

# Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey Annual Newsletter 2023 Season



Holly Blue by  
Paul Brock

Compiled by the WCBS team – Rachael Conway, Ian Middlebrook, Richard Fox (BC), James Heywood, David Noble (BTO), Marc Botham, David Roy (UKCEH), Jasmine Salvati and Kirsi Peck (JNCC).

## Welcome to the WCBS

The Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) forms part of the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS) which generates high quality data on the population status of butterflies. The WCBS comprises a network of randomly selected 1km squares sampled at least twice a year. Recorders count butterflies using standard transect criteria along two 1km long survey lines, which run parallel within the square. This newsletter presents initial results from WCBS squares in 2023, based on changes in species occurrence from the previous year. The full population trend results, from all component surveys of the UKBMS is published as official statistics and is available via the UKBMS website, in late March. The WCBS is jointly run by Butterfly Conservation (BC), the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH), the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).

## Coverage in 2023

Coverage decreased this year with 795 squares surveyed\* (-48 squares on 2022 levels). Survey effort by Butterfly Conservation (BC) and BTO Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) recorders dipped by 22 and 26 squares respectively, resulting in a total of 512 BC squares and 283 BBS squares surveyed. This fall comes despite the hard work undertaken by the BBS team to increase uptake of WCBS, resulting in 31 new BBS squares surveyed. It is likely this decrease was a reflection of the poor weather which particularly hampered the core survey period.

At the country level 706 squares were surveyed in England (-39

compared to 2022), 48 in Scotland (-2), 26 in Wales (-5), 13 in Northern Ireland (-2) and two on the Isle of Man (same as 2022).

\*records submitted to the Scheme before 01/01/2024

## Regional Coverage

The three BC branch areas with the greatest number of squares covered during 2023 were Dorset with 69 (63 BC and 6 BBS), Gloucestershire with 45 (37 BC and 8 BBS), and Hampshire & Isle of Wight with 44 (29 BC and 15 BBS), these areas continue to be popular with BC volunteers. Coverage by BBS volunteers remains greatest in Sussex for the 6th year in a row with 27 squares. The BC branch area that saw the greatest overall increase in coverage was East Midlands (+10 squares). An excellent result for Champion Ken Orpe, in what was a poor year for coverage overall. Only 38% of all branch areas managed to maintain or increase levels of coverage from the previous year (compared to 75% of branches in 2022).

The following branches did well to increase their coverage overall by over 10% in a difficult year.

Branch	2022	2023	Increase in squares	% change
East Midlands	20	30	10	50
North East England	17	22	5	29
Glasgow and SW Scotland	9	11	2	22
Lincolnshire	5	6	1	20
Herts and Middlesex	31	36	5	16
Upper Thames	34	38	4	12



Large Tortoiseshell by  
Paul Brock.

2023 SURVEY

# Overview of Survey Results 2023

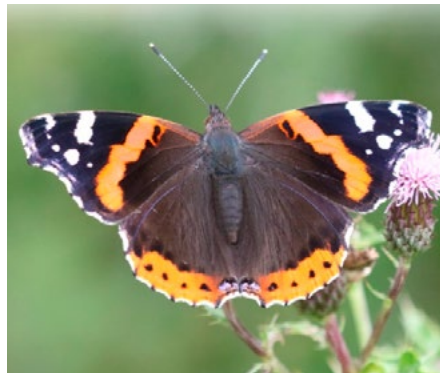
In total 1964 WCBS surveys were carried out by 630 recorders, counting 142,745 butterflies of 47 species, the same as in 2022. The species count comprised of 18 habitat specialists, 25 wider countryside species, and four migratory species, including the rare migrant Large Tortoiseshell, which was observed and photographed in a BBS square in Sussex.

There were 160 spring visits which returned data from 132 squares (103 BC and 29 BBS) recording a total of 22 species. Orange-tip was the most widespread, being recorded in 99 squares (+20% on 2022), occurring in 16% more squares than Green-veined White (74 squares). Holly Blue occurred in 56 squares (+13% on 2022) and Green Hairstreak in eight squares (+38%). An additional 75 visits were made to 67 squares in September.

The overall busiest day for recording was 10th August when 105 visits were made, recording 4,694 butterflies of 29 species. The most visits made to a BBS square were eight to a square near Hilton, County Durham. The most visits to a BC square were 17 to a square near Hapton, Norfolk and the same square held the record for the most visits (5) during the core period.

Throughout the core July and August recording period, 742 squares were visited (93% of the total visits for the year). 542 squares (68%) received the required two visits of one in July and one in August with 10 days between visits (-14% compared to 2022). 51 squares (7%) received more than two walks and a further 196 squares (26%) received one visit during the core period.

61,470 butterflies of 46 species were recorded during these 1,142 core visits, which is one more species than in 2022. An average of 53 butterflies were recorded per core period visit, one fewer than 2022. For squares which received the target two visits, 41 species were counted. Of these, 21 species achieved 'good' coverage (detected in 100 or more squares) one fewer than 2022, whilst a further four species had 'adequate' coverage (found in 30-99 squares) two fewer than 2022. Meadow Brown continued to maintain the top spot as the most widespread butterfly in 2023 and bounced back



Red Admiral had its best year of the survey to date (Martin John CC BY 2.0)



Orange-tip (Jeannie Debs CC BY 2.0)

from a significant dip in occurrence in 2022, occupying 92% of squares visited during the core recording period (+18%). Green-veined White enjoyed a boost in occupancy, increasing to 57% of core visit squares, up by 9% on 2022. All 25 wider countryside target species were observed during the core period visits and all bar Ringlet were more widespread than in 2022 (Chart 2) although for Small Tortoiseshell it was a small increase of only 1% improvement from its 18% loss of coverage in 2022. Holly Blue had a great year, occupying 57% of the core visit squares, increasing its occupancy by 40%. It was trumped only by migrant Red Admiral which boasted 90% occupancy, an impressive 45% increase in coverage from 2022. Both of these species had their best year since the survey began. Peacock, Comma, Small White and Gatekeeper all increased coverage by over 20% when compared with 2022, with Small White climbing back up to 91% coverage compared with 69% in 2022. All these species bar Peacock had their best year, which missed out by just 1%.

Silver-washed Fritillary remained the most widespread of the 13 habitat specialists, being detected in 11% of squares (+3%), it was also the only habitat specialist to

increase in occupancy by over 1%. In addition to Red Admiral, regular migrants Clouded Yellow and Painted Lady were recorded. The rare migrant Large Tortoiseshell was an exciting record for 2023 and you can read more about the sighting by Jane Birdsey on page 8.

## Country Level Results

This year, a different species held the top spot in each country. Meadow Brown held on for another year in England (95%), in Wales it was Gatekeeper (94%), Green-veined White knocked Ringlet off the top spot for Scotland (82%), whilst in Northern Ireland, Speckled Wood was found in 100% of squares surveyed.

Small Tortoiseshell occupancy was again better in the northern countries, and in Northern Ireland bounced back from 40% in 2022 to 78% occupancy this year, leading all countries for the species as can be seen in Chart 1.

For the first time since the start of the survey, a Holly Blue was recorded in Scotland on a square near Woodhaven, Newport-on-Tay, Fife.

For squares visited twice during the core period, 13 habitat specialists were reported in England, followed by two in both Wales and Scotland; Dark Green

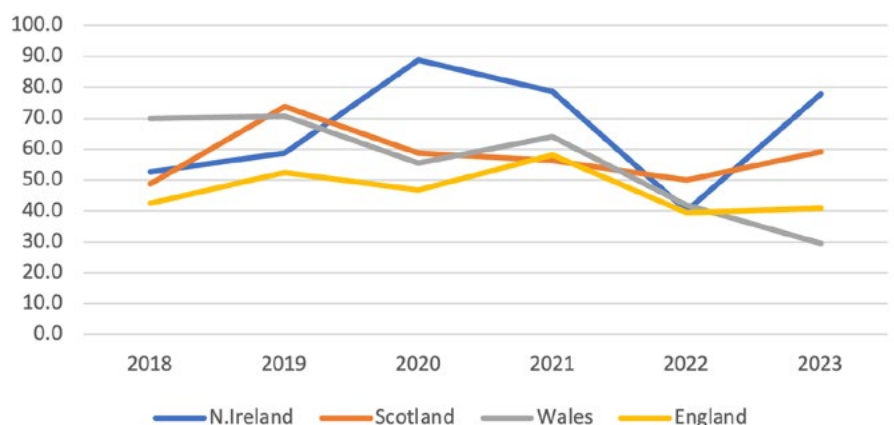
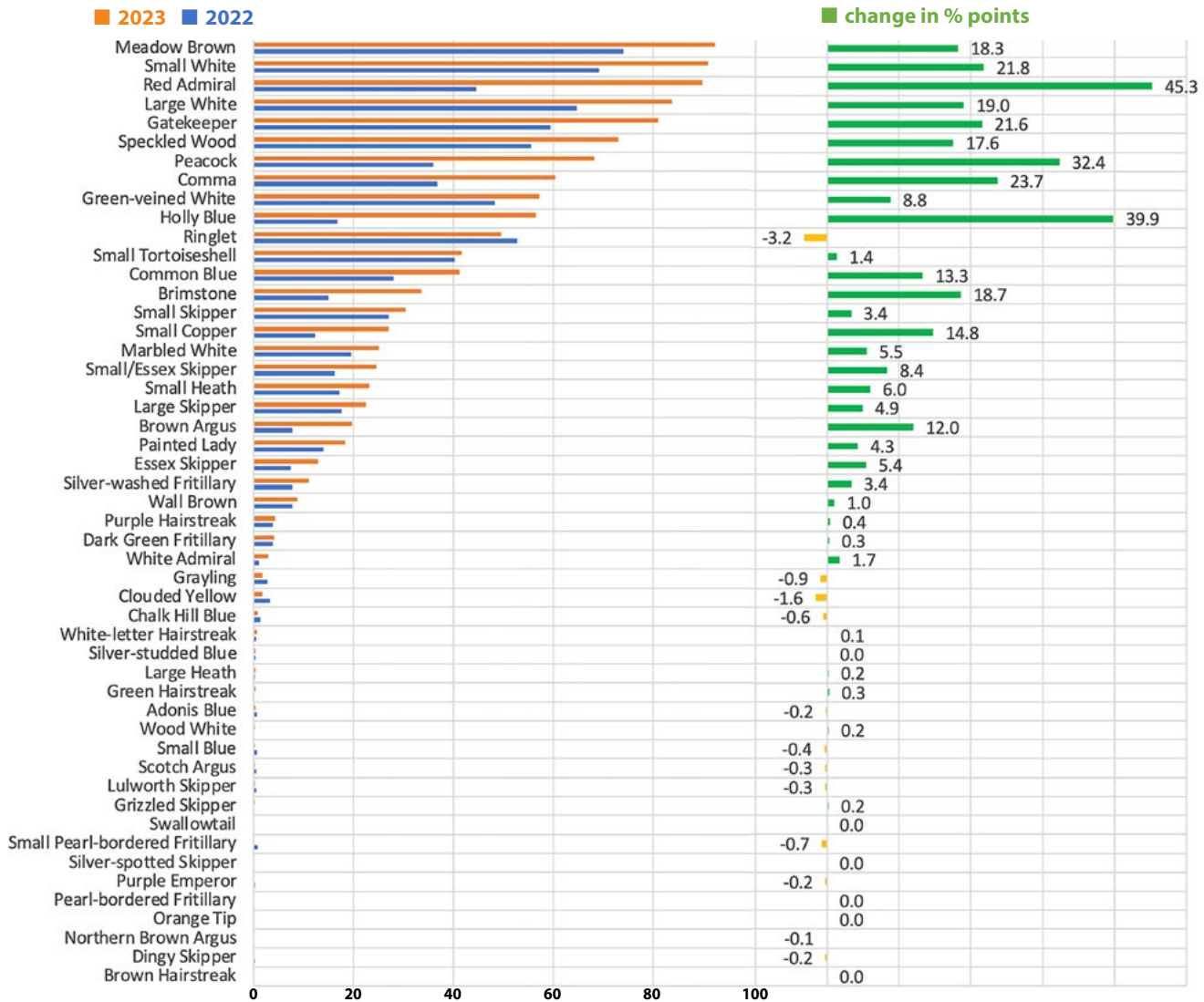


Chart 1. Change in the proportion of squares in which Small Tortoiseshell was recorded (%) 2018–2023 by country.

Chart 2: Comparison of occupancy in 2022 and 2023 based on squares sampled twice during July and August.



**Moths** (see also page 9)

1,503 moths were recorded in 206 squares (127 (+11) BC and 79 (+28) BBS), which comprises 26% of all squares surveyed (+6 % compared to 2022). In total moths of 96 species were recorded (13 more than in 2022). The square with the highest number of moth species (20) was a BC square near Wighton, North Norfolk. Silver Y remained the most widespread moth, being recorded in 53% of squares that recorded moths and was also the most numerous moth accounting for 22% of all moths seen. Other moth species that were commonly encountered included Yellow Shell (the second most widely distributed) and Six-spot Burnet. Garden Grass Veneer was the second most numerous followed by Horse Chestnut moth.



The two runners up for most widespread moth, Yellow Shell (Bennyboymothman CC BY 2.0) and most numerous moth, Garden Grass Veneer (Judy and Terry Wood CC BY)

**Dragonflies**

Dragonflies were recorded in 205 squares (103 BC and 102 BBS), which equates to 26% of all squares surveyed (-8% on 2022). A total of 2,962 dragonflies of 29 species (four more than in 2022) were counted. As with the previous two years Common Blue Damsel was the most numerous of the Odonata species, accounting for 19% of all Odonata records. Common Darter continued to hold the top spot for most widespread dragonfly for the eighth year in a row, being seen in 46% of squares that recorded dragonflies.

**Other Species**

Other wildlife species recorded through the WCBS surveys in 2023, include 63 species of birds, 19 hoverflies, nine mammals, seven bees, five ladybirds, and 46 other invertebrate species. Plant recording increased by 60% and fungi records also made it into the WCBS in 2023. These data flow to the iRecord database for verification and are made available to the relevant national recording schemes.



## 2023 SURVEY

Fritillary in both and Silver-washed Fritillary and Large Heath in each respectively. The Isle of Man also reported Dark Green Fritillary, its only habitat specialist. No habitat specialists were reported from Northern Ireland.

### Top Counts

The largest butterfly count overall in 2023 was during a core period survey and was also the highest count for England, with 196 Meadow Brown counted on 6th July at a square near Tenterden, Ashford, Kent. In Scotland, it was 32 Small Tortoiseshell on 26th August at a square near Manzion, Tweedsmuir, Scottish Borders. Peacock topped the chart in Wales with a count of 24 on 17th August, at a square near Blaenau Dolwyddelan, Conwy. In Northern Ireland, the highest count was 14 Small Tortoiseshell seen on 5th July at a square near Ballykelly, County Derry/ Londonderry.

### Habitat Specialists

The maximum habitat specialist count was 50 Silver-studded Blue on 21st June at a square near Burley, New Forest, Hampshire. Other notable counts included 50 Grayling on 26th August, near Wantisden, East Suffolk, the same square which reported the highest number of Grayling in 2022. An impressive 10 Large Heath were recorded on 17th June at an upland square near

Fort William, Highlands, and there was a welcome return of Grizzled Skipper, after last years' absence, to two squares in Cambridgeshire and Sussex, each returning one observation.

### Zero Heroes

Zero Heroes are those walkers who still submit their walk data even if no butterflies were seen. Zero or low counts are just as valuable as higher ones. They enable us to identify patterns and explore why butterflies may not be doing so well in certain areas or habitats. We are extremely grateful to all recorders who continue to persist with their surveys despite low numbers of butterflies being seen, especially in a year of such poor weather.

In 2023, 12 visits to 12 squares resulted in no butterfly sightings. All but one of these visits was during the core survey period, the wet summer may have resulted in fewer recorders setting out at all due to unsuitable weather for survey methodology. In contrast in 2022, 38 visits to 34 squares resulted in zero counts, 23 of these were in the core period, although the weather seemed favourable, it was potentially too hot for butterflies to be active within the survey time range.

### New Squares

49 new squares were walked in 2023 and although the survey coverage

overall was lower this year, we take heart in the new square coverage and are especially grateful to the champions and surveyors who made this happen. It was very encouraging to see that 31 of these squares are BBS squares walked by BBS recorders and we welcome these new WCBS recorders into the network. Thank you to James Heywood and David White at the BTO for their hard work in encouraging uptake of the scheme to their volunteers

### The Weather

Unfortunately, for a second year running we report on extremes of weather. 2022 saw record breaking temperatures along with the drought and although 2023 was the second warmest summer on record for UK, it was also wetter than average, particularly hampering the WCBS core survey period. In Northern Ireland it was the wettest July on record and the third wettest summer since the series began in 1836. Both Northern Ireland and Wales had their warmest summer on record which makes for two consecutive warmest years ([Met Office 2024](#)). These extreme weather conditions are becoming more frequent, and we don't yet know what the long-term impact will be on butterfly populations. WCBS data contribute to the overall UKBMS analysis, and by surveying and submitting data you help us better understand how our changing climate impacts butterflies.

## 2024 GOALS

### Squares with long data runs

Squares with continuous sets of data are highly valuable, enabling us to produce population trends and better understand what is happening to butterflies across the countryside. In 2023, five squares with long data runs were resumed by WCBS recorders, including SK1978 in East Midlands, which was promoted in last year's newsletter, many thanks to WCBS champion Ken Orpe and the surveyor who got this square up and running again. Also of note is TM1599 in Norfolk, resumed after a gap of four years, SU6630 in Hampshire & Isle of Wight resumed after a three year gap, and TL9047 in Suffolk also resumed after three years, thanks to champions David Prince, Andy Barker and Twm Wade, respectively, for their efforts.

BC Square TG2215, near Bullock Hill, Horsham St. Faith, in Norfolk is the longest running square totalling a 16-year data run. Congratulations and thanks to the walker/s of this square for such an impressive achievement.

**Please see opposite for more priority squares for 2024 (12-14 years data run not walked in 2023) requiring re-establishment or contact [Rachael Conway](#) to check priority squares in your area.**

Square	Location	Information	Contact
TL4610	near Netteswell, Harlow, Essex	This square contains two aptly named pubs: the Small Copper and the Purple Emperor!	<a href="#">Rob Smith</a> Cambridgeshire and Essex
SK4880	near Killamarsh, Sheffield, Yorkshire	A pleasant route around a reservoir owned by the Canal and Rivers Trust. Good parking and paved paths. Site is close to the Magnesian limestone ridge.	<a href="#">Nick Hall</a> Yorkshire
SJ5170	Mouldsworth, Cheshire	An easily accessed and mapped route, close to the village of Mouldsworth. Traverses public footpath, open fields and woodland with ponds.	<a href="#">Rachael Conway</a> Cheshire and Peak

# HOLIDAY SQUARES

## Spot your holiday destination

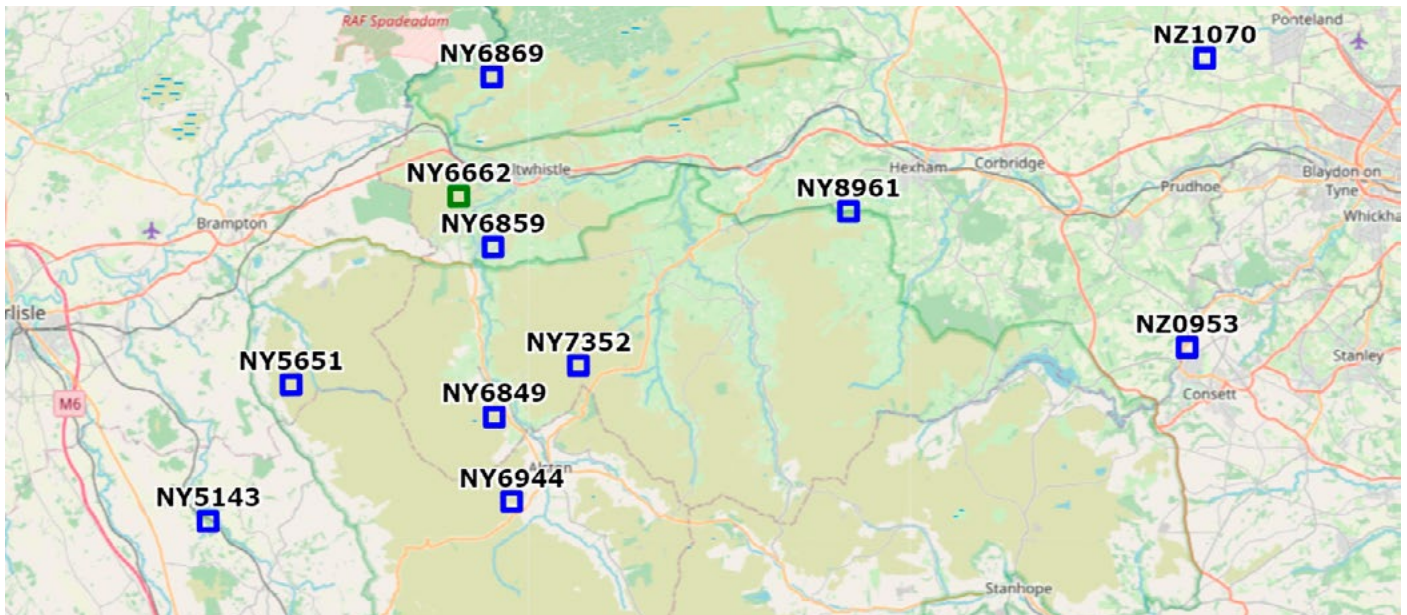
The 'Holiday Squares' element of WCBS aims to increase coverage by making it easier for potential recorders to sign up to a square in an area of countryside they would like to visit. These squares are a great excuse to explore new areas whilst contributing valuable information, and there is no long-term surveying commitment.

42 Holiday Squares were walked in 2023 (five more than in 2022), it is likely that many of these holiday squares have been adopted by a recorder on an ongoing basis, which is great news for the survey. If that is the case for you please get in touch at [survey@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:survey@butterfly-conservation.org) so we can update the website and remove the square from the Holiday Square list.

The map below shows some of the Holiday Squares which are available (blue) in the North of England.

Holiday Square NY8961 in Northumberland is located near the market town of Hexham, close to Hadrian's Wall. This square has been surveyed once in 2012 and is mapped along the stunning ravine of West Dipton Burn. If you are planning a holiday in North East England and are interested in surveying this square, please access the 'Holiday Squares' page of the website to sign up.

There are also opportunities to complete one-off surveys on the BBS 'Upland Rovers' contact [David White](#) (see 'BBS Support' page 10) to be allocated a square for one season only.



West Dipton Burn (geograph.org.uk 2556083 by Mike Quinn CC BY-SA 2.0)



FEATURE

# Healthy Hedgerows

by Megan Gimber, People's Trust For Endangered Species  
<https://ptes.org/>

Two-thirds of our British butterfly species have been recorded in our hedgerows\*, and whilst they may be brimming with many common species, such as Commas, Orange-tips and Holly Blues, they also play a critical role for our more threatened species too.

Brown Hairstreaks are a flagship for hedgerows. The larvae are completely dependent on the young blackthorn leaves, and the shelter and warmth provided by a hedgerow enables the adults to take flight to scour the countryside for a mate, where they congregate at isolated hedgerow trees such as Ash. For Brown Hairstreak, well managed hedgerows should be sensitively trimmed, have few gaps and feature isolated trees.

In short, Brown Hairstreaks are a lovely example of how hedgerow management can directly affect butterfly conservation. And they're just one of over 2,000 different species that make use of hedgerows.

Over 70% of the UK is agricultural land and hedgerows provide fantastic habitat within that landscape, as well as the safest routes of travel for our wildlife. Whether this is for Hazel Dormice who

scramble through shrubby growth, or butterflies and bats that require flight paths, we need a well-connected network of hedges to help our wildlife thrive.

It's fair to say that within our agricultural landscape, hedgerows are one of the best habitats. But not all hedges are equal, and their management has a direct impact on their wildlife value, their structural condition and even their chances of survival in the longer term.

## The hedgerow lifecycle

The reason we have such a rich network of often ancient hedgerows is thanks to a long, unbroken chain of care. Farmers have managed hedges from generation to generation according to the hedges' lifecycle. We know that hedgerows need management, which includes trimming, to survive. But managing them well requires working with their natural lifecycle, to which periodic rejuvenation is also key.

Unfortunately, we have largely broken with the tradition of lifecycle hedge management, and over the decades we've seen the consequences of this in the poor condition of hedges nationwide. The last countryside survey described less than half our hedgerows as being in good structural condition.

It's clear their future can't be taken for granted, as many hedges are at risk through the frequency, intensity and fixed approach to how they're managed. We urgently need to rethink how we manage our hedgerows.



Brown Hairstreak by Chaz Jackson CC BY 2.0



Peacock on hawthorn hedge by Megan Gimber

## Hope on the horizon

There is a lot to be optimistic about if you're into hedgerows; the government has committed to planting or restoring 45,000 miles of hedge between now and 2050. We've also seen increased payment rates for valuable hedge management

*Healthy Hedgerows training, delivered by PTES by Megan Gimber*



such as laying, coppicing and gapping up, making these options much more attractive to farmers and land managers. There's also the new Sustainable Farming Incentives, which recognise that key to getting hedgerows healthy is understanding what condition they're already in; for the first time there's financial support to go out and assess their current state. As the adage goes, you can't improve what you're not measuring. One way to do this it to use the Healthy Hedgerows app developed by People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES).

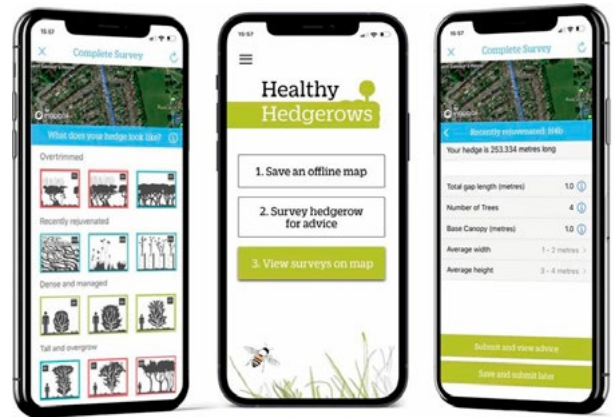
## Cutting hedge technology

It's been a while since managing hedges on their lifecycle was commonplace. So, PTES created an app to help those thinking of returning to our traditional management methods. Designed specifically for farmers, the FREE Healthy Hedgerows app offers a simple

way to help manage hedgerows. With six easy questions, it identifies the stage each hedge is at on its lifecycle, (based on the Adams Code by Nigel Adams), and calculates what management options would be best suited to it. These results can be used together to help create a management plan at a farm or landscape level.

## Training opportunities

PTES offers training to farm cluster groups as well as others working within the farming community. The courses offer a whirlwind of hedge information, including a presentation and a hedge 'safari' walk. We look at everything from the wildlife and on-farm benefits of hedges, the best-practice management and history, to what's coming up in SFIs and how to do your hedge assessments.



The Healthy Hedgerow app is available to download free

Many WCBS surveyors have existing relationships with farmers and other landowners, if you are interested in arranging a hedgerow training session in your area please contact [megan.gimber@ptes.org](mailto:megan.gimber@ptes.org)

\* Dover, J. Sparks, T (2000) A review of the ecology of butterflies in British hedgerows, 2000

## Tree Butterflies

by Rob Still, Princeton WildGuides

Perhaps the most typical mind-image of a butterfly is of an adult feeding on flowers. However, herbaceous flowers only make up around two-thirds of our 700 or so widespread native and naturalised flora, with grasses, sedges and rushes (18%) and trees or shrubs (15%) making up the rest, with both these latter groups containing species vital for some of the region's butterfly species. Trees and shrubs, although not actually defined botanically other than possessing woody stems, are very important components of the British and Irish landscape, whether growing unconstrained in woodland or heavily manicured in hedgerows. Although the range of flowers found in trees is relatively

narrow and the flowers themselves often inconspicuous and only in bloom for a short time, the leaves of some of these woody plants are of prime importance for the caterpillars of some butterfly species. In Britain and Ireland, the eponymous Holly Blue is perhaps the best-known tree-linked species. Named after one of its caterpillar foodplants it is readily observed around Holly and Ivy. However, there are a few more tree-linked species by virtue of caterpillar food preferences. For example Brimstone only uses either Buckthorn or Alder Buckthorn. The magnificent Purple Emperor is well known as an adult around master oaks in woodland and for its propensity to take minerals from puddles and rotting fruit. However, as a caterpillar it is almost exclusively linked to Goat Willow. The nation's hairstreaks are all inherently

linked to trees or shrubs for their caterpillar foodplants: Brown and Black Hairstreaks are confined to Blackthorn (and near relatives, such as Wild Plum hybrids); Purple Hairstreak is an obligate feeder on oaks; White-letter Hairstreak on elms; and the more widespread Green Hairstreak is, perhaps unsurprisingly, found on a wider range, including Broom, Gorse, Dogwood and Bilberry. Rarities to look out for in these times of changing climate are three related species which broadly rely on willows and poplars – Large Tortoiseshell, Scarce Tortoiseshell (also elms and birches) and Camberwell Beauty (also elms). When surveying it is worth paying attention to trees in hedgerows, even if heavily managed, as although the often short-lived flowers may not be visited frequently, prospective egg-laying females may well be found in the vicinity.



Hedgerow and tree hairstreaks (left to right) Green, White-letter, Black. Photos courtesy of Paul Brock – **WILD**Guides Britain's Insects and Britain's Butterflies [princeton.wildguides](http://princeton.wildguides).

YOUR WCBS

## A lucky Large Tortoiseshell on a Breeding Bird Survey Square

By Jane Birdsey



Large Tortoiseshell by Jane Birdsey.

On 26th July 2023 I set out to do my WCBS on one of my BBS (Breeding Bird Survey) squares in East Sussex.

One section of my route crosses the middle of an arable field, going uphill for around 230 m. This is always the least interesting section and a walk taken with a bit of a sigh. However, on this day I was rewarded for my effort. On reaching the far field edge a strip of rough grassland leads to a small wood and just before entering the wood there is a clump of brambles. Over the brambles a large orange butterfly fluttered. I felt sure this wasn't a Silver washed Fritillary and, in my mind, questioned a Large Tortoiseshell, which I had never seen before. From a distance I started taking photos on my phone, hoping to get some sort of record. Obliging the little beauty settled on a leaf and allowed me to get very close. Phew, at last I could let my breath out and allow a racing heart to settle!

Not being a butterfly expert, I needed to double check the ID markings at home and was very happy to confirm my first sighting of a Large Tortoiseshell. I do hope there will be many more in the future.

## Butterfly Events and Workshops

There are a number of BC events coming up this spring and summer that WCBS recorders may find interesting. Below we detail just a couple of the events being advertised at time of publication. For all events available please check the Event pages on the BC website <https://butterfly-conservation.org/events>.

**12th May Activity Day at Stourton Woods** The Lincolnshire branch of BC will be attending with displays, children's activities and hopefully some live moths and caterpillars to exhibit. The event will be a celebration of all the outdoor activities, experiences, and creativity available to enjoy in the county.

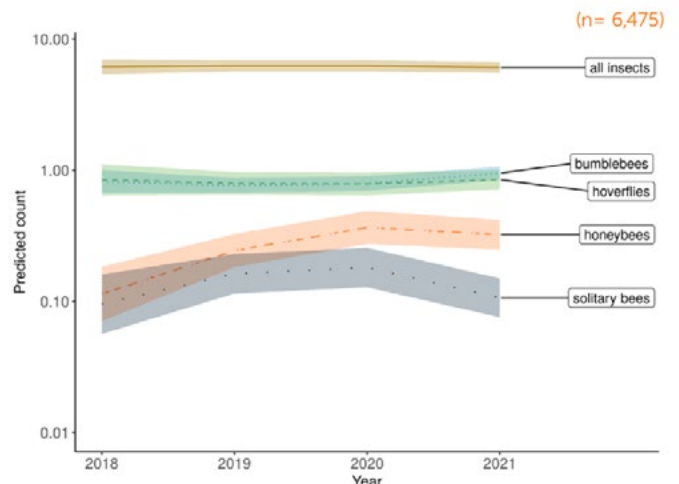
**29th May Early Butterflies including Wall Brown** A three hour walk and search for 1st generation Wall Brown in Sudbourne, Suffolk. Beginners and those developing ID skills welcome.

## POMS - Add some more pollinators to your surveys!

If you have some spare time after completing your WCBS surveys, and are keen to see some more insects before you finish, why not spend 10 minutes on a Flower-Insect Timed Count for the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (PoMS). To carry out a FIT Count you need to find a patch of flowers, choosing just one sort of flower as your target and focusing on a square of 50 by 50 cm. Count the number of insects that land on the target flowers within the 10-minute period, identifying them into broad groups (bumblebees, hoverflies, beetles etc.). Butterflies and moths are included as one of the groups! Counts can be recorded on paper and added to the website, or you can use the FIT Count app which takes you through the whole process.

Last year almost 600 people participated in the FIT Counts, contributing over 4,376 counts (equivalent to a month of counting all day every day!), and counting over 46,000 individual insects. In our 2022 Annual Report we showed some preliminary results from the first five years of PoMS, see the example below. It is reassuring to see that the data does not show any dramatic decline over this time period, and with continued monitoring we will be able to provide further detail as more years can be analysed. Watch out for the 2023 PoMS report this spring.

For all the information you need to carry out a count, and to find out about the other PoMS surveys and activities, see the [PoMS website](#). Butterfly Conservation are partners in PoMS.



ABOVE Insect abundance per 10-minute count from the FIT Counts in 2017–2021 (from the UK PoMS Annual report 2022).

BELOW Insect watching can be fun and relaxing as well as producing useful data! (Photo by Martin Harvey).





## GETTING INVOLVED

### Getting involved in the WCBS

Overall co-ordination of the WCBS is led by Butterfly Conservation's Butterfly Monitoring Officer, Rachael Conway, with squares allocated to recorders through a network of voluntary local Champions (see 'Meet the Team'). Rachael can be contacted via [survey@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:survey@butterfly-conservation.org). If you would like to take part in the WCBS on your BBS square, please contact James Heywood at the BTO via [bbs@bto.org](mailto:bbs@bto.org)

#### WCBS Champions

WCBS Branch Champions have a pivotal role in promoting and co-ordinating the scheme in their local areas. Throughout the season they also provide support and encouragement to recorders as and when required. This year we say goodbye to Jacky Adams, Champion for Hampshire & Isle of Wight who has done a superb job for over five years. We are very pleased the Branch have recruited a new Champion for the 2024 season and that Jacky is continuing to support with a seamless handover.

David Prince, Champion for Norfolk will also be handing over the reins to a new Champion this year. David will continue to support WCBS in the 2024 season until a new champion can be found, we are very grateful to David for the three years served in the role and for continuing to oversee the survey during the transition. Kirstie Ross WCBS champion for Highlands is also moving on to pastures new, thanks to Kirstie for the work she has done to support the scheme in a remote area for over four years, we wish Kirstie all the best for her new chapter. If you are interested in supporting the scheme in these areas, please do get in touch at [survey@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:survey@butterfly-conservation.org)

To find out who your WCBS Champion is please see page 10 of this newsletter.

#### Champion Vacancies

We have a number of opportunities for new Champions to get involved with the scheme this year. Vacancies are currently available in BC Branch areas Highlands, Lincolnshire, and Norfolk. The role would suit an organised person who enjoys engaging with recorders and volunteers. There is no requirement to be a butterfly

'expert', as training and support will be provided by both the WCBS Officer and the local BC Branch. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Butterfly Monitoring Officer Rachael Conway at [survey@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:survey@butterfly-conservation.org)

We now have online training for champions, which helps outline the roles and responsibilities. We invite both existing champions and those considering one of our vacant roles to access the training. We would be very keen to receive your feedback and ideas for improvements or development. You can access the training via our [Volunteer Training and Resources](#) page.

#### BTO Regional Organisers

The WCBS on BBS squares is nationally coordinated by James Heywood at the BTO with volunteer support provided by David White. We are hugely grateful to the efforts of the BTO's Regional Organisers for the BBS who help promote the WCBS to their BBS volunteers, achieving a significant uptake of squares in 2023.

### Recording moths – Adults Only

All data submitted via the UKBMS website flow to iRecord, where they are available to County Recorders and national recording schemes. However, the UKBMS website does not have an entry field for 'stage', which can make verification decisions more complex for County Recorders. Please only submit adult records via the UKBMS website and submit larvae or other life stages to [iRecord](#), the [National Moth Recording Scheme](#) or other recording platforms such as your local records centre website.

*Five-spot Burnet by Rob Still.*



## MEET THE TEAM

### WCBS co-ordination and support

**Rachael Conway**

**Butterfly Monitoring Officer**

✉ [survey@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:survey@butterfly-conservation.org)

☎ 07557 271 464

[www.butterfly-conservation.org](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org)

### BBS support

**David White**

**Engagement and Surveys Officer**

**BBS National Organiser at BTO**

✉ [bbs@bto.org](mailto:bbs@bto.org)

☎ 01842 750050

[www.bto.org](http://www.bto.org)

### BBS co-ordination

**James Heywood**

**BBS National Organiser at BTO**

✉ [bbs@bto.org](mailto:bbs@bto.org)

☎ 01842 750050

[www.bto.org](http://www.bto.org)

### BC Champions

BEDFORDSHIRE AND NORTHANTS

**Clare Topping**

✉ [clare.topping@gmail.com](mailto:clare.topping@gmail.com)

CAMBRIDGE AND ESSEX: CAMBRIDGE

**Vince Lea**

✉ [vincelea@btinternet.com](mailto:vincelea@btinternet.com)

CAMBRIDGE AND ESSEX: ESSEX

**Rob Smith**

✉ [recorder@cambs-essex-butterflies.org.uk](mailto:recorder@cambs-essex-butterflies.org.uk)

CHESHIRE AND THE WIRRAL

c/o BC's WCBS Co-ordinator

✉ [survey@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:survey@butterfly-conservation.org)

CORNWALL

**Kelly Uren**

✉ [p5ktherese@gmail.com](mailto:p5ktherese@gmail.com)

CUMBRIA

**Martin Chadwick**

✉ [martin\\_chadwick@hotmail.com](mailto:martin_chadwick@hotmail.com)

DEVON

**Jenny Evans**

✉ [jennifer.evans@lineone.net](mailto:jennifer.evans@lineone.net)

DORSET

**Adrian Neil**

✉ [raneil418@gmail.com](mailto:raneil418@gmail.com)

EAST MIDLANDS: DERBYSHIRE

**Ken Orpe**

✉ [ken@malaga.plus.com](mailto:ken@malaga.plus.com)

EAST MIDLANDS: LEICESTERSHIRE

**Richard Jeffery**

✉ [winrich168@btinternet.com](mailto:winrich168@btinternet.com)

EAST MIDLANDS: NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

**Steve Mathers**

✉ [smbutterflies11@gmail.com](mailto:smbutterflies11@gmail.com)

EAST SCOTLAND

**Richard Buckland**

✉ [r.buckland@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:r.buckland@blueyonder.co.uk)

GLASGOW AND SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND

**Louisa Maddison**

✉ [louisa-mh@hotmail.com](mailto:louisa-mh@hotmail.com)

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

**Tricia Atkinson**

✉ [chair@gloucestershire-butterflies.org.uk](mailto:chair@gloucestershire-butterflies.org.uk)

HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT

c/o BC's WCBS Co-ordinator

✉ [survey@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:survey@butterfly-conservation.org)

HERTFORDSHIRE AND MIDDLESEX

**Andrew Wood**

✉ [zoothorn@ntlworld.com](mailto:zoothorn@ntlworld.com)

HIGHLANDS

c/o BC's WCBS Co-ordinator

✉ [survey@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:survey@butterfly-conservation.org)

KENT

**Peter Charles**

✉ [pjcnews@aol.com](mailto:pjcnews@aol.com)

LANCASHIRE

**Stephen Ryder**

✉ [stephenryder@hotmail.com](mailto:stephenryder@hotmail.com)

LINCOLNSHIRE

c/o BC's WCBS Co-ordinator

✉ [survey@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:survey@butterfly-conservation.org)

NORFOLK

c/o BC's WCBS Co-ordinator

✉ [dprince@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:dprince@hotmail.co.uk)

NORTH EAST ENGLAND

**Val Standen**

✉ [Valerie.standen@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Valerie.standen@hotmail.co.uk)

NORTHERN IRELAND

**Leah Cox**

✉ [leahcox16@gmail.com](mailto:leahcox16@gmail.com)

NORTH WALES

**Amy Green**

✉ [wildswimmingwolf@gmail.com](mailto:wildswimmingwolf@gmail.com)

SOMERSET AND BRISTOL

**Andy Danford**

✉ [WCBS@somersetbutterflies.org.uk](mailto:WCBS@somersetbutterflies.org.uk)

SOUTH WALES

**Daisy Dunn**

✉ [daisy.dunn500@gmail.com](mailto:daisy.dunn500@gmail.com)

SUFFOLK

**Twm Wade**

✉ [twm.wade@yahoo.com](mailto:twm.wade@yahoo.com)

SURREY AND SOUTH LONDON

**Bill Downey**

✉ [billdowney@sky.com](mailto:billdowney@sky.com)

SUSSEX

**Colin Gibbs**

✉ [sxwcbs@outlook.com](mailto:sxwcbs@outlook.com)

UPPER THAMES (BUCKS, BERKS AND OXON)

**Peter Philp**

✉ [peterphilp@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:peterphilp@hotmail.co.uk)

WARWICKSHIRE

**Keith Warmington**

✉ [keith@warmies.uk](mailto:keith@warmies.uk)

WEST MIDLANDS: HEREFORD AND

WORCESTERSHIRE

**Philip Nunn**

✉ [philip-nunn@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:philip-nunn@hotmail.co.uk)

WEST MIDLANDS: STAFFORDSHIRE AND

SHROPSHIRE

c/o BC's WCBS Co-ordinator

✉ [survey@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:survey@butterfly-conservation.org)

WILTSHIRE

**Janet Crittenden**

✉ [janetmcrittenden@gmail.com](mailto:janetmcrittenden@gmail.com)

YORKSHIRE

**Nick Hall**

✉ [webmaster@yorkshirebutterflies.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@yorkshirebutterflies.org.uk)

### Acknowledgements

The UKBMS partnership would like to thank the following people for their help and support in producing this newsletter: Jane Birdsey, Megan Gimber, Rob Still, Martin Harvey. We would like to acknowledge the following photographers: Jane Birdsey, Paul Brock, Megan Gimber, Martin Harvey, Jon Stokes.

The WCBS forms part of the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS). The UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme is organised and funded by Butterfly Conservation, the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, British Trust for Ornithology, and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. The UKBMS is indebted to all volunteers who contribute data to the scheme – without your help the project would simply not be possible. We would also like to acknowledge the enthusiasm and support of the BBS volunteers in the extension of monitoring from birds to butterflies through the WCBS. The BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey is a partnership jointly funded by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), with fieldwork conducted by volunteers.

### References

Met office News (2024) 2023 was second warmest year on record for UK. Available online. Accessed at <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/press-office/news/weather-and-climate/2023/2023-was-second-warmest-year-on-record-for-uk>