

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION UPPER THAMES BRANCH

White Admiral Species Champion report – 2016



(photo copyright Ewan Urquhart)

Overview

2016 turned out to be a quiet year for White Admiral recording - unfortunately on a par with the poor summer of 2012. On reviewing my own sighting records and observations for the summer, the overall impression is of flight season weather that was mainly overcast and windy and that even on the sunny, warm days we did have, it was still very windy. I believe this restricted my own observations, and probably therefore over the region as a whole.

Despite this I was delighted by an exciting late sighting of a White Admiral. This was on 22 September and was at the same site where the first recorded sighting of the year was made! Not only, therefore, does this indicate a stable site for this butterfly, but it also implies that a second generation was on the wing. So, maybe not a good year for observing White Admirals but the weather clearly did not deter their behaviour.

Detail

The first sighting was received on 27 June and the last on 22 September; as noted above, these were both received from the same recorder and the same wood - Crowsley Park Woods, near Reading. Unfortunately there were no double figure sightings and no new sites were discovered, although I was

pleased to rediscover the butterfly on a couple of sites in Oxfordshire last reported 10 years ago.

35 people provided observations this year and in all 72 reports were received, advising of 117 individuals seen at 28 sites. There were far fewer reports from Berkshire this year than previously (6 compared to 18 in 2012 for example) so, in particular, if any of you are out and about walking in Berkshire woods during July please keep an eye out for this beautiful butterfly and let me know of any sightings.

Unfortunately the field trip to Bowdon Woods, BBOWT reserve, in Berkshire on 9 July was a cool overcast day and we managed only one fleeting view of a White Admiral with another possible view of a Purple Emperor. So, although an enjoyable walk, it was disappointing in terms of our target species.

Many thanks, as ever, to everyone for providing the information that contributes to this report.

Julia Huggins