

# BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION UPPER THAMES BRANCH

## White-letter Hairstreak 2020 report

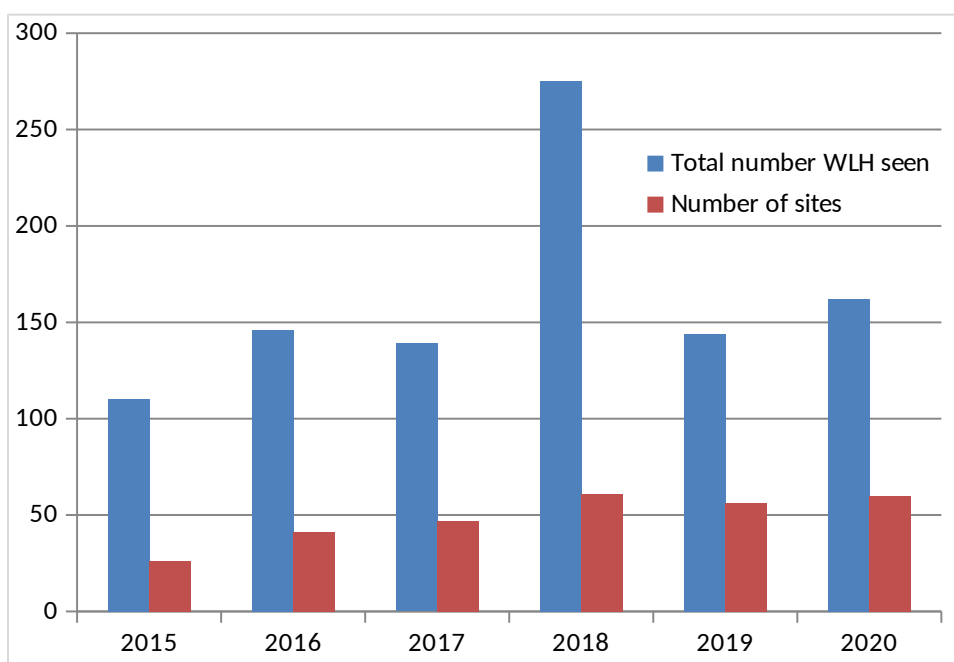


A female White-letter Hairstreak at the Warren, Caversham.

Many thanks to all who reported their White-letter Hairstreak sightings in 2020. The butterfly enjoyed a reasonably good year in the Upper Thames.

The first sighting was the 7<sup>th</sup> June. This was the earliest in the UTB area in the last 17 years and 13 days earlier than the mean average. The last sighting was 11<sup>th</sup> August.

There were a total of 162 WLH sightings in 2020 from about 60 sites. The graph below shows how this compares over the last six years.



There were a number of reports from previously unrecorded sites. I managed to find four new sites in 2020, The Warren, near Caversham and Bardolphs Wood (both VC23), Ashampstead Common (VC22), and a site in the Hughenden Valley (VC24). Jim Asher's new Levana extension which highlights sightings which are more than 2k outside any sightings for the 2015-19 period shows 16 such sites for WLH with 50 adult butterflies. Most of these were reported by Tom Dunbar at sites along the A41 in Bucks. This demonstrates that there are still plenty of colonies to be found in the UTB area and I would encourage BC members to look for surviving elms and check them for colonies of this charming little butterfly. If you need any tips on the best way to do this have a look on the UTB website, click on the conservation tab and scroll down to the White-letter Hairstreak Project.

### **Elm project**

Upper Thames Branch continues to plant elms across the three counties to provide potential habitat for the WLH. To date we have planted 253 elms. All elms are now UK sourced, or grown from seed in the case of White elm, to ensure we do not import tree diseases.



Nick Bowles hard at work planting elm at Diddershall Woods.

Peter Cuss

February 2021.