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Cornwall Butterfly Observer



Butterfly Conservation
Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Cornwall Branch
www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk



Editor's Note

Cornwall Butterfly Observer welcomes contributions from members and supporters of Cornwall Butterfly Conservation. We are keen to publish information relevant to butterflies or moths in Cornwall, whether it's news of an event or development, or an in-depth article.

Cornwall Butterfly Observer is careful to check the information that it publishes. Whilst content attributed to a named individual will normally have been reviewed by fellow volunteers, the information and its interpretation, together with the views expressed, are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the settled position of Cornwall Butterfly Conservation

If you would like to contribute to the *Cornwall Butterfly Observer,* please get in touch via email at chair@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

Front cover: Marsh Fritillary Photo: Steve Batt
Inside front and back covers: Cubert Common Field Trip Photos: Tristram Besterman
Back cover: Common Blues Photo: Steve Batt

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Post from the Chair

Dear Reader

As always, we have included topical and what we hope are interesting articles and reports to keep you updated with what is going on locally with butterflies and moths. An important recent development from Cornwall Council has been the publishing of the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Nature Recovery Strategy, providing a locally shaped blueprint for achieving local and national ambitions to halt the decline of biodiversity and to protect 30% of land, rivers and seas by 2030. As the focus now shifts to delivery of the strategy, Butterfly Conservation is one of the many charities involved in helping to develop key partnerships and targeted projects.

The current focus of the Branch's project work is on the Marsh Fritillary at many locations in the Bodmin Moor area and a professional team is currently monitoring larval webs at these sites with a view to formulating an effective long-term plan to conserve these vulnerable populations. We are organising campaigns of practical conservation work for this winter and we are always in need of volunteers to help with these tasks and if you feel that you could help us, see article on P.26.



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary Photo : Jerry Dennis



Three Graylings Photo: Jerry Dennis

Our series of nineteen field trips in 2025 is nearing completion as I write this piece. Once again, the programme has proved popular and interesting with many butterflies, moths and other special wildlife species having been seen and enjoyed. We try and vary sites and times of year to make sure that attendees have the chance to get new experiences. I was relieved that two of the trips in which I was involved worked well this year. We brought forward the timing of the Porthgwarra trip to focus on Silver-studded Blue and Green Hairstreak in late June rather than the Grayling in early August and we were rewarded with excellent numbers of both species. A visit to Godolphin Woods to seek out the Purple Hairstreak had been a dismal affair in 2024 but this year we got great sightings of numerous individuals on a sunny afternoon among the oak trees. If you have an idea for a new location for a field excursion, please let us know by email events@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk .

Recording butterflies and moths

Recording butterflies and moths is one of the most important elements of Butterfly Conservation's national monitoring. Its value applies to all species, from the most common to the most threatened. The difference between seeing and enjoying butterflies and recording them is that you need to write down what, where, when and how many of each species seen, either doing so straight into a phone app such as iRecord Butterflies or iRecord, or like me, into a notebook and then into an application on a computer. There are so many schemes in which you can participate. For those of you with busy lives and not much time, the Garden Butterfly Survey and Big Butterfly Count are ideal and the computer apps are easy to use and you can just use apps whenever you see a butterfly when and wherever you are. For those of you that might like to try walking a transect next year, we have a friendly team who will be able to help you who can be contacted on transect@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk.

Finally, and importantly, I would like to thank you for your continued support of Butterfly Conservation. Together we can make sure that the populations of our beautiful butterflies and moths remain healthy for future generations.

Cornwall National Landscape recognises the *Magnificent Marsh Fritillaries on Bodmin Moor*

The importance of our *Magnificent Marsh Fritillaries on Bodmin Moor* project has been recognised by the Cornwall National Landscape team and has been awarded nearly £6,500 through the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Grant and the FiPL Grant Authority. Cornwall Branch of Butterfly Conservation will be matching this with monies raised through sales of our *Butterflies of Cornwall Atlas*: *for the Twenty-first Century* publication.



An Emperor Moth caterpillar seen on 14 June on Carkeet..Above
Marsh Fritillary webs on Bodmin Moor in July this year.Below
Photos: Alan Stapleton

As I mentioned in the Summer e-bulletin, Cornwall Branch started this new project at the beginning of 2025, focusing on the Marsh Fritillary populations of Bodmin Moor, with the view to getting a better understanding of managing the Moor for the Marsh Fritillary. Volunteers were out in May and June, recording the adults during the flight period within the known sites across the Moor. This work included one of our regular field trips, to Church Hay Down where only one batch of Marsh Fritillary eggs were seen, followed by a volunteer survey day at Carkeet where eight adults were noted, along with a couple



of batches of eggs. This survey work was led by Alan Stapleton, our Marsh Fritillary Species Champion, with the data collected being used now to guide the larval web surveys. These larval web surveys, along with accompanying Marsh Fritillary habitat condition assessments, are underway and are being undertaken by Attwell Associates, a local environmental and heritage consultancy, with previous experience of surveying the Marsh Fritillary on Bodmin Moor.



A Marsh Fritillary. Photo: Alan Stapleton

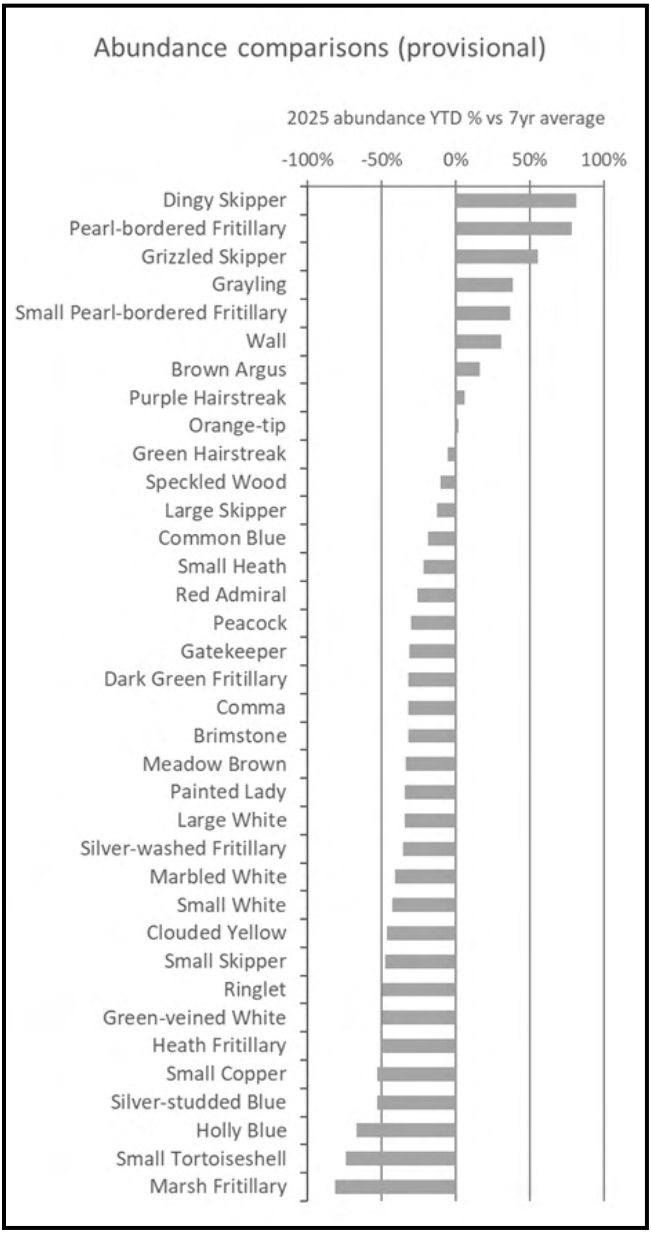
Through this project, it is hoped that over 40 sites within the 12 meta-populations of the Moor will be surveyed and their suitability for supporting for this species assessed. Attwell Associates will use this information to make habitat management recommendations for each site, with the aim of working with landowners in 2026 to enact these recommendations. Distance and movement corridors between extant sites will also be looked at, to ensure dispersal of this species through the landscape and to assess the feasibility of currently unoccupied/potential Marsh Fritillary breeding habitat being colonised.

We are extremely grateful to Cornwall National Landscape / Farming in Protected Landscapes Grant Authority for awarding us this grant, to Jenny Plackett, South West Conservation Manager for Butterfly Conservation for making the funding application, and to all of you who bought a copy of *Butterflies of Cornwall* – still on sale via our website! A big THANK YOU also goes out to all of you who give up your time to record butterflies, including the Marsh Fritillary on Bodmin Moor, providing valuable information to underpin conservation work for butterflies across the county. Only by working together can we ensure the Marsh Fritillary, and our other butterflies, thrive into the future.

Sarah Board

Butterfly recording in 2025

Jerry Dennis, our county butterfly recorder, reports on butterfly sightings to date in 2025.
Please email him at records@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk
After experiencing one of the worst butterfly years in 2024, I'm sure that you are anxious to find out if there has been a bounce back in the populations of some or all of our resident butterfly species. I have analysed the provisional data received so far with this in mind and the good news is that most butterflies are flying in greater numbers this year compared to last year.



Relative abundance, in percentage terms, is shown for each resident species seen this year in the graph below. Note that there are still many butterfly records to be received and the situation may improve for species still flying as I write this article in mid-August.
A quick glance shows that the majority of species have lower than average abundance, indicating that numbers so far in 2025 are generally below par but for most species considerably better than in 2024. Weather conditions in the year provided a much drier

and warmer spring with warm sunny days particularly in May and we are on course for one of the driest and warmest summers on record. Many broods have been earlier than usual and this is attributable to the warmer than average weather.

There have been some good results for species that emerge relatively early in the year. Of these, the two early skippers Grizzled Skipper and Dingy Skipper had remarkably good numbers and many of you managed to get to the main sites at Gear Sands and Penhale Sands and were rewarded with sightings. Our Dingy Skipper species champion and one other person have found second brood Dingy Skippers this year in late July and early August close to locations involved in historic clay mining. This is quite unusual but has happened in a few previous years.



A Dingy Skipper at Gear Sands on 4th May. Photo: T. Besterman



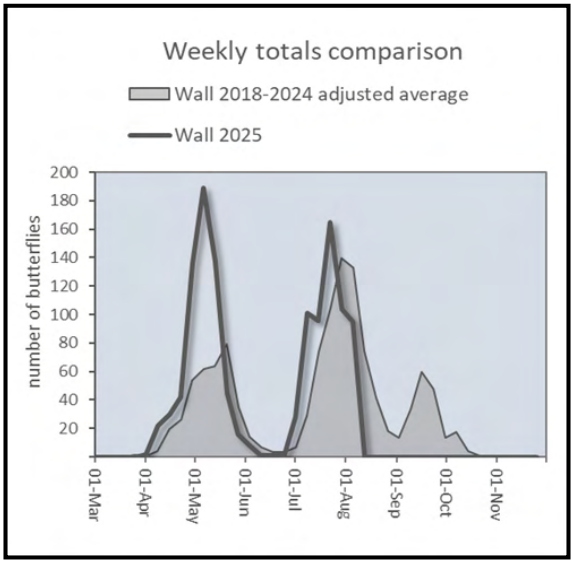
The Wall is having a good 2025. Photo: Jerry Dennis

The Pearl-bordered Fritillary also had an excellent brood this year, with first appearance on 4th April, approximately a week earlier than any other year on record. There was a fire at Pendrift Downs on 4-5th April, one of its principal sites, but indications are that this may not have greatly harmed the population there. This demonstrates how vulnerable our endangered species are when they are only living at a few sites in the county.

Also doing well this year are the Wall and Brown Argus. The second brood of the Wall is coming to an end as I write this piece, but there have already been more than average annual numbers this year and this prior to the third brood numbers later in the year. I have shown this year's flight curve on the graph below that shows a really significant and early first brood followed by a both bigger and earlier than average second brood.

There are several common species currently with below average numbers that will improve when the Big Butterfly Count records are included and I will refrain from comment on them until I have this data available for the next edition. There are unfortunately some species that continue to struggle after the bad effects of 2024.

This year's Marsh Fritillary numbers are the lowest for more than a decade, and this is perhaps partly explained by the unsettled weather that set in for most of its flight period. Our species champion and others have been monitoring key sites in the Bodmin area and on the Lizard and recording larval webs and some good news is that the caterpillars of next year's generation are currently active at many sites.



The Silver-studded Blue has had a fairly poor year with numbers about half the recent average. The transect at Upton Towans serves as a good indicator and numbers this year show only 15% improvement on 2024's total which was the lowest since recording began in 2010. There have been some good counts at other places, however, including Porthgwarra (185 on the Butterfly Conservation Field Trip on 29th June) and Kynance Cove (102 seen on 4th July).

The common whites, with the exception of the Orange-tip, have had quite poor numbers so far this year. The flight curve of the Green-veined White typifies what has also happened to the closely related Large White and Small White and it is shown graphically below. What can be seen is the acceleration of both first and second broods compared to recent average in the warm conditions this spring and early summer. What is concerning is

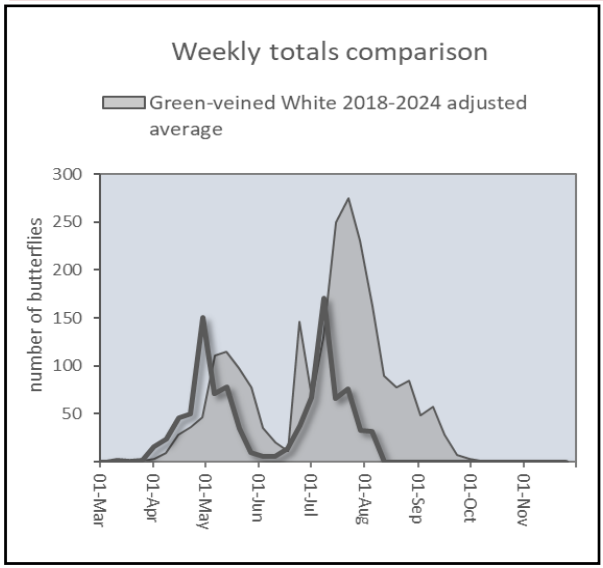


A Marsh Fritillary in the sun at Goonhilly Downs.



An iridescent female Silver-studded Blue at Upton Towans

Photos: Jerry Dennis



the apparent curtailment of the second brood just as it was progressing nicely towards its peak. Perhaps the final position will look more favourable when the remaining records come in from the Big Butterfly Count.

Our regular migrants have been brightening up our summer and this has been the best Painted Lady year since 2019. The more elusive Clouded Yellow was absent for most of the year until August when this beautiful butterfly was suddenly spotted all over the county. I hope that you were able to see one or both of these stunning butterflies this summer. The Red Admiral has been seen everywhere as usual and it is such a great species as it is plentiful, beautiful, a formidable flier, and can be seen all year round.

A quick note of the Southern Small White that has now been confirmed in eastern England and may soon turn up in Cornwall. If you think you have spotted one, remember to take good photos of it as these will be vital for verification. Perhaps one of you reading this article will be the first to find one here, and good luck with that.

Cornwall Branch is very grateful to receive your records and these are vital in our longer-term monitoring of butterfly species. Please continue to keep recording the butterflies and moths near you.



The Painted Lady is having its best year since 2019.



A Clouded Yellow seen at Kynance Cove on 10th August

Photos: Jerry Dennis

Moths, Autumn 2025

Here are the highlights of records up to July 2025. As ever, they are records received at the time of writing, early August.

There have been reports of the rare *Yponomeuta irrorella* in Cornwall as well as other southern counties. The only record received so far is from John Nicholls (JCN) at Downderry on 8 July. The nationally scarce *Carpatolechia decorella* was recorded by the Friends of Kilminorth Wood (FOKW) with Rogan Jones (RJ) on 25 February, our first record for 10 years. The scarce *Acleris kochiella* came to light at Fairy Cross on 25 June (John Cook & Marilyn Edyvean (JC, ME), only the 6th record since VCH. Just a single *Acleris logiana* was noted from its usual site, Great Trethew, on 5 February (JCN). The nationally scarce *Aethes williana* came to light at Kilminorth Wood on 25 April (FOKW, RJ) and at Downderry on 18 July (JCN). *Rhyacionia buoliana* (Pine Shoot Moth) is a local species, more often recorded in Scilly than on the mainland; Graham Cundale (GC) recorded them three times between 4 and 25 July on St Mary's.



Yponomeuta irrorella



Brown Tip

The rare *Agrotera nemoralis* was recorded at three sites throughout June, Kilminorth Wood (FOKW, RJ), Downderry (JCN) and Trussel by Andy Adams (AA). Jersey Mocha (*Cyclophora ruficiliaria*) has now been recorded on the Isles of Scilly; the only record received is from GC on 17 July



Lead-coloured Pug

on St Mary's. Kilminorth Wood is one of very few sites where Lead-coloured Pug (*Eupithecia plumbeolata*) occurs; one came to light there on 15 June (FOKW, RJ). Another very local moth is the Broom-tip (*Chesias rufata*); JC & ME recorded one on 20 April at Caerloggas Downs, our first record since 2016.



Small Marbled

There have been numerous reports of Small Marbled (*Eublemma parva*) this year, including four records in my Torpoint garden between 17 June and 10 July. The only further records received were from Nick Watmough at Trevarth on 28 and 30 June. Rosy Underwing (*Catocala electa*), although scarce & local has appeared annually in the last four years. One was recorded at Kilminorth Wood on 28 July (FOKW, RJ). There have been reports of the Ni Moth (*Trichoplusia ni*), this year, although the only record received so far was from Ruan Lanihorne on 6 June (Carol Hughes). Scarce Merveille du Jour (*Moma alpium*) was recorded at four sites this year: at Glasshouse Wood, Herodsfoot, JC & ME recorded the remarkable total of eleven on 20 May, at Kilminorth Wood FOKW, RJ recorded them on 30 May (4), 15 June and 30 June, at Trussel, (AA) recorded two on 30 May, and Andy Harding recorded one on 26 June at Polperro, a new site. The Latin (*Callopistria juvenina*) is a rare immigrant: AA trapped one at Trussel on 22 July. The White-marked (*Cerastis leucographa*) is scarce and local in Cornwall. Nick Banks recorded one at Trenault (near Launceston) on 30 March, the fifth Cornish record. This, and the previous four records are all from the northeast of the County.



Scarce Merveille du Jour

Leon Truscott

On a wing a

Tristram Besterman offers some perso

World War 2's Government warning that "Walls have ears" elicited the irreverent retort, "Yup, I found some in my ice cream". An old saw, which doesn't quite work with Kelly's, but to my surprise, I found a wall with a refreshingly different message on a recent visit to Canterbury. There, facing me near a busy junction just inside the mediaeval walls of the city, was a depiction of an old friend from Cornwall. The Heath Fritillary, which we know from its unique Cornish fastness at Greenscoombe Wood in the Tamar valley, was superbly rendered many times life size on the wall of an old building. Instantly recognisable and accurate in every detail, including Common Cow-wheat, its primary larval foodplant in rides and clearings in Kent's Blean Woods. (Whereas in the Tamar valley, Ribwort Plantain is the primary larval foodplant, with Common Cow-wheat a second favourite.)



Turns out this was painted by Mark Anthony, a street artist who signs himself ATM. His website states, "*ATM paints endangered species on urban walls, drawing attention to the environmental crisis by bringing huge images of our native fauna, much of which is disappearing at an alarming rate, to a wide audience.*"
https://atmstreetart.com/

The work was commissioned last year by Butterfly Conservation as part of its *Kent Magnificent Moths* project. A clued-up moth-er reading this will have spotted that the mural also depicts another rare species local to Kent, the White-spotted



Mural in Canterbury depicting the Heath Fritilla butterfly and White-spotted Sable moth.

nd a prayer

nal reflections on animals as emblems.



Sable moth (thank you, Leon Truscott, for confirming that one for me).

It is unusual for insects to become symbols of cultural identity. Traditionally, large vertebrates are the norm. Think lions in Scotland and England; eagles from ancient Rome to Nazi Germany and the USA; ermines' tails in Brittany. Not to speak of mythical animals: the unicorn in England, facing off against the lion; dragons from Wales to China; and griffins from ancient Persia to modern Lithuania.

More locally, we have choughs – supporting the Duchy coat of arms and surmounting Cornwall Council's. And here was another surprise for me in Canterbury: they have them too! They get around, our Cornish choughs, they really do. Three Cornish Choughs have been adopted by the City on its coat of arms. Below a golden 'lion passant' are 'three Cornish choughs Sable beaked and legged Gules', to use the wonderful heraldic jargon, i.e. three black choughs with red beaks and legs.



ry *Artist Mark Anthony paints a European Bison for the London Mural Festival in 2020.*

Why are Cornish choughs on Canterbury's coat of arms? The answer, as with so much cultural identity, creatively blends history with myth. After Becket's murder in 1170, three crows dipped their beaks in his blood (and presumably paddled in it, too). Lo, the chough was born and added posthumously to Becket's coat of arms. They are still known as 'beckits' in heraldry. Choughs, as it happens, were probably flying over the white cliffs of Dover in Thomas Becket's time – nearly 900 years before Vera Lynn's wartime 'blue birds'. Choughs became extinct in Kent 200 years ago; and after years of painstaking conservation work, this August the first chough to fledge in the wild took flight once more over that iconic coast.



City of Canterbury coat of arms features three Cornish choughs.

Back to that mural, with vivid depictions of a rare butterfly and moth, local to the area. Might something similar be commissioned in Cornwall? What would it depict? The Silver-studded Blue? Better than mythical blue birds and very much a Cornish speciality. Which is why we chose it for the cover of the book, *Butterflies of Cornwall*: *Atlas for the Twenty-first Century.* Where to commission it? Truro? Or better still, a town near one of the butterfly's hotspots, say, in Perranporth or Hayle. Maybe it's time our Lepidoptera pushed the Chough off his pre-eminent cultural perch!

At the time of writing, these are merely the musings of the author, yet to be discussed by CBC Committee. In the meantime, please let us know what you think. If the project goes ahead, it would rely on funding raised specifically for the mural, from sources of sponsorship quite separate from CBC's normal conservation work. "*By showing the beauty and significance of these creatures,"* artist Mark Anthony hopes to *"inspire interest, curiosity and a desire to protect them and the habitats on which they depend."*

Sounds good to me.



Silver-studded Blue butterfly on Gear Sands, near Perranporth.

Treasurer's Report

1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

At the time of writing (end of July 2025), I have yet to receive final audited accounts for Cornwall branch from Butterfly Conservation (BC) finance department relating to the last financial year. I am therefore reporting here on the accounts as agreed with BC's finance department for the year end.

Our **General Fund** (relating to the day-to-day management of Cornwall branch) started the year at £7380. At the year end, it stands at £4927, having spent £13,147 employing our wonderful Volunteer Co-ordinator, producing the branch newsletters, training volunteers, as well as paying volunteer expenses, running events and buying field equipment. Our income for the year totalled £10,694, received as members subscriptions, donations and sales at various events. We were asked by Cornwall Wildlife Trust to help with butterfly recording at their Breney Common reserve, which was delivered by Georgie Paul. The consultancy income, as well as the expenditure is included within our income and expenditure.

Our **Restricted Fund**, which relates solely to our *Butterflies of Cornwall: Atlas for the Twenty-first Century*, started the year with a balance of £8,841. We continued to sell atlases throughout the year, generating £742. We purchased further copies of the atlas for the branch to sell, which cost us £339 (including postage). Therefore this fund stands at £9,244. The Restricted Fund is used to directly support the branch in its butterfly conservation work.

1 April 2025 to date

Butterfly Conservation has made a number of changes this financial year to how branches manage funds. Now, at the start of every new financial year, we, as a branch, have to work out how much we think our expenditure is likely to be and request this amount from BC i.e. we no longer automatically receive a proportion of the membership fees based on the number of Cornwall branch members. We also have to estimate our income. Our Restricted Fund is still earmarked for spending on conservation work in Cornwall so all the monies raised from selling our atlas will continue to be paid into this fund.

Also, some staff were made redundant, which included our wonderful Georgie Paul and therefore we are no longer covering the cost of a Volunteer Coordinator post.

So far this financial year, we have spent £263 from our General Funds (including website costs and volunteer expenses) and have received £192 (including sales and donations).

Regarding our Restricted Fund, we have already sold a number of *Butterflies of Cornwall*, generating an income of £328. We have been successful in our grant application to Farming in Protected Landscape for our Magnificent Marsh Fritillaries on Bodmin Moor project (see project article for further details) and will be matching this with approximately £7000 from our Restricted Fund.

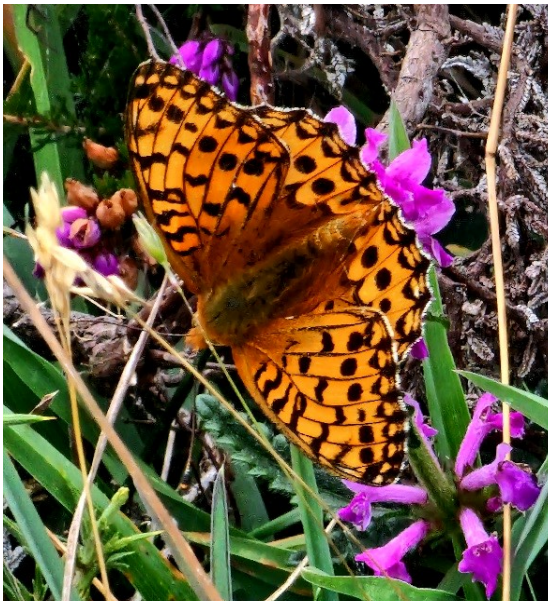
Sarah Board
Branch Treasurer
treasurer@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

Appreciating the Dark Green Fritillary

Jerry Dennis looks into the high-speed world of this beautiful species.

The Dark Green Fritillary is possibly overlooked amongst the six species of fritillary that we enjoy in Cornwall. It is smaller and less elegant in flight than its bigger cousin the Silver-washed Fritillary and it lacks the rarity and sighting value that goes with seeing the endangered Heath, Pearl-bordered and Marsh fritillaries, and this leaves it to compete with the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary for the minor popularity placings. Dark Greens really do not help their cause in this regard because, unlike those species that pose nicely or flutter carefully about, they spend a lot of their time flying purposefully and quickly and do not settle for long to be admired. I can recall many occasions on which I have been edging up to a settled individual that is taking on board nourishment but continuously twitching its wings, to have it unexpectedly fly away just before a great photo can be taken. The photos I include in this article were all taken by me on my phone this summer and so please bear with my efforts.

It is relatively easy to identify the species with it being much bigger and faster-flying than all other fritillaries with the



Dark Green Fritillaries feeding on Betony at Kynance, a bright orange male above and a female below.
Photos: Jerry Dennis



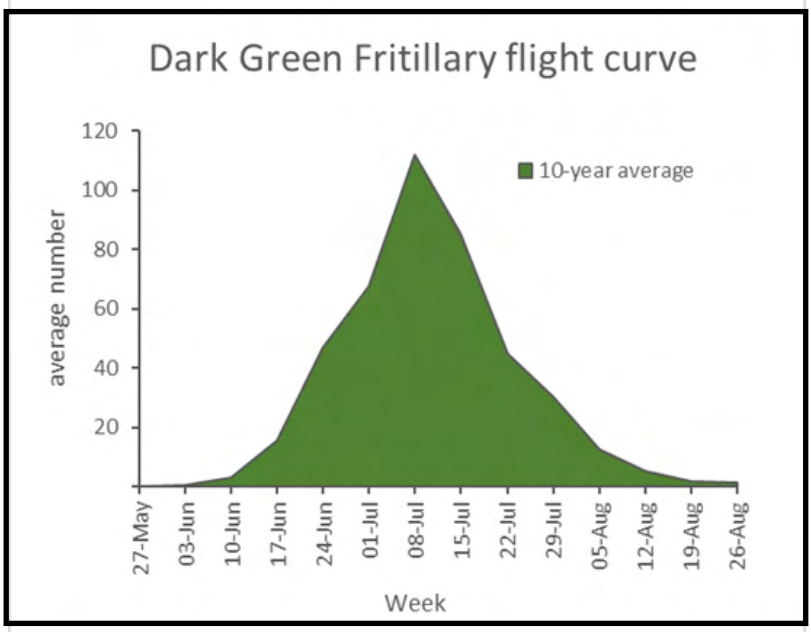


A freshly emerged Dark Green Fritillary at Upton Towans showing its underwing patterns. Photo: Jerry Dennis

exception of the Silver-washed Fritillary that is generally found in woodland.

During the early parts of the flight period in June there are many freshly emerged males and their wings have a very striking and intense orange colour quite unlike any other species. The females are not quite so vivid and may have heavier dark markings on the wings that have a paler orange hue that transitions to light brown/cream at the wing edges. A sight of the underwing of either sex shows the green colouring that gives the butterfly its name overlain by a set of delightful silver spots.

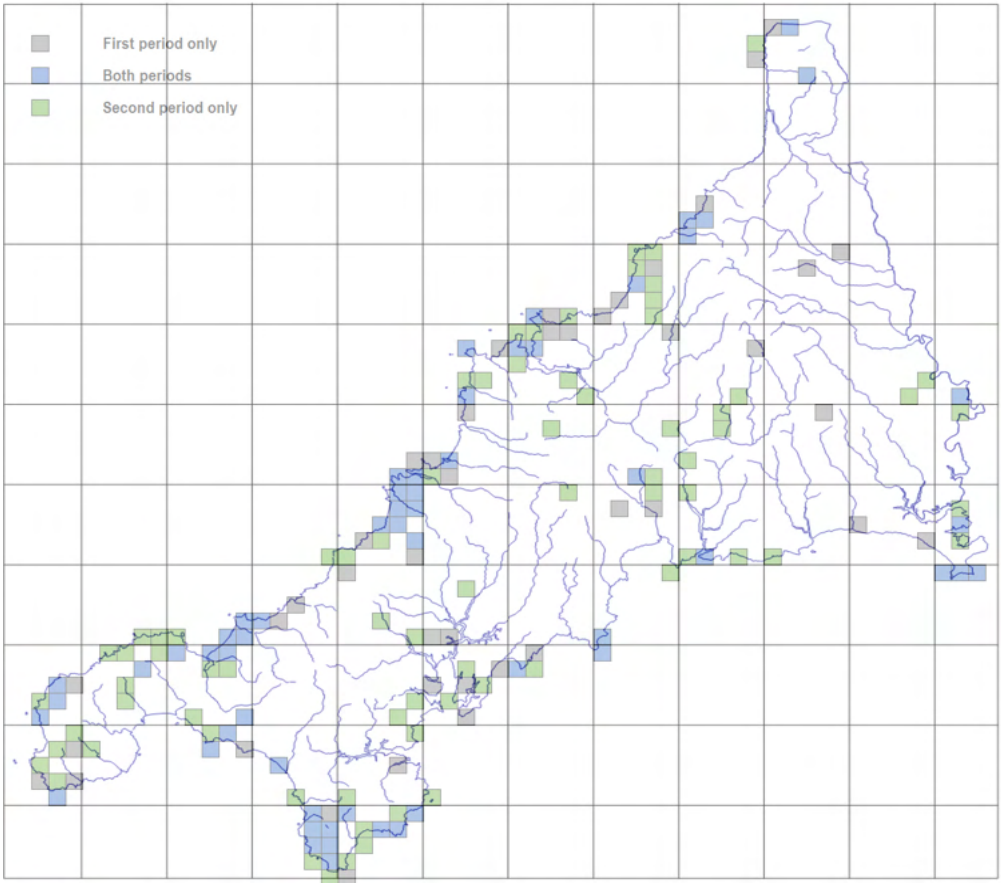
In Cornwall it is typically seen zooming around at various coast sites in dunes and open grassland with short sward such as at Upton and Mexico Towans. The species seems to prefer and to enjoy flying in such open spaces. Its high



energy lifestyle requires many pit stops to refuel and it is often only seen properly when it is nectaring. It has been observed that the butterfly prefers purple flowers such as knapweed, thistles and buddleia for this purpose and I can confirm that the purple-flowered Betony is a great favourite at Kynance.

After mating, the female lays her eggs singly on violets such as Common Dog-violet and Marsh Violet and the larvae hatch and shortly afterwards enter a long winter hibernation in the first instar. The caterpillars awaken in the following March and then progress through five further instars to full maturity. From the fourth instar onwards, the spiny caterpillars have a dark colour with characteristic orange spots on the sides of the segments. After a few weeks in pupation, adults begin to emerge in early June. The population grows steadily to peak in early July and then diminishes through July into August as shown on the average Cornish flight curve.

The map above shows the tetrads where the butterfly has been seen in two periods: 2000 to 2017 and 2018 to 2025. Colours are used to show the tetrads where the butterfly was



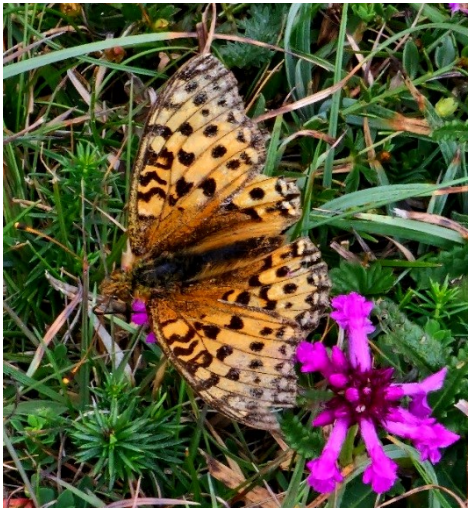
seen only in the first period (grey), in both periods (blue) or only in the second period (green). The map confirms the importance of coastal sites for the species.

I have been very fortunate this year to encounter Dark Green Fritillary colonies at two excellent sites: at Upton Towans where 54 were recorded on the organised field trip on 26th June, and between Kynance Cove and Vellan Head where I have counted 100 on several weekly visits. Other good sites in the county include the coastal stretch between Holywell Bay, Cubert Common and Polly Joke. These key areas are characterised by clusters of blue tetrads on the map, i.e. where the butterfly has been seen over quite a large area in both periods. There are very few inland blue tetrads, but lots of places where the butterfly was seen in one of the two periods. This may indicate that many of these inland Dark Green Fritillaries were wanderers or individuals from ephemeral populations.

Recording abundance of this butterfly is somewhat problematic as the butterfly tends to fly in circuits and may pass an observer more than once. Each pass may be minutes after the previous one so as not to alert the observer to the possibility of repeat sighting. If an observer were to see ten Dark Green Fritillaries on a walk but only three at the same time, how many individuals were on the wing? Well, logically between three and ten, but it is not easy to know the actual number. The recommendation is that recorders should continue to use their skills and judgement to record the numbers seen as best as they can and assumptions as to possible double counting can be applied in any subsequent analysis if this is relevant.

Some good news is that the overall health of Dark Green Fritillary populations in the county appears to be stable. Evidence suggests that its distribution in Cornwall may have increased in the first quarter of this century, although there has been a recent reduction in abundance at good sites such as Nare Head. What the butterfly needs is good amounts of common violets and those open spaces with short grass currently found at many coastal sites.

If you haven't yet managed to see a Dark Green Fritillary, or want to see lots more, there is a wealth of useful information as to where to go and what to look for in the *Butterflies of Cornwall: Atlas for the Twenty-first Century.*



A worn Dark Green Fritillary seen on 23rd July. Photo: Jerry Dennis

TOGETHER IN NATURE

Within Butterfly Conservation's 5-year Strategic Goals are Initiatives aimed to address key areas of concern for nature and guide our work. We can only begin **to recover butterflies and moths** if we **unite for wildlife, connect people to nature, manage land better and tackle threats to species**.

Our conservation programme has been guided by these considerations and we have been working hard to engage with other organisations and groups with similar aims. We do not exist in a vacuum!

We took part in the nature recovery strategy consultation and after 18 months of engagement with communities, farmers, local groups, environmental organisations, businesses and other interested parties the Local Nature Partnership have launched the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Nature Recovery Strategy.

We have been hard at work on landscape scale recovery on Bodmin Moor, working with farmers and landowners to support habitat management for two threatened species the Marsh Fritillary and Pearl-bordered Fritillary. We are in the process of surveying vital Marsh Fritillary sites for larval webs so we have an up-to-date picture of their distribution on the Moor and are gathering information to enable us to advise on habitat management. (More on this in an article by Sarah Board)

Under our Regional Conservation Officer, Jenny Plackett, we have drawn together experts from many organisations who have attended the Cornwall Fritillary Action Group meetings so we can discuss areas of joint concern and interest and work together to make a difference.

For our mining project, Jewels in the Cornish Mining Landscape, we are finalising plans to present to Head Office. We have been working with various interested parties including the Cornish Mining World Heritage Sites, Cormac and the Environment Agency and have built strong links with various community groups in the Camborne/Redruth and Gwennap mining areas. We have been welcomed to meetings of the Mining Villages Regeneration Group and contributed to the Environmental Section of their Focus Report by outlining methods to Increase and Enhance Biodiversity. We are also working to support King Edward Mine's Education Officer with information about butterflies and moths and Dr Marcus Rhodes has given a talk to the Trevithick Society.

Cornwall Wildlife Trust have been working hard on a package of support for local and special interest groups, called Association, with the aim of building an improved network and creating more opportunities to connect, share, and collaborate across groups. They now have an online hub on their website www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/association.



Photo: James Fowler

With help from some of our volunteers we have been conducting searches for Marsh Fritillary for Natural England on The Lizard. One day we flushed a Nightjar and MSc student Amira



Nuseibeh, found a "nest" containing 2 eggs. With permission she was able to return a week later to find they had hatched, and again to ring them (she is licenced). Later she found them again after fledging! As moths constitute a large part of their diet the moth population on The Lizard must be doing well!

Other things we get up to include attending Bioblitzes, searches and surveys, giving talks to community groups, advice on land management, and attending village fetes and fairs!

An area we would really like help



Photos: Amira Nuseibeh

with, is attending freshers fairs and career days at our local universities and colleges.

If anyone would be interested in helping in any way, please contact Sue Allen at events@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk



My First Jersey Tiger by Kathy Wood

The Jersey Tiger Moth is a large and beautiful day-flying and night-flying moth with distinctive black and white forewings, and red, orange or yellow hindwings which warn predators that they are toxic. Therefore they do not need to hide themselves away during the day as most moths do. It was for many years more or less confined to the Channel Islands, apart from rare migrants. I have often seen its image in the Day-Flying Moths identification chart (one of the many produced by the Field Studies Council which we sell in aid of Cornwall Branch funds at events, only £4 each, ideal for beginners including children, contact me if you are interested!) and wished I could see a real one. I use the chart at public events to demonstrate to members of the public that moths are not "brown and boring", as many people had supposed, but infinitely varied and interesting, though I don't pretend to know much about them.

The Atlas of Britain and Ireland's Larger Moths, compiled largely by Butterfly Conservation staff and published by Pisces, shows records up to 2016, of which there were very few in Cornwall, though our County Moth Recorder, Leon Truscott, told me that Cornwall was one of the first counties to be colonised after the original mainland sightings in South Devon. The atlas shows that the species had spread eastwards along the south



Jersey Tiger Photo: Alastair Wood



Hummingbird Hawkmoth Photo: Alastair Wood

coast to the Isle of Wight and, in much smaller numbers, to Somerset, South Wales, the south coast of Kent and the Home Counties.

I was surprised and delighted this summer to receive from different relatives 'upcountry' three photos of Jersey Tigers (though only my 8 year old granddaughter had been able to identify the species, thanks to her memory of having seen an illustration in her I Spy book. We sell those too!) which they had spotted between 31st July and 5th August in, respectively, Middlesex, Hertfordshire and on the Kent coast. I have of course reported them to the appropriate recorders. Twice I heard the unusually high numbers of sightings of the species being mentioned on Radio 4. The recorders told me that there had been a big increase in the distribution of the species in recent years, so the map in the atlas is well out of date. The radio programme mentioned that a number of listeners had contacted them claiming sightings, including one as far north as Nottinghamshire, though the expert said that, in the absence of a photo, he would be inclined to be sceptical of that one and suspect it of being a Garden Tiger in reality.

I was even more surprised and delighted on 20th August, when I visited Trelissick, a National Trust Property between Truro and Falmouth, with the same child and her parents. Before I had even had my membership card scanned, she had stepped out of the ticket office into the garden entrance and found a Jersey Tiger again, this one resting high up on a climbing plant nearby, see photo. At the end of the visit, very close to the same spot, we found four Hummingbird Hawkmoths, though they were spread too far apart on a clump of similar two-foot high herbaceous plants to be able to get them all in one photo; this only shows one of them. What a good day!

With thanks to the Moth Recorders for Cornwall, East Kent, Middlesex and Hertfordshire

Help needed with practical conservation work

We are planning our practical conservation days on Bodmin Moor and in some Gwennap and Camborne/Redruth Mining World Heritage Sites for this autumn and winter and urgently need more volunteers. No previous experience is needed, just reasonable fitness. The days run on weekdays and at weekends, so there are sure to be some you can attend. If you want to help, you will need to register on Assemble, which will enable you to see forthcoming events, register for the ones you would like to attend and to be covered by our insurance. To find out about volunteering opportunities please check Event Invitations on Assemble regularly as you may not get the information in an email. Non-members are also very welcome to volunteer. Gloves and tools are provided and lifts can usually be arranged.

If you have any questions, please contact Sue Allen at events@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

To register on Assemble, please use the link below, and ignore the map of Truro you will see, that is beyond our control and irrelevant. Thank you.

https://volunteer.butterfly-conservation.org/opportunities/77707-practical-conservation-group-volunteer-cornwall-2024-12-07

KEEP THE DATE!

Our annual indoor meeting, which will include a short AGM, will be on **Saturday 14th March 2026** at our usual venue, St Erme community centre, Trispen. More information will follow in our winter email news and on our social media, and in an email which will be sent to members in the new year when the programme is arranged. Anyone interested will be welcome to attend. See you there!

Committee Members and Contacts

Cornwall Branch Committee of Butterfly Conservation

Chair:
Jerry Dennis
chair@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

Secretary:
Vacancy
secretary@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

Treasurer:
Sarah Board
treasurer@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

Membership Secretary:
Kathy Wood
membership@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

County Butterfly Recorder:
Jerry Dennis
records@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey Champion and Joint Transect Coordinator:
Kelly Uren
transect@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

Health and Safety Officer and Social Media:
Beth Giles
handsofficer@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

Lead on Landscapes:
Sue Allen
events@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

Marsh Fritillary Species Champion:
Alan Stapleton
alanstapleton52@gmail.com

Miriam Christine
mim001122@gmail.com

Dr Marcus Rhodes
M.W.Rhodes@exeter.ac.uk

Other key contacts

County Moth Recorder:
Leon Truscott
Leon.truscott47@gmail.com

Volunteer Coordinator:
Vacant

Joint Transect Coordinator:
Jim Barker
jimfrances@talktalk.net

Social Media

Website: http://www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

Like us on Facebook:
ButterflyConservationCornwall/

Follow us on X. @Cornwall_BC



