

Hebridean Small Heath

Coenonympha pamphilus subspecies *rhoumensis* Harrison

Subspecies type locality and authority

Specimens from the Isle of Rhum in the North Ebudes, Scotland, were first described as a subspecies by Harrison (1948).

General distribution and status

Resident. At present this subspecies is only known from the Isle of Rhum in the North Ebudes where it appears to be widespread and locally common. It may occur in the neighbouring islands of Canna, Eigg and Muck but has not specifically been searched for there as far as is known. Its subspecific status is a matter of dispute but this cannot be resolved until more is known about the

taxon's distribution and the consistency of its morphology. There are very few extant specimens in collections and, so far as the author is aware, the individual figured below is the first and only ever to be photographed alive and published. More research into this delightful and little-known butterfly is therefore warranted.

Flight period

Single brooded, flying from late May to the end of July, with a peak during the last week of June and the first week of July.

Larval foodplants

As for the Small Heath (p. 299).



Fig. 270 Hebridean Small Heath. Kinloch, Isle of Rhum

Hebridean Small Heath

Habitat requirements

In the Isle of Rhum it appears to be fairly widely distributed but, because its status as an assumed endemic subspecies has not been appreciated, little information has been gathered. It is presumed that it inhabits moorland, and the author found it on the grassy edges of meadows.

Identification characters, variation and similar species

Average wingspan and variation presumed to be similar to that of the Small Heath (p. 299) from which it differs in the following ways:

1. Forewing underside duller orange with

borders more silver-grey; pale area around eye-spot smaller or absent.

2. Hindwing underside more silver-grey and less tinged olive; central pale flash greyer, less tinged cream, and narrower.
3. In flight overall appearance eye-catchingly paler and greyer.

For similar species see the Small Heath (p. 299).

Field tips and regional prime sites

Scotland. The Hebridean Small Heath is only known from the Isle of Rhum in the North Ebudes where it is regarded as being the island's commonest and most widespread species. This may well be the



Fig. 271 Habitat of the Hebridean Small Heath at Kinloch, Isle of Rhum