

State of Surrey Butterflies in 2014

While the weather in 2012 was characterised by the wet summer and consequently the worse year on record for butterflies, 2013 weather was characterised by the cold spring, by contrast the spring in 2014 was warm. The warm weather continued on for the rest of the year, with the exception of a colder and wetter August than average.

The year was generally poor for the migrant butterflies.

This report is based on all the records received and validated. It is never too late to submit records from earlier years. All records are most welcome.

Papilionidae – The Swallowtails

There were three sightings of the **Continental Swallowtail** in 2014 on 16 May at Raynes Park, 10 Jun at Ottershaw and 30 July at Woldingham, which apparently is the largest influx of these butterflies into the UK since 1945. It is possible that the sighting in May was from a local population in Sussex rather than an immigration from the continent which did not occur until July.

Hesperiidae – The skippers

Dingy Skipper first brood from 11 April to 26 June and a tiny second brood from 22 July to 5 August.

Grizzled Skipper from 14 April to 17 June were only seen in small numbers,

Essex Skipper 12 June to 7 August, with most seen in July.

Small Skipper from 15 May to 20 August, seen in large numbers in first-half July in 7 monads.

Silver-spotted Skipper from 16 July to 15 September, seen in good numbers between 24 July and 24 August in 6 monads.

Large Skipper from 6 May to 2 September, with peak numbers in June and July.

Pieridea – The Whites & Yellows

Wood White first brood from 17 April to 19 May, and second brood from 14 July to 6 August. Recorded in good numbers at Tugley Wood on 18 May and in 18 & 21 July.

Orange-tip is one of the species used in JNCC's Spring Index. In 2013 Orange-tips did not appear until 20th April (3 weeks later than 2012), while in 2014 they were first seen on 23rd March, over 4 weeks earlier than 2013. Flying until 22 June. There were reports of second brood in July and August from 4 different locations which haven't been confirmed.

Large White a very early eclosion on 2 March, and another on 9 March, with the main flight period commencing 23 March until 28 October.

Small White from 9 March to 26 October, generally in low numbers. It was only on 18 May, and between 19-26 July that they were recorded in any great numbers in 4 monads.

Green-veined White from 23 March to 28 September, with no clear separation between first and second broods in June.

Clouded Yellow the first was seen on 18 May at Ham House riverside, and a further few in June. The main sightings were July and August. The last was seen on 4 November.

The last **Brimstone** of 2013 was seen on 29 December, and the first of 2014 was seen on 2 February, and the last seen on 29 November. The greatest numbers were seen between March and May. Eggs were found in April and May, and July seemed to be best to find the larvae (presumably in their final instar before pupation), where a maximum of 5 were found near Chiddingfold.

Nymphalidae – The Browns, Fritillaries & Aristocrats

Speckled Wood was very unusually recorded on 10-11 January near Chiddingfold. The rest started to emerge on 16 March and with overlapping broods were on the wing until 26 October. Seen in large numbers at 2 monads on 12-14 July and 22 August.

Small Heath from 15 April to 2 October. Most seen in June, July and September. However, only seen in small numbers throughout the season compared with previous years.

Ringlet from 9 June to 24 August. Where recorded in high numbers between 24 June and 4 August.

Meadow Brown from 9 May to 16 October, with late June to August been peak months for large numbers.

Gatekeeper or Hedge Brown was very early with first sightings 7 June and last 22 September.

Marbled White from 8 June to 20 August seen in good numbers throughout the county.

Grayling 4 July to 10 September. A vagrant was observed on 9 August at White Downs, and

Silver-washed Fritillary from 29 May to 8 September, seen in high numbers at 5 monads.

Dark Green Fritillaries 8 June to 12 August.

White Admiral from 12 June to 13 August, and three second brood were seen on 13, 14 & 22 September. Large numbers seen at Bookham Common.

Purple Emperor from 17 June to 3rd August, with 10 been reported at Tugley Wood on 7 July. Records were received from 19 monads.

Red Admiral 5 January to 8 December. June to September were the months when the Red Admiral was seen in greatest numbers.

Painted Lady from 1st April to 19th December were seen in small numbers throughout the season, mainly between June and August.

Peacock from 2 February to 29 November. Hibernators were seen in good numbers in April and beginning of May. The 2014 brood was seen in July.

Small Tortoiseshell from 10 January to 16 November, with recorded in good numbers between June and July in 6 monads.

Comma 24 Feb. to 19 Oct. The first brood emerged in mid-May, and the second brood in mid-June, with most entering hibernation by end of September.

Glanville Fritillary 5 May to 1st June in two monads at Hutchinson Bank. No records were received from Wrecclesham in 2014, which puts into question whether it has been lost from that site after a very poor year in 2013.

Lycaenidae – The Coppers, Hairstreaks & Blues

Small Copper from 10 April to 10 October, with overlapping broods. Greatest numbers seen at beginning of August in the SW of Surrey.

Brown Hairstreaks from 15 July to 11 Oct. were widely seen throughout the County with records for different 33 monads. Four females were seen in Horton Country Park on 3rd September, along with one male.

Purple Hairstreak from 21st June to 4 September, were seen in low numbers, except for 20 been recorded on 12 July at Holmwood Common.

Green Hairstreak from 13 April to 25 June. Seen in good numbers at Canons Farm & Banstead Woods during first half-May.

White-letter Hairstreak from 16 June to 11 August, for 15 adults in 8 monads. A larvae was photographed on 7 May at Chapel Bank.

Small Blue first brood from 5 May to 3 July, with small second brood from 18 July to 30 August. Recorded in large numbers at Howell Hill on 17 June, and good numbers at Pewley Downs on 1 June.

Holly Blue first brood 12 March to early June, second brood late June to 28 September with a small third brood between 26 October and 31 October recorded in 4 monads.

Silver-studded Blue from 5 June to 28 August, seen in reasonable numbers at Fairmile Common, Ash Common and Chobham Common. Although overall numbers seemed to down on previous years.

Brown Argus continuously brooded with the first appearing 3 May and last sighting on 23 September. Peak abundance occurred during the second brood from the end of July to end of August.

Common Blue 30 Apr. to 3 Oct. The First brood was largely over by 2nd July, with the second brood emerging in the latter half of July, and peaking around 7th/8th August.

Adonis Blue first brood 14 May to 11 June and second brood from 29 July to 18 Sept. Numbers seem to be poorer in 2014 compared with 2013 during the second brood, maybe because of the cool August.

Chalk Hill Blues 29 June to 18 Sept. were seen in large numbers at Pewley Down and Denbies Hillside from mid-July to early August.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to everyone who submitted records during 2014. This report would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of all those people who recorded their sightings and sent them into one of the recording schemes. All records, no matter how few or great all went in creating the overall picture of the State of Surrey Butterflies in 2014. Records were received from the following recording schemes:

- Big Butterfly Count;
- Butterflies for the New Millennium;
- BTO Garden Bird Watch
- iRecord Butterflies
- Migrant Watch – Painted Lady;
- UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme;
- Wider Countryside Butterfly Scheme.