

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION UPPER THAMES BRANCH

Green Hairstreak Report 2014

Dave Turnbull



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The Green Hairstreaks had favourable conditions over their flight period from the end of March and into April, May and June when temperatures were above average and it seemed likely that there would be an early sighting.

Aston Rowant produced the first for the Upper Thames region when Tony Croft reported seeing three on April 10th. Nationally it was March 30th in Gloucestershire. Although an early record, 2012 is the Upper Thames' earliest in the last ten years with March 29th.

Sightings remained constant and several people reported seeing their first ever Green Hairstreak. It was rather strange that despite the regular sightings there were no large numbers seen. Twenty at Pitstone was the most and seemed to indicate an exceptional year for them as this was the largest number recorded there in a single visit. A couple of marking variations were noted at the time and the photographs are included in this report (*see above*). One with large white marks and the other with almost a typical Hairstreak 'W'.

Incombe Hole, Steps Hill and Ivinghoe Beacon proved to be as reliable as ever but they were seen from all over the Upper Thames area but nearly all in single figures. Statistic-wise this year we had 170 from 40 reports, down from last year's 220 from 49, but well up from their disaster year in 2012 with 99 from 49 when one of the wettest Springs on record meant they had a bad year. Their best year, as with many other butterflies, was in 2010 with an exceptional 800 from 37 reports.

This year's favourable conditions should help their numbers next year but we must hope for a favourable Spring.

As many will already know, I am standing down this year (2014) and I would like to thank everyone for sending in their sightings to the web site, or me, over the recent years.

Sending in sightings is important, not only of this species, but of all species, as it helps to show geographical trends, numbers can predict environmental stresses or problems. It also helps generate interest and helps others to know when and where to look. I hope you continue to do so and that we all have a good butterfly season next year.

Dave Turnbull 2014