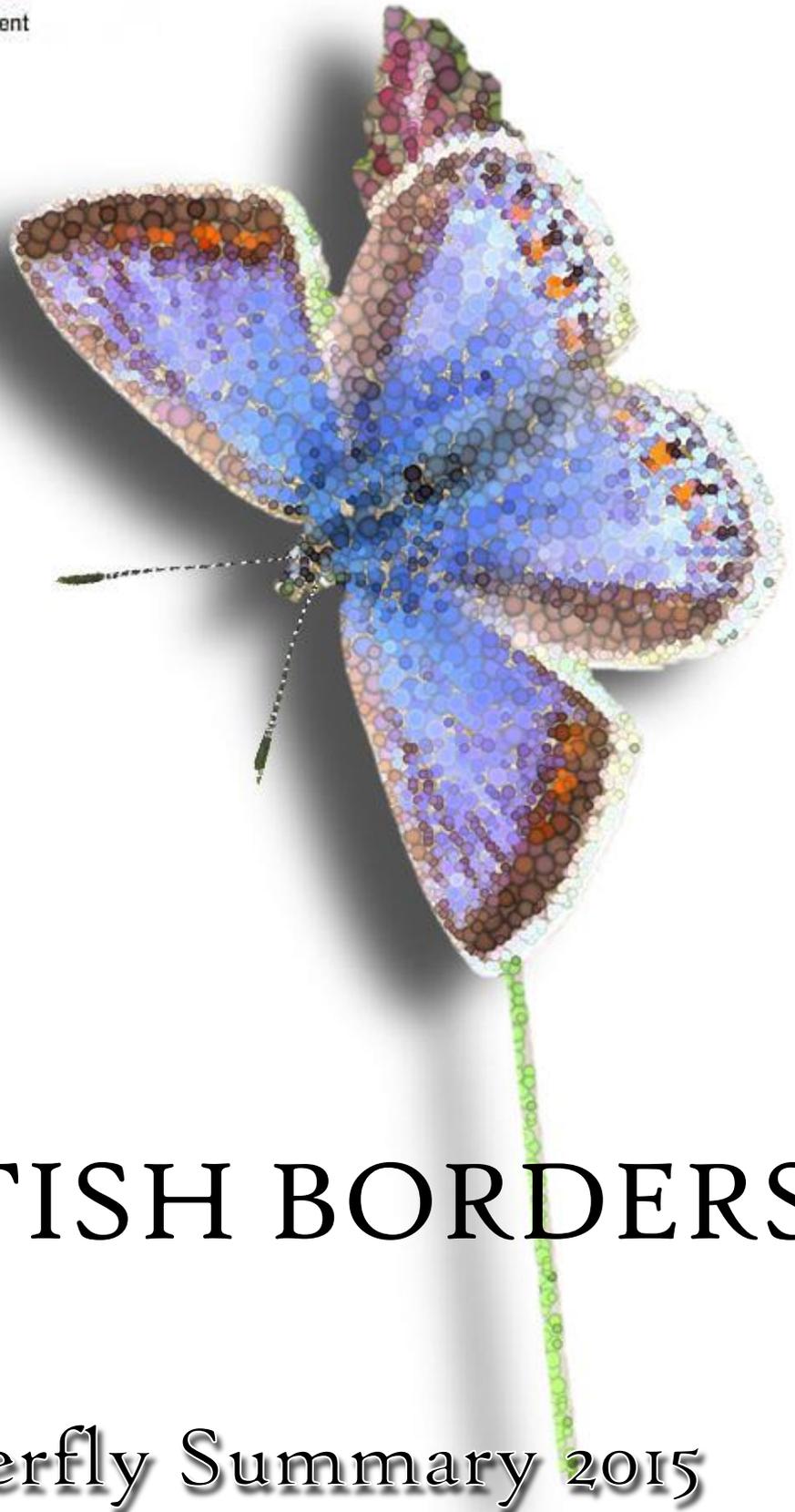


Butterfly  
Conservation  
Scotland

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment



# SCOTTISH BORDERS

Butterfly Summary 2015

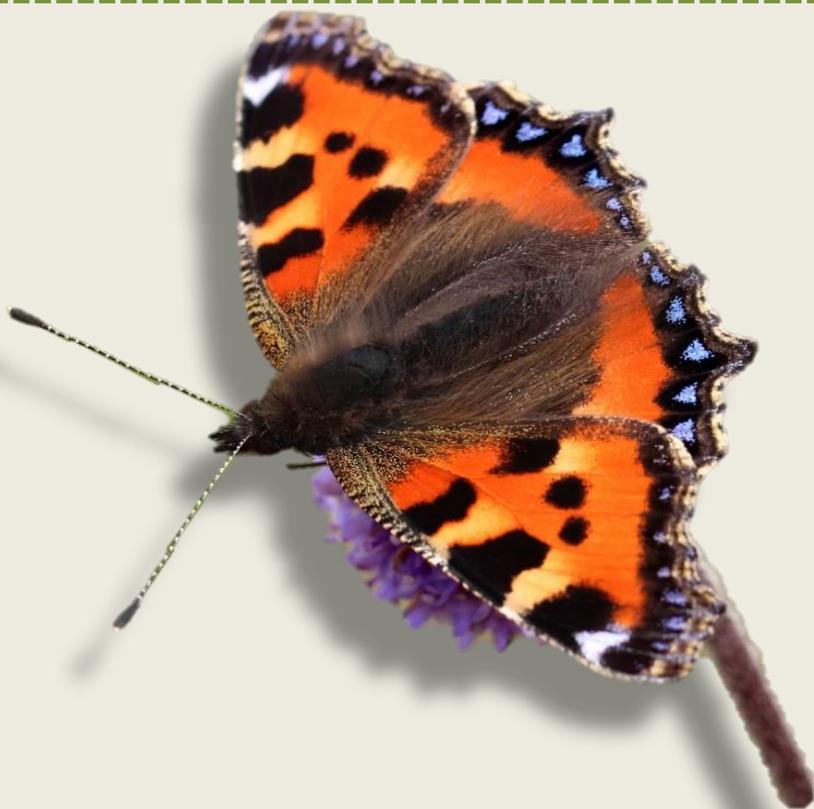
Compiled by Iain Cowe

## Contributors

Abbie Marland, David Austin, Barry Prater, Barbara Prater, Liz Auty, Chris Barlow, Brian Minshull, Laurence Carvalho, Rory Changleng, Charles Clark, Charlotte Cavey-Wilcox, Chris Duncan, Clare Tarnawska, David Long, Susan Davies, Charlotte Dennis, Eddie Paterson, Graham Checkley, Harry McKerchar, Iain Cowe, Ian Aitchison, Ian Campbell, Jeff Waddell, St Abbs Head, Fran Evans, Martin Moncrieff, Tam Stewart, Phil Munro, Duncan Davidson, Natalie Harmsworth, Sarah Eno, Mark Gurney, Colin Campbell, Tommy Pringle, Vicky, Jim Montana, Sarah Joss, K. Brownlie, Paul Kirkland, Lesley Fairweather, Lynn Craig, Nick Cook, Malcolm Lindsay, Arthur Martin, Teyl de Bordes, Sandy Bruce, Pat Bruce, Janet Moxley, Nick A. Littlewood, Nick Morgan, P R Wells, Peter Eeles, George Raitt, Reuben Singleton, John Woolliams, Luke Gaskell, Graham Pyatt, Richard Buckland, Alistair Ringrose, Robbie Hitchcock, Robin Cowe, Ron McBeath, Roger Manning, Andy Swales, Sheila Tyldesley, Sheri Van Decar, Simon Metcalfe, Christopher Sullivan, Susan Kevan, Allan Watt, with apologies for any accidental omissions.

## Contents..

- Introduction
- Species Pages
- 🦋 Hesperiiidae
- 🦋 Pieridae
- 🦋 Nymphalidae
- 🦋 Lycaenidae
- Maps
- 10k highlights
- Neighbouring counties News
- St Abbs Head transect



# INTRODUCTION

The Scottish Borders is just one of the regions that make up the East Scotland Butterfly Conservation Branch. It is a rather large region comprising of four Vice Counties namely, Berwickshire, Roxburghshire, Selkirkshire, and Peebleshire. The Scottish Borders region also includes a few areas out with these Vice Counties into East Lothian and Midlothian VCs.

This summary aims to paint a picture of the recording effort that took place throughout 2015 within the Scottish Borders and also briefly highlight what is going on in neighbouring counties. Neighbouring counties to the south of the Borders region include North and South Northumberland, and Cumberland. To the west we have Dumfries-shire and Lanarkshire. In the north the Midlothian and East Lothian VCs.

Despite the regions large size, it is surprisingly well covered by regular recorders; however it still remains a mighty task to keep on top of everything. Many sites can be unrecorded for several years.





Over the following pages you will see an account of each species recorded in 2015 within the Scottish Borders. The species are partitioned into their respective main family groups, starting with the Hesperiiidae (Skippers) through to the Lycaenidae (Blues, Coppers and Hairstreaks). I have included a short introduction and few highlights on each family group as well as highlighting a few species which may or may not inhabit the Borders for interest.

Each individual species account includes as many highlights from the recording year as I could jam onto one page. There are so many highlights in one year; each time I looked at the records gathered I found more that might well have been included. Alongside the species name you will see a numbered 10k square that depicts the number of 10k squares the species was present in 2015. The tables below the species annual accounts are fairly self-explanatory. I later included the 2015 flight tables and aimed to illustrate peak emergences with some colour coded bars. The species annual counts table compares numbers from previous years back to 2010. These bars are also colour coded with green red and amber. There was no exact science behind these colour codes. I just used a bit of judgement.

After the species accounts I have included a few maps. Included are recording density maps for 2015 and 2010-2015. So much more I could do on maps...but how much work that is to do.

I have also added a 10k highlight square for each VC. This is a short summary from random squares of interest from each Vice county that you will find towards the back of the Summary.

Also at the back of the summary I have attempted to gather some news from neighbouring counties. As a late addition to the records I had a ton of important records from the St Abbs Head transect to input. As a result, I have managed to update some of the information such as the recorded numbers tables and flight periods, however not all. A description of highlights from the reserve during 2015 can be found at the back of the report.

Looking at the records from 2015 it is fairly obvious to me that the Large Heath is a priority Scottish Borders species. No sightings from one season is perhaps not the end of the world, however it does show quite clearly how easily a species can drop of the radar. There are a number of sites really worth visiting to establish a good count for 2016. Those sites are outlined in the Large Heath species page. Some of those sites are recent I know but that is no excuse not to at least register their presence in the coming season once again. I did, as many others, try to get some record for the species last year and found that I was just too early. The seasons were quite out of sync. The weather plays a large part in the successes and failures of the recorders in the field. The Butterflies however seem a bit hardier than us, and only in extremes will they suffer. The Large Heath is very likely the hardiest of our Butterflies.



There is nothing much more I can add other than I hope you enjoy reading through all the great sightings made within the Scottish Borders region throughout 2015. We are pretty lucky to have so many recorders all across the region; however, we will always need more. I have been encouraged by the number of folks who are first time recorders and I have been inspired by their enthusiasm.



- 11,707 Butterflies recorded
- 2,404 records gathered
- 68 recorders
- 25 species recorded
- Largest single one record count: Ringlet-St Abbs Head (UKBMS) ~ 210 on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July.
- Second largest: Scotch Argus- Gameshope Burn-Teyl de Bordes-200 on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August.
- Top 5 species: Ringlet, Meadow Brown, Green-veined White, Small Heath, Wall.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Comma	97	106	55	88	116	90
Common Blue	369	313	189	448	355	368
Dark Green Fritillary	70	100	47	87	40	105
Grayling	117	353	71	330	121	130
Green Hairstreak	45	58	10	24	81	29
Green-veined White	760	769	598	1657	2130	938
Large Heath	7	28	24	59	51	0
Large Skipper	47	93	40	110	113	136
Large White	266	62	45	418	309	36
Meadow Brown	439	513	436	1489	1053	1755
Northern Brown Argus	287	176	179	537	677	358
Orange-tip	254	281	182	188	269	317
Painted Lady	18	16	9	59	28	77
Peacock	477	384	351	441	814	542
Red Admiral	171	497	153	98	607	243
Ringlet	1342	1180	1026	2635	2087	2043
Scotch Argus	510	274	215	261	162	483
Small Blue	76	110	295	177	174	253
Small Copper	169	215	169	319	139	405
Small Heath	1045	444	433	761	673	883
Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	210	242	100	226	190	178
Small Skipper	160	150	32	135	195	571
Small Tortoiseshell	538	478	425	630	1060	652
Small White	503	121	47	770	519	143
Speckled Wood	115	52	93	100	176	109
Wall	171	92	161	398	340	863

# Hesperiidae

- Small Skipper
- Large Skipper
- **Essex Skipper**

It has taken the **Small Skipper** a near decade to establish itself fully into the Scottish Borders landscape. This is not a Butterfly that you find very often in small numbers, and it is usual to find many hundreds swarming through open grassland sites. It is now being seen widely across Berwickshire, Selkirkshire, and Roxburghshire. It has recently found very fine grazing land up on the East Lothian coast as well now a regular into Mid Lothian. I expect it to be found into Peebleshire imminently, there seems no reason why it has not already done so.

The **Large Skipper** has taken a little longer to find its niche in the Scottish Borders. It is found in fewer numbers at suitable sites that are sheltered. It recently made it into East Lothian, but only just. Almost all of the records gathered for this species are from Berwickshire with only a handful hailing from Roxburghshire. I am finding the species at new sites regularly and I do expect them to move a little further west and north soon.

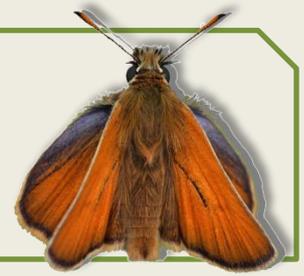
The **Essex Skipper** may seem like an unlikely candidate for range expansion into the Scottish Borders. There have been rumblings that this species has made sudden great gains in the far south of the north east of England quite by surprise, and in larger numbers than were first thought. Very similar in appearance to the Small Skipper and habits, this species may fly under the radar for some time before being picked up. One for the future I think.



10<sub>10k</sub>

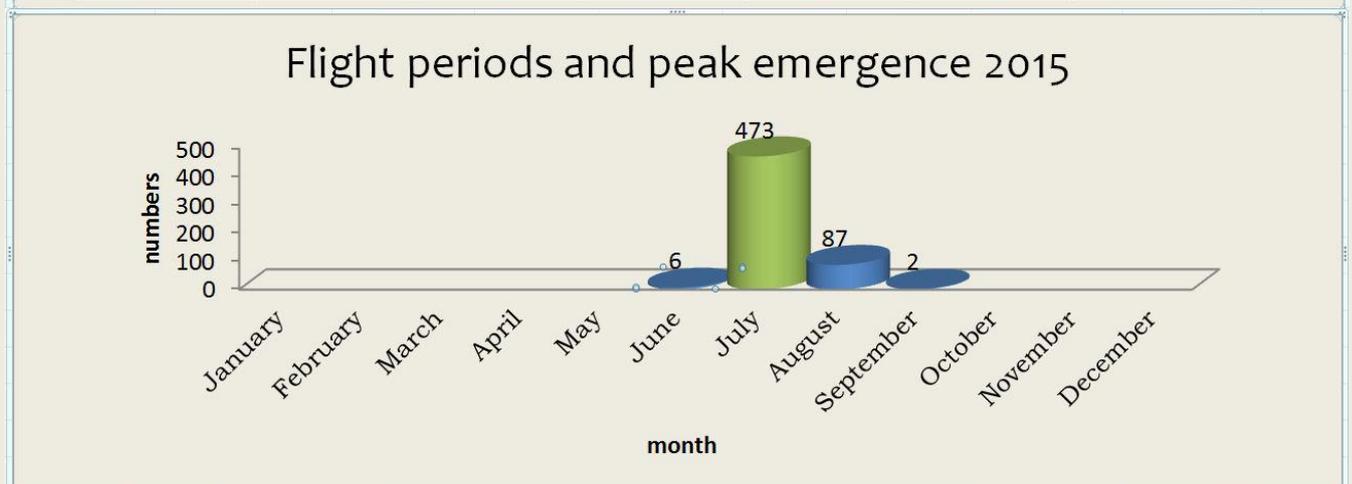
## Small Skipper

*Thymelicus sylvestris*



A remarkable season for this species that has been running amok in the eastern Borders and threatening to do so in the central and western Borders. Peeblesshire though still remains Small Skipper free. I would think they are out there somewhere to be found.

The first of the deluge of Small Skipper were seen on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June with 6 being counted at various locations north and west of Foulton in Berwickshire. They are quick to take advantage of favourable conditions, and just 8 days later 200 were counted on the Whiteadder banks at Edrington and Newton Braes on the Whiteadder banks. A single was observed at Lumsdaine Shore on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July, a first for this site. 2 were reported by Sarah Eno and Andy Swales up at the Hangingshaw Burn on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July. Another 2 were seen at Yellow Craig Head on the Coldingham coast on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July. David Long recorded 115 at Spottiswoode, a record number for his patch on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July. A dozen were flying about Selkirk Hill on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July. Another 40 were seen at a new site near Billiemains on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July. Teyl de Bordes had 30 at Whitmuir on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August. The final record came through from Barry Prater of 2 at Edrington on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September.



6<sub>10k</sub>

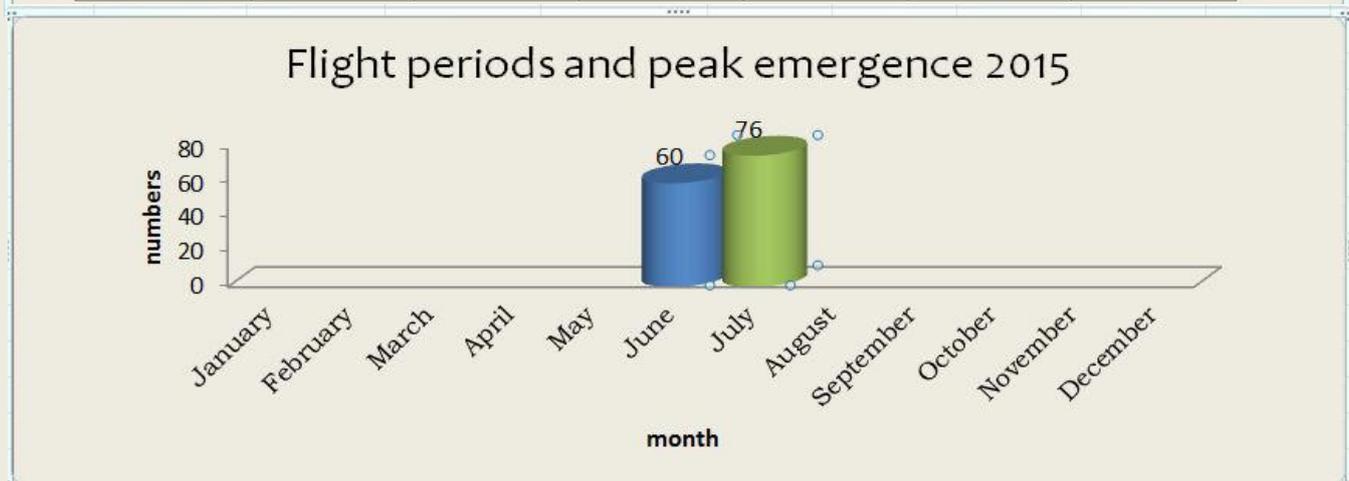
# Large Skipper

*Ochlodes sylvanus*



2015 was the best season for Large Skipper to date. The first one being seen on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June perched in a grassy hollow on the Berwickshire cliffs at Blaikie Heugh. A few days later 1 was seen briefly at Partanhall (Ian Campbell). Most of the following sightings throughout the month of June were made in the coastal 10k squares of Berwickshire. The first real inland sightings were at Upper Blackadder near Halliburton on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June and Macks Mill near Gordon, Berwickshire on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June. 3 were sighted at Dunglass on the East Lothian border by Nick Morgan on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July. Much larger numbers were seen on the Whiteadder banks on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July at Newton Braes and Tibbie Fowlers Glen, traditional hotspots for both Large and Small Skipper where 30 were counted in all. The last Large Skipper records were from West Foulden on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July where 4 were seen.

Very few sightings of Large Skipper have occurred outside the eastern Berwickshire coastal zones. I can say, being very familiar with the species, that they are gaining new ground every season. Perhaps most significant was the move west from the Greenlaw area where they are recent, and now being found 5 miles further west at Gordon.



# Pieridae

- Green-veined White
- Orange-tip
- Large White
- Small White
- Clouded Yellow
- Brimstone

The **Green-veined White** remains the dominant member of the Whites in the Scottish Borders region and will remain so. **Orange-tip** have done well over the past five years throughout the region with minor blips in years 2012 and 13. The **Large White** has suffered very badly since 2010 with a slight recovery in 2013 probably down to migrants from the continent. 2015 saw the lowest numbers recorded in this recent period. **Small White** can depend somewhat on fresh migrants from England or the continent to boost the numbers, a very noticeable migrant year was 2013.

**Clouded Yellows** are more likely to be seen on the east coast in good summers as a migrant. It is still quite scarce and only a few have been observed these past few years.

The **Brimstone** is included on this list simply because it is possible. The Butterfly foodplants the Buckthorn, *Rhamnus cathartica* and the Alder Buckthorn *Frangula alnus* may occur in gardens, garden centres and tree nurseries. Imported hedging may bring this species from time to time in and about our region. It is unlikely to prosper away from larger towns if it ever does gain a foothold.



35<sub>10k</sub>

## Green-veined White

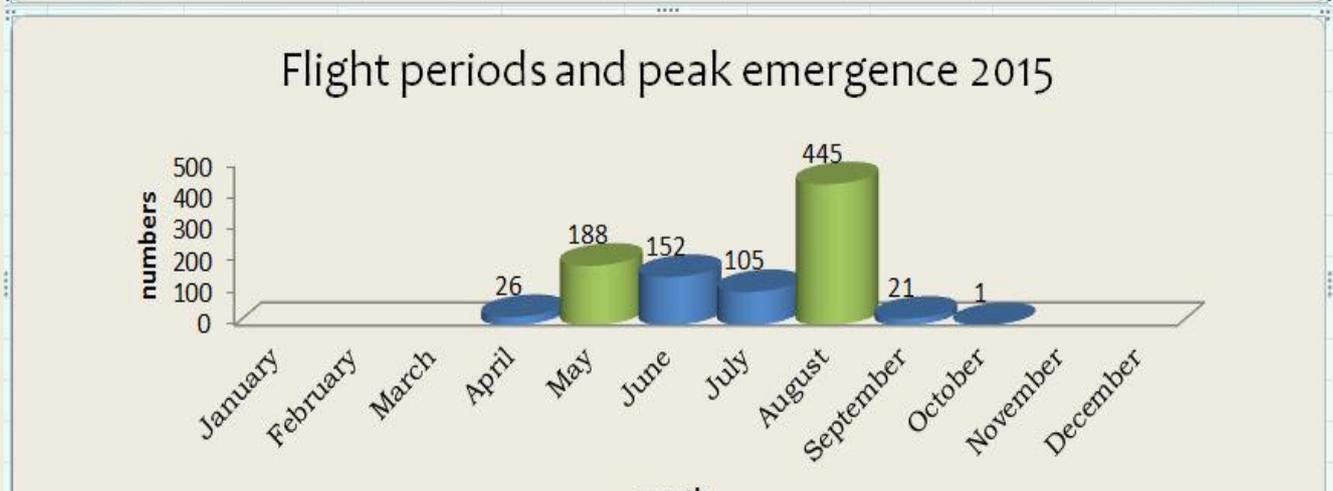
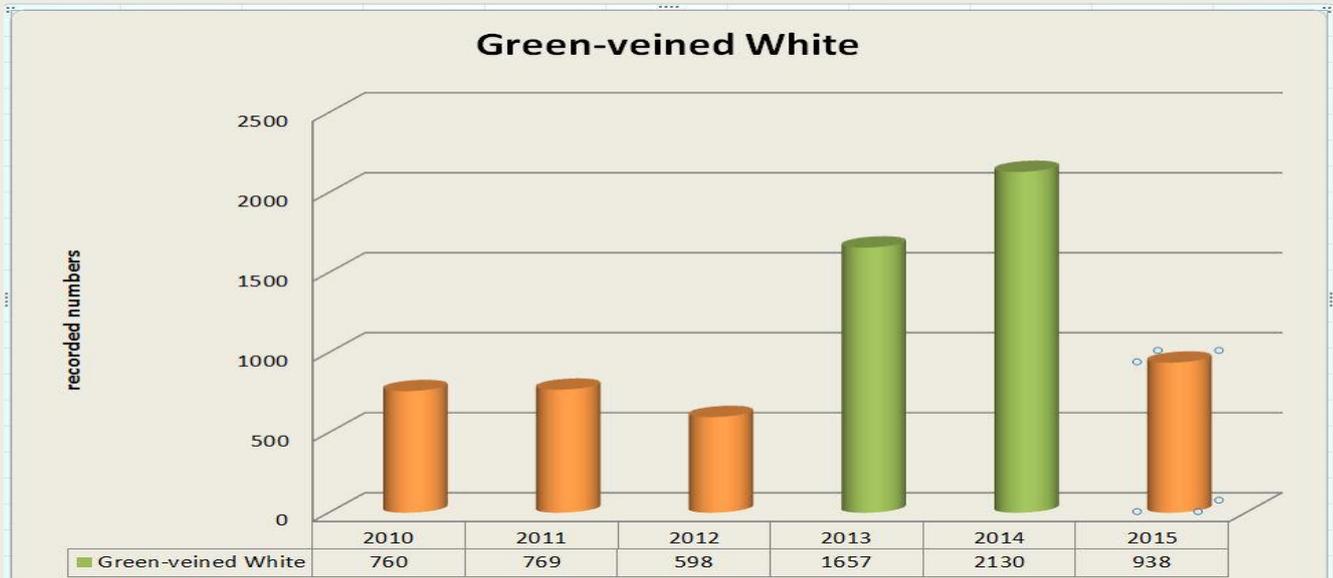
*Pieris napi*



The species first appeared on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April at Edrom in Berwickshire. Very low numbers were observed throughout the spring. 11 were seen on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May at Hyndhaugh Brae on the Whiteadder, 10 at Dearley Burn on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May. The highest count of the early season occurred on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May at Hareford near Gordon in Berwickshire when Barry Prater reported 35 on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May.

The second half of the season was equally disappointing with low numbers continuing. Malcolm Lindsay recorded 30 in the Tweedsmuir Hills on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July, and I recorded 25 at Lamberton Holdings on the Berwickshire coast on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August. A season high count of 60 was made on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August at Ecclaw in Berwickshire. All these totals were pretty poor for a species that can be hundreds strong in good years. 2015 being a very late season for most species saw some late flurries of activity with sightings continuing through September and tailing off into October with the final sighting from Barry Prater on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October at Redheugh.

However poor the 2015 numbers look on paper, the Green-veined White was the most widespread species of 2015 being seen in half of the available 10k squares.



23<sub>10k</sub>

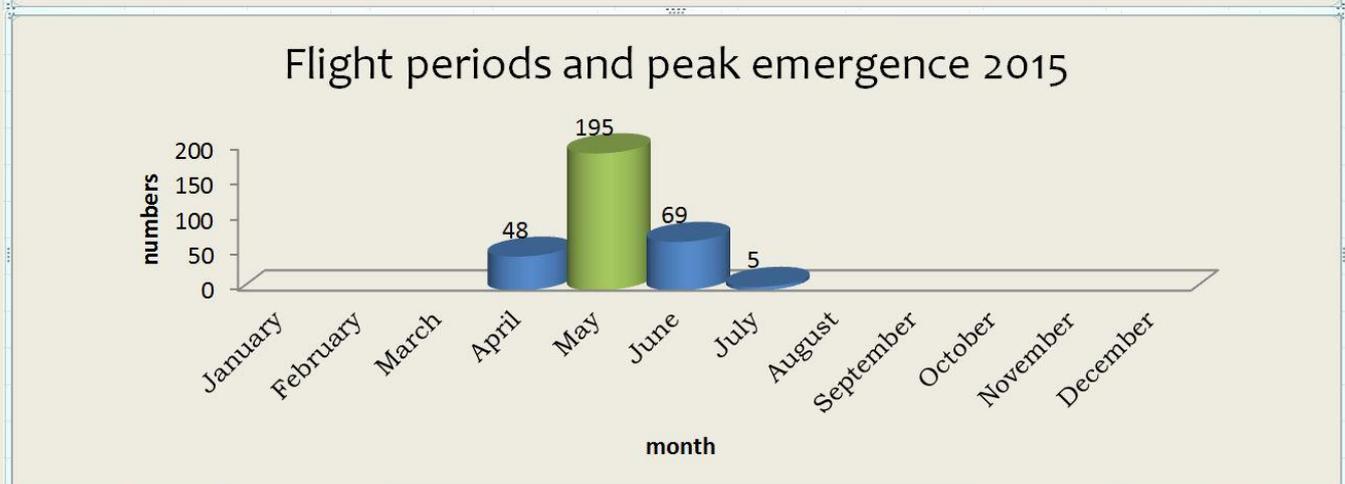
## Orange-tip

*Anthocharis cardamines*



The Orange-tip had its most successful season of the six season period covered within this summary. The spring weather is crucial for this single brooded species; however that is not the only story to tell. The Orange-tip is generally flying later to compensate for poor spring conditions; this though risks the inability of the larvae to feed on the ever ripening pods of Garlic Mustard and Cuckoo flower.

The first of the emerging Orange-tips were observed on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April on the Blue Braes by the Whiteadder banks near Chirnside. 15 were seen on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April at Ninewells, Whiteadder. In the extreme west of the Border region up at Billhope, Lynn Craig had 1 on the 20<sup>th</sup> April. The Orange-tip flew throughout May with 30 counts around Gordon Moss on the 26<sup>th</sup> May. Malcolm Lindsay counted 6 up at Glenkinnon on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June. Sarah Eno and Andy Swales were still recording Orange-tip at Edenhope at Yarrowford on the last day of June with 4 counted. Malcolm Lindsay and Teyl de Bordes counted a single on the Cramalt Burn on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July. And finally I had the last one at Pipers Knowe Quarry, Causewaybank on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July.



10<sub>10k</sub>

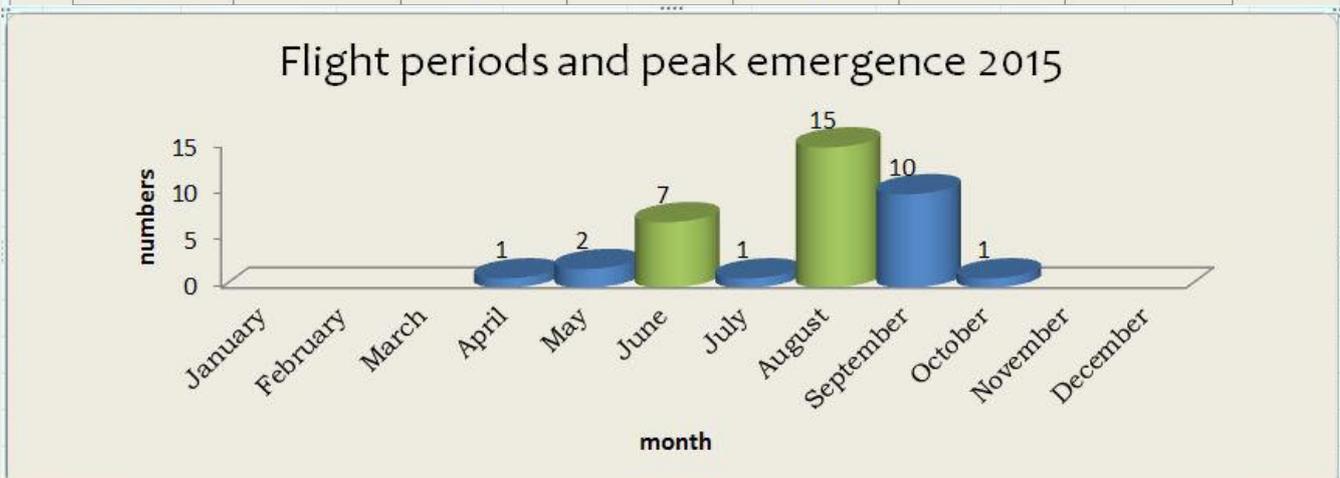
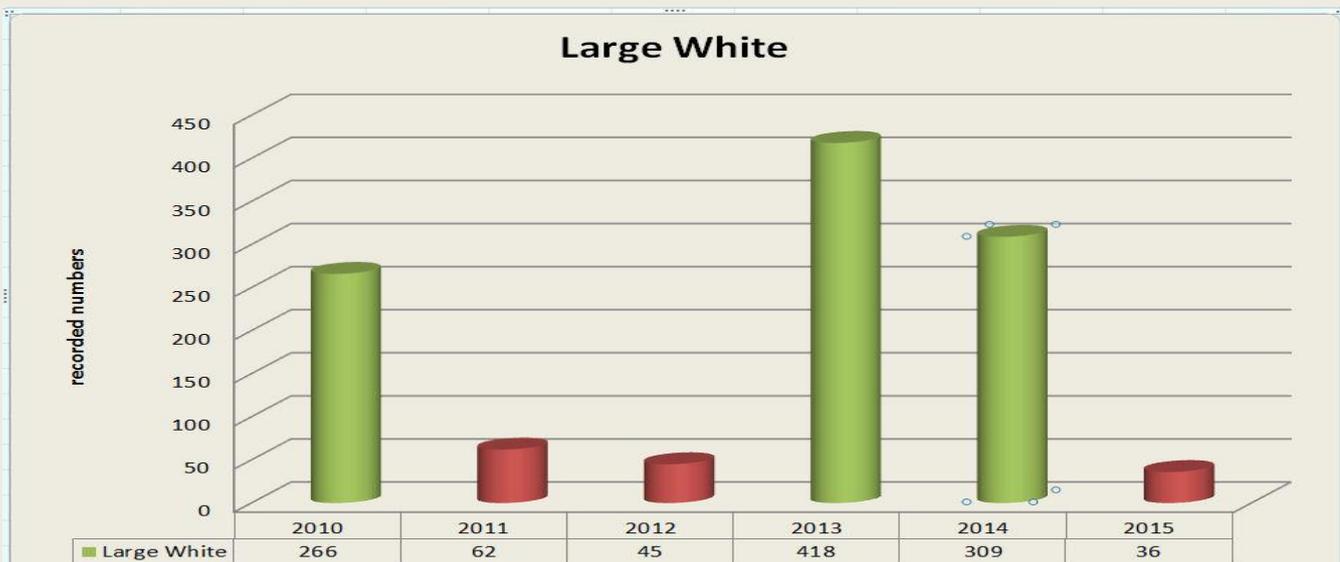
Large White

*Pieris brassicae*



Large White struggled in 2015 with a very low count of adults. A very poor high spring total of just 7, and a second brood, if you can call 15 a second brood, from August. A first Large White was observed at Crow Bank Whiteadder on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April and then followed a long series of singles throughout the season until a few doubles started showing up in mid-August on the Berwickshire coast at Burnmouth and Eyemouth. Susan Kevan reported 1 on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September at St Boswells Community Woodland. Up at Billhope, 2 appeared on consecutive days on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of September.

So a very disappointing display altogether from what used to be a species that struck fear into growers with their ability to strip a cabbage patch down to size within days. Farmers don't grow quite so many large leafed vegetables anymore and those that do regularly spray them. The Large White has come to rely heavily on seasonal reinforcements from overseas, 2013 being a good example when largish numbers were suddenly appearing on the coastal strip. The future of the Large White may depend on the Farmers and landowners continuing to sow game strips on field edges for Pheasants, however, these small slices of opportunity are easy pickings for the many predators of the caterpillars.



12<sub>10k</sub>

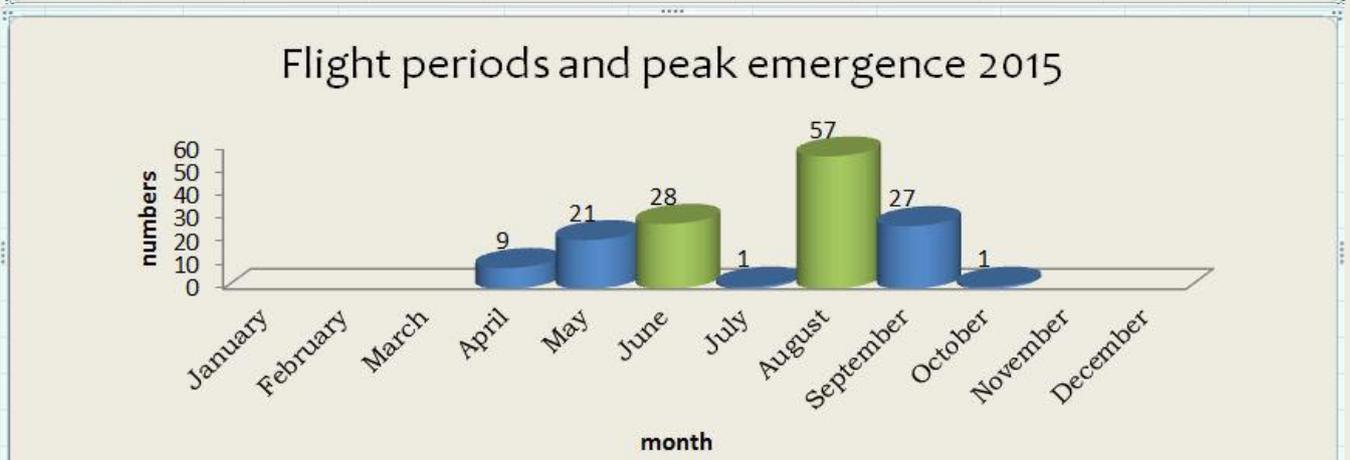
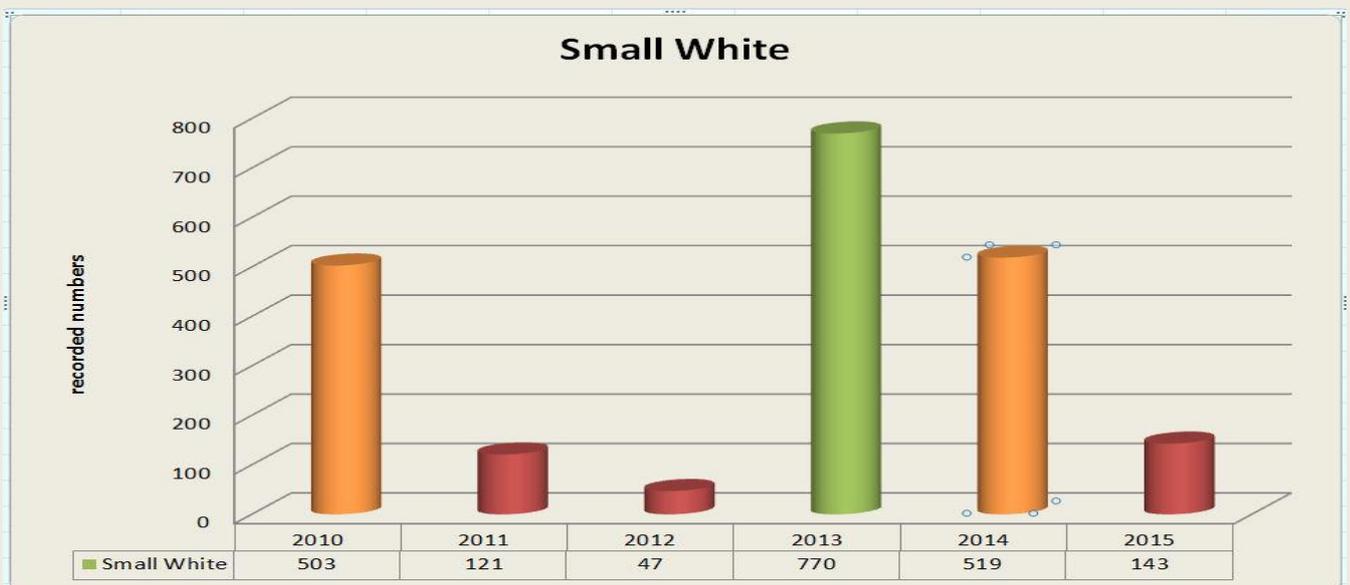
## Small White

*Pieris rapae*



The Small White was first observed on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April at Hutton Bridge in Berwickshire. It was to be 2 weeks before the next sighting of the species occurred on the Burnmill path at Lauder. Numbers remained fairly low throughout the spring with a high 5 count at Newton Braes on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May. PR Wells reported seeing 9 on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June at Longnewton Forest and that total was only just surpassed by a sighting of 10 at Burnmouth Hill on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August. A few of the last Small White adults were recorded at Lintlaw on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September, all females attempting to lay eggs on stunted Oil seed rape plants growing on a field edge. A few caterpillars were recorded into October at Edenhope, Yarrowford.

The Small White, as the Large, does prosper from those migrant reinforcements in late summer, and despite a late migration of Vanessids and Silver Y to the east coast, members of the Pieridae were not among them. The Small White generally seems to have more luck than its large cousin and this could be down to its single egg laying strategy, or its ability to use lesser examples of suitable foodplant.



# Nymphalidae

- Comma
- Dark Green Fritillary
- Grayling
- Large Heath
- Meadow Brown
- Painted Lady
- Peacock
- Red Admiral
- Ringlet
- Scotch Argus
- Small Heath
- Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary
- Small Tortoiseshell
- Speckled Wood
- Wall

The **Comma** has been a steady resident for quite some time now appearing very regularly in early spring at Willow Catkins. It can be quite difficult to find through the summer months and seems to quite often push out a partial second brood with offspring sometimes being seen well into autumn at the last of the Ivy blooms. The **Dark Green Fritillary** continues to inhabit the coastal districts and hillside burns through July in, at times, reasonable numbers.

**Grayling** are now almost certainly confined to the coastal districts where they can become in some years quite numerous. They have had 2 consecutively poor years and are due a good one soon. The **Large Heath** remains much under recorded in the district and records gathered cannot give us a true scale of their population.

2015 saw no records at all of the Butterfly and will probably be a priority species for the Scottish Borders. The **Meadow Brown** does not appear to be struggling on the face of it, but they do appear to be much less widespread than they once were. This is a recent phenomenon and has not been fully understood, as I have not seen any reports voicing concern. Numbers seem to be stable though.



# Nymphalidae

The much publicised **Painted Lady** failed to make an impact on the Scottish Borders although a very late fall from mid-August on the coastal districts and later inland was nice to see. The **Peacock** numbers in spring time were quite high but those numbers were never really reflected in the late summer. **Red Admiral** were plentiful from mid-summer onwards though never breaking any records. Higher numbers were seen on the East Lothian coast at about the same time we had the mini Painted Lady invasion. The **Ringlet** once again became the most commonly seen Butterfly in the Scottish Borders during 2015 despite a fall in numbers from 2014 and 2013. **Scotch Argus** were in fine form at the few sites that they were recorded. The species still seems absent from the east, notably Berwickshire. A search in fine conditions at Hareford, Gordon Moss and Bonaparte's Plantation revealed nothing. New areas will be looked at this August though it does seem unlikely. A much better season for the **Small Heath** and long may that continue to be the case. The Small Heath is not a huge fan of under grazed pasture and many of its haunts are lacking sufficient winter grazing. I am also convinced that the species is single brooded on the coastal strip and double brooded inland. Fresh Butterflies on the coastal strip in the second half of the season are very rare where as I can almost guarantee fresh ones from the Duns Hills westwards into August. The **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** are being found at new sites these past few years, mostly by accident. Could milder winters and lower mortality rates among the larvae be driving this local expansion of territory? Or is it just plain old under recording? There are a growing number of recorders out there in the field from year to year; sooner or later interesting discoveries are made.



# Nymphalidae

The **Small Tortoiseshell** were much reduced in number from 2014. Poor summer weather delayed and slowed down the development of the larvae. The **Speckled Wood** has thrown us a few curve balls throughout 2015 with very low spring and early summer numbers, then suddenly exploding out of the blocks mid-summer, then disappearing and reappearing with irregularity till the last one on the Burnmouth braes into November. There were some unusual sightings of Speckled Wood females on the coastal strip on the cliffs and screes where you would expect to see Grayling and Northern Brown Argus. A rare inland sighting was made of the species at the St Boswells Community Woodland on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September (Susan Kevan). Some hope it will regain lost territory from last season. The **Wall** continues to thrive on the Berwickshire and East Lothian coastal strip with offshoots along the Tweed valley, especially but probably not exclusively the Whiteadder River. There will probably be a good few undiscovered colonies in the Kelso area, an area crying out for some more regular recording. The discovery of a female up at Newstead near Melrose is proof enough that the species has the legs to expand along these river valleys and exploit rough banking's, quarry's, under cut farm tracks and the like. I suppose the question is, can they sustain the rising numbers, and how will they manage to use those large numbers to their advantage when gaining new ground.

## Unlikely Possibilities among the Nymphalids of the Scottish Borders

There have been some legendary near mythical members of this group resident at one time or another, now alas, presumed extinct, throughout the Scottish Borders history of Lepidoptera. **The Marsh Fritillary, Large Tortoiseshell, Silver Washed Fritillary, Pearl Bordered Fritillary.** Lately the advent of the Big Butterfly Count has thrown up the odd **Gatekeeper** among the hopeful sightings that come in. I suppose you never know what might turn up from time to time. **Camberwell Beauty** is the most likely to appear as a migrant in the east. And the **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** is the most likely in the west. Nothing can ever be written off in this day and age where travel and transportation routes have carved high-speed corridors of opportunity across the land, and rapidly changing weather patterns have seen huge shifts of several species national distribution. In the south and east the **Scarce Tortoiseshell** made land fall after an expansion through western and northern Europe. The species has still to prove its worth if it is ever to settle here, but, as time goes by species will evolve and distributions will almost certainly expand and sadly contract. We are in danger of losing a few of this family group, probably not in our lifetime, yet, the **Large Heath** and **Grayling** in particular are leading quite charmed lives for example.

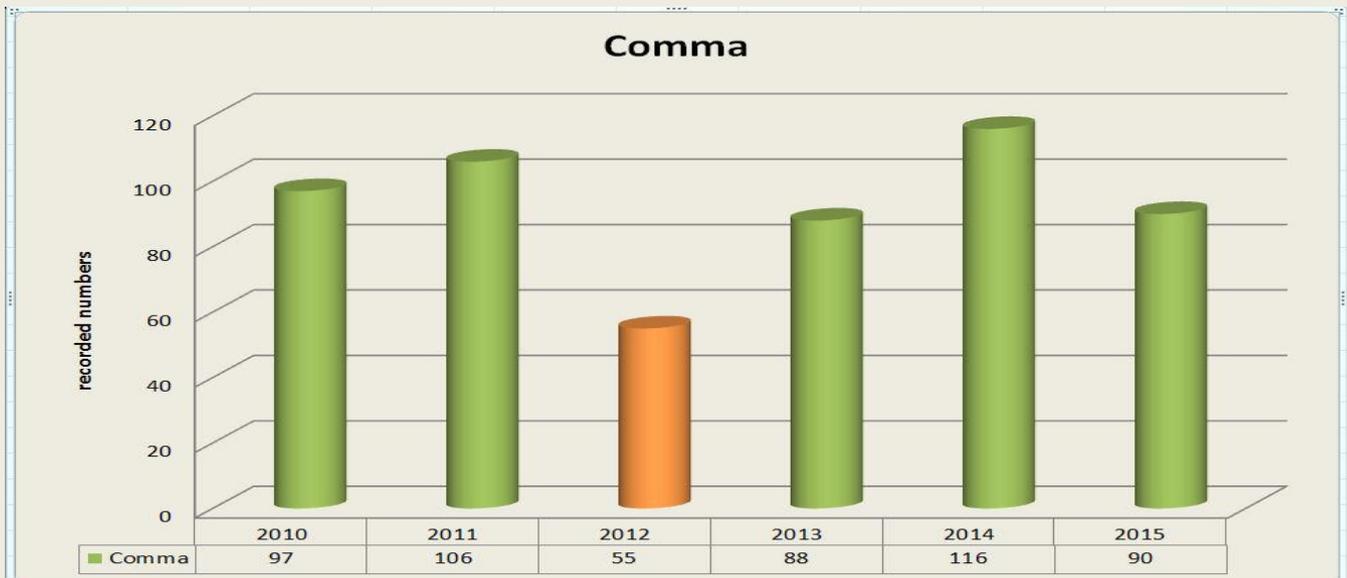
12<sub>10k</sub>

Comma

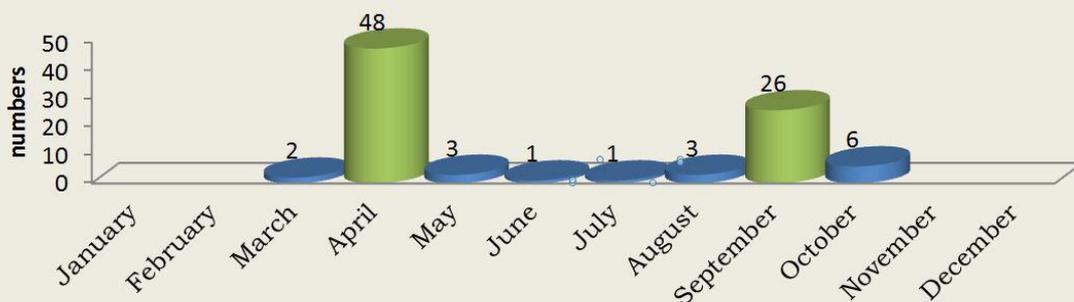
*Polygonia c-album*

The Comma was seen in all of the Scottish Borders vice counties throughout 2015, however, as is usual for this species, it remained elusive and fleeting, never in large numbers like its cousins the Tortoiseshells. The first one was observed at Ninewells House near Chirnside on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March. There were 7 in the vicinity of Hutton Bridge nectaring on Willow catkins on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April. 7 were also observed mud puddling on the tracks around Duns Castle Woods on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April. Jim Montana had 5 at Gala Policies on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of April I witnessed a female deposit 2 eggs on the tips of Elm leaves by the Whiteadder at Ninewells.

The second half of the season began with a sighting at Pipers Knowe Quarry of a fresh male on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July. A female form *Polygonia c-album ssp. c-album f. hutchinsoni* (Robson, 1881) ovipositing on Nettle by the Whiteadder at Blue Stone Ford on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August. A series of singles appeared throughout August and well into September until reports of multiple Commas appearing near Earlston in a garden from the 25<sup>th</sup> of September till the end of the month. A nice discovery by Charlotte Cavey-Wilcox occurred on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September of a Caterpillar on Elm near Kelso. Nick Morgan found the last one on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October up at Yarrowford.



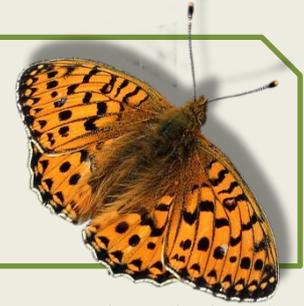
**Flight periods and peak emergence 2015**



16<sub>10k</sub>

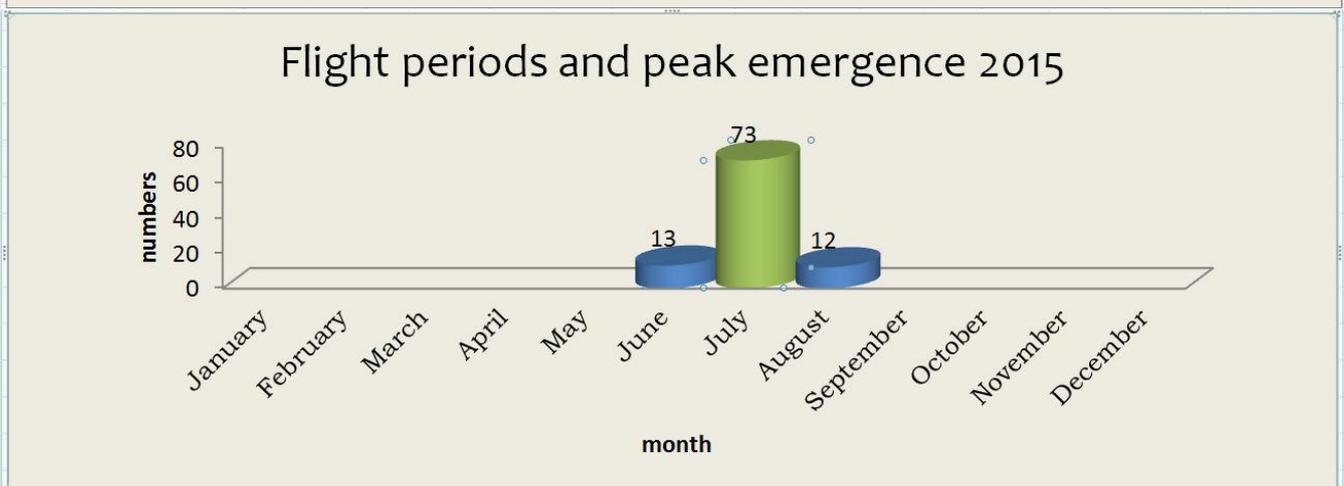
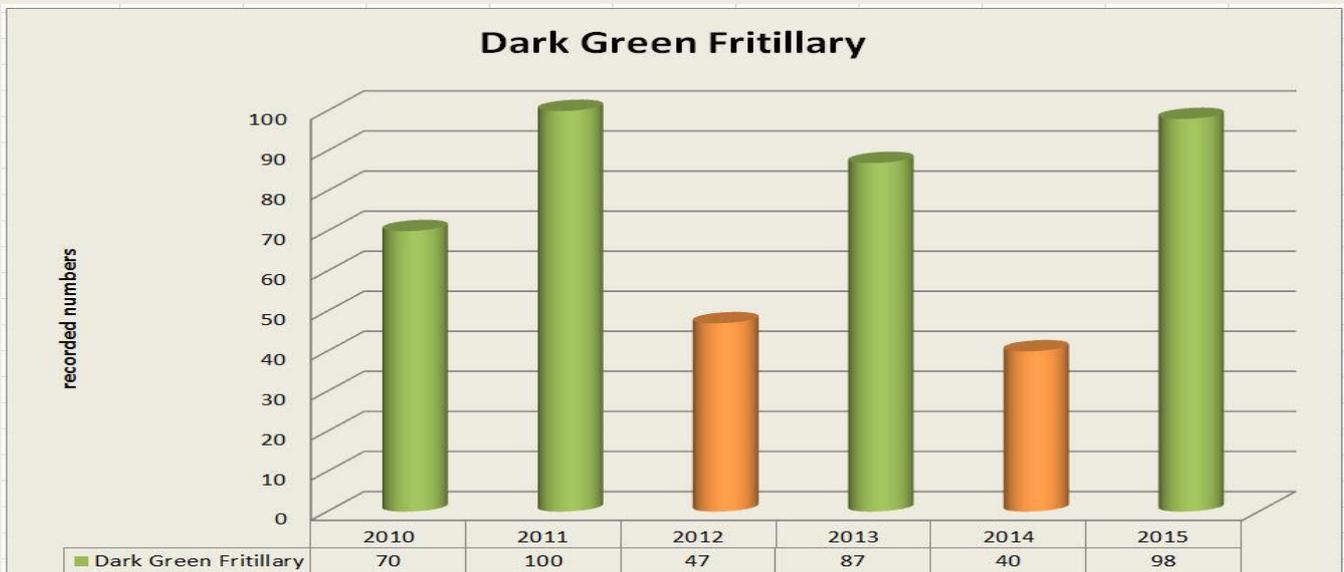
# Dark Green Fritillary

*Argynnis aglaja*



The annual total of 98 for this species looks pretty poor. Comparing it in the table below tells you that 2015 was a pretty good year for the Dark Green. The first of these fast moving and strikingly bright orange Butterflies were seen about Lumsdaine on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June by Robin Cowe. On the same day Malcolm Lindsay had a single up at Thornylee. Sarah Eno reported 7 on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July at Gala Rig. I had a good day about Lumsdaine Moor, Dowlaw and Brander Heugh seeing 21 in total on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July. On a walk from Eyemouth up to Coldingham on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July a total of 25 were seen along the coastal path feeding on Spear Thistles. Up at Billhope Lynn Craig reported a single on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August. On the same day Richard Buckland had 2 on the Raishaw Estate. The final sighting of a single was made up at Dowlaw by Barry Prater on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August.

I am sure, though the numbers do not add up, that this Butterfly has increased its footing on the coastal strip these past few years. When I started out back in 2006/7, I never came across this Butterfly very often. Females are wide ranging insects and can be found pretty much anywhere. Large concentrations in the hills are often missed from year to year. They are under recorded I would suggest.



4<sub>10k</sub>

# Grayling

*Hipparchia semele*

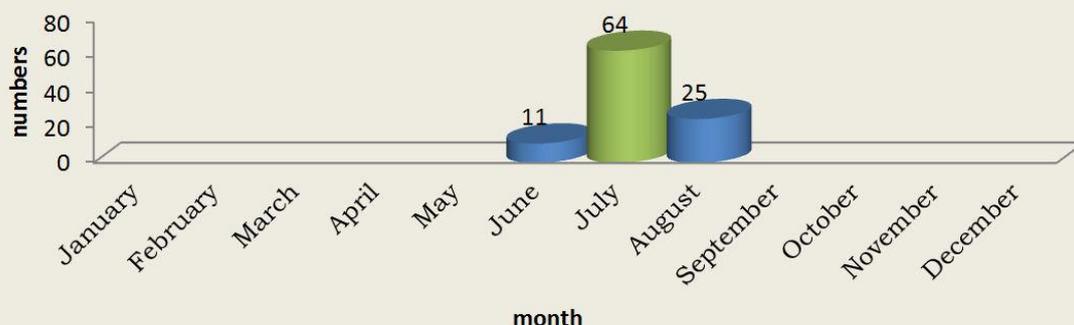


It was yet another disappointing year for the Grayling on the Scottish Borders coast. Numbers were well down on all sites though the species was seen at all of its usual haunts. The first ones to appear were at the well monitored Partanhall on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June observed by Ian Campbell. Robin Cowe had 5 at Blaikie Heugh on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June. A season's high count of 16 was had at Lumsdaine Dean on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July. This coastal Dean is disconnected from the coast by a half mile, so technically they may be the only colony away from the coast in Berwickshire. 14 were reported to be about Partanhall on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July (Jim Montana). There were 9 about Yellow Craig on the Coldingham coast and 6 about Linkim Shore on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July. A single was seen away from the coast up on Lumsdaine Moor on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August (Robin Cowe). Another 5 at Catcairn on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August. The final sighting I made at Blaikie Heugh on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August.

Despite finding some decent looking sites inland where you would think Grayling would prosper, they do still seem to be nailed to that coastline. It is without doubt one of our most threatened species, however, the coastal strip has some very high quality habitat that for now should sustain the populations for some time to come.



## Flight periods and peak emergence 2015



O<sub>10k</sub>

# Large Heath

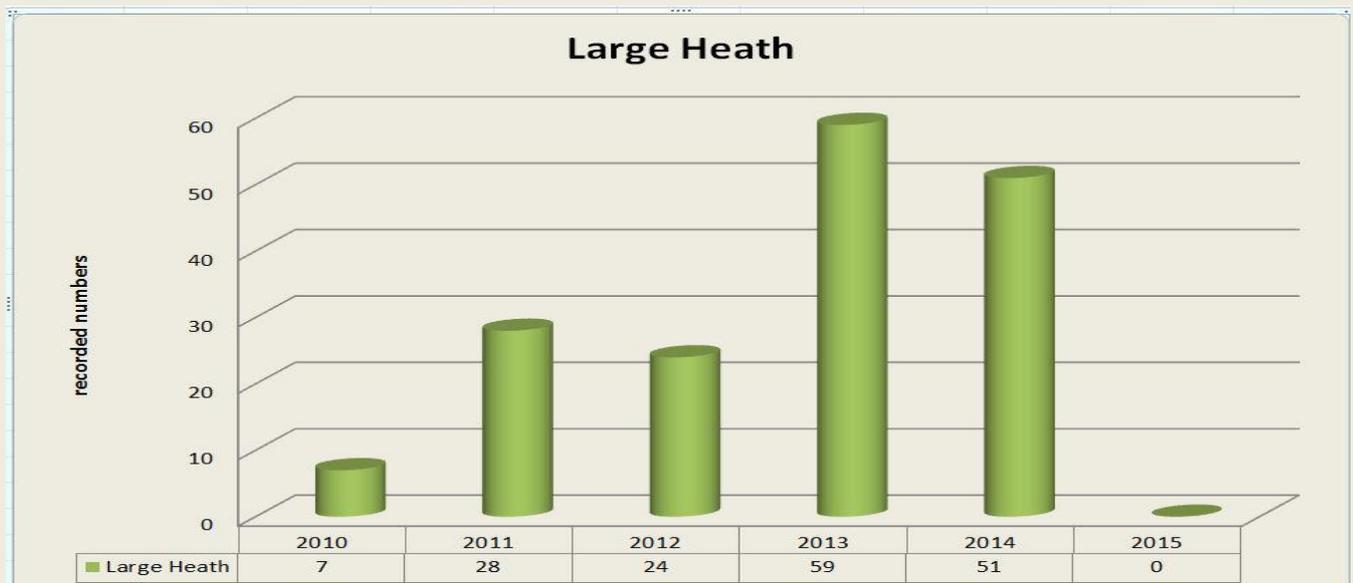
*Coenonympha tullia*



The Large Heath is certainly not the easiest of species to find on a wet expanse of pitch pools and tussock moor on the best of days. Even when they are active they can blend in so well to the subdued hues of the Moss. A slight breeze can render them motionless and invisible among those tussocks and flushing them from there hidden positions can seem like Grouse beating with grossly inferior odds of success. We have established that 2015 bore no fruit for this species by way of sightings. Historically they have been numerous from time to time at various sites across the Scottish Borders. A few favourite haunts have been and still are Dogden Moss (2014), Threepwood Moss (2008), Spurlens Rig (2013), Clearburn Loch (2014), Din Moss (2014), Gilston (2011), White Knowe, Alemoor (2012). The largest counts of Large Heath have come from Fala Moor, 30 in 1997, Threepwood Moss, 30 in 1997, Kiteley Knowe, 30, 2003 and Dogden Moss, 30, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2013.

There are many sites in the Scottish Borders as you can see, and there are likely many more sites undiscovered. There has been a great reduction in there preferred habitat through the last century of that there is no doubt; however, enough habitat remains for this species to survive a good long while yet. The Large Heath is about as priority number one as far as recording goes as it gets and we absolutely need to get an idea of just how the species is fairing with some targeted survey work. All of the above sites and a few more besides need to be looked at ASAP. I will compile a hit list of target sites with an aim get a better picture of the species going forward.

Just a side note: The Large Heath is most likely seen from the last week in June and throughout July.



23<sub>10k</sub>

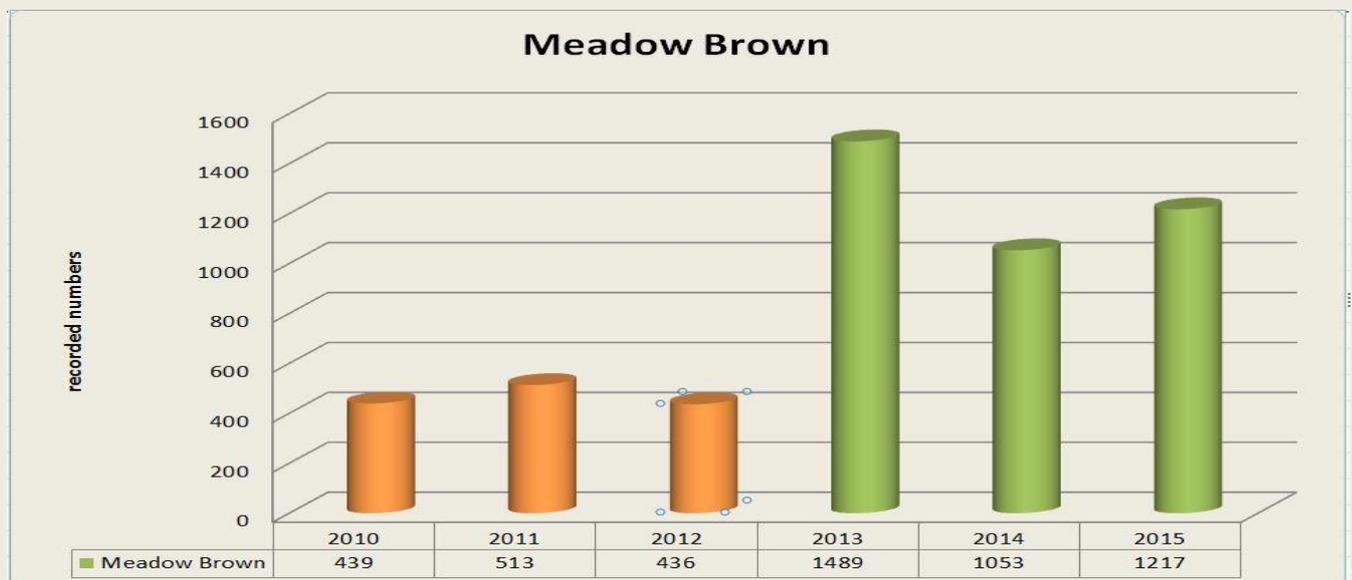
## Meadow Brown

*Maniola jurtina*

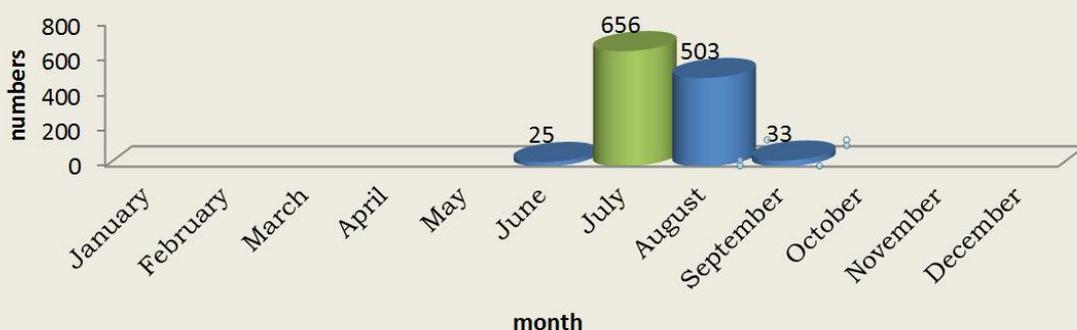


Almost all the species in the Scottish Borders suffered a setback in 2012, the Meadow Brown were no different. 2013 saw a good few species suddenly bounce back, and once again, the Meadow Brown was no different. The one thing that is different is that the Meadow Brown has managed to sustain that bounce back and build on it quite well. Pre 2012 the species was struggling a little anyway and there has been a reduction in wider distribution, but numbers are still very good.

The first Meadow Browns of 2015 were seen at Whitmuir Farm Quarry on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June (Teyl de Bordes). Numbers were pretty low to begin with until a good count between Lamberton and Burnmouth of 55 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July. Another good count of 94 was made between Edrington and Hutton Bridge on the Whiteadder grass banks on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July. About Crosslaw, Lumsdaine and Dowlaw on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 115 were counted. These good counts continued through July and into August with a round 50 counted at Smailholm Tower on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August (Charlotte Dennis). Simon Metcalfe had 39 on the Berwickshire coastal path about Burnmouth on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August. And they continued into September with 27 at Edrington on the 6<sup>th</sup> (Barry Prater) and finally on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September Chris Duncan recorded 2 at Paxton South Mains.



### Flight periods and peak emergence 2015



10<sub>10k</sub>

# Painted Lady

## *Vanessa cardui*

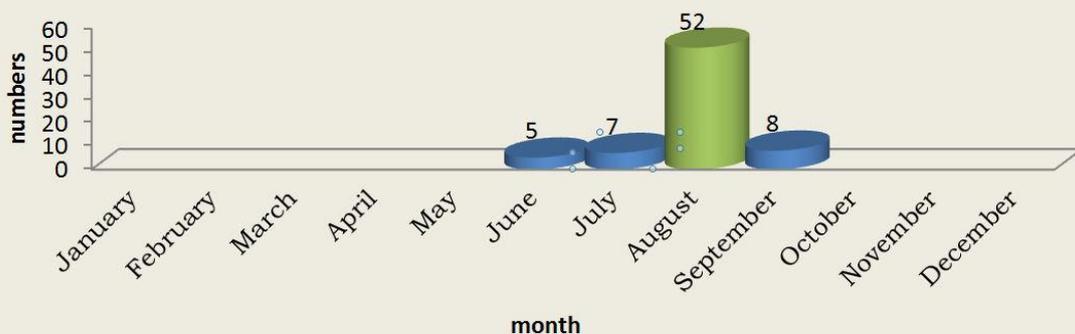


A Painted Lady year it certainly was not, however we were very lucky from mid-August onwards to import a few from the continent. First one was seen quite unexpectedly on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June at Hareheugh Craigs near Hume. After a few more coastal singles one was reported inland at Abbotsford on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July (Phillip Munro). 6 were then seen about Eyemouth at Nestends and Ramfauds on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August. These were all very fresh Butterflies, unscathed. Robin Cowe tallied up 8 on the Duns Hills on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August. A very healthy 24 were recorded between Lamberton and Eyemouth on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August. Charles Clark had 2 up at Kelhope on the same day. There was a single at St Boswells Community Woodland on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September (Susan Kevan). The final ones of the season came from Broadgairhill on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September observed by Sheila Tyldesley.

Noting that 2015 was the highest number of Painted Lady recorded during the time period from 2010. In 2009 there were 429 recorded. 2003 was the most notable Painted Lady year with 487 records. 1996 was probably a better year than the total of 198 suggests, and I could say the same about 2006. Maybe this year will be a Painted Lady year, here's hoping.



Flight periods and peak emergence 2015



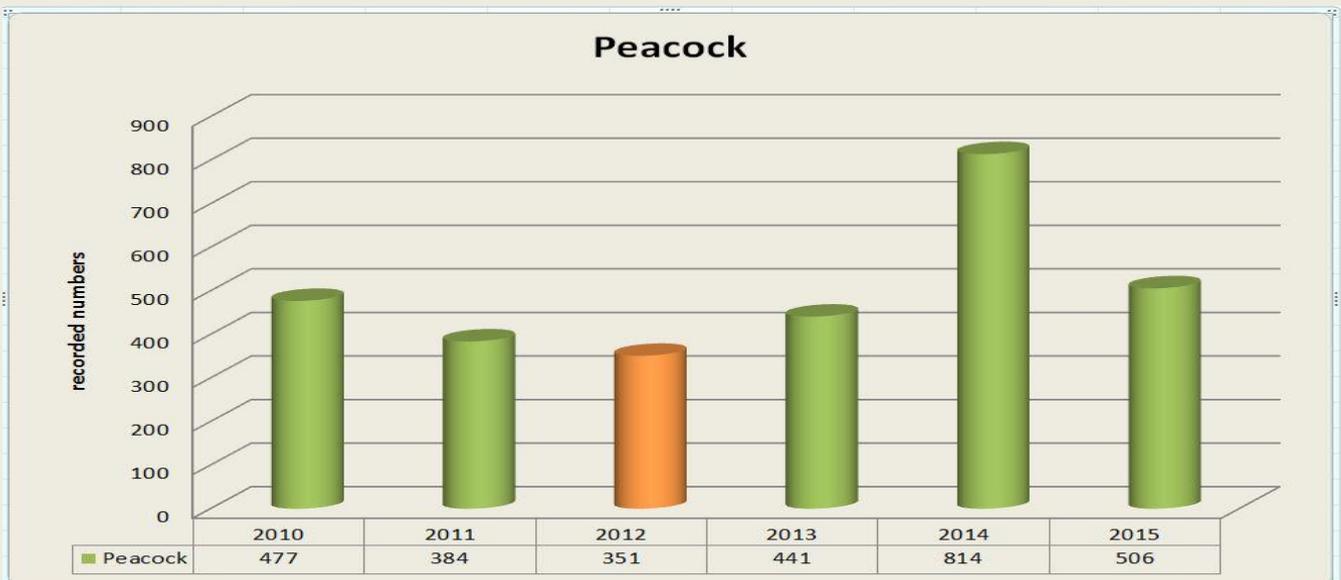
23<sub>10k</sub>

# Peacock

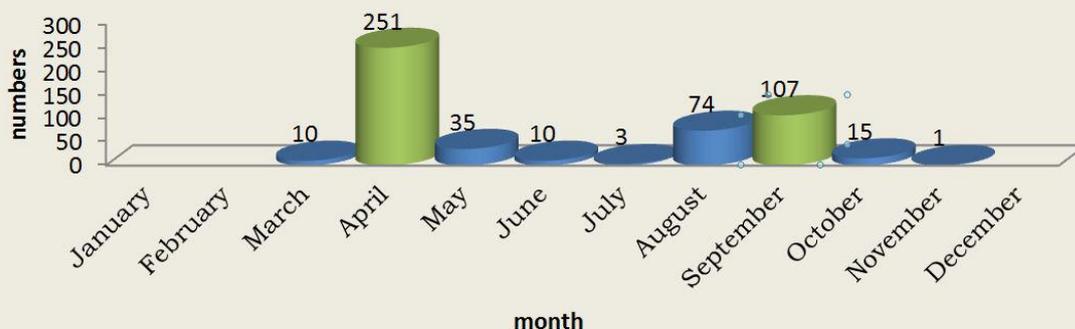
*Aglais io*



The Peacock began to emerge out of hibernation from mid-March 2015 with the first of them being seen on the Whiteadder at Ninewells and Burnmouth Partanhall on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March. Inland the Peacock first appeared at Edenford, Yarrowhope on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April (Sarah Eno, Andy Swales). Reuben Singleton had 1 on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April at Portmore Loch. Over at Billhope on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April Lynn Craig reported 1. On the Whiteadder banks at Ninewells numbers had since soared to 48 on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Throughout the remainder of April numbers remained steady, dropping off into May and June and then July producing only 3 sightings. Into August the summer brood started to emerge with noticeable irregularity. A good long list of singles before a 40 appeared on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August along the Lamberton coastal path towards Burnmouth and Eyemouth. Barry Prater reported 31 on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September at Edrington Flower Meadow. On the same day Sherri Van Decar noted 6 on St Cuthberts Way near Kirk Yethom. It all fell a bit flat for the species after that throughout September and into October. Teyl de Bordes had 3 up at Whitmuir on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October. Lynn Craig had a rash of singles into early October up at Billhope. Barry Prater had 1 at Eyemouth on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Finally Teyl de Bordes recorded the last of the Peacocks at Newtown St Boswells on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November.



## Flight periods and peak emergence 2015



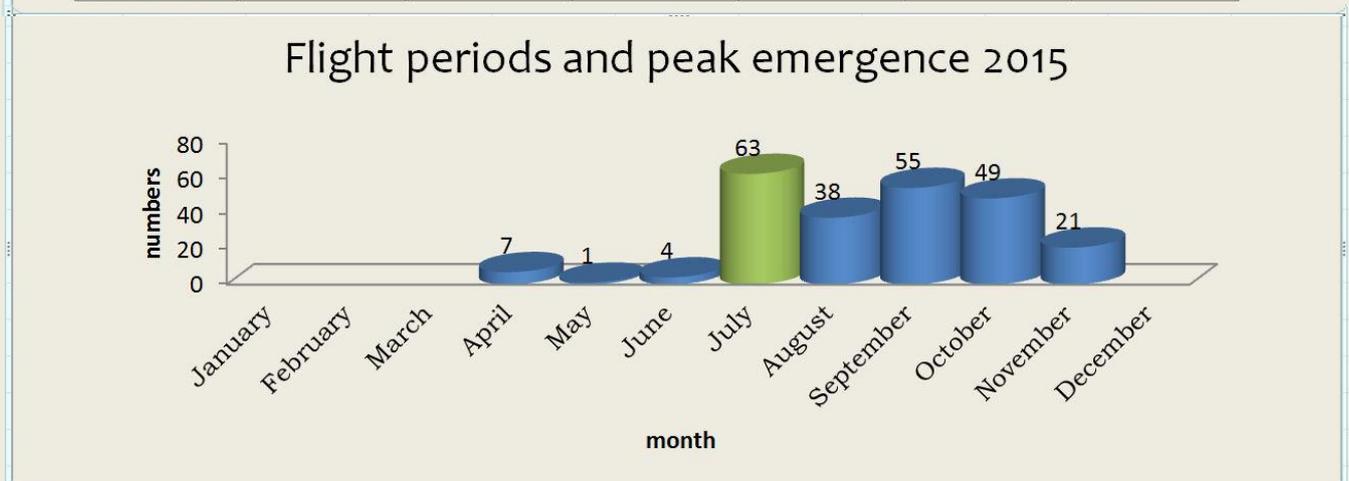
21<sub>10k</sub>

# Red Admiral

*Vanessa atalanta*



The Red Admiral showed up very early at Edenhope, Yarrowford on the 5<sup>th</sup> Of March when 5 were seen flying about the garden by Sarah Eno and Andy Swales, perhaps overwintered nearby. Only a few singles were seen elsewhere throughout March. Only a single Butterfly appeared in May up at Dowlaw on the 8<sup>th</sup> (Barry Prater). In June, again, very few were seen with 2 at Lumsdaine Farm on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June (Robin Cowe). July was a much better month with a wide range of singles across the entire region with an exception of 12 seen at Whitmuir by Teyl de Bordes on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July. Numbers stayed quite steady into August with, again, a wide range of sightings. 21 were seen on the Lamberton coast on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August that could have been part of a migration that included Painted Lady and a larger number of Silver Y. And so the Butterfly continued into September with perhaps a few of the home grown broods mixing up with those new arrivals. Barry Prater had 5 at Eyemouth on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September. Sarah Eno and Andy Swales were seeing multiple Red Admirals at Edenhope, Yarrowford on *Erysimum linifolium* on a number of days around the 28<sup>th</sup> of September. The species flew through October being seen in reasonable numbers throughout and finally into November when Barry Prater recorded a single on the 13<sup>th</sup> of the month.



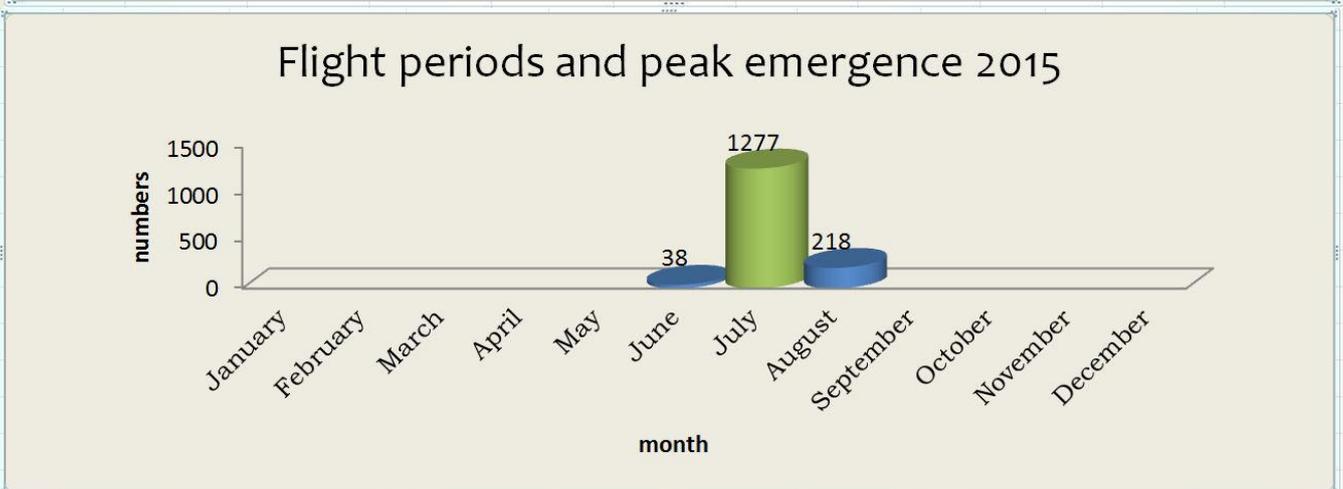
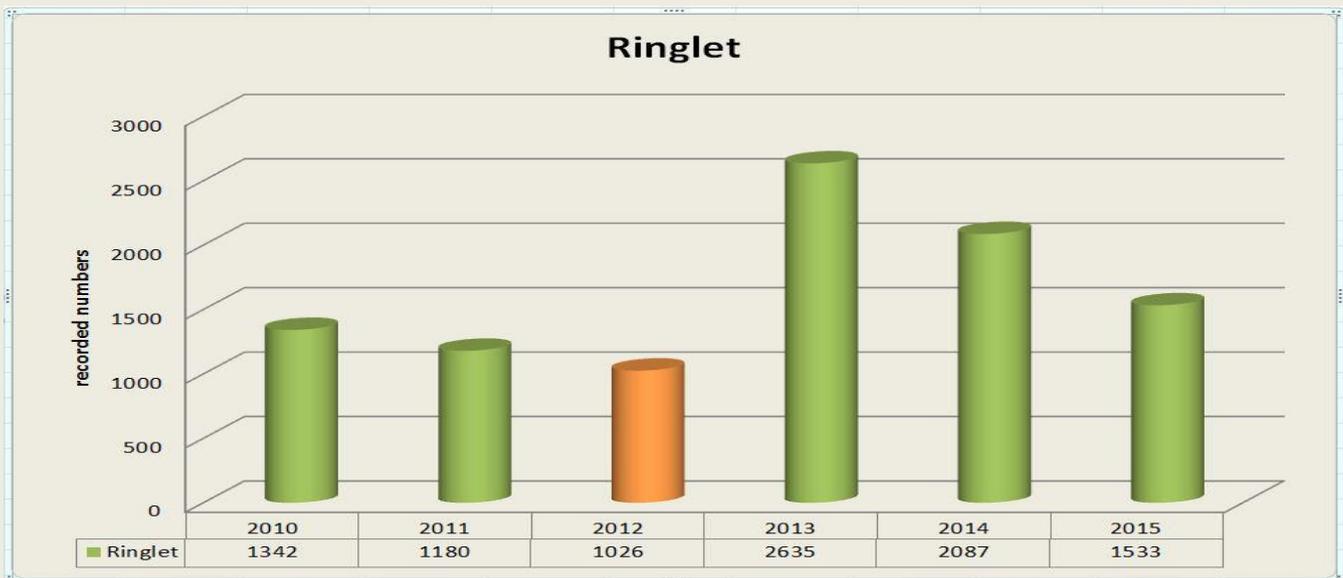
31<sub>10k</sub>

# Ringlet

*Aphantopus hyperantus*



Ringlet began appearing around the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June when Malcolm Lindsay reported the first 2 at Thornylee. There were 11 in the vicinity of Gordon on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June and then 16, again in the vicinity of Gordon on the 30<sup>th</sup>. 41 were counted on the coastal path about Lamberton and Burnmouth on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July. Clare Tarnawska reported 40 at Highlaws Farm near Eyemouth on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. A day later 54 were counted around Harelaw and Causewaybank. 61 were reported at Paxton South Mains by Chris Duncan on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July. I counted 148 on the grass banks of the Whiteadder about Edrington and Hutton Bridge on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July. Another good count of 127 was made up on Lumsdaine Moor and Dowlaw on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July. Malcolm Lindsay had consecutive centuries at the Eildon rifle range on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. P R Wells observed 52 at Longnewton Forest on the 19<sup>th</sup>. There were 65 between Eyemouth and Coldingham on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Numbers then began to drop into August with 14 at Whitmuir on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August (Teyl de Bordes). Reuben Singleton had 23 at various locations on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August, 10 of that number at Harrowhope. Reuben also had 22 at Kingledores on the 13<sup>th</sup>. The very last of the reported Ringlets came from Burnmouth Hill on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August with 2 being observed.



9<sub>10k</sub>

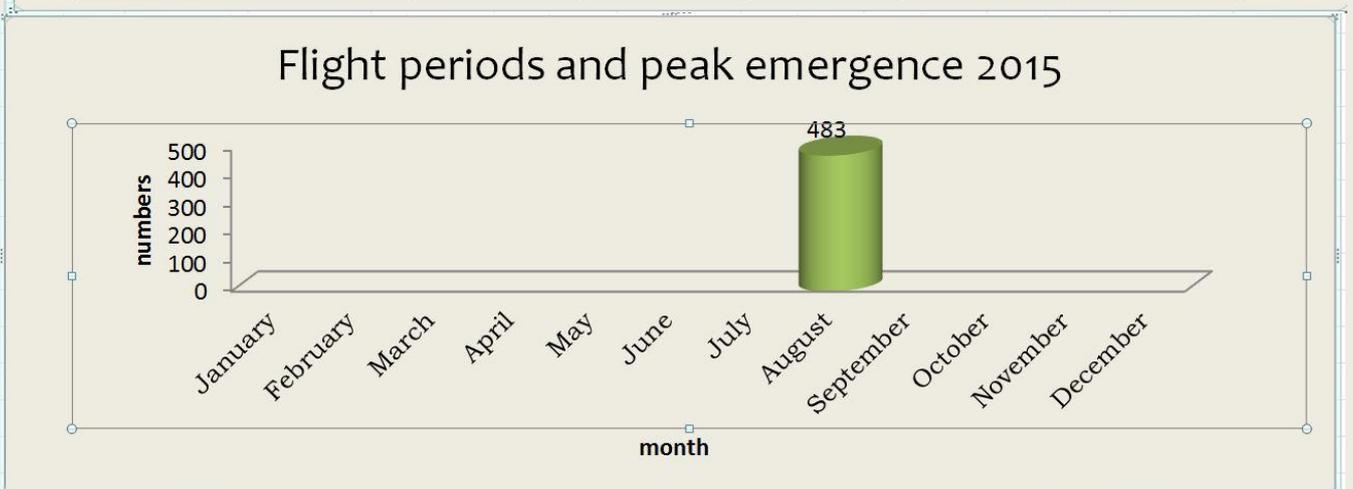
## Scotch Argus

*Erebia aethiop*



The Scotch Argus, like some other Butterflies can be difficult to judge when it comes to how well it has done in a season due to its relatively short lived flight season which can be pretty much a four week period from August. There are records of the Butterfly flying in early and mid-July, but that seems to be quite a rare event, and there are very few records of the Butterfly into September.

The first of 2015 came from Dingleton Common when 5 were eventually found on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August. A few days later on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Teyl de Bordes had 40 at Whitmuir. Sarah Eno and Andy Swales reported 138 at Tima Water on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August. Teyl de Bordes had a very decent day up at Games Hope Burn with 200 on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August. Malcolm Lindsay on a second visit to the Eildon Hills rifle range had 40 on the 24<sup>th</sup> after a 30 count on the 20<sup>th</sup>. David Long observed 24 in number over various locations on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August at Phawhope, Near Ettrick Head and Entertrona Burn. The final single again reported by David Long was seen at Garelet Hill on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August.



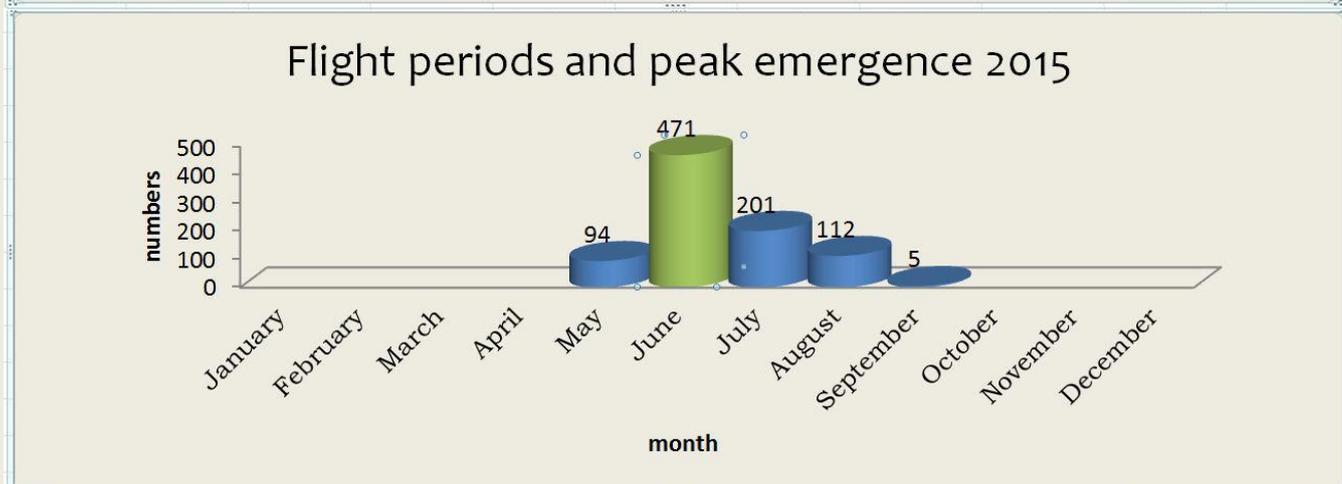
33<sub>10k</sub>

## Small Heath

*Coenonympha pamphilus*



The Small Heath had their best year since 2010 and they got off the blocks sharply on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May on the coast Lamberton, Hilton Bay with 2 reported by Robin Cowe. 10 were seen on the Burnmouth coast on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May. The first report from VC79 came from Reuben Singleton with 4 at Crosslee Rig on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May. Robin Cowe had 17 on the Coldingham coast on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June. A very good 60 were counted on the screes at Catcairn on the Burnmouth coast by Nick Morgan on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June. Lynn Craig had the first VC80 record at Billhope on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June. Reuben Singleton and Rory Changleng discovered the first VC 78 records also on the 10<sup>th</sup> from various sites Corsincon Wood, being one of those. June continued to produce good numbers at all locations and into July coastal numbers began to drop. Inland however Teyl de Bordes and Malcolm Lindsay had 40 on the Cramalt Burn on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July. Richard Buckland had 10 on the Raishaw Estate in VC83 on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August. On that same day Sherri Van Decar spotted 18 on the Southern Upland Way near Lauder. They just kept going in the western hills well into September with the final one being reported all the way over at Billhope on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September. (Lynn Craig).



4<sub>10k</sub>

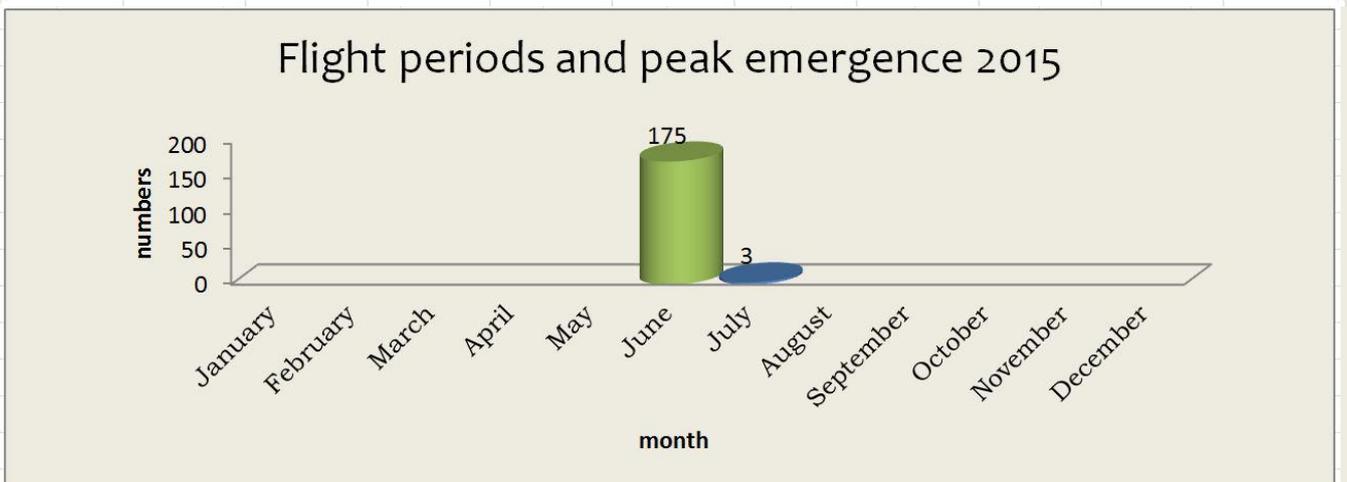
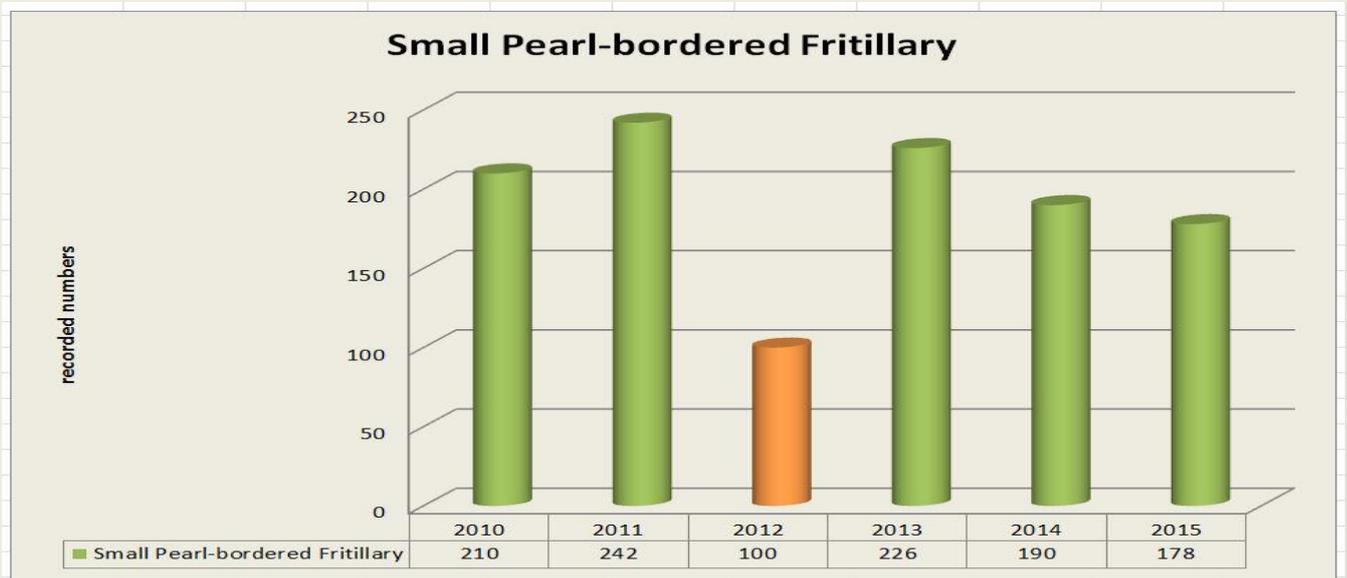
# Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary

*Boloria selene*



The Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary has suddenly become quite a bit more widespread in recent years, whether that is down to an increase in recording in suitable areas or the Butterfly expanding its range is still hard to say.

The first Small Pearls were found at Hareford with 83 counted most freshly emerged males on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June. A single Butterfly was found at the Gordon Community Woodland on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June only briefly and much to my surprise as this well monitored site had not shown this species up before. David Long confirmed this sighting with a visit on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June with a 4 count. David Long also discovered a new site at Fingland Burn a day later. I returned to the Gordon Community Woodland on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June and found 14 Small Pearls and a healthy little community that had somehow evaded us for quite some time. Better news was still to come of a new 10k record from Craik, on the Borthwick Water Old drove road when Malcolm Lindsay reported 2 on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July. And yet another 10k breakthrough was had at Beanrig Moss on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July of a single Butterfly, (Jeff Waddell, Mark Gurney & Colin Campbell). The previous record for this 10k was in 1903, Malcolm Moss. (W.Renton).



30<sub>10k</sub>

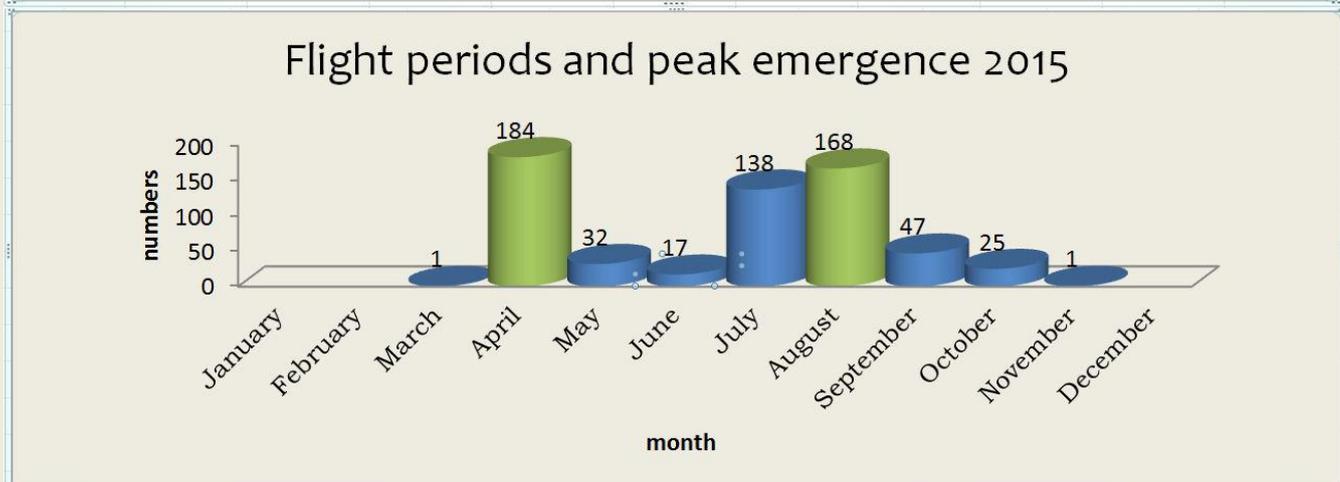
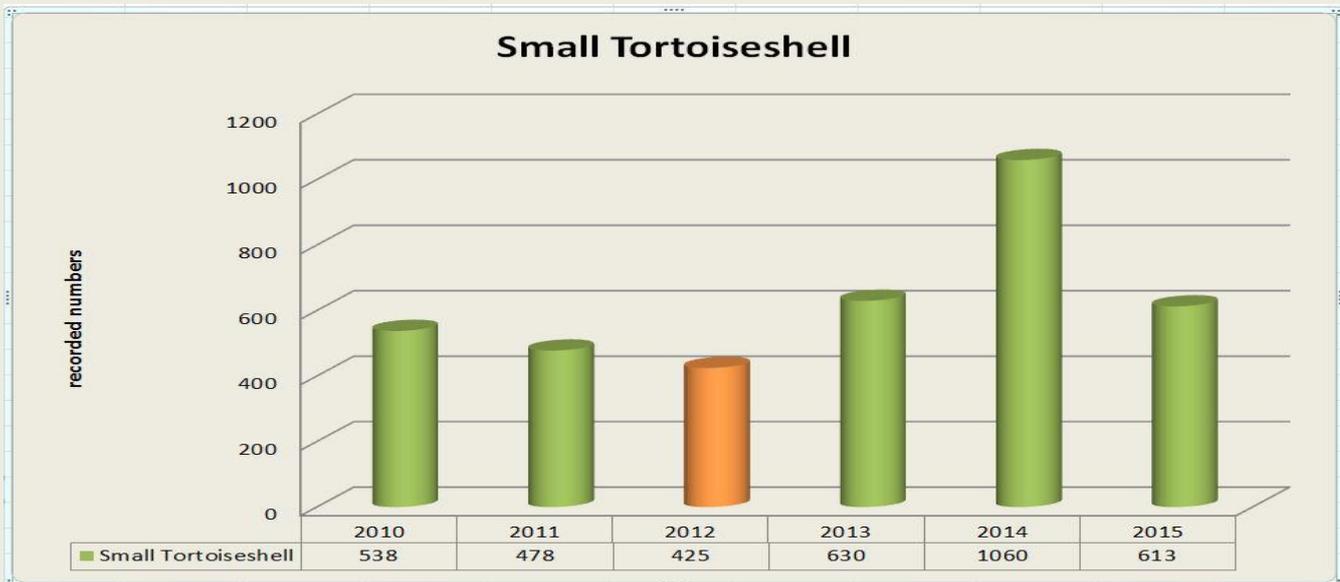
## Small Tortoiseshell

*Aglais urticae*



The Small Tortoiseshell had something of a boom year in 2014 and through 2015 an inevitable slide downwards again to just fairly average was perhaps expected. Despite 2012 hitting the species hard, it did as other species, bounce back.

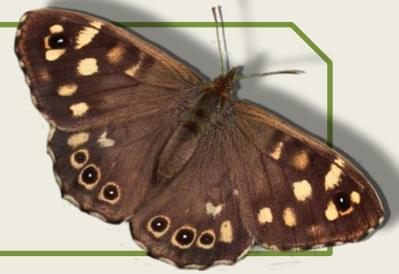
The first of the Small Tortoiseshells were seen on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March on the Whiteadder banks on my patch. It was quite some time before Sarah Eno and Andy Swales reported 2 at Edenhope, Yarrowford on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 35 were counted on the Whiteadder banks. Lynn Craig had 5 up at Billhope on the same day. Good numbers prevailed through the rest of the month and into May before running into singles towards the end of the month. June was the quiet month for the species before the summer brood began emerging into July. Clare Tarnawska had 9 at Highlaws Farm on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. 12 were reported from Abbotsford on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July (Phillip Munro). Into August numbers picked up with many single sightings and small groups. September saw a drop in numbers, dropping further through October and a lone single at Chirnside on the first day of November concluded an average year.



8<sub>10k</sub>

# Speckled Wood

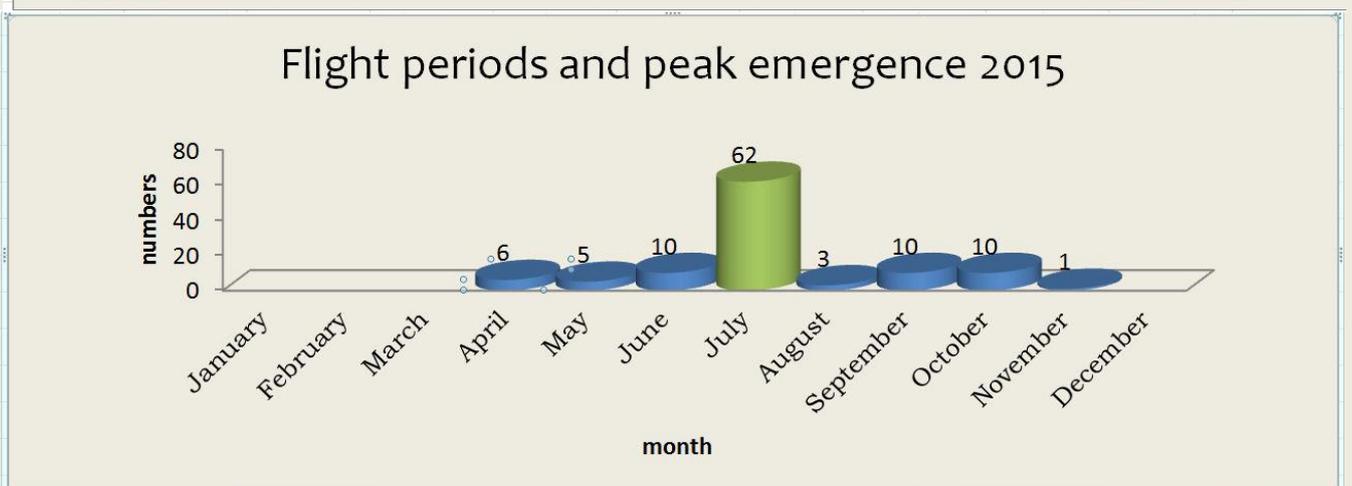
*Pararge aegeria*



For the Speckled Wood 2014 saw a very significant push with high numbers and many newly occupied locations in the eastern Borders and the East Lothian district. There was much excitement for 2015 as we did anticipate something quite special would occur.

So spring 2015 came around, and we waited, and waited, and nothing happened. Barely a whimper from the spring brood and very little from the second wave, so what happened?

The first one appeared briefly on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April on the March Burn in Berwickshire. Then a short series of singles before 3 were spotted on the Lambsmill Burn woods near Foulden on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May. 3 were reported at Partanhall on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June (Jim Montana). The first reasonable number of 9 appeared at Hyndhaugh Brae on the Whiteadder at Chirnside on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July. Finally a much more hopeful 40 were seen between Edrington and Hutton Bridge on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July. Then we were back to all singles with the exception of 4 at New Horndean on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September (Barry Prater). There were a further 7 along the Whiteadder near Chirnside on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October. The last turned up at Burnmouth on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November (Jim Montana).

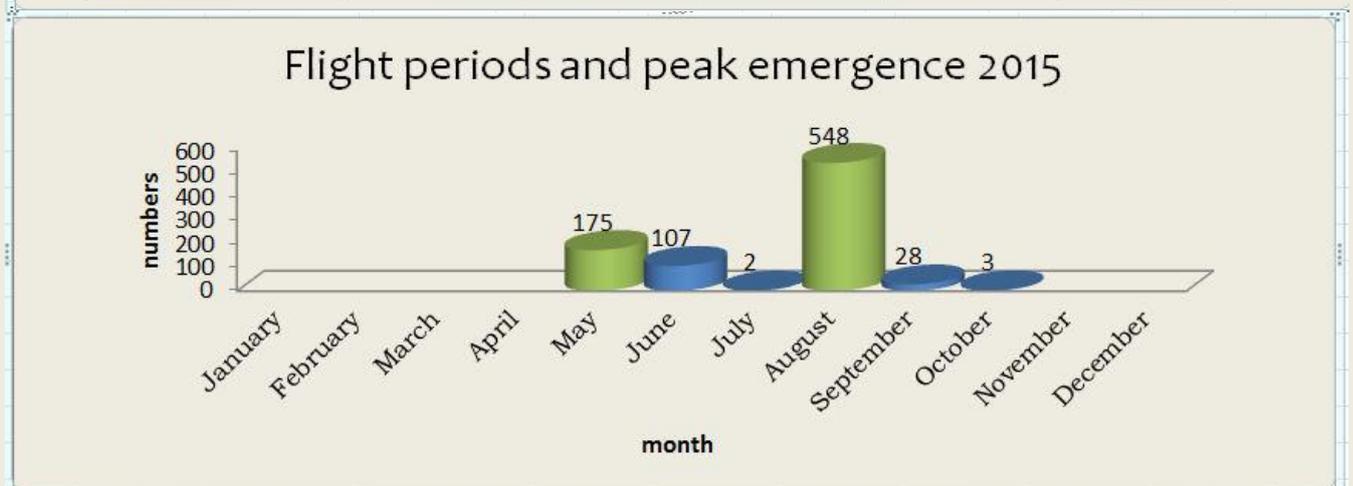
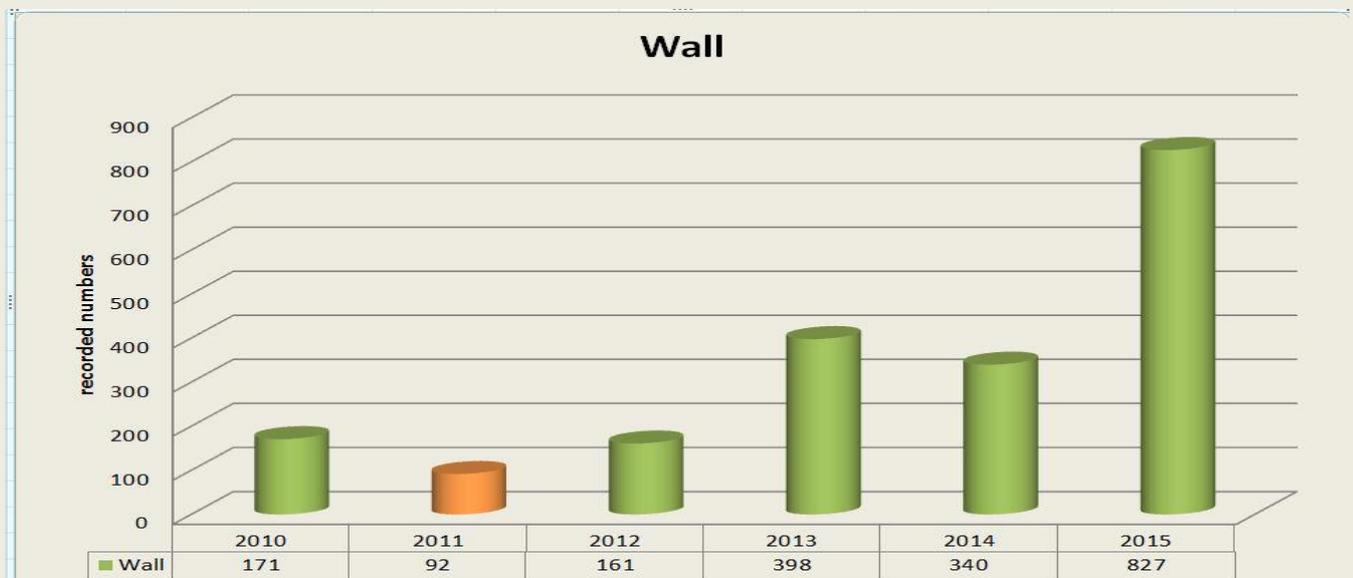


7<sub>10k</sub>

Wall

*Lasiommata megera*

2015 turned out to be a sensational year for the Wall Brown, despite bad news about its recent decline further south; this species has truly become one of our more commonly seen Butterflies. However, the Walls are still pretty much restricted to the coastal districts of Berwickshire with very few exceptions. It is possible that they may make a breakthrough up the Tweed Valley, and some evidence of that possibility came late in the season of a single female Wall spotted at Newstead near Melrose on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September, (Harry McKerchar). The first of the spring brood to appear were 4 found on the Burnmouth coast on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May (Robin Cowe). 17 were seen along the Whiteadder banks about Edington Mill on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May. Jim Montana had 14 on the Burnmouth coastal path on the same day. Some very good numbers followed throughout that first brood window. The second brood was even better with some spectacular numbers around the Burnmouth headlands with 61 on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August, 203 on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August (Simon Metcalfe) and a whopping 238 on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August. These huge numbers fizzled out quite quickly through September with the final sighting from Barry Prater into October with 3 on the 8<sup>th</sup> at Redheugh.



# Lycaenidae

- Common Blue
- Green Hairstreak
- Northern Brown Argus
- Small Blue
- Small Copper
- Holly Blue
- Purple Hairstreak
- White-letter Hairstreak



The **Common Blue** had a reasonable year throughout its flight period. The species is still pretty strong on the coast and seems to be struggling inland though I am unconvinced about that just yet and could point to the obvious fact that the coastal strip is much surveyed at that particular time of year. The Bird's-foot-trefoil that the Butterfly mostly depends on is still strong in the hill burns and quarries and old railway lines that criss cross the region, however, under grazing, tree planting, scrub encroachment are all factors that will determine the future of this species. For now, the coastal strip is the most reliable habitat, but even here there are similar problems. **Green Hairstreak** remain much under recorded throughout the region. It is more than likely going to be found anywhere that holds suitable stands of Blaeberry on sheltered south facing hillsides. Like all the Hairstreak species, they are not easily seen and a short window of opportunity to find them has led to very irregular recording from year to year. It would be a mammoth task to get a grip of the real situation regarding the species in the Scottish Borders.

**Northern Brown Argus** tended to struggle throughout 2015. Several factors on the coastal strip kept numbers of the Butterfly on the lower end of what we might normally expect. A boom in Rabbit numbers all along the coast kept vegetation noticeably short. There are advantages and disadvantages to that. NBA were dispersing further afield to look for more suitable sites away from the overgrazed slopes. (Continued.....)

# Lycaenidae

The advantages of the Rabbits hard graze is that it will in time refresh the vegetation and hopefully check any scrub seedlings. The Grayling, Wall Brown as well as Small Copper will have prospered from this as they will have more open and eroded slopes to inhabit. The Rabbit numbers will drop eventually. I guess a balance will be struck in the end. The two instances of Northern Brown Argus observed away from the Common Rockrose encrusted slopes of the coastal strip at Highlaws Farm and Netherbyres by Clare Tarnawska and Jim Montana were of great interest as they showed very fresh specimens in open arable land on field margins. In the excellent photos the recorders provided I was able to determine female and male respectively. These sightings I deduced could have been down to cold onshore breezes and lack of suitable Common Rockrose on the coastal strip driving individuals further afield. Without doubt, finding **Small Blue** in August was the find of the century where this species is concerned. It is something that has been looked into before without success. Only the two were found, and only one of those properly identified on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August as a male showing several days ware. It is likely that there were a dozen maybe more spread around. It was very exciting to see. I guess it is no coincidence that the Kidney Vetch had a late flowering season in 2015. Just how the species can predict that outcome I don't know. Plenty more highlights included a single male at Agate Point on the Eyemouth coast, a continued unlikely presence of a male at Partanhall, probably even more unlikely continuation of a small colony at the inland site near Causewaybank and the Blaikie Heugh site maintaining its colony into the second year. Just so much very good news. Caterpillars were found at all the known sites apart from Partanhall were I am not finding any Kidney Vetch...yet. **Small Copper** did very well in 2014. Larger numbers are often seen into August especially on the coastal strip around Burnmouth and arguably the best spot being St Abbs Head.

**Holly Blue** once again escaped the eye of any of the Scottish Borders recorders in 2015. I have no doubt at all that they are there or thereabouts. There have been 17 Holly Blue recorded in the Scottish Borders from 2006 to 2008. All sightings were made in either April or August. Most of the records came from Kelso. The last sighting of Holly Blue was on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 2008 by Alan and Effie Pringle at Pinnacle Park Kelso.

**Purple Hairstreak** seem an almost impossible species to add to our Scottish Borders list and the same could be said for the **White-letter Hairstreak**, though even more so. My only hope is that we will find them within the next few years. Purple Hairstreak has a history within the Scottish Borders though sketchy with a record at Bowhill Estate near Selkirk way back in what is now ancient history. I have included them on this list because it's not impossible.....only almost.

16<sub>10k</sub>

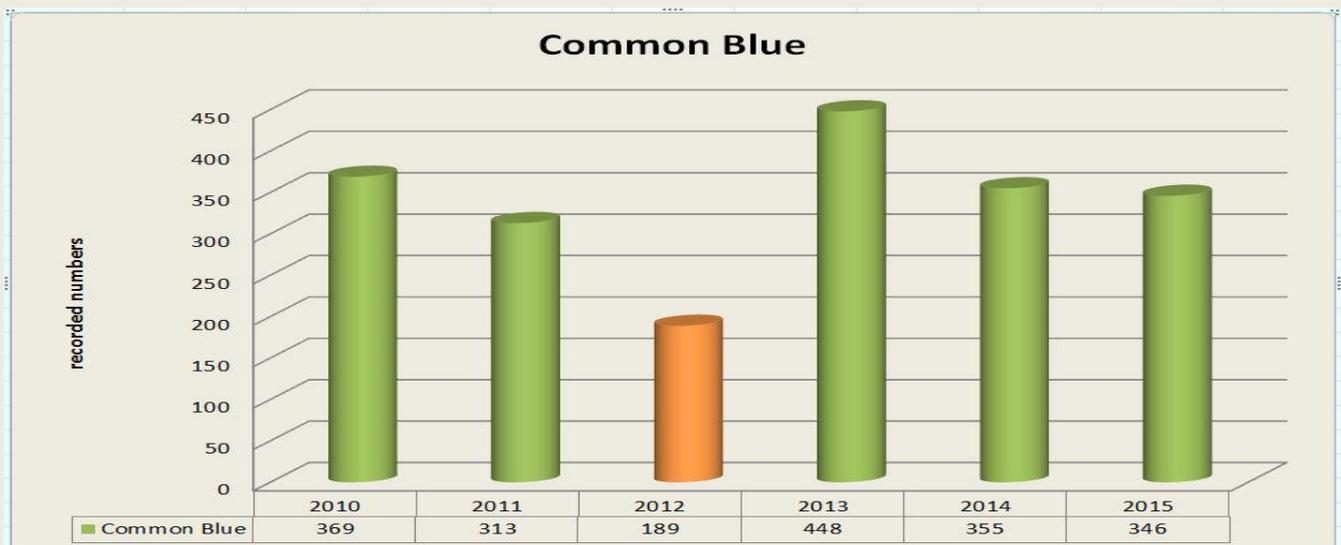
# Common Blue

*Polyommatus icarus*

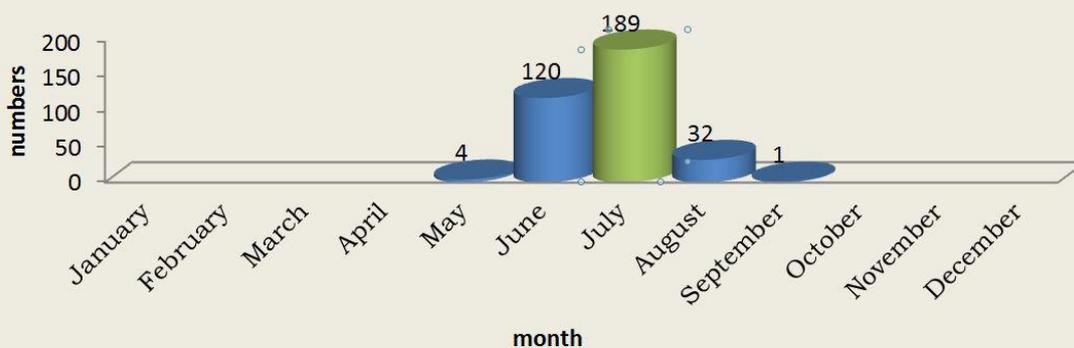


This species is widespread throughout the Borders with it seems an increasingly coastal bias. Inland sightings throughout 2015 were pretty poor indeed.

Common Blue usually appear into June, so a sighting of 4 at Eyemouth Bay was a good start on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May (Barry Prater). All of the early to mid-June sightings were coastal and it was not until the 28<sup>th</sup> of June that we had a report from VC78 AT Cardie Hill, Glentress of a single male by Rory Changleng. A season's high count came on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July on the Lamberton and Burnmouth coast with 69 counted. There were 36 at Causewaybank in Berwickshire on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Low numbers had been pretty typical for the inland sightings and 7 counted by Teyl de Bordes on the 26<sup>th</sup> of July up at Megget was a seasonal inland high. Charlotte Dennis counted 5 at Smailholm Tower on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August. Reuben Singleton had a single on the Easton Burn on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Sherri Van Decar had 2 on the Southern Upland Way near Lauder on the 13<sup>th</sup>. Sarah Joss had 1 up at Glentress Peel on the same day. On the Lamberton coast 13 were seen on the 15<sup>th</sup>. The final Common Blue records came from Sarah Eno and Andy Swales at Edenhope, Yarrowford of a single on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September.



### Flight periods and peak emergence 2015



5<sub>10k</sub>

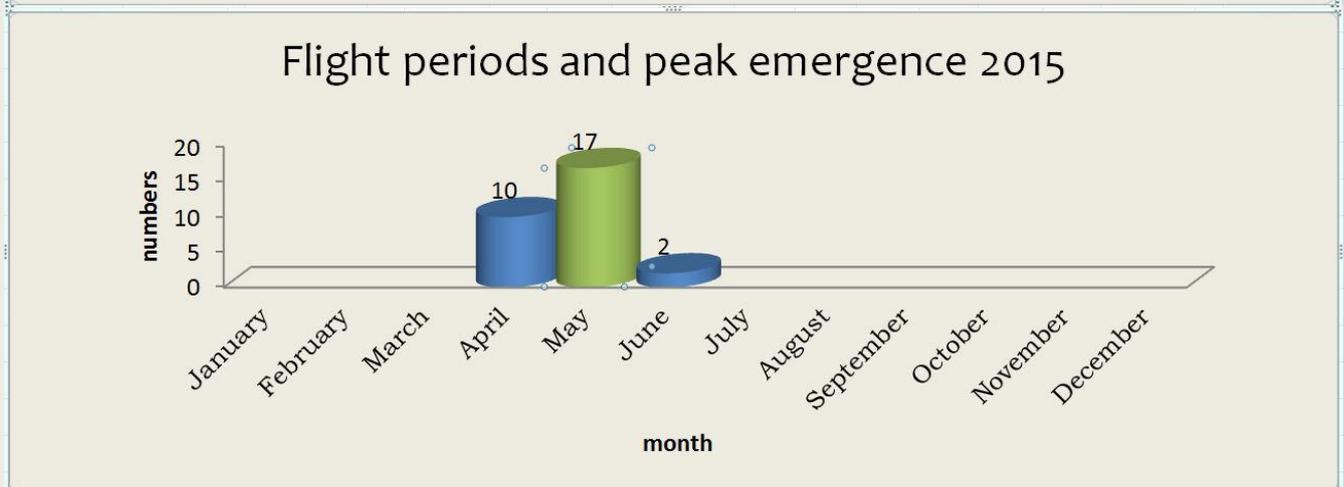
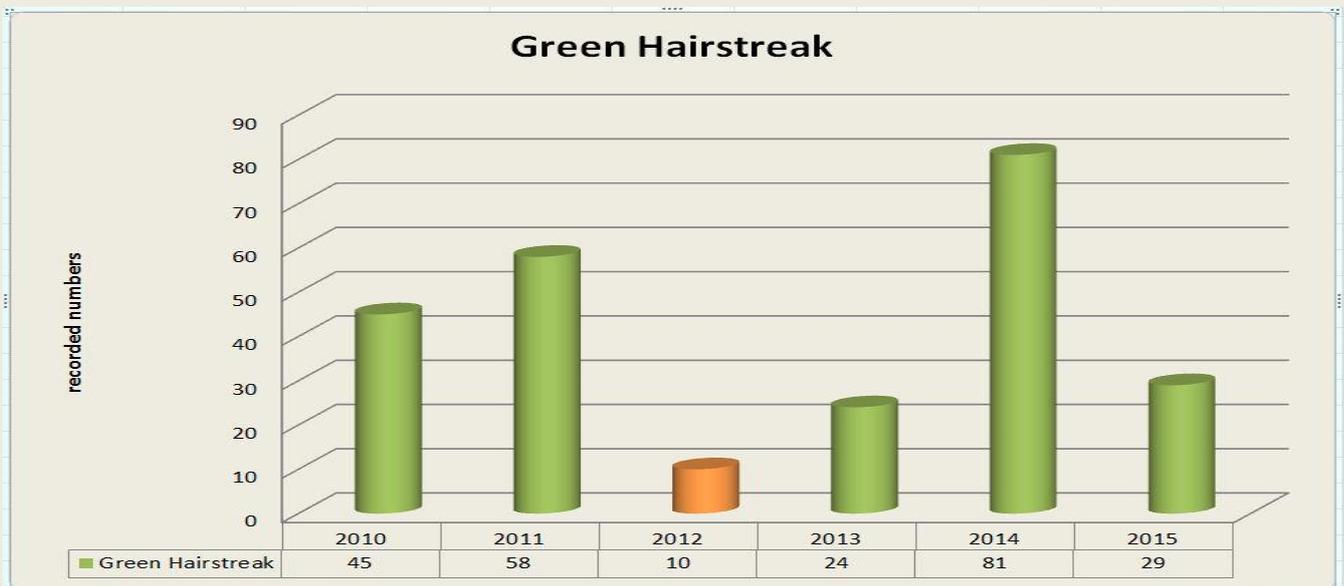
## Green Hairstreak

*Callophrys rubi*



2015 saw a very short list of records for the Green Hairstreak. This species can be numerous at times, but timing your visits to find Green Hairstreak is crucial. The last week in April can be risky, however you will see, if you are patient enough, some beautifully rendered emerald green metallic jewels darting around in the fresh spring air, if you are lucky. May looks like a better month to look for the species, and as ever, it cannot be guaranteed that you will be successful.

The first records from 2015 came after a long day searching and almost giving up at Avenel Hill near Galashiels on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April with 3 eventually found. On the same day Reuben Singleton found 7 at various locations along the Scrape Burn. After these early successes it would be a month or thereabouts before Abbie Marland whilst looking for the species up at Soutra found 1 on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May. 3 days later on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Brian Minshull reported 10 at Carcant in the Moorfoot Hills. 6 days after Abbie's visit to Soutra, Nick Morgan found 6 in roughly the same spot on the 26<sup>th</sup>. The final record for the 2015 season came from Richard Buckland who reported 2 on the Raishaw Estate on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June.



15<sub>10k</sub>

# Northern Brown Argus

*Aricia artaxerxes*

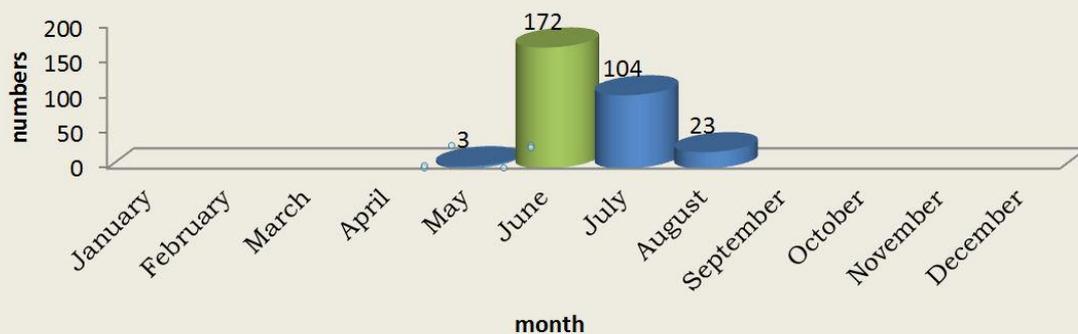


The first of the adult Northern Brown Argus were seen, unsurprisingly at the Partanhall site at Burnmouth on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May. 10 were found at Dowlaw on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June (Robin Cowe). Nick Morgan had 20 at Partanhall on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June. Numbers rose on the coastal cliffs and inland the first report came from Glenkinnon via Malcolm Lindsay of 5 on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> Richard Buckland had 2 at Threepwood Bridge. On the same day Malcolm Lindsay observed 5 at Thornylee. At Greenlaw Dean, Fangrist and Upper Blackadder only 8 were found on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June. Chris Barlow found just the 2 up at St Abbs Head on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June. Clare Tarnawska spotted a stray Northern Brown Argus at Highlaws Farm on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Jim Montana had a similar encounter with a stray near Netherbyres on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July. There were 19 about Lumsdaine on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July. Sarah Eno and Andy Swales counted 9 at Deuchar on the 14<sup>th</sup>. On the banks of the Whiteadder at West Foulden 6 were found on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Into August with numbers slowly dwindling, Sarah Eno and Andy Swales reported a number about Old Tinnis woodland on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month. I found the last recorded NBA on the cliff tops at Blaikie Heugh on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August with a pair that rounded of a much quieter season for the species.

Northern Brown Argus



Flight periods and peak emergence 2015



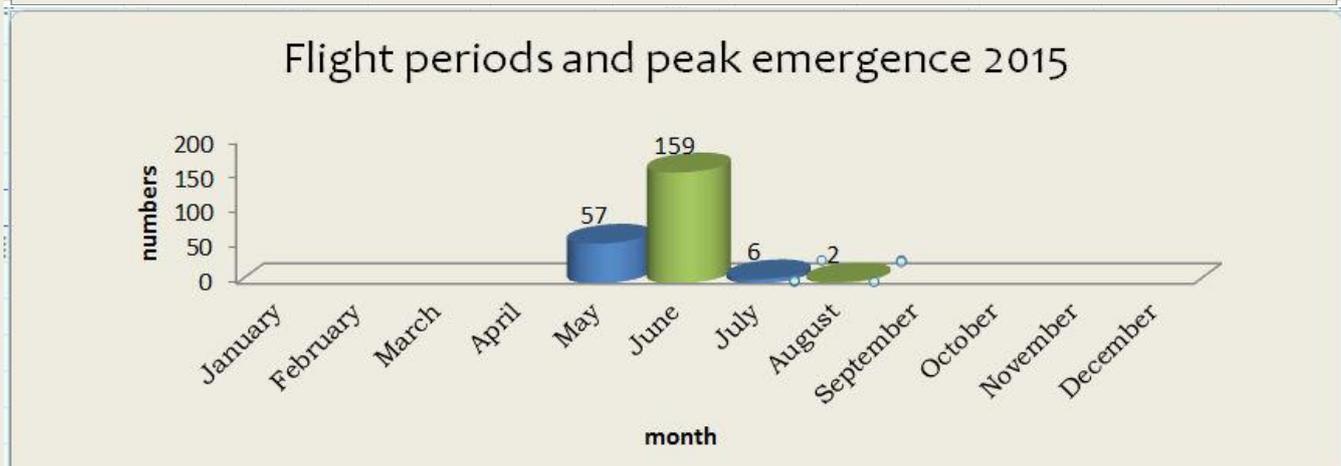
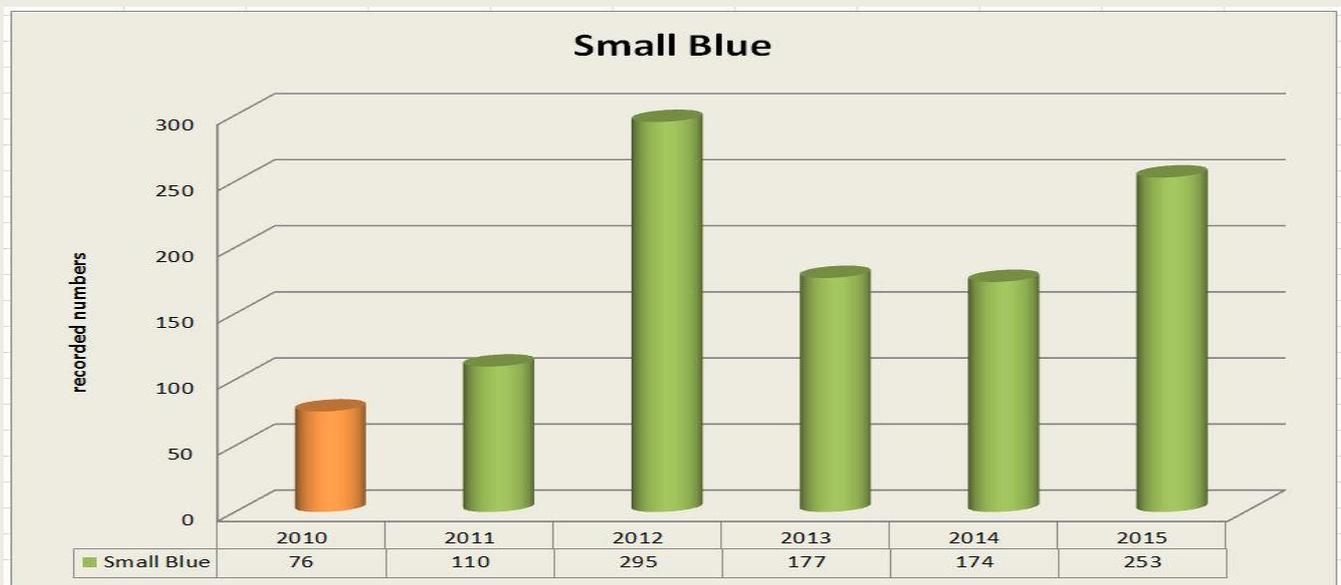
3<sub>10k</sub>

# Small Blue

*Cupido minimus*



A single Small Blue on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May at Catcairn turned out to be a very early one as the next sightings of the species despite intensive searching did not appear until 10 days later on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, again at Catcairn when I managed 6 in the morning and Paul Kirkland reported 2 from the same site in the afternoon. The Blaikie Heugh site further north had 2 on the 26<sup>th</sup>, and on the same day there were 3 reported by Ian Campbell on the Kings Gardens site. A male was seen at Partanhall on the 28<sup>th</sup> coinciding with the first of the sites Northern Brown Argus emerging. A single Small Blue was seen briefly further north at Scout Point on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Into June, and a good start as a few Small Blue were seen at the inland site at Causewaybank after a long search. Nick Morgan had the season's best count about Catcairn with 48 on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Barry Prater had a stray male at Agate Point on the 10<sup>th</sup>, by far the furthest north of the season and some real hope of the species continued expansion. At Blaikie Heugh the species peaked on the 11<sup>th</sup> with 20 being seen. The Small Blue continued throughout June and unusually into July with smaller numbers at Blaikie Heugh, Catcairn and Causewaybank. The most outstanding sighting occurred on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August of supposed second brood Butterfly only briefly seen (Robin Cowe). This was to be proved correct on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August with close views of a male second brood at Catcairn, a first for the Berwickshire colonies.



18<sub>10k</sub>

# Small Copper

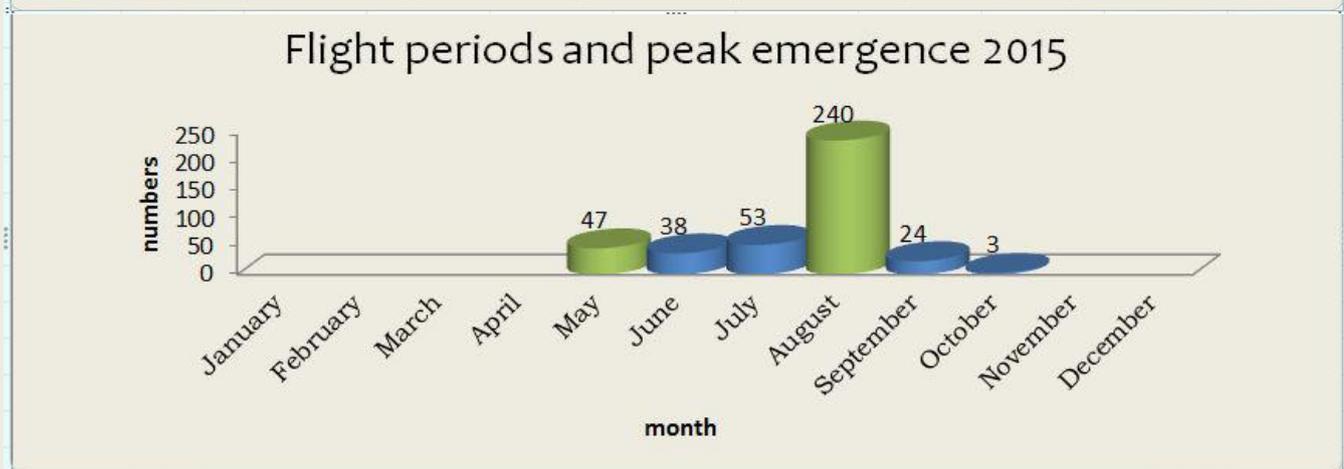
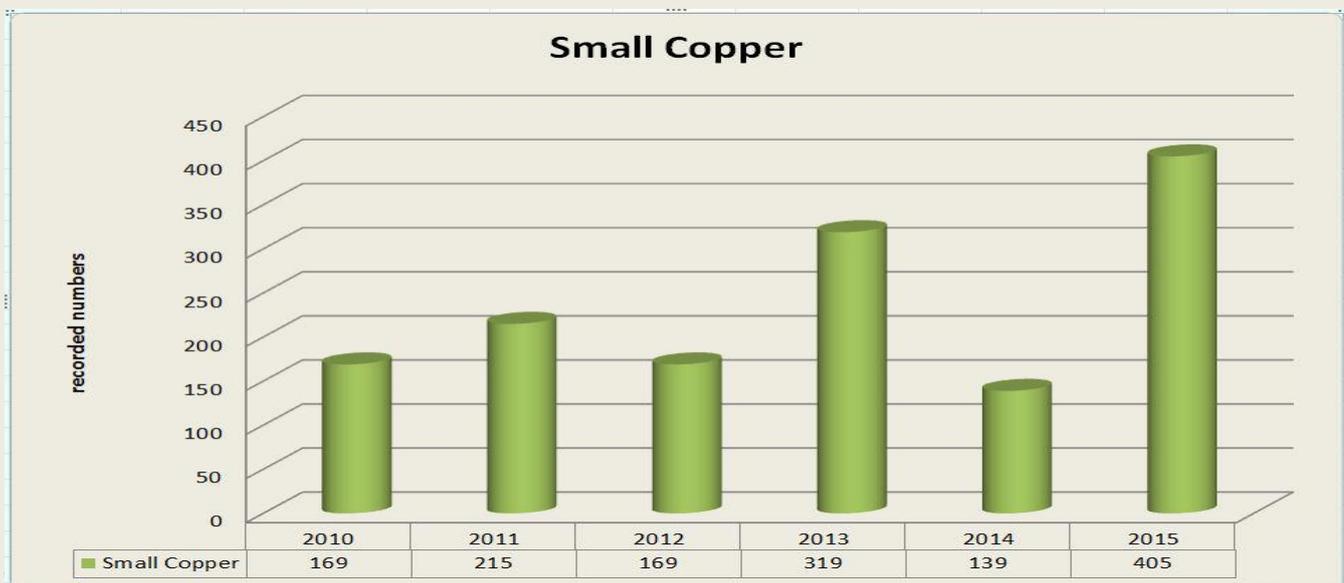
## *Lycaena phlaeas*



The first of the Small Copper for 2015 appeared on the Burnmouth coast on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May. Away from the coast Jeff Waddel had 1 at the Dearley Burn on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May. Another 1 was seen in the Duns Hills at Wellrig on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May. (Robin Cowe). On the same day Barry Prater had 5 counted at Hareford near Gordon Moss. The species maintained these low numbers through the remainder of May and into June with 1 being seen at Edenhope, Yarrowford on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June. (Sarah Eno, Andy Swales). 1 observed at Glenkinnon on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June (Malcolm Lindsay). 1 reported at Threepwood Bridge on the 24<sup>th</sup> June (Richard Buckland). The last of the spring brood was seen at Blaikie Heugh on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June (Robin Cowe).

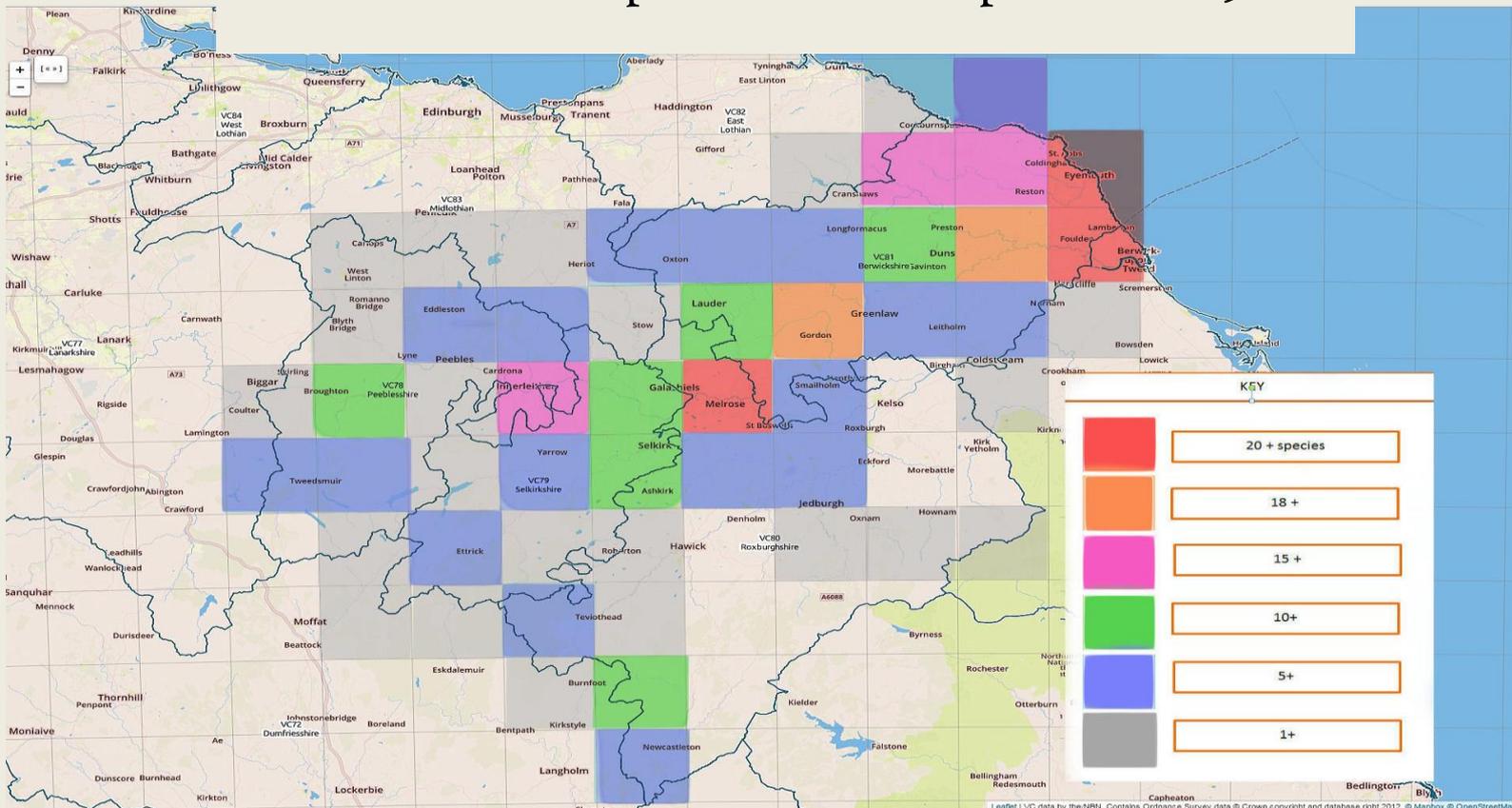
The Small Copper summer brood began with a sighting at Pipers Knowe Quarry on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July. 5 were reported at St Abbs Head on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August (Robbie Hitchcock).

Jim Montana had 9 about Burnmouth on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August. There were 15 on Lamberton Moor on the 15<sup>th</sup>, and 19 between Eyemouth and Burnmouth on the 19<sup>th</sup>. 41 were observed from Lamberton to Eyemouth on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August. The final sighting came from Lynn Craig up at Billhope on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October.



# Maps

## Number of species counted per 10k 2015

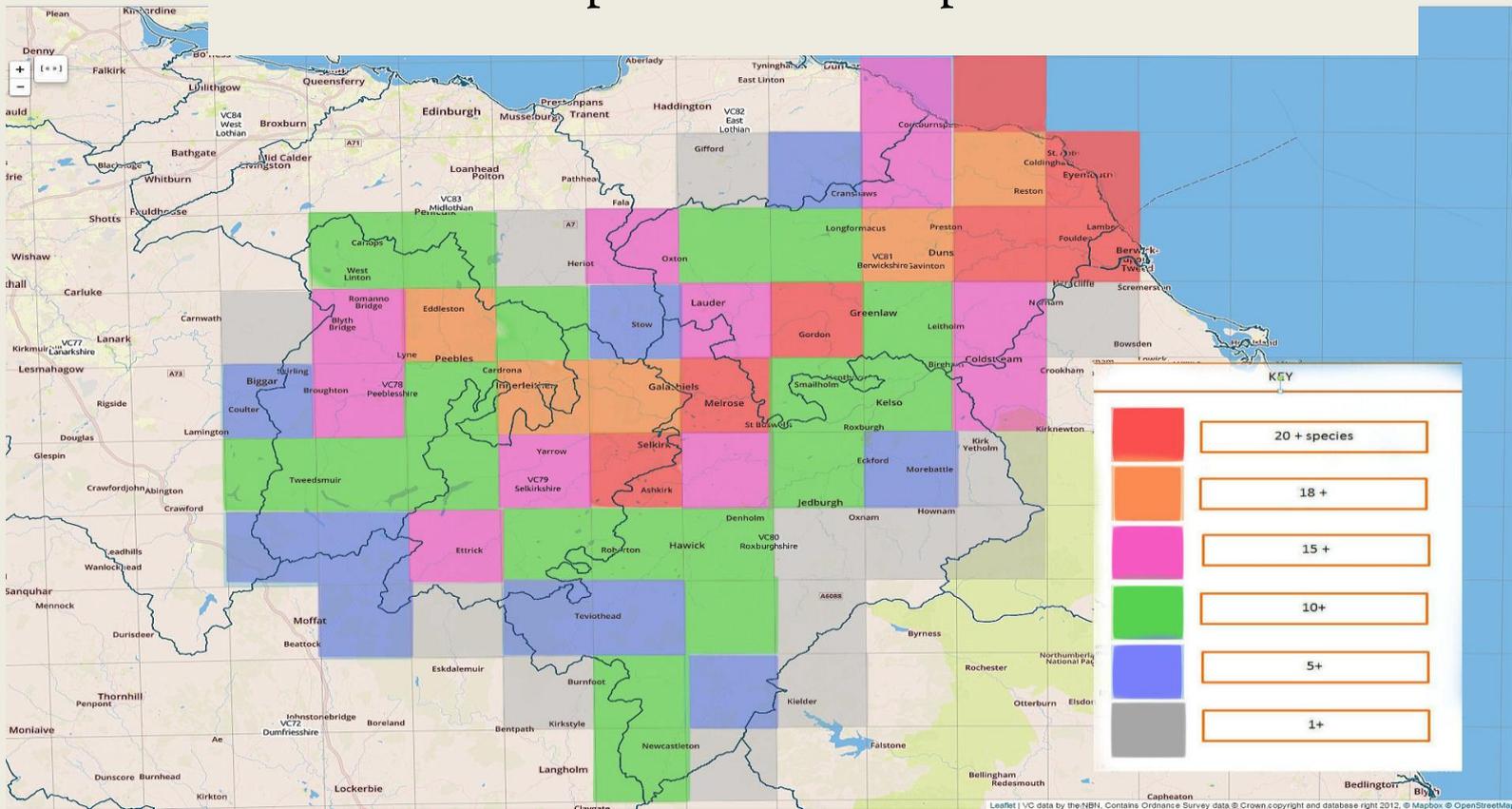


These maps describe species density across the region.

The map above describes season 2015.

As expected NT95 and NT96 are well recorded with 20+ species. NT53 centred Melrose also does very well. NT64, Gordon and NT85 Chirnside are just a shade behind those red squares. Those squares are very often visited. NT85 is my home square and this 10k has recently acquired Small Blue at Causewaybank, Pipers Knowe Quarry NT8859. The purple patches NT33 Innerleithen that straddles Selkirkshire and Peebleshire is very productive, as are the cluster of 10k squares in the north east NT76, NT86 and NT87. It is obvious that there are large swathes of Border territory under recorded. The grey squares are numerous, and unshaded squares, especially in central and eastern Roxburghshire look pretty bleak.

# Number of species counted per 10k from 2010



This map describes all the seasons from 2010 up to 2015.

The coastal districts are very well recorded as you might expect. A central belt through Duns, Gordon, Melrose, Selkirk, Galashiels, Innerleithen and Peebles inland looks good with regular recording occurring throughout the period. The purple patches fill in quite well the peripheries at Romano Bridge, Drumelzier, Ettrick, Yarrow, Lilliesleaf, Lauder, Swinton, Coldstream, Oxton, Cockburnspath and Abbey St Bathans. Looking at the map you will still see as in the 2015 map a severe number of grey squares, too many for a six season period I think. The eastern portion of Roxburghshire looks very grim. We just don't have many if any regular recorders down there at all it seems. I believe there are only the 2 blank squares with no Butterflies recorded at all since 2010, NT70. NT70 has maybe 20% of the square within the Borders. The terrain looks to be Forestry, moorland with little road access to Upper Hindhope. Historically there have been 3 species recorded in this square, namely, Small Heath, Green-veined White and Green Hairstreak. Last known records from the square were from the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2003. So a challenge someday for someone. The other blank is NT05 Peebleshire. Very little of that square resides in the Scottish Borders. No historical records known. Most of the terrain looks like Grouse Moorland, heavily managed with little access. The eastern bank of the Medwin Water that splits the region from Lanarkshire might be fruitful for Green Hairstreak.

# Vice County 10k Highlights

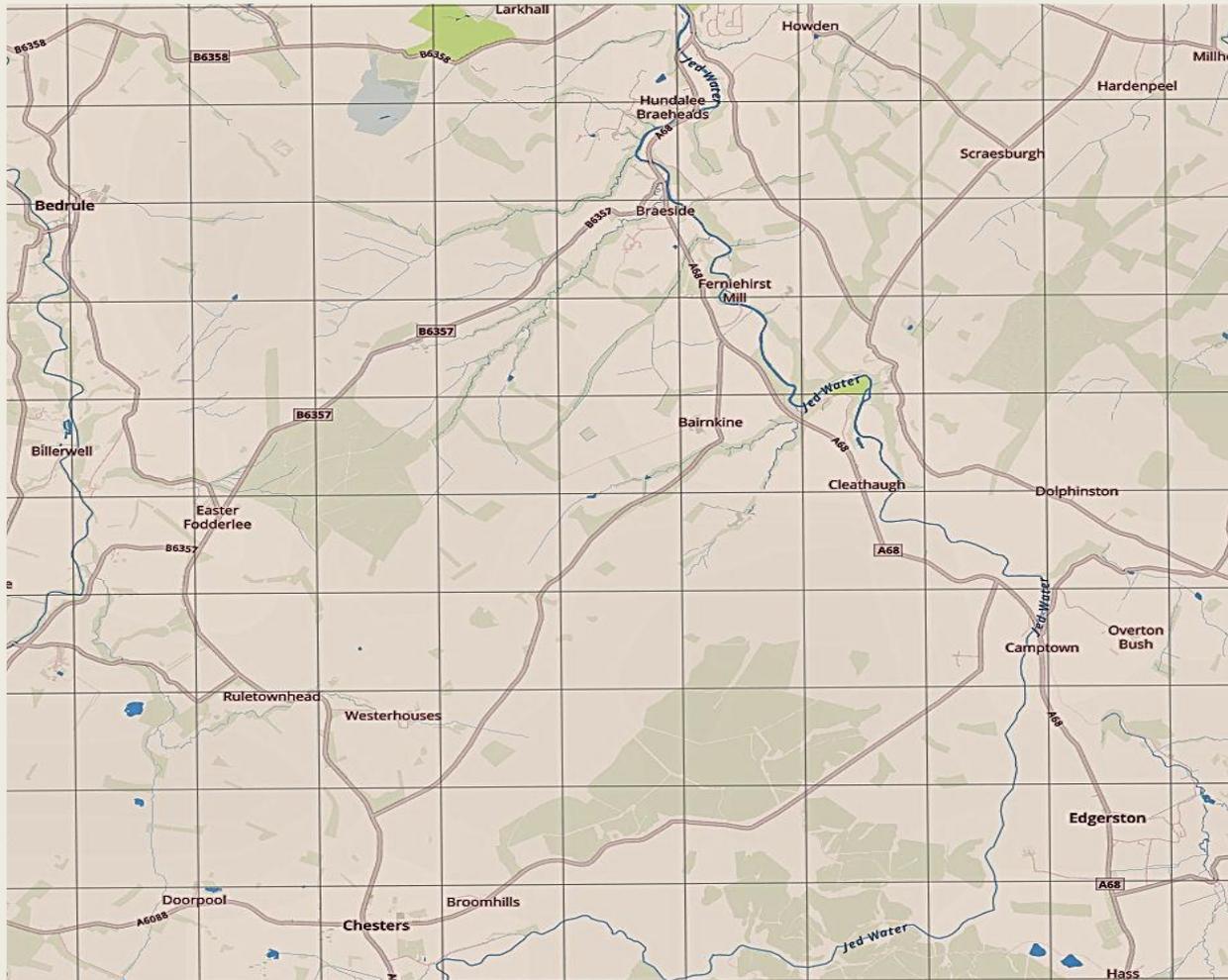
Duns NT75 VC 81



Duns, NT75 has 19 recorded species. Most of the records coming from SWT Duns Castle reserve and the Castle Woods and hills. This 10k has notched up 2,184 Butterflies since records began culminating from 487 records. 2015 produced a modest 36 records and just 90 Butterflies. Of those 90 Butterflies there were 10 species recorded. The Small Heath was the most recorded Butterfly with 41 individuals being seen. Jeanies Wood *NT756558*, Wellrig *NT759553*, and Plendernethy Burn *NT753559*.

The square has records for all of the new species to the region, ie Large and Small Skipper, Comma, Speckled Wood and Wall. The Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary, Large Heath, Green Hairstreak and Northern Brown Argus are posted missing in this square though there is suitable habitat for all four of them.

# Jedburgh South NT61 VC 80



Jedburgh NT61 has 15 recorded species. This square has just managed a poor 344 Butterflies culminating from 123 records. 2015 summed up very well the situation with a single annual record being reported from Jed Water at Camptown *NT61R* of a Small Tortoiseshell on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April. So that will be the annual highlight right there.

The square holds some interesting species such as the Green Hairstreak colony at Belling Hill *NT640122* (2014). Only the Comma has been registered from this square concerning new species, and that was seen at Chesters *NT627108* back in 1996. There are very few Common Blue records with both coming in consecutive years 2000 and 2001 around Roughlee *NT655105*. The Small Tortoiseshell is the most recorded species with a 60 count. The 2015 single record was the first Small Tortoiseshell record for the square since 2007!!

The only other highlight for this square I can glean from the records is a fairly obvious one of a triple record for Clouded Yellow at Mervinslaw Plantation *NT669107* in the summer and autumn of 2000.

## Ettrick NT21 VC 79

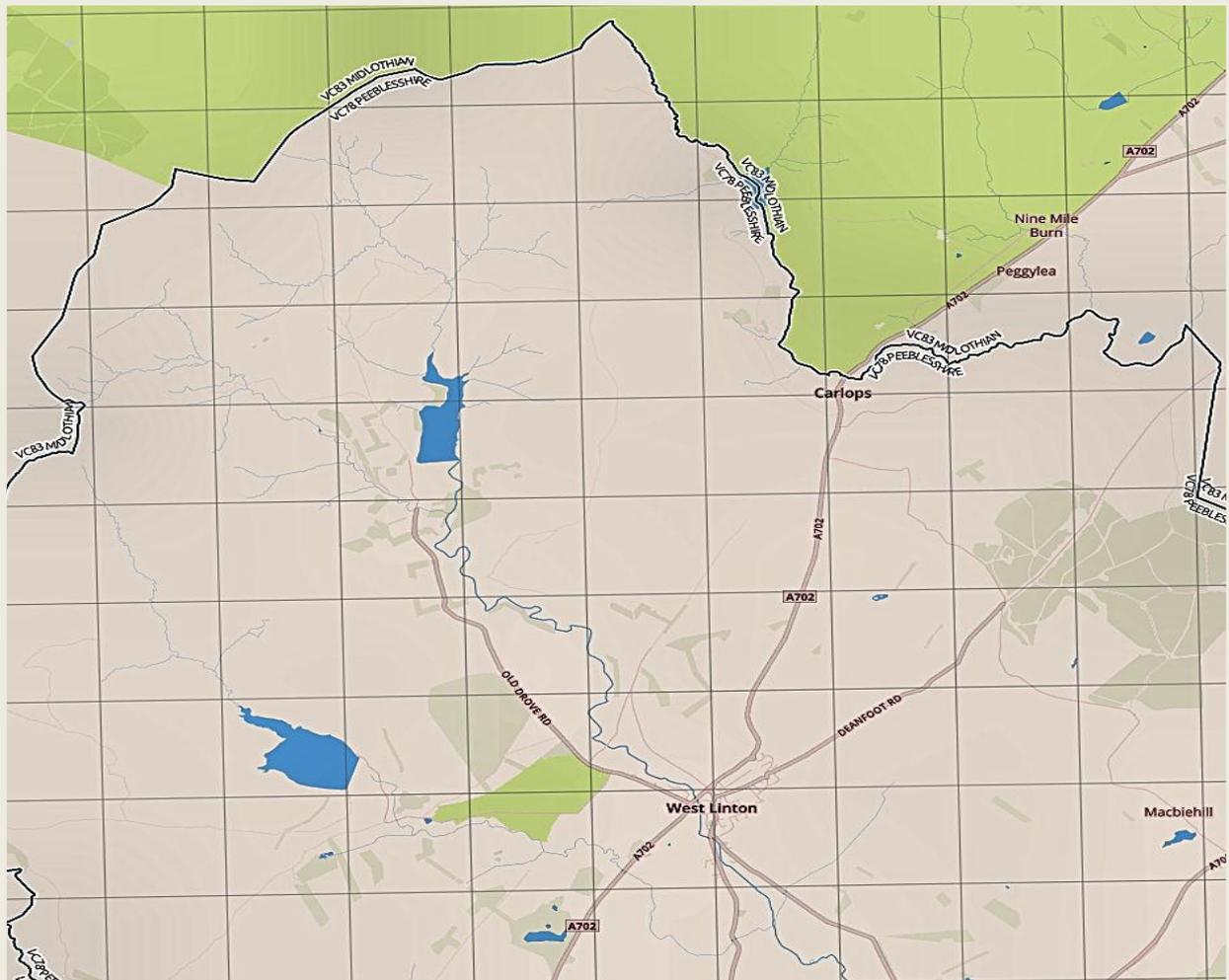


Ettrick NT21 has 16 recorded species. Over the years this has resulted in 215 records of 1,705 Butterflies. In 2015 saw 15 records come in of 53 Butterflies and just 7 species.

In 2015 there were records that covered just 4 days. Reuben Singleton had a number of Orange Tip and Green-veined White recorded about Crosslee Rig (NT2819) on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May. The Orange Tip were good records for this square. Northern Brown Argus have just the 21 records through the years for the square, so good news as Jeff Waddel reported 3 at Riskinhope Burn (NT238187) on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July. The Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary seems to be extremely scarce with only one record back in 2010 by Richard Buckland from Ettrick Marshes (NT279137). The Scotch Argus has been well recorded here with regular sightings through the years over multiple sites at Scabcleugh (NT2414) 2003, Cossarshill Farm (NT239137) 2003, Ettrick Marshes (NT2915) 2006, Ark Law (NT2710)2011, and Tima Water (NT2799513082)2015 as well as many other sites.

The Common Blue has just 2 records from 2004 and 2013. The Green-veined White is the most numerous species at 905 over the years. Finally, Dark Green Fritillary looks to be very rarely seen with just 7 individuals seen over the years in what looks like perfect habitat for the species.

## West Linton NT15 VC 78



This is one of 2015s grey squares with just 2 records for 2015. 3 Small Tortoiseshell on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April at West Linton Golf course (NT136519), and 2 Orange Tip at Baddinsgill (NT132549) on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June. Both sightings by Reuben Singleton.

The records show that there have been 921 Butterflies recorded throughout the years from 280 records and 18 species.

The Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary has not been recorded since 2000 Baddinsgill, in fact that has been the only record of the species. Just the one Comma record from Carlops (NT177563) in 2006. The Common Blue did quite well it seems up until 2010 with no sightings since. Paties Hill, Pentlands (NT1558).

Turning to the Northern Brown Argus where records are very thin, nothing since 2004 at Lyne Water (NT138538) Richard Buckland. Other past sites have included Carlop Hill Farm (NT157557), and North Esk River Braes (NT158564).

The Large Heath has several decent looking sites around this square. The last record from 2014 came from an area close to Carlops (NT1738055356) 28<sup>th</sup> July 2014, Graham Checkley.

# Neighbouring regions

The following pages give a highlighted overview of neighbouring regions.  
Many thanks to Tam Stewart, Simon Metcalfe and Nick Morgan.

The Speckled Wood East Lothian distribution map is courtesy of Nick Morgan.

## North and South Northumbria

Edited highlights from the North East Branch Butterfly Summary 2014  
and the North East Branch Autumn 2015 newsletter.

I guess the biggest news story from the North East England Branch does not concern the North and South Northumbrian VCs. In fact the Essex Skipper sightings that I am so interested in are very much farther south on the north side of the Tees in County Durham VC66. I am though very hopeful that these sightings are the tip of a rather large iceberg. Further reading on the subject of the Essex Skipper expansion into the County Durham VC can be downloaded from the North East England BC website, Autumn Newsletter, the article written by Ian Waller is just fascinating.

The Scottish Borders is a vast area and hugely under recorded. The North and South Northumberland VCs by just looking at annual distribution maps are equally huge and equally under recorded. Sites close to the larger conurbations, as is the case in the Borders, are much more frequently visited. Perhaps the most exciting record from the North East England Branch annual summary report 2014, for me, would have to be the sighting of Northern Brown Argus on the Carey Burn near Wooler. As seems to be the sad case these days, these sightings were immediately labelled as unpublicised releases...how dispiriting it is to hear such things after initially welcoming some good news.

The only other point I will add to this section is the continued surveying for Small Blue on the Berwick coast down towards Cocklawburn and Bamburgh. With the spread of the species on the Berwickshire coast it seems only a matter of time....perhaps this year.

# Lanarkshire

By Tam Stewart

In Lanarkshire in 2015 we had 21 regularly recorded species despite the miserable weather. The first nice record of the year we had was from a BC member from Sussex who when on a stationary train observed a single Holly Blue fluttering around a tall Holly near Motherwell train station one had been seen a few years back so nice to get a second report. A target I set myself was to track down Green Hairstreak colonies throughout the upland areas to the south of East Kilbride. In 2014 I had found a new colony at Ardochrig Hill, Whitelee Forest (NS6346) so decided to explore a bit further south from there at an area called Mossmulloch (NS6342). What I found here on 9<sup>th</sup> of June amazed me as within 40 minutes of starting walking at 10.30am I had counted over 40 of the little beauties on a hazy morning and another new colony was on the map.

Another key area for exploring in the deep south of Lanarkshire is around the Coulter area (NT03). We had some nice records from the Northern Brown Argus colony down there with 28 individuals reported in 2015. This colony at Girdle Burn and the Coulter Craggs seem to be just hanging on with bracken and scrub encroaching. Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Dark Green Fritillary are regularly recorded in this corner of the county and it was nice to find a new colony of Green Hairstreak which is also new for the 10k square. In the Daer reservoir (NS90) area we have a healthy colony of Scotch Argus and in 2014 I recorded them in NS91 which was new for the 10k square and this year found I also found them at Camps water NS92 new for the 10k square. Common Blue are also doing well in that far away corner of Lanarkshire with over 20 records in 2014, 8 records only in 2015 though as it appear butterfly recorders are rarer down there than the butterflies.

Here's hoping for a brighter better 2016.

# Lothian and Falkirk

Edited highlights from the Lothians with information supplied by Simon Metcalfe and Nick Morgan

- Speckled Wood numbers have been increasing with only a small number seen in 2009 rising to counts of 960 in 2014 and 600 in the 2015. Sightings in 2015 have been across all of East Lothian.
- Comma numbers have been increasing with only a small number seen in 2010 rising to counts of 66 in 2014 and 182 in the 2015. Sightings in 2015 have been across all of East Lothian.
- There are only one or two records of Holly Blue and Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary in 2015.
- Small Skipper numbers have been increasing over the past few years with only a small number seen in 2011 rising to counts of 79 in 2014 and 113 in the 2015. Sightings are generally along the coast.
- Wall numbers have been increasing over the past few years with a count of 77 in 2015; the spread would appear to be taking place along the East Lothian coast.
- Generally in Mid Lothian the common species are all present. There have been a few sightings of Speckled Wood however given the number of records it is difficult to ascertain whether they are spreading throughout the county or are just in certain locations. A few sightings of Comma have occurred. As both the Small Skipper and Wall appear to be mainly spreading along the coast there are no sightings in Mid Lothian as it has no coast.

Simon Metcalfe

Butterfly recorder - Lothian and Falkirk

# Speckled Wood distribution and summary

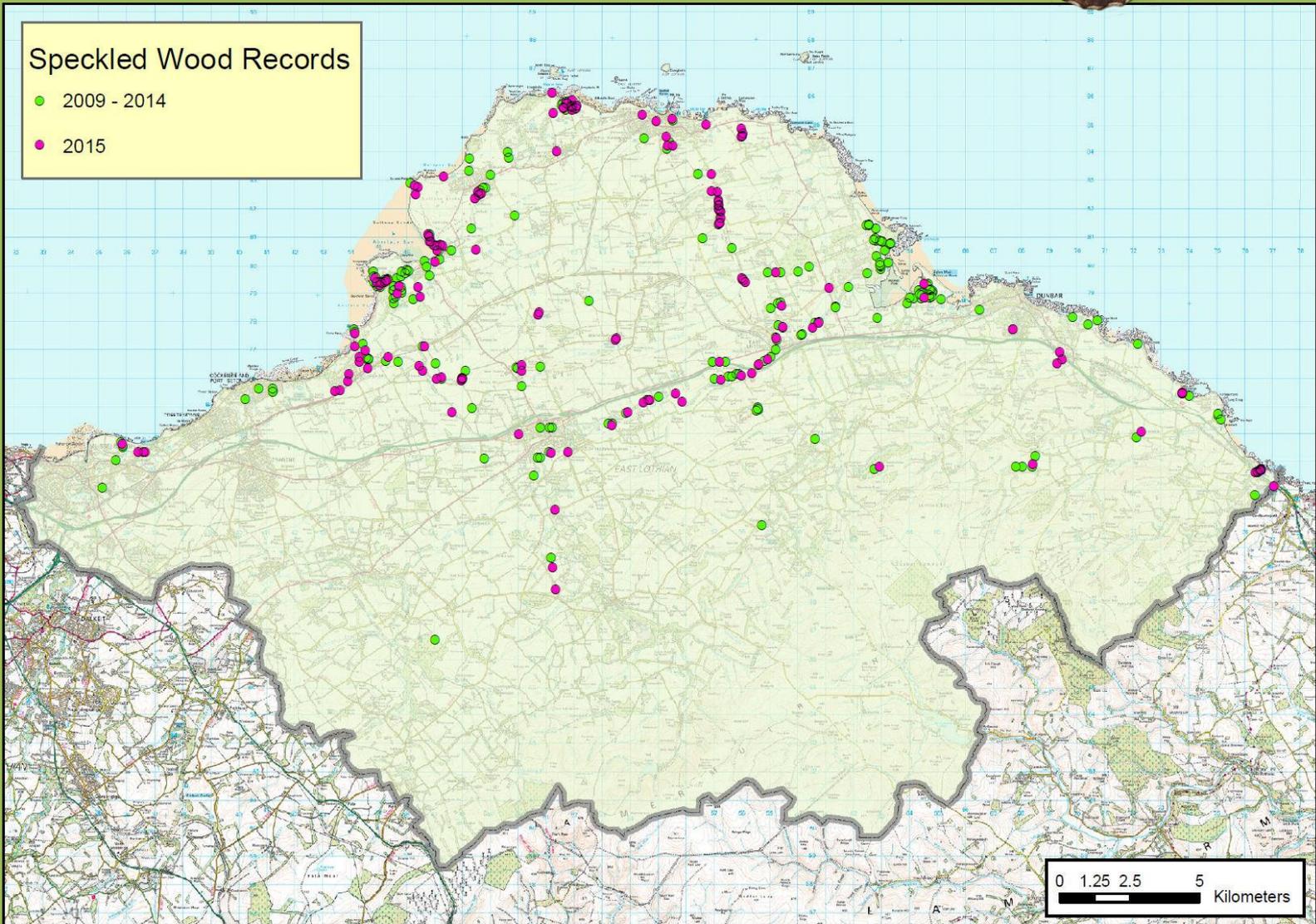
## East Lothian

Nick Morgan



### Speckled Wood Records

- 2009 - 2014
- 2015



Thank you so much for all of your butterfly records this year. We have had a bumper number of records despite the rather grey weather. I notice that there are over 1,200 entries on the spreadsheet. This should give Butterfly Conservation a really good picture of what is going on in East Lothian and the spread of butterflies up the east coast of Scotland.

It is good to see that we had a Holly Blue record again in 2015, so they are hanging on in there, somewhere. I think I will make an extra effort to try and locate a colony this year. I am sure they must be in a secret little corner somewhere around the Aberlady/Dirleton/North Berwick area! Sadly there haven't been any records from their previous stronghold at Newhailes for the last two years.

Similarly Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries are just hanging on here with only one record from 2015.

Unfortunately I didn't receive any records of Large Skippers from East Lothian in 2015. Of course this could be just because the weather wasn't inviting enough for people to go and look for them! I found them still on the Borders' side of Dunglass Dean, so they are still there waiting to cross the border if they haven't managed to cling on this side.

I notice that Peacocks did particularly well and we had a spectacular invasion of Red Admirals at the beginning of July. Just about all of us experienced them coming in from the sea on a rather dull and windy day. They obviously did well and went on to produce offspring which delighted us through to November.

Some of the white butterflies were a little low in numbers in the spring, reflecting the poor late summer of 2014. However, the second generation was back up to normal numbers.

I have mapped the Speckled Wood records again this year and attached a map showing 2015 and previous records. They didn't advance as much in 2015 as they have in previous years, but maybe that is because they have already occupied most of the suitable habitat available. Despite searching hard I didn't find any in Gifford, but did find them at Eaglescairnie, just a mile or so North West. I am sure they will arrive in Gifford this year, though! (I said that last year!!) Also, it is interesting that we have no records of Speckled Woods from Pencaitland. There must be a lot of suitable habitat there and woodland along the Tyne and towards Butterdean that you would think would allow them to spread that way. So, somewhere else for us to check this year!

By Nick Morgan.

# St Abbs Head transect highlights 2015



## St. Abb'S Head: Counts for the year 2015

Week No.	APR				MAY				JUN				JUL				AUG				SEP						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
Site	Ind																										
Large White	4	.	.	.	.			.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	1	.	.	.
Small White	18	.	.	.	.			1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	9	1	3	1	.	.	1	
Green-veined White	24	.	.	.	.			1	1	2	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	.	2	3	4	4	.	.	.	
Small Copper	247	.	.	.	.			5	12	8	.	.	3	4	5	14	29	45	16	35	30	16	3	.	1	.	
Northern Brown Argus	55	.	.	.	.			.	.	.	11	10	10	15	.	6	1	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
Common Blue	22	.	.	.	.			.	.	.	1	5	6	4	2	2	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
Red Admiral	5	.	.	.	.			.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	3	.	.	
Painted Lady	6	.	.	.	.			.	.	.	.	.	1	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	1	2	.	.	.	.	
Small Tortoiseshell	43	.	.	1	.			.	.	.	.	.	1	5	.	2	5	3	.	3	12	1	2	.	3	.	
Peacock	49	1	.	1	1			2	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3	17	4	1	.	5	.	
Dark Green Fritillary	7	.	.	.	.			.	.	.	.	.	1	1	.	2	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
Speckled Wood	2	.	.	.	.			.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
Wall	46	.	.	.	.			3	1	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	10	14	4	.	2	.	
Grayling	31	.	.	.	.			.	.	.	.	1	2	6	1	9	4	4	.	1	.	2	.	.	.	.	
Meadow Brown	546	.	.	.	.			.	.	.	.	2	32	88	62	132	65	65	28	49	12	.	.	.	.	.	
Ringlet	422	.	.	.	.			.	.	.	.	.	92	210	54	66	9	13	4	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	

The transect results for St Abbs Head were very significant towards the overall annual results for the Small Copper especially. St Abbs Head is very likely the best site in the Scottish Borders for this species with some very high numbers recorded in the later months around July and August.

Speckled Wood continues to be a feature of the reserve woodland around the Mire Loch.

Despite a few searches for Small and Large Skipper on the reserve I have been unable to locate them. The open grassland should be good for the Small Skipper and the Mire Loch grassland should hold the Large in fair numbers.

Northern Brown Argus seemed to do very much better in 2015 on the reserve than 2014.

Noting that the Small Heath is a very scarce Butterfly on the reserve with very few sightings at all in the transect history.

Many thanks to all those sending in records.  
And many thanks to those contributing to this summary.  
Good hunting in 2016.

Iain Cowe  
6 Lammerview,  
Chirnside,  
Berwickshire

TD11 3UW

Tel 01890 818314 or  
07775 747838

Email: [bordersbutterflies@eastscotland-butterflies.org.uk](mailto:bordersbutterflies@eastscotland-butterflies.org.uk)

