have more volunteers to help us conserve butterflies and moths and more people to come to our work parties and field events.

South Devon Stitchers at Torre Abbey



I went to visit the South Devon Stitchers exhibition at Torre Abbey and was very impressed with the amazing work on display. The level of artistry and care taken was astonishing. Countless stitches have carefully been sewn to create pieces with a powerful message. My favourites were the Blairs Wainscott, Pearl Bordered Fritillary and Beautiful Gothic, I hope I get to see them all for real one day!

Work Parties Autumn/Winter 2022

Saturday 22nd October joint NT/BC Ashclyst Forest near Exeter
10.30 am – 14.30 pm or, volunteers could join one of the regular
Wednesday tasks led by National Trust rangers

Saturday 29th October Hillbridge Farm, Mary Tavy, Rhos pasture
and scrub 10.30 am – 14.30 pm

Sunday 6th November BC Little Breach reserve near Culmstock
10.30 am – 14.30 pm

Sunday 13th November joint DWT/BC Chudleigh Knighton Heath
10.30 am – 14.30 pm

Saturday 19th November BC Lydford Old Railway reserve 10.30 am
– 14.30 pm

Saturday 26th November Beer management for white spot moth
10.30 am – 13.30 pm

For more information please contact Peter Beale 01626 333106
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Caterpillar Field Guide

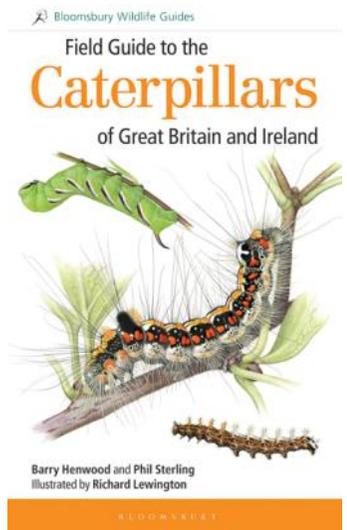
An interest in wildlife is often accompanied by a desire to find out more. We ask questions, we read, we make observations, it's on an ongoing quest to discover more. What does it eat? Where does it live? Which family does it belong to? How did it get its name and so on.. The answers often lie in the valuable knowledge of others, those who have studied more, observed more and have had the opportunity to thoroughly explore their passions. We can consider ourselves fortunate to be able to learn from those who are wiser than ourselves, whether it be through word of mouth, publications or increasingly via apps and websites. Whatever approach we may take to learning, none can be more satisfying than a good book.

The 'Bloomsbury Wildlife Guides' form a series of informative books that enable us to identify species and learn more about the flora and fauna of the British Isles. There are guides on everything from ladybirds to amphibians, the jewel in the lepidoptera crown must go to the **Field Guide to the Caterpillars of Great Britain and Ireland**. If you have a wish list of books then surely this field guide must be on it!

The book is written by Barry Henwood and Phil Sterling with illustrations by Richard Lewington. The trio formed a crack team and between them have produced a beautifully illustrated field guide that covers caterpillars of the moth and butterfly species that are most likely to be encountered in the British Isles.

This one review sums the book up perfectly, "I wish I was able to put into words what a thing of beauty this book is. The love, and enthusiasm for their subjects, comes through in every line of Mr. Henwood's and Mr. Sterling's text."

Grab yourself a copy!



Grendon Farm, Dartmoor 27 May 2022 moth recording

Barry Henwood

Jenny Plackett and I were joined by about 10 people including Paul Burgess and Jukka Vuorinen who brought their own MV lamps. The night was cold, so we did not have great expectations. However, in the end we did manage to record 24 species as adults and found three larvae.



Small Elephant Hawk-moth
Barry Henwood

The most common moth on the night was the ubiquitous Flame Shoulder, *Ochropleura plecta* with 14 recorded, closely followed by 11 Oblique Carpets, *Orthonama vittata* which is a marshland habitat specialist and certainly not a moth that I often see. Other species of note were six Devon Carpets, *Lampropteryx otregiata* and a Small Elephant Hawk-moth, *Deilephila porcellus*. A single *Elachista luticomella* was seen which was significant in that there are only 6 previous records on the Devon moth database.

Larvae found were Drinker, *Euthrix potatoria*, Common Quaker, *Orthosia cerasi* on Pedunculate Oak and either Dotted Border, *Agriopsis marginaria* or Scarce Umber, *Agriopsis aurantiaria* on the same tree. They cannot be distinguished as larvae.

Thank you to all those named above who helped on the night and Ellie from Shallowford Trust.

In Praise of Buddleia

Richard Stewart

Every year someone will tell me they are disappointed with the numbers of butterflies attracted to their garden Buddleia. Poor weather during the flowering period may be the reason but there can be other causes. Buddleia is called 'the butterfly bush' for good reasons, it is easily one of the top garden nectar plants, attracting many different butterfly species. The flowering period for Buddleia's can be extended well beyond the summer flowering *davidii* varieties.

There are the purple cascades of early flowering *alternifolia* and the yellow *globose* is another early variety. At the other end of season there is yellow *wyeriana* , in a mild early winter it can still have a few flowers into early December. Two other ways of extending *davidii* 's flowering periods can be by staggering spring pruning so not all of one plant, or plants is cut at the same time. Deadheading also extends the flowering period and we usually carry out at east four sessions between July and August.

Buddleia also attracts other wildlife, our visitors include nesting Goldfinches, foraging Long-tailed Tits, hunting Hornets and the neat work of Leaf-cutter Ants, with 'insect houses' close by. Moths are also attracted, including the migratory Silver Y and Hummingbird Hawk moths, not just in daylight hours but also..

Within nights stillness,

Ghost moths hovering on nights wings,

Hunt the perfumed dark.



Devon Branch Butterfly Conservation
Members Day 2022



Saturday 15th October
9.30am—3.30pm

At the Boniface Centre in the
grounds of Crediton Parish Church
Church lane Crediton Devon EX17 2AH

We are pleased to announce our guest speakers at this years event are **Barry Henwood** who will be telling us about his wonderful caterpillar guide and renowned wildlife expert **John Walters**.

The day will be one of celebration! Celebrating us all getting back together again after so long, celebrating butterflies and moths in all their glory and celebrating the work we have all been doing over the last couple of years in order to fulfil the aims of Butterfly Conservation.

Refreshments (and cake!!) will be provided but members are asked to bring their own packed lunch.

We are really looking forward to seeing you there!

Devon Local Nature Partnership

Get Devon Buzzing

Get Devon Buzzing is all about raising awareness of the importance of pollinators such as bees, wasps, hoverflies butterflies and moths and taking positive action to conserve them!

Between 75% and 95% of the Earth's flowering plants require pollination including 1200 crop species. Devon is also home to some incredibly rare and threatened pollinators known as the Devon Special Species. The Devon Special Species list was first compiled in 2017 to identify the wildlife that needed more focused species recovery work in the county. Many of these Devon special species find a home on DWT's nature reserves. From the dormouse that has been lost from so many other parts of England...to the brown hairstreak butterfly that suffers the most when hedges are cut so severely.

Get Devon Buzzing is part of a wider collaborative effort to highlight the species that need and encourage us to do more to improve things for them. Of the twelve species identified there are three butterflies, Brown Hairstreak, Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Small-pearl bordered Fritillary.

How can you help pollinators? Commit to making some positive actions to benefit pollinators across Devon. Check out the DLNP website to find activities that are relevant to you, your business or work

<https://www.devonlnp.org.uk>

Musings from a 7 year old

“Butterflies are beautiful. They can help your plants by pollinating them. Some of them lay their eggs on stinging nettles. Moths and butterflies are different, moths don't come out regularly in the day, but some of them do. Such as, I think, maybe a tiger moth?”

“What's your favourite butterfly?”

A TRIBUTE TO DAVID HOPKINS (1941-2022)

David Land

It was with great sadness that I learned of the passing of David Hopkins (known to his friends as 'Dave') on 16th May 2022.

Dave was a proud Devonian and grew up and lived all of his life in Exeter. I first met Dave some 70 years ago when we both lived in Ebrington Road in Exeter, very near the old Cattle Market. That was our playground where we played football and the first glimmerings of our interest in wildlife took hold. Very nearby was Marsh Barton where we roamed the fields. In those days it was a wild area, the fields being surrounded by ditches, hedges and streams.

I lost touch with Dave, until some years later when my wife and I were in Rudge Meadow in the Bovey Valley Woodlands looking for High Brown Fritillary, as was Dave. In those days it was a relatively common butterfly here during July. From that time we went on many wildlife trips together looking for birds, butterflies and other wildlife.

Dave was a keen member of Butterfly Conservation, for many years supporting and working in a voluntary capacity for the Branch. In the early days of the Branch, he served on the Committee arranging field trips. He also took part in the working parties at Lydford following the reintroduction of the Heath Fritillary until age and health issues caught up with him. He also helped with various tasks at the Large Blue site in Devon including annual thyme planting and assistance with monitoring the Large Blue during the flight period. Dave was also involved in a weekly transect during the summer set up through the Forestry Commission in the Kiddens area of Haldon Forest (in those days you were disappointed if you did not see a Wood White on each visit during the flight period.) In later years he assisted with the timed counts for the Pearl-bordered Fritillary on Haldon. Even when his mobility deteriorated he would still record butterflies as and when he could sending records to the Branch. Dave was a very skilled observer and would often phone telling me about what he had seen. I recall him telling me about a sighting he'd had in the 1970's of a Heath Fritillary in the Dunkery area on Exmoor, but he wasn't believed. Interestingly in the 1980's very large colonies were found

here. I've no doubt he was right. Throughout his life Dave kept meticulous records of his sightings in the form of annual diaries which are now an invaluable record of our wildlife over many years. He never had a computer and his notes were beautifully hand written.

Dave had a great love for the natural world and was out exploring most days come rain or shine - he made the most of every day. He loved all parts of the south west and particularly Exmoor where he would watch the Red Deer during the rut and on a good day see Merlin and Hen Harrier as well. He



was an unashamed twitcher and would travel the country adding to his rarities list. The autumn was an important time for him when he went to the Isles of Scilly with his many friends. As his health deteriorated he could be seen on his beloved Exminster Marshes on most days in his car where he was content to sit, watch and wait.

He had many other interests. He loved folk music and could be heard singing in the local pubs and at other folk sessions. He could be seen every year at the Sidmouth and Dartmoor Folk Festivals enjoying a beer and a sing song. He also had a great love of Morris Dancing and played the drum until a couple of years ago with Raddon Hill Clog Morris.

Dave loved life. He was one of the most contented people I've ever known. He will be greatly missed so much by those who knew him and loved being in his company. My life would have been the poorer if I hadn't known him.

Our thoughts are with Brian his brother, Gail, and Tracey.

David Land

Half of British butterfly species on new Red List

- 24 species of butterfly are now listed as threatened – including 8 that are endangered – representing a substantial increase compared with the previous assessment (2011)
- The risk of extinction is increasing for more species than decreasing.
- There is some hope for species that have been the focus of intense conservation work and have been brought back from the brink of extinction.

Butterfly Conservation is warning that time is running out to save some of Britain's best-loved insects, with the latest Red List assessment of butterflies published in May, revealing a 26% increase in the number of species threatened with extinction.

Using data gathered by volunteers through the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme and Butterflies for the New Millennium recording scheme, scientists from Butterfly Conservation have put together the new Red List, which assesses all the butterfly species that have bred regularly in Great Britain against the rigorous criteria of extinction risk set out by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The new Red List is published in the journal *Insect Conservation and Diversity*.

Of the 62 species assessed, four are extinct in Britain (Black-veined White, Large Tortoiseshell, Large Copper, and Mazarine Blue) with 24 (41% of the remaining species) classed as threatened (8 Endangered, 16 Vulnerable) and a further five (9%) as Near Threatened.

Head of Science for Butterfly Conservation, Dr Richard Fox, says: "Shockingly, half of Britain's remaining butterfly species are



listed as threatened or Near Threatened on the new Red List. Even prior to this new assessment, British butterflies were among the most threatened in Europe, and now the number of threatened species in Britain has increased by five, an increase of more than one-quarter. While some species have become less threatened, and a few have even dropped off the Red List, the overall increase clearly demonstrates that the deterioration of the status of British butterflies continues apace.”

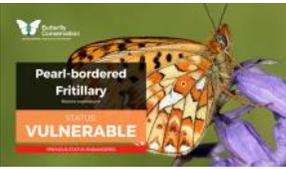
While land-use change remains the most important driver of decline, the impact of climate change on butterflies is also evident in the new Red List, with all four British butterflies with northerly distributions, adapted to cooler or damper climates, now listed as threatened (Large Heath, Scotch Argus, Northern Brown Argus) or Near Threatened (Mountain Ringlet). Both the Large Heath and the Grayling have moved from Vulnerable to Endangered, and seven species have moved from Near Threatened to threatened, including the beautiful Swallowtail and Adonis Blue. Two new species have been added for the first time, Scotch Argus, which is listed as Vulnerable, and Dark Green Fritillary, listed as Near Threatened.



It isn't bad news for all butterfly species though, with some improvement in status for those that have been the focus of concentrated conservation effort, offering hope for other species.

The Large Blue, which became extinct in Great Britain in 1979 and has been the subject of an intensive, ongoing, and highly successful reintroduction programme, has moved from Critically Endangered to Near Threatened. The High Brown Fritillary, also formerly listed as Critically Endangered, has moved to

Endangered; likely to be the result of intense conservation work from Butterfly Conservation alongside other organisations. The Duke of Burgundy and Pearl-bordered Fritillary, which have also benefitted from much targeted conservation effort, both moved from Endangered to Vulnerable.



Dr Richard Fox adds: “Where we are able to target conservation work, we have managed to bring species back from the brink, but with the extinction risk increasing for more species than are decreasing, more must be done to protect our butterflies from the effects of changing land management and climate change. Without action it is likely that species will be lost from Britain’s landscapes for good, but Butterfly Conservation is taking bold steps to improve key landscapes for butterflies and reduce the extinction risk of many threatened species.”

The production of the new Red List of British butterflies has been led by Butterfly Conservation with input and funding from Natural England, and the full scientific paper can be found here: <https://doi.org/10.1111/icad.12582>

Memorial Bench at Lydford

A new bench has been placed at our Lydford reserve. The bench is dedicated to the memory of Jim Braven who worked so hard to manage the reserve for the benefit of the Heath Fritillary. Next time you are there please make sure to sit for a moment and marvel at the reserve he played such an important part in maintaining.

Our thanks go to Colin Sargent and Steven Felton who installed the bench.



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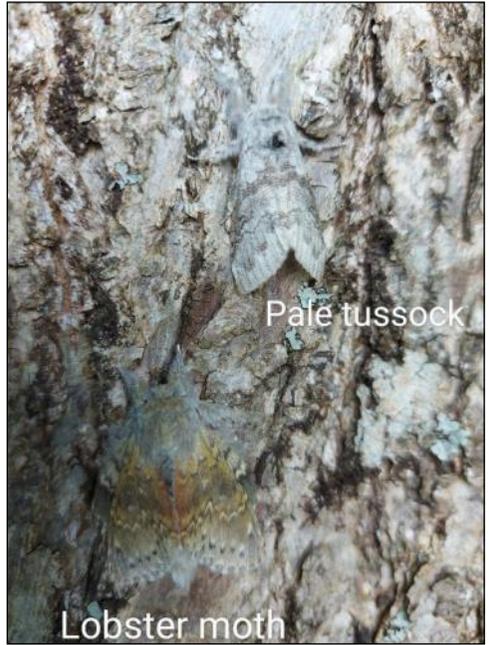
Dark Green Fritillary *Speyeria aglaja*
Michael Brooking at Bolt Head, Salcombe



Four-spotted Footman *Lithosia quadra*
John Summerscales
at Armada Way, Plymouth



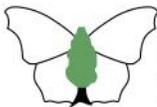
Peacock *Aglais io*
Mark Beer at Bickington, Teignbridge



Pale tussock
Calliteara pudibunda
Lobster moth *Stauropus fagi*
Marije Zwager at Sharpham, Totnes



Common Blues *Polyommatus icarus*
Colin Mather at Halford, Liverton



Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats

**Butterfly
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