

FRYENT COUNTRY PARK AND BEANE HILL BUTTERFLY SUMMARY 2022

Eighteen species of butterflies were recorded on the monitored transects at Fryent Country during 2022. The summer was noted for a long period of dry weather, while the hottest temperatures in the UK exceeded 40 degrees Centigrade for the first time.

However, few butterflies were observed at Fryent Country Park during August and September. For example, one week in September had ideal weather for butterfly flight but no butterflies were seen. Possibly the parched condition of ground vegetation could have been a factor.

The Gatekeeper, one of the later season butterflies had its lowest transect counts for many years. However, numbers of other grassland Satyrinae subfamily butterflies had reasonable numbers including the Speckled Wood, the Ringlet; and the Meadow Brown which remained the most numerous of the butterflies at the Country Park. The Marbled White which has established at Fryent Country Park only in recent years, had its highest counts to date. A favourite food-plant of the adult Marbled White is the Common Knapweed growing in meadows though the caterpillars eat grass. As in previous years, the Marbled White was observed only in the open and not on the more shaded Beane Hill transect.

Numbers of the Large Skipper; and of the Essex Skipper and Small Skipper remained low. The Brimstone is a sight of spring and has been encouraged to the Country Park by the planting of Alder Buckthorn. The other species recorded on the transects were Large White, Small White, Green-veined White, Orange Tip, Small Copper, Common Blue, Holly Blue, Red Admiral, Peacock and Comma.

Monitoring is during the months of April to September and involves a walk along two transect routes, to count the butterflies. Walks are weekly but as part of a rota, so recorders take a turn every few weeks. Briefing can be provided for new walkers and that includes of the transect walk method that is used nationally.

The results have been entered into the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme database and shared also with the London Natural History Society, Greenspace Information for Greater London, and Hertfordshire and Middlesex Butterfly Conservation.

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