

Re: IAC

by IAC, 03-Mar-12 10:11 AM GMT

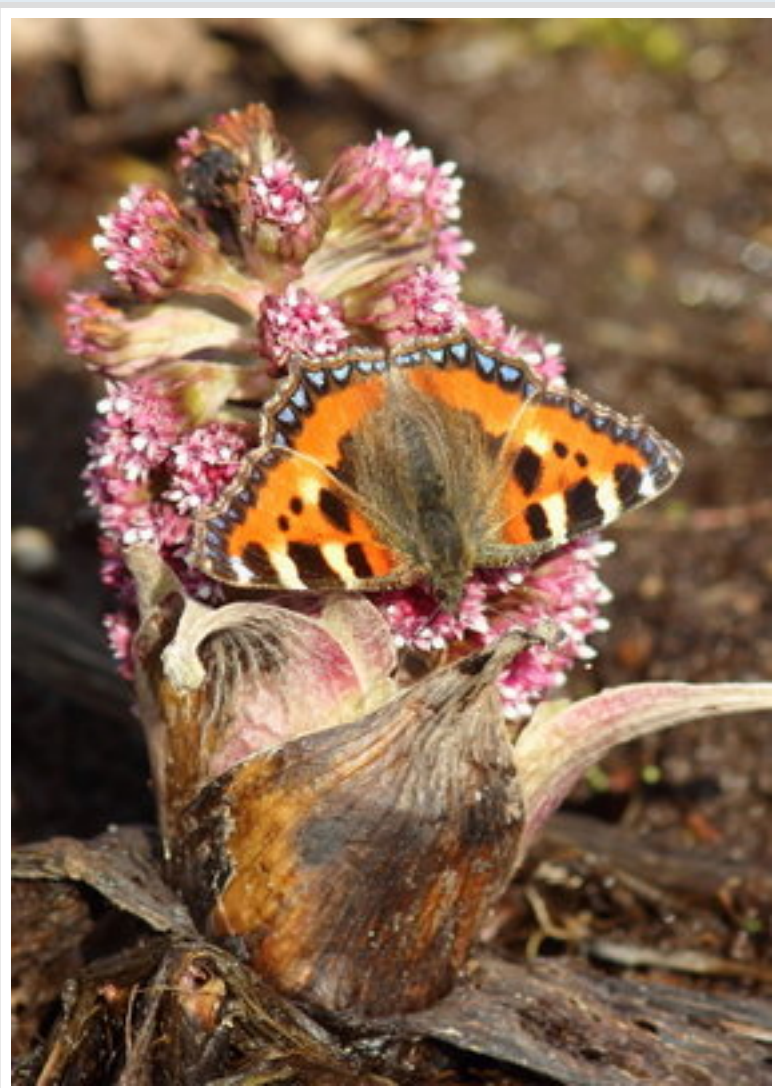
Out from hibernation a lot earlier than anticipated, I shook of the cobwebs and sped of in search of a likely sunlit arena that I hoped would contain one of the 4 likely suspects, that like me had been dreaming all winter about such a day as Tuesday the 28th of February.

17oC.... 😲 ...unbelievable!!! Near Ayton on the Alebanks it did not take me long to see that old familiar fluttering insect the butterfly...this one a Peacock...first of the season in good nick. In that instant the shackles of long winter depression fell away to the delights of selfish indulgence...birds singing, flowers in bloom, butterflies on the wing 😊 I know I am not the only one. I was even more excited to see a Comma a few minutes later sipping minerals from a muddy pool on the trackway...great stuff.

Yesterday it was a little cooler at 12oC...however I was determined enough that Small Tortoiseshell would brave it given some shelter and a nectaring opportunity. A long search ensued.... and finally, on a flowering spike of Butterbur, a very smart looking Small T Shell posed for photos before leading me on a merry dance around the marshy ground...it is good to be back 😊



My first butterfly of 2012...17oC..February....ridiculous!!



Small Tortoiseshell on the Whiteadder Banks near Chirnside Berwickshire.



Comma by the Ale near Ayton Berwickshire.

Re: IAC

by IAC, 12-Mar-12 03:48 AM GMT

EARLY MARCH BUTTEFLIES

Some cool and cloudy weather has finally given way to something a little more acceptable. Bright sunshine and temperatures at around 14°C certainly demanded a good long walk down by the river Whiteadder today. A brisk westerly chased me into the wooded edges that had at least a south east face and it did not take too long to see a Comma firing past at speed. Another Comma on the same banking only minutes later was a little easier to approach and it seemed to be in very good nick indeed. The sunshine became a little milky after lunch and the wind intensified a little heralding a dark slab of cloud....so I used the lull in the weather to transport myself to another location, a well sheltered bank that is permanently wet due to underground springs. The ground is very muddy and never freezes over in a frost, so Butterbur always flowers here first. The first butterflies were Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock, one of each. The Small Tortoiseshell only had eyes for its big and bold new girlfriend...poor little thing. Another Comma alighted and landed on a Butterbur leaf on the other side of the shallow spring stream...so...with one knee in the stream and braving the mud I got another photo.

I think by the looks of it that given another 2 days of this weather there will be good numbers of butterfly tempted out into the open....very early indeed for this part of the world at least.



A sunning Comma..very clean this one...almost looks as fresh as one seen in July.



Soggy knee but worth the pain to get a photo of this excellent species.



Small Tortoiseshell biting off a little more than he can chew.



Butterbur on the spring banks well advanced.



A few Dandelions showing just now.

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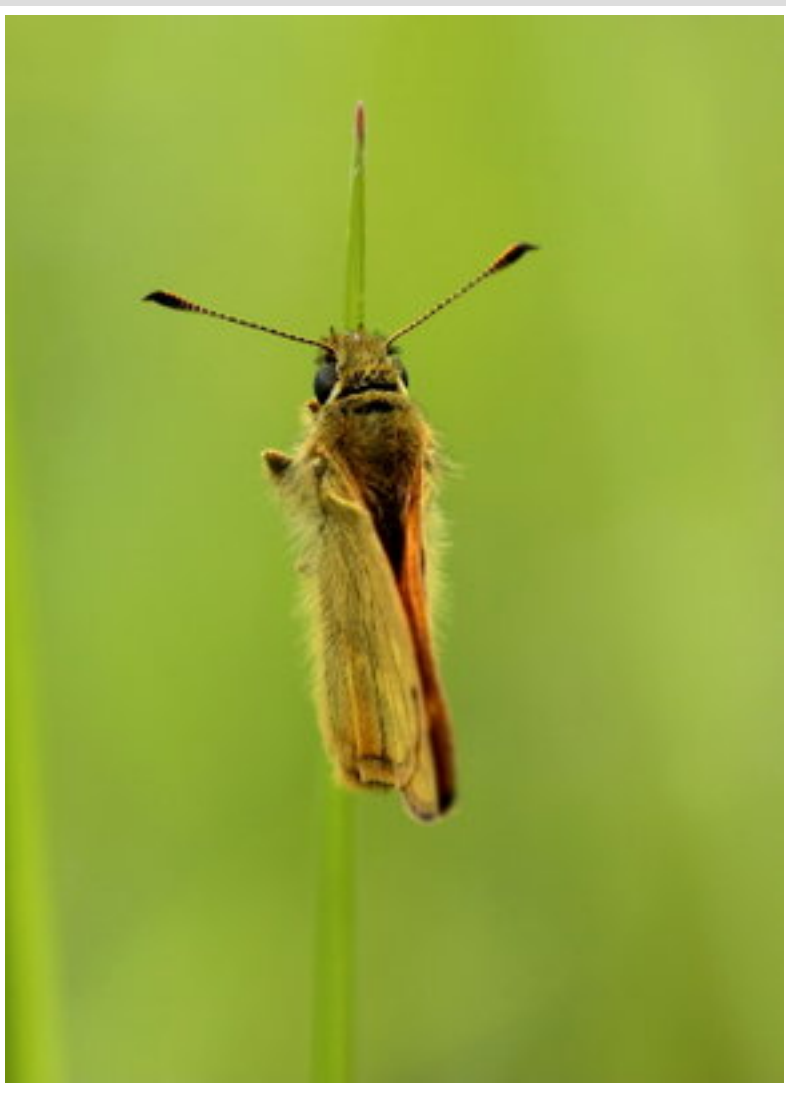
by IAC, 09-Jun-12 07:10 PM GMT

May and early June highlights

It has been a while since I last updated this diary. I just have not had the time to do so. The weather...I could ramble on for hours about the weather. Its been kinda tough finding butterflies this season, and when you do its usually one or two of each species. I have been concentrating on the coast of Berwickshire throughout May trying to track down Small Blue colonies hidden away on the rocky inlets and sheer cliffs from Berwick Upon Tweed to Fast Castle. A survey of the coast for adults and foodplant has been so far very successful with a good number of volunteers combing the coast, not only in Berwickshire but also North Northumberland where there is ample habitat for the butterfly. A field trip was organised which went very well despite the east coastal haars best efforts to muddy the waters. A good number of folks saw the Small Blue in large numbers and at close quarters which was great. Butterfly numbers are well down, suppressed by this constant stream of Low pressures, however, if you take your chances inbetween the deluges rewards are sweet. So far in May, Orange Tip and Green Veined White continue to fly, it will be interesting to see how late the Orange Tip persist. Up here mid June is usually the latest, I have a feeling it will be possible to see them in July this year. Small White are scarce after an early start, Large White are frequent. Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell had a famous March, a quiet April and a quieter May.....still being seen in low numbers, mostly females. Comma are posted missing for now, not seen one in a while. Speckled Wood are a very hardy butterfly and were seen throughout the period with a brief lull mid May things are picking up again with a few fresh ones on the wing. Wall Brown have been very evident huge numbers when the sun shone on the coastal footpaths. Small Copper are okay, massive emergences having been suppressed locally. In the Duns hills a 20m square piece of ground held no less than 25 warring individuals...total chaos!! Small Blue have had a great season, however, I feel that again high numbers have been down to forced emergence because of a weather break...rather than an increase of anykind in actual numbers. Northern Brown Argus have just began emerging, though I did see 3 males at Burnmouth on the 28th May.. Common Blue and Large Skipper are on the wing as well...only just with low numbers so far. This weekend and next week I will be hoping to find some Small Pearl Bordered Frits.....nothing so far....this is highly unusual..fingers crossed for a wee spell of the warm stuff soon. 😊



Fire orange in green grass in June can only mean one thing...they are smashing butterflies.



Large Skipper, quite established now in the Scottish Borders.



The Berwickshire coast and inland hills have many colonies...some still being discovered.



NBA just great to see them firing around the coastal screes.



Not a butterfly...but what a beauty..Viola Tricolor...just before the council strimmer....sadly.



Wall Brown female, common on the coast and becoming so inland, where this individual was prospecting.



Small Blue pair, photographed during the field trip.



The first of the Common Blues.



A fresh Speckled Wood in early June.



The rugged coast of Berwickshire north of Eyemouth.



Small Copper at Cocklawburn Beach, Northumberland.



Small Blue found during a survey of the Berwickshire coast.