

Rebecca

by Rebecca, 10-Apr-12 06:45 AM GMT

I've thought for a while that I ought to keep a diary and having read some others I have finally decided to start one. I also thought if anyone is interested that it might be good to read things from a newbies perspective.

A bit of history first. It all started 2 years ago when I decided that I really needed to educate myself better on my surroundings (I live on a farm, so fields, woods, lake etc around me). i had a reasonable knowledge of nature but felt it wasn't good enough. Every morning I'd take the dogs out, armed with my RSPB pocket book and binoculars. I also used the camera on my phone to take pictures of wild flowers to identify and also used my phone to record birdsong I didn't recognise.

One day I was in the woods and came across a little patch of bluebells and noticed a butterfly nectaring. I took a picture with my phone but couldn't identify it with my small British nature book. A few weeks later I took a picture of a blue butterfly on a dandelion but again I couldn't decide what it was. The only butterflies that I knew were red admirals and small tortoiseshells I think.

So unable to identify them I found UK butterflies and still couldn't be sure, so I joined this forum. Luckily the lovely helpful people here told me that I had seen a common blue male and an orange-tip female (i didn't realise the females had no Orange!)

I read posts on the board and I think the friendliness and enthusiasm rubbed off on me as I bought myself The pocket guide to the Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland and then set off Butterfly hunting!

I decided to start from scratch and pretend that I had never seen a butterfly before. During 2010 I saw 21 different butterflies – large skipper, Brimstone, large white, small white, GV white, orange tip, small copper, brown argus, common blue, holly blue, red admiral, painted lady, small tortoiseshell, peacock, comma, Silver-washed frit, speckled wood, marbled white, gatekeeper, meadow brown and ringlet.

Last year I saw 7 more – small skipper, brown hairstreak, purple hairstreak, chalkhill blue, adonis blue, large blue and small heath.

What I have found amazing is the way it has become a huge part of my life, almost bordering obsessive at times. I also am amazed at the amount I have learnt about butterflies and I'm now getting people coming up to ask me about identification.

Anyway onto this year. So far I've seen 9 butterflies – Brimstone, small tortoiseshell, speckled wood, peacock, comma, small white, orange tip, holly blue and GVW. I plan to see at least 5 new ones this year, a green hairstreak, some frits, purple emperor and maybe a couple of skippers. I'm also looking forward to this year as the Headteacher of our village primary is letting me sort out the nature garden at school. Its overgrown big style and she is happy for me to clear it and create a butterfly meadow (any tips welcome). Hoping with the aid of a teacher to get a nature club started too, I'm hoping my daughter will get some of her friends interested.

well I've used my first diary entry to witter on about my life story, but from now on it should be sightings, thoughts and pictures and will hopefully be far more interesting! 😊

Re: Rebecca

by David M, 10-Apr-12 07:04 AM GMT

I enjoyed reading your post, Rebecca. Butterflies are creatures everybody recognises and likes, but precious few seem to take a keen interest in. That's a shame as they are so stunningly delicate and beautiful and observing them can take you to parts of the country that you wouldn't otherwise visit (which in itself is a treat).

Re: Rebecca

by Wurzel, 10-Apr-12 07:50 AM GMT

Looking forward to reading your diary Rebecca, I reckon you might be able to find a few more than five new species this year 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Rebecca

by John W, 10-Apr-12 09:45 AM GMT

Hi Rebecca, what part of the country do you live in? Judging by your species list for 2010 it's in the south somewhere. If you're looking for Purple Emperors this year you stand a good chance of also seeing White Admirals, a lovely butterfly with probably the most graceful flight of all our species.

I would check out your local branch of Butterfly Conservation and see what field trips they are running this year – that's an excellent way of meeting both people and butterflies!

Best wishes

John

Re: Rebecca

by Lee Hurrell, 10-Apr-12 06:14 PM GMT

Hi Rebecca,

I'm also looking forward to reading your diary and enjoyed your brief history! You're in for a wonderful journey that will take you to some beautiful and tranquil places.

Also, my mum lives in Somerset so I will be watching where you see things! 😊

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Rebecca

by Rebecca, 10-Apr-12 06:39 PM GMT

Thank you for your comments. I'm in east Somerset and I'm very lucky to be near some very good sites. I never knew about the different butterflies I could see even in my locality. I've visited the wonderful Babcary meadows and Perrymead meadow which is only a few miles away and last year I discovered Purple and brown hairstreaks in the little wood just across the field from here.

last year I visited Collard Hill for the large blue and went to Fontmell down for the adonis blue and chalkhill blue, sadly I didn't see any silver spotted skippers. This year I plan to venture further afield. My husband is planning a late birthday trip for me in July. he has spoken about bentley wood and different spots in that area to hopefully see a number of new butterflies. I'm also looking at Priddy mineries, Great breach wood and a few other Somerset sites. I will also check on trips organised by the Somerset branch of BC and maybe anything organised through this board. hopefully my journeys and excitement of discovering new things will be interesting to you all. i shall also keep updates on how my meadow gets on at the school.

Re: Rebecca

by Rogerdodge, 10-Apr-12 08:59 PM GMT

Rebecca

A trip to Buckland Wood in early May should get you Duke of Burgundy, Green Hairstreak and Grizzled and Dingy Skippers.

I am sure Somerset BC do a trip there around then.

Sand Point for the introduced Glanville Frits is worth a trip, and Exmoor for Heath, High Brown and the other frits (PBF is the only one we don't get) is well worth visiting.

I know these areas are all in the west of the county - but they make good days out.

PM me if you want finer detail.

Enjoy

Re: Rebecca

by NickMorgan, 11-Apr-12 03:31 AM GMT

Rebecca, I'm also looking forward to reading about what you see. You have already seen 11 butterflies that I haven't seen yet, but they are all ones that don't occur up here. Good luck with your hunting.