Butterfly Conservation Dorset Branch
Newsletter No 87

Dorset Butterfly Report for 2017

www.dorsetbutterflies.com

Butterfly Conservation
Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Editor's Notes

From Lyn Pullen

We are delighted to bring you the Butterfly Report for 2017 rather earlier than we managed last year. The next newsletter will be following quite soon, but, as the Report was complete, we didn't see any point in holding it back.

Bill Shreeves, as ever, has done a superb job of analysing the year's results and working out which butterflies did well or otherwise. Putting this printed version of Bill's presentations to the area meetings together, it was certainly nice to not be typing such a long list of 'losers' as last year! Bill has also added some extra information on the Comma and Silver-washed Fritillary and the different forms they can take.

Our thanks must go to all of you who have sent in butterfly records via whatever means. If you haven't really got into it yet, do have a look at the 'recording' page on our website for a list of ideas of how you can contribute.

One way of joining in is to help ensure every kilometre square in Dorset has as many species as possible recorded, and you will find the current 'White Holes' map and an explanation of it on pages 29 and 30. The website has a more advanced version of the map: you can click on any kilometre square to see its grid reference, and which species have been recorded in this five-year recording cycle. This is updated continuously with the records which come into the

website, though other records can only be added at the end of the year. Go to the Recording page and click on White Holes, to find the interactive white holes map.

The Events List for Spring/Summer 2018 is accompanying this Report, so we hope you can come along to some of the events Arthur Bryant has organised - Arthur is another essential member of the team, who produces a superb programme of events each year, and types them into both our website and HQ's website, which must send him quite cross-eyed.

The final members of the Newsletter team to be thanked are Nigel Spring and Jane Smith for reading through this publication to make sure I have not made any awful mistakes, Robin for arranging the labels for the envelopes, Adrian for booking the room at HQ in which we stuff the envelopes, and the stuffers - as yet unknown - for the final task which falls to the Branch. Thanks too, to HQ staff for making us welcome and putting the 900-odd envelopes through the franking machine.

We are grateful for those members who have gone over to receiving electronic copies, as this saves us money which can be put to conservation, though we understand those who prefer to have a print copy. The printing costs for the year's three Newsletters and two Events Lists are around £2,000, with postage adding another £1,200. New members are automatically receiving digital copies now, though they can opt in to hard copies if they wish. Anybody wishing to opt out of hard copy should contact Robin George.

If you are around Winfrith Newburgh in the summer, do have a look at my plant sale stall - all profits go to Butterfly Conservation.

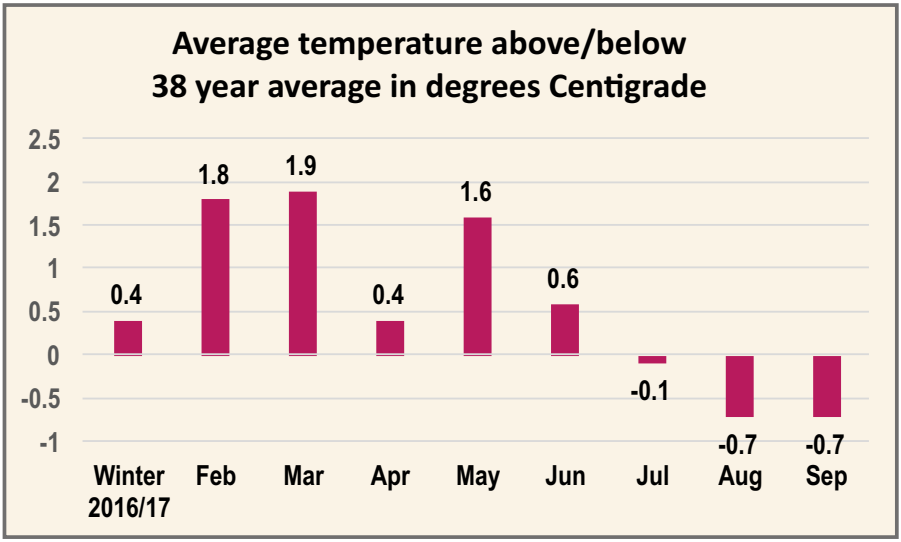
Enjoy the summer and enjoy your butterflies!

Lyn Pullen

Weather

The temperatures in 2017 can be seen in the graph below and the key points to note are:

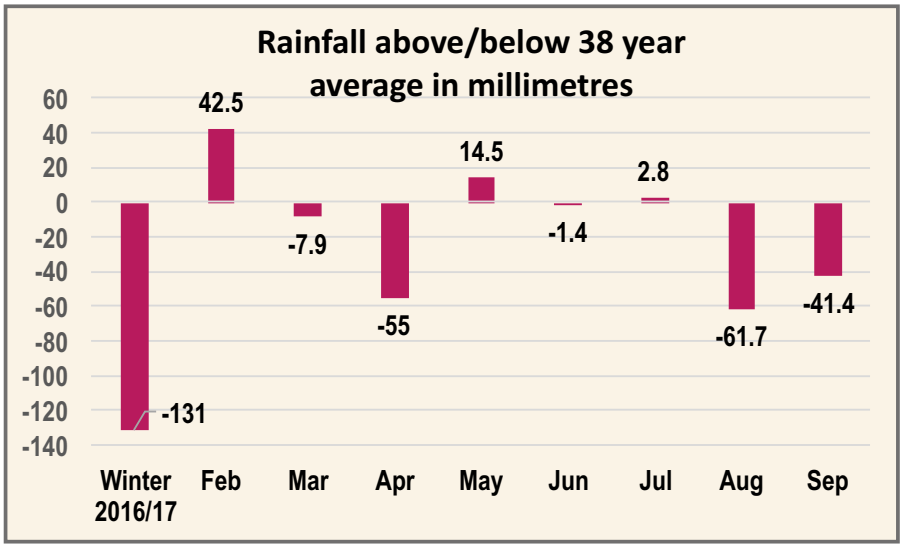
- The winter temperatures were above average again, though not as extremely as 2015/16 (0.4 degrees above rather than 1.7).
- Unlike 2016, March and April were well above average.
- May and June were also well above average compared to 2016.
- August and September were both well below average for 2017, while in 2016 they were well above. This might not bode well for 2018 butterflies with eggs laid at this time.



The main points arising from the rainfall data are that:

- Butterflies in 2017 had experienced an extremely dry winter on the whole – very different from their predecessors in 2016, who followed a very wet one.

Weather

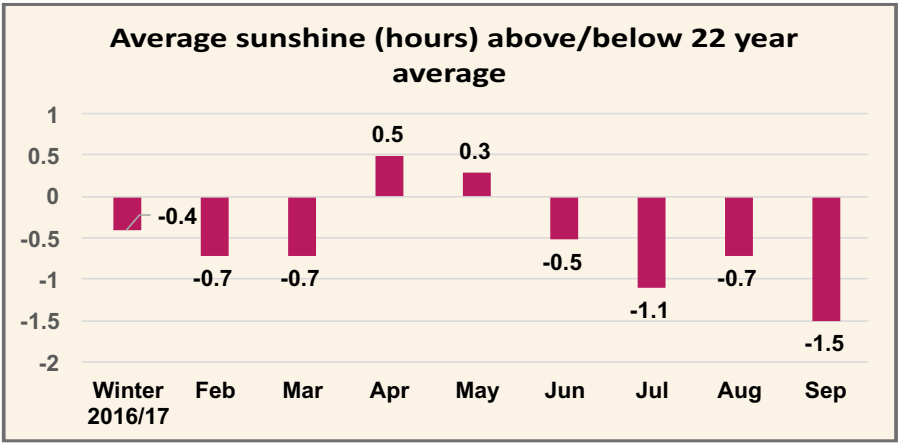


- Only February had well above average rain in 2017 which left March to July 2017 both warm and relatively dry – usually good for butterflies as long as it was not a drought. Slightly above average rain in May and July ensured that this was not so.



Above photos (left to right): Wall Brown (Gordon Cryer); Small Copper (Charlie Steadman); Brown Argus (Chris Becker).
All these are 'winning' butterflies (see page 14) which could take advantage of their multi-brood status thanks to the weather.

Weather



The key points arising from the sunshine figures (above) are:

- The sunshine figures available from the Westgates at Fontmell Magna only cover 22 years compared to the 38 year coverage for rain & temperature so they must be used with some caution.

- Only April and May 2017 had above average sunshine but this would have reinforced the good start given by the dry rainfall and good temperature data. Species with first broods should have been given a good start.

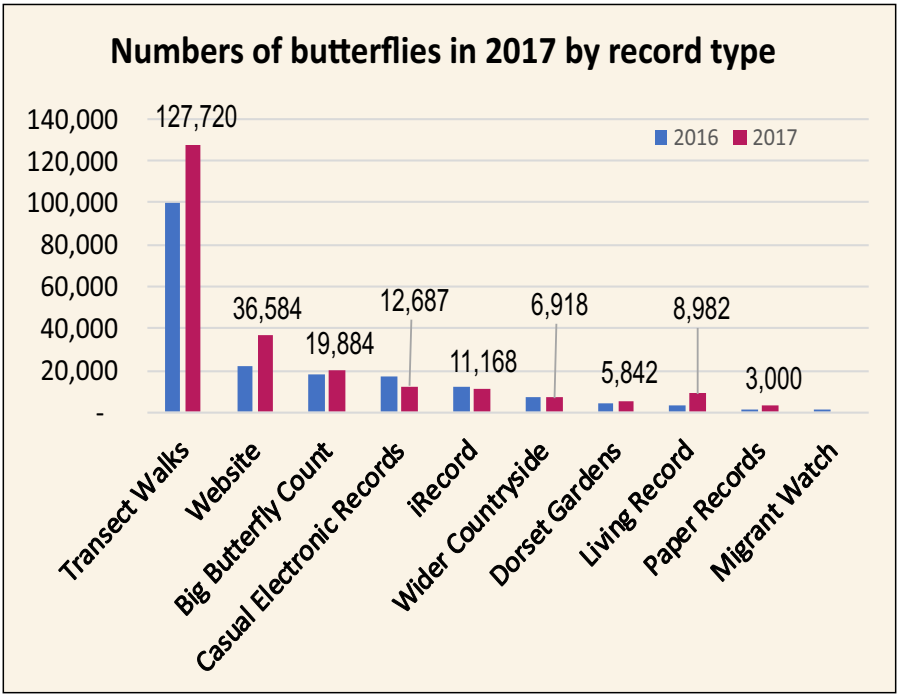
- The below average sunshine figures for August and September reinforce the dismal below-average temperature and above-average rainfall figures which must have hampered flight and therefore egg laying for species with two broods or late first broods. This will probably have more consequences for 2018 than 2017.

Altogether, the weather data should predict an excellent start to 2017, especially with the good kick-off from dry warm 2016 August and September, but a poor finish.

All Butterfly Data for 2017

Total butterflies 2017 - 234,802,
Total butterflies 2016 - 188,744
Increase of over 24%

Fewer records were received in 2017 than the previous year from the Wider Countryside Scheme, iRecord and via casual electronic records, but judging by our other numbers this was a decrease in recording, not butterflies.



Butterfly Transect Data for 2017

Transect walks are always our biggest contributor of records, and the most scientifically useful, in that they have a set of rules regarding the conditions in which to walk, which makes the data more accurately comparable over a long period of time.

Dorset runs a high number of transect walks - 64 in 2017 - and more help is always needed to ensure all 26 weeks are walked. If you would like to become part of a transect walking team, please contact Bill Shreeves (see inside back cover).

Taking a break from butterfly spotting.
Photo: Lyn Pullen

There is a map showing the location of the walks on our website - go to 'Recording', then 'Become a Recorder' and scroll down to 'Butterfly transect and target species recording'.

Although all transect teams try to make sure all 26 weeks are walked, some inevitably are missed, often due to the weather not being sufficiently good. 2017 was a record year, with the lowest number of missed weeks over the last twelve years. 64 walks, walked 26 times gives a potential total of 1664 individual walks, of which only 124 were missed. It was obviously a better year weather-wise, but thanks also to the walkers for their dedication.

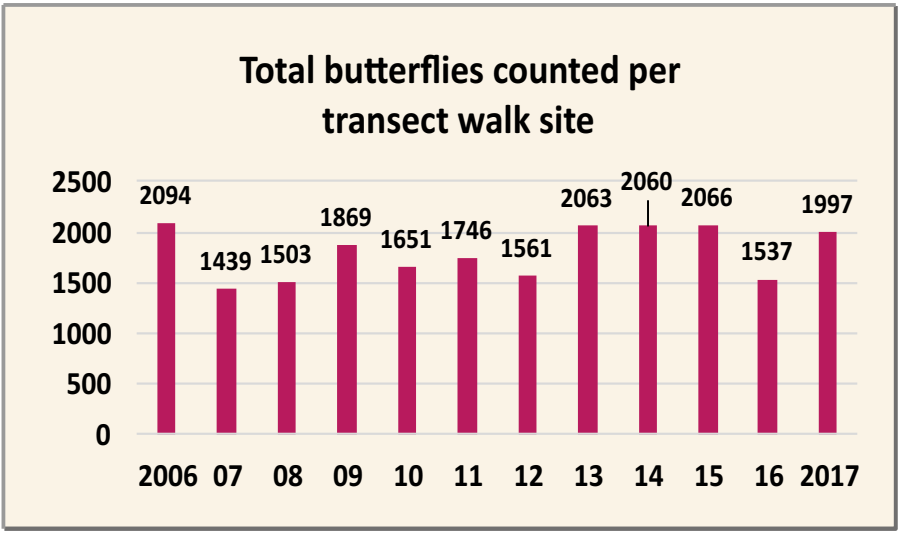
Regarding the actual butterfly records, the computer software we use: 'Transect Walker Online' uses an averaging system to create records for missed walks, but generally missed walks still count quite heavily against results.

Butterfly Transect Data for 2017

The total number of butterflies counted per transect walk site was up by 30% on 2016, when the count was 1,537. 2017's total was 1,997.

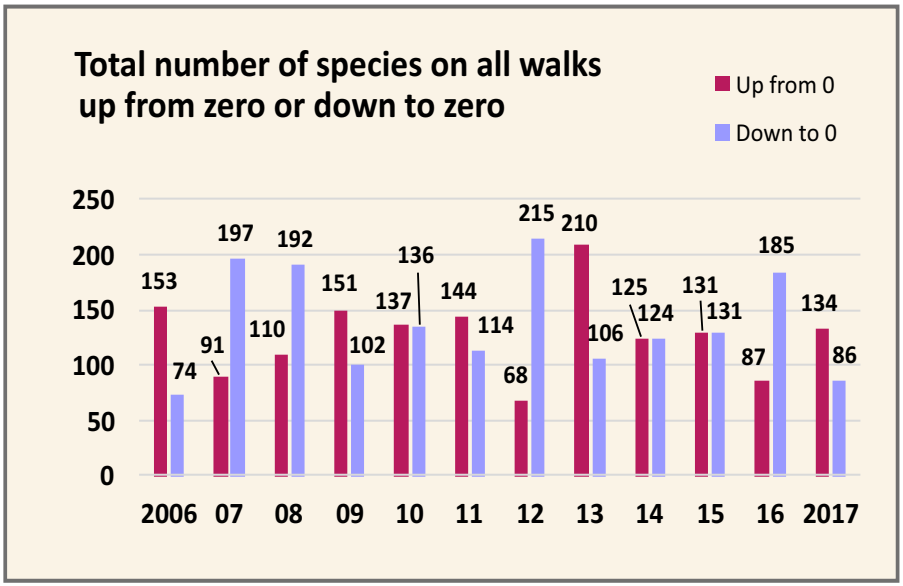
To put this in a wider context, the average count between 2006 and 2017 was 1,799, so 2017 was comfortably above average.

Highest total count for the year was 6,470 butterflies at Ballard Down



Although our name is "Butterfly Conservation" (for simplicity), we do work just as hard to help moths. If you record moths, you can see the variety of ways in which to send in your records on the website of our sister organisation, the Dorset Moth Group: www.dorsetmothgroup.info

Butterfly Transect Data for 2017



The figures in the graph above show that 2017 was decidedly a better year than 2016: 134 species go up, compared to 87 in the previous year, while only 86 go down, compared to 185.

Overall, the numbers rising from zero put 2017 in sixth place over the last 12 years, well behind 2013 which had 210. The number falling to zero, however, put 2017 in second place, with only 2006 doing worse with 74 to 86.

The final statistical measurement we look at takes the number of species which increased or decreased by over 50% on over half of the transect walk sites which recorded it. The increase may be measured against either the previous year's figure on the annual average since each walk began. The method assumes that the year may best be judged by these large fluctuations, leaving other species relatively static.

Butterfly Transect Data for 2017

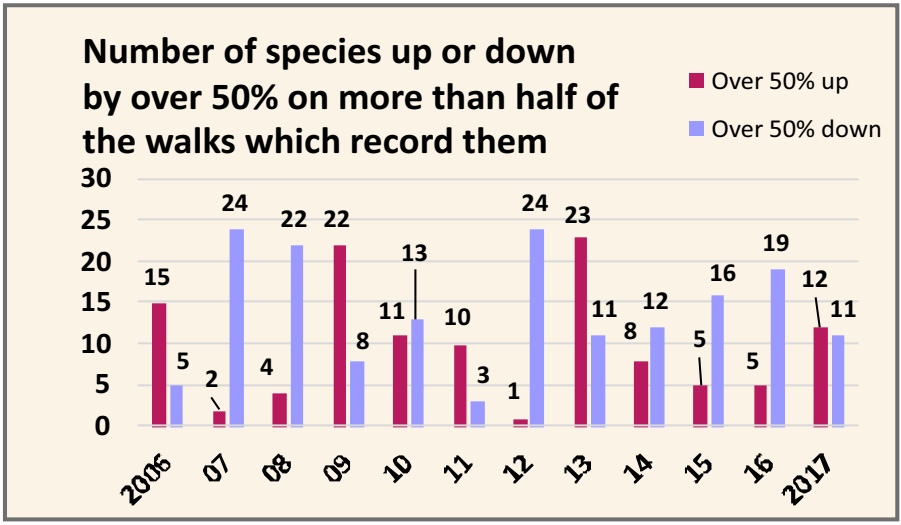
Silver-spotted Skipper. Photo: Mark Pike

As with the other statistics looked at, this shows 2017 was a big improvement on the previous year, with the numbers of species 'up' from five to 12, and 'down' from 19 to 11. Again, however, 2017 proves to have been below many other years.

In regard to numbers 'up' it falls to fourth position, well below the record of 23 held by 2013. In numbers 'down' it finishes at eighth lowest, with 11 a long way below the leaders (2007 and 2012) with 24.

2017 had:

- Fourth highest number of species up by over 50%
- Eighth lowest number of species down by over 50%



Top Winners for 2017

2017 Butterfly of the year:-
The Comma
Close second: the SWF

We call a butterfly a 'winner' for the year if it has a gain of over 50% on both the previous year and judged against the annual average figure for it. On these criteria, there are two winners for 2017.

The **Comma** was up by 71% and 59% over 58 sites.

The **Silver-Washed Fritillary** was recorded on 35 sites and was up by 91% against the previous year and 73% against its average.

The Silver-washed Fritillary, had higher percentage improvements on both criteria, though the Comma achieved this in a much larger number of sites: 58 to 35. The Comma finally out-did the SWF very decidedly by appearing in 81 new squares since 1995, while the SWF only managed 28.

We will look in more detail at what we know about the reasons behind the success of each species later in this booklet (see page 22); for now, we will continue to look at the winners and losers.

Photos above: (Left) Comma, photo Mark Pike. (Right) Silver-washed Fritillary, photo Chris Rowland.

More Winners for 2017

There were three species whose numbers were over 50% above their annual averages.

Red Admirals scored an increase of 59% and were recorded on all the transects in this year's statistics. They were butterfly of the year in 2016, and narrowly missed reaching this record for a second time, but with such large counts in 2016, it would have been very hard for the species to have increased by another 50% on both the previous year and their annual average. It is worth noting that the species was reported in every month of the year via our website.

Essex Skipper were up 67% on 12 sites, but the problems with identifying this butterfly mean we cannot totally trust the figures.

The **Ringlet** seems to be doing very well: it has appeared twice as our winner for the year in 2009 and 2014, and 2016 saw it up 54% on 57 sites.

Four species achieved 50% above the previous year, though with 2016 being such a bad year this was not too difficult.

Common Blue were 71% up on 59 sites, thanks to the weather enabling it to build up second broods from very poor first broods: Fontmell Down went from 18 (first brood) to 204 (second brood). This species has been in the winning list four times before: 2003; 2008; 2010; 2013.

Three Common Blues. Photo: Mark Pike

More Winners for 2017

The **Small Heath** was up 62% on 45 sites. As a species it has two or three broods in a year, which is probably an advantage, though the system is so complex that it is little understood: not every egg that is laid develops into an adult in the same year, and sometimes three generations

Small Heath. Photo: Brian Arnold

of caterpillar may hibernate together. It has managed to be in the winners three times before: 2003; 2009 and 2013.

For both **Gatekeeper** and **Meadow Brown** this is their first time in the winners league. Gatekeepers achieved 58% increase on 2016 and Meadow Browns 52%, both being counted on all 64 transects.

Three species managed to be more than 50% above their 2016 numbers, but below their annual averages.

The **Wall** was 68% up (19 sites) but 100% down on its annual average. It has only been in the winners league once before, in 2009.

The **Brown Argus** was 67% up (27 sites) but down on its average by 56%, while the **Small Copper** was 60% up (55 sites) but 55% down compared to its average.

The Brown Argus had featured in the winners league six times previously, but the Small Copper only once. All three of them (including the Wall) were able to take advantage of their multi-brood status*.

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*Butterflies who have more than one brood in a season will benefit if the early-season weather is bad, as they have a second chance to multiply.

Losers in 2017

It is pleasing to note that with only 11 'losing' species, 2017 was the best year since 2011, when there were three. They were:

- Adonis Blue
- Chalkhill Blue
- Clouded Yellow
- Grayling
- Grizzled Skipper
- Lulworth Skipper
- Painted Lady
- Purple Hairstreak
- Small Blue
- Small Skipper
- Small Tortoiseshell

There were five species which were over 50% below their average for two or more years. The most worrying of these is the **Chalkhill Blue,** which is covered in detail overleaf. The **Adonis Blue** and the **Small Tortoiseshell** have now been losers for three consecutive years, while the **Grizzled Skipper** and **Grayling** have lost for two. Three of the five (Chalkhill, Grayling and Grizzled Skipper) have the disadvantage of being single brooded.

Four other species have become a loser (over 50% down on annual averages).

The **Lulworth Skipper** has been in the loser category six times since 2000, including three consecutive years from 2010-12. Despite increasing its range to most of Portland and sometimes expanding its flight period back into April it is struggling to build up its numbers as it used to be able to.

This is the fourth time in the lower league for the **Small Blue,** but so far it has always bounced back in the following year, so we are keeping our fingers crossed for 2018.

The **Purple Hairstreak** is also in the loser league for the fourth time, but it is not really a species which shows up well on transect walks, as much depends on the luck of spotting its occasional descent from the tree tops.

This is the **Small Skipper's** third appearance in the ranks of the losers - previously 2010 and 2012.

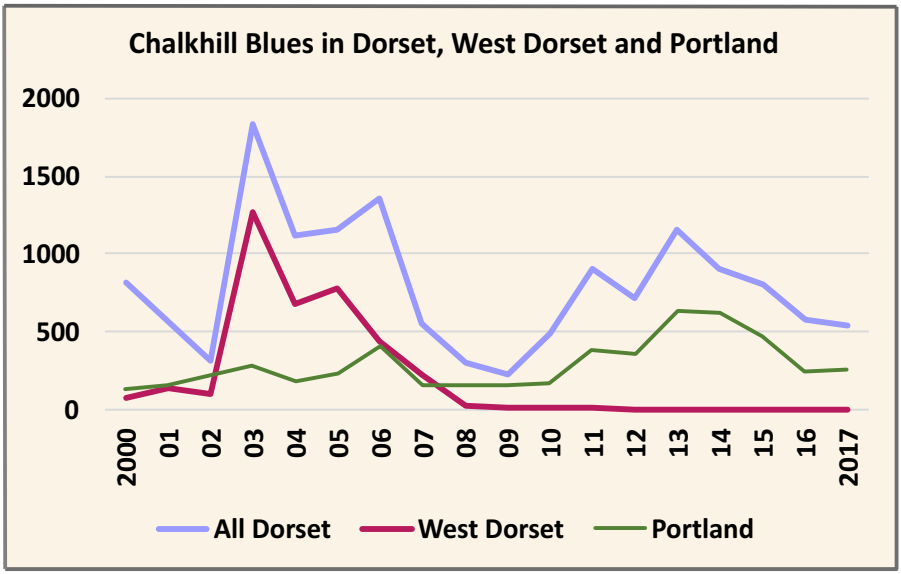
Losers in 2017 - Chalkhill

The **Chalkhill Blue** is our biggest concern: as you can see from the graph, it is declining throughout Dorset, but by far the steepest decline is in the west.

The general decline started in 2014, but there has been a total collapse of colonies west of Portland, where it is measured by four transect walks, on Cerne, Blackhill, Hogcliffe and Lankham Bottom, none of which have recorded a single Chalkhill Blue in the last four years. By contrast, only four of Portland's 17 kilometre squares has not recorded a Chalkhill Blue.

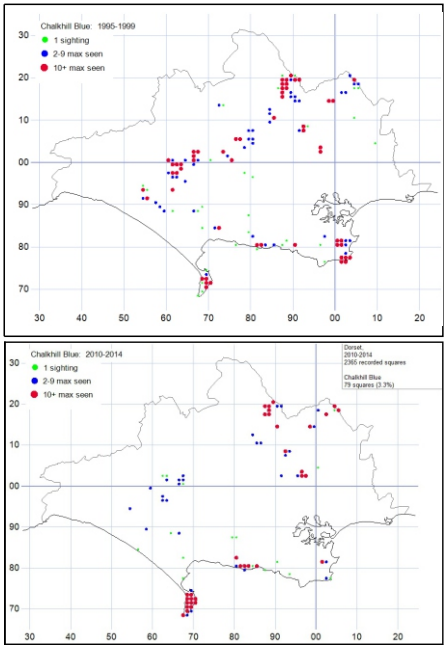
Possible reasons put forward are:
a) chemicals excreted from cows (we believe there to be no cows on Portland)
b) Rise in temperature; we know Wiltshire has the same problem
c) A pathogen specific to the Chalkhill has got out of control.

It is possible that all three factors are playing a part.



The graph above gives a visual representation of the situation; it is not entirely accurate, due to walks missing in some years. Some missing data has been estimated.

Losers in 2017 - Chalkhill



The two distribution maps to the left also show the loss of the **Chalkhill Blue**, but measured by all records received, not just those of transect walks.

The 1995-99 map (top) shows that the south chalk colonies below the river Frome still just about linked up eastwards from Haydon Down to Maiden Castle.

The 2010-14 map shows these links more or less gone.

YOU CAN HELP

The system we had for monitoring most of the Chalkhill sites at least once in every five years has broken down, and so we need the sites where they have previously been recorded to be visited in 2018 to see if any remain. The full list of sites is on the website: go to the Species page and find the Chalkhill Blue section for a link to it.

Chalkhill Blue. Photo: Penny Hawes

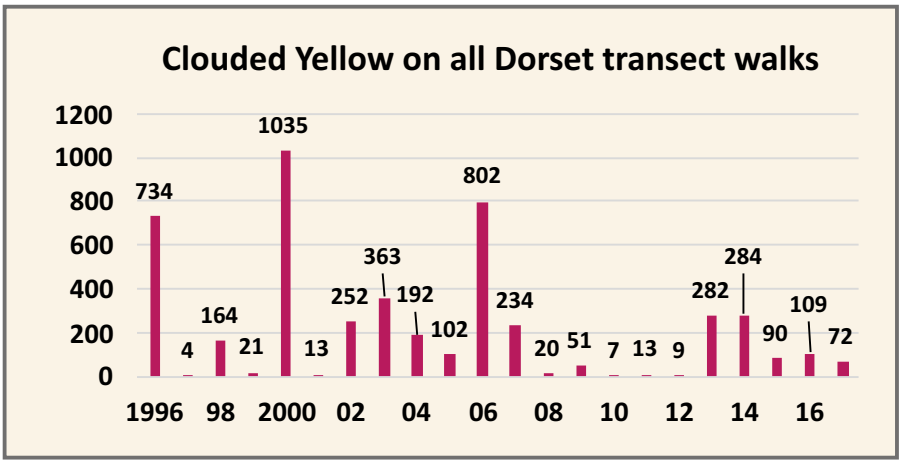
Regular Migrants

We seem to have had talk of a possible inward migration of **Painted Ladies** for some years, but it is yet to happen. We always get a few, but some years are way above the rest.

The 'normal' number counted is in the 50-800 range, but back in 2009 we recorded 5,035, in 2003 the figure was 3,123, and in the amazing year of 1996 we scored 18,311! The highest counts were at Durlston East (near Swanage) and Lydlinch (North Dorset), both of which recorded 28 over the season; it is interesting that the number is as high as far inland as Lydlinch.

Painted Lady. Photo: Andrew Reekie

The number of **Clouded Yellow** which turn up is very variable. The last major migration year was 2006. Again, it is penetrating well inland, with Lydlinch having the top count of 10. Very early sightings on the Bournemouth Undercliff suggest that it is still successfully overwintering there.



Migrants

The **Red Admiral** had its third-highest count on transect walks, the highest individual score being at Melbury Down and Wood, with 261. There were some very high counts at the end of the season on ivy blossom. We still lack clear evidence of what proportion of Red Admirals do hibernate and what proportion are migrants. Although we know that large numbers take part in reverse migration at low level, we don't know whether any use high level migration, as the Painted Lady and Silver Y moth are known to do. There have been some records of late larvae but not much evidence of them being able to overwinter.

Wood White

The Wood White has not been seen on or off the transect walk route around Powerstock since 2012, and it was not seen in 2017 at its other location, the Undercliff west of Lyme Regis in 2016. This area had suffered a severe landslip, leading to concern that it was extinct in Dorset. Over the UK it has declined by 65% since the 1970s.

However, the great news is that they have not only returned to the Undercliff, but good numbers have been seen in both the May and the July/August broods. 26 May saw 30 recorded, while on 25 July eight were seen. Some egg-laying on Meadow Vetchling has also been observed.

Wood White 2017. Photo: Mark Pike

It is a dainty butterfly with rounded edges to its white upperwings; the undersides are white with indistinct grey markings. It has a slow, fluttery way of flying.

Unusual Vistors

There were no other genuine migrants but Dorset did have what is possibly our first ever **Geranium Bronze** photographed and reported to us by Colin Lamond in Verwood on 20th, 27th and 31st August. There may have been more than one but Colin never saw more than one at any one time.

The Geranium Bronze originates in Cape Town, but has recently reached the coast of the Mediterranean, then progressed inland up the west coast of France. The explanation for this magical expansion is that it feeds on cultivated geraniums. Ironically gardeners are up in arms against it in many countries, but it is the European trade in Geraniums which is spreading the species. Colin told me that his wife had bought some geraniums from the local nursery.

Geranium Bronze.
Photo: Colin Lamond.

The only butterfly of this species known to have survived the winter in England did so in a conservatory. The first sighting in England was in a garden in Lewes, Sussex on 21 September 1997. Four were seen and eggs were laid on potted geraniums. The last seen was on 1 Nov. Though another appeared the following May, it was thought to have survived the winter in a neighbour's greenhouse.

Have you thought about remembering Butterfly Conservation in your will?
Help from the Government is reducing, leaving us a big funding gap.

Unusual Visitors

Monarchs were seen at Durlston from 13 to 19 August. Most probably the sightings and photos were of the same individual. Weddings are held at Durlston but they are not allowed to use confetti, let alone live butterflies, as are released at some weddings.

Clouded Yellows and Painted Ladies were around at the time, but as Monarchs from the colony in Spain have never been seen to migrate, this is probably just a coincidence. The Monarch's migrations across the Atlantic are not usually made until late September or October, and no others have been reported. However, on 21 August, an American Yellow Headed Warbler was reported from Portland, so is there a connection?

The case of the release of Monarchs at a wedding at Compton Acres (Poole), which you will have read about in the Autumn 2017 Newsletter, continues. Currently a police enquiry involving Poole and Bournemouth police and the national Butterfly Conservation is on-going, as the release of non-native species is definitely against the law and Monarchs are not native to the British Isles.

Monarch. Photo: C Verey

Success of the SWF & Comma

In 2017, **The Silver-washed Fritillary** (SWF) celebrated its second-highest count (1,651) in the years since 1999, albeit a long way behind the bumper year of 2006, when it made an astonishing 2,880.

The Comma managed the highest count in the years since 2000, with a total of 1,003. It's numbers do not fluctuate as much as the SWF, but have been as low as 285 (2012) with the second highest year being 2003, with 946.

So how did the weather affect these two winning species?

Silver-washed Fritillary

1) The egg laying stage back in August and September 2016 had above average temperatures and below average rain, so must have been perfect. Eggs are usually laid in the crevices of tree bark.

SWF caterpillar. Photographer unknown.

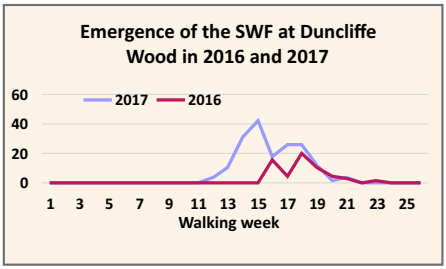
2)The caterpillars spend the winter living off just the eggshell and hibernating on a spun pad of silk on the tree trunk. The winter weather was above average warm and dry; it is uncertain whether that would be particularly favourable.

3) In spring the caterpillars creep down to the ground to find violets, and the weather from Feb to May was above average temperatue but average rainfall, which must have been very favourable.

4) The chrysalis stage is centred mainly in June; with above average temperature but average rain, this was favourable weather.

5)The weather for the main July/August flight period was the first unfavourable period with temperature and sunshine below average. However, it was also unusually dry, and the high count of SWF shows that the earlier stages must have built up sufficient numbers.

Success of the SWF & Comma



The emergence graph for Dorset's best SWF count at Duncliffe shows that in 2017 (blue) there was an extremely early emergence from mid June, which was not the case in 2016 (red) when emergence only started in July, though going through into September. In 2017, perhaps as a result of the poor weather, the flight period came to an early end in late August. The interesting questions for 2018 are whether the early start to egg laying will cancel out the poor July-September weather and whether the winter and spring give us any unpleasant weather surprises.

Comma

The Comma's story is complex.

1) Unlike the SWF, the Comma overwinters as a butterfly. For this the weather was warm (which was not good) but dry (possibly OK).

2) From April to May the Commas mated and laid eggs in excellent warm and dry conditions.

3) After this things get more complicated. Caterpillars which grow up earlier in the year and experience 18-20 hours of light per day plus lengthening days turn into Hutchinsoni, especially if the caterpillars experience warmth or especially nutritious food. These fly in June/Early July.

Caterpillars developing from eggs laid later and which experience shorter hours of daylight emerge later in July and through August.

The Hutchinsoni butterflies live only a few weeks but in the warm, dry and sunny May laid plenty of eggs which matured into normal Commas in August; at this point they met the slow track normal Commas. Neither of these branches of Commas mate but go into hibernation after feeding up in September/October. The weather was good enough to

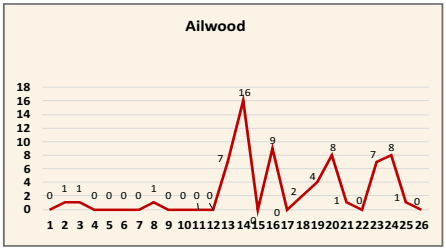
Success of the SWF & Comma

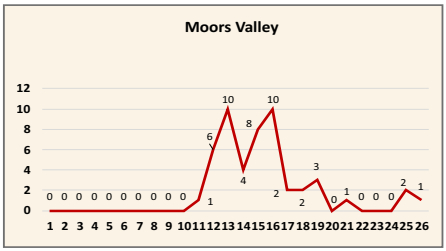
produce large numbers of Commas of both sorts but we must wait to see how they cope with hibernation.

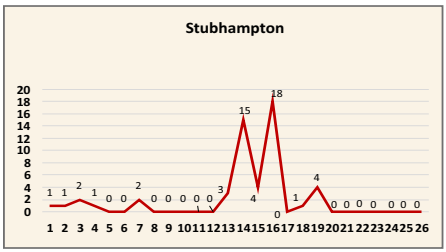
Looking at the story of the four sites with the largest Comma counts in each region in 2017: Ailwood (S); Stubhampton (N); Moors Valley (E) and Radipole (W) shows how complex it can be. If we had used all the transect walks with Commas, it is fairly sure they would have been recorded in every week of the 26-week walking period. Moors Valley recorded no Commas in April/May, all sites recorded them in June and July when the highest counts came, Radipole missed out

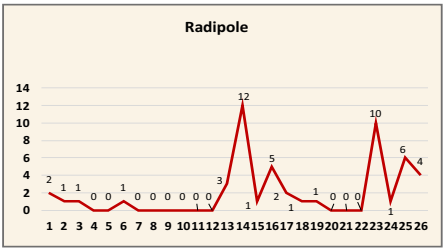
Comma. Photo: James Gould

in August and Stubhampton in September. It could be that the majority in June were Hutchinsoni who had the best of the weather, but as we don't record Hutchinsoni separately we can't tell.









SWF and Comma

One common feature of both the SWF and the Comma is that they both have a variant form.

The SWF has a female form known as Valezina. Instead of the normal orange her wings are a sort of dusky green. If you look at the photo on the front cover, you will see a mating pair, of which the female is Valezina

When females of this type are bred in captivity a greater proportion emerge as Valezina than in the wild, where they are confined largely to south central England at a ratio of between 5 and 15% of Valezina females to the normal form.

Although Valezina is not separately recorded by Butterfly Conservation for their Levana Butterfly Atlas we in Dorset Branch have tried (with some difficulty) to record the form separately. The graph does seem to show a decline in the percentage of Valezinas compared to all normal male and females counted, but may not be reliable. One behaviour

Silver-washed Fritillary, Valezina form. Photo: Colin Burningham.

characteristic of Valezina is that she tends to fly in much shadier areas possibly because her dusky body may be prone to overheating. Global warming might therefore bring about a general decline in numbers if woods heated up. It is interesting that the highest percentage of those which were counted (3.3%) coincides with one of the lowest counts of all SWF in 2008. It should certainly be well worthwhile to continue to count Valezina separately.

The **Comma** has its own variation known as Hutchinsoni, after Emma Hutchinson who, in the 1890s, determined that the Comma could be double brooded and perfected a method

SWF and Comma

of breeding the golden form ever since named after her. In those days Commas were virtually confined to the Welsh borders: from 1830-1929 there were fewer than half a dozen recorded in Dorset.

Unlike the SWF Valezina, which is always female, male or female Commas can be Hutchinsoni and can easily be distinguished on both upper and underside by their much more golden colour. The upper side is also much smoother without the accentuated jagged form of the normal version. They can represent up to two fifths of the mid summer Commas.




Left: Hutchinsoni. Right: Normal.
Photos: Top left - K. Miller; Bottom left - P.Cooper.
Top right: Brian Arnold; Botton right - K. Dolbear

The Dorset Branch of Butterfly Conservation is one of 32 Branches of this UK organisation, dedicated to saving butterflies, moths and the environment. **www.butterfly-conservation.org**

Wider Countryside Records

The Wider Countryside Scheme, operated all over the country, aims to see how butterflies are doing in general, so the places to be surveyed are selected at random, to ensure there is no bias towards the better spots.

Dorset was the top branch for the number of squares surveyed in 2017, with a total of 61. We survey nearly 10% of the national total of squares!

The Wider Countryside scheme recorded:

	Number of km squares recorded	Number of species recorded	Number of butterflies recorded
2017	61	33	6,987
2016	56	32	7,306
2015	58	34	7,355

Species not seen in 2017 that were the previous year were Brown Hairstreak and White Admiral. Species seen in 2017 but not 2016 were the Chalkhill Blue, the Dingy Skipper and the Clouded Yellow.

This is a much less intensive monitoring system than transect walking - you only need do two or three walks in the year. Not all walks will turn up rare species, but the results are vital to our knowledge of how butterflies are faring in the places where they are not specially looked after. If you could help, please contact Adrian Neil (see inside back cover).

Dingy Skippers. Photo: Christine Brown

Garden Recording

One way we encourage you to record butterflies is to note those in your garden. This scheme has been going for some time, using paper recording forms, which can still be used, but you can now report your sighting on a national database: www.gardenbutterflysurvey.org.

The two schemes are slightly different, in that the paper record only asks for the first sighting of each species, while the on-line one allows you to record any sighting, and the number of a species you have seen. The online results for Dorset are fed back to us at the end of the year.

2017 saw 35 different species recorded in Dorset gardens: one up from 2016 but one down from 2015. Species gained were the Essex Skipper, Purple Hairstreak and Geranium Bronze, while losses, compared to 2016, were the Adonis Blue and the Purple Emperor. The only exotic species was the Geranium Blue, mentioned on page 20. Adrian Neil, who runs the scheme locally, notes that White Admirals are now seen every year, which must be in gardens near suitable woodland,

White Admiral. Photo: Tim Field

Garden gaps we need particular help filling are in the areas around:

- Halstock
- Sandford Orcas
- Buckhorn Weston
- Cranborne
- Alderholt
- Highcliffe

But we welcome all records from any part of Bournemouth, Poole or Dorset.

White Holes - Please Help

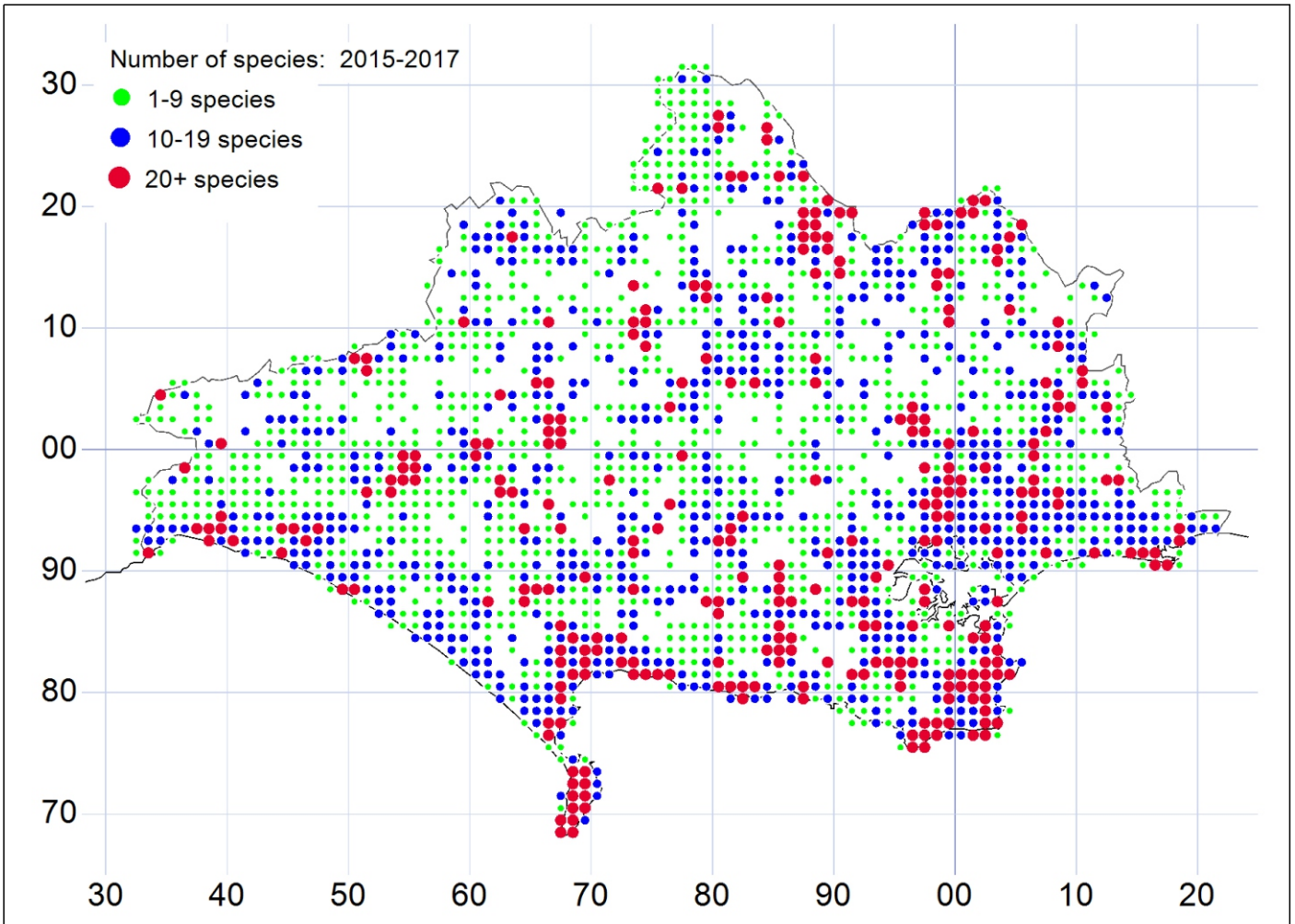
Marsh Fritillaries on orchids. Photo: Charles Williams

Butterflies are recorded nationally in a five-year recording cycle. The current cycle started in 2015 and ends in 2019, so 2017 marked the half-way point. We are doing quite well in Dorset: **see the map overleaf** which shows how many species have been recorded so far in each square. Squares where nothing has been recorded are called 'White Holes'.

We cannot rest on our laurels for the last two years, though. While we have less 'white holes' than usual at this point in the recording cycle, a lot of the squares have only been 'filled' by a low number of species.

It is only by good recording of butterflies over a long period of time that we can judge how well they are doing, both in distribution (as in the map) and in abundance, so please do all you can to record every butterfly you see, and if you can get out into the under-recorded areas, that would be superb.

Sightings of all species, even the common ones, are important, and can be recorded via the website: www.dorsetbutterflies.com, where you will also find an interactive version of the white holes map which allows you to identify which species have been seen in each square.


Number of species: 2015-2017
1-9 species
10-19 species
20+ species
30
20
10
00
90
80
70
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
00
10
20
30

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Peacock. Photo: Brian Arnold.