

## Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) in Upper Thames Area 2012

The number of squares surveyed was one less than in 2011, with two less from BC recorders and one more from the BTO. The total number of visits was also down.

1km Squares	2010	2011	2012	Monthly counts	2010	2011	2012
BC	9	11	9	April	0	60	0
BTO	19	18	19	May	29	0	10
Total	28	29	28	June	280	279	18
Species	26	26	24	July	2897	1991	2009
Visits	64	63	56	August	1419	818	707
Count per visit	72	49	49	September	23	26	0

With a similar number of squares surveyed in all three years we can make rough comparisons again. Total counts were only 4% down on 2011 but 36% less than in 2010. This agrees broadly with the regional transect results.

Monthly counts were down by 13.6% in August and 93.5% in June but July counts were slightly up (by less than 1%). All three main months were exceptionally wet, especially June, with 2.9 times the local average rainfall. July was relatively the least wet, only 41% above average. Temperatures were also below average.

The number of species recorded was 24 compared with 26 in the previous years, with no hairstreaks or Brown Argus seen.

Counts were again dominated by Meadow Browns which, along with Large Whites had their best year of the three. The Small and Essex Skipper in aggregate increased by a factor of 2.9 over 2010 and 4.4 over 2011. They had a number of high counts including one of 87 in July and four others in double figures. Ringlet improved on 2011 but Gatekeeper was pushed from second into fourth place, decreasing again by 23% from 2011 and 39% from 2010.

Most species with significant counts decreased compared with the previous years, notably Common Blue with only four individuals compared with 469 in 2010. Small Tortoiseshell continued down, from 274 in 2010 to 13 in 2012.

In contrast to Butterflies, Dragonflies and Damselflies more than doubled in number, Three new species were recorded, but two less in total. Maybe the wet summer conditions suited them or it may be that more surveyors are recording odonata.

Three more moth species were recorded, four of them new. Nearly double the total number were counted, but half were the migrant Silver Y, not recorded in 2011. However, a total of 20 is only a fraction of the number of odonata.

It remains to be seen whether the summer of 2013 will bring better weather to allow the butterflies and moths to begin to recover from the disastrous past three years.

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Species	2011	2012
Azure Damselfly		5
Banded Demoiselle	4	1
Blue-tailed Damselfly		1
Broad-bodied Chaser	1	0
Brown Hawker	3	10
Common Blue Damselfly	32	73
Common Darter	13	26
Common Hawker	1	0
Downy Emerald		1
Emperor Dragonfly	9	9
Migrant Hawker	1	0
Red-eyed Damselfly	1	0
Ruddy Darter	1	2
Southern Hawker	2	0
Unidentified Damsel		8
Unidentified Hawker	4	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>151</b>

Species	2011	1012
Six-spot Burnet	1	3
Narrow-b'd 5-spot Burnet	7	1
Shaded Broad-bar	1	1
Common Carpet	0	1
Yellow Shell	0	3
Speckled yellow	0	1
Cinnabar	2	0
Silver Y	0	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20</b>

### Butterflies

#### Odonata

By Species	2010	2011	2012
Small Skipper	57	24	48
Essex Skipper	8	7	11
Small/Essex Skipper	11	19	159
Large Skipper	74	29	36
Brimstone	28	11	13
Large White	403	387	507
Small White	525	473	212
Green-veined White	230	192	59
Orange-tip	14	28	8
Purple Hairstreak	3	1	0
White-letter Hairstreak	1	0	0
Small Copper	14	6	1
Brown Argus	36	9	0
Common Blue	469	37	4
Holly Blue	17	13	6
Red Admiral	27	54	20
Painted Lady	4	1	2
Small Tortoiseshell	274	68	13
Peacock	46	50	43
Comma	40	23	20
Dark Green Fritillary	0	3	2
Silver-washed Fritillary	26	10	11
Speckled Wood	97	115	31
Marbled White	105	60	71
Gatekeeper	610	486	372
Meadow Brown	874	669	887
Ringlet	650	314	428
Small Heath	5	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>4648</b>	<b>3092</b>	<b>2967</b>

#### Moths

By Rank	2012
Meadow Brown	887
Large White	507
Ringlet	428
Gatekeeper	372
Small White	212
Small/Essex Skipper	159
Marbled White	71
Green-veined White	59
Small Skipper	48
Peacock	43
Large Skipper	36
Speckled Wood	31
Red Admiral	20
Comma	20
Brimstone	13
Small Tortoiseshell	13
Essex Skipper	11
Silver-washed Fritillary	11
Orange-tip	8
Holly Blue	6
Common Blue	4
Painted Lady	2
Dark Green Fritillary	2
Small Heath	2
Small Copper	1
Purple Hairstreak	0
White-letter Hairstreak	0
Brown Argus	0