

## essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 14-Apr-12 07:53 AM GMT

Hi everyone,welcome to my personal diary!

I hope you enjoy my occasional reports from Essex, my old home in Cornwall,and trips to other places.

After reports from others on this forum,the Orange Tips in Essex have started to emerge, about the same time as last year,but earlier than in 2010.



## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 16-Apr-12 06:35 AM GMT

Today,after work,i took the chance to visit West Wood,an Essex Wildlife Trust ancient wood near Thaxted. It was too cold for any butterflies, but i visit the wood in April to see the flowers.Lots of violets and anemones are present,and the early purple orchids are coming out as well. But this is an oxlip wood. Part of the primrose family,oxlips are an Essex treasure, for they are only found here,and a few woods in Suffolk and Cambridgeshire near the border with Essex. Oxlips have declined, and much work is being done in the wood to maintain their numbers.



## Re: essex buzzard

by hilary, 16-Apr-12 09:47 PM GMT

It was good to see the Oxslips in the wild. Hope they recover their numbers. I grew some from seed a few years back and they have spread very quickly and are a hit with the bees.

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 17-Apr-12 05:12 AM GMT

Considering their rarity in the wild,oxlips are surprisingly easy to grow. Any ordinary soil will do,as long as it doesn't dry out. I have several good clumps in my garden in sun or shade,on heavy clay. They even resist some trampling,and often seed themselves in gaps in my paving. And you don't have to live in Essex to grow them in your garden! Lovely 😊

## Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 17-Apr-12 06:16 AM GMT

Interesting – what are the defining features of this species that splot it from other primroses?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by David M, 17-Apr-12 06:40 AM GMT

I didn't realise they were rare in the wild. I saw a clump growing on my local patch yesterday and barely gave it more than a cursory moment's thought.

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 17-Apr-12 07:04 AM GMT

Hi wurzel. How do you identify oxlips? Well firstly, its range– anything growing well away from Essex in the wild is not them! The oxlip flowers grow at the top a central stem, like the cowslip and garden polyanthus, where as primrose flowers are borne singly from the leaf rosette.

Also, cowslips don't often grow in woods, at least within the oxlip range. Oxlips produce larger, but fewer flowers per stem than cowslips, on average, which should separate these two. And the flowers often face to one side.

But it is never that simple. Because there is also the false oxlip, a natural cowslip X primrose cross! It is these that could be mistaken for 'oxlips' in other parts of the country. They also grow in Essex. But i have never found them without one or both parents present.

True oxlips, in contrast, are often found without its relatives.

Hi David, they must (presumably!) have been false oxlips!

### Re: essex buzzard

by David M, 17-Apr-12 07:11 AM GMT

#### "essexbuzzard" wrote:

Hi David, they must (presumably!) have been false oxlips!

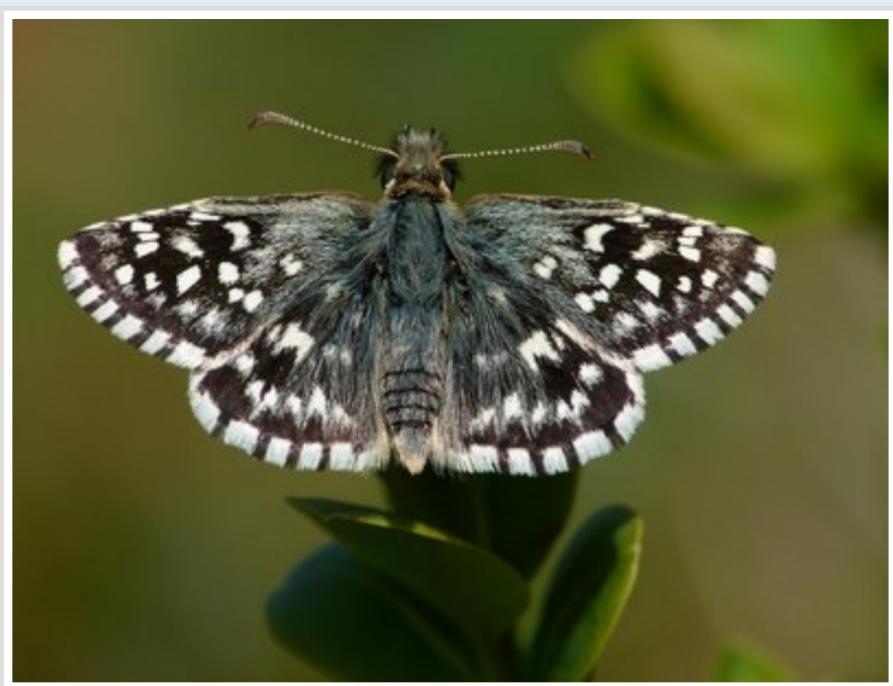
Maybe. The area where they were growing is one that regularly attracts tippers, so it could well be that they're garden varieties.

I'll take a photo next time I'm passing by.

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 19-Apr-12 06:02 AM GMT

Despite not ideal weather, it's the only chance i will get, so, on Tuesday, i went out for my first butterfly trip of the season, my annual trip down to Mill Hill, Sussex. It was windy there, and cool, but the sun soon came out, and, after 11AM, i saw about half a dozen of my target species at the bottom of the slope:



### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 19-Apr-12 06:50 AM GMT

Last year, there were several Dingies on Mill Hill by mid April but this year, despite much searching, i failed to find any. Perhaps the chilly weather has delayed emergence, although the Kipper has seen one. However, there was compensation when i found this little beauty looking at me from behind the fresh new leaves:



*Green Hairstreak*

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 28-Apr-12 06:38 AM GMT

Hi all, well with the rotten weather this week, there has been very little chance of seeing butterflies, so I opted for a trip to Cricklade North Meadow, a NNR between Swindon and Cirencester. Although a species-rich reserve, the main reason for my visit was to see the snakes-head fritillaries. This fantastic site has an incredible 80% of Britain's fritillary plants, and they reach their splendid peak in late April:



### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 28-Apr-12 06:56 AM GMT

Cricklade meadows often flood, and this probably benefits the fritillaries. Another plant which likes wet feet, and is found here, is the marsh marigold. However, I think this may be taking things a bit far!



### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 28-Apr-12 06:58 AM GMT

Cracking shots there and I'm very envious that you've been able to get out 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 28-Apr-12 07:03 AM GMT

Thanks wurzel. Your comments are much appreciated.

### Re: essex buzzard

by ChrisC, 28-Apr-12 07:18 AM GMT

i especially like the marsh marigolds, brilliant! 😊

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 28-Apr-12 07:43 AM GMT

Thanks Chris—it looks like most of us in England and Wales may be seeing scenes like this over the weekend! 😞

### Re: essex buzzard

by David M, 28-Apr-12 10:22 PM GMT

#### "essexbuzzard" wrote:

Cricklade meadows often flood, and this probably benefits the fritillaries. Another plant which likes wet feet, and is found here, is the marsh marigold. However, I think this may be taking things a bit far!

Aquatic marigold more like 😊

There's more (much more) to come tomorrow, so I daresay by Monday morning those poor plants will be 2 feet underwater.

### Re: essex buzzard

by Lee Hurrell, 29-Apr-12 12:33 AM GMT

Lovely photos. The Snakes Head Fritillary is one of my favourite flowers and that view looks beautiful 😊

Best wishes,

Lee

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 30-Apr-12 08:22 AM GMT

Thanks for your comments. Yes David, I agree. I'd dread to think what that meadow looks like now!

Yes Lee, they are one of my favorites too. I have some in my garden, but there is nothing like seeing them in the wild in their thousands.

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 15-May-12 07:47 AM GMT

Well the weather has been so dull and cold, I have hardly seen anything of interest! On Sunday, while most of you were (hopefully) enjoying some long overdue reasonable weather, I was at work!

However, after work, there was time for a quick trip to the Langdon Hills, near Basildon. With blue skies but a chilly wind, the only butterfly I saw was a Small Heath, though it was my first for 2012. But the star for me was the Green-winged Orchids, which number in thousands in places here, and reach their peak in mid May:



### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 15-May-12 07:52 AM GMT

Often, in large populations, a few white flowered plants are present

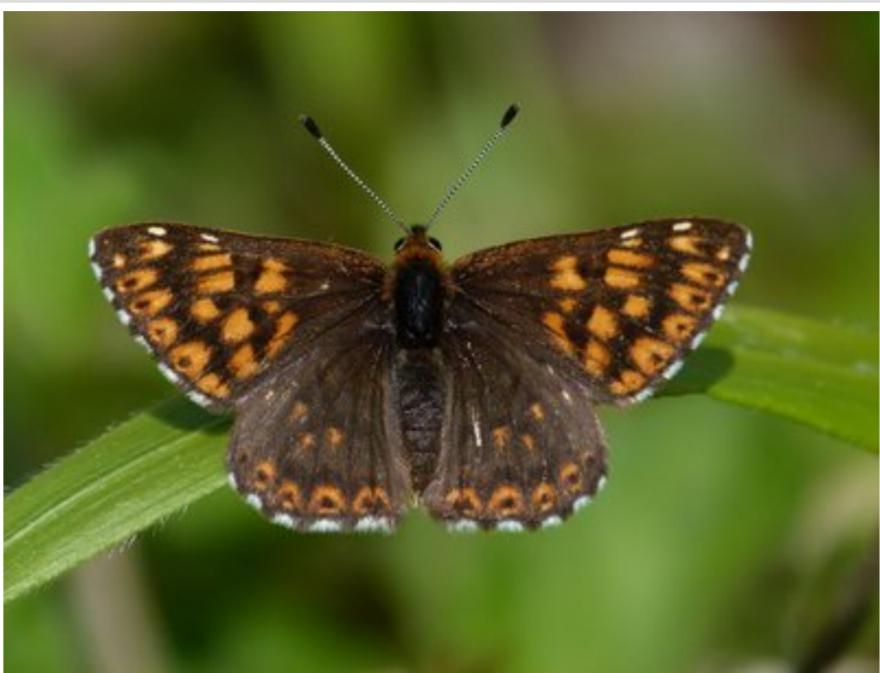


*Green-winged orchid*

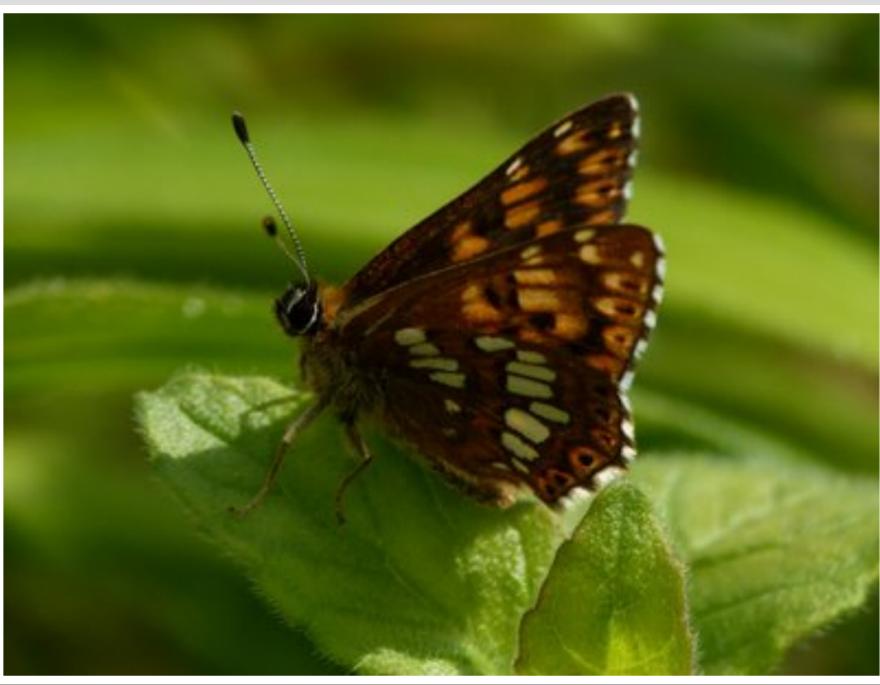
### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 18-May-12 06:46 AM GMT

With at last, something of a break in the weather, on Wednesday 17 May, I headed to West Sussex in search of the Dukes at Heyshott, where I was pleased to find Mark Colvin and Colin Knight as well. It was a cold, cloudy day, with only 10 to 20 per cent sunshine, keeping things down. However, we eventually managed to find a few little Duke of Burgundies, and what beauties they were. They are always much smaller than I expect, for some reason! Many thanks must go to Neil (Sussex Kipper) for his advice in finding this great little species.



*Duke of Burgundy*



*Duke, 16 May*



### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 18-May-12 07:55 AM GMT

After lunch, onto Mill Hill, where lots of Dingies, and a few Grizzled Skippers and fresh Adonis Blues were present with single Common Blue and Small Copper. One advantage of the cold, they were relatively easy to photograph. 😊





## Re: essex buzzard

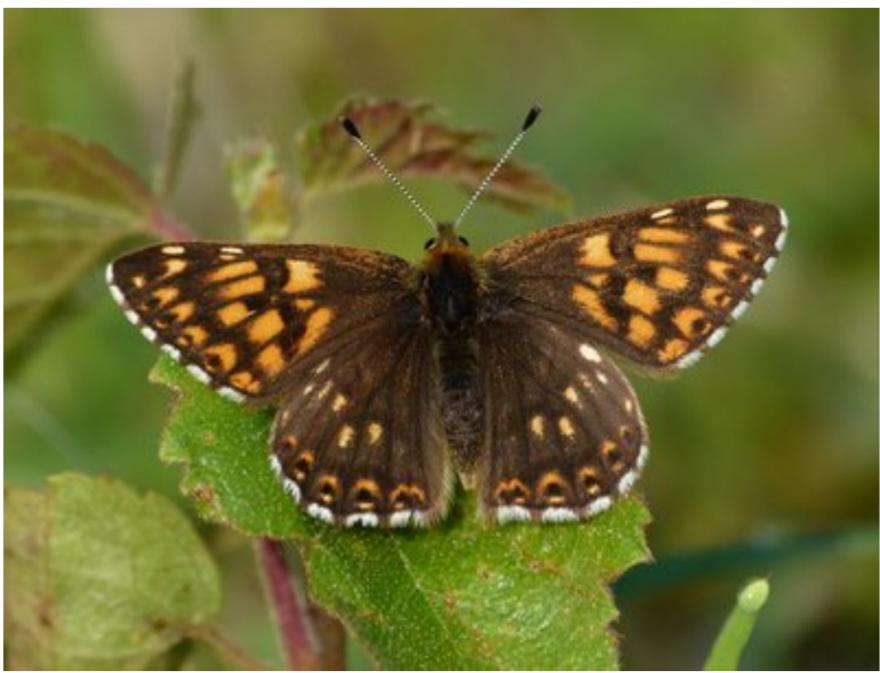
by essexbuzzard, 26-May-12 07:16 AM GMT

Hi all. On Thursday, we had the pleasure of visiting Denge Wood, Kent. It was already very warm when we arrived, just after 8 AM, on what was in the event the hottest day so far this year.

This is a great site for orchids, including some very nice Lady Orchids, which were at their glorious peak. While enjoying them, a Turtle Dove was purring, a sound I rarely hear these days, and nearby, a Nightingale and Cuckoo, thankfully still found in Essex.

Gradually, Duke of Burgundies started to be seen. All seemed to be males, and most were fresh, probably owing to the recent weather. The Dukes here were brighter than the ones I saw in Sussex last week, with more markings. Much hard work has been done since I last visited to increase and spread the Dukes here, several were seen in new areas.

Also seen were Holly Blue, Dingy Skippers, Orange Tips, speeding Whites and a Green Hairstreak.



*duke of burgundy*



*lady orchids*

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 26-May-12 08:13 AM GMT

Then onto Mill Hill—this is such a great site, it is worth a second look!

Adonis and Common Blues were in good numbers, as were Dingies again. Plenty of Small Heath were present, with Grizzled Skipper, some still in good

nick-i first saw them here in mid April. Brimstone,Small Copper,Orange Tip,all seen.  
It was worth another trip just to see the fantastic Horseshoe Vetch,which is glorious here this year!  
A bit of good weather makes all the difference,this was a great day out!



*common blue*



*small heath*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by pkg1, 26-May-12 05:02 PM GMT

Hi, Essex Buzzard, I'm new to this forum and hope you don't mind me contacting you. I've never seen Heath Fritillary and I understand that they occur at Hockley Woods near Rochford. I was just wondering if you knew if they are currently flying there? I live in South Yorkshire so before I take out a mortgage on a tankful of fuel to make the trek south I am hoping for up to date info. TIA

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 28-May-12 08:03 AM GMT

Hi,welcome to the forum,and to the joys,well,when the sun shines!,of butterflies in general. May they give you many years of pleasure!

Essex is not over endowed with butterflies,in terms of species,for a southern county, but Heath Fritillary is one rarity we do have. Although the season varies from year to year,i think a visit in mid June would be best this year. Heaths have started to emerge already,but take a couple of weeks to reach their peak.

If you have the time,i would recommend you visit Pound wood and Belfairs wood,near Southend,as well. If it is a hot day,stay untill early evening if you can,for photo's. Adults often sit with their wings open,to absorb the last rays,at this time. But lets face it,it is more likely to be cloudy,with limited sunshine,and this can help the photographer,as the frits will be less active.

Seach the areas of woods that have recently been cut back(coppiced). And look for Common Cow-wheat,the caterpillar food plant in Essex,if you find this growing in a cleared area,the adults shouldn't be far off.

Heath Frits are relatively easy to see and photograph.

Above all,enjoy your visit to the county,and let us on UKButterflies know how you get on.

Kind regards,and if you have any further quesions,do not hesitate to ask them-i will be delighted to help if i can!

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 01-Jun-12 07:45 AM GMT

Wednesday 30 May.

Today,i spent the morning looking for Grizzled Skippers at our last Essex site,and i'm glad to say i was successful. I have seen Grizzlies elsewhere this spring,but to see them in my own county means the world to me. It means this lovely species has survived for another season. We have already lost the Dingy Skipper,with none seen since the 1990's, and Grizzlies are down to this one last site,where it survives in low numbers across these beautiful fields. Working with the Essex Wildlife Trust and Butterfly Conservation,we are fighting tooth and nail to save this Essex species from certain extinction.

Several of the Skippers are more boldly marked than usual, and we think this is due to the genetic bottleneck of the species at this site. Also seen here were Common Blue, Small Heaths, Small Copper, Speckled Wood and Lots of Burnet Companion moths.



*Essex Grizzled Skipper*

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 01-Jun-12 08:33 AM GMT

Then onto a site in the Chilterns for Military Orchids, which were close to their peak. Excellent. Many Fly Orchids, too, plus Common Blue, Dingy and Grizzled Skippers, my first Brown Argus of the year, Orange Tip female, Small Heath, Brimstone female and Speckled wood. Loads of Kites and Buzzards overhead.

Then onto Aston Rowant, arriving 6PM. I normally visit this as a Silver Spotted Skipper site, but I thought I would have a look and see what was around now, as it was a warm evening. 5 species—Common Blue, Small Heath, Brown Argus and Grizzled and Dingy Skippers, many perching in their roosting positions on dead heads. A super day!



*Military Orchid*



*Brown Argus*

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 04-Jun-12 06:35 AM GMT

Friday 1st June.

On Friday, having booked a day of work, we headed south to Surrey. It was a rather dull day, due to a dying cold front nearby, but quite warm as we started to walk across Denbies Hillside. Soon the first butterflies were seen, including plenty of Small Heath, which seem to be having a good start this year – I wonder why this is? Adonis Blues were present, too, though not many males 😊. A few Common Blue, Dingy Skipper, and Peacock and Grizzled Skipper singles.

Then just an hour at Botany Bay, which doesn't do it justice; we could happily spend a whole day here, if time allowed.

Several Speckled Woods quickly seen and soon after, Wood Whites started to appear – quite active given the dull skies, we saw a good twenty with ease, with seven in the air together at one point. Heard Willow Warbler, Cuckoo and Nightingale singing.

Our last stop was in West Sussex, where we looked for Small Blues at a known site for them. We found some, many already roosting head down, but a few were active. Dingy Skipper and Common Blue were also here, and a Buzzard, crow and Peregrine had a spectacular encounter, as did we with a very close Hare, in all my years of living on a farm, I don't think I've ever seen one so close! Great stuff! 😊



### Re: essex buzzard

by ChrisC, 04-Jun-12 06:02 PM GMT

that's a lovely grizzled

Chris

### Re: essex buzzard

by Padfield, 04-Jun-12 06:29 PM GMT

"ChrisC" wrote:

that's a lovely grizzled

I believe it is ab. *intermedia*.

See <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/research-curation/research/projects/cockayne/database/image.dsm?filename=500658X&includeInfraSubspecific=on&nametype=scientific&searchtype=taxon&sort=taxon-euro&taxonname=pyrgus+malvae&sex=Male&side=upper&provenance=native&reclimit=20&format=gallery&taxonID=8451>

Guy

### Re: essex buzzard

by David M, 05-Jun-12 01:35 AM GMT

I've only just noticed this. That's quite a find.

Spectacular.

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 06-Jun-12 06:51 AM GMT

Thanks so much for your comments,folks. It's lovely to hear what other people think,glad you like the pictures!

Yes Guy,the Grizzlie is intermedia,and i'm really pleased to find it. A wide range of forms are found at Langdon,from the normal kind right through to ab. tarras.,and everything in between. We think that this is because all the adults in the population are probably related in some degree.

But this cannot be the only reason,for many sites are isolated,for example Indian Queens railway which runs accross Goss Moor in Cornwall,where these forms never occur. Such mystery just adds to the pleasure of this fantastic little species.

### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 06-Jun-12 06:57 AM GMT

Certainly is a cracking little butterfly Essexbuzzard 🤔🌿 Bottlenecks in gene pools do allow these unusual varieties to be maintained, perhaps in Cornwall there wasn't this variety to start with so recessive alleles couldn't be expressed?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 06-Jun-12 07:05 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,very quick there!

You're right,it seems to be something in the gene pool,which is not present in evey population. I for one am glad it is present in ours,as it makes finding them even more interesting. It also underlines how important it is to save these colonies from dying out. Cheers!

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 22-Jun-12 04:38 AM GMT

Evening everyone!

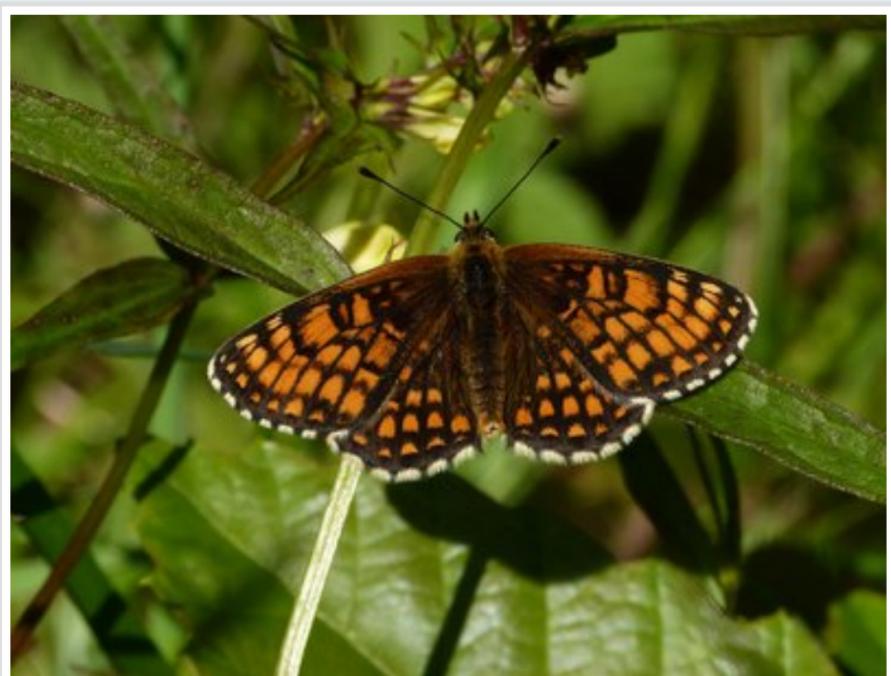
Just back from Croatia (Hrvatska) with Naturetrek,which was excellent. We saw 95 species of bird and 100 kinds of butterfly!

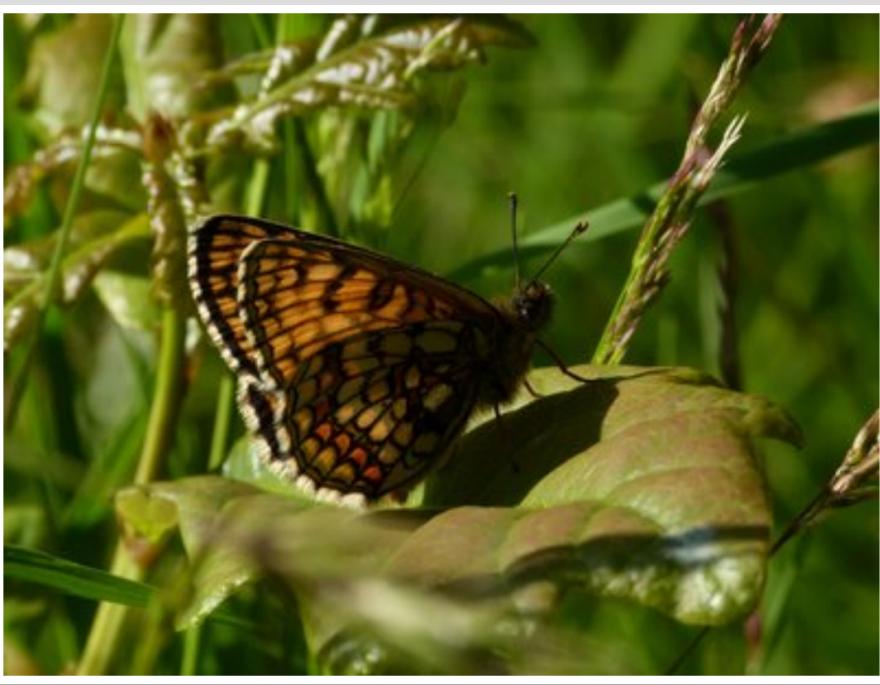
It's worth remembering that untill relatively recently,this was a war torn country,and there is still plenty of evidence of this. Bullet holes can still be seen on buildings,especially in quieter towns and villages. And the abandoned homes,goodness knows what happened to the occupants. Still there,perhaps there is no money,or will,to do anything with them. A bit shocking,to be honest.

Farming is small-scale,like a giant allotment,a few rows of corn,a few rows of hay,a few rows of potatoes,and so-on. At the end of these fields,small weedy patches and wild flowers are found. How i wish it was like this in Britain.

The weather in HR has similarities with ours,but there are differences. They probably get as much rain as we do,throughout the year,but it comes and goes quickly,unlike our long,cloudy days,which may produce nothing more that a bit of drizzle. So the sunshine success rate is better and the average tempeature higher then say, London,at least durind latr spring and summer. This is consistant with our findings. There was rain of Lake District proportions on the first day,while the rest of our week was hot and sunny.

Got a lot of photo's to sort out,and some id's to confirm, so i'll end with some of the Essex Heath Fritillaries. They were two a penny in HR,but of course very rare in GB,and the woods near Southend contain some very important populations. They,like most of the country,were enjoying a rare day of sunshine yesterday,before the rain returned...





### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 22-Jun-12 06:06 AM GMT

Looking forward to the trip report - don't skimp on the birds either 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 29-Jun-12 06:47 AM GMT

Don't worry Wurzel-there were some quite keen birders on our trip,i don't think much went unnoticed!

28 June.

Today,i went to the Roman River Valley,near Colchester. I've never been there before,but the attraction for me was not butterflies,but dragonflies. For this is the only place in Essex where the Beautiful Demoisele can be seen. As a bonus,it flies alongside the similar Banded Demoisele, i know of no other place where this is the case,as they prefer different habitats.

Red Admiral,Speckled wood and Meadow Brown were seen in this wooded valley.



*Banded Demoisele,Roman River*



*Beautiful Deman River*

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 29-Jun-12 07:08 AM GMT

After lunch, onto Hadleigh Castle Country Park. I was pleased to see the first White-letter Hairstreaks have emerged, as have the first Marbled Whites, Small Skippers and two Essex Skippers. Hutchinsii Commas were plentiful and others seen at this splendid site were Large Skipper, Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Common and Holly blues, Speckled Wood and Red Admiral.

This is the only site I know where White-letters do reliably come down to feed on flowers, for the Elm grows as scrub and aphid honeydew is scarce. Although it dies back as soon as it reaches about 20 feet, the Elm continuously regenerates. Probably the best place in Essex—maybe even Britain—to see this Hairstreak.



## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 14-Jul-12 06:38 AM GMT

Hi all, just back from holiday in Cornwall. I'm happy where I live now in Essex, but with my family history, I have and always will have a love for this fantastic place, and a big part of my heart remains there. It still has some pretty good wildlife spots, too—and scenery to match. We're not only about Cornish cream teas and pasties! I do still endeavor to enjoy the finest of Cornwall's cuisine when I can, though—just one more reason for going there! The weather was a bit mixed, as it has been for most of us since March—apart from west Scotland! Hardly summer, but it wasn't that bad, though my heart goes out to those affected by the floods in Redruth, Bude and other places on Friday night. But perhaps worse from a butterfly point of view is the

general lack of sunshine. We don't have Silver Spotted Skippers, Scotch Argus or Brown Hairstreak,so it seems all of Cornwall's butterflies are going to struggle,even if the weather improves in August. Apart from Meadow Browns and Ringlets,they were by far the most often butterflies seen during the week.

Report and pics tomorrow,if i have time. Cheers!

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 16-Jul-12 06:18 AM GMT

Wednesday 4 July.

As i arrived in Cornwall, via the Tamar Bridge, the rain stopped and the cloud started to lift, so got straight to work.

Sylvia's Meadow. A Cornwall Wildlife Trust reserve. The western end is sheltered by trees, and here, Meadow Browns were getting going. Several of these were soon seen, with quite a few Ringlets as well. The spotting on these was highly variable, some adults had hardly any spotting at all, as they flew among the normal ones.

As a shaft of sunlight briefly shone down, a Small Tortoiseshell landed in front of us. This is a species i've hardly seen at all this year, but it seems still fairly common in Cornwall—several were seen during the week. Several male Large Skippers were also seen, along with a Red Admiral and a worn Common Blue, probably hanging on from the first brood.





## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 16-Jul-12 06:59 AM GMT

By now, blue sky was visible near the coast, so onto Penlee Battery CWT. One of the specialities here is the Marbled White, here in east Cornwall, they are at the far west of their range, that have no colonies further west in the county. Several fresh mostly male specimens were seen, indicating that the flight period was only just starting. A mating pair was disturbed from the grass, but carried on making babies unharmed. We noticed the colour contrast between male and female. Also present were Meadow Browns, Ringlets, Large Skippers, another Common Blue and two new species for the trip—Small Copper and Speckled wood—they are one of the most common of Cornwall's butterflies, but are between generations, few were seen. A Hummingbird Hawkmoth was also seen.

Several Buzzards were hovering in the wind here, and I soon noticed how shrivelled the leaves on the trees were, having been given a frequent blasting by spring and summer gales, you may have thought it was October! Dreadful.



*marbled white male, Cornwall*



*marbled white pair, Cornwall*



*marbled white female, Cornwall*

**Re: essex buzzard**

by Gothic\_dreams, 16-Jul-12 07:53 AM GMT

Cracking Marbled White shots, the pair together is lovely 😊

Chris

**Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 16-Jul-12 08:03 AM GMT

Thanks Chris. My photography skills could still do with some improvement, but in this of all years, i am grateful of whatever i can get! Cheers! 😊

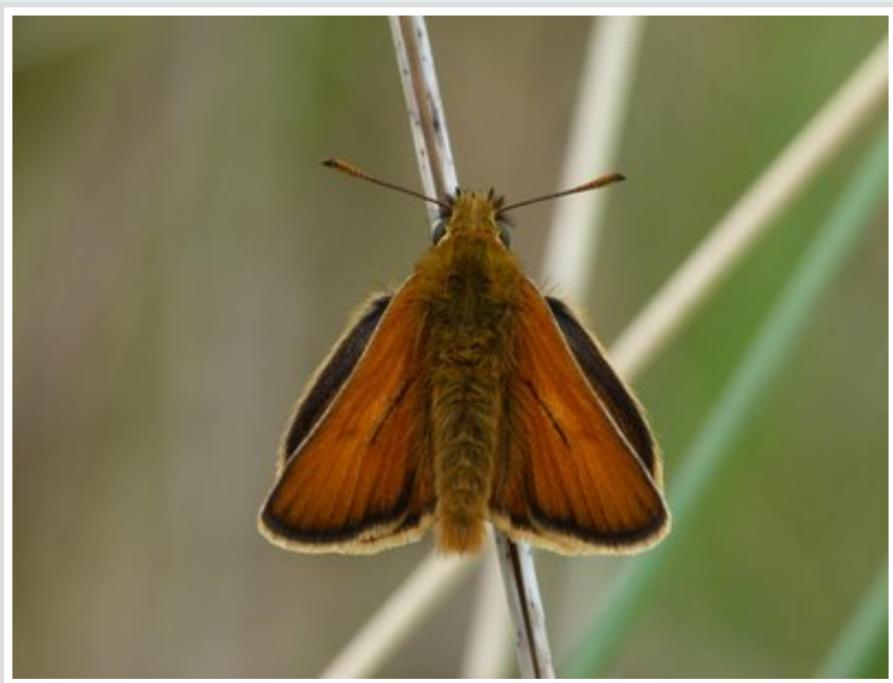
**Re: essex buzzard**

Friday 6 July.

Cornwall still has quite a few strong Silver-studded Blue colonies, and one of these can be found at Gwithian Towans, near Hayle. Despite more grey skies, it was mostly dry, and quite warm in the dips and divots here. As we walked onto the dunes, we soon started to see Meadow Browns and Ringlets. A few Small Heath, too. Then, as we got deeper into the dunes, the blues started to appear. Ones and twos at first, some with wings open, some still closed. All were Silver-studded. Mostly males, but there were a few females, too, one of which had quite a good dusting of blue scales, which you can see in the picture. Several Cinnabar adults seen, along with their caterpillars. My first Cornish Small Skipper was seen. I love the eye lashes of the skippers, which you see below. Another Small Tortoiseshell was also present.

We saw a curled up Adder, trying to warm up.

On the bird front, Kestrel, Buzzard and 4 honking Ravens were high lights. For a grey day, this was most enjoyable. 😊





### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 17-Jul-12 06:54 AM GMT

Cracking shots there Essex...the female Silver Studded Blue is almost like the Welsh sub-species 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 17-Jul-12 07:17 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel. The caterpillar foodplant is Birds-foot Trefoil here,as it is in parts of Wales,so perhaps they have something in common! They are quite different to the heath subspecies,which also occurs in Cornwall.

### Re: essex buzzard

by Neil Freeman, 18-Jul-12 03:56 AM GMT

Nice photos,

Is that a Burnet Moth caterpillar that I see in the background of the first male SSB shot?

Cheers,

Neil F.

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 18-Jul-12 04:09 AM GMT

Yes,the eagle-eyed among you may have noticed the bunet moth caterpillar—they were everywhere! Some chrysalis were present too,even the odd adult. But i didn't mention them because we saw 5 and 6 spot in different places—and i can't remember which where! I think these were 6 Spot Burnet. Thanks to all who look at my pages,i am most grateful for all your comments. Cheers!

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 20-Jul-12 07:09 AM GMT

On Sunday 8 July, there was a little bit of sun,so we decided to return to one of my old haunts. The rocky outcrop at Madron Carn,near Penzance,has long been known to me as a 'hilltopping' site for nymphalids and sure enough,a Red Admiral and a new one for the trip,a Painted Lady,were quickly spotted doing battle. Sometimes another would appear and at one point,3 RA and 2 PL were in the air together,rising high into the air then tumbling down and breaking off,to go their seperate ways. It was most entertaining,we watched these for some time. Meadow Browns and Ringlets also present.



### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 20-Jul-12 07:29 AM GMT

Mondat 9 July.

Today we visited an area of Cornwall i'd never been to before, St. Anthony Head. With its impressive scenery and lighthouse, this is a very nice area. Unfortunately, the weather wasn't so nice, with more rain than expected and we walked the coast path with only Ringlets and Meadow browns for company. But late afternoon, the sun came out, and so did my first Gatekeepers of the year. Red Admiral, Small Tort and two Hummingbird Hawkmoths were seen, and some good birds, too.



*Cornish Gatekeeper*

### Re: essex buzzard

by CJB, 20-Jul-12 06:24 PM GMT

Hi Essex or should I call you Mr Buzzard?

I am heading down to Cornwall near Bodmin and wondered if you knew of any good sites nearby?

Looks like I might be lucky with the weather!

Flutter on!

CJB

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 24-Jul-12 07:01 AM GMT

Hi CJB, hope i'm not too late with this message!

I know Cornwall well, but if you don't, check out the Cornwall branch of Butterfly Conservation. They have many field trips on their events page with grid references, which you can do yourself, either by joining them—they really are a friendly bunch!—or on your own.

Also there is a site guide on their website, several good ones near Bodmin.

Hope this helps!

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 24-Jul-12 07:19 AM GMT

11 July.

This was our last day. One of the species i wanted to see in Cornwall is the Silver-washed fritillary. These are fairly common in Cornwall, and one of the best places i know about is Cabilla Woods, not far from Bodmin.

There was just a little sunshine today, so we gave it a try. However, by time we got there, it was raining, and a cold wind was blowing as well! With a few short sunny spells returning, we managed two, possibly three sightings, a really poor showing, there must have been more than that at this excellent site, managed with this species in mind! 😞

Speckled woods, Meadow Browns, Ringlets and an egg laying Hutchinsonii Comma completes the picture, with ravens and buzzards overhead.

Below is a SWfrit picture—hardly vintage, but the best i could do!



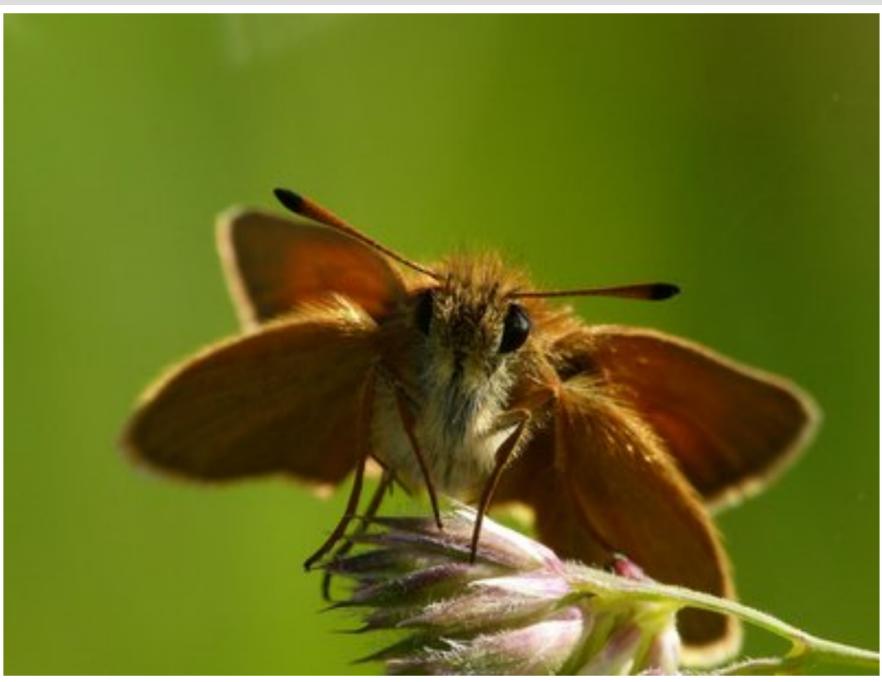
## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 27-Jul-12 07:21 AM GMT

One morning earlier this week, i got up early, taking advantage of the rare good weather, at least in the south, to catch the Skippers waking up on the large common near my home. Large Skippers can be seen, but it was the two small Skipper species that were my target today. So i took the Lumix and close-up lens and took the pictures below, which show the obvious difference between the two. Living in prime Skipper country, it is second nature to check every adult i can. Both Small and Essex Skippers are abundant here, but Small probably outnumber Essex by about 5 to 1 on this site. Both are great little insects, and are typical of high summer. 😊



*Small Skipper*



*Essex*



*Essex Skipper*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 31-Jul-12 05:50 AM GMT

Ok,now for Croatia. A full report will appear on the Naturetrek website, so this is merely a short personal report of my own hilights,and some of my favorite photo's.

This was a three centre holiday,to capture different habitats in different areas.

On arrival in Zagreb,we were soon on our way to the Plitvice Lakes National Park,a UNESCO World Heritage Site,and our first base. Although our first day was very wet,we clocked up some great stuff here,even the meadows behind the hotel had many butterflies such as Reverdins Blue(thanks Roger and Guy for confirmation),Marbled Fritillary and pearly Heath,worthy of the early searches before breakfast. On our outings,Amenda's Blues were common,a species often encountered throughout the week. Finding my own colony of Large Coppers by a river was a hilight for me,as was Chequered Blue,Twin-spot Frit and lots of Black-veined Whites,once the sun returned.

For the birders,Golden Orioles were frequently hear and seen,Turtle Doves and Red-backed Shrikes too. Corncrake heard.Quail and Black-headed Bunting behind hotel.

Photo's to follow 😊 .

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by Wurzel, 31-Jul-12 06:17 AM GMT

Cracking shots of the skippers-I really like the Smalls pose 😊 Looking forward go the Croatia photos 🎁  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by David M, 31-Jul-12 06:27 AM GMT

Me too. Croatia is a very tempting destination and I'll be interested to read this report.

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 31-Jul-12 07:34 AM GMT

Thanks for the comments,guy's. So here are some of my favorite photo's from the first part of the holiday. 😊



*amanda's blue*



*black-veined white*



*marbled frit*



*queen of spain frit*



*reverdin's blue*



*chequered blue*



*large copper*



*Plitvice Lakes N.P.*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 05-Aug-12 05:17 AM GMT

For the middle part of the trip, we headed west to the Adriatic coast, and Paklenica National Park. The habitat could hardly have been more different here—it was hot and dry. The hotel was different too—with its swimming pool and beach, it was more like a resort in the Med! But it turned out to be a stroke of genius, for next to the hotel, was an area of waste land, with Spotted Frits, Clouded yellows, skippers, blues, a Swallowtail and our only Hermits of the trip—my first ever! If that wasn't enough, the birders were happy with breeding Red-backed Shrike, Turtle Doves and Wrynecks! No wonder I was out there at the crack of dawn each day 😊 .

And imagine our delight on the first evening, when a Large Tortoiseshell landed in front of us near the hotel!

On our outings, an excellent range of southern butterflies were seen, including for me, several firsts. Ilex and Blue-spot Harstreaks were everywhere, and Mountain and Southern Small Whites were identified, among many that sped by too quick for i.d. The single Little Tiger Blue was a highlight for us all, and to see 3 large green Balkan Green Lizards together was a treat.

Also, I soon learned to identify the Nettle Trees, and after some searching, a Nettle Tree Butterfly was found, with several more later. Aren't they strange, with that long snout? A Camberwell Beauty caused understandable excitement, as it briefly landed, but was gone in seconds! Not so a Cardinal male, it posed nicely for photos.

The birders had a good time, too, with Rock Partridge, Alpine Swifts, Honey Buzzards, Short-toed Eagles and Sardinian and Subalpine Warbler putting on a good show. One valley in particular echoed to the glorious song of Nightingales.

Photo's to follow 😊 .

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by Wurzel, 05-Aug-12 06:28 AM GMT

Looking forward to the photos and I have my bucket ready for when I'm ill with envy 🍷 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 05-Aug-12 07:45 AM GMT

Cheers Wurzel. The first round of photo's from this part of the trip. More tomorrow.



*very inviting on a hot day!*



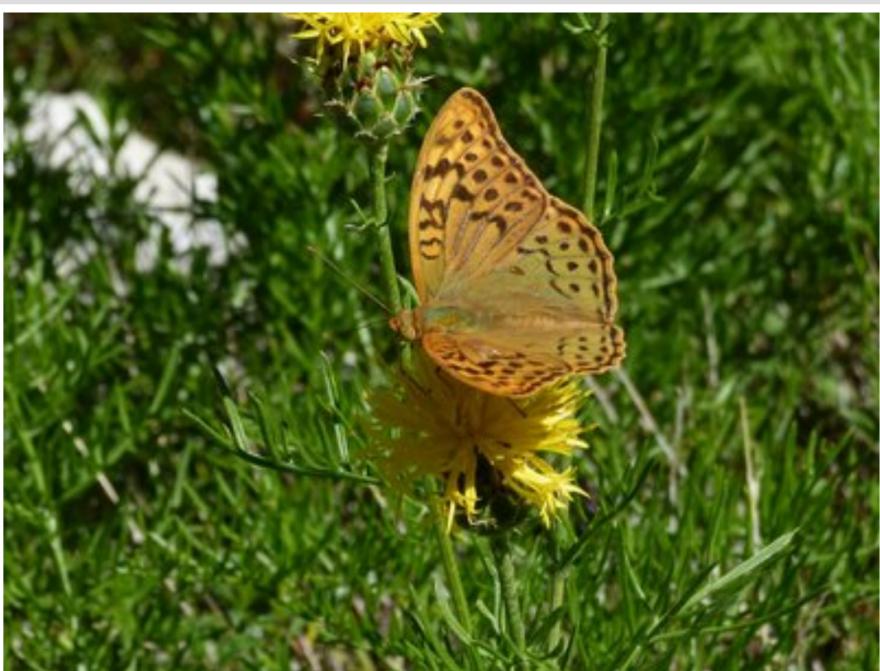
*mazarine blue*



*southern small white*



*marbled skipper*



*cardinal*



*clouded yellow*



*ilex hairstreak*



*eastern bath white*



*large tortoiseshell*



*blue-spot hairstreak*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by Pauline, 05-Aug-12 03:12 PM GMT

Morning Essex Buzzard, just had to say I love your hairstreak photos. Hairstreaks are my favourite group and your lovely photos show them at their best. Beautiful examples. Green just doesn't come close 🍃🍃😄

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by Nick Broomer, 05-Aug-12 06:24 PM GMT

Lovely photos 😊  
All the best, Nick.

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 06-Aug-12 08:09 AM GMT

Thanks so much for your comments Pauline and Hideandseek. Yes, the Hairstreaks were super, and they were common at nearly all the sites we visited. They clustered at stonecrop, bramble and many other flowers, we were almost ignoring them at the end, which is criminal really. Here are a few more pic's;



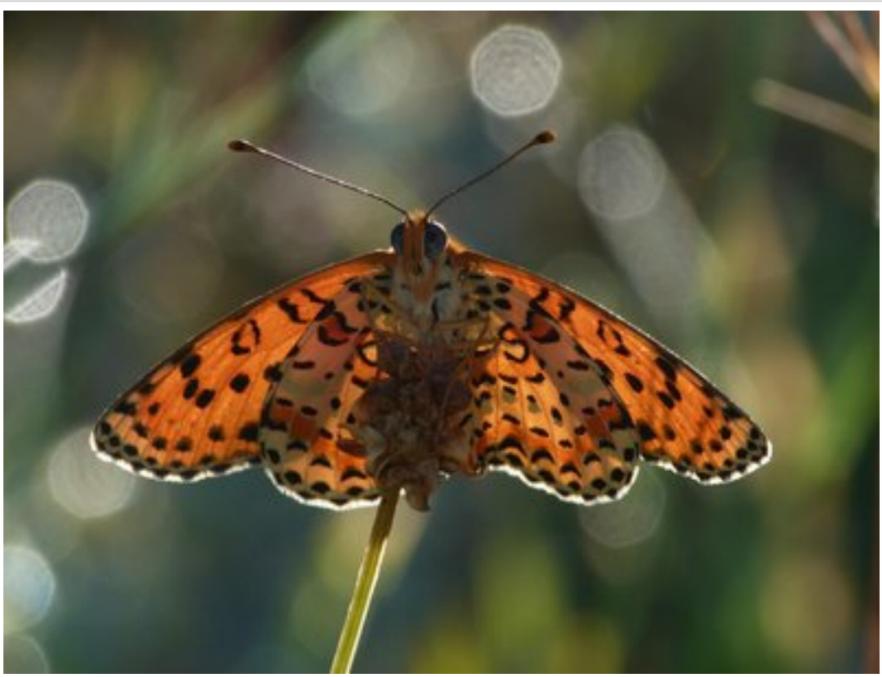
*adriatic coast*



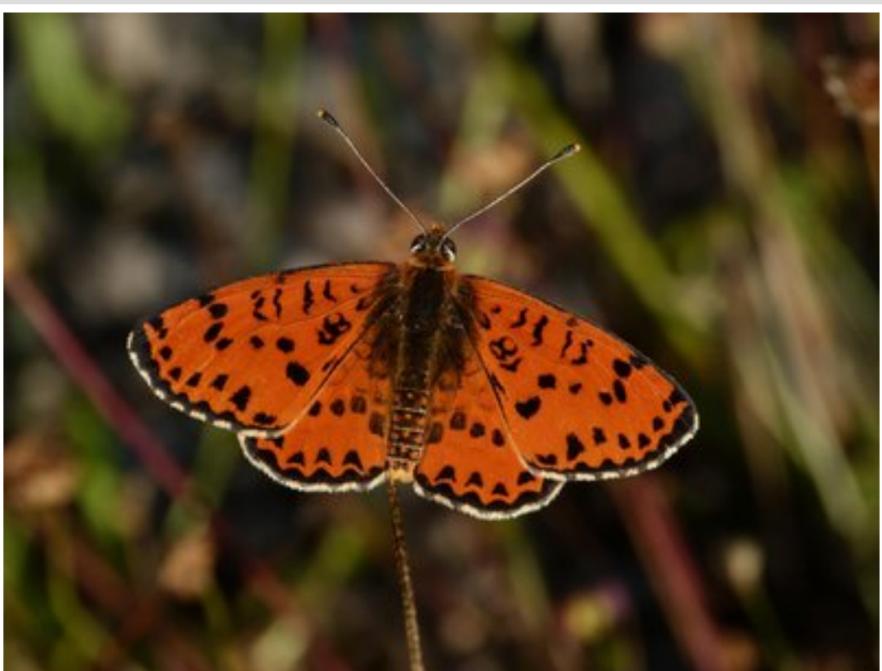
*large wall*



*scarce swallowtail on an aleppo pine*



*spotted frit in early morning*



*spotted fritillary next to the hotel*



*swallowtail,next to the hotel!*



### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 09-Aug-12 05:26 AM GMT

A few more pictures from Croatia,the last for this section of the trip. High in the mountains behind the hotel,were several Blue Rockthrushes,my first ever. The image below is cropped.



*blue rockthrush*



*my first ever southern comma*



*little tiger blue*



*hermit*

## Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 09-Aug-12 05:52 AM GMT



Nuff said! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 09-Aug-12 06:40 AM GMT

Cheers,Wurzel. Will try to get the last section up over the weekend,before i go to Dorset next week 😊 .

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 12-Aug-12 07:31 AM GMT

So,for our final couple of days,we took he spectacular journey along the coast,then turned right,which took us high into the mountains,towards the Velebit Nature Park,a UNESCO biosphere reserve.

The hotel here was a more traditional Naturetrek type,just outside a village and surrounded by lush green meadows,full of butterflies. Plenty of haymaking was going on,too-taking advantage of the continuing glorious weather. One meadow,in front of the hotel,was owned by the hotel,which meant i could have a good look through before breakfast! It was full of Fritillaries,Marbled Whites,Black-veined Whites,Skippers and Meadow Browns. During our day outings here,high in the mountains,butterflies were abundant,with several new ones for the trip. Several Cleopatra were seen-now this is a species i want to see more of! High Brown Fritillary and Clouded Apollo were on the higher slopes. Orbed Red-underwing Skipper was new for me,and several Nettle Tree Butterflies by a stream were a surprise and a delight. A Duke of Burgundy was seen,a new species for some of the group.The many Fritillaries included Knapweed,Glanville, Heath and Queen of Spain. The Marbled Whites were a much darker form than ours.

A great veiw of a Crested Tit was a delight to see. In the evenings,we fell asleep to the sound of crickets and Nightingales through the open windows and balcony door.

Even the road trip back to Zagreb was of interest,with Buzzard,Honey Buzzard,Black Kite and a White Stork,which circled right over our minibus! Pictures to follow. 😊

## Re: essex buzzard

by Nick Broomer, 12-Aug-12 07:51 AM GMT

Sounds like you had a great trip, seeing a lot of lovely butterflies and birds [being a birder as well]. Look forward to seeing some more photos. All the best, Nick.

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 12-Aug-12 07:58 AM GMT

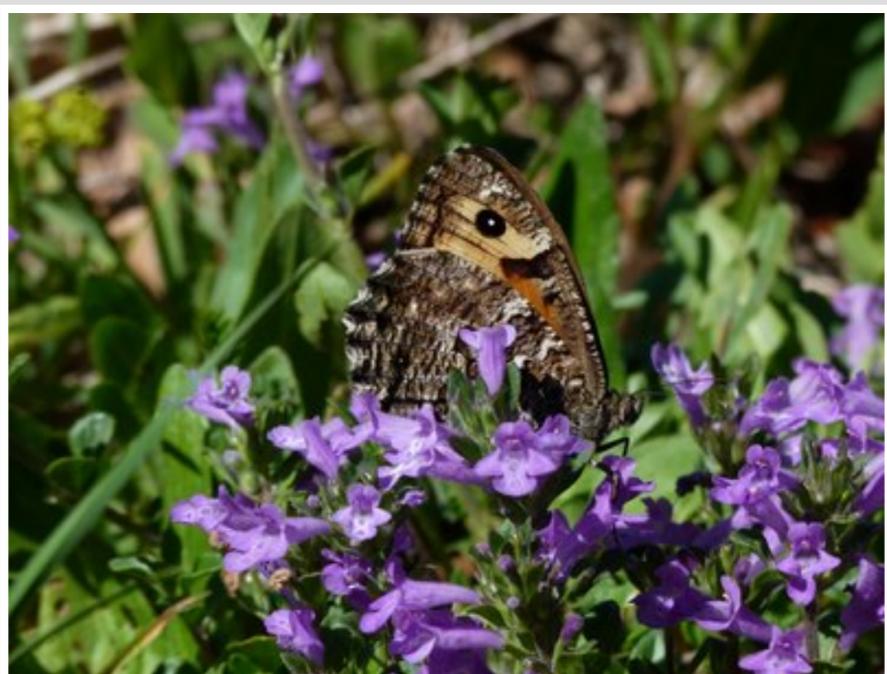
Thanks Nick.I will hopefully do the photo's sunday evening. Cheers.

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 19-Aug-12 06:12 AM GMT

Good evening everyone,just back from the Isle of Purbeck,which was most enjoyable,although the weather wasn't always butterfly friendly! But we managed to get some butterflies in,more to come later.

Here are some photo's of our trips in the Velebit National Park,Croatia;



*greyling*



*chestnut heath*



*nettletree butterfly*



*orb-weaver*



*mazarine blue*

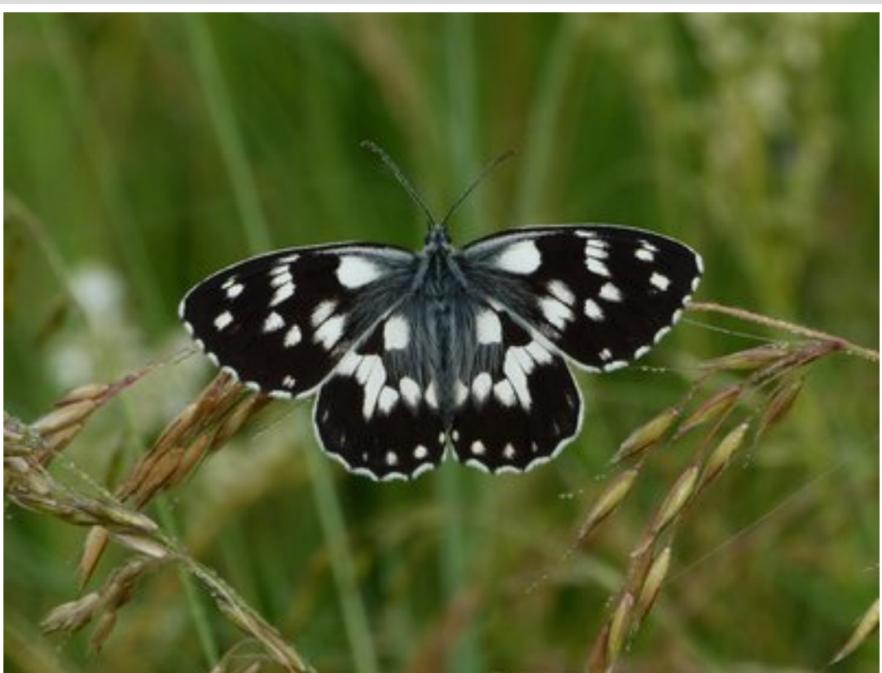


*great sooty satyr*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 19-Aug-12 07:02 AM GMT

And here are a few i took in the mist in the meadow in front of the hotel on the very last day,while everyone else was eating breakfast;



*marbled white*



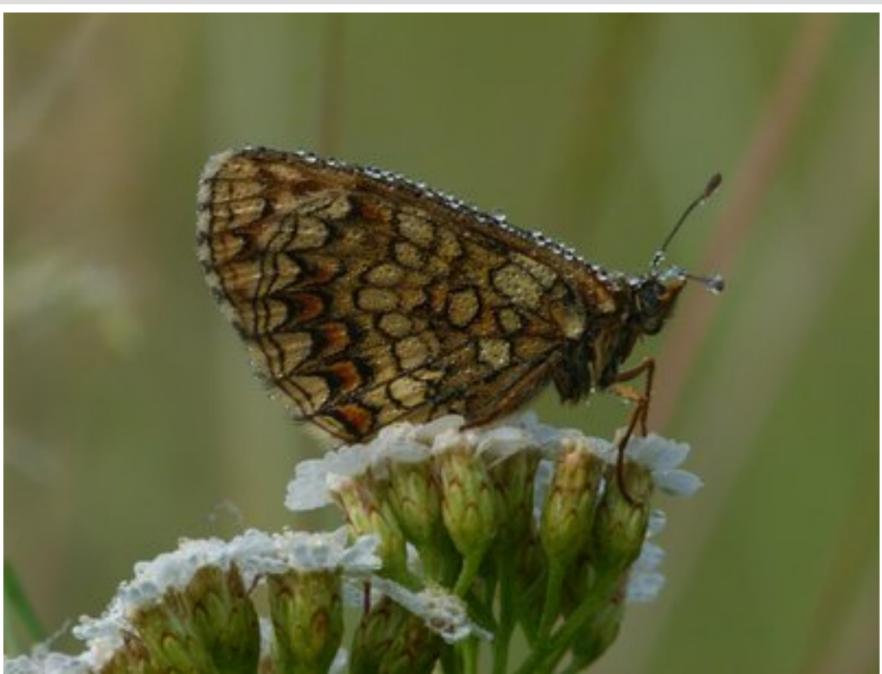
*niobe fritillary, our only one of the trip!*



*black-veined white*



*knapweed fritillary*



*heath fritillary*

### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 19-Aug-12 07:26 AM GMT

👍👍👍 Especially the Marbled White

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 19-Aug-12 07:57 AM GMT

Yes,they were cracking,so defferent to ours,though the same species.  
Enjoy the sunshine tomorrow Wurzel,if you have it. Cheers.

### Re: essex buzzard

by Neil Freeman, 21-Aug-12 06:03 AM GMT

Some nice reports and photos, that Marbled White is a beauty 😊

Cheers,

Neil F.

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 21-Aug-12 07:15 AM GMT

Thanks Neil.It's one of my favorites,too. It's amazing how different they look,even though they are the same species as ours.  
To finish off,here are a few pictures of Hrvatska/Croatia for the botanists.



*globe orchid*





*birds-nest orchid*



*orange lilies*



*white buttercup, growing in woodland*



*red heleborine*

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 26-Aug-12 07:07 AM GMT

ISLE OF PURBECK, 13-16 AUGUST.

Tuesday 14 August. After a wet day Monday in Dorset, the sun returned on Tuesday. Staying at Lulworth Cove itself was a definite advantage-i even managed to see a few butterflies before breakfast! Just east of the cove is Bindon Hill, and this is where we spent most of the day today. With warm sun and light winds, we were soon seeing Chalkhill Blues by the hundred- a great year for these here and elsewhere. Meadow Browns and Gatekeepers were still abundant, and it was nice to see plenty of Walls-outside Cornwall, where it is still locally common, this is the most walls i've seen in a long time. Lulworth Skippers are one of the main attractions here, and they did not disappoint-good numbers of both male and females were seen on the cliff tops, while families enjoyed the beach, far below. What a long season these tiny little crackers have! Small and one late Large Skipper were noted, too. Marbled Whites were in numbers here, indicating the late season this year.

Dark Green Frits were in good numbers, including some fresh ones-see picture below. Small Tort, Peacock, Large and Small Whites, Red Admirals, Gryling and Brown Argus all seen.

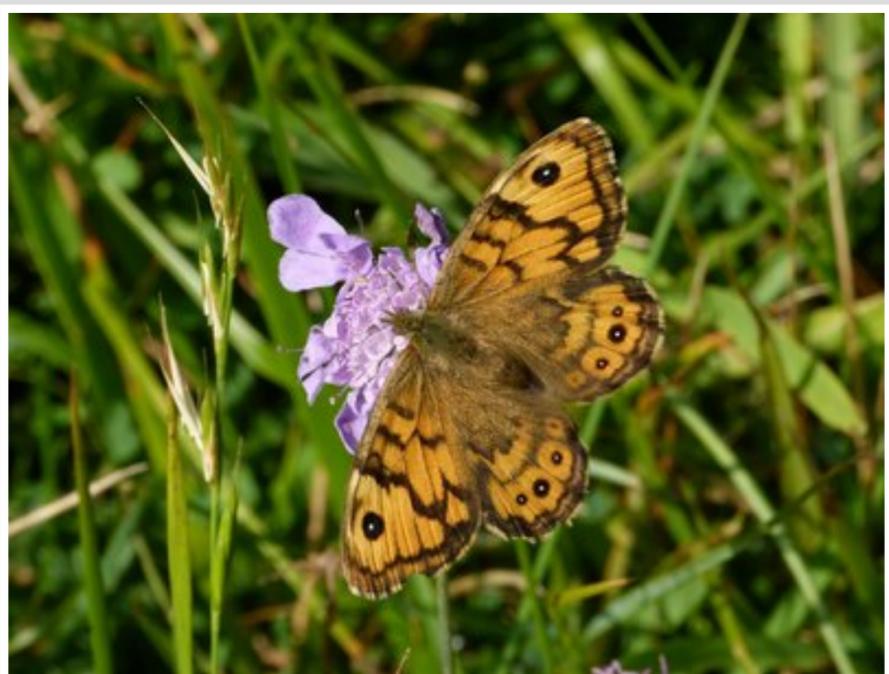
Several Common Lizards, while Raven, late Swifts and Stonechats were among the other species noted. Lots of Swallows were probably scooping up the Chalkhill Blues.



*chalkhill blue*



*dark green fritillary*



*wall*



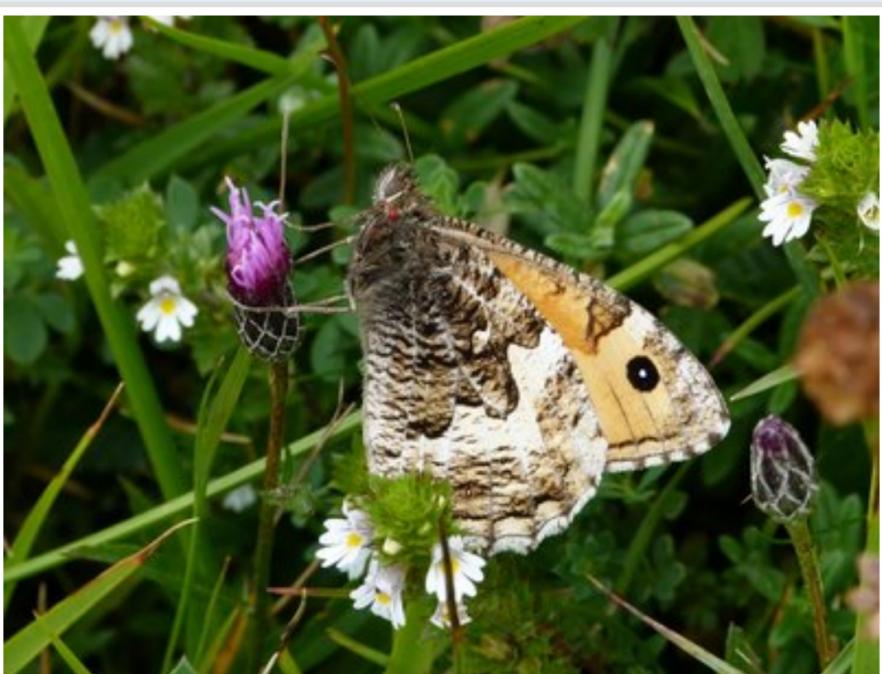
*lulworth skipper male*



*brown argus*



*marbled white*



*greyling*

### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 27-Aug-12 07:19 AM GMT

Cracking stuff great to know that Dorset is still producing the goods 😊 great shot of the skipper but the Wall is my favourite 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by Neil Freeman, 27-Aug-12 07:31 PM GMT

Good report and Photos 😊

I am going to be in Dorset next week for a family break.

It seems that this late season is going to be a bit of a blessing in disguise for me with some species still about that would normally be just about finished 😊

Neil F.

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 29-Aug-12 07:27 AM GMT

Isle of Purbeck, Thursday 16 August.

After wind and rain Wednesday, conditions improved so we had one last day to see some butterflies. There are many choices here, but we decided to go to Durlston Country Park, Swanage.

Our trip began with a very nice ride to Swanage on the Swanage Steam Railway. You can walk to Durlston from the station, but, to save time, we got the bus.

In the dips sheltered from the wind, we were pleased to see good numbers of Lulworth Skippers, including some that were laying eggs. Also in the shelter, were several male Small Blues, which was surprising, but a delight to see. Several Common and one Adonis Blue were present here too.

Present all around the site were Marbled Whites, quite late in the season. Dark Green Fritillaries were seen, along with several very similar (when speeding past) Oak Eggar Moths. Abundant Meadow Browns and Gatekeepers were no surprise, and Walls and Small Skippers were seen.

By late afternoon, spots of rain were falling, so we made our way back to the railway, and home, satisfied that we had a great last day.

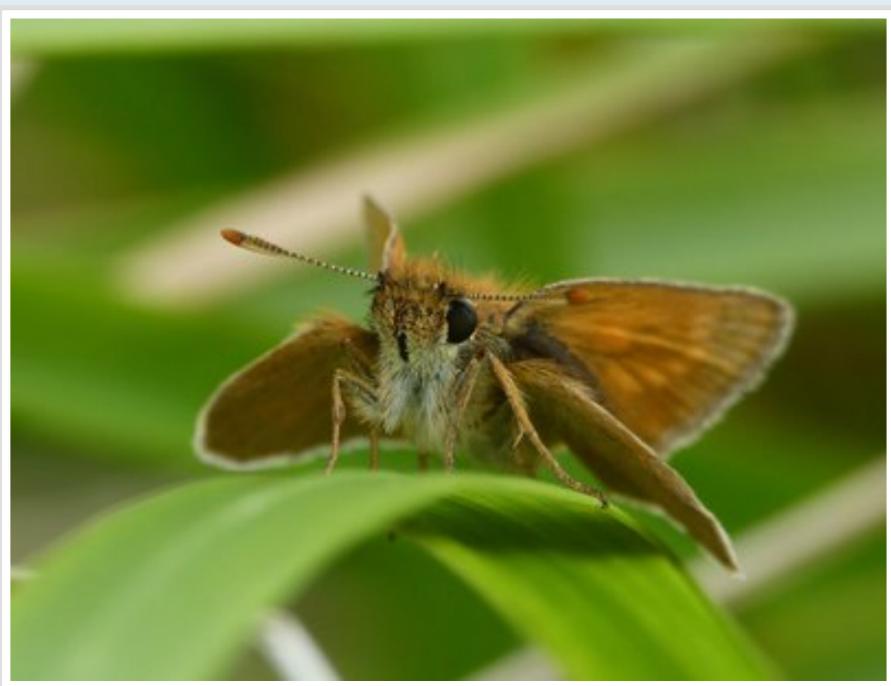
Had a chat with a couple of people at Durlston, our impression is that Lulworth Skippers have done quite well this year, despite the wet weather, but perhaps helped by lush growth of the caterpillar foodplant, Tor Grass. If so, this bodes well for next year as well. I hope so, for they are smashing little butterflies and I love them! 😊

Photo's to follow.

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 30-Aug-12 07:13 AM GMT

Photo's from Durlston CP:



*Lulworth skipper*



*egg laying lullwort*



*lullwort female*



*lullwort female*



*adonis blue*



*small blue*



*lulworth skipper male*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 01-Sep-12 06:27 AM GMT

East Kent, Bank Holiday Monday.

While most of the country enjoyed another day of increasing cloud and rain, east Kent seemed to poke out, so, with a rare B.H. off, I decided to head to Lydden Temple Ewell Downs, a Kent Wildlife Trust reserve near Dover.

The weather did indeed live up to the forecast, with some reasonable sunny spells, especially in the morning.

Soon, I was on the Downs of this extensive site, looking firstly at some Autumn Ladies Tresses, the last orchid to flower, and one of the smallest. I love the way the flowers open up the spike in a spiral. Sometimes, spikes next to each other, will have flowers going in opposite directions.

Meadow Browns were abundant in this first section, and there has been a good emergence of Adonis Blues—with the weather this year, I didn't know if there would be. Several fresh Common Blues here too—when seen next to the Adonis, the colour difference is obvious, even in flight. Chalkhill Blues, though fairly plentiful, were showing their age. Several Small Heath in this section as well.

After enjoying these butterflies, I walked to the top, behind the trees, and down to the next section of downland. This is where the main colony of Silver Spotted Skippers is found. While some were showing signs of wear, there were still some fresh adults, especially females. Numbers were reasonable, if slightly below average. While the Skippers were mostly at the top of the slope, a few Walls, Brown Argus and single Marbled White, Small Tortoiseshell and Red Admiral were near the bottom. Worn, old Gatekeepers near the bushes.

Plenty of food for the adults here, with abundant Marjoram, Small and Devil's-bit Scabious in bloom.

By late afternoon, the weather had caught up with me, so it was time to leave, with the memory of a good day, at a top site, which is surprisingly little visited, even on a holiday, when most other places had the day ruined by the weather.

Photo's coming up. 😊

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 02-Sep-12 06:37 AM GMT

Photo's from B.H. Monday, east Kent:



*silver spotted skipper, east kent*



*silver spotted skipper female*



*chalkhill blue*



*adonis blue*



*adonis blue*



*meadow browns*



*common blue*



## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 11-Sep-12 04:49 AM GMT

Wednesday 5 Sept.

Today found me back in east Kent. With the ripening Hawthorn berries, Autumn Ladies Tresses and Autumn Gentians, there was a slight sadness about this day, as a trip here in early autumn represents the end of the main butterfly season.

In the picture, Sugarloaf Hill can be seen on the right. This is a special place for me, for it is the first site I ever visited to look for butterflies, back in the 1990's. I wanted to see my first Adonis Blue, and having seen this site before, and remembering it had something like the short turf described in the earlier Jeremy Thomas and Richard Lewington book, I had a feeling it might be suitable. And, sure enough I found a colony, in effect, discovering my first colony on my own. Little could I imagine back then, the wealth of site guides and info, or the camera equipment, at my disposal today. The Adonis I found that September afternoon weren't particularly good, and nor were the photo's, but I still have them, they have great sentimental value.

They are still present today, I saw several Adonis here this morning.

So, this was not a morning about taking the perfect picture, it was about reminiscing, and about enjoying the early Autumn sunshine, and the last of the seasons butterflies.



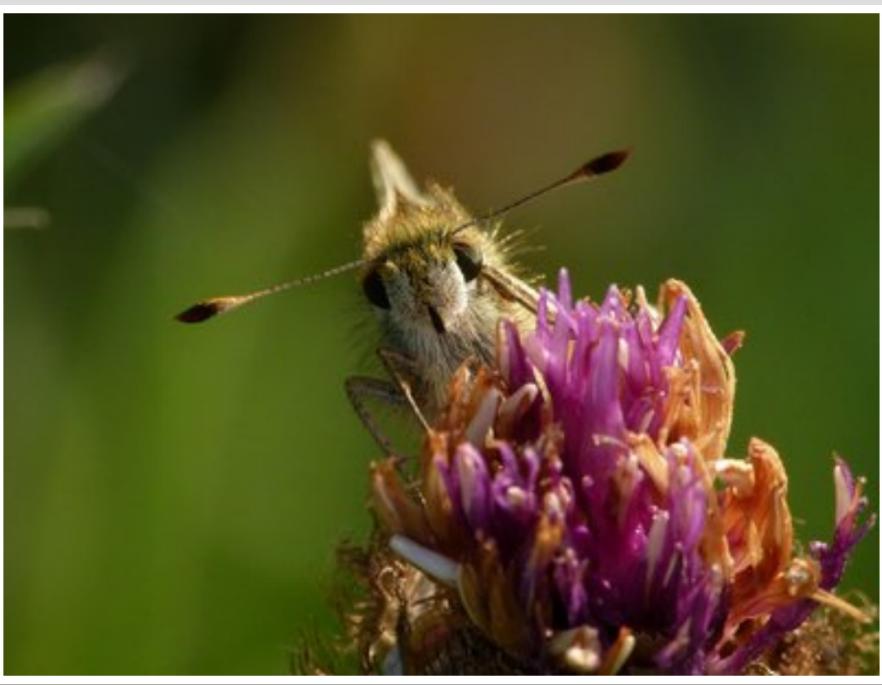
*folkstone downs, with sugarloaf hill to the right*



## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 12-Sep-12 07:01 AM GMT

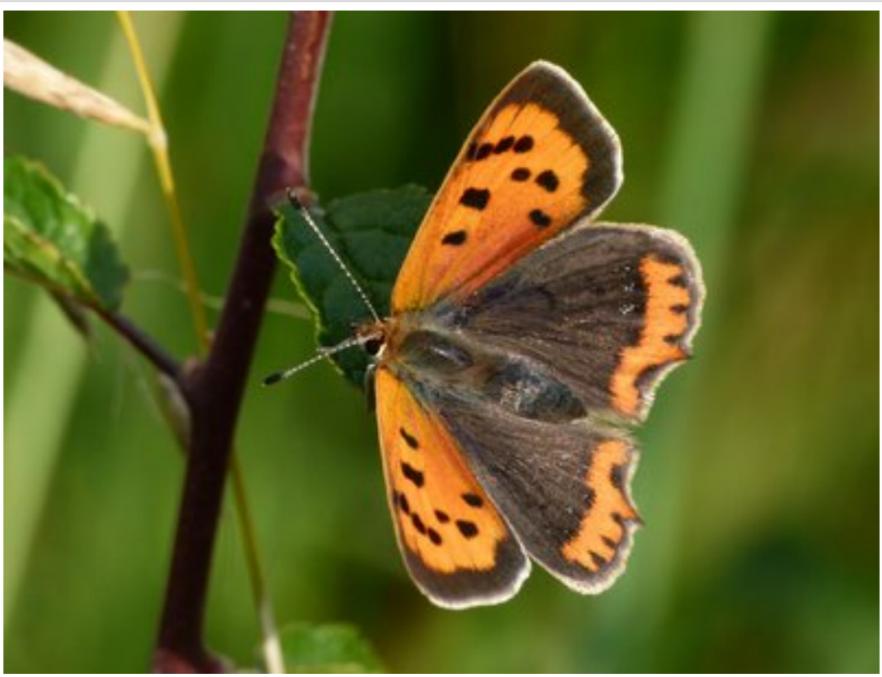
Having spent the morning at the Folkstone Downs, I headed back to Lydden Temple Ewell Downs for the afternoon. There were sure signs of the ending season here, too, with butterflies fewer and more tattered than a couple of weeks ago. However, I did manage to get a couple of shots of the last fresh Adonis Blues and Silver Spotted Skippers of the season, plus a nice Small Copper, and a family of Buzzards—probably the most eastern ones in the country—were much in evidence.



*'teddy bear' skipper*



*silver spotted skipper*



*small copper*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by Wurzel, 12-Sep-12 07:02 AM GMT

Great shots Essex 😊 They do look surprisingly fresh.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 12-Sep-12 07:18 AM GMT

They do,dont they? Small Coppers should continue to emerge untill October, but a Silver Spotted Skipper as fresh as that in September was a surprise and a delight,having seen a few tatty ones earlier,and a great way to sign off the downland season. 😊  
Now,lets see if i can find some of the Commas and Red Admirals that everyone else seems to be seeing...

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 20-Sep-12 07:17 AM GMT

Wednesday 19 September

Comma Day!

Waking up to blue skies, and a nice, if cool day forecast, today I decided to go to Bedfords Park, which is only about half-hour drive from home. By time I arrived, however, it was already clouding over, and it was really quite cold. 😞

However, the sun did reappear at around 4 pm, and soon I was watching Comma's—including 11 on one Blackberry bush! They are one of the few species that seem to have done well in 2012, in East Anglia at least. This is a good site for Small Copper, and I saw a few, including a couple of fresh ones, maybe 3rd generation. Just one Red Admiral was disappointing, and not the numbers being reported in the far south.

A Spotted Flycatcher was great to see.



## Re: essex buzzard

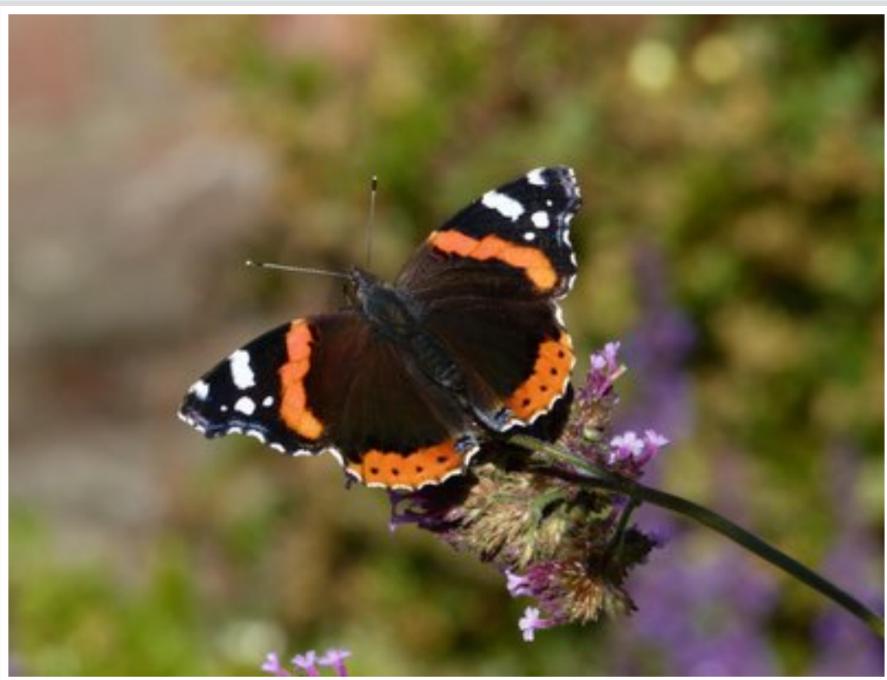
by Goldie M, 20-Sep-12 10:19 PM GMT

Great shots Essexbuzzard, I've seen just two Small Copper's all season, no Wall except when I was in Dorset in May, (too quick to take photos.) No Adonis except a side view which isn't very good. also no Chalk Hill Blue's I came south at the wrong time this year, I think they'll have gone from Kent when I get there in October, although you did give me some hope 😊 Goldie

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 30-Sep-12 08:24 AM GMT

In the gardens at my place of work,in cool but sunny conditions, six Comma,four Red Admiral and a Large cabbage White were feeding on Vebena bonariensis, Wallflower 'Bowles Mauve' and Buddleija. The Buddleija was a particularly interesting one,as it's a dwarf one called 'Buzz' which is said to grow to only 2 ft (60cm). It also appears to be perpetual flowering,as it had buds,blooms and dead heads at the same time. Well worth a try in a patio pot or garden too small for a normal Butterfly Bush. Remember,to get butterflies,it must get sunshine,not only in Summer,but Autumn as well. A late Peacock was nearby,but not feeding.





### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 28-Oct-12 06:38 AM GMT

A dusting of snow for East Anglia this morning—the first October snow i have seen here.

With a poor spring and summer,and a cold autumn,a depressingly early end to a poor season this year. 😞



### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 16-Dec-12 05:43 AM GMT

WALKING IN A WINTER WONDERLAND!

Like most of the country,East Anglia has had a short cold spell this week,with temps down to -6 or -7C. On Wednesday 12 December,overnight freezing fog had cleared by first light,leaving spectacular rime deposits on grass,trees and all surfaces,which lasted for two days. A true winter wonderland! 😊





## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 26-Dec-12 10:48 PM GMT

### WAXWINGS!

After reports of good numbers of Waxwings coming to GB from eastern Europe, i have been desperate to catch up with some of these stunning birds. Several other people on this forum, as well as some of my Essex birding colleagues, have reported sightings, but birds are mobile, and getting reports is one thing, birds still being present when i get a day off work is another!

However, there has been a flock around Maldon for several days now, and today i at last managed to get there. As i was driving along the road, there they were, in the roadside bushes—birdwatching has never been so easy!

As if that wasn't enough, the sun was shining, the sky was blue and all the colours showed perfectly! I managed to get a few photos in the morning sunshine, before it clouded over and the rain returned.

Happy days! 😊



## Re: essex buzzard

by Susie, 27-Dec-12 02:45 AM GMT

That's wonderful! 😊

**Re: essex buzzard**

by Wurzel, 27-Dec-12 07:22 AM GMT

Congratulations Essex, they're cracking birds 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 30-Dec-12 07:38 AM GMT

Thanks guys! I have been desperate to find some ever since i heard they were coming over this year. To say i'm delighted to find some is an understatement!

And to find them during just about the only spell of sunshine we've had during the festive period is doubly fantastic! 😎  
Cheers.