

Butterfly Report

Thanks to DG and SH for their butterfly survey during the year. DG read out his report.

“Sue Hayes and I have completed our eleventh year of recording butterflies on our site.

Before giving some details of this year’s findings let me say a few words about our surveying. This is carried out just once a week from the beginning of April to the end of September. We have a set route and record our sightings only in a 5 metre wide corridor. The surveying guidelines are laid down by Butterfly Conservation. Every October we send our 26 weekly recording forms to them for analysis and inclusion in national statistics.

Our total sightings this year were 609, 35 more than last year. We saw 21 different species this year. This is the highest count ever in one season. However, 11 of these species were only recorded in single numbers for the whole year. They were Brimstone, Orange Tip, Brown Argus, Small Copper, Holly Blue, Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Comma and Silver-washed Fritillary. Amongst these the Painted Lady was seen for the first time since 2009. Also the largest butterfly we see on our site is the Silver-washed Fritillary which has made a single appearance for the third year in a row.

Large Whites and Small Whites appeared at historical levels. The Browns namely Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Ringlet and Small Heath were all seen in usual numbers and represented over 70% of all sightings this year. Only 14 Speckled Woods were seen this year, the lowest number ever recorded.

Holly and Common Blues were a disappointment this year with only 25 recorded. This compared to 86 last year and 53 in 2017. Going back to 2016 only 2 were seen which demonstrates just how volatile blue sightings are.

To conclude, this year’s sightings of the Marbled White totalled 12 which was the highest number ever recorded. In the last 4 years we have recorded 23 compared to only 3 in the 7 years before that. These increased sightings mirror national trends which report a general increase in Marbled White numbers.