

FRYENT COUNTRY PARK AND BEANE HILL BUTTERFLY SUMMARY 2020

Though we were unable to access the transect route for much of June, we did manage to record at the start of the first of those four weeks and at the end of the last of the four weeks, so only the two intermediate weeks (11 and 12) were not surveyed. With two missing consecutive weeks, the estimate equations that the national database employs, could estimate for the missing weeks.

We missed only two other weeks (23 and 26), both due to unsuitable weather; and an achievement given the various forms of lockdown and other Covid-19 requirements.

The weather during the spring and early summer was some of the best for butterfly recording, warm and with '100% sun'. However, that did not necessarily translate into higher numbers of butterflies. The positive to that is the reassurance that the method works - even in less sunnier years.

Numbers of the Meadow Brown were relatively low compared with recent years, as were several other species. None of us recorded an Essex Skipper, Small Skipper or Large Skipper, though there have been some previous years with zero counts. Nor is the Small Tortoiseshell on the list.

The Brimstone had its highest count to date on the Fryent Country Park transect. As also did the Purple Hairstreak, which seldom descends to viewable heights, but this year was seen flying amongst oak scrub during the mid-afternoon. It is probable that we under-record this species, though again, the transect method is based on a comparable sample, so the numbers seen do possibly indicate a high population this year.

The Small Copper, a grassland butterfly, particularly where Common Sorrel grows (for example at Lower Hydes East: section 3 on the main transect), had its highest count for some years.

Ringlet numbers at Beane Hill were good and it was also present elsewhere in the Park. The Marbled White prefers more open situations and had its best count to date (all on the main FCP transect, with no records from Beane Hill).

And away from the transect was Andrew's record of a Purple Emperor at the top of Barn Hill.

Each record is saved and collectively contribute to our knowledge and to conservation.

The butterfly transect team.