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February 2025

Dear Branch Member,

Please find the latest news from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch...

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Branch Update

As some members may be aware, [Butterfly Conservation is undergoing a restructuring as a result of financial pressures](#). What these changes mean for our branch is still to be determined.

I do not want to speculate on what the outcome of the restructuring will be, but please rest assured that our Main Committee and subcommittees are doing everything we can to ensure that there is minimal impact upon our branch.

Pete Eeles (Branch Chair)

Transect News

Firstly, let me thank everyone who was involved in butterfly transect walks in 2024. We now have more than 200 active transects being walked in Hampshire and Isle of Wight, which is probably the highest total of any Butterfly Conservation branch. The data obtained is so important for understanding local, regional and national trends, and for identifying those species in greatest need of conservation action.

2024 was undoubtedly a disappointing season, with numbers for most species being 30-40% down relative to 2023. There will be discussion of the results in the branch Spring Newsletter.

If you would like to see 25-year trend graphs for all species, comparing the Hampshire & Isle of Wight trend relative to that for England, these are available to view and download from the “Transects” menu item on the branch website, or by clicking the following link:

https://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/webpage.php?name=transect_25year_trends

Assemble registration

In my role as Transect Co-ordinator for Hampshire & Isle of Wight, can I just remind you that Butterfly Conservation requires all volunteer transect walkers to please [register with “Assemble”](#). This is necessary for insurance purposes and other reasons. You will already have received correspondence about this, but can I just give you a prompt if you’ve yet to get round to doing it. When I checked a couple of weeks back, there were 142 Hampshire & Isle of Wight transect walkers registered with Assemble, which is a great start, but I think there are probably at least double that number who walk transects, so there are certainly others who need to join.

If you’ve already registered with Assemble, perhaps as a volunteer involved with practical conservation volunteering on our reserves, you don’t need to register again, but you will need to check that “UKBMS Transect Surveyor (Hampshire & Isle of Wight)” is tagged as an additional volunteering role in your role profile on Assemble.

My future intention is to group message all transect walkers via Assemble, which will make communication a lot easier for me, and will mean that I can get information to you more quickly. If, however, your role profile doesn’t list you as a “UKBMS Transect Surveyor (Hampshire & Isle of Wight)” you won’t get the message. I’m not sure that you can add additional roles yourself, within Assemble, so you may need to contact someone at BC Head Office to add ‘transect surveyor’ to your profile.

Dr. Andy Barker (Butterfly Transect Co-ordinator, Hampshire & Isle of Wight)

New Forest Butterfly Transect Group report

The New Forest National Park Authority’s **Volunteer Fair** was opened by Sir Julian Lewis, the local MP, on Sunday, January 26th in Brockenhurst village hall. This year, 53 organisations were in attendance, hoping to attract volunteers to join their organisation. The opportunities on offer varied from helping-out in local hospitals, heritage organisations, community groups as well as national and local wildlife conservation groups - one of which was the New Forest Butterfly Transect Group, of course!

It was a busy day, with a number of visitors coming to talk to us about their interest in butterflies and expressing a willingness to get involved. Transect walking is not suitable for everyone because of the criteria needed to obtain a valid result - for those people we recommended that they download [the iRecord App](#). Fourteen people left their details, and stated that they would like to join a team this year, with several others taking our contact details, with the intention of getting in touch once they had thought about the commitment required. We were also approached by one of the organisers of the New Forest Show who is keen to have a butterfly presence in the Heart of the Forest area.



John French talking to a potential transect walker. Photo © Trevor Bumfrey

We welcome new volunteers who would like to walk a transect in the New Forest. For more information please click [NFBTG](#). You can also email us at nftg-inbox@googlegroups.com

Trevor Bumfrey (NFBTG)

Reserves report

It's not been a good start to the year. Someone smashing-up the "Dogs on leads" signs; graffiti sprayed over the side of the container; **and a sheep attacked and badly injured by a dog at Yew Hill.** (It's been an eye-opener how many people blatantly ignore 'Sheep Grazing. Dogs on Leads' signs.) **Sadly, as a result, we now have a policy "No Dogs at Yew Hill", when the sheep are there.**

A shining light through it all has of course been the volunteers. They have done an incredible amount of work clearing scrub, footpaths, repairing fences, and given endless help. Each reserve has an awesome volunteer team I can rely on and together we have kept the reserves in good shape.

Magdalen Hill Down

The gorgeous cows and sheep bring Magdalen Hill to life in the depths of winter. The cows are in the main Pathfield, often accompanied by Roe deer and even Skylarks this early in the season. The cows don't seem bothered by the joggers and all the people going by. The sheep will graze the Hillside and the Allotments before heading off for summer. The Livestock Lookers made sure the troughs were clear of ice during the cold spell, and managed to keep on with the daily checks in all weathers.

There are still lots of birds such as Yellowhammer, Bullfinch, Long-tailed Tit, Stonechat, Redwing and of course Kestrel and Red Kite. Of note was a Dartford Warbler being present through November / December. I also saw the moment a stoat killed a rabbit – fascinating to see!

Yew Hill

Southern Water has completed the new reservoir at Hill Top. They will be sowing some seed, collected from the Extension field at Magdalen Hill Down last summer, for grassland restoration. They also hope to collect more seed (again, from the Extension field) around mid-August. There is the possibility we may get grazing back at Hill Top this year and be able to start the transect again.

Southern Water article [here](#).

Bentley Station Meadow

I'm thrilled to see the wildflowers returning with Primrose already trying to flower and Betony spreading all over. The reserve is looking like it should and not just a total thicket of Bramble. We left patches of young Blackthorn around the edges of the meadow for the Brown Hairstreak.

We just need the butterflies to come back! It shows how weather has the biggest impact.

Volunteer work days schedule

Please see the [Reserves Volunteering](#) sub-section of the Dates section, below.

Butterfly Walks on the Reserves

See [our Facebook page](#), for latest updates.

Butterfly Conservation restructure

Sadly, this restructure has resulted in my South Downs Landscape Officer role coming under review. The post may well change so this means **there are no planned reserve walks or volunteer field trips, for the time being**.

Keep warm, stay safe and I look forward to seeing you on the reserves soon.

Fiona

Some of our amazing volunteers (all photos © Fiona Scully)...



Bentley Station Meadow



Magdalen Hill Down



Yew Hill

Snippets

- Branch Annual Butterfly Report:** In order to ensure that we provide a comprehensive and high-quality report in the bi-annual Branch Newsletter, we have decided to delay publication to the Autumn edition. Records are still being validated as we speak! However, the data-centric digital report PDF will be available on the branch website in the April/May timeframe (and will be announced on the branch website and the e-Newsletter, in due course). **Please email your noteworthy butterfly and moth anecdotes / observations, or transect notes, to butterflywalks@gmail.com by 21 March 2025.**

Dates

An electronic calendar (.ics), covering all Field Trips & Reserves Walks, is available from [the Butterfly Walks webpage](#), or just copy/paste this link into your Calendar application, to **subscribe** (don't 'download' - you won't get automatic updates, if events change): https://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/BC_Hants_walks.ics

Reserves Volunteering

Please check the website for updates.

To be advised - check website		
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Branch, and branch-related Events*

To be advised - check website		
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*The branch Events Coordinator position is currently vacant. If you are at all interested in the position, then please contact the Branch Chair, Pete Eeles, at chair@hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk.

Branch Field trips

Full details of [Hampshire walks here](#) (PDF), and [Isle of Wight walks here](#) (PDF). [Apologies, these were not available at the time of publication - [check the Branch website](#)]

When	Where	Target species
Sat 26 Apr 13:30	Parkhurst Forest	Orange Tip, Brimstone, Comma, Peacock
Sun 27 Apr 10:00	Broxhead Common	Emperor Moth
Wed 30 Apr 10:00	Portsdown Hill	Early butterfly & moth species
Sun 4 May 10:00	Butser Hill	Duke of Burgundy, Green Hairstreak, Grizzled Skipper
Sun 11 May 10:00	West Wood / Crab Wood	Duke of Burgundy & other woodland species
Wed 14 May 10:00	Coulters Dean / Queen Elizabeth Country Park	Duke of Burgundy, Green Hairstreak, rare Orchids
Sat 17 May 13:30	Mottistone Chalk-pits	Glanville Fritillary, Grizzled Skipper, Dingy Skipper
Sun 18 May 10:00	Stockbridge Down	Duke of Burgundy, Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Small Copper
Wed 21 May 10:00	New Forest: Ivy Wood / New	Pearl-bordered Fritillary, and other

	Copse Inclosure	invertebrates
Sat 24 May 13:30	Compton Chine	Glanville Fritillary, Green Hairstreak, Small Blue, Adonis Blue
Wed 28 May 10:00	Martin Down	Marsh Fritillary, Adonis Blue, Small Blue, rare Moths
Sun 22 Jun 10:00	New Forest: Hawkhill Inclosure / Beaulieu Heath	Dark Green Fritillary, Clouded Buff Moth, Silver-studded Blue, reptiles
Sat 28 Jun 13:30	Newtown Meadows / Walters Copse	White Admiral, Marbled White, Brown Argus, Ringlet
Sun 29 Jun 10:00	Alice Holt Forest	Purple Emperor, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary
Wed 2 Jul 10:00	West Walk	Purple Emperor, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary
Sat 5 Jul 13:30	Mottistone Down	Dark Green Fritillary, Brown Argus, Chalk hill Blue
Wed 9 Jul 10:00	Whiteley Walk	Purple Emperor, Purple Hairstreak, White-letter Hairstreak
Sun 13 Jul 10:00	Farley Mount	Purple Emperor, Scarlet Tiger Moth, Dark Green Fritillary
Wed 16 Jul 10:00 / 14:00	Micheldever Wood (a.m.), Abbotstone Down (p.m.)	Purple Emperor, Silver-washed Fritillary, Dark Green Fritillary (a.m.) Marbled White, Dark Green Fritillary, Scarlet Tiger Moth (p.m.)
Sat 19 Jul 13:30	Kemphill Moor Copse	White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary (inc. ab Valesina), Purple Hairstreak
Sat 26 Jul 13:30	Mount Joy, Caribrooke	Chalk Hill Blue, Common Blue, Wall, Brown Argus
Wed 13 Aug 10:00	Soberton Down / St Claires Meadow / River Meon	Brown Hairstreak
Sat 16 Aug 13:30	Brading Downs	Chalk Hill Blue, Brown Argus
Sun 17 Aug 10:00	Broughton Down	Adonis Blue, Chalk Hill Blue, Silver-spotted Skipper
Wed 20 Aug 10:00	Shipton Bellinger	Brown Hairstreak, Wall, Magpie Moth, Oak Eggar Moth
Wed 27 Aug 10:00	Portdown Hill	Brown Hairstreak, Wall, Oak Eggar Moth
Sun 31 Aug 10:00	Old Winchester Hill NNR	Adonis Blue, Silver-spotted Skipper
Wed 3 Sep 10:00	Beacon Hill NNR	Silver-spotted Skipper, Small Copper
Sat 6 Sep 13:30	Thorness Bay fields	Clouded Yellow, Wall, Brown Argus, Small Copper

Accompanied Reserves Walks

Please check the website for updates.

When	Where	Target species	Information
To be advised - check website	-	-	-

[First sightings \(04/12/2024 - 08/02/2025\)](#)

Note: Data extracted from [Branch 'News' webpage](#) (so, NOT official!)

Tue 7 Jan	Red Admiral	Mayfield Park, Southampton
Sun 2 Feb	Brimstone	Hillier's Gardens, Romsey

Social Media links, etc.



Branch FB



Our Reserves FB



Branch X
(Twitter)



Branch Insta



Branch WWW