

Dave Brown

by dave brown, 12-May-10 01:22 AM GMT

Saturday 8th May 2010.

One look out of the window told me today was not the day for butterflies or dragonflies. A phone call from a friend then had us heading to my favourite place. Good old Dungeness. Scenery not the best in the world but the wildlife exceedingly good. Thirty minutes later we were watching a Whiskered Tern hawking insects over the New Diggings, showing from the road to Lydd. Also present were a few hundred Swifts, Swallows, House and Sand Martins, together with a few Common Terns. A quick chat with Dave Walker (very friendly Observatory Warden) and his equally friendly assistant confirmed that the recent weather there meant little or no Butterfly or moth activity.

With the rain falling harder it was time to leave Dunge and head inland. The Iberian Chiffchaff at Waderslade had already been present over a week so it was time to catch up with it. On arrival at the small wood off Chesnut Avenue the bird showed and sang within a few minutes of our arrival. This is still a scarce bird in Britain so where was the crowd. In 30 minutes the maximum crowd was five, and that included 3 from our family. It sang for long periods of time and only once did it mutter the usual Chiffchaff call, otherwise it was Iberian Chiffchaff all the way. It also look slightly different in structure and colour. To my eyes the upper parts were greener, the legs were a brown colour and the tail appeared longer. The latter being subjective as there was nothing nearby to compare with.

Still raining hard and no chance of butterflies, so we rounded off the day by heading to Marden Meadows to admire the sight of 3000 plus Green Winged Orchids. They are currently at their best. In amongst the normal colour we found one white and several pink ones.

Considering the weather a very good day of wildlife watching.

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 17-May-10 09:17 PM GMT

Saturday and Sunday proved to be a little disappointing weather wise here in Mid/ East Kent. We started off near Chilham hoping to see Dingy or Grizzled Skipper but failed miserably. Only 5 Large Whites, 3 Small Whites, 2 Orange Tips, Green Veined White and Peacock were present, together with one Early Purple Orchid and 3 Speckled Yellow moths. A Common Buzzard flew over being harassed by a Crow.

Being so quiet we decided a spell of bird watching was in order. Oare Marsh had the usual common waders, together with 3 Common Sandpipers and 2 Avocets. Just east of Faversham we saw one Honey Buzzard (11.10hours), possibly the one seen near Dover earlier in the day, 2 Hobbys and 4 Sparrowhawks. A phone call had us searching the area just west of Canterbury where a Red Kite had been seen by several birders about 20 minutes earlier. We were out of luck, but we did see a Common Buzzard and 2 more Hobbys.

I was informed that at least 10 Duke of Burgundy's were out at Denge Wood but by now drizzle was falling so it would have been a pointless visit. Rain was forecast by midday for Sunday so it was out early to look for Downy Emerald at Castle Water Rye. No luck with these either but we did see our first Small Heath and Hairy Dragonfly of the spring. Hobby and 2 Cetti's Warblers also present. We then called in at Beckley Woods near Rye to look for Grizzled Skipper. We checked 2 sites where we saw them last year but failed to find any on this visit. We did see 2 Brimstones, Red Admiral, 4 Large Whites, Speckled Wood, 5 Speckled Yellow moths and 4 Early Purple Orchids before calling it a day as the clouds came over. The weather forecast is better for the coming week so next weekend could be interesting.

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 23-May-10 04:27 AM GMT

Thursday 20 May 2010.

A late afternoon/ early evening visit to a local wood near Chilham, Kent only produced 2 Brimstones, 4 Large Whites and many Speckled Yellow moths. The site seems suitable for Skippers but I have yet to see one here.

Next we visited Chilham Lakes where 2 Green Veined Whites were present, also one singing Nightingale.

Our last port of call was more successful where 2 Brown Argus, 2 Dingy Skippers, 4 Large Whites, 5 plus Burnet Companion moths and 9 Lady Orchids were on show at the base of a hill on the Wye National nature reserve.

Friday 21 May 2010.

The predicated weather forecast encouraged us over the border into East Sussex. We first called in at Abbots Wood near Eastbourne to the welcome site of 62 Pearl Bordered Fritillaries in the northern section of this wood. Even allowing for a possible few double counted the true number must have been in excess of 55. A great deal of management work has been undertaken resulting in not only increased numbers but an extension of their range within the wood. Also 4 Brimstones, 5 Large Whites, 1 Small Heath and many Speckled Yellow moths.

Next we called in at Park Corner Heath but this was fairly quite apart from Brimstones. Over 21 were present, along with 4 Speckled Woods, 3 Blood Vein moths and 2 singing Nightingales. I was informed that Grizzled Skipper is in low numbers at this location this year.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 24-May-10 04:36 PM GMT

Saturday 22nd May 2010

With a predicated warm day we decided to visit Oaken Wood to catch up with the Wood Whites. We walked the Oaken Wood complex and about half way to Botany Bay in brilliant sunshine, the downside being that most butterflies were constantly on the move making photography difficult. The count being 34 plus Wood Whites, 2 Grizzled Skippers, 10 Brimstones, 1 Green Hairstreak, 1 Red Admiral, 4 Speckled Woods, 4 Orange Tips, 1 Small Copper, 2 Peacocks, 1 Common Blue, many Large & Small Whites, many Speckled Yellow Moths, 2 Blood Vein moths, Hornet and 1 Hairy Dragonfly.

The true figure for Wood White was probably nearer 50 but we were trying not to double count as everything was so active. A really excellent day in a beautiful location.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 03-Jun-10 08:56 PM GMT

Update of recent days.

Saturday 29th May 2010.

The weather did not bode well for Butterflies and so it turned out, with only Large White being seen. We did call in at Oare Marshes to see a male Marsh Harrier and 4 Avocets. Elmley RSPB reserve produced 15 Little Egrets, Peregrine and Common Buzzard. At a location south of Faversham we had the wonderful sight of 376 White Helleborine Orchids just about to flower (I estimate about a week away). Also 15 Greater Twayblade.

Sunday 30th May 2010.

The day started dull so we commenced our day at Pett Level to see one Red Kite, 3 Common Buzzards, Hobby, Med Gull, Little Egret and 2 Cettis Warblers. Next was Beckley Woods. On the approach we saw 4 Common Buzzards, in the woods we came across 2 Common Blues, 2 Brimstones, 3 Large Whites, 12 Speckled Yellow moths, 6 Silver Y moths but still no Grizzled Skippers. Dragonflies seen were 1 Hairy Hawker and Broad Bodied Chaser. The weather was now starting to improve but Hamstreet woods only gave up 2 Brimstones, 3 Speckled Yellow moths, 5 Azure Damselflies and 1 Large Red Damselfly.

Monday 31st May 2010

The poor holiday weather continued so it was no surprise that a visit to East Blean woods failed to find any Heath Fritillaries. The only goodie being a Sharp Angled Peacock moth. Nearby Stodmarsh only produced 2 Hobbys, Sparrowhawk, Marsh Harrier, 200 plus Swifts and the usual Reed and Sedge warblers.

We ended the day at Yockletts Bank, a local site well known for its orchids. A brief visit produced 4 Fly Orchids, 26 Lady Orchids, 1 Common Spotted, 1 Greater Butterfly, 2 White Helleborine and 2 Greater Twayblades.

Like many others I found this weekend a great disappointment when it came to butterflies. Things can only get better.

Wednesday 02 June 2010.

A very welcome phone call from someone at Dungeness saw us joining him 45 minutes later to look at a splendid 1st Summer male Red Footed Falcon sitting on posts at the back of Hookers Pit. We also learnt that Grizzled Skipper numbers around the observatory trapping area were reasonable this year with a maximum of 15 being seen.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 08-Jun-10 05:41 PM GMT

SATURDAY 05 JUNE 2010

Today the forecast was good so it was time to catch up with Duke of Burgundy in Kent. My local site is Bonsai Bank in Denge Woods. Despite being a little late in the year there was still at least 8 on the wing, with 2 being in pristine condition. Also present 6 Common Blues, 8 Large Whites, 1 Speckled Wood, 1 Burnet Companion (moth) and many Speckled Yellows (moth). This is also a good orchid site with 350 plus Lady Orchid still in good flower, 10 White Helleborine about to flower, 4 Greater Butterfly Orchid, with many Common Spotted and Greater Twayblade coming through. 2 Common Buzzards flew over, with Willow Warbler, Marsh Tit and Blackcap present.

SUNDAY 06TH JUNE 2010

The forecast was mixed but worth a visit to Ashdown Forest in case any early Silver Studded Blue were on the wing. Despite a 2 hour search we could not find any. We did see 1 Green Hairstreak, 2 Small Heath, 4 Large White, 1 Speckled Wood. Moths present included 3 Blood Vein, 10 Silver Y, 5 Lattice Heath and 3 Brown China Mark. Bird life was good with a final count of 10 Redstarts, 4 Tree Pipits, 2 Common Buzzards, 3 Cuckoos, 2 Crossbills and 4 Redpolls.

Some dragonflies were on the wing and included 10 Broad Bodied Chasers, 6 Large Red Damselflys and 1 Four Spotted Chaser.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 10-Jun-10 12:44 AM GMT

MONDAY 7TH JUNE 2010

Today we visited Park Corner Heath in East Sussex and despite an overcast start we managed to see 8 Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries, 1 Brimstone, 4 Blood Vein moths and a smashing Cream Spot Tiger moth. The sun was breaking through as we left with a number of visitors arriving, so I imagine more SPBF were seen later as the recording book showed up to 22 were present.

We then went on to nearby Glynde to see a minimum of 3 Red Kites and 2 Common Buzzards between there and Ringmer. The kites looked settled as we watched them for about an hour. Also 1 Common Blue.

WEDNESDAY 8TH JUNE 2010

The forecast was showers but this did not stop us checking out East Blean Wood near Canterbury. We found 5 Heath Fritillaries resting on bracken but none flew in the dull weather. Also present 1 Blood Vein moth and 3 Speckled Yellow moths. Heavy rain then fell stopping any further activity.

Dave



Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 11-Jun-10 05:51 PM GMT

WEDNESDAY EVENING 09TH JUNE 2010

The weather started to brighten up so a trip to an undisclosed site near Ashford was in order. Alas no Black Veined Moths were on the wing, maybe a few days too early. The Late Spider Orchids were in flower, but numbers are again low this year. 5 were suitable for photography. We then visited Hamstreet Woods but could not locate the reported Nightjar. 2 Woodcocks did several circuits.

THURSDAY 10TH JUNE 2010

A trip to Sandwich Bay was the order of the day. On arrival the wind picked up and spoilt our chances of seeing much in the way of butterflies. All we could muster was 7 Small Heath, 4 Common Blue and 2 Red Admirals. We could find no Scarce Chasers, just 4 Blue Tailed Damselflies. The orchids at this site are all behind. We located 100 plus Lizard Orchids but nearly all were still in tight bud. Whilst checking these my eagle eyed son found 2 Sand Catchfly (plant) but these were behind as well. Broomrape were in good numbers, mainly Common but also Bedstraw (also known as Clove Scented). The weather then closed in putting paid to further exploration.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 14-Jun-10 03:30 AM GMT

SATURDAY 12 JUNE 2010

Had the predicated fine weather actually arrived we would have joined the others in the brambles looking for Black Hairstreak. Here in Kent it was dull and cloudy until the early afternoon, so we were not willing to make the long journey on this occasion. After rearranging our plans we ended up at Parkgate Down. It is an excellent Orchid site but also good for butterflies, except for today. It was all one species. 72 Common Blues were spread across the 3 fields that make up this nature reserve. Moths were represented by 7 Silver Y's. The first field contained 20 Monkey Orchids with many Common Spotted and Fragrant Orchid still not in full flower. The second was better with over 120 Monkey Orchids, and again many Common Spotted and Fragrant. The third field contained many Common Twayblade and Common Spotted but no sign of any Musk Orchid yet.

SUNDAY 13 JUNE 2010

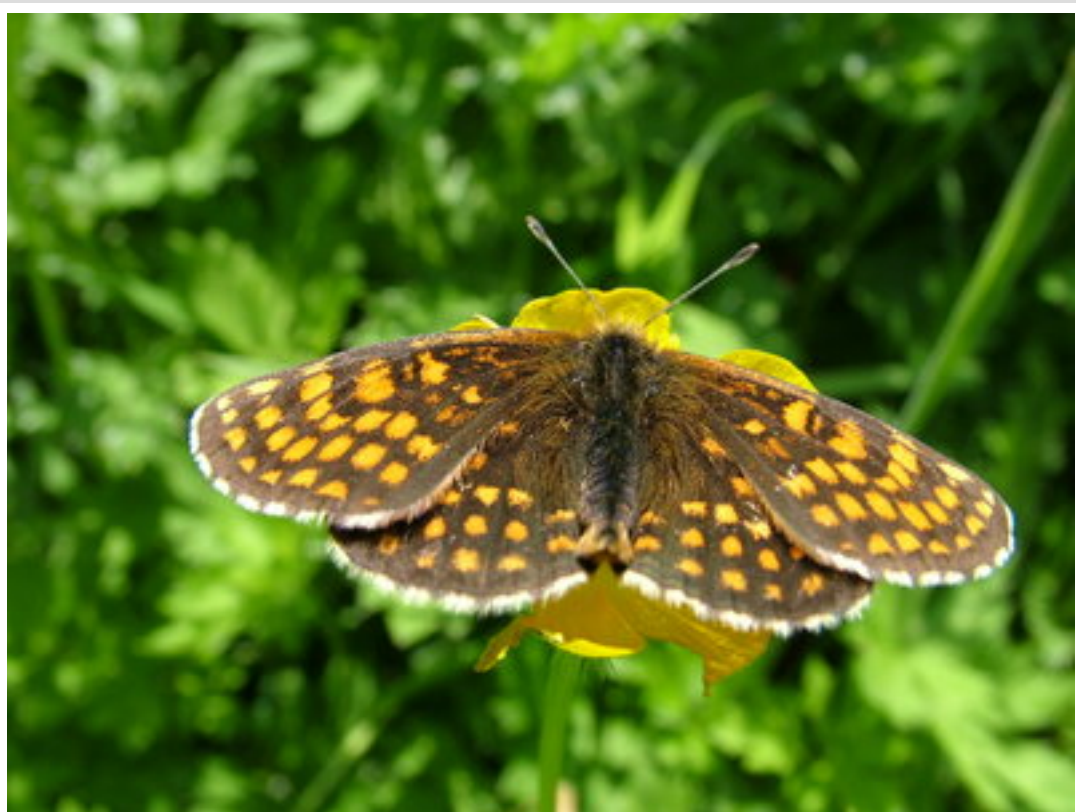
In dull conditions we explored Wye Crown but not one butterfly was on the wing. Neither could we find any Burnt Tip Orchid. This is the third year running that we have failed to find any at this location. There was only ever small numbers but this is looking bad. It's a popular site for walkers, kite flyers and rabbits so perhaps the species is in trouble here.

We decided to give East Blean Woods another visit, which was a good choice as the sun came out on our arrival. Almost immediately 10 Heath Fritillaries were on the wing. Still low numbers, but perhaps a few more hot days and numbers will increase. Also seen 1 Common Blue, 1 Silver Y and 1 Treble Bar moth.

Next was Westbere for dragonflies, but butterflies seen were 3 Red Admirals, 4 Common Blue and 1 Large White. Dragonflies included 6 Scarce Chasers, 1 Large Red and many Azure, Variable, Common Blue and Blue Tailed Damselflies. 4 of the Scarce Chasers were alongside the public footpath that leads from the railway foot crossing and within the first 150 metres.

The final stop of the day was a roadside location near Crundale where 25 Man Orchids and 2 Common Buzzards were on view. Not a brilliant day for butterflies but not bad considering the weather.

Dave



Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 17-Jun-10 03:47 AM GMT

WEDNESDAY 16TH JUNE 2010

After the disappointment of yesterdays visit to Queendown Warren (Kent) where we only saw 2 Common Blues on the wing in dull and dismal weather, todays visit to Monks Wood was much more positive.

Many thanks to the kind gentleman (PhilB?) who not only pointed out the best spot but give an update on all the latest information on Black Hairstreak at this location. It certainly is a very good spot to connect with this butterfly. My family spent an enjoyable hour in his company during which time we saw at least 9 different individuals. The sugar solution certainly seems to have a lot going for it with many staying on view for several minutes. I will post a few photos later in the week. Also seen walking whilst around the wood, 14 Speckled Woods and 3 Common Buzzards overhead.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 20-Jun-10 03:30 AM GMT

THURSDAY 17 JUNE 2010

The weather here in East Kent this week has been very disappointing with very little opportunity for insects to fly. Todays dull and overcast skies with a strong North East wind was no exception. There was little chance of seeing any butterflies but a visit to Dungeness was rewarded with good views of one of the Purple Herons (featured on Springwatch this week). A Bittern then flew around for several minutes giving excellant views to the dozen or so people present. Also 4 Hobbys and a Marsh Harrier.

FRIDAY 18 JUNE 2010.

Despite the cold biting wind a visit to Langdon Bay near Dover saw 2 Large Skippers, 3 Common Blues and 1 Burnet Companion. We also saw a few Common Spotted Orchids but other orchids seemed very late.

Best of the day though was 1 Painted Lady, our first of the year.

SATURDAY 19 JUNE 2010

The cold temperatures continue so it was no suprise that a visit to Castle Water near Rye only turned up 23 Blue Tailed, 1 Variable Damselfly and 1 Red Admiral. The day was saved when a phone call diverted us to Dungeness where 6 Rannoch Loopers (moths) were trapped overnight at the Observatory. Up to last year this was a major rarity for Kent, but there was an influx last year and it appears the start of one this year, with 12 also trapped on Thanet this week. We have finally caught up with this moth for they were on display as we arrived. A visit to the reserve saw 2 Hobbys and 4 Common Spotted Orchids before the showers set in.





Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 02-Jul-10 07:26 PM GMT

THURSDAY 24TH JUNE 2010

Following a small influx into Kent of the Rannoch Looper moth over the previous week, for only about the fifth time this year we had put the moth trap out overnight in the garden more in hope than expectation, especially being 15 miles inland. However, much to our surprise we caught one. This was even more surprising when the total species caught was 6 and the total moth count was 15. This is the rarest moth we have ever caught in our urban garden, but goes to show how big or widespread the Rannoch Looper influx must be for this very rare migrant.

SATURDAY 26 JUNE 2010

ASHDOWN FOREST

We started our day at the Forest Lodge Nature Reserve and ended up walking around the area from the Smugglers car park. In total we saw 4 Silver Studded Blues (150 yards onto the heath from the Smugglers Car Park). This is the lowest number I have seen in this area and unless further emergence occurs is slightly worrying. The good news was the number of Large Skippers. We counted 35 but probably missed many more. Also 8 Meadow Browns, 3 Small Heaths, 1 late Brimstone, 8 Blood Vein moths, 3 Latticed Heath moths, 5 Emperor Dragonflies, 6 Broad Bodied Chasers, 18 Large Red Damselflies, 15 Heath Spotted Orchids, 4 Redstarts and 3 Tree Pipits. An excellent day spent in good weather at a great location.

SUNDAY 27 JUNE 2010

IDEN MOAT (EAST SUSSEX)

5 Small Tortoiseshell, 8 Large Skippers, 1 Red Admiral, 2 Meadow Browns, 1 Downy Emerald, 35 White Legged Damselflies, 6 Four Spotted Chasers, 2 Emperor Dragonflies, 1 Hairy Dragonfly, 7 Red Eyed Damselflies, Hobby, Common Buzzard and 2 adult Mediterranean Gull. Another good day as the sunshine continues



Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 02-Jul-10 11:32 PM GMT

TUESDAY 29 JUNE 2010.

An early evening visit to nearby Wye only found 3 Marbled Whites on the wing, but being our first of the year these were most welcome. Also present 2 Bee Orchids, 91 Pyramidal Orchids with 2 Turtle Doves purring away.

THURSDAY 01 JULY 2010.

A day off on what turned out to be a beautiful day saw us heading to the Field Centre at Sandwich Bay. Luckily we are members otherwise the road toll fee of £6 would be off putting on a regular basis. Well worth the visit though because as we walked through the door we met the very friendly warden who said would we like to see a Spurge Hawk Moth. Yes we would was the reply as this a real stunner and a mega rarity for Kent, only the 14th record we were informed. This was most unexpected. I attach a photo but apologise for the poor quality and reflection. It was quite active and did not dare take it out of the container for photos.

We then visited the area known as the North Stream, the area surrounding the railway line and ending up looking out the hide on Restharrow pool. Seen was a very tatty looking Painted Lady, 9 Common Blue, 5 Speckled Wood, 1 Large White, 5 Large Skipper, 2 Red Admirals, 20 plus Meadow Browns, 3 Red Veined Darters (Restharrow pool), 4 Scarce Chasers, 25 Black Tailed Skimmers, 5 Banded Demoiselle, 2 Four Spotted Chasers, 8 Emperor Dragonflies, 12 Blue Tailed Damselflies and many unidentified blue damselflies. Bird wise it was very quiet, mainly Swallows and House Martins hawking insects. A good day in a very interesting location that produced some real goodies.

Dave



Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 11-Jul-10 04:13 AM GMT

SATURDAY 3RD JULY 2010

Another visit to the Dungeness area in glorious sunshine provided a good mix of butterflies, with a few decent moths at the observatory. Butterflies included 7 Marbled White, 50 plus Small/ Essex Skippers (most were Small), 2 Red Admirals, 2 Tortoiseshells, 2 Small Copper and 27 Meadow Browns. Good moths included 1 Scarce Black Arches, 1 Brown Scallop, 1 Peach Blossom and 1 Small Emerald.

We called in to check the Royal Military Canal at Kennardington, this produced 1 Comma, 2 Speckled Woods, 1 Red Admiral, 7 Red Eyed Damselflies and our first Brown Hawker of the year.

Hamstreet Forest produced 4 White Admirals, 1 Comma, 1 Large Skipper, 8 Small Skippers and 2 Common Buzzards.

SUNDAY 04TH JULY 2010.

Whilst the rest of the country seemed to be looking at Purple Emperors, wearing such oddities as smelly socks and dirty jeans to enhance their chances, we decided to look for White Letter Hairstreak, which is now a rarity in East Kent. We decided to visit the Royal Military Canal at Warehorne where sightings used to be regular many years ago. A 3 hour search did produce 4 sightings, but they remained in the tops of an Elm tree and gave no photographic opportunities. Also seen during the long walk was 4 Essex Skippers, 12 Small Skippers, 1 Marbled White, 25 plus Meadow Browns, 3 Small Tortoiseshells, 1 Red Admiral, 1 Ringlet and 4 Large Whites. Dragonflies seen were 1 Emperor, 2 Southern Hawkets, 1 Ruddy Darter, 12 Common Darters, 5 Blue Tailed Damselflies, numerous Azure and Variable damselflies and 1 Emerald Damselfly. Birds included 1 Common Buzzard and 2 Lesser Whitethroats.

We then spent the rest of the day in Beckley Woods (East Sussex). This was excellent, with 23 Silver Washed Fritillaries, 14 White Admirals, 2 Purple Hairstreaks, 8 Ringlets, 30 plus Meadow Browns, 1 Red Admiral, 4 Commas, 1 Large Skipper, 1 Hummingbird Hawk Moth, 9 Southern Hawkets, 35 Common Darters, 1 Black Tailed Skimmer and 1 Marsh Tit. A really good end to a most enjoyable day.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 16-Jul-10 01:11 AM GMT

SATURDAY 10TH JULY 2010

We started the day at Warehorne looking for White Letter Hairstreaks, but without luck. Strangely we found 3 Purple Hairstreaks in the Elm tree and not the usual oak tree habit. The long walk was very pleasant and resulted in 12 Small Skippers, Red Admiral, Comma, 8 Gatekeepers, 5 Large White, 25 Meadow Browns and 3 Brown Hawkets. Next stop was the Denge marsh area of Dungeness to see the by now famous Purple Herons. We had to wait about 30 minutes but then saw Purple Heron, Great White Heron and Bittern, all in the space of 10 minutes, much to the appreciation of the gathered crowd. A phone call then sent us to the trapping area at Dungeness Bird Observatory to see a resting Lesser Emperor dragonfly. It had been present for nearly two hours in the same spot so perhaps a migrant resting after the long journey. I attach a photograph, not the best of quality, but a record shot showing it to be a probable female. Our first female, but about our 10th Lesser Emperor in total. All at Dungeness over the last decade.

Back at the observatory we saw a Sussex Emerald, Maidens Blush and Obscure Wainscot (moths) and Deptford Pink (flower).

A really good day enjoyed by all the family.

SUNDAY 11TH JULY 2010.

Whilst just about everybody else had been to see Purple Emperors somewhere, up until now we had resisted the temptation. Today however was probably our last chance this flight season in predicated good weather so we found ourselves at Mark Beech (Kent) late morning. This is one of Kent's best and well known sites, but even though well watched there are not many reports of good numbers here or sightings on the ground. We had left the smelly socks behind, but still hopeful that some would be on the wing. At about 11.30 am the first one appeared and flew around the master tree. Over the next 30 minutes we had sightings of 1, 1 and 2. Barry Wright then joined us with camera in hand and over the next couple of hours we saw further ones and twos. We never saw all PE's together, but judging by the direction of approach and dispersal I would think at least 3, if not 4, different individuals were present. Barry managed to get several decent photographs to confirm the sightings.

Also seen were 4 White Admirals, 7 Purple Hairstreaks, 5 Ringlets, Red Admiral and 2 Brown Hawkers.

We then called at a small stream near Bough Beech to see 8 White Legged Damselflies, 11 Banded Demoiselles, 2 Southern Hawkers, Emperor Dragonfly, 3 Red Eyed Damselflies.

We were just about to pull up outside our home when my son sitting in the back suddenly said Mega at Dungeness, without even stopping we were on our way. The call in question turned out to be the wandering White Tailed Plover present on the ARC pit. We arrived to find about 20 birders looking rather depressed, not a good sign. Never one to give up we spread the search to other parts of Dungeness, luckily the bird reappeared on the same pit about an hour later much to the delight of the gathering crowd. I attach a poor record photograph which does not do the bird full justice. A really good end to an excellent weekend.

Dave



Re: Dave Brown

by Michaeljf, 16-Jul-10 01:37 AM GMT

"dave brown" wrote:

The call in question turned out to be the wandering White Tailed Plover present on the ARC pit. I attach a poor record photograph which does not do the bird full justice.

Dave,
I don't think you've loaded up a picture of the Plover there....unless it's invisible?

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 16-Jul-10 03:49 AM GMT

Here is the Swallow Tail moth. I am having trouble loading the White Tailed Plover. The picture appears to be 1.78MB and the blog only accepts 512K. Not sure why the file is that big as the photo is not that good. Computers are not my strong point. Perhaps Pete can tell me how to reduce the photo size to allow it through. Otherwise you will all have to look at the invisible picture of the Plover and imagine how good it was. I have never seen so many excited Kent birders, many having waited a life time to see one.

Dave



Re: Dave Brown

by Pete Eeles, 16-Jul-10 03:52 AM GMT

"dave brown" wrote:

Perhaps Pete can tell me how to reduce the photo size to allow it through.

Not sure what software you have available. But try here:

<http://www.picresize.com/>

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 18-Jul-10 05:45 AM GMT

Pete, thank you for the link. I will try to downsize the photo in the week when I have more time to understand the process. My cheap and old Fuji camera creates files that are below your limit, but my Samsung MP4 for digiscoping goes over 1MB per file.

SATURDAY 17TH JULY 2010.

Today did not look too promising weather wise, but in the end we had a reasonable time. Starting the day in Hamstreet woods (Kent) we located 3 White Admirals, 8 Purple Hairstreaks, 10 Peacocks, 1 Red Admiral, 2 Large Skippers, 4 Small Skippers, 20 Gatekeepers, 3 Ringlets, 50 plus Meadow Browns, 1 Speckled Wood and 4 Large Whites. Moths included 1 Large Emerald and 1 Buff Tip. Dragonflies present were 3 Migrant Hawkers and 30 Common Darters, birds represented by an overhead Peregrine and Sparrowhawk.

The White Tailed Plover at Dungeness was too much of an attraction so an afternoon visit gave reasonable views. It is now much more distant from the hide as the recent rains seemed to have made the water levels rise. It is still a popular draw one week on, with over 50 birders present at the time of our arrival. Also one Garganey from the viewing screen. At the observatory we saw a very battered Pine Hawk Moth, 1 Lunar Spotted Pinion and 1 Small Seraphim. The Deptford Pink was still in flower near the Observatory. A good day enjoyed by all.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 19-Jul-10 09:09 PM GMT

SUNDAY 18 TH JULY 2010.

Today we decided to visit Cliffe Pools RSPB reserve. News had filtered out during the week of at least one Southern Emerald damselfly present, so with this in mind and an opportunity to see good numbers of butterflies, it had the makings of a good day.

In the end the wind was too strong to give photographic views of the dragonfly but we did see at least one male and one female Southern Emerald, with a second male some 25 metres from the first which was probably a different individual. During the 2 hours we were there sightings were difficult because the wind was keeping everything low, but numbers of Scarce Emerald Damselfly were the highest I have ever seen in this part of Cliffe (second viewing point along the bumpy track, and then walk north east for 50 metres along the side track).

50 plus Scarce Emerald Damselfly, 20 plus Ruddy Darter, also Common Darter and Southern Hawker. 2 Marbled Whites, 2 Small Heath, 5 Red Admirals, 12 Large Whites, 6 Gatekeepers and 20 Meadow Browns.

On the way home we called in at a small wood south of Faversham to see 1 plus Silver Washed Fritillary, 2 White Admirals, 2 Purple Hairstreaks, 15 Large Whites, 2 Gatekeepers, 25 plus Meadow Browns, 2 Commas, Red Admiral, Peacock and 200 Broad Leaved Helleborines not too far from flowering.

With luck the distant photo of the White Tailed Plover is attached and also a poor shot of a Purple Hairstreak landed briefly low down.

Dave





Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 26-Jul-10 09:58 PM GMT

Saturday 24th July 2010.

Today we decided to visit Oare Marsh nature reserve on the North Kent Coast. In the past it has been a fairly reliable Kent spot for Clouded Yellow. In addition it is always worth checking the wading birds on the incoming tide. The weather was decent, as was the wildlife, but unfortunately no Clouded Yellows. Neither was there any sign of the Spoonbill which had been seen up until 09.00 hours.

Butterflies seen were 8 Small Skippers, 1 Common Blue, 40 plus Meadow Browns, 18 Gatekeepers, 2 Peacocks, 1 Red Admiral and 2 Silver Y moths. Dragonflies -50 Emerald Damselflies, 1 Broad Bodied Chaser, 2 Brown Hawkers, 2 Southern Hawkers, 5 Migrant Hawkers, 25 plus Ruddy Darters, 10 Common Darters. Birdlife included over 400 Black Tailed Godwits, 3 Avocets, 1 Greenshank, 1 Marsh Harrier and 5 Little Egrets. Nearby 6 Little Egrets were present on Ham Pits.

We ended the day at a small wood near Chilham viewing 3 White Admirals, 2 Commas, 1 Brimstone, 15 Gatekeepers and many Meadow Browns.

6 Silver Y's were flying around the buddleia bush when we arrived home. Nothing special but a good day all round.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 28-Jul-10 07:17 PM GMT

SUNDAY 25TH JULY 2010.

We all have one of those days. Make the wrong decision on where to go or what to see. Today turned out to be one. I had toyed with the idea of going to Cliffe with a view to putting in more effort to locate any further Southern Emerald Damselflies; it can also be good for butterflies and waders. However, at decision time there was a heavy shower so it did not seem suitable and in the end we played safe and went to Dungeness, where even if it rains you can usually see good things. We later learnt that people searching for the Southern Emeralds turned up Kent's first record of Southern Migrant Hawker, not one but two patrolling up and down the same dyke.

Never mind, Dungeness had its moments. 4 Marbled Whites, 3 Common Blues, 25 Meadow Browns and 15 Gatekeepers around the observatory area. The moth trap contained Pale Grass Eggar, Dusky Sallow, Dingy Footman, Toadflax Brocade, Reed Dagger, 2 Tiger Moths and Pebble Prominent amongst others. The ARC pits saw 2 Common Sandpipers, 1 Summer plumaged Knot, 4 Little Ringed Plovers, 1 Little Egret, 1 Brown Hawker, 5 Migrant Hawkers and very rare this year, 1 Painted Lady. In addition 2 Commas, 1 Red Admiral, 3 Silver Y's and numerous Meadow Browns.

During this visit we were advised that 3 Silver Washed Fritillaries had been seen the previous day in Hamstreet Woods so that was our next port of call. This is still a good butterfly in East Kent. Unfortunately we could not find any, but we did see a fresh emergence of Brimstones, 14 males and 4 females in total. Also 16 White Admirals, 2 Commas, 3 Red Admirals, 1 Purple Hairstreak, 4 Peacocks, 1 Large Skipper, 60 plus Meadow Browns, 25 plus Gatekeepers, many large Whites, with a few Small Whites, 9 Migrant Hawkers and 1 Brown Hawker.

Finally, we have been seeing 6 or 7 Silver Y's around the garden Buddleia bush most days in the last week; however yesterday evening (Tuesday) we saw a minimum of 23. Why the sudden and large increase I have no idea, but a most welcome occurrence.

Dave



Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 02-Aug-10 11:12 PM GMT

SATURDAY 31ST JULY 2010.

Today was one of those days when our time would have been better spent at home. The weather was cloudy, dull, and cold with a few showers. We decided to visit Oare Marshes with nothing special in mind. Butterflies were few with just small numbers of Gatekeepers and Large Whites. Birds included 10 Little Egrets, 8 Ruffs and 2 Greenshanks. To show how bad things were we actually went shopping in the afternoon, and shopping does not feature in my 100 must do list.

SUNDAY 01ST AUGUST 2010.

The weather was not much better, but with predicated periods of sunshine forecast a trip to Cliffe Marsh RSPB was in order.

Butterflies. 5 Small Heaths, 4 Common Blues, 20 Gatekeepers, 15 Meadow Browns, 12 Large Whites, 1 Red Admiral and 1 Peacock. Others reported several Wall Browns near the first viewing point.

Dragonflies. 2 SOUTHERN EMERALDS in the ditch that runs parallel with the wide track in the north east corner of the field with the metal gate. 100 metres east of the second viewing ramp. This was early afternoon after a 3 hour search. Well spotted by a young lady searching with her husband in less than ideal conditions. 60 plus Scarce Emerald Damselflies, Emperor Dragonfly, 25 Ruddy Darters, 12 Blue Tailed Damselflies.

Birds. 12 Little Egrets, 1 Greenshank, 1 Peregrine, 1 Hobby, 2 Marsh Harriers, Med Gull and 2 Little Ringed Plovers.

I attach a poor record shot of one of the Southern Emerald Damselflies and a Scarce Emerald.

Dave



Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 13-Aug-10 10:49 PM GMT

SATURDAY 7TH AUGUST 2010

Today's forecast for East Kent was showers and cloud in the morning, with a few sunny spells in the afternoon. It was not going to be a butterfly day. Dungeness here we come again. A safe bet in the circumstances. The morning was all about birding with Great White Egret, Cattle Egret, Little Egret and Bittern all showing from Dengemarsh Road. With others seeing the Purple Heron a little before we arrived this has to be the best place in Britain at the moment for birding. This was supported by 5 Whimbel, Hobby and a small movement of Willow Warblers, Whitethroats and Sand Martins. We really struggled with butterflies and only saw 2 Small Tortoiseshells Red Admiral and 9 Large Whites.

The Bird Observatory produced 3 Black Redstarts, 3 Small Tortiseshells, 2 Red Admirals, Common Blue, Bordered Straw and Dark Sword Grass (both moths). The previous day 40 Small Tortiseshells had been in the area.

With the sun now breaking through the ARC pits produced 14 Common Blues, 4 Gatekeepers, 2 Meadow Browns, 5 Small Tortoisehells, 6 Migrant Hawkers and 3 Ruddy Darters.

SUNDAY 8TH AUGUST 2010

The weather pattern was much the sam as yesterday but a visit to the Wye Downs Nature Reserve in the afternoon produced 5 CLOUDED YELLOWS. This is the 3rd year running we have seen them at the same site, near the foot of the Devils Kneading bowl towards Brook alongside the steps. Also 100 plus Chalkhill Blues, 75 plus Common Blues, 4 Brimstones, 7 Gatekeepers, 24 Meadow Browns, 9 Small Heaths, 30 Large Whites. A great little spot on the day, but a steep walk down from the main car park.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 18-Aug-10 04:02 AM GMT

SATURDAY 14TH AUGUST 2010

Yet another disappointing weekend weatherwise. It's a shame that as the otherwise very good butterfly season draws to an end the weather turns against us. This was not going to be a good weekend for insects in this part of Kent and my report bears that out. With strong winds and an overcast day we turned up at Dengemarsh Road, Dungeness to see the Great White Egret fly in. Also present was Hobby, 7 Little Egrets, 3 Marsh Harriers, 7 Common Terns and 50 Sand Martins. Despite much searching we only found 18 Large Whites and no other species.

Later in the day we went to Oare Marshes to watch the incoming tide. A Little Stint, 2 Greenshanks, 3 Ruffs and the ever present large numbers of Black Tailed Godwits was not a good return. Disappointingly no butterflies or dragonflies.

Of course the sun came out on our return home, which encouraged 4 Holly Blues, 2 Red Admirals, Peacock and 9 Large Whites to the garden. Also 2 Migrant Hawkers appreciated hanging on one of our garden bushes.

SUNDAY 15TH AUGUST 2010

If anything the wind was even stronger so our chances of butterflies was almost non existant. A visit to Grove Ferry Nature Reserve did produce 3 Common Blues but not surprisingly no others. Birds included 2 Greenshanks, 2 Ruff, 3 Snipe, 5 Green Sandpipers, 2 Yellow Wagtails and one Cettis Warbler. Home for a warm cup of tea. At about 15.00 hours we had a call to say a White Winged Black Tern had been found at the Patch on Dungeness. We should have been tempted, but for once we carried on with our cup of tea. However, another call 3 hours later to say there now was a Juvenile Buff Breasted Sandpiper on the ARC Pit at Dungeness prompted us into action and 45 minutes we were enjoying reasonable views of this American wader. Dungeness continues its remarkable run of rare birds and insects (another Lesser Emperor dragonfly had been seen in the week on the RSPB reserve).

MONDAY 16TH AUGUAT 2010

The wind was just as strong but the early cloud was giving way to a few clear spells so another visit to Dungeness was on the cards. A 5 hour visit produced Great White Egret, Adult Purple Heron, Cattle Egret and another view of the Buff Breasted Sandpiper. We failed to find the Red Backed Shrike which had been trapped and ringed earlier in the day. Also present was a Pied Flycatcher, 9 Little Egrets, 2 Yellow Wagtails and March Harrier. We had a little more luck today with butterflies with 5 Small Tortoiseshells, 2 Common Blues, 8 Large Whites, 5 faded Meadow Browns and a number of Gatekeepers past their best.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 20-Aug-10 02:54 AM GMT

WEDNESDAY 18 AUGUST 2010

Another trip to Dungeness, but this time with some chance of seeing butterflies. The wind was rather stronger than we would like but at least the sun was shining.

It was all about one one species, infact 51 of them. Small Tortoiseshells were everywhere and we probably under recorded them The warden had seen at least sixty whilst we were still on 39 so the true figure was probably in excess of over 100. This is a very welcome return to good numbers after a year or two of very low numbers. Also seen were 28 Large Whites, 4 Gatekeepers and 1 each of Red Admiral, Peacock, Common Blue and Meadow Brown. Birds included a splendid Juvenile Red Backed Shrike and Spotted Flycatcher in the Old Lighthouse garden. Sand Martins were in good numbers as they fed up before departing south.

The Cattle Egret showed in flight near the RSPB reserve entrance but otherwise things were much the same as the weekend.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 24-Aug-10 04:11 AM GMT

FRIDAY 20 AUGUST 2010

We visited our butterfly site on the Wye Downs near Brook. The weather was not bad and the butterflies responded. Numbers were down on our previous visit but there was still 55 Common Blues, 43 Chalkhill Blues, 6 Small Heaths, 1 Brimstone, 5 Brown Argus, 18 Meadow Browns, 5 Gatekeepers, 24 Large Whites and 3 Migrant Hawkers on the wing. A most enjoyable afternoon.

SATURDAY 21 AUGUST 2010

The weather forecast meant it was going to be a struggle to see anything let alone buterflies, and so it proved. We visited Stodmarsh NR to check the area for possible Willow Emerald Damselfly. The first record for Kent had been seen at nearby Reculver on Friday so it was worth a check as the Stodmarsh site seems so suitable in parts. Alas no records and only Speckled Wood on the butterfly front. Birdlife was quiet as everything was keeping low in the strong wind.

On to Oare Marsh where again no butterflies or dragonflies were seen. Birds included 2 Peregrines, 1 Common Buzzard, 1 Marsh Harrier, 1 Little Stint, 2 Water Rails and 5 Ruff. We rarely count the Black Tailed Godwits these days as they number in the hundreds and today was no exception.

SUNDAY 22 AUGUST 2010

Dungeness. In between the showers and wind we did see a few birds, but no butterflies or dragonflies. Spotted Flycatcher, 100 plus Sand Martins, 2 Whinchats, 33 Yellow Wagtails, 2 Common Sandpipers, 2 Little Egrets, Whimbrel, 2 Black Terns, 4 Gannets, 2 Little Terns. Med Gull, with 4 Porpoise feeding just off shore from the lighthouse. The best was left to last, as we were just about to leave a text message sent us back to the sea front to see our second Red Backed Shrike of the week. This was clearly a different individual as it was not ringed, unlike the last one. A good end to a very disappointing weekend.

I hope to post a few photographs later in the week.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 26-Aug-10 03:31 AM GMT

I attach record shots of the Juvenile Red Backed Shrike and Purple Heron. Both taken over recent days at Dungeness. The Purple Heron has reached the National news as the pair bred and produced at least one young.

Dave



Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 01-Sep-10 03:33 AM GMT

SATURDAY 28TH AUGUST 2010

Having never seen Brown Hairstreak we almost joined the crowds being escorted by Sussex Kipper around Steyning. However we would have left late and not made the meeting point in time. Judging by the size of the crowd perhaps it was a wise decision, as I am sure that even more participants would have made the job of leading even more of a challenge. In the end we went to Dungeness again. Although Dungeness is noted for its bird life it is infact a good place for Butterflies, Moths and Dragonflies, with always a chance of some unusual migrant. Today was the turn of Birds for we saw 2 Icterine Warblers near the old Lighthouse. They were quite mobile and never gave me opportunity to photograph, although others were more fortunate. Also seen were 2 Pied Flycatchers and a Hobby. Butterflies included 2 Small Coppers, Large & Small White, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Meadow Brown and Gatekeepers. Not a bad day in the end.

MONDAY 30TH AUGUST 2010

When will August brighten up and show us the sun without the strong winds? In between sunny periods we visited Hamstreet Woods to see a very tatty Silver Washed Fritillary, a Purple Hairstreak on its last legs (but still very welcome), 9 Speckled Woods, Holly Blue, numerous Small Whites with a few Large Whites, dozens of Common and Ruddy Darters, with at least 12 Migrant Hawkers. A lunch time stop at Dungeness produced the Great White Egret on Dengemarsh and 2 Hobbys. I understand that the Silver Washed Fritillary is doing very well in Kent this year with large numbers being seen, or being recorded at new sites. This is a delightful butterfly so the more the merrier.

TUESDAY 31ST AUGUST 2010

Today we visited a site near Reculver known as Chambers Wall. This is Kent's first known site for the Willow Emerald Damselfly where after only a few minutes searching we managed to locate 2 males and one female. We were later joined by Nigel and Julian who also enjoyed good views as the damselflys basked on the sunny side of the bushes adjacent to the small river. To reach here is a long walk from the public car park or the main road, but well worth it for this new migrant. A very good find by the local boys considering the vast area they cover. Found a week ago this is an excellent reward for their daily visits. Also seen were 2 Common Buzzards, 12 Swallows, Holly Blue and 2 Migrant Hawkers.

We ended our day looking at Violet Helleborine near Crundale. Now well past it's best a visit next year at the right time will be needed to see this at it's best.

Dave



Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 02-Sep-10 03:08 AM GMT

WEDNESDAY 01 SEPT 2010

The sun was shining so we took this opportunity to catch up with some chalk downland butterflies. We spent a very pleasant 2 hours at Lydden Nature reserve near Dover. After a slow start the sun became stronger and our sightings included 14 Silver Spotted Skippers, 175 plus Adonis Blues, 100 plus Chalkhill Blues, 75 Common Blues, 1 Wall, 50 plus Gatekeepers, 15 Meadow Browns. Plants included 117 Autumn Ladies Tresses and 2 Autumn Gentian. Birds included 2 Blackcaps.

Many butterflies were past their past but a number of Adonis Blues looked very fresh. The place was alive with butterflies and a welcome change from the low numbers in the recent wet weeks.

Later we called in at the Monument at St. Margarets to view 104 Autumn Ladies Tresses. These were on average smaller than the ones at Lydden, perhaps a result of constant mowing of the grass surrounding the monument.

Dave



Autumn Ladies Tresses at Lydden

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 09-Sep-10 03:42 AM GMT

SATURDAY 4TH SEPT 2010

Sadly the butterfly season is coming to an end and the number of species seen over the next few days reflects this. There was little chance of many butterflies today as we visited Dungeness, but we continue to see good numbers of Large Whites. Birds seen included a WRYNECK, the long staying Great White Egret, 5 Little Egrets, 2 Hobbies and a Spotted Flycatcher. We also saw a Great Green Bush Cricket near the ARC pit. This is the first one we have seen and were amazed at how big they are. Plants included Jersey Cudweed alongside the road that runs by the ARC pit. This rare British plant is doing well at Dungeness behind the fence line, but clearly visible from the road.

SUNDAY 5TH SEPT 2010.

Another visit to Dungeness but this time the weather for the afternoon was forecast to be warm. After seeing a reasonable fall of migrants that included 9 Whitethroats, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 15 Yellow Wagtails, 6 Whinchats and 24 Chiffchaffs we headed to Hamstreet Woods. Here we enjoyed 3 male Brimstones defending a small area that included Red Admiral, with good numbers of Large and Small Whites.

MONDAY 6TH SEPT 2010

A morning visit to Oare Marshes produced a Ruddy Shelduck and Wood Sandpiper in addition to the usual waders. An afternoon visit to Stodmarsh nature reserve found 9 Speckled Woods, a Red Admiral and a Treble Bar Moth in the more sheltered spots.

TUESDAY 7TH SEPT 2010

This was a much better day and our visit to Dungeness produced 1 Common Blue, 4 Small Coppers, 19 Small Heaths, 6 Red Admirals and in excess of

150 Large Whites. Birds seen included 5 Common Buzzards, Black Necked Grebe, 3 Hobbies, 2 Sparrowhawks, 12 Yellow Wagtails and 1 Whinchat. Another very enjoyable day.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 16-Sep-10 03:51 AM GMT

WEDNESDAY 08TH SEPT 2010

A brief visit to Oare Marshes produced 3 Curlew Sandpipers, 1 Little Stint and the usual common waders, but no butterflies and only a few Migrant Hawkers.

THURSDAY 09TH SEPT 2010

The day started of dry and fairly warm so we visited Kingsdown on the Kent East Coast. The warmth was sure to bring a few butterflies out and so it turned out. In the morning we saw 4 Common Blues, 7 Red Admirals and 50 Large Whites below the white cliffs. In addition we found one plant of Woody Fleabane past its best. Next stop was Sandwich Bay, but by now the clouds were arriving and we only saw 1 Holly Blue, 1 Common Blue, 1 Speckled Wood and 15 Large Whites. Bird wise things were better with a Wood Warbler, Pied Flycatcher, Spotted Flycatcher, Redstart and 8 Whinchats all feeding up before continuing their migration.

We arrived home just in time to miss several heavy showers, but our tea was interrupted by news of a WILSONS PHALAROPE at Grove Ferry. This was only Kent's second record in over 20 years, so one hour later we were enjoying good, but distant views of this lovely and rare bird. The rain had also brought down many House and Sand Martins to feed over the reed beds. A really good Kent day.

SATURDAY 11TH SEPT 2010

A really strong South West wind meant there was only one place in Kent to go today. So we headed south and dabbled in the black art of seawatching at Dungeness. Luckily on days like this there is usually someone there skilled in seabird identification and today was no exception. Between the fifteen or so people present, we identified, in the time that we were there, 2 Balearic Shearwaters, 2 Great Skuas, 4 Artic Skuas, 1 Artic Tern, 4 Black Terns and 2 Porpoise. Many birds were quite distant and must remain unidentified.

A visit to the ARC pit produced a PECTORAL SANDPIPER being enjoyed by a large group of French birders on a day trip from France.

SUNDAY 12TH SEPT 2010

This turned out to be a really good day for us considering all the hours we put into looking for and enjoying wildlife. The weather was warm and dry so we decided to search suitable areas near Kent's only reported site for the Willow Emerald Damselfly. So far 3 damselflies had been found, but hundreds have arrived in Suffolk over the last two years so there was a good chance of more in Kent. We found a new location some 2 miles South West of the first sighting. This location produced at least 12, and possibly 14, different individuals. Best of all they are right by a minor road and available to all enjoy. The same spot produced 3 Migrant Hawkers, 1 Comma, 1 Red Admiral, 5 Holly Blues, 15 Large Whites and 2 Common Buzzards. This was a good day in really enjoyable weather.

Dave



Willow Emerald Damselfly at Marshside in Kent

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 17-Sep-10 03:52 AM GMT

MONDAY 13TH SEPT 2010

It was really windy so we were rather surprised to find 2 Small Tortoiseshells and 20 plus Large Whites at Dungeness. The Observatory had caught a Western Conifer Seed Bug at the weekend and this was on show to visitors. Bird wise we saw 2 Black Redstarts, 20 Yellow Wagtails, 1 Whinchat and 4 Wheatears. The ARC pit was interesting, if not difficult to view in the now increasing wind speed. It produced 3 Black Terns, 3 Juvenile Little Gulls, 2 Artic Terns and over 200 Sand Martins. A pair of Peregrines playing in the wind caused the occasional mass panic.

Just as we were making our way home and passing the entrance to the RSPB reserve we noticed several of the RSPB staff looking skywards, always a good sign. Parking the car in rather a hurry we too enjoyed the view of 18 GLOSSY IBIS that had just flown in across the main road. 17 were now on the ground but 1 decided he was a show off and did several tours of the air space around Boulderwall Farm (RSPB entrance). This number is a Kent record and is presumably part of the flock of 20 seen in Devon a few days ago.

TUESDAY 14th SEPT 2010

Yesterday the wind was strong at Dungeness but today you had a job to stand upright. The reason that we were there again was the news that a HOOPEE had made landing near the fishing boats. This was not idea habitat, but the bird must have been glad that it had made landing at all and not gone down in the sea. If we humans were struggling to move in the wind the birds must have been having a nightmare. As for butterflies, it was no surprise that we saw none.

We did however enjoy reasonable views of 2 LAPLAND BUNTINGS feeding on seed also near the fishing boats. These had been here a few days and had arrived in better conditions. The bad weather meant it was time to make a retreat for home, although we did manage to see the 18 Glossy Ibis again before we went.

Dave



Lapland Bunting keeping low in the strong wind

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 21-Sep-10 01:21 AM GMT

WEDNESDAY 15TH SEPT 2010

A visit to Oare Marshes found 8 Small Heaths and a few Large Whites in the sunny spots. Birds included a rather large, for Britain, flock of 8 SPOONBILLS, 18 Avocets and 14 Yellow Wagtails on the East Flood.

A return visit to Marshside in less than ideal conditions produced 5 Willow Emerald Damselflies at our new site, also 3 Migrant Hawkers, 1 Common Darter and a Speckled Wood, with 2 Common Buzzards passing by.

THURSDAY 16TH SEPT 2010

A return visit to Oare Marshes, this time to see the freshly found that morning WHITE RUMPED SANDPIPER. This proved to be an adult bird that was content to keep to one corner of the East Flood. 3 Spoonbills were still present along with one Common Buzzard and one Hobby, with a distant Artic Skua and 9 Common Seals hauled out on the sands. No butterflies or dragonflies were to be seen in the blustery conditions.

SATURDAY 18TH SEPT 2010

Today was much better weather wise with good sunny clear spells. A recheck of Marshside found 9 Willow Emerald Damselflies, including one mating pair. The new site has attracted some interest and six other people were present at the time of our visit.

SUNDAY 19TH SEPT 2010

The day started in good conditions so we put some effort into finding late butterflies on Walland Marsh. We were rewarded with 9 Red Admirals (many of them very fresh), 1 Painted Lady (very worn), 3 Commas, 2 Small Tortoiseshells, 4 Small Whites, 10 plus Large Whites, 8 Migrant Hawkers and 3 Common Darters. An enjoyable morning but butterflies are becoming increasingly scarce.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 02-Oct-10 02:29 AM GMT

MONDAY 20TH SEPT 2010

A text message sent us to Oare Marshes where an Adult WHITE RUMPED SANDPIPER was showing to the appreciative growing crowd of Kent birders. Apart from a Little Stint there was nothing else out of the ordinary, and butterflies were non-existent. However, the sun was breaking through so we thought that a last summer visit to Wye Downs was in order to see what remains on the wing. Surprisingly it was a good afternoon with a late Chalkhill Blue, 1 Brimstone, 3 Small Coppers, 14 Common Blues, 12 Small Heaths, 3 Gatekeepers and a late Meadow Brown. A good mix for so late in the season.

TUESDAY 21ST SEPT 2010

A tour around Walland Marsh produced 15 Red Admirals, 3 Commas, 4 Small Tortoiseshells, 2 Peacocks and 12 Large Whites. On the return journey we called in at Hamstreet Woods to enjoy 6 Commas, 1 Brimstone, 1 Red Admiral and a Hobby hawking.

WEDNESDAY 22ND SEPT 2010

A reasonably warm but windy day. A tour around Chislet Marshes produced 3 Red Admirals and a Comma. We also checked several more locations for Willow Emerald Damselfly and found 2 males at a totally new site. 3 males at our previous site and a further male 300 metres south of this site. 2 Common Buzzards were circling the skies.

SATURDAY 25TH SEPT 2010

A visit to Reculver from 09.30 to 11.40 hours in very strong North Westerly winds produced the hoped for goodies in the form of a Juvenile Long Tailed Skua, 18 Great Skuas and 2 Artic Skuas. A distant shearwater in our view was a Sooty due to its size and all dark appearance. The other feature of this seawatch was the large movement of mainly Juvenile Gannets. Many other birds were too distant for us to identify.

MONDAY 27th SEPT 2010

A day trip to Dungeness found a PECTORAL SANDPIPER on view on the ARC pit, together with a Little Stint and 2 Juvenile Little Gulls. We also found 6 Small Coppers, 1 Small Heath and 3 Large Whites around the Observatory area. Moths seen included a Delicate and Pearly Underwing.

Dave



Record shot of the Pectoral Sandpiper at Dungeness



Small Copper at Dungeness soaking up the little sun on offer.

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 11-Oct-10 02:02 AM GMT

Summary of Tuesday 28th Sept 2010 to Monday 4th October 2010

Now that the sightings of butterflies are falling off I have changed the format of my diary to read as a summary until the spring. With so few species now on offer it becomes increasingly difficult to make the entries really interesting. Luckily for my family the autumn bird migration is in full swing and we have plenty on offer to interest us, although I am aware that some of the readers of this blog are only interested in butterflies and moths.

Visits to Sandwich Bay (twice), Grove Ferry and Dungeness (4 times) have produced Small Heath (1), Red Admiral (many), Small Copper (1), Peacock and Silver Y. Dragonflies are represented by good numbers of Migrant Hawkers and Common Darters. Other insects have included Long Winged Conehead (Dungeness).

Birds have included an elusive Grasshopper Warbler (Sandwich Bay), Black Throated Diver (Dungeness New Diggings), Juvenile Spoonbill (Dungeness), 4 Ring Ouzels (Dungeness), Barred Warbler (one at Sandwich and one at Dungeness), Great White Egret (Dungeness), Short Eared Owl, Artic Skua and 2 BUFF BREASTED SANDPIPERS (Dungeness Scotney Pit). Incoming migrants included a flock of 15 Brambling and small numbers of Siskins. Despite spending four to five hours daily in the field the weather during this particular week has meant a dramatic fall in insect numbers.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 13-Oct-10 03:19 AM GMT

TUESDAY 5th OCT 2010 to SUNDAY 10th OCT 2010

The butterfly highlight of the week was on our visit to Sandwich Bay on Sunday 10th. The warm weather had encouraged a large number of Red Admirals on the wing. We saw at least 24 in the small wood known as the Elms, mainly around the Ivy bushes. All were in very good condition and were joined by 2 Commas, 1 Peacock, 1 Speckled Wood and several Small Whites. The same warm weather also brought good numbers of Migrant Hawkers and a few Common Darters.

The previous day we had seen a late Common Blue, 4 Red Admirals and 3 Small Whites near Ramsgate. Moths during the week included a Mallow and 4 Black Rustics.

Bird wise we had an excellent day on Friday 8th October when a visit to Scotney Pits (near Dungeness) had produced not one but three Juvenile BUFF BREASTED SANDPIPERS. This is almost unheard of in Southern England so the constant stream of admirers were well pleased with this unusual event. Other birds seen in the week included a Juvenile Long Tailed Skua (Dungeness 05/10), 2 Great Skuas, 4 Artic Skuas, 2 Greenshanks, 2 Little Stints, 3 Black Terns, 3 Brambling, 1 Firecrest (sandwich Bay), 3 Med Gulls, many Goldcrests and our first Redwings of the Autumn.

A really good and enjoyable week. Hopefully the fine weather will continue and encourage a late showing of butterflies.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 20-Oct-10 02:51 AM GMT

MONDAY 11TH OCTOBER 2010 TO MONDAY 18TH OCTOBER 2010

With regards to butterfly sightings, and using a line from an early Rolling Stones hit, 'It's all over now'. We have only seen one species this week and that is Red Admiral, despite five days out in the field. The butterfly year had to come to an end sometime, but its still a shock to realise summer is firmly behind us. We will still keep looking but it will probably be birds from now on. A few Migrant Hawks and Common Darters are still on the wing but in low numbers.

Bird wise we have done well this week with 4 visits to Dungeness and 1 to Thanet/ Reculver. Birds seen (during a good seawatch at Reculver) 38 Pomarine Skuas, 15 Great Skuas and 8 Artic Skuas. Land birds include PALLAS'S WARBLER (Dungeness), 3 Firecrests, 3 Black Redstarts, GREAT WHITE EGRET (Dungeness), Little Stint, Merlin, 4 Little Egrets, 11 Redwings and our first Fieldfares of the Autumn. Other seabirds seen, 3rd Winter CASPIAN GULL (Dungeness), Little Auk (Dungeness) and the Black Throated Diver still on the New Diggings pit at Dungeness.

Here's hoping for a late Clouded Yellow or even something better, like a late Monarch from America.

Dave



This Black Redstart was on the approach road to Dungeness Bird Observatory (18 Oct 2010).



This Caspian Gull (bird in centre standing) was on Dungeness beach. We believe that this is a 3rd year bird (18 Oct 2010).



This very smart Pallas's Warbler was trapped and ringed whilst we were visiting the observatory (18 Oct 2010).

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 27-Oct-10 01:43 AM GMT

TUESDAY 19TH OCTOBER 2010 TO TUESDAY 26TH OCTOBER 2010

A quite week here in Kent. We only spent 4 days out in the field this week due to a mix of poor weather, a bit of DIY and a decline in the amount of migration taking place. Despite this we actually saw two species of butterfly this week, Red Admiral and Peacock. On the 21st we saw a minimum of 5 Red Admirals at Dungeness, all in reasonable condition. They may have even been migrating or at least passing through. Also present a Migrant Hawker and one Common Darter.

Birdwise was not too bad. On the 26th October (today) we were actually sitting in the Hanson Hide at Dungeness when a stunning male PENDULINE TIT popped up in front of us. The attached photo does not do the bird justice, but was all I could manage in the poor light and the 20 minutes it was on view. This species is now almost annual at Dungeness but is still difficult to catch up with. Other birds seen include a very mobile, but vocal, YELLOW BROWED WARBLER in Margate Cementry (24th), a Little Auk on the sea at Minnis Bay (20th), 3 Black Redstarts, 2 Firecrests, Yellow Legged Herring Gull, many Goldcrests, Redwings, Fieldfares, Song Thrushes on migration, a late Wheatear and the usual Little Egrets.

Despite the mass arrival of Waxwings throughout the country over the last few days we have yet to catch up with this species this year. Perhaps the coming week will bring a number into our corner of Kent.

Dave



Male Penduline Tit at Dungeness, sorry but the poor light would not produce a sharper image.

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 09-Nov-10 02:17 AM GMT

WEDNESDAY 27TH OCTOBER TO MONDAY 08TH NOVEMBER 2010

Like everyone else we have really struggled to find any butterflies during the above period. Our sole species is Red Admiral and the maximum number on any day has been 2. The cold and wet weather of the last few days will probably mean that for another year, but you never know. Dragonflies have been a little more numerous with both Migrant Hawkers and Common Darters in low numbers. 6 Common Darters on the 1st Nov at Dungeness was a decent total for this late.

It has also been hard work finding birds, however a very obliging, if rather flighty, 1st winter or female RED FLANKED BLUETAIL stole the show at Dungeness on the 6th Nov. This is the sort of bird that has the wow factor but where were all the birders. The crowd never exceeded 20 all the time we were there for what is still a national rarity, and it showed well for this species.

Other species seen in the period include an immature Spoonbill (Oare Marsh), Peregrine, good numbers of Cettis Warblers, Lapland Bunting (Dungeness), Hooded Crow (Reculver and a rare bird in Kent), Common Buzzards, Marsh Harriers, Goldeneye (Dungeness), still a few Swallows migrating, a few incoming Brambling, Siskins and many Starlings.

We look forward to another good period of looking for wildlife.

Dave



This rather untidy looking immature Spoonbill has been present at Oare Marshes for over a week.



Red Flanked Bluetail along Dengemarsh Road at Dungeness. A first for the Dungeness area.

Re: Dave Brown

by Matsukaze, 09-Nov-10 03:37 AM GMT

The White Admiral photographed on the 25 July entry has orange markings around the margin. Is this well known? I don't remember seeing the like before - in fact at first I wondered if it was a Poplar Admiral, although it isn't.

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 17-Nov-10 04:02 AM GMT

TUESDAY 9TH NOVEMBER TO TUESDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 2010

In response to the good observation by Matsukaze, and I can see why Poplar Admiral was raised, I thought at the time that it was just a well worn individual and I still feel that. I must say that none of my other photos of other White Admirals show such well defined orange markings around the border although I suspect that it is well within the normal boundaries.

At the start of the day my entry for this week was due to say that for the first time since March we have seen neither a butterfly or dragonfly this week. However, that is no longer true for today we saw 2 Red Admirals flying around in the sunshine at Dungeness. It was so calm and warm you could have been forgiven for thinking that spring had arrived.

Bird wise it has been very quiet despite 5 visits in the field. The highlights have been 2 Grey Phalaropes. One at Dungeness and the second at Pett Level (Nr Rye).

Other birds seen have included 2 Velvet Scoters (Pett Level), 5 Bearded Tits, Cettis Warbler, 2 Goldeneyes, 3 Marsh Harriers, Common Buzzard, 5 Little Egrets, goups of Siskins and Fieldfares on migration but very few Redwings.

Dave



This Grey Phalarope was more distant. It spent most of the time spinning around in an anti-clockwise direction.



This is the Grey Phalarope that spent the day at Scotney Gravel Pits near Lydd.

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 25-Nov-10 03:13 AM GMT

WEDNESDAY 17TH NOVEMBER 2011 TO WEDNESDAY 24TH NOVEMBER 2011

Well, this is the week when we saw no butterflies or dragonflies at all. Not surprising really when you note the low day time temperatures. Disappointing, but it had to happen sometime this month.

We have had a reasonable week with regards bird sightings. Our highlights have included Spoonbill (Funton Creek, Sheppy), 1st Winter Glaucous Gull (Dungeness), 5 Snow Buntings (Sandwich), Short Eared Owl, Barn Owl, Tawny Owl, 4 Bewicks Swans, 6 Hawfinch (near Canterbury), 4 Long Eared Owls (near Ashford) and a Tree Sparrow (Dungeness RSPB).

The forecast for the next few days is cold with possible snow. This could move a few species around including the potential arrival of Smew at Dungeness and possibly Waxwings somewhere in Kent.

Dave



This species of bird is usually difficult to see so it was pleasing to obtain this photo.



This 1st winter enjoyed the area of beach around the fishing boats. Notice the missing tail.

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 07-Dec-10 01:03 AM GMT

THURSDAY 25TH NOVEMBER TO MONDAY 06TH DECEMBER 2010

It goes without saying that no butterflies or dragonflies were seen during this period of cold weather, including very heavy snow falls. Hopefully the butterflies will survive in good numbers during the prolonged snow covering. Kent, like else where, has been heavily hit and we could not get out for 5

days. Our birding days out only numbered four, however we have still seen some good birds.

Our luck was in on Saturday 4th December for we were just passing the ARC pit at Dungeness when a message told us that a Penduline Tit was in front of the Hanson Hide. Less than 5 minutes later we were enjoying good views of a male bird. This was almost certainly the bird (ringed) that was seen in October, but where has it been the last few weeks? The ARC pit is well watched on a daily basis so is unlikely to have been missed. The light was not good but I managed a couple of record shots.

Other birds seen in this period include 11 Hawfinches near Canterbury, 3 Long Eared Owls near Ashford, Adult Yellow Legged Herring Gull (Dungeness), Jack Snipe (Dungeness), 2 Goldeneye, 11 Goosander & 1st Winter Glaucous Gull (Dungeness), 25 Bewick Swans & 3 Tree Sparrows (Walland Marsh).

The cold snap has yet to produce the expected Smew at Dungeness but more cold weather is forecast so this may well change next week.

Best wishes

Dave



Yellow Legged Herring Gull (bird standing). Apart from the obvious yellow legs, the head is clean white and the back slightly darker than Herring Gull



Penduline Tit in front of Hanson Hide, Dungeness RSPB



Penduline Tit in front of Hanson Hide, Dungeness RSPB

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 24-Dec-10 02:31 AM GMT

TUESDAY 7TH DECEMBER 2010 TO THURSDAY 23RD DECEMBER 2010

Like most other people we have been snow bound for several days, which has restricted our activities. We have however still managed to see a few goodies including several sightings of Waxwings. This species is being recorded in excellent numbers this year throughout the country, enabling those who wish to see this beautiful bird to catch up with it.

Our Waxwing sightings have been 42 on the 8th Dec, 158 on the 11th Dec at Folkestone (B&Q store) and 15 today south of the village of Hamstreet

where it joins the A2070. Other goodies have included 2 Red Kites north of Charing (11th), 1 Hawfinch and Tawny Owl near Canterbury, 5 Purple Sandpipers at Hythe (near Imperial Hotel), 11 Bewick Swans (Walland), Black Necked Grebe, Goldeneye & Smew (Dungeness) and Barn Owl (Pett Level). There seems to have been an influx of Geese into the South East over the last few days. Today we managed to catch up with 45 Whitefronts (Pett Level), 150 plus Whitefront and 4 Pink Footed Geese near Scotney (Lydd), 200 plus Whitefronts along the Lydd to Dungeness Road.

We are sure that this prolonged cold spell will lead to increased sightings of Bitterns here in Kent as their favourite spots are frozen out, but we have yet to catch up with them this winter. If the cold snap goes on too long many will struggle to feed and survive so lets hope there is a break in the cold weather soon.

Dave



Distant photo of the Purple Sandpipers at Hythe.



One of many at the Folkestone B&Q store.

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 01-Jan-11 03:00 AM GMT

FRIDAY 24TH DECEMBER 2010 TO FRIDAY 31ST DECEMBER 2010

Looking back over this year I feel personally that my family and I have had a good year. The one disappointment was our failure to visit Scotland for Chequered Skipper, Scotch Argus and Mountain Ringlet. Lack of time was one of the main reasons why a Scottish trip did not materialise, something I hope to correct next year now that I have retired. The year will probably be best known for the Purple Emperor and we too enjoyed a number of these wonderful butterflies. Our other highlight was the finding of Kents second colony of Willow Emerald Damselflies. This species looks set to expand in the county. We also know that the Dainty Damselfly has been discovered on the Isle of Sheppey. Hopefully access will be arranged next year for all to enjoy. Equally it would be exciting if the Queen of Spain Fritillary were to be refound somewhere similar to last years discovery in Sussex (which we failed to see).

Now to the recent bird news. The cold and misty weather restricted activities and sightings but we still enjoyed what was on offer. An adult Red Breasted Goose at Pett Level showed all the features of a truly wild bird (unringed, fully winged and arrived with Greenland Whitefront Geese). A excellent Rough Legged Buzzard showed well late afternoon on the 27th at Lydd Ranges after being elusive late morning. 24 Waxwings near Wyevale Garden centre at Hamstreet were most enjoyable.

Other birds included Barn Owl, 2 Bitterns (one very showy in front of Scott hide the past few days), 6 Smew, 5 Goosanders, Red Breasted Merganser, adult Caspian Gull, adult Yellow Legged Gull and Water Rail at Dungeness. Several flocks of Whitefront geese at Scotney GP and Pett Level with a Pale Bellied Brent Goose at Scotney GP. A stunning male Hen Harrier near Monkton (Kent) and 106 Barnacle geese on Worth Marshes. A real good end to 2010.

Best wishes to everyone for the coming year.

Dave



This Bittern was one of at least 11 on Dungeness RSPB. It showed well in front of Scott Hide for most of the day.