

Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 18-Apr-10 02:38 AM GMT

Decided it would be good time to start this as my butterfly season just started.

17th: Went on a 4 mile walk from my house, along a meadow, riverside bank and up into an ancient pine, spruce, birch, oak and ash forest (it used to have elm but they got desiesed back in 1980s and all died)

Warm sunny, not much cloud (17C). Wnt to usual spots to check for butterflies, didn't find any. Walked along into a forest, came out other side and into a place where pigs used to be kept in 1800's. This has been unused so long, but its a great place for hibernating butterflies. Found a Small Tortoiseshell, but in no way was I going to get to photograph it properly, I only got one shot, poor at that:



Small Tortoiseshell

Next I walked along a large field edge and came to an area that as Peacock butterflies, in the enterance to an ancient beech/oak forest. There is a river that runs through it. I saw 4 peacock butterflies, as equally hard to photograph. Everyrime I went near one it eiaht flew away, or as I was going to press shutter, another came and had a fight with it. One the occation I did get close to any, they faced the camera, wings pointing away, not a good thing as you can see:



Peacock 1

The Peacock butterflies were mostly in good condition, but one was worn, managed a slightly out of focus shot of it:



Blurry Peacock

I walked further, along a large bank of the river that is going along the edge of two fields, it has lots of mature oaks dotted along it and it runs for half a mile or so. While walking along, found 4 small tortoiseshells, no way easy to photograph. I walked along to the end where a forest begins. There is an old farmhouse here that was used in 1800's but has been abandoned since. The forest is ancient and goes up a high hill, one of the nicest, natural places I have been in.



Forest 1



Forest2



Forest3



Forest 4

I walked into the deepest part of the forest and rested under a birch tree, and this caterpillar (I presume not a sawfly larvae?) fell down, it was very small:



Cat

On the way back I found quite a few wood sorrel in flower:



Wood Anemone

Also saw lots of primroses everywhere and bluebells getting bigger. On the way back I saw another small tortoiseshell and a *Agonopterix heracliata* moth flying about and saw a dead, black bracket fungus laying under a mature oak, turned it over and found this caterpillar. Possibly a common or map winged swift caterpillar?



Swift caterpillar?

All in all it was a good day, saw also a few buzzards, a pair of jays and quite a few swallows, here is one of the swallows (You can't get a good photo of one with a Sigma 105mm macro):



Swallow

Re: Dave McCormick

by Susie, 18-Apr-10 05:16 AM GMT

Hi Dave, the white flower is actually Wood Sorrel.

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 18-Apr-10 05:22 AM GMT

Thanks Susie, was kinda wondering at first what it was (post has been edited). Also saw a female large white today, it was emerging from a pupae I found in garden, but I didn't have my camera then and couldn't get a shot of it.

Re: Dave McCormick

by Susie, 18-Apr-10 05:30 AM GMT

You're welcome. The photos you posted are great anyway and I look forward to seeing more of your posts and photos. 😊

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 18-Apr-10 05:51 AM GMT

Thanks susie. I forgot to add something. Where I found the first small tortoiseshell where the pigs used to be kept, back in November last year, I was here with my dad and lost my wool hat. I came back today and found it, not only did I find it, I found a moth pupae inside it. (It must have been warm in it and the caterpillar pupated and hibernated in it.)



Mystery Moth Pupae

I haven't got it ID'd yet, but I brought it home and I will return the adult when it hatches. Be interesting to know what it turns out to be, it doesn't remind me of Angle shades pupae (as its darker usually) and cabbage moth pupae are a bit bigger (I have five I am looking after at moment) so not really sure.

I am heading next weekend to set up a lot of moth traps at my relatives bog, maybe while I am there I might find Green Hairstreak (last recorded in area in 1970s and hopefully its still there) There are large numbers of small heath, common blue and Meadow Brown here (seems common blue use large

birds foot trefoil as foodplant as there is no birds foot trefoil there) also quite a few Dark Green Fritillary

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 29-Apr-10 09:39 PM GMT

Was waiting for the bus this morning at bus stop beside Strangford Lough. Since I had 30 mins until bus arrived, I walked down to the shore and saw my first small whites and green veined whites of the year (you never have a camera when you need one) and two small whites began courting and then started mating. The two green veined whites I saw where a male and female but were some distance apart, then another male came past. Hoping to go back shortly with camera after I eat and see if I can get any shots of these. In Mountstewart my dad who was ploughing a field saw a holly blue on some cherry blossom (he usually sees them before I do) so I am hoping to find my first soon.

More later if I get photos.

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 30-Apr-10 12:27 AM GMT

I went back to Strangford Lough, didn't see any of the Small Whites I saw this morning, however I found 4 GV whites, two flying about and a mating pair. I got a video I'll edit and upload as soon as I can. Here is a shot of the mating GV whites:



GV White Mating

I also got bogged down in boggy seaweed and it wasn't very pleasant smelling, but my first photo of a GV White this year though which was good. Also surveyed an area of mayweed/chamomile and want to look there for chamomile shark to see if there is any chance its there as its really rare in Northern Ireland, only known from one location (I know the person who found it) so if I can't find adults, maybe I'll look for caterpillars later on in the year.

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 03-May-10 02:56 AM GMT

Only able to go into garden today, slight rain on/off and bit busy. I did see a freshly emerged male large white crawling up the wall of my house, sunning itself and drying wings before it flew off. Can't believe there are still emerging adults in my garden. Wonder how many actually did overwinter here?

If I can, want to look for Green Hairstreaks this weekend at my relatives bog, its was declared as an area of special interest my butterfly conservation and is being surveyed for its plant fauna (has a few rare plants and lots of various orchids about it)

Two images of the bog I got this year:



Heather scrub on raised lowland cutover bog and birch woodland in distance



Area of bog with birch/sallows

Quite a bit of the bog is birch woodland, if you saw it, you'd think like it's always been there, (I did) but no. It wasn't there 50 years ago. Back then it was nearly all very wet, open bog with mostly purple heather blanketing it. Suddenly the birch appeared and made woodland. Apparently it has to be controlled now from spreading further out or it will consume the open bog, so the birch woodland has to be stopped expanding.

Also back 50 years ago, there used to be a train line that ran right past the area and connected nearby towns, this has been stopped quite number of years way back (in the 1960s the train line stopped and was taken away from the area). But in around June/July and September when the bog was dry, the shrubs/trees used to catch fire when the train came past and the sparks from the train ignited the dry plants and it all burned back.

The birch woodland has to stay the size it is, the birch if its allowed to grow, sucks the moisture out of the bog and dries it up. I was told by the person who owns it now, when he was about 10 years old, he was not allowed in the bog itself as it was so wet. He said once that when he was young, he put a large shovel into an area of bog and it sank completely and disappeared under the bog because it was so wet then. Its still pretty wet today in some places, but not as wet as it used to be.

I moth trap there with someone and I managed to catch a yellow horned moth and confirm it existed there (its not very common around here, glad to see its there and pitty I missed the peak of them when I trapped here):



Yellow Horned

Hoping to find Dark Green Fritillaries, the large amounts of small heath, common blues and see small copper here again this year as I saw them last year.

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 07-May-10 11:48 PM GMT

Finally saw my first Speckled Woods of the year. I had to go for a Job interview today in town not far away and when I was walking back to the car, I stopped for a sec by some cherry trees with pink blossoms and saw one male speckled wood. Then a female came along. Where is a camera when you want one? Still haven't got a photo of one this year. Going to Lough Neagh, Co Armagh tomorrow for a BCNI event, so might see something different up there.

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 08-May-10 03:43 AM GMT

Went out and saw a holly blue male, it wouldn't sit still long enough for me to get a shot of it, it flew too high too. Saw a worn male Small Tortoiseshell, likewise with it, it flew too fast and didn't sit long enough to get a photo of it. Saw a male GV white too, but I managed a short video of it:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZGOXN_6RcA

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 08-May-10 09:47 PM GMT

Went on a BCNI field trip today, to Lough Neagh, Co Armagh. Got there at 8:35 or so, the first issue was the Lough Neagh Black Fly. Estimated 3 trillion of them, they were everywhere, you couldn't escape them, they were covering cars, in buildings and on outside of them, flying in dense black clouds and even covering moth traps that were used overnight. Don't breathe in much, hold your ears and nose, some even used their nets as protection over

their heads.

Just a few of the flies, and by few, I mean few:



Black Flies

I found some meadowsweet plants after and rubbed them on my face and hands, seemed to deter the flies. First traps were checked and moths shown, it was really windy and cold overnight and during the morning, despite warm sun. just a selection:

Lesser Swallow Prominent:



Lesser Swallow Prominent

May Highflyer:



May Highflyer

This wasn't trapped here, was brought to show then returned back where it came from (Poplar Hawk Moth):



Poplar Hawk Moth

Same as hawk moth, this Flame Shoulder was also brought to show and returned where it was caught:



Flame Shoulder

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 08-May-10 10:10 PM GMT

After traps were checked and we had a quick bite to eat, we went on a trek to see if any butterflies were around. It got warmer by then, but less windy. The flies were still around in their millions. Made photography harder.

First butterflies we saw were 2 Green-Veined Whites and one person spotted a blue butterfly of some sort, but don't know if that was what he saw or just a patch of blue sky through hawthorn bush, but he was convinced he saw a blue butterfly.

Incidentally, there isn't a lot of holly bushes around, those that are planted seemed to get stolen, which surprised me. After they are dug up, they can't really be replanted and usually die, so those that take them can't do much with them. In the meadow area we were in, someone tried to net a micro moth, but how he told the difference between a moth and a fly there was beyond me.

Seeing cuckoo flowers, I looked for eggs, found one on one plant. Interestingly what I saw (is this normal?) I found 3 eggs on one cuckoo flower and 3 on another of Orange-Tip (I know caterpillars will eat another to give it more chance of surviving) so why would there be three eggs on a plant?



OT Egg

The we found more butterflies/moths as the day got warmer. GV Whites, Orange-Tips, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell, Speckled Wood, also saw in moths: 2 common carpet and a female muslin moth. I managed my first OT shot of the year! I got really close to it which I have never been able to do before (although its not a great photo):



OT Male

Saw my first damsel/dragonfly this year here too, a large red damsel:



Large Red Damselfly

Managed to catch a Reals Wood White and photograph it, although a few of the group were upset I let it go a little early, but it didn't sit still long to photograph. First photo of a Reals Wood White since 2008 (apparently there is going to be a documentary made on Reals Wood White to ascertain the differences in it and wood white as all we know they are found in different habitats as Reals likes woodland where as wood white has been found in different habitat, can't remember which):



Reals Wood White

We looked over at a few islands, this one you can see, it has a heron hatchery on it. Also saw some common terns flying about.



Island

After this we went past a sycamore tree and I spotted a male holly blue on it. I went over and almost managed to put it in my magnifying pot, but accidentally tapped the leaf it was on and it flew away. Two tried to net it, but it didn't happen.

Finally I had to leave early, but we arrived at an area that used to be a road that went through the area, but its cut of and has a hedgerow now. We were told that a mass grave of famine victims were found in the area.

Overall it was a great day, lovely place to look for butterflies and see moths

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 17-May-10 11:53 PM GMT

Went on National Moth Night at Clandyboye, Co Down, Northern Ireland, and didn't get much, I used an 125W MV at a walled garden with wildflowers and a under a cherry with blossom. I only got a nut-tree tussock with it. I put a second my home made 11W Energy Saving UV Bulb Trap in an area of forest with a few cut down trees and mostly beech with oak and I put trap under a horse chestnut and got only 10 moths... 2 Water Carpet, 3 Nut-Tree Tussock, 1 Common Quaker, 1 Clouded Drab and 2 Brindled Pug.

Also got to hear about all the bats in Ireland. There is 8 known (two types were found more recent years) and bats can live up to 40 years if they stay free of desieses and parasites most of their life. Was strange, during the talk, all th people went to hear about bats were at the left side of the room, rest of us from butterfly conservation were on right side of the room.

It was a good trip overall. There was 3 125W MV Traps run as well as one 22W Gladiator, one 15 Watt Heath trap, 2 3 6 Watt Heath Traps, one 8 Watt actinic and one 11W Energy Saving UV trap. Rained bad for a while overnight but it was low as 6C, warmer than it has been.

If there was a **National Fy Night**, my 11W UV trap would have been best, there was hundreds of flies in it! Well I have learned UV lights attract lots of flies.

Also saw a Small White and an Orange-Tip on the way home, although it rained bad after we went to see what was in one of the MV Traps. One 125W MV was in a tree nursery and it got interesting species none other traps got... Small Square Spot, Bright-line Brown Eye and Lesser Sallow Prominent (the LSP was caught in another trap)

Highlights were finding in traps (to name jus a few):

V-Pugs
Scalloped Hazel
Spectacle
Brown Brindled Beauty
Clouded Border

Overall it was a good night, despite the lack of numbers, the varied species was ok.

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 23-May-10 03:45 AM GMT

Warm 25C here today, went out looking for butterflies, no photos though, saw 50+ cocksfoot moth (2 mating pairs) also:

2 female large white in garden 1 GV white and 1 small white in garden too

Walking along a woodland ride I saw:

2 worn Small Tortoiseshell (flying straight up and down for some reason)
20+ Small WHites
10+ Green-Veined White
1 Holly Blue
1 Possible Reals Wood White (didn't get a definate ID, if it was this would be a new site for it)
1 Speckled wood male (first I have seen near my house, rest I have seen elsewhere)

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 27-May-10 01:30 AM GMT

Went on a trip to Strangford Lough today (post images later, just home and need to eat) but I saw:

hundreds of jellyfish all over the shoreline, must be that time of year again (happens every year) some seemed to be drying up and dying, you could see a hole where the jellyfish was, and what was left of it nearby

Also saw my first Painted Lady flying up from the shore (Strangford Lough is linked to Irish sea where migrants like Clouded Yellow and Painted Ladies, Vestals, Silver Y's, Dark Saword Grass and migrating whites come from)

Saw a number of whites too (20 GV White and 10 Small Whites) also 4 cocksfoot moths and 1 crambus moth I haven't got around to ID yet.

Found this yesterday thought, I was trapping night before with a 125W MV and 11W UV energy saving bulb and must have flew into bushes where light was shining...I came indoors and saw this on my foot...Poplar Hawk Moth. This is it warming up to fly (strangly the camera recoreded its wing beats this slow, I didn't edit speed of the video, it does this with other things like propellers on planes too) Even though they are common, can't help getting excited about finding these.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sWER-lDXfWI>

Post more later, no time right now

Re: Dave McCormick

by Padfield, 27-May-10 05:30 AM GMT

Great video, Dave!

If you are using a 'sports' setting (to catch fast motion without blurring) on your video camera, you may well get a strobe effect when you film something vibrating or spinning. This may appear to slow the motion.

Guy

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 27-May-10 05:54 AM GMT

If you are using a 'sports' setting (to catch fast motion without blurring) on your video camera, you may well get a strobe effect when you film something vibrating or spinning. This may appear to slow the motion.

Thanks Gut, I am using a Canon 500D on movie mode (I prefer it as its 1080p HD video and I can use various lenses to get videos and shoot photos easily without having to switch between a video camera and photography), the video mode doesn't really have much settings, the 500D records up to full 1080p video, albeit at the rate of 20 frames/sec. you can't have something like sports mode on video or change speed settings. Only choose the quality and exposure settings. So its not to do with the video settings. Maybe its the frame rate?

I know there is a hack in progress to get the firmware settings for movie mode the Canon 550D onto the 500D as you can do more with movie mode on 550D (It uses AV and TV manual settings on movie mode which you can't change aperture values on 500D movie mode or speed settings, also has 24fps) but at moment, thats the way the camera shot the video, it looked that way through the live view before I took the video, so it could be the camera itself that makes fast moving objects appear in slower motion?

While we are on it, here is a photo of the Poplar Hawk Moth (Have a better one somewhere):



Poplar Hawk Moth

Video I got last Sunday of a cocksfoot moth (boy they are hot to get photos or videos of being so tiny) found 50 of them while searching a small meadow patch:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDncG4PI9Fg>

Cocksfoot Moth really looks like a fish when you see it at this angle (female laying eggs in cocksfoot grass stem) – Notice the "eye" on the top of the shot? Thats the fish head



Cocksfoot Moth Female

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 15-Jun-10 06:08 AM GMT

Sorry for no updates in ages, been busy with one thing or another. So back to this:

On 6th I went to my relatives bog, one area I was in was about the size of a football field or a little less. There is also a birch woodland and another open area of cutover bog scrub which is the same size at the other side of the birch forest, but I couldn't get to it because my cousin had cows out feeding on the overgrowing plants around the path. 17-18C full sunshine. Totals I saw:

100+ Small Heath, in a small area that seems like a good find, even though there was so many, they were not at all easy to photograph:



Small Heath



Small Heath

4 Orange-Tip, two male, two female, only got a poor shot of a male:



Male Orange-Tip

Common heath moths were plentiful too, saw about 50+ but most I found were female, only an occasional male:



Common Heath Female

Saw also about 20 Timothy Tortrix Moths and quite a few *Crambus lathoniellus*, a few large white, 3 small copper and 3 Speckled Wood, this one a female:



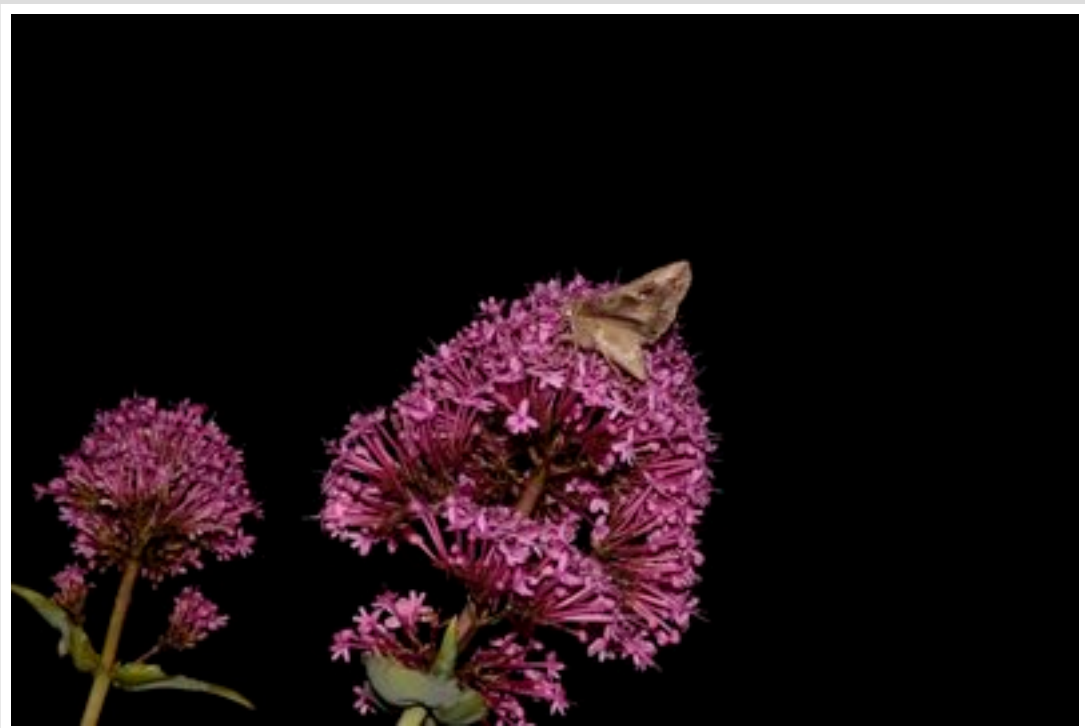
Female Speckled Wood



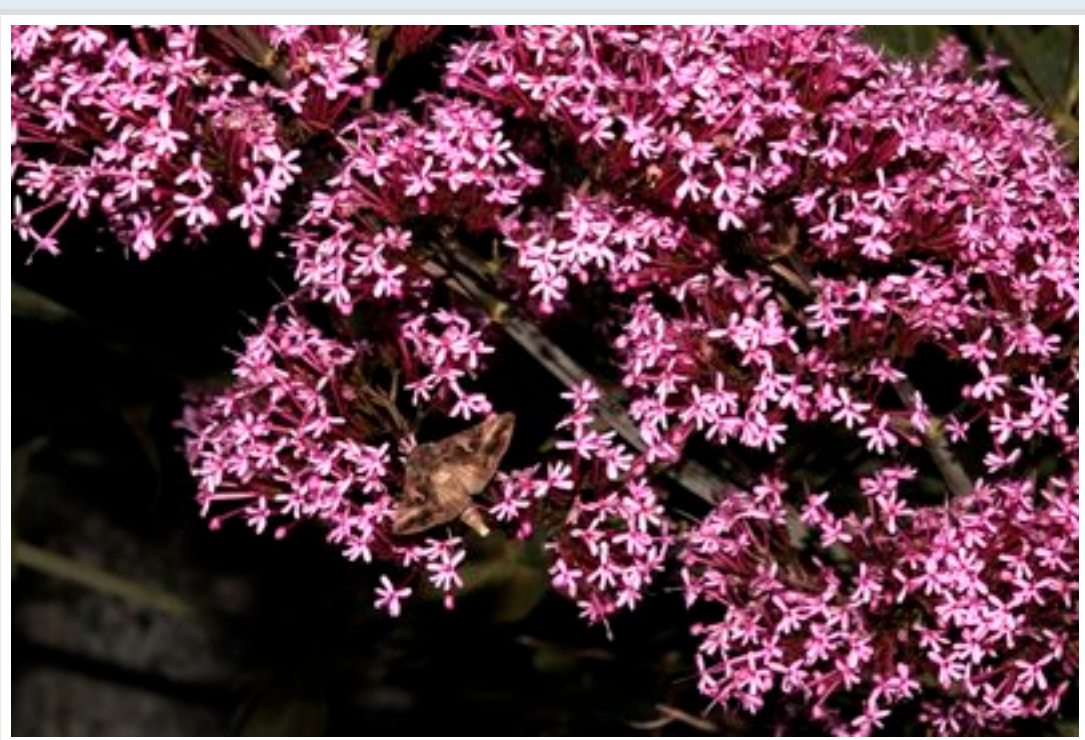
Crambus lathoniellus

Finally caught glimpse of 4 Silver-Y migrants and a battered Small Tortoiseshell

All in all it was a good day. Haven't actually seen butterflies since then besides 2 Large White and a Speckled Wood since. Strange that I haven't seen much butterflies since then. Last night I recorded 20+ Silver Y moths that were feeding on red valerian flowers beside my house, 2 Large Yellow Underwing doing the same (1 male and 1 female) and 3 silver-Ground carpet also feeding:

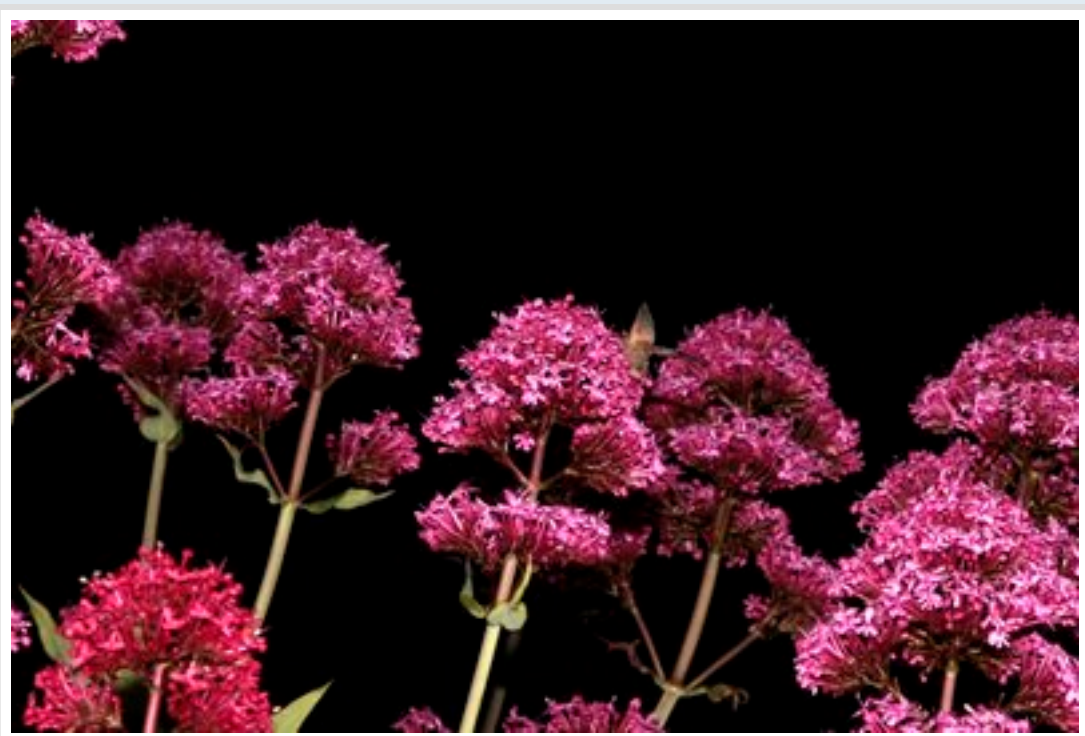


Silver Y



Silver Y 2

Here is a few of the Red Valerian flowers with a Silver Y moth, hard to get photos in the dark with a headlamp that's not so bright. There is a wall a few hundred yards long covered in the valerian, it's great for all moths/butterflies and feeding insects as they flower from late April to early December so migrants, passers by and hibernators fuel up here.



Red Valerian

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 16-Jun-10 07:51 AM GMT

I was out today and saw only two speckled wood, a male and female each in different locations. Also a large white graced my garden.

But a few hours back I had quite a scare....Not far from the forest I was going to as to set up my custom built moth trap, is a colony of Buzzards. I was whistling and saw a buzzard flying overhead, then it circled a bit lower, then it turned lower and flew directly at me. I could see it getting closer and closer! It got really close (a few yards almost) then flew up and met with its partner nearby. I think it had fledging young and may have seen me as a potential threat to them! Quite scary seeing a buzzard flying very fast towards you and seeing its eyes very clearly in front of you! Have to watch it in morning when I go to check the trap.

However I saw my first gold swift and observed three male ghost swift lekking in tall grass in the forest while in there.

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 20-Jun-10 04:14 AM GMT

Saw a single Large White today and that was it, boy is my butterfly list getting sparse for June, no madow browns or ringlets yet although they have been spotted elsewhere in Northern Ireland.

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 22-Jun-10 07:53 PM GMT

Yesterday saw a brown-house moth resting on a building as I was going to college to do the training course I was sent on. On way home in Mountstewart, Co Down, not far from my house I saw a speckled wood and Small Tortoiseshell in bright sunshine flying around a woodland edge.

Also later that night a common pug and a buff ermine came to lighted bathroom window. Finally I asked Ulster Wildlife Trust for permission to look around a bog not far from my house as they own it. I was pleased by very positive feedback saying I could even get volunteers to come with me if they could. I am also going to set out moth traps there overnight on Saturday night, just been told to watch out for an angry bull nearby and have to do this at weekend before the exmoor ponies are put in the bog to stop it overgrowing. I am hoping to find signs of Marsh Fritillary here as they have existed in a small colony in the past, but may have disappeared since last search (hopefully not). Post more with images later.

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 25-Jun-10 07:27 PM GMT

Update on Inishargy Bog, I have got the permission now, going on saturday. Was told to look out for wall brown, stoats, irish hare and signs of Marsh Fritillary (one of the only remaining sites in Ards Peninsula for Marsh Fritillary) and I think this is where a vagrent was recorded coming from as in 1980s one Marsh Fritillary was reported in Mountstewart Estate, 3 or 4 miles away, but there was another colony of Marsh Fritillary at the time about 4 miles in the other direction, but I know the fritillary wasn't present in Mountstewart as they have never been recorded except this single individual.

I am getting a tour of the bog as well. I'll post images when I get home of the bog in 2008. Here is a link to some info about it:

[http://www.ulsterwildlifetrust.org/natu ... shargy+Bog](http://www.ulsterwildlifetrust.org/natu...shargy+Bog)

I have seen all the birds of prey (Buzzard, Kestral and Sparrow Hawk) there or nearby before. WOuldn't mind seeing a stoat as I have only seen one before, this was at a lake near where I live, I photographed it chasing a rat along the lake side at dusk. Didn't realise at the time what I photographed. Also be great to see a hare as I have not seen one before.

Last night I found a map winged swift male in my bathroom, must have come through the window at some point. Seems numbers are booming of map-winged swift as they were big in 2008 (I recorded a few hundred over a week or so) and same this year, and it has been 2 years since they were seen, given they overwinter twice before becoming adults.

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 26-Jun-10 09:16 PM GMT

Images of lishargy Bog, going later today, just have to remember how to get to it as the normal route has cattle in it and have to take a back way to it

Wet area with lots of reeds and yellow flag Iris (this part has been enriched since years ago, I was told the reed wasn't present in early 1990's)



Inishargy – Yellow Flag Iris and Wet area

Wet area:



Inishargy - Wet Patch

A few more images:



Inishargy - Trees/Bushes



Inishargy



Inishargy - Bushes

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 27-Jun-10 11:54 PM GMT

Well I never got to the bog, was told that parts of the land are owned by different people and couldn't find a right way onto the bog so had to cancel my plans. I emailed the guy who told me about the land and see what he says now. Saw two speckled woods in the area.

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 02-Jul-10 05:00 PM GMT

Meadow Browns are starting to get up in numbers, and reports of a lot of them being reported where I live. I still haven't seen any ringlets yet, I thought I did, but turns out I dreamed I saw them!

Saw two fighting male speckled woods today as I was walking in town. Over past week here I have saw 1 single dotted wave, 1 riband wave, 9 cinnibar moth and 2 tortrix (same species) I forget name of and a Garden Grass Veneer. Yesterday observed 4 female Buff Ermine along house doorsteps, getting flighty, one was well worn and dying.

Going tonight to set out moth traps at Mountstewart Lake, actually recording the trapping (using 15W actinic over white sheet and a 15W energy saving bulb that gives of 30% UVA and 10% UVB rays as well as normal light) so I'll post more on that tomorrow.

Noticed yesterday my cabbages and brocolli is being munched by cats, at first I thought they were of small white caterpillars (one is) but they are actually a lot of cabbage moth caterpillars...well I did release 6 adults in the area this year (ones I reared from cats on cabbages there last year) so I am rearing these.

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 06-Jul-10 11:12 PM GMT

Was out early this morning as I have week free and was searching a meadow not far from my house at about 7am. I found:

1 Male Common Blue (very worn)
11 Meadow Brown
13 Ringlet

Also found 1 pinion streaked snout and 18 *Stenoptilia pterodactyla* among others. This meadow I was in holds the only population of Common Blue in Mountstewart where I live. Once I found a male common blue way on the dar side of this area, but it was across a forest and a road. Suppose it could have been a vagrant?

Here is a few photos I managed to get (I didn't bring a tripod as I don't know how to use camera on one when butterflies are prone to moving about easily and it takes time to mount a camera on it and they could be gone by the time you do)



Ringlet on Grass



Ringlet sunning itself



Common Blue Male (Worn)



Two Ringlet and a Common Blue Male



Meadow Brown Female



Pinion Streaked Snout

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 19-Aug-10 10:44 PM GMT

Just came home and had a look in garden, 4 red admiral, 1 peacock, 2 large white and 1 small tortoiseshell feeding on buddliea and spearmint, going now to look for more about as seems like a good day to find butterflies, hopefully manage a decent shot of something.

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 22-Aug-10 01:12 AM GMT

Had a look in my shed today and found young swallows in nest, swallows have nested in the same places in my shed for well over 14 years and even when the roof had to be replaced, the three nests that are there were built in the same place as the older ones that had to be removed with the old roof. I couldn't stay long with the nest I was photographing as the adult came back and did not like me being around the nest and the young wanted fed.

Looking for food:



Feed me!

Two more images:



Swallows in nest



Another young swallow

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 01-Sep-10 08:58 AM GMT

29th: Went to South Co Down, Northern Ireland in search of Silver Washed Fritillary. Sadly, never got to the area they were found, so have to wait until next year. Went to Dundrum then Newcastle. Went to a place called Murlough National Nature Reserve, the largest areas of costal sand dunes and heathland in Northern Ireland. Its costal heath, sand dunes, acid grassland, scrub and woodland. Some areas have sea buckthorn introduced and never seen buckthorn before, fell over and touched one, not realising they had thorns, ouch.

As far as I know, at Murlough 20 resident butterfly species and over 260+ known macro moths have been found there (don't know how many micros). Murlough is quite a large area, can take 3-4 hours or more to get around it all.

Strange thing was seeing lots of lichen in the dunes, blanketing areas around the large areas of heather. Another strange sight was seeing various fungus growing in the dunes, far away from trees. There is quite a few young sycamores dotted around the sand dunes which looks out of place. Devils Bit Scabious is plentiful as is burnet rose.

Dundrum costal path (a small inlet which directly in front of it on the other side of the water is Ballykilner, a army barricks with woodland and sand dunes.) Lots of thrift here, it was all over the place. Some pine trees along the edge of the area too. At Dumdrum I saw 3 Green Veined White, 1 Small White, 3 Silver Y and a Speckled Wood. Also found a shell of a sea urchin. Not long after a quick look here, went to Murlough.

Images of Dundrum costal path:



Dundrum Costal Path 1



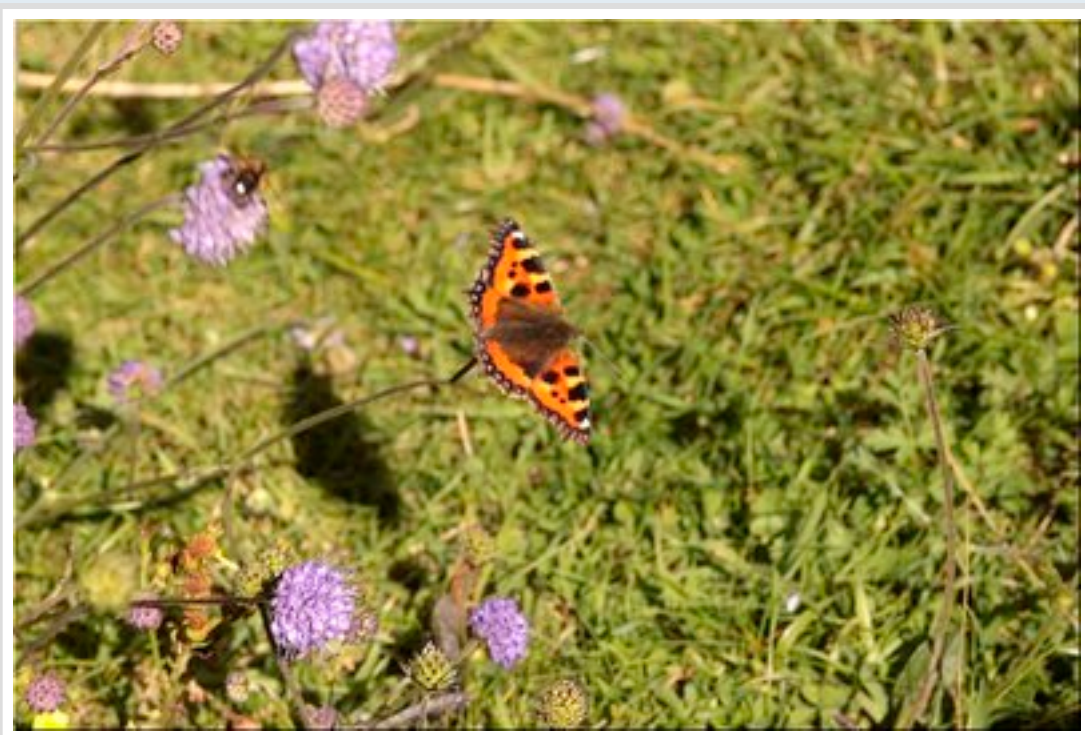
Dundrum Costal Path 2

Here is Murlough, when I arrived, first place I went to was an area covered in Devils Bit Scabious looking for marsh fritillary cats. Didn't see any, but it was like looking for a needle in a haystack with the abundance of scabious (must have been hundreds of devils bit scabious plants), I did see 3 small

tortoiseshell and two meadow brown here, there was lots of scabious and burnet rose:



Scabious



Small Tortoiseshell



Burnet Rose

Found a green caterpillar on a hawkbit (or is it called hawkweed?), but don't know what it is (might be hard from this photo):



Green Cat

Moving along (walking around a mile) I saw 35 Meadow Brown (with one mating pair), 7 with 2 empty Six-Spot Burnet cocoons (which I took empty ones with me), 9 small copper, 6 common blue (all males), 5 small heath, 1 Brown Silver Line, 5 Silver Y, 1 Red Admiral and one adult six-spot burnet. However I didn't manage many photos of butterflies because of the wind, had monopod with me and it didn't help much and those I did get were not great.



Meadow Brown Pair



Six-Spot Burnet



Empty Six-Spot Burnet Cocoon



Small Heath



Small Copper

Some places were really windy (around 20mph winds in high places and quite cold in wind, but sun was warm 19–20C when wind died down)

This was in a sort of valley between two hilly sand dunes, best area for seeing things here as it was less windy here and warm, with sea buckthorn and blankets of lichen around heather (can anyone ID it?) also some out of place sycamore here also st Johns wort and willowherb, birds-foot trefoil also was here amongst grasses.

Area that most butterflies were (in a sort of sand dune valley with hills on both sides)



Sand Dunes

Lichen growing between the heather that was everywhere:



Lichen

Other areas in Murlough:

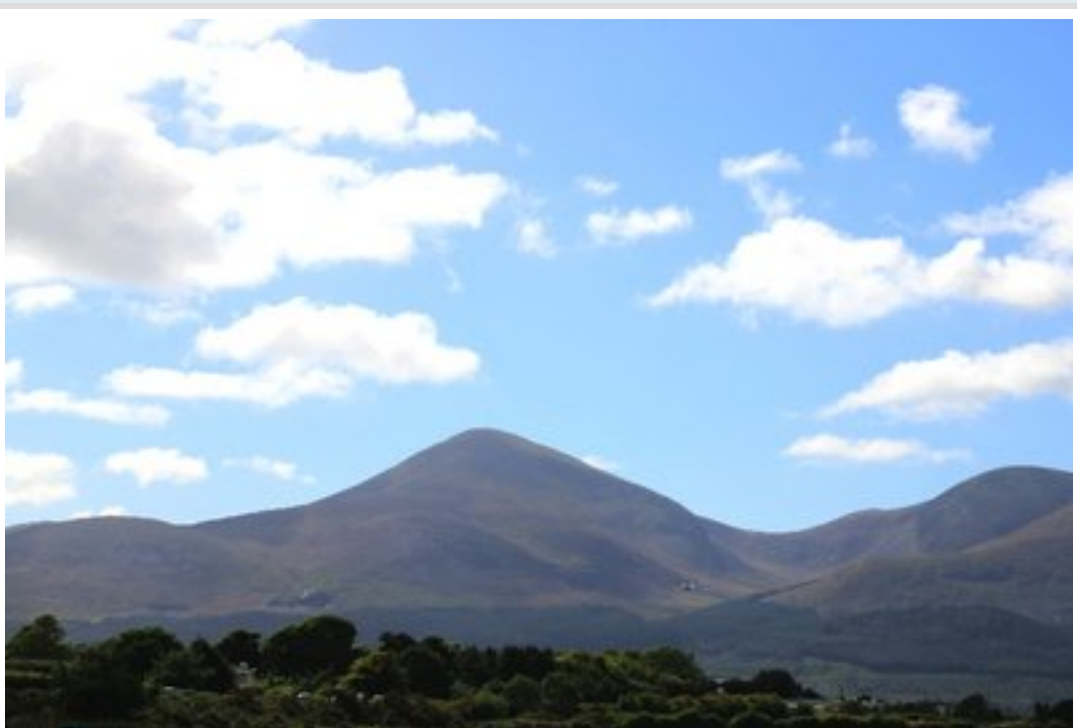


Sand Dunes 2



Sand Dunes 3

Mourne Mountains:



Mourne Mountains 1



Mourne Mountains 2

Was there for about 2 hours or a little more and although I didn't see any grayling I wanted to see, or any Silver Washed Fritillary, had a good day anyway despite wind blowing and not getting good butterfly shots (find it hard getting close to the butterfly, and taking the photo before it flies away) Also managed to get lots of very juicy blackberries of the bramble bushes there.

I noticed many plants here had more seeds than I have usually seen. Someone said that the amount of berries on bushes (this case a lot on hawthorn and loads of blackberries etc...) or seeds wildplants produce, can let you know if the winter is going to be harsh or mild. If the plants produce a lot of seeds, winter will be harsh as they will need more seeds (more chance for at least some of the seeds to make it over the harsh winter and germinate) but less are needed in mild winter as more would survive. He predicted another cold winter.

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 01-Sep-10 09:13 AM GMT

30th: Went to BallyMaCormick Point in north Co Down, a costal area where Chamomile Shark moth has been found before, a rare moth in Northern Ireland and saw very little despite warm sunny day. I did see:

- 2 Speckled Wood
- 6 Small Tortoiseshell Chrysilis on a wall of a house near the sea
- 3 hatched Six-Spot Burnet cocoons
- 24 unhatched cocoons of Six-Spot Burnet
- 1 Adult Six Spot Burnet
- 1 Shaded Broad Bar
- 3 stigmella aurella mines on brambles

Then went to Orlock Point, another costal area in north Co Down (both managed by National Trust) and saw mostly silver Y moths coming over the sea. Scotland was so clear today, you could see the Scottish coast very clearly and the wheat or barley fields and tubines around the coast. Saw:

- 11 Silver Y - Possibly more, was watching them coming over the sea
- 4 Small Tortoiseshell (One got attacked by a bird but survived with just a bit of its wing edge missing)

31st: Was looking for Ballyquintin Point in south Ards Peninsula in Co Down, but forgot map and got lost somewhere very close to it (kicked myself to a slightly wrong turn and missed it by a little bit) I saw mostly a few small whites and loads of white ermine and garden tiger caterpillars moving fast across the road. Found an odd sign near the village of Clough, a village not far from the Irish sea. It was on a shed on a small road beside the sea. Not sharks but crocs around the coast here that are the problem! 😂 There isn't actually any crocs here which made this sign odd and funny 😂



Warning...Crocs!?!

Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 30-Dec-10 03:16 AM GMT

Hope everyone had a great christmas, mine wasn't bad. Just thinking how I'll plan next year. I am currently digging over my old wildlife plot in garden which got overrun by buttercups and grass and don't want the same again. Was also given 15 common osier so want to see how I can put them to good use. Have an ambitious plan for the coming year, to record videos each month of my trips into the wild and will put them all together into month by month videos of my year of nature, just have to figure out how I am going to do this. Got a new external 1TB lomega HD to store and backup all my

videos/images as I read through lots of reviews before getting it and couldn't find any real negative reviews so seemed a good external disk to get.

Also was sent lots of seeds of Yellow Iris, Yellow Marigold, Birds Foot Trefoil, Dog Rose and some others, so want to make my wildlife area much better, maybe make a small pond in it, if I can do that. Roll on 2011!