

# BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION UPPER THAMES BRANCH

## Wood White Species Champion Report 2024

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Although numbers of sightings were generally lower than in previous years, the good news is that Wood White fared quite well as it coped with days of wet weather during its flight period and indeed occasional high counts were recorded

Locally in Wicken Wood, the first sighting was on the 18<sup>th</sup> May when 11 were seen with a further 26 seen on the 25<sup>th</sup> May

As usual, Leckhamstead Wood sightings were slightly later than Wicken with a first sighting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June

Thereafter numbers rose, peaking during the second and third week in June with neighbouring Hazelborough Forest recording 14 on the 24<sup>th</sup> June and Bucknell Wood recording 22 on the 26<sup>th</sup> June

Second brood numbers were well down with the occasional sighting in July right up until the 31<sup>st</sup> when 2 were seen in Hazelborough Forest

Elsewhere, Salcey Forest and Yardley Chase recorded good numbers throughout June and the occasional records were received from private woodland around the Kettering area suggesting there may be a new colony or two in that area

Let us hope for a return to more “normal” weather conditions in 2025 with the hope that we see numbers returning to a more familiar level

Please remember to keep searching for this dainty little butterfly and let me know of any sightings!

## How to recognise Wood White

The adult butterfly is creamy-white, and the wings are more oval-shaped than other whites. The male has a squarish blackish spot on the tip of its forewings and the female just has some blackish scales between the veins. However, this is hard to see because on landing the Wood White always closes its wings, so that only the pearly-gey underside can be seen; but this dusky appearance is a good identification feature.

The flight is rather feeble and close to the ground, bobbing up and down and weaving through the vegetation. This weak flight is characteristic though and means it is unlikely to be confused with other white species, for example Green-veined White, which has a far more vigorous flight. But if the weather is overcast, Wood White can be reluctant to fly, tending to settle on the underside of a leaf and can then be difficult to see.

