

FRYENT COUNTRY PARK AND BEANE HILL BUTTERFLY SUMMARY 2018

Fryent Country Park has two monitored butterfly transects or fixed survey routes, which contribute data to the national UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme and to indices of change for London. These transects provide data to enable comparisons between species, areas of the Park, and from one year to another. The 'Fryent Country Park' transect takes a route through the centre of the Country Park, while the 'Beane Hill' transect follows woodland paths in the south-east of the Park.

Ringlet is a butterfly that was first recorded on the Country Park only in recent years and in was not recorded on the transects until 2016. In total 10 were recorded on the transects in that year and then 19 in 2017. In 2018 the count was 53 on the Fryent Country Park transect and 45 on the Beane Hill transect. There was a concentration in the Beane Hill and Cowlays woodlands, along hedgerows in the south-east of the Park, and with others recorded elsewhere. It is the edges of the woodland, glades, footpaths and hedgerow edges that are favoured. The conservation work of scalloping along hedgerows should be beneficial.

The Marbled White appeared on the Fryent Country Park transect in numbers too. To put this in perspective, one was first recorded on the Fryent Country Park transect in 1996, but not again until 2011 and then one in 2016. For 2018 the count was 32. The butterfly has a wing-pattern that looks similar to a chess-board. This is a butterfly of open grassland and all the records were from the meadows and hedgerow edges. None were recorded in the woodland of Beane Hill.

Purple Hairstreaks were recorded on the transects of the first time since 1995 (Beane Hill) and 1992 (Fryent Country Park transect). Atypically there were days when this usually early evening flyer in Oak canopies, was observed at ground level during the earlier times of the day.

The Brimstone had its best counts to date on both the Fryent Country Park and the Beane Hill transect. The butterfly is attracted by the Alder Buckthorn, a small tree on which it lays eggs.

Small Skippers, Essex Skippers and Large Skippers were present in higher numbers than during some recent years, but populations remain relatively low compared with earlier records.

Both the Large White and the Small White were present in relatively high numbers compared with the average for these species. Green-veined White and Orange Tip were also present.

Meadow Brown was the most numerous butterfly with a transect count on the Fryent Country Park transect of 2,241, though this was approximately half of the high count of 2017. In the hedgerow edges it was often found in company with the Gatekeeper. Speckled Woods were observed in the dappled shade on woodland and along hedgerow edges.

The Comma was the most frequently encountered of the 'Vanessids' with the Peacock, Painted Lady, Small Tortoiseshell and also the Red Admiral each in relatively low numbers.

The Holly Blue was more common here than the Common Blue. The Small Copper had some transect records but was more often seen by others in the hay meadows.

The spring and summer weather appeared more conducive to the walking to monitor species than in some recent years, though the numbers of butterflies appeared to reduce quickly by about the first week of August.

With thanks to the team of transect walkers: Simon Mercer, Michael Berthoud, Tara Furlong and Leslie Williams. Additional records were made by others away from transects. (17/10/2018)