

# BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION UPPER THAMES BRANCH

## Green Hairstreak Report 2012

Dave Turnbull



*Photo © Dave Turnbull*

**Yoesden Bank and Steve Croxford again produced the first Green Hairstreak sighting of the year on 29th March and must surely be one of the earliest for this species in the Upper Thames region. It is certainly the earliest in the last eight years.**

After such a promising start, April became the wettest on record and there were only another two reported in the following six weeks with April only producing one sighting which must be unprecedented.

Sightings from the 12th May became more consistent and on the 22nd of the month 37 were seen at the Devil's Punchbowl but this was the only record in double figures and this from a site where they have been seen in hundreds in the last two years. The relatively small number at such a stronghold gives measure to how the Green Hairstreak has suffered this year.

On a brighter note, there appears to be a 'new square' record when one was seen at Marlow Bottom by Adam Bassett.

Although their flight season was slightly longer this year following the exceptionally early sighting, only 26 reports totalling 99 individuals were received. This compared to 57 reports with 250+ individuals in 2011 and 37 reports with 800 in 2010. The year finished with Steve Croxford seeing the last one, again at Yoesden, on the 15th June.

Clearly, although this butterfly is quite hardy and survives late frosts, it loves warmth and sunshine which were both lacking in April, the first half of their flight season. This, with cool temperatures and so much rain, had a devastating effect on their numbers and many must have perished without mating. It is difficult to imagine them bouncing back next year in significant numbers but I hope I am wrong.

My thanks to those who sent in their sightings.

**Dave Turnbull**  
December 2012