

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 03-Feb-14 11:04 PM GMT

SUNDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2014

With a fine weekend and a rare Sunday off, it's time to take a trip to the Fens. Not surprisingly, there is a lot of water on the flood plains this year, as this picture clearly shows:



*water as far as the eye can see!*

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 03-Feb-14 11:44 PM GMT

Soon we made our way up to Welney Wash, a Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust reserve, having seen lots of kestrels and a couple of buzzards on the way.

Here the visitor can get close-up views of ducks, geese and swans.

With their red-brown heads, grey backs and dumpy shape, pochards are one of the most attractive ducks to be seen here. They are nearly all males, it seems the females spend the winter in the Med—perhaps they have better map reading skills than the males!

Common as they are, mallards are one of the most handsome of all ducks. Although they look the same as the ones on your local pond, in fact most of these mallards come to Britain from Russia and Siberia!

Mute swans can be seen here all year. There are the swans we see on our local lakes and rivers. They don't move far, few fly more than a few miles away from their birth place during their lives.

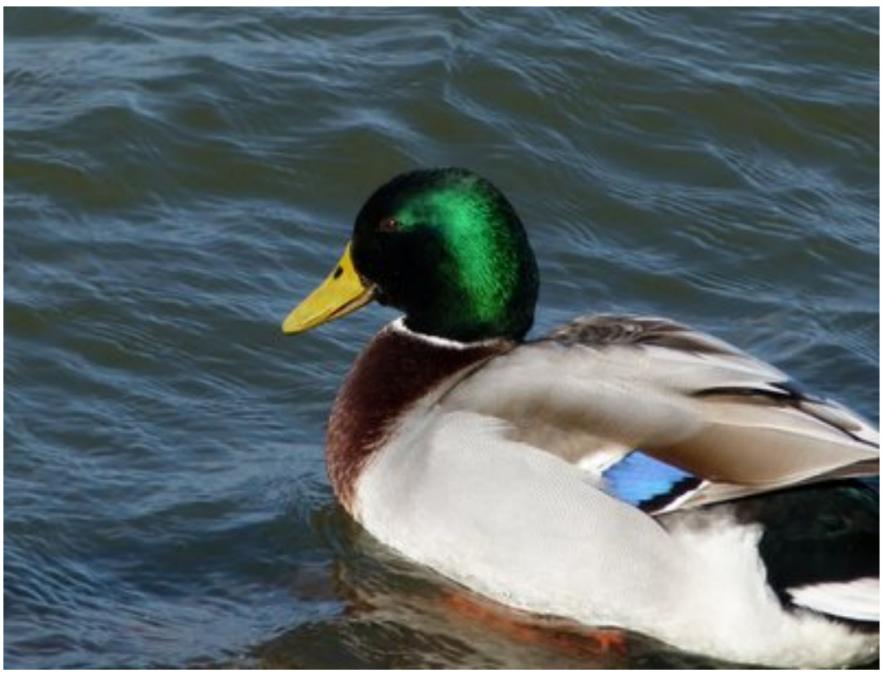
In contrast, whooper swans can be seen here, and they are long distance migrants, coming to East Anglia all the way from Iceland, where they breed. They are as big as the mute's, and often squabble among themselves, particularly at feeding time. Nowhere can you see wild whooper swans closer than right here at Welney.

Normally, the staff wheel a barrow full of grain out at 3.30PM, but today, with the flood so high, it was a floating lunch!

Several other wildfowl species can be seen and, on the roadside just outside the reserve, two barn owls were a fitting way to end a rather splendid winter's day out. 😊



*pochards*



*mallard*



*mute swan*



*whooper swan*



*dinner time!*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by philm63, 04-Feb-14 02:37 PM GMT

Lovely shots – I wish we had a closeish wetland reserve, most years have to depend on winter field floods down in the valley if they occur

Phil

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 12-Feb-14 09:33 PM GMT

Should be plenty of floodwater in your local valley this winter,Phil!

SUNDAY 9 FEBRUARY.

Booked another Sunday off, but my own Essex conservation day was cancelled, so I headed down to Sussex to join Michael Blencowe and the Sussex volunteers, to do some work at the Park Corner Heath and Rowland Wood BC reserve.

Park Corner Heath has been a reserve for many years now, but now, Rowland Wood next door has recently been added. A massive amount of hard work has been done since I last visited early in 2012, and, to start with, I hardly recognised the place! Blocks of pine have been felled, widening rides and creating new clearings, letting far more light into the wood.

This reserve is good for a wide range of butterflies and moths, but it is perhaps the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary for which the site is known to most people. This, I believe, is the last site for SPBF in south-east England, but this colony is now completely isolated, with no chance of new recruits coming in from other sites. Numbers of adults have become worryingly low in recent years. We can only hope our work here comes just in time to save this special colony from extinction.

Hazel catkins were abundant and, out of the wind and in the late winter sunshine, you could almost imagine the first Brimstones fluttering down the woodland rides here – won't be long now! 😊



## Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 12-Feb-14 11:25 PM GMT

Good luck with the Small Pearls this year Essex – it would a shame if the colony was lost 😞 Is there no way that their numbers could be bolstered from another colony? I know that interference like this is often frowned upon but it seems like their numbers have dwindled due to our interference (or lack of it) in the first place 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: essex buzzard

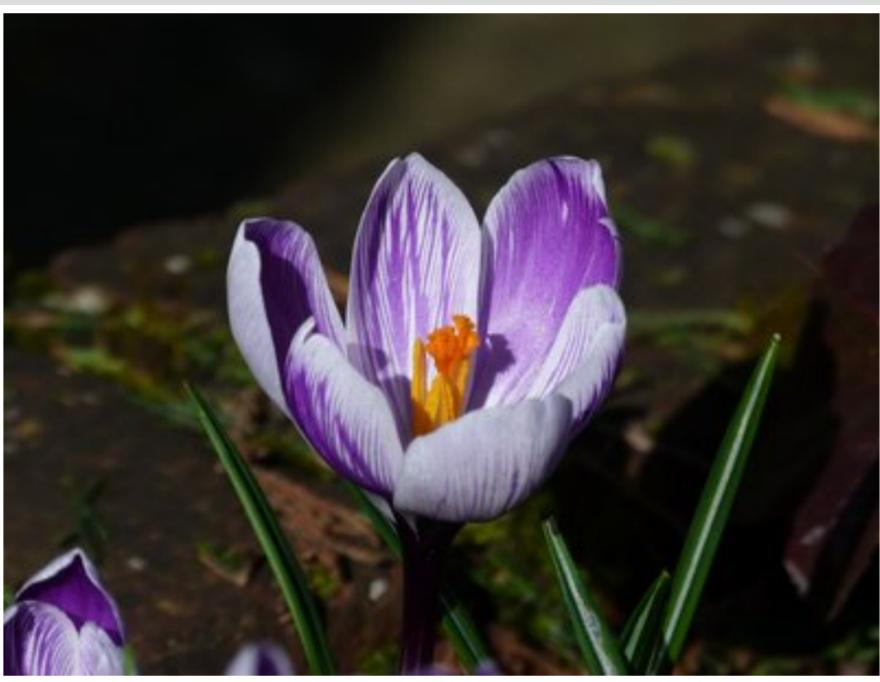
by essexbuzzard, 28-Feb-14 11:03 PM GMT

Like you said,Wurzel,i think that sort of thing is frowned upon! Thanks for your comments,though.

There have been some nice,sunny days this week.It really seems spring is just around the corner. The bumblebees have been flying,and i even saw my first Red-tailed Bumblebee–and my first 2014 butterfly! Six weeks earlier than last year! It was a Red Admiral,and in pretty good nick too. Sadly no photo,as it was at work and i didn't have the camera.

So i'll sign off with the lovely Myrobalan Plum–the first blossom to appear–which has come out this week,and some crocuses.





## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 02-Mar-14 11:34 PM GMT

### HAS SPRING SPRUNG?

People often ask me when spring begins, and are surprised to hear there is no such thing as an official start of spring in Britain. For weather records, spring consists of March, April and May. The real start of spring varies widely from year to year. For example, last year, spring didn't really get going until mid April. This year, however, the opening crocuses, daffodils and blossom would have us believe spring had already arrived by the end of February, at least in the south.

So it's time to look back at what has been a remarkable winter. It was mild throughout the Kingdom, with no cold spells, and scarcely even a frost, where I live at least. Temperatures were 1.5C above average for most.

As we know, it was wet and windy throughout, and many southern and western parts had between 1 and a half and twice the average rainfall, as did eastern Scotland, during the three winter months. Only Norfolk, north-east England and north Scotland were marginally drier than average. On high ground, much of this fell as snow, especially in Scotland, where avalanches have occurred.

It was also very dull in many western areas, including west Wales, and in particular north-west England and south-west Scotland, where they recorded less than 65 per cent of the expected sunshine. In contrast, much of England and parts of eastern Scotland were remarkably sunny, and some areas of East Anglia recorded 50 per cent more hours of bright sunshine than expected.

All this indicates that the weather was dominated by Atlantic lows and, sure enough, long drags of wet and windy weather swept from west to east off the relatively warm Atlantic throughout. As a result, it was probably the wettest and windiest winter in living memory, and the floods and gale damage that resulted were devastating.

So what will spring bring?

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 05-Mar-14 10:41 PM GMT

### WEDNESDAY 5 MARCH

In the late morning and lunchtime sunshine today, I went for a walk in my local woods. Hazel catkins are still abundant, and the primroses are starting to flower. In the rides and clearings, I saw several new species for 2014.

A male Brimstone was first up, then my first Peacock, Comma, Tree Bumblebee and Common Carder Bee.

So, at the beginning of March, I already have seen 4 butterfly species! A great start to the spring—long may it continue.

My only regret is that all I managed to photograph was this record shot of the Peacock...



### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 05-Mar-14 11:48 PM GMT

It looks like the answer to your previous post is "yes definitely", four species already and a shot of an early Peacock 🎁 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 12-Mar-14 09:23 PM GMT

I agree,it certainly seems like it,Wurzel-i hope so!

Today,after a couple of cloudy days in the south-east,the sun returned,and so did the warmth,with 15C recorded at Writtle,near Chelmsford. After the lovely photo's posted by many on this site,i thought it was time i joined in!Although i was at work,i managed to sneak out at lunchtime,and find some butterflies. I saw my first Small Tortoiseshells on sunday,so today,i took my camera.

As Guy said,the Sallow catkins are popular with insects,and soon produced a Comma and a Small Tort. Elsewhere,a peacock was on some heather,and another on Viburnum tinus. A few more butterflies,including a Comma, were basking on bare ground elsewhere. All to soon,it was time to get back to work,having spent some most enjoyable time with March butterflies! 😊 😎





### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 13-Mar-14 12:28 AM GMT

Great stuff Essex 😊 - the lunch time butterfly foray is a must now the season has begun 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by lee3764, 15-Mar-14 08:31 PM GMT

[color=#BF4000:rik48tit]Hi Mark,

Thank you very much for making the big effort to visit us all at our AGM in Cornwall today all the way from Essex!! Well done & look forward to seeing you again this summer on any of the fieldtrips I arrange for Cornwall Butterfly Conservation. Martin Warren was mighty impressed at you coming to see us & Martin's excellent talk on "Fritillaries" in Cornwall today mate after a several 100's of miles drive!Cheers mate & good speaking with you.

Lee Slaughter (Cornwall Butterfly Conservation).[/color:rik48tit] 😊😊😊😊

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 17-Mar-14 12:22 AM GMT

Thanks, Lee, though the pleasure was all mine! Thanks to you all for the 'behind the scenes' stuff involved in organising such a great day! More on that to follow, but first,

CROESO I GYMRU—WELCOME TO WALES!

Last week, we took a trip to the Welsh hills. The weather was glorious, so one of the things we did was took the drive over to Devil's Bridge, and back along the Elan valley to Rhayader, stopping at intervals to soak up the scenery in these beautiful hills, and enjoy the sunshine. All the way we were treated to buzzards, kites, a couple of sparrowhawks and, at one point, a swarm of thousands of starlings! A late flock of fieldfares was also notable. We didn't miss out on butterflies, either, with Peacocks and Small Tortoiseshells seen, the picture below was taken at Cwmystwyth. As we drove back down the Elan Valley, we stopped at the reservoirs. It seems most of the water in them finds its way to Birmingham and the west Midlands conurbations! At one of them, a pair of particularly friendly chaffinches took crumbs, almost from the hand.

We had the place almost to ourselves, but I imagine it gets busy here at weekends, if the weather is good.





### Re: essex buzzard

by Neil Freeman, 17-Mar-14 09:25 PM GMT

Hi eb, some lovely views there 😊

Just made a coffee with some of that lovely Welsh water 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 17-Mar-14 11:03 PM GMT

Of course,Neil,that's where you live! Perhaps you can think of the lovely Welsh hills next time you have a drink,and think of all of those kites!

While in Wales,and with great weather,we couldn't resist a visit to the kite feeding centre near Rhayader. It is said to be the worlds most spectacular bird table! If you want to see birds of prey up close,this is the place to come.

Up to 400 kites can be seen here on cold winer days,so it's easy to forget that,until recently,the kite was very rare,and threatened with extinction in Britain.It had been exterminated in England and Scotland by the 1900's and even in Wales,the few nests failed for several years.So it seemed it would soon be gone for ever. The second World War,a terrible event,actually helped the kite,as mans efforts were focused elsewhere,perhaps allowing the last pairs a chance to breed unmolested. Slowly,the numbers increased but,even by 1990,there were only 50 pairs. Now though,a viable breeding population has increased to over 1000 pairs of Welsh Kites. At the feed,kites tend to snatch food,often from crows,and rarely land.

Buzzards can also be seen here. They do often land,and eat the food on the ground. Regular visitors to my pages will know this is one of the species i have the very deepest love for,partly owing to my younger days in Cornwall. Although less well known,the buzzard story is broadly similar to he kite's,with tens of thousands of these splendid birds trapped,shot and poisoned in a bloodbath of persecution. This drove it to extinction over most the country,leaving pairs in the wilder parts of Cornwall,Exmoor,west Wales and west Scotland. At last,in the 1950's,buzzards began to increase and spread east. Suddenly, myxamatois struck,and perhaps half the buzzards in Britain died of starvation. Then,in the 1960's,the Dieldrin used in sheep-dips killed many more,and reduced breeding success. Even in the 1980's, i soon noticed Cornwall had buzzards,while Essex had none. I can still remember the joy of seeing one for the first time here,and it has been a great pleasure to witness their spread accross the country.

Ravens also come to the feed. Their strange croaking calls and upside-down display flight are a joy to behold. Like the buzzard,ravens are spreading east as persecution reduces. Though i have seen them in Kent and Sussex,ravens have yet to colonise Essex,hopefully they will in the next ten years. At the feed,ravens are shy,and often grab a beakfull of meat,and eat it in peace elsewhere.

Some of the pictures below have been cropped.



*kites at feed time!*



*buzzard*



*crow and raven*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by Wurzel, 18-Mar-14 12:58 AM GMT

Cracking shots Essex especially the Raven Crow comparison 😊 I'll have to try fog a few Kite shots when I visit the in-laws. The only problem with the feeding station is that I lost my first scope there so it brings back sad memories 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### **Re: essex buzzard**

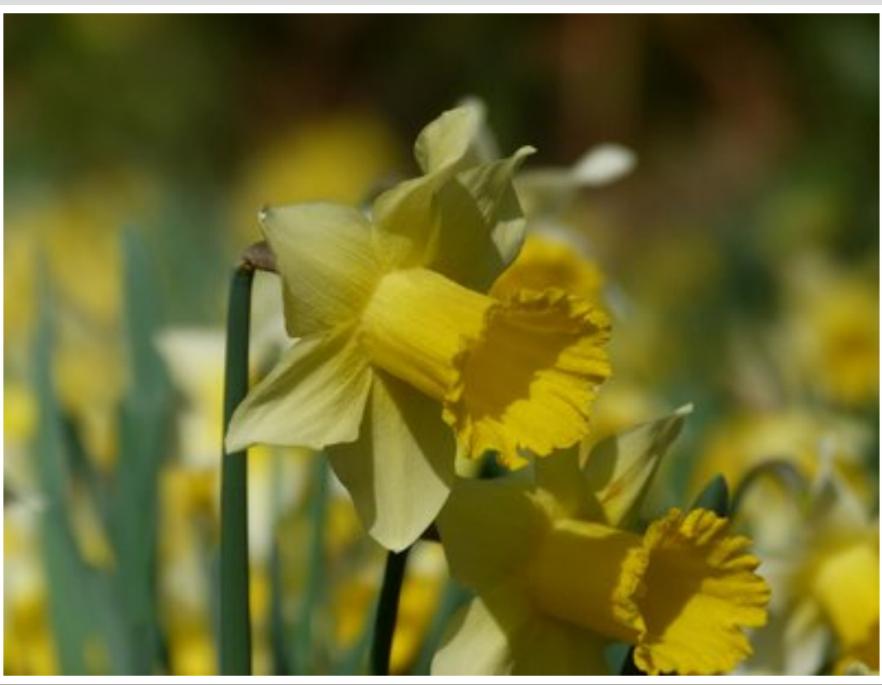
by essexbuzzard, 19-Mar-14 12:08 AM GMT

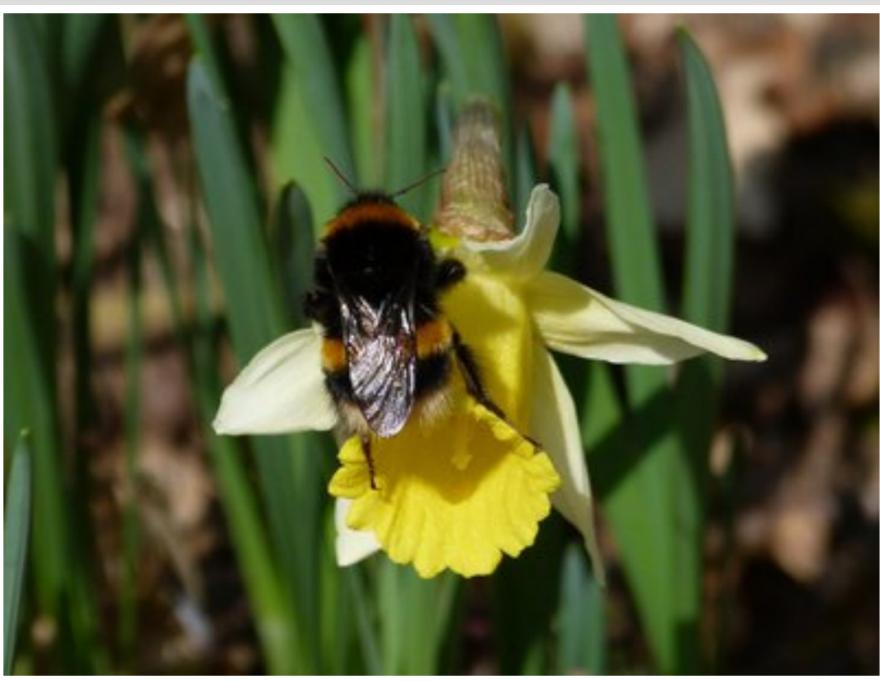
#### THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

On the way back from Wales, i decided to spend a day in Gloucestershire. The area between Dymock, Ledbury and Newent is known as the 'golden triangle'. This is because many of the woods, fields and hedges here are carpeted with glorious Lent Lilies (Wild Daffodils). Until the 1950s, special trains used to run up from London, to bring tourists to admire the spectacle, and buy bunches of the daffodils. Once the fog had cleared, i had plenty of time to enjoy this marvelous spectacle, visiting Betty Daws Wood and Gwen and Vera's Fields, managed by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, and Dymock Woods, owned by Forestry Commission.

While enjoying these daffodils, i began to notice a few other things, too. Dymock Wood was full of Redwings, while at Betty Daws Wood, buzzards and ravens were seen. On the ground, celandines were starting to flower. As i have these in my garden, i have a bit of a love-hate relationship with them, as they are so invasive. Here in the wild, however, celandines are a lovely addition to the woodland flora. The first anemones were already out, too. Bumblebees were everywhere, and Small Tortoiseshells were seen—they seem to be everywhere this spring!







### Re: essex buzzard

by Pauline, 19-Mar-14 07:54 AM GMT

Lovely photos of the Buzzards and Kites Mark. The other day I had 6 Buzzards circling and calling over the garden but the number of Kites I have ever seen you could count on one hand so they are still very much a novelty for me. The daffodils are beautiful too but what makes a wild daffodil wild? Is it just a daffodil growing in a wild place or are they an old breed so to speak as there are so many varieties available now.

### Re: essex buzzard

by William, 19-Mar-14 08:33 AM GMT

Lovely Daffodil shots Essex Buzzard, that must have been quite a sight 😊😊

### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 20-Mar-14 12:50 AM GMT

Lent Lilies – that's a cracking name for daffs, great shots Essex 😊 Let's hope that the multitudes of Small Torts are a good sign for the year.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 20-Mar-14 01:18 AM GMT

Hi Pauline, lovely to hear from you. I've been trying to get to Wales all winter, but with all those birds, it was worth the wait. I even managed to get a few butterflies in!

What makes a Wild Daffodil wild? It's a good question, and I'll try to answer it. The Wild Daffodil, or Lent Lily, is *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*, and is native to Britain, that is, its presence here is completely natural, and they have been growing in our woods for thousands of years. In fact, they are as much part of the British woodland scene as Bluebells. Yet they are much less common, and occur in very localised parts of the country. I have seen them in the Glynn Valley in Cornwall, and at Ullswater in the Lake District. These are the daffodils that inspired Wordsworth. I believe they also grow in Staffordshire, but have not seen them there.

So, Wild Daffodils have been growing here for centuries, long before cultivated daffodils were ever thought of. They grow about ten inches high, and reach peak flowering in mid to late March, on average, in the south, but not until mid April at Ullswater.

Hope this helps!

Thanks for you comments,as always,Wurzel. I too an hoping that all those lovely Torts are a good omen.

Thanks William. The sight of woods carpeted with thousands of these Wild Daffodils is a sight to behold,i can tell you!

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 21-Mar-14 11:04 PM GMT

### CORNWALL BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION AGM

Last saturday i was pleased to be able to atend the Cornwall BC AGM.It was a most enjoyable day,and i was able to catch up and say hello to old and new friends.

After the AGM proper,we were treated to our first talk of the day,a most enjoyable talk by Cheryl Marriot from Cornwall Wildlife Trust. It was about the work CWT are doing to improve water quality in the East Looe river catchment,working with local farmers. I was particularly impressed with the access they get onto farms. Coming from a farming background,i know farmers can be wary of do-gooders from outside coming in and telling them how to do a job they have been doing for generations. Working with Environment Agency,CWT have been able to offer small grants for relatively simple changes,sometimes as simple as paying for gutters on barns,which helps reduce run-off on dairy farms. Everyone benefits-farmers reduce slurry going into rivers and being fined for polution incidents,and fish and wildlife thrive and increase with improving water quality in the river. Plus Looe beach is cleaner for tourists-good for the local economy!

Then there was a lunchtime feast.Pasties,sandwiches and cakes were enjoyed,while we all chatted about the coming season.

After this it was time for a talk by Dr Martin Warren,Cheif Executive of Butterfly Conservation,on 'Conserving Fritillary Butterflies'. He explained about the different habitats for different species,the varying heat requirements for the caterpillars,and management techniques needed for each species-and different habitat management for the same species in seperate parts of the country. Did you know,for example,that Heath Frits in Kent and Essex need different management plans to those on Exmoor? And that Heaths in Cornwall are different again?

And did you know that Pearl-borders prefer woods with oak trees? I didn't. This is because oak leaves are hard and last through the winter on the ground,where the emerging caterpillars can lie on them sunbathing in early spring. Ash leaves,in contrast,have pretty much rotted away by time the cats emerge from hibernation-something i would never have thought of. Facinating.

Massive thanks to Dr Martin Warren for coming down from Dorset to speak to us at our AGM,to Cheryl from CWT,and huge thanks to Cornwall BC for all the behind the scenes stuff,and for organising such a great event.



## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 31-Mar-14 10:19 PM GMT

### MALAGA AND GIBRALTAR

Hi all,just back from a short holiday to Malaga and Gibraltar. Our main reason was to kick-start the season,and because we have never been there!We flew to Malaga,picked up a hire car and drove straight down to Gibraltar.Arriving mid afternoon,there was time to spend a couple of hours in the lovely Alameda Gardens. Our first butterfly was a Speckled Wood of the brown European form-this may be part of Great Britain,but the butterfly knows no boundaries! This was soon eclipsed in spectacular style,as the first of several Monarchs glided past-my eyes nearly popped out! Now i've heard of them here before,but not in my wildest dreams did i think i may see one,especially in March!

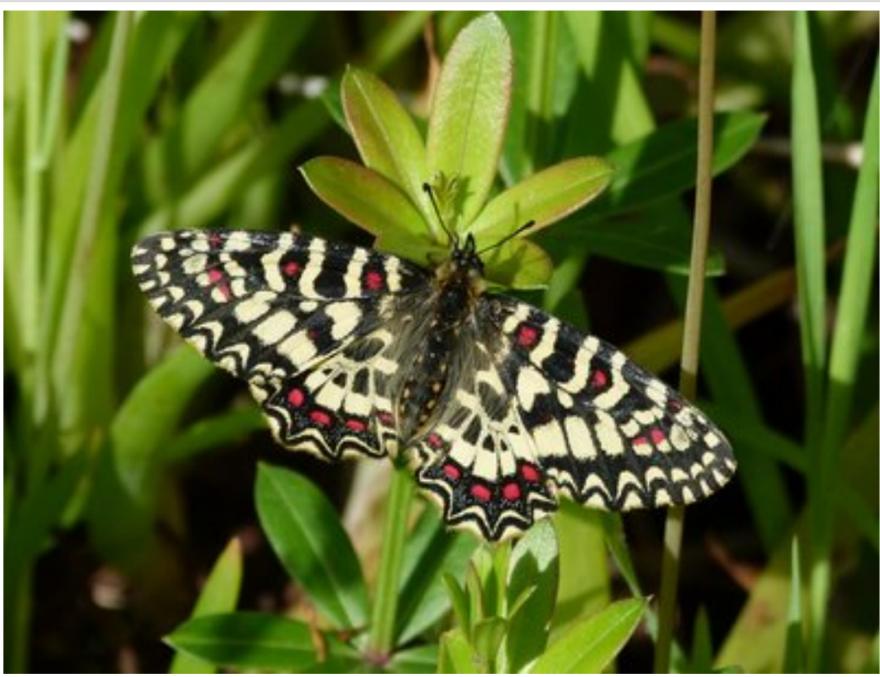
One of my main reasons for coming to Spain now was to see the lovely Spanish Festoon. And i succeeded-on the first day! Several were flying around the gardens,and i soon learned to spot Birthwort-the larval plant for the Festoons. Several Sardinian warblers and blackcaps were seen,followed by my last butterfly species of the day,a Large White. A great start to the trip!



*speckled wood*



*monarch*



*spanish festoon*



*birthwort*



*large white*



*cacti in the alameda gardens, Gibraltar*

**Re: essex buzzard**

by Padfield, 31-Mar-14 11:11 PM GMT

Great start, Buzzard! It's good to see the monarchs are thriving!

I look forward to the rest of the report!

Guy

**Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 01-Apr-14 09:54 PM GMT

Thanks, Guy! You and others were the inspiration for this trip, so give yourself a pat on the back too!



*another monarch in alameda gardens*

## Re: essex buzzard

by David M, 01-Apr-14 10:02 PM GMT

Great images, Buzzard and I'm sure this trip has reinforced your enthusiasm for UK based butterflies.

## Re: essex buzzard

by Lee Hurrell, 01-Apr-14 10:05 PM GMT

Nice shots EB 😊

I look forward to the rest.

Best wishes,

Lee

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 01-Apr-14 10:53 PM GMT

GIBRALTAR DAY 2, MARCH 26

Today we spent the day up on the rock. From our hotel, we walked up upwards and found the Mediterranean Steps, soon getting spectacular views towards Africa. A Hummingbird Hawkmoth was a great start to the day. As we enjoyed the unfamiliar flowers, we began to see first Spanish Festoons—these were to be a constant and welcome companion throughout the day. Climbing higher up the Steps, our first male Provence Orange Tips were seen, and slightly further up, our only female of the trip. Pink rock-roses were enjoying the warm sunshine, as were we. At the top of the steps, the views were truly splendid. We stopped to enjoy them, then had a walk around the top, seeing lots of yellow-legged herring gulls. Then we arrived at the areas where the monkeys are. Seeing them here at the top is an almost surreal experience. Some had babies, all were great to see. As we watched them, bus loads of tourists arrived. But they were quite content, and didn't seem bothered by all the cameras.

Then on, walking the paths and lanes. Speckled Woods, Spanish Festoons and a Red Admiral were seen, as well as a green lizard—one of several during the day. The lovely Gibraltar candytuft was in flower, and a Clouded Yellow was noted. A courting pair of Festoons descended to mate and nearby, a clump of parasitic broomrape was blue—never seen this before. Then a couple of Cleopatra flew by, and one briefly settled. Another was laying eggs. Walking further, we saw Large Whites. By now it was time to start our descent, enjoying more Provence Orange Tips on the verges, as well as many flowers. Time was getting on, and our last Provence OT we saw went to roost on buckler cress, the caterpillar food plant. The day was nearly done, when a Wall was seen, our last butterfly of the day. As we went out for dinner, swifts and alpine swifts were flying over the buildings, and we had the chance to reflect on a really great day.

Took a lot of pictures, a small selection below.

Thanks Lee, hope you enjoy the rest!

Thanks to you too, David. You are right, I can't wait for the UK season. And anytime now, I will see my first Orange Tips—a highlight of my year!



*view from the Rock*



*Spanish Festoon*



*Festoon pair*



*Cleopatra*



*Provence Orangetip*



*roosting P O T*



*green lizard*

**Re: essex buzzard**

by David M, 01-Apr-14 11:00 PM GMT

Glorious stuff! You've clearly had a wonderful time!

**Re: essex buzzard**

by Wurzel, 01-Apr-14 11:16 PM GMT

Wow Essex those sightings and photos are lush 🍷🍷😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 03-Apr-14 09:40 PM GMT

Oops! I forgot to post these cheeky monkeys from Gibraltar. How could i?!



### Re: essex buzzard

by Padfield, 03-Apr-14 09:58 PM GMT

Superb pictures, Buzzard! As you know, I walked that route hundreds of times in my youth, and I take a real, vicarious pleasure in reading about you doing it. It's great you had such good weather – the Levanter can hang stubbornly over the Rock when the wind blows from the East, even when the rest of Spain is cloudless.

I look forward to the rest of your Spanish trip report.

Guy

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 03-Apr-14 10:21 PM GMT

Gibraltar to Malaga

28 March. Today was change over day. We were sad to leave Gibraltar, as we thoroughly enjoyed our time there. But time for new adventures, as we head for Malaga, about a two-hour drive. In the event, we found Hotel easily, so we spent the afternoon in the south of the Parque nacional de Monte Malaga, just a couple of miles from our hotel. Unfortunately, from a butterfly point of view, most of these hills turned out to be covered in Aleppo Pine woodland, but we found a few clear areas, which were worth a look. As we left the car, a Wall and Large White were seen, as well as the pink orchids in the picture. Then a Cleopatra briefly showed. A nearby grassy area proved productive for what I thought were Bath Whites, now, looking at the pic's, they seem to be western Dappled Whites. Here too, were our first Common Blues of the year. Further up, some different blues were seen – Black-eyed Blues.

On a yellow restharrow bush, two strange green spiders were present. A couple of Provence Orangetips flew past, shortly followed by more Spanish Festoons slightly further on. Then, as the track petered out, a smaller white was seen. I chased it until it settled for a couple of seconds, enough to confirm the id – Green-striped White, another lifer for me! By now, we had to turn back – it was clouding over anyway – and we needed to check-in to our Hotel.



*montes de malaga*



*dappled white, i think!*



*common blue*



*pink butterfly orchids*



*black-eyed blue*



*black-eyed blue*



*lovely little irises*



*spanish festoon*

**Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 03-Apr-14 10:52 PM GMT

Thanks, Guy, for all your advice and help. You are an inspiration to me and, i'm sure, many others on UKB. Thankfully, the wind was fairly light, about 10-15 mph on the day, and blowing from the north-west. This gave excellent clarity, and deep blue skies. The sky was full of herring gulls, gliding in the breeze.

Cheers.

**Re: essex buzzard**

by Pauline, 04-Apr-14 07:42 AM GMT

Pleased to see the monkeys Mark 😊😊 . I'm really enjoying your report and I love the black-eyed blue.

## Re: essex buzzard

by Goldie M, 04-Apr-14 02:51 PM GMT

Fantastic photo's Mark you sound to be having a great time, Goldie 😊

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 04-Apr-14 10:55 PM GMT

Hi Pauline and Goldie M, thanks for your comments. Hope you enjoy the rest of the pictures as much as i enjoy sharing with you!

MALAGA FRIDAY 28 MARCH

Today we enjoyed breakfast in the Passo del Parque. Here there were lots of wild parrots, and we also enjoyed watching a Short-toed treecreeper. Chiffchaff and blackcap were singing. As morning warmed, a couple of butterflies showed, a Speckled Wood and a Red Admiral. Running through Malaga is a dried up river bed. There is a dam up river, so now the river probably flows only in times of flood. In the river, grey and white wagtails were seen. This river was full of litter and rubbish of all kinds, some quite disgusting. But it was also full of weeds, and these were attracting butterflies. First up was a Small White. Several were later seen. Also here were several Clouded Yellows, soon followed by a Painted Lady. A little further up, a we were surprised to see a Swallowtail glide past, and then another. It then occurred to me i was surrounded by dead fennel stems. At one point, 3 Swallowtails were chasing each other. Even more amazing, while walking on the riverbank, a Monarch suddenly took off from under our feet! Despite me giving chase, i failed to re-locate it. At the bottom of the riverbed, trefoils were growing, and several Common Blue males were spread out. While watching one, a tussle broke out when a male Brown Argus appeared, a feisty little chap indeed! Eventually, we got as far as we could go, so we turned to go back. After a while a much smaller white appeared, a Green-striped White. After i lost it a couple of times, it eventually stopped long enough for some pictures. I would dread to think what the locals thought of me, jumping and chasing around like i had gone mad! 😊

We headed back into town for drinks, then had a look around the marina and relaxed on the beach for an hour. Some of the youngsters even braved the sea! Brrr, braver than me! Then we headed to the marina restaurants, for a delicious Spanish evening meal, as the sound of the screaming swifts faded in the evening light.



*passo del parque*



*malaga parrot*



*swallowtail*



*common blue*



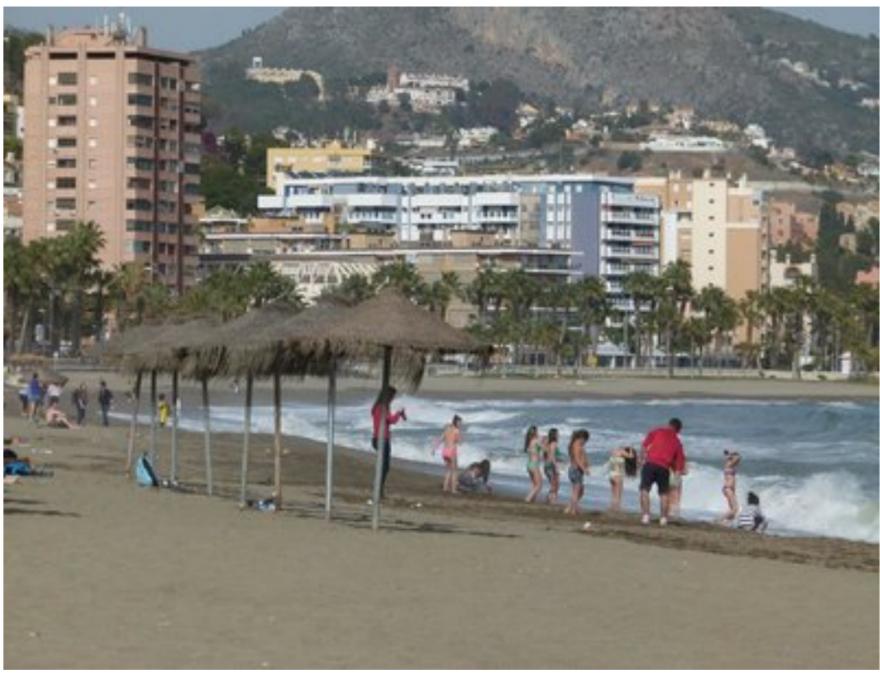
*these lively daisies were abundant*



*small white*



*green stripe white*



*the beach*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by Pauline, 05-Apr-14 08:32 PM GMT

That place looks idyllic Mark. Love the Green stripe – and even better the Monk Parakeet which, like butterflies, have plumage which ensures good camouflage, unlike the coloration of the captive bred birds. Pity they're considered a pest in so many places.

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by David M, 05-Apr-14 10:02 PM GMT

Just caught up with this thread again. Some great shots there and, like Guy, I'm thinking how much I'd be enjoying it were I to be in your shoes!

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by Goldie M, 06-Apr-14 03:07 PM GMT

Fantastic photo's again, your making me wish for my hols but I won't be going to such a great place, love the Parrot Goldie 😊

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 06-Apr-14 11:07 PM GMT

Thanks for your feedback,folks--i love to recieve it and i am grateful!

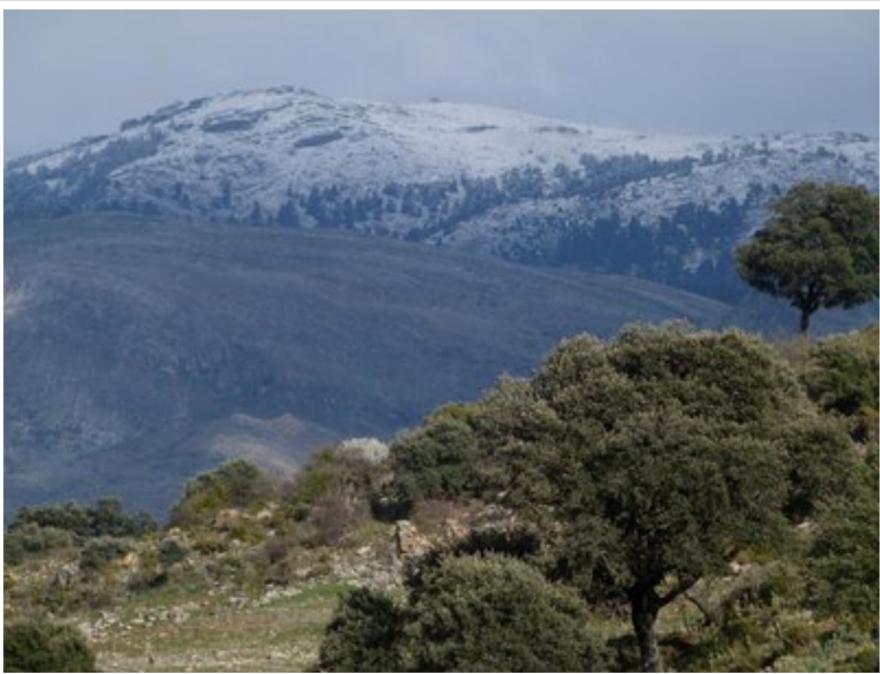
MALAGA SATURDAY 29 MARCH

Today we woke to pouring Spanish rain. It was expected to clear from the west,so we headed in that direction,up in the hills,to Ronda. We headed up the valley--a bit like Cwm Rhondda in south Wales--and saw kestrels,swallows,swifts and a kingfisher. As we got higher,a short-toed eagle was spotted and lots of griffon vultures. Once in Ronda,there was some sort of running and cycling event was taking place. Although it had now stopped raining,most of the participants were covered in mud! There was a band playing,too. Eventually,we found our way to the bull ring/museum. I'm not into bullfighting myself,but it is interesting to get a bit of Spanish culture while in their country. For an extra euro,they lend you an earphone, which explains all the things you are seeing as you walk around the bull-ring and museum. It was very good and,thankfully,the rain held off.Ronda is perched high on a rocky outcrop,with driveable access only on one side. On the other,and quite near the bull-ring,is a sheer drop of hundreds of feet--see picture below. Over this gorge,we saw our only butterfly of the day,a Large White. Also present were several pairs of lesser kestrels. By now,it was late afternoon,and time to head back. By now,most of the cloud had cleared the high hills,revealing fresh snow! Snow in south Spain? Well i never!





*don't look down!*

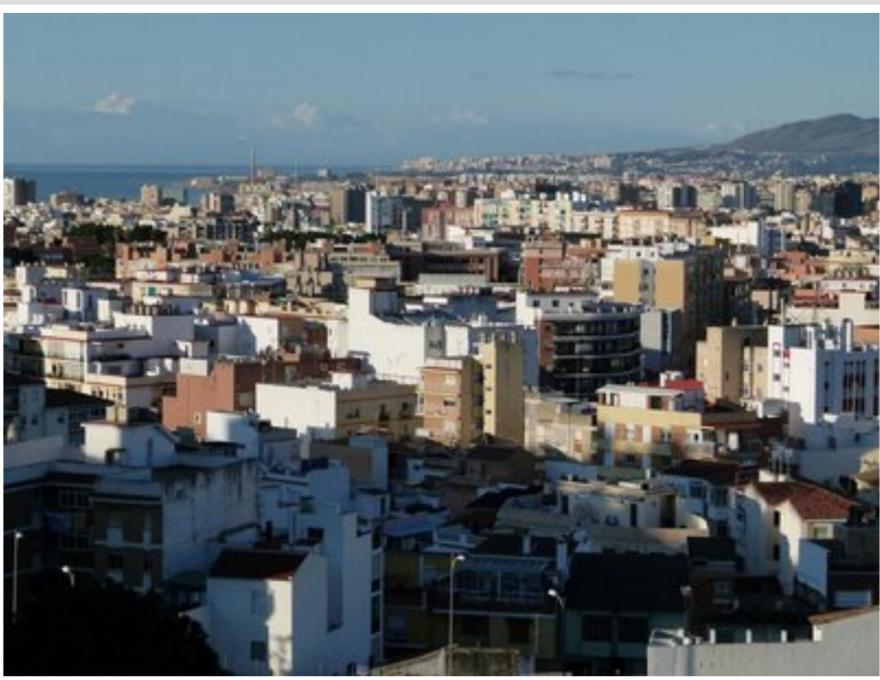


*snow in southern Spain*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 07-Apr-14 10:07 PM GMT

Here is a photo from our hotel balcony. From here, you can see what a big, sprawling city Malaga is. While taking this picture, a cattle egret flew past, with its distinctive yellow bill, and spotless starlings were on a nearby lawn. A great start to the day!



### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 07-Apr-14 10:35 PM GMT

MALAGA LAST DAY. SUNDAY 30 MARCH

Waking up to glorious blue skies, we decided to head up into the hills. Quite a few booted eagles were seen circling, gaining height, and then drifting off, probably on migration. Getting out of the car, our first thought was how cold it was! We soon realised no butterflies would be active at this height, so we made our way back down, and decided to walk some of the south-facing slopes above Malaga. Here, in a sheltered sun-trap, we soon saw our first butterflies, a Wall and a Spanish Festoon. Next was a Black-eyed Blue. We slowly made our way to the bottom of the slope, where a tiny buzzing butterfly was seen, a grizzled skipper that turned out to be a Red-underwing Skipper—new for the trip. Quite a few flowers were in bloom here, and these were attracting the butterflies, including several whites. Green Striped, Large, Small and our first Bath Whites. A slightly worn Brown Argus was present, too.

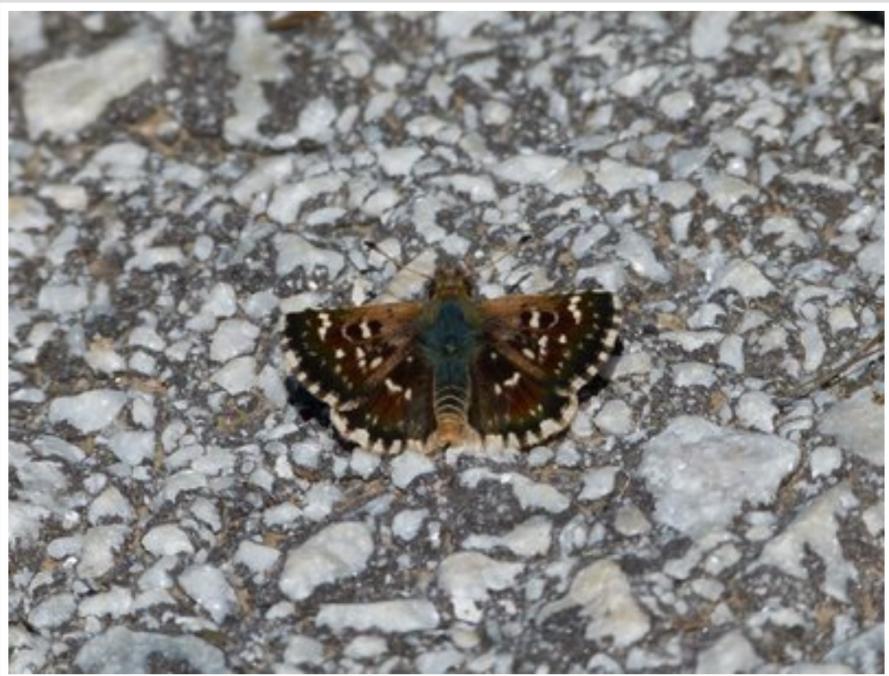
Several Clouded Yellows were seen. It had proved quite a productive morning!



*our last festoon!*



*clouded yellow female*



*red underwing skipper*



*bath white*



*green striped white*



*large white*

**Re: essex buzzard**

by David M, 07-Apr-14 11:00 PM GMT

Lovely shots, Buzzard. That skipper positively glows.

**Re: essex buzzard**

by Padfield, 07-Apr-14 11:03 PM GMT

Yes - really good photos. As David says, that red-underwing skipper is brilliant.

Guy

**Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 08-Apr-14 12:05 AM GMT

Thanks very much. I was delighted to see it. I did think of cropping the picture, but I try to keep keep cropping to a minimum, in case it reduces the quality, and spoils the enjoyment for people.

## MALAGA LAST DAY PART 2

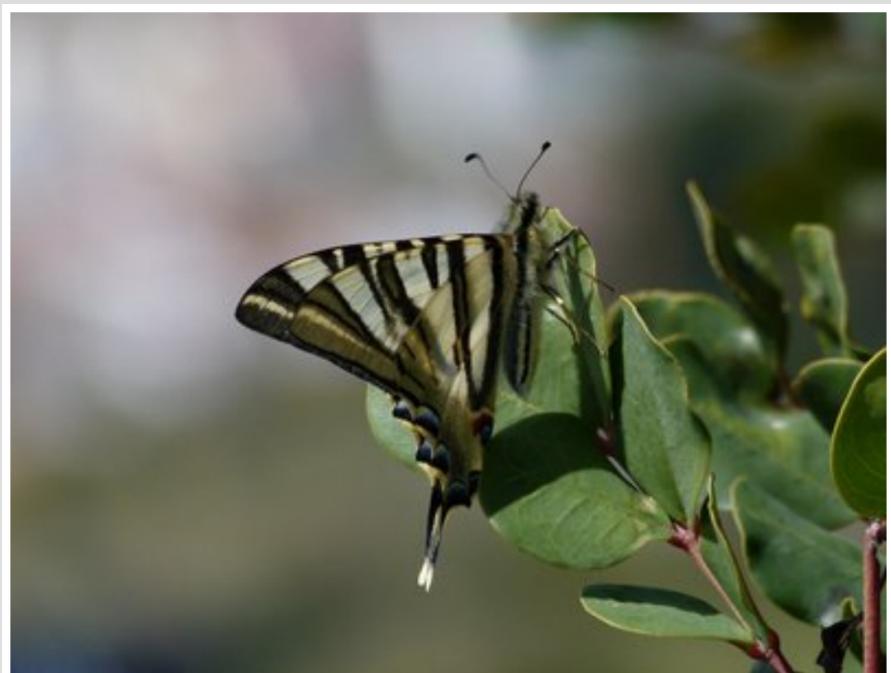
We were going to drive higher this afternoon, and search for habitats higher up. But this area was so productive, we decided to continue to search this area, increasing our time in the field, not in the car. We climbed the next hill, and at the top, several butterflies were hill-topping. As Guy mentioned last year, this is when males gather on hilltops, waiting for virgin females to arrive. At least 3 Swallowtails, Walls and a Scarce Swallowtail, our first of the trip, were present here. Another Scarce was laying eggs on an almond tree lower down. Sometimes the 3 Swallowtails would go into combat. From a British point of view, an unusual thing to see. Then an uneasy truce would break out—until the next time! Climbing another hill, several Black-eyed Blues were located, including the female below. Although it was clouding over, a couple of Red Admirals were hill-topping here, and a Swallowtail and Scarce Swallowtail were also present. Several burnet moths were feeding on flowers. All around, swallows, red rumped swallows, housemartins, swifts and alpine swifts were flying. Also on this hillside was a new species—the last of the trip. Checking among the Black-eyed Blues, one was different. It was a Long-tailed Blue, quickly followed by another. Making our way down the hill, another Red-underwing Skipper was on the path. As the sun reappeared, the day ended as it began—with a Wall. Walking back toward the hire car for the last time, we passed several bushes laden with oranges, and some rocks with several larks perched on top that were probably Thelka larks, and a few clumps of pink orchids. Now, it was time to head through Malaga to the airport, for our delayed flight home.



*really good area*



*painted lady*



*scarce swallowtail*



### Re: essex buzzard

by William, 08-Apr-14 07:51 AM GMT

Some Great Shots Essex Buzzard, 😊😊 I loved the Festoons and Provence Orange Tip from a few posts back, and that photo of the wildflowers is stunning – very jealous 😊😊

### Re: essex buzzard

by Lee Hurrell, 08-Apr-14 01:14 PM GMT

Very nice report, EB, with lovely photos.

Love the side on Scarce Swallowtail.

Best wishes,

Lee

### Re: essex buzzard

by David M, 08-Apr-14 04:53 PM GMT

That flower patch on the hillside looks quite special.

I bet it's teeming with insects come May.

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 08-Apr-14 10:26 PM GMT

#### SUMMARY

Our aim,when we booked this trip,was to kick-start the season,and also to see some of the spring European species which i usually miss on my summer trips to Europe. It was a brilliant success. Good weather,flowers,birds and a great crop of butterflies in two great locations. And it didn't cost a fortune,either!

Highlights of the trip surely must be the Spanish Festoons. I was hoping to see a few and grab a few photo's. But they were everywhere! So mush so i was almost ignoring them in the end! Almost! The Provence (or Moroccan) Orangetips were great,too,as were the Green-striped Whites. All species one would miss if they went in summer.

On the debit side,i couldn't find the Provence Hairstreak,that curious half Small Copper half Green Hairstreak butterfly,which i was hoping to see. I would like to go back in a couple of years,if so,i will do some more research first.

A few more pictures from our last afternoon in Malaga,of species mentioned in my last post,to follow shortly.

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 08-Apr-14 11:07 PM GMT

Those last few pictures. Enjoy! 😊



*brown argus*



*female black eye blue*



*swallowtail*



*male black eye blue*



*lang tail blue*

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 10-Apr-14 10:31 PM GMT

ANEMONE DAY!

Last Wednesday, 2 April, I headed off to Stour Wood, part of the RSPB's Stour Wood and Copperas Bay reserve. The bay is good for birds, especially in winter. But in Spring, it's the wonderful carpet of wood anemones I come to see. What a spectacular sight they are! This is perhaps one of the best carpets of woodland flowers on earth—and it's right here in Essex! Colour is everywhere now. On the edge of the wood, horse-chestnut trees were resplendent in bright fresh green leaves. 😊





### Re: essex buzzard

by David M, 10-Apr-14 11:08 PM GMT

Lovely images, Buzzard. Wood Anemone is undoubtedly one of the finest wild flowers of the British Isles. It's wonderful to see them carpeting the woodlands at this time of year.

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 15-Apr-14 12:15 AM GMT

Thanks David. Do you get them in South Wales? When you see them en masse like that, they are an absolute treasure to see. Such simple flowers, they have to be one of my favorites!

9 APRIL

With another fine day expected, this morning I headed off to Hylands Park, near Chelmsford. In late summer, this is the location of the V-Festival. But at this time of the year, this big park has many treasures. The meadows were full of dandelions. Ignored by many, I think they are attractive close to. It's not just me, either, several Peacocks, and a few Small Tortoiseshells, were feeding on them.

At the bottom of the park is the river. On the banks, are beds of stinging nettles. These nettlebeds were alive with Small Torts and Peacocks. Some were clearly males, as they were chasing everything that came near. But many more were females, laying eggs. While there were plenty of nettles to choose

from, the Peacock and Small Tort in the picture were laying on the same leaf! While i was watching this fascinating behavior, i noticed cuckoo flower, or ladies smock, was in flower in the damper areas. This means Orangetip season is here. Sure enough, an Orangetip flew past, which i chased until it landed. This was the only one i saw, suggesting emergence is in the early stages. Lovely to see, i truly love this species. Later, while walking by the river, i disturbed another white from the grass. My first Green-veined White of the year!

A very nice morning, in lovely surroundings.







### Re: essex buzzard

by Pete Eeles, 15-Apr-14 08:51 AM GMT

#### "essexbuzzard" wrote:

While there were plenty of nettles to choose from, the Peacock and Small Tort in the picture were laying on the same leaf!

Excellent observation, Mark!

Cheers,

- Pete

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 18-Apr-14 11:19 PM GMT

Thanks Pete. I found it extraordinary that, despite having a whole riverbank to choose from, two different species were laying on the same leaf. There must have been something about it that was better than all the others!

It was too cold in East Anglia for butterflies today, but a couple of times in the last week or so, I have managed to sneak out at lunchtime to check out the edge of a nearby farm field. I was well rewarded, with Brimstones, Orange Tips, Green-veined and Large Whites, Small Tortoiseshells and abundant Peacocks—they are having a great start this year! Some were feeding on oilseed rape. I couldn't resist a photo of an Orange Tip.

Willow warblers have returned from Africa. They have declined greatly in southern England in recent years, although the opposite is the case in the north-west. Their lovely, descending song would be a great loss to the countryside were it to disappear.





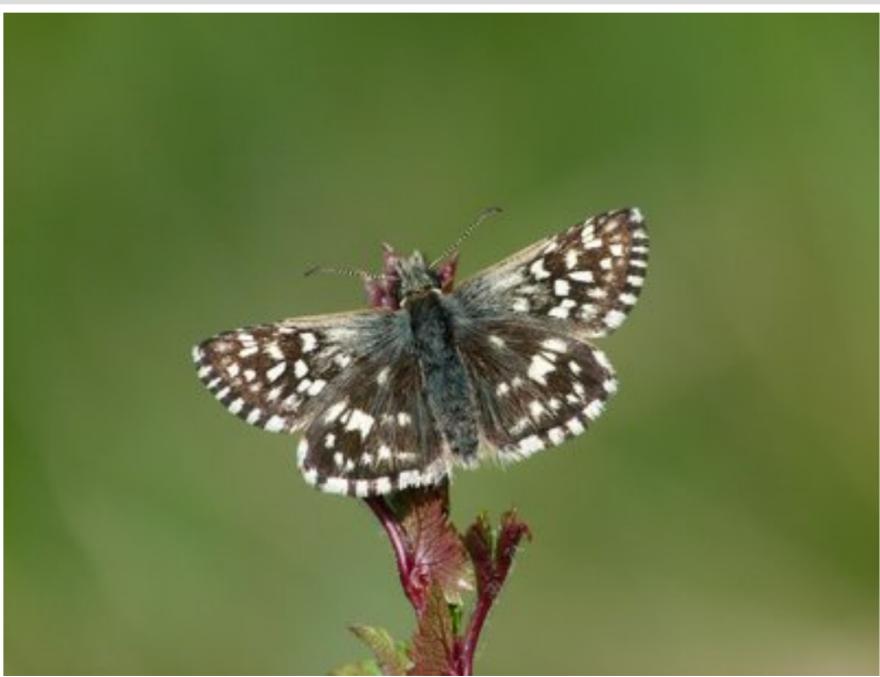
## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 25-Apr-14 10:40 PM GMT

SUPER SUSSEX!

I enjoy living where i do but it must be said,Essex,and East Anglia in general,can be a bit lacking in terms of butterfly species. So yesterday,Thursday,with the promise of improving weather, i headed down to Sussex for my first day trip of the year.

I spent the morning at Mill Hill, a south-west facing slope near Shoreham. Here fly Grizzled and Dingy Skippers. With the sun now rising,it wasn't long before i saw a grey blur shoot past-my first Grizzled Skipper. As the day warmed,more were seen. Some were already a little worn,but most were fresh and absolutely gorgeous! Then i started to see my first Dingy Skippers-slightly larger and browner. Several Brimstones were about,and a sparkling male Wall was too quick for a photo. Not so a lovely Green Hairstreak, it was sitting on a spray of flowering hawthorn for several minutes. At the bottom of the slope,an adder was basking and this small pink moth was seen. All too soon,it was lunchtime,and time to head elsewhere...







### Re: essex buzzard

by lee3764, 25-Apr-14 10:45 PM GMT

What fantastic photos Mark.....Shows that even the smallest of species are really lovely! Glad the sun shone on this trip mate. All the best,

Lee Slaughter (Cornwall). 😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊

### Re: essex buzzard

by Neil Hulme, 25-Apr-14 10:51 PM GMT

Hi Mark,  
Great to see you in Sussex! That first shot of a Grizzly is particularly good – a real stonker. The Green Hairstreak is mint fresh – it's a shame they lose their condition so quickly. Hope to catch up again soon.  
BWs, Neil

### Re: essex buzzard

by False Apollo, 25-Apr-14 11:34 PM GMT

I too love the photos. What camera/lens do you use? I could almost believe the butterflies and moth were in the room with me. It was also great to see the Black Eyed Blue on your recent trip to Malaga as it is a species I have never seen and it certainly got the pulse racing. I am very tempted to do an early trip for spring species I have made a special trip to the Greek island of Chios to see one of my favourite butterflies (yes you've guessed it) the False Apollo and I wasn't disappointed. I did go to Northern Greece last year for Eastern Greenish Black Tip but they were virtually over when I arrived, and as they fly so fast, I only saw a couple of blurred flypasts. I did however visit Madeira in February 2013 where I saw hundreds of Clouded Yellows throughout the island. It looks like you got your timing spot on in Malaga and I'd also love to see Provence Hairstreak!

Regards  
Mike

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 26-Apr-14 12:18 AM GMT

Thank for your positive feedback,guys!

Lee,i truely love Grizzed Skippers,their beauty when seen close up,and their lively character. Reminds us what a shame about the former colony at

Indian Queens...

Thanks Neil,you were so helpful yesterday,as always. Great to see you again. Speaking of which...

So then,onto Rewell Wood for the afternoon. I walked through the lovely bluebells,and then onto cleared areas of coppice. Soon,i started to see what i was looking for- Pearl-bordered Fritillaries! Many were nectaring on bugle flowers. Orangetips were present,including a female,and several Peacocks. In mid-afternoon,i was walking down a track,when who should be coming in the opposite direction. None other than Neil Hulme! We had a bit of a chin-wag,and he kindly pointed me toward some of the best areas for Pearls. Sure enough,we were soon tripping over them-all the better as i havn't seen any for a couple of years. Some were more heavily marked than others,but all were beautiful.All the time,a willow warbler was singing it's lovely descending song from a tree. In the fading evening sun,Neil told me how to find roosting Pearls. His advice worked its magic,as i found one(picture below).A truely super day,up there with the very best!

Full list for the day was: Grizzled Skipper,Dingy Skipper,Brimstone,Small White,Large White,Green-veined White,Orange Tip,Green Hairstreak,Peacock,Small Tortoiseshell,Comma,Pearl-border Fritillary and Wall.

Birds seen included cuckoo,lesser whitethroat,kestrel,buzzard ad raven,while Cetti's warbler was heard at Mill Hill.

Super! 😄😄😄😄😄😄





### Re: essex buzzard

by Pauline, 26-Apr-14 07:09 AM GMT

Love your Green Hairstreak Mark – a lovely combination of colours and your Pearls are fantastic. Yet to see any this season and with all this rain and thunder it might be a while before I do. I was interested in your comment about roosting Pearls – round here they only roost up trees, not on bracken etc and the only way I could get a shot of them roosting was to carry a stepladder through the woods at 5.00am 🤔😄😄

### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 26-Apr-14 08:33 AM GMT

Great reports Essex 😊 And good to see that you got some Pearls – the one in the first image is definitely outside the norm, stunning markings 😊👏 Hope to get some at Bentley soon but no reports from there yet...soon though.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by David M, 26-Apr-14 12:12 PM GMT

Beautiful images. That first aberrant PBF is remarkable.

### Re: essex buzzard

by LancsRover, 26-Apr-14 01:24 PM GMT

Hi EB, I've just caught up with your Spanish/Gibraltar trip, looks like you had a fantastic time. 😊 The Monarchs must have been a great start and it looks like you achieved most, if not all of your objectives. Sorry you missed Provence Hairstreak, I only saw 1 in nearly 3 months, and I didn't know what it was when I stumbled across it 😞

Cheers Russ

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 04-May-14 10:11 PM GMT

WELCOME TO THE GLORIOUS MONTH OF MAY!

Hi everyone,just back from a short break in Cornwall. More on that to come soon. But while i was away,the Essex countryside has exploded into fabulous colour and scent,as spring reaches it's glorious peak. In town,road verge and countryside alike, everywhere you look is the sight,scent and splendour of flowering hawthorn,aka Mayblossom—for good reason! Under these hedges grow cow-parsley,red campion and many other flowers,giving a riot of spring colour. 😊

Along each of these beautiful hedges and verges,fly male Orangetips. These butterflies,flying against a backdrop of hawthorn,the air heavy with scent...words and pictures simply cannot do it justice. They together signal the height of spring perhaps like no other. 😊

Today was just about enjoying the moment,trying to soak it all up. However,i couldn't resist a fow more pictures of Orange Tips! 😊

When the sun shines,nothing beats the British countryside in May—the most beautiful month of the year! 😊😊😊😊

Thanks to you all for the feedback while i have been away,i'm grateful for your comments. 😊





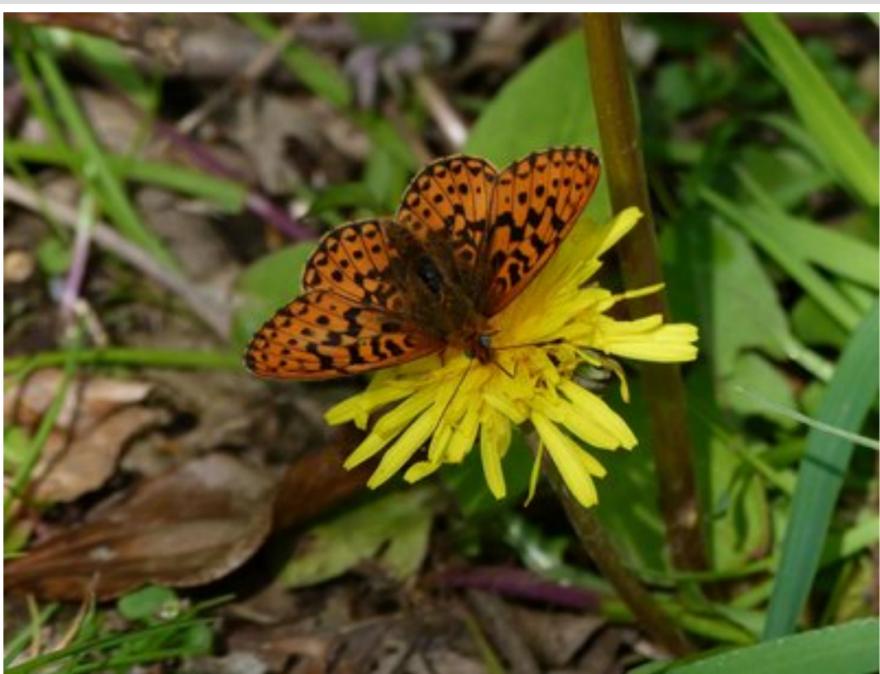
## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 05-May-14 10:47 PM GMT

CORNWALL DAY 1 MONDAY 28 APRIL

We went to Cornwall last year in late April to see some spring species—and failed miserably! But things were better this time! After a cloudy start, it started to brighten up as we headed out onto the coast path west of Seaton. There is the Murrayton Monkey Sanctuary here and just below it, is one of only 4 or 5 Cornish colonies of Pearl-border Fritillary. We soon reached this colony, and good numbers of adults were seen, in various stages of wear. A few were past their best—not surprising as the first Pearls were seen 2–3 weeks earlier. Others were mint, including several females. The Fritillaries were found over quite a long stretch of coast path, flying up and down, and feeding on the available flowers.

Also seen here were Orangetips, Green-veined Whites, my first Holly Blues of 2014, Peacock, Speckled Wood and Walls. Ravens, Kestrel, Sparrowhawk and Buzzards were among the birds. By early afternoon, the skies had darkened, and soon a full storm arrived—torrential rain, thunder, lightning, hail—the lot—bringing an early end to an otherwise great first day.





### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 07-May-14 09:38 AM GMT

Glad you had more luck this year Essex 😊 The Pearls seem to emerge about a week or more earlier in the South Western colonies than they do in Wiltshire – do you know if it is the same for Small Pearls?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

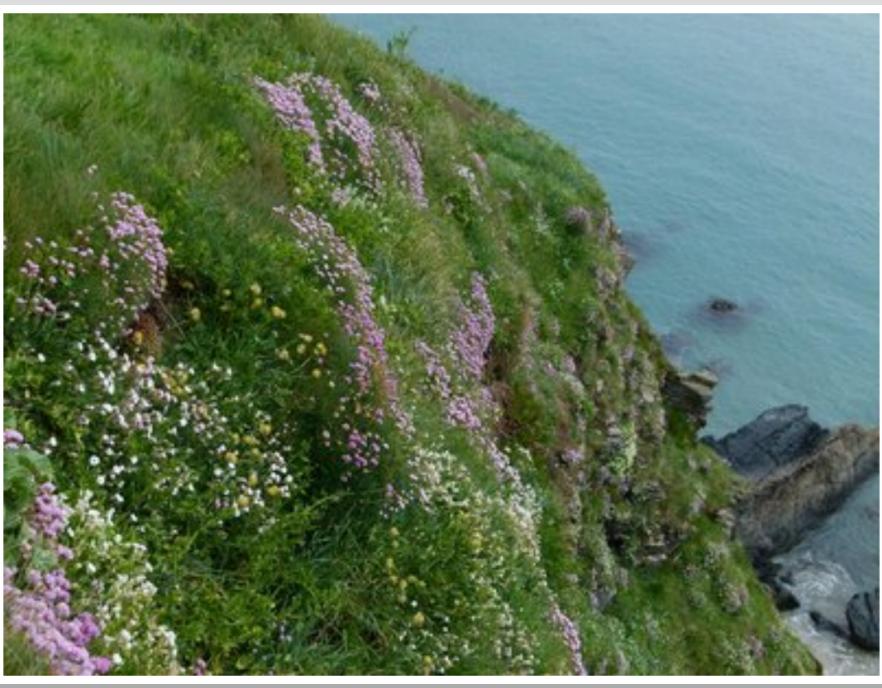
by essexbuzzard, 08-May-14 11:44 PM GMT

I believe they do Wurzel. I don't know when they emerge in Wiltshire, but they are about in west Cornwall by mid-May in most years. Even last year, after the cold spring, Small Pearls were abundant at the beginning of June, and had clearly been about for a week or two.

CORNWALL DAY TWO.

Today, the forecast was better in west Cornwall, so we headed down to the Lizard, one of my favorite places. The results of the stormy winter were clear to see here. Normally the gorse is yellow with blooms in spring, but here it was scorched brown. Thankfully the other flowers were unscathed, and an abundance of colour awaited us. Bluebells, sea campion, thrift and the lovely little spring Squill. This tiny flower formed a glorious hazy blue carpet in places. As the sun started to break through the cloud, butterflies started to be seen. Green-veined, Small and Large Whites. Then a Small Tortoiseshell flew by. By now, it was time for a pasty in the Lizard cafe, as Cornish chough flew nearby.

After lunch, we headed towards Kynance Cove. Walking along the South West coast path, several Walls were seen near a stone wall. As we headed west, more cliff-top flowers were enjoyed, and stonechat, wheater, raven, kestrel and buzzard were seen. Near Kynance Cove itself, early purple orchids grow on the cliffs. This seems a strange for a woodland plant to grow. Evening had arrived, so we enjoyed the splendid scenery and blue skies for a while, before heading back. When we got to our digs in east Cornwall, they said it had been raining all day there!





### Re: essex buzzard

by lee3764, 09-May-14 10:06 AM GMT

[color=#800040:1zuaadg9]Hi Mark mate.....Can't believe how nice your photographs are! Superb! Just to let you know that I have been blocked from posting on our CBC forum for trying to promote recording of Pearl-Bordered Fritillaries at Bunny's Hill!! I can't therefore reply to your posting on that forum! The 2 people that run it don't favour me as you know & have deleted my account yesterday! I will therefore still communicate with you on here mate & if you wish to send me your e-mail I will correspond with you that way as well. They cannot prevent me corresponding with fellow lepidopterists then. Funnily enough I am leading a fieldtrip to Bunny's Hill next Saturday 17th May to search for the Pearl-Bordered Fritillary butterfly! Should be interesting!!

Me & my son, Robert had several Dingy Skippers near St Austell on 5th May....Dingy Skippers are really rare now in Cornwall so was delighted to be shown a new colony discovered near the China Clay area.

Let me know if you can send me your e-mail.....mine is... [leelisa1998@aol.com](mailto:leelisa1998@aol.com) You can always PM me with it & I'll keep you posted about Cornwall's butterflies as usual. 😊

Cheers mate,  
Lee Slaughter.[/color:1zuaadg9]

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 09-May-14 10:59 PM GMT

My goodness, it is all happening in Cornwall! You have my sympathy, as I just wish we could come together as one, and work together to save Cornwall's rarer butterflies and moths, after all, that's what we all want. I will e-mail you shortly, in the meantime, may I wish you the best of luck at Bunnys Hill - I so hope the Pearls haven't gone from there.

CORNWALL DAY 3.

We were staying near Saltash, so today we headed back to the Seaton coast and valley. This lovely little place has had a rough winter, and the damage is clear for all to see. We walked from the village, up the hill and joined the coast path, and guess where we ended up - back at the Pearl-border Frit colony! Along this path were bluebells galore, plus colourful buttercups, stitchwort and red campion, a lovely combination. There have been coast slippages here, and a new path has been created. On it today, several Walls were present, enjoying the morning sunshine. Further on, we saw several Holly Blues, including the female in the picture. Then we arrived at the Pearl colony, and spent some time enjoying them. A female, perched on a bluebell, was attracting plenty of interest from passing males, picture below. Saw some lovely fresh adults, suggesting they were still emerging here. Then a shout came "mating pair of Holly Blues over here" Esther had indeed found Holly Blues on a sycamore leaf. Nearby, a male Green Hairstreak was holding position, darting out at everything that flew past. The sun was now fading ahead of a warm front, but Orange Tips, a Peacock and a Red Admiral were enjoyed. Heading back, and having seen a couple of Speckled Woods earlier, the adult below was particularly attractive. Speckled Yellow moths were about. By time we arrived back at Seaton, light rain was falling. We checked out the woods in the Seaton valley, which have carpets of bluebells and wild garlic at this time. In the more open areas, we found a couple more Orange Tips, roosting on cuckoo flowers, some of which also contained the orange eggs. Rather wet by now, we called it a day, glad we had made the most of the earlier sunshine. 😊





### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 09-May-14 11:47 PM GMT

Cheers for the confirmation of my observation Essex, I'll keep my eye out for reports from the South West and then visit Bentley Wood a week or two later 😊 More great Pearl shots – especially the one on the Dandelion – that's gurt lush that is 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by lee3764, 10-May-14 11:18 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

I live in Cornwall & know Essex Buzzard anyway.....Small Pearls are fairly common still here in Cornwall especially round the coast! They should start emerging in about maybe 10 days time & then keep going until 2nd week of June. There are many places to see them in Cornwall. Try Breney Common or Bunny's Hill, near Cardinham, nr Bodmin Moor or even especially around the Lizard Peninsula/Kynance Cove area which has 2 distinct broods of this species.

Hope you are lucky in your quest!  
Cheers,  
Lee Slaughter (Par, Cornwall).

## Re: essex buzzard

by Neil Freeman, 10-May-14 05:03 PM GMT

Great reports and photos from Cornwall 😊

I remember the area around Seaton from a couple of family holidays back in the 1970s, it was a really quiet, away from it all place back then, has it changed much?

We stayed in some apartments just up the hill from the beach café and I remember seeing my first Silver-washed Fritillaries just behind them.

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 10-May-14 10:39 PM GMT

Hi Neil. I have never been there in peak tourist season, as I think this area has most to offer, for me, in spring. But it's just a small place, with a small beach, a café and so-on. I would expect it to be fairly quiet most of the time, though, as it just doesn't have the facilities of some of the other more famous Cornish beach resorts.

### CORNWALL DAY 4

This was our last day in Cornwall, and we decided to try and see, and photograph, Orange Tips and Dingy skippers, both of which are found in this part of Cornwall.

In Seaton valley, we found plenty of cuckoo flowers the day before, plus a couple of Orange Tips at roost. After a rainy start, the first blue patches were arriving when we got to Seaton—good timing! So we headed straight there. Almost as soon as the sun came out, a couple of male Orange Tips were spotted, one of which was on the cuckoo flowers. Nearby, a Green-veined White landed when the sun went in again. A great start to the day!

So we decided to head up to the coast path, which you join up the hill out of Seaton to the west. It was cool with a breeze but with intermittent sunshine too, we fancied our chances. We lingered this time in the area before the Pearl colony that we visited the day before. Walls are still fairly common in Cornwall, especially near the coast, and several males were seen. A few Orange Tips were flying in the brighter intervals between a few showers, but no Dingy Skippers.

So we had a delicious Cornish Cream tea in Looe, then back to Seaton to check the path to the east, where I saw Dingy Skippers in April 2011. However, the wind had increased and although it had stopped raining, the sun had gone, too, and it was no surprise we failed to find any. So a slightly disappointing end to an enjoyable few days in Cornwall. We went back to Looe to get some pasties to take home, then it was time to go.





**Re: essex buzzard**

by Katrina, 10-May-14 11:07 PM GMT

Lovely OT photos!

**Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 10-May-14 11:52 PM GMT

Thanks Katrina! I love Orange Tips,sadly they will be over soon. 😞 But i've seen lots this year 😊

**Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 12-May-14 10:17 PM GMT

WEDNESDAY 7 MAY

Today,despite cloudy and windy conditions,there were a few sunny breaks,so we took our chance,and headed down to Botany Bay to look for Wood

Whites. All along the main track, many nightingales were singing, with the usual blackcaps and the lovely descending song of the willow warbler. We walked up to, and around the Oaken Wood site—still no Wood Whites. Then, heading back, a slow, fluttering white butterfly—could it be one? Sadly not, it was a Green-veined. Then a couple of Speckled Woods were seen. Then, in a few sunnier breaks, things warmed up a little and a Wood white appeared, then another, and another. None all morning, then 5 at once! Great stuff! We enjoyed them (obviously) then headed back towards the car, stopping to enjoy a few more Wood Whites including courtship, and checking the garlic mustard for Orange-tip eggs—found some—on the way, before heading into Sussex for the afternoon...



### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 16-May-14 10:32 PM GMT

WEDNESDAY 7 MAY AFTERNOON.

For the afternoon, we headed down to the Heyshott Escarpment in Sussex, to see the Duke of Burgundies. Though it was cloudy and windy, there was just enough sunshine to enable a few to be seen. Also present were Grizzled and plenty of Dingy Skippers, Common Blue, Small Heath and Brimstone. Most of the Dukes were fresh, and were great to see as I missed them last year because of the poor weather. Not so this year! Another very enjoyable day. 😊





### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 17-May-14 09:54 PM GMT

THURSDAY 15 MAY

Today i went out with a family friend of ours,who has never seen a Duke of Burgundy.She lives in Kent,so we headed to Denge Wood,near Canterbury. We got to the Bonsai Bank site and,just inside the gate,a couple of Dukes-wow,that was easy!

Several orchid species are present here and,in May,splendid Lady Orchids,which are putting on a great show here this year. A few of the stunted conifers have been removed,resulting in increased numbers of these rare orchids- perhaps the best display of them i have seen.

Further down,near the bottom of Bonsai Bank,is where most of the primrose plants are,and where most of the male Dukes were seen. After enjoying them and taking some more pictures,we headed further down,into the wood to have our picnic. While we enjoyed it,another Duke fed on buttercups,almost at our feet! In about half a mile is a meadow area,where more Dukes were found.

Two purring Turtle Doves were heard,a sound to treasure these days as this is fast dying out in Britain. Kent,Essex and Suffolk now have most of the small breeding population,for a few more years at least,but extinction in the UK seems inevitable.

Full butterfly list for the day Dingy Skippers, Large White,lots Brimstones,Orangetips including eggs,several Green Hairstreak,Holly Blues,Peacocks and a Speckled Wood.

Photo's to follow...

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 18-May-14 11:28 PM GMT

Photo's from Denge wood as promised...



*lady orchid*



## Re: essex buzzard

by Katrina, 18-May-14 11:40 PM GMT

Beautiful sheen on the Green Hairstreak!

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 18-May-14 11:58 PM GMT

Thanks Katrina! And congrats on the Norfolk Swallowtail,a great sighting!

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 22-May-14 10:24 PM GMT

Near my home is a verge which is normally shredded to the ground at this time of year. So a couple of weeks ago i checked the garlic mustard plants there for Orangetip eggs. Sure enough,i found and rescued about 40. I then potted some hairy bittercress plants,a common weed in gardens. OT caterpillars will happily eat this,and these small weeds are so much easier to deal with than mustard,which grows 4 feet tall!

The first picture shows a cat the first day after hatching. I had to crop this,as i don't have the technology for photographing really small stuff. The second cat is about a week old.



*a day old*



*a week old*

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 22-May-14 10:47 PM GMT

FRIDAY 16 MAY

This day was not about looking for anything in particular,it was about enjoying weather, the sights,scents and sounds (including nightingales)of spring,my favorite time of year, one last time,before we loose the freshness,and head on into early summer.Stayed in Essex today,visiting several countryside sites,and tried to soak it all up. The hawthorn,the horse chestnut,the buttercups–these and many others combined to make a glorious setting.

Butterflies were not ignored,of course,and included Orangetip,Small Copper,Green Hairstreak,Common and Holly Blues and Speckled wood,while dragonflies were Hairy Hawker,4 Spot Chaser Dragons,and Common Blue,Azure Blue and Large Red Damselflies.



*essex at it's best*



*crab spider with dinner!*



*hairy dragonfly*

### Re: essex buzzard

by William, 23-May-14 07:34 AM GMT

The Hairy Dragonfly and Crab Spider are magnificent photos Essex Buzzard 😊

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 23-May-14 10:59 PM GMT

Thanks Wiliam. Quite impressed with your stuff,too...

#### DENBIES HILLSIDE

On Wednesday,we headed out to a familiar site of mine and others on UKB, Denbies hillside in Surrey. Weather was reasonable,if rather cloudy. The butterflies certainly didn't let us down,with about 20 male Adonis blues and several females. About 10 Dingy Skippers also enjoyed,while Grizzled Skippers,Brimstones,Green Hairstreaks,Brown Argus,Common Blues,Speckled Woods and Small Heaths were all about in low numbers. Nothing like the sheer abundance of butterflies here in high to late summer,but a good showing in terms of spring species. Also Burnet Companion and Mother Shipton-two day flying moths to confuse the unwary!

Poor showing of horseshoe vetch flowers here this year. In good years,it is so abundant it can turn the turf yellow. This year,though,just a thin scattering of blooms.





### Re: essex buzzard

by David M, 23-May-14 11:11 PM GMT

Lovely image of the Mother Shipton, EB.

The name is SO apt.

### Re: essex buzzard

by lee3764, 23-May-14 11:18 PM GMT

[color=#800000:1dndntt3]Nothing to add other than first class superb photos as usual mate!! 😊 Keep in touch by e-mail mate as CBC Forum taken off now! My e-mail is.. [leelisa1998@aol.com](mailto:leelisa1998@aol.com)

Cheers Mark,

Lee Slaughter (Cornwall).

PS: HeathFrits started to emerge at our Cornwall site yesterday![/color:1dndntt3]

### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 23-May-14 11:28 PM GMT

Great reports and cracking shots Essex – especially the Mother Shipton 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by Maximus, 23-May-14 11:39 PM GMT

Great stuff Essex B in rescuing the Orange-tip eggs, however you'll have your work cut out now with 40 of them 😊 Lovely photos of Essex in late spring and great shots from Denbies 😊

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 26-May-14 11:00 PM GMT

Thanks for your comments, everyone. I was pleased with the mother shipton, as they usually seem to land in grass etc, where a clear picture is impossible. Saw several on the day, this one was showing off!

Orangetip cats eat each other in the early stages, so I had to keep them on separate plants in my cage. Now, though, they are quite well grown, and seem happy to feed side-by-side. They are doing well, no problems so far. 😊

### Re: essex buzzard

by Maximus, 26-May-14 11:42 PM GMT

Hi Essex Buzzard,

Our personal observation of Orange-tip larvae is that they appear not to eat each other in early stages, or in later stages, but seem to co-exist quite happily without problem. We have 20 and they are now beginning to pupate together, I will post some photos shortly.

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 27-May-14 12:01 AM GMT

Hi Maxims,i have to say i have never seen it my self,but i read or heard somewhere that they can be cannibalistic, so i didn't want to take any chances! The hardest part,i think,will be keeping the chrysalis's untill next April,such a long way away...

## Re: essex buzzard

by Maximus, 27-May-14 07:13 PM GMT

Hi Essex Buzzard, I understand why you don't want to take any chances, having gone to the trouble of rescuing them! It is a long wait until the adults emerge next April, but it's well worth it 😊

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 01-Jun-14 10:06 PM GMT

EAST KENT

Hi everyone,welcome to early summer. Where i live at least,it's been a good spring,with better than average weather-and after some rotten springs in recent years,it was badly needed!

Not much good weather around last week,but on Thursday,i struck lucky. East Kent seemed the only place where the sun would break through,so i headed in that direction.

First to Lydden Temple Ewell Downs,where Adonis and Common Blues have emerged. Brown argus were also present,and still a few Small Tortoiseshells,perhaps surprisingly. Lots of fragrant orchids were seen,and a good colony of bee orchids,too. Other butterflies included Small Heath and Small White.

Then onto Kingsdown Leas. This is the site that briefly became famous last year,as visitors from all over the country poured in to see the Long-tailed Blues. There are none there now,but good colony of Small Blues exists on these cliff tops. Another Adonis was seen,and a Wall,amongst others. Never visited this Small Blue colony before,but it is a nice find.

Late afternoon by now,so a quick stop at Western Heights Dover,to check another Small Blue colony. A very small site,scarcely more than a couple of road verges,but Small Blues again present,as were lots f common spotted orchids.

Then an evening visit to Park Gate Down,where the very rare monkey orchid is found,as well as many other orchids! A couple of hours were well spent,then time to go home. A busy day,but a cracker!



*adonis,lydden*



*adonis pair*



*bee orchids*



*small blue, kingsdown leas*



*small blue, western heights*



*monkey orchid*



*fly orchid*

### Re: essex buzzard

by Willow, 02-Jun-14 02:42 PM GMT

As well as the butterfly images your orchid shots are delightful also essexbuzzard!!!

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 02-Jun-14 11:11 PM GMT

A very busy day Essex – you crammed it all in 😊😲 Great shots my favourite is the first Small Blue with the oily sheen apparent on the fore wings 😊🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 09-Jun-14 09:52 PM GMT

Thanks for your feedback,everyone!

Just back from a short break to west Cornwall,staying near Penzance,about 7 miles from lands end. However,while i was away,most of the Orangetip caterpillars i have been rearing have pupated,just a couple of small ones left. I will take a photo and post it here.

Back to Cornwall. Monday 2 June.We crossed the border and arived at Launceston to pouring rain. However,after a pasty it started to look a little brighter,so we took our chance and headed down to Greenscombe Woods,part of the Duchy of Cornwall esate. Here is a colony of the rare Heath Fritillary and this Cornish population is the first to emerge each year. However,with heavy skies and rain threatening again,we did wonder if we had done the right thing. But a few small blue patches arrived and with the sunshine,a few early Heath Fritillaries indeed appered. They were fresh as a daisy,and emergence was only just starting. Although low in number at this early stage,they were a delight to see.Brimstone and Speckled Wood also seen. I'm glad we went,as this is about a two hour drive from Penzance,and we didn't get the chance to go back.



*Greenscombe woods*



*Heath Fritillaries*



**Re: essex buzzard**

by David M, 09-Jun-14 09:54 PM GMT

The individual in your final image is positively gleaming. I think I may well have to take the plunge and go and see this species next weekend (even though I almost get sick of the sight of them when I'm on my summer hols on the continent).

**Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 09-Jun-14 10:22 PM GMT

Yes, HF are locally common on the Continent. But nothing quite beats seeing there rare treasures on British soil!

**Re: essex buzzard**

by David M, 09-Jun-14 10:36 PM GMT

**"essexbuzzard" wrote:**

Yes, HF are locally common on the Continent. But nothing quite beats seeing their rare treasures on British soil!

Can't argue with that, EB. It's the same for Swallowtails, Mountain Ringlets, Large Blues, High Brown Fritillaries & Lulworth Skippers too!

Yes, these butterflies can be easily found in France, but seeing them in the UK means so much more.

**Re: essex buzzard**

by Wurzel, 09-Jun-14 11:51 PM GMT

Lovely shots Essex of a butterfly I have still to see 🍷🍷, maybe this year I can connect with it.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: essex buzzard**

by Willow, 10-Jun-14 12:39 PM GMT

**"Willow" wrote:**

As well as the butterfly images your orchid shots are delightful also essexbuzzard!!!

What a nice thing to say EB 😊

Those **Heath Fritillary** images are making me drool, it's such a great time of year...can't keep with it all though 😊😊

Bill 😊

**"When in doubt...venture out"**

**Re: essex buzzard**

by lee3764, 10-Jun-14 02:55 PM GMT

**Heath Fritillaries and your photography brilliant as usual mate!! We had over 70+ Heath Frits on our fieldtrip at Greenscoome Woods, Luckett on Saturday 7th June!**

**Cheers,**

**Lee Slaughter.** 😊😊

**Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 15-Jun-14 09:20 PM GMT

Thanks for your comments, everyone. I agree, David, nothing beats seeing our species on home soil!

Wurzel, what are you waiting for? Cornish HF are probably peaking now, with the Exmoor and eastern colonies not far behind.

Thanks Willow. I'm quite into my flowers as well as butterflies!

Lee, goes without saying, thanks for your help. I'm so glad the HF field trip was a success. The site is looking good, isn't it? This site is a little known Cornish treasure!

**Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 15-Jun-14 10:00 PM GMT

**MARSH FRITILLARY DAY! TUES 3 JUNE.**

The three main species I wanted to connect with on this trip were all Fritillaries—Small Pearl—border, Heath and Marsh. I saw Heaths on my first day—and the others on the second day!

Staying near Penzance, I usually have to drive to mid Cornwall to see Marsh Frits. This is no problem, a small price to pay to see these special butterflies. But just days before I came, I got a tip-off about a site much closer to 'home'—on the Lizard! It took a while to find this site, but it turned out that I had been driving right past it for many years—without even knowing! This area of damp fields and standing water was outstanding and, in 3 fields, we saw one to two hundred Marsh Fritillaries, and we didn't even enter the main breeding area where most of the foodplants were, for fear of treading on egg-laying females. Males, females, mating pairs, egg-laying females—they were all here. The day was warm but mostly cloudy, but every now and then, the sun would break through, and the adults would rise from the tussocks, ten visible at a time in every direction! 😊

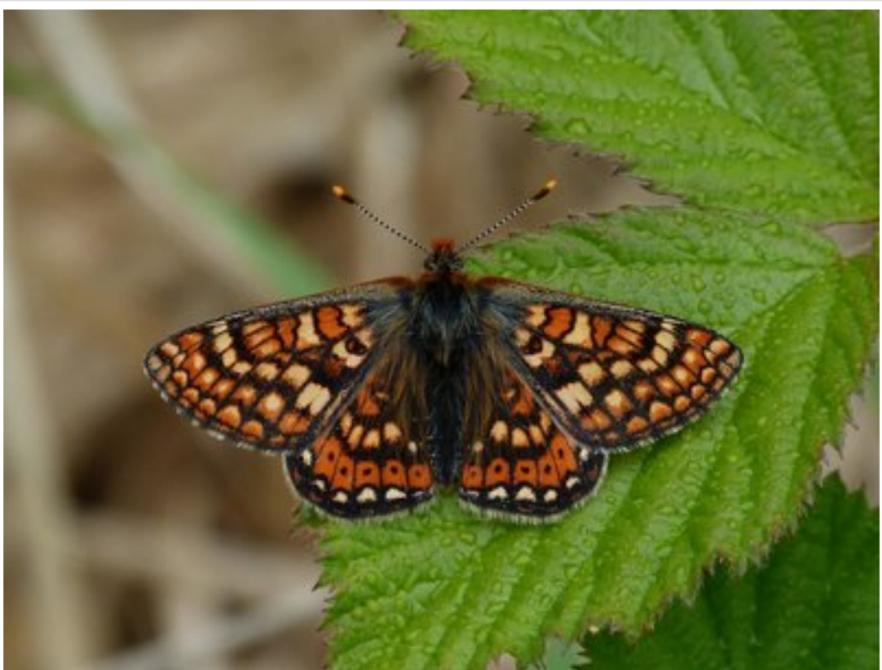
Smaller numbers of male Small Pearl-bordered Frits were seen, as were Speckled Wood, Small Heath and Common Blue. Cuckoos, ravens and buzzards were among the birds. A truly memorable day! 😊



*marsh frit female*



*habitat*



*marsh male*



*small pearl-border frit*

### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 15-Jun-14 10:04 PM GMT

Lovely Marshies Essex 😊 Cheers for the advice as well, I was thinking of going this weekend but my wife got wind of the distance (200 mile round trip) and so has said no way 😞, getting sideswiped by the van last week didn't help my cause either 😞😞. Still next year we're having a weekend away on Exmoor 😊 Sorted.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by David M, 15-Jun-14 11:34 PM GMT

Excellent image of the ovipositing MF, EB. I've yet to see this in spite of being surrounded by this species. 😞

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 17-Jun-14 10:40 PM GMT

Surrounded by this species? Wish i was! All i can say is be carefull where you tread,as the females are hard to spot,tucked under the scabious leaves.

CORNWALL DAY THREE

With our butterfly aims acheived in the first two days, we turned to other things during our spare time. Today,it was bright and cheerful,but also very windy and cold-just 13C! We spent most of the day walking the coast path near Mullion Cove,stopping to enjoy Cornish crab sandwiches for lunch. Not many butterflies were about,given the cold,but we found some lovely heath spotted orchids and a few green winged orchids near the cove. A hunting buzzard was hovering when, suddenly,a peregrine shot out of the sky like a bullet,narrowly missing the buzzard,which simply glided away a little further along the cliff. Would have scared the life out of me!

The cliff-tops were alive with flowers. Stonechats were on the tops of gorse bushes. Ravens patrolled the cliffs,some with juveniles in tow. Near Church cove,a wren was feeding a fledgeling,which came within a couple of yards of us. Lovely to see. Also at Church Cove,several brown sand martins were hawking flies. Most of todays sightings were of fairly common stuff,but it was an enjoyable day in magnificent surroundings.





## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 17-Jun-14 11:33 PM GMT

### CORNWALL DAYS 4 AND 5

Our last couple were spent simply enjoying west Cornwall's coast and countryside—as well as the best of Cornwall's food and drink!

A valley near our B+B was full of wild rhododendrons. Madron Carn is a good hill-topping site for Red Admirals. I always see them here, and this was no exception. A telegraph pole had a great-spotted woodpecker nest, with a juvenile poking its head out. We also visited the Hayle bypass, where the bank has many southern marsh orchids.

Golden ring and broad bodied chaser dragonflies were seen, as well as Large and Small Whites, Small Copper, Speckled Wood and Wall. At the Hayle Bypass, I saw my first Large Skippers of the year.

A very enjoyable few days had sadly come to an end.





**Re: essex buzzard**

by Pauline, 18-Jun-14 05:32 PM GMT

Smashing reports Mark and beautiful photos of the stunning scenery. I had a holiday in Cornwall years ago and would love to go back. My mouth was watering at the mention of the crab – my favourite 😊

**Re: essex buzzard**

by Neil Freeman, 18-Jun-14 09:28 PM GMT

Great reports and some lovely photos, I particularly like the first female Marsh Fritillary and the scenery shots, great stuff 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: essex buzzard**

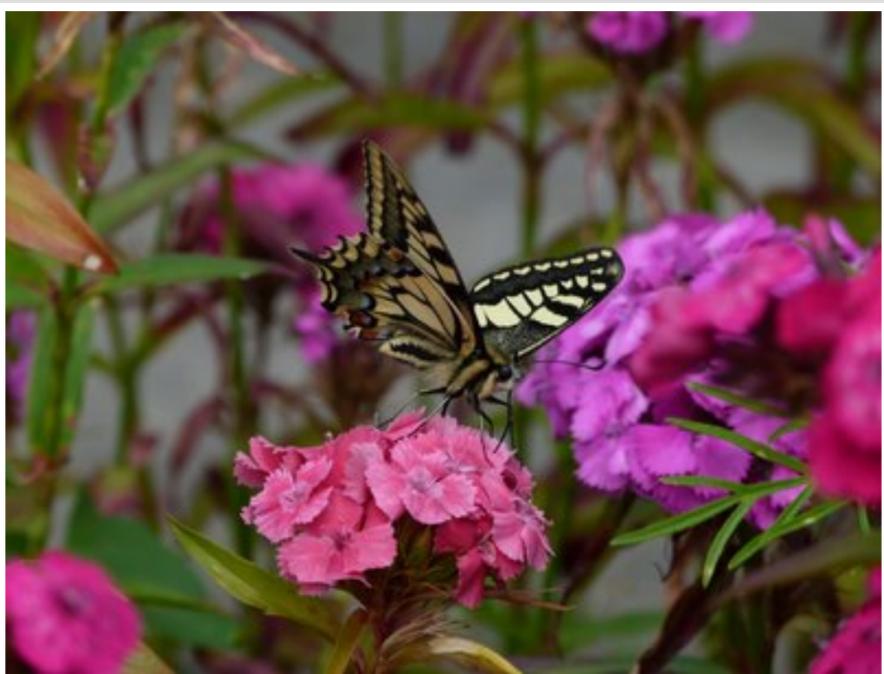
by essexbuzzard, 23-Jun-14 09:35 PM GMT

Pauline,thanks for your comments. Glad you and Neil like the pictures!

#### THE BROADS

On the 11th,we headed up to Strumpshaw Fen to see the Swallowtails,and the Norfolk Hawker. Good numbers of hawkers throughout,but Swallowtails were few and far between,unlike last time i visited in May 2011. After a good spring,this was dissappointing,and i only managed to grab a few record shots—they wont win any prizes! They were already looking a bit worn,too—unlike the pristine adults i saw near Malaga in March. That said,it was good to catch up with them on home soil and there was a supporting cast of loads of Small Torts,plus Meadow Browns,Brimstones,Red Admirals,Large Skippers,Speckled Woods and my first 2014 Ringlet.

In the doctors garden was another Swallowtail and,in the rough field next door,a worn Brown Argus.



#### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 23-Jun-14 10:52 PM GMT

They may just be 'record' shots to you Essex but a Swallowtail always looks impressive to me 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 23-Jun-14 11:19 PM GMT

### IRTON FELL

I haven't seen the Mountain Ringlet for several years so, with good weather forecast, we went up last Thursday. We arrived at Irton just as the overnight cloud was beginning to break up and, once out on the fell, we soon started to see Mountain Ringlets. At this low level, many of the adults were showing signs of wear, so after enjoying the first few, we headed higher up. Here the adults were fresher. This is a great advantage at this site—it gradually rises to higher ground, where adults emerge a few days later. We took some photos here, and as well as the Mountain Ringlets, a multitude of Small Heaths were present. By lunchtime, temps had risen, and we were surrounded by mountain butterflies in all directions, and they were not stopping for pictures now! So we enjoyed the scenery for a while, and headed down.

We then drove to Wast Water and looked up at the fells where we had been walking just an hour or two before.

Then, having read Neil F PD (take a look at his superb pictures!), we headed to Latterbarrow, a site I knew nothing of, to search for the Northern Brown Argus. We found two almost straight away but, unfortunately, a large cloud suddenly appeared, blocking out the sun until 7pm. This was unfortunate, but at least we had seen them and, up till then, the weather had been perfect, so we can't complain. A super day. 😊



*mountain ringlet female*



*mountain ringlet male*



*mountain ringlet habitat, irton fell*



*wast water*



*northern brown argus*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by David M, 23-Jun-14 11:26 PM GMT

It's a beautiful location isn't it, EB?

Well done on the NBA. I didn't know this species could be found on Irton Fell.

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 23-Jun-14 11:34 PM GMT

Thanks for your feedback,David. The NBA were at Latterbarrow nature reserve,about an hours drive south from Irton fell. I should have made that clear,sorry to all! 😞

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by Pauline, 24-Jun-14 01:23 PM GMT

Loving your diary Mark and soooo envious of all you are seeing. The Swallowtail – your 'record' shots .... well, I would be happy with them any day of the week. Keep posting 😊

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 26-Jun-14 11:20 PM GMT

Thanks Pauline.I've had a busy season so far–long may it continue!

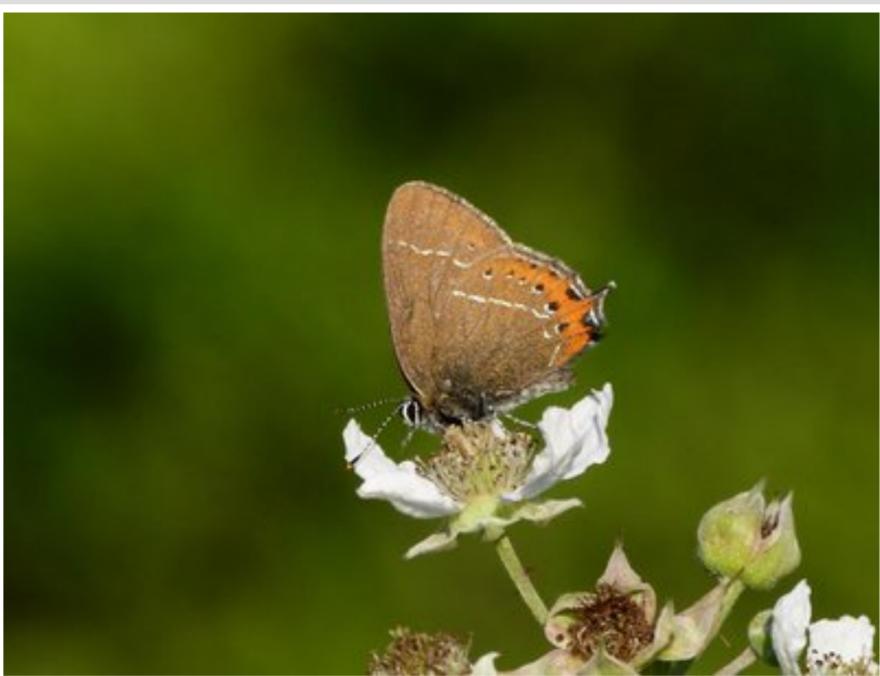
On the way back from Cumbria,i decided Black Hairstreak time was running out,so i headed to Glapthorn Cow Pastures. With records tailing off and with the season running so early,i feared i may be too late. But i needn't have worried. I got talking to other visitors,who kindly pointed me to the best area. A very nice female was on the brambles,with several males coming and going. A Hutchinsonii Comma was holding territory,and Meadow Browns and Ringlets were abundant. Large Skippers were feeding with the Hairstreaks,a couple of Black Hairstreaks were still feeding when the last shaft of of sunlight dissappeared from the bramble patch at 7.15 in the evening.



*black hairstreak female*



*meadow brown*



*black hairstreak male*



*habitat*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by David M, 26-Jun-14 11:26 PM GMT

Wow! You did well to see any Black Hairstreaks, EB, in particular one so seemingly fresh.

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 28-Jun-14 10:24 PM GMT

Thanks David, i did have my concerns about early emergence this year—everything is moving so fast, i'm struggling to keep up! I'm impressed to read about your trip to Oxfordshire for this species, such a long way from Swansea...

It's been several years since we visited Collard Hill to see the Large Blues. This week, with continuing good weather, we felt it was time to put that right and, on Wednesday, we went down to Somerset.

Large Blue numbers have been low at Collard for a couple of years, and it's hard to know why, as many other species have bounced back thanks to better weather. We arrived early, beating the Glastonbury traffic, and we had the slope to ourselves for a while. After about half an hour of searching, i disturbed a Large Blue from the grass, and followed it. I watched it for about two hours, reluctant to lose sight of it. It was just as well as, in the event, this was the only one we saw. There must have been others on site though, as this was a female and, once she had warmed up, she started to feed and lay eggs on the thyme flower buds. A few other people had arrived by now, and she gave a good display for all the morning visitors. 😊



*large blue first thing*



*egg laying large blue*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by MikeOxon, 28-Jun-14 10:48 PM GMT

You've certainly been getting around recently! Wonderful series of posts and I'm pleased you included some scenic shots, as well as the butterflies. It's nice to be reminded of the beautiful places on our island.

Mike

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 30-Jun-14 11:00 PM GMT

Thanks Mike. I like to get a few scenic or habitat shots in where i can-i think it gives a bit of the feel of the place. But i don't know if others like it,so i value your feedback.

THURSDAY 26 JUNE

Stayed in Essex today,to visit a few local sites and get a few new species.

First up was Belfairs Hadleigh woods. This wood is full of Ringlets,Meadow Browns and Large Skippers. But it was the White Admirals i came to see-my

first of the year. Several were flitting up in the canopy,weaving in and out,following the contours of the trees.Every now and then,one would glide down,fly around briefly then soar again. Such splendid flyers. Occasionally one would stop to feed on the brambles,but only briefly.



*white admiral at belfairs,essex*



*ringlet female,belfairs*

## **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 30-Jun-14 11:32 PM GMT

After enjoying these,it was off to nearby Hadleigh Castle Country Park,for my annual White-letter Hairstreak feast. As i've mentioned before,this is the only site i know where adults reliably come down every year,to feed on brambles. Once in the right area,several were quickly spotted. The males were already past their best,but the females were splendid with lovely tails.

But there is more to Hadleigh than WLH.For sheer numbers,this is the best site for summer butterflies i know of in Essex. Large,Essex and my first Small Skippers of 2014 were seen,and Holly Blue,Small Torts,Hutchinsonii Commas, Red Admirals,Ringlest by the hundred,Meadow Browns and Marbles Whites. A super day was had! 😊



*essex skipper*





*white letter hairstreak habitat*

### Re: essex buzzard

by David M, 01-Jul-14 12:20 AM GMT

EB, that first White Letter shot is a gem.

### Re: essex buzzard

by Katrina, 01-Jul-14 06:12 AM GMT

The second one is a gem too!

### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 01-Jul-14 10:13 PM GMT

Great shots Essex, I reckon all three WLH shots are brill, the first is lush, the second is glorious and the third I like as I can just imagine the butterfly stretching out it's front legs to try and reach the next flower on 😊 . And it was great to see an Essex Essex Skipper 😊 I too have found some Essex Skippers Essex but in Wiltshire...this is getting a bit confusing, I'll get my coat 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 01-Jul-14 10:21 PM GMT

Thanks David and Katrina for your compliments—glad you like them!

Several rare or unusual flowers grow at Hadleigh. The Depford Pink is one of them. This tiny relative of garden Carnations is rare in GB, though more common in Europe. This is the only place I have seen it in Britain. It grows about 18 inches tall, and flowers in late June and July. Each plant lasts just one year.

Spiny Restharrow also grows here. Though not so rare as the others, it is still uncommon. The woody stems bear thorns, and the lovely pink flowers are borne throughout the summer.

The Hairy Vetchling is a real rarity and, as a native, is probably restricted to Essex. It is a scrambling annual with pink flowers in summer, and grows in the grassy meadows at Hadleigh, and a few nearby places.



*Depford Pink*



*Spiny Restharrow*



*Hairy Vetchling*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 01-Jul-14 10:33 PM GMT

Good to hear from you Wurzel. I'm glad you have seen Essex Skippers over your way. They have been spreading north in recent years, but not west, as far as I know. So they are still a rarity in Dorset, and have never got established in Devon and Cornwall, as far as I know. Here in Essex, though, they are common—just about any patch of grass is likely to turn up a few adults in season.

Cycled through my local woods on my way to work on Sunday. Amongst a multitude of Ringlets, Meadow Browns and Large Skippers, I found this cracking beauty—my first of the year! 😊



### Re: essex buzzard

by Willow, 03-Jul-14 12:38 PM GMT

Excellent summaries of your recent visits to some lovely location Mark, those photo's ain't half bad either 😊

Great to meet you and Esther at **Fermyn Woods** yesterday...a fantastic day 😊

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 04-Jul-14 11:30 PM GMT

WEDNESDAY 2 JULY-FERMYN WOODS

It was time to catch up with His Imperial Majesty on Wednesday. We arrived at 9 and already,quite a few cars had arrived-it was going to be a busy day!

Esther had never seen a Purple Emperor before,but that changed within minutes of arrival. Unfortunately a van chose that exact time to drive up the ride-oh well 😊 Soon i spotted some familiar faces-Phil and Rosalyn,who i met while looking for Long-tailed Blues last year. With them was Bill(Willow)-great to meet you!

We were soon seeing Emperors and both Esther and me had a trousering. Another took great interest in Bills feet,staying long enough for plenty of Photo's. Yet another took a liking to one of the rucksacs,staying there for a considerable time. Several more grounded males were enjoyed,then,at lunchtime,we had a look to see what else was around.

A Wych Elm was searched and turned up an egg-laying White-letter Hairstreak. It was present for perhaps an hour. Suddenly,almost from under my feet,a male Purple Hairstreak flew up out of the grass,straight up into the trees,and completely refusing to stop for photo's-this,for me,is the most difficult species to get pictures of,and it is one of the most common butterflies 😊 . Several White Admirals were seen,and several common species. A super day was had by all present. 😊



*lady woods, fermyn*



*emperor on bills boots!*



*emperor on a rucksack*



*rosalyn has a bit of fun with her brand new camera,well it was new once!*

### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 05-Jul-14 10:32 PM GMT

Stunning shots of His Nibbs Essex 🇩🇪 Is there a way of getting the blue on both wings – stand right over it, flash ?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by Neil Freeman, 05-Jul-14 10:57 PM GMT

Just catching up on your diary Essex, some great reports and photos, I cannot pick out any favourites, they all convey a good 'feel for the place'. I too like the scenic shots, they provide the context and are also enjoyable in themselves

I know what you mean about everything happening at once, I am already resigned to missing some species this year. Mind you that just means that plans are taking shape in the cobwebs of my mind for next year 😊

Bye the way, many thanks for the great comments on my photos in your Irton Fell report 😊

Cheers,

Neil

### Re: essex buzzard

by Willow, 06-Jul-14 10:58 AM GMT

Great Fermyn report Mark with some real 'tell a story' images...much enjoyed 😊

Regards,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

### Re: essex buzzard

by Rosalyn, 06-Jul-14 05:30 PM GMT

It was certainly a good day. all the better for the company of fellow UK Butterflies. Good to meet up with you again, and Esther. 2 pics of me with the Kodak, going viral? 😊 I too was miffed to miss out on the Purple Hairstreak we needed a bit more luck on our side, one for another day.

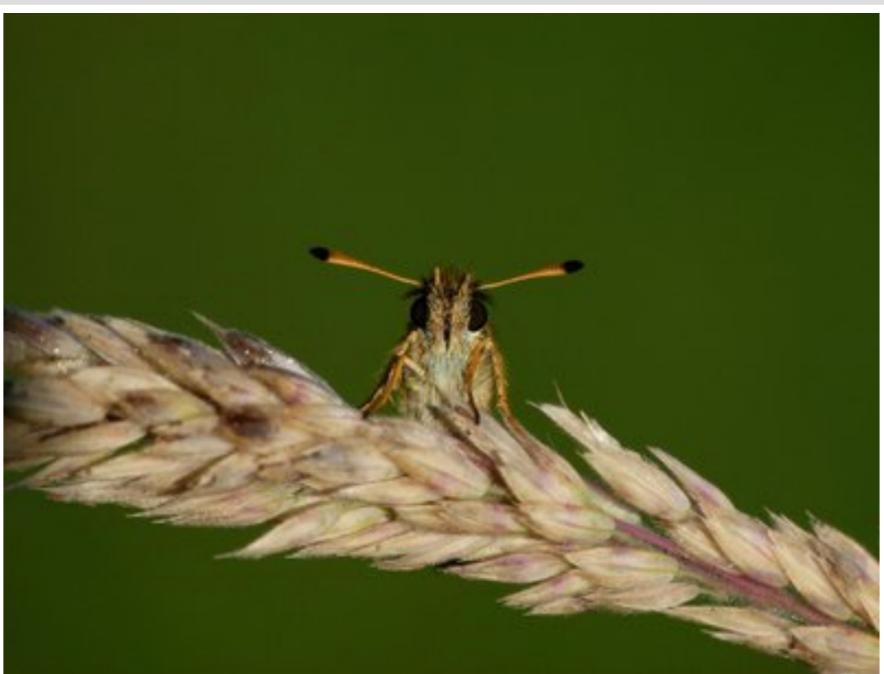
### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 12-Jul-14 10:49 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments,guys. It was a most enjoyable day at Fermyn,and lovely to see meet up with some of you. Rosalyn,i've seen those pictures too! Fantastic stuff.

Wurzel,i never use the flash on my Lumix when taking butterfly pictures,i find they come out over exposed. I'm sure there is a way,but for someone whose brain went years ago,i've yet to work out how! When His Imperial Majesty is grounded,i just try to take photo's at slightly different angles,and it works–sometimes!

Just back from a short break in northern England.However,before we went on Monday,there was just time to take a look at the grassy common behind my house,to watch the waking Essex Skippers at dawn...





### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 12-Jul-14 11:05 PM GMT

With the Tour de France coming through Essex today, and within a couple of miles of my home, I was in two minds what to do today. As it turned out, by the time the Tour left Cambridge, we had already arrived at Prees Heath in Shropshire. This Butterfly Conservation reserve is the last Midlands site for Silver-studded Blues. But the habitat area, and the amount of ling heather caterpillar plant is small, and only about a dozen SSB were seen at the most. I'm sure BC is doing all it can to increase the habitat here.

Despite low numbers, the SSB were a delight to see, and the only chance I will get this year. After enjoying them for a couple of hours, and delays on the M6, it was on to Blackpool late afternoon for a walk, and to get something to eat. I've not been here for about 30 years, so it was nice to visit as an adult. A good start to the trip north. 😊

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 12-Jul-14 11:10 PM GMT

Forgot to add the photo's! 😊



*silver studded blue male*



*female*



*prees heath*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by lee3764, 13-Jul-14 11:16 AM GMT

[Superb photos as always Mark! Did you receive my e-mail from a couple of days ago??](#)

[Just returned from a successful visit to The Lake District and Southern Scotland.](#)

[Cheers mate,](#)

[Lee Slaughter \(Cornwall\).](#)

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 13-Jul-14 11:52 PM GMT

Cheers Lee, i haven't checked my emails yet but i will take a look - i can't wait to find out what you have seen!

TUESDAY 8 JULY

With a change in weather forecast, it was a change of plan today, as we took the long drive from Lancaster, across the Pennines and up to the north-east of England. We arrived late morning at Seahouses, and, after lunch, went on a boat trip to the Farne Islands. For any nature lover, a visit here is a must.

Traveling around the Farnes, several colonies of grey seals were hauled out on the rocks. They are used to visitors, and take relatively little notice of the boats full of people, or the clicking cameras.

Further round, many cormorants and shags were breeding. Rafts of guillemots and puffins were feeding on the sea. Gannets were passing through and, on the rocks, herring, lesser and great black-back gulls were watching over the colonies of sea birds.

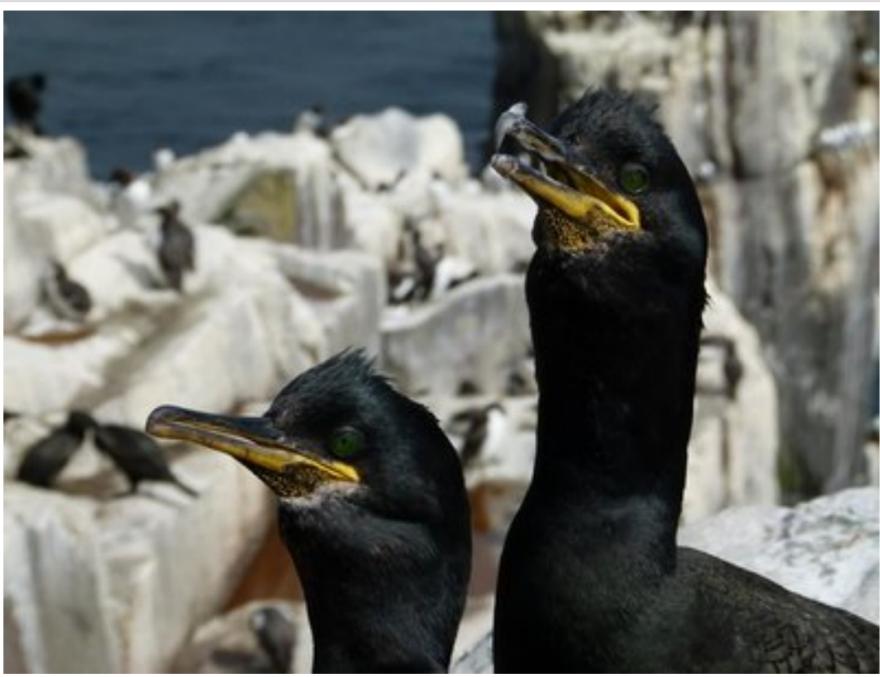
Then we reached Inner Farne, an island where you can get off and walk around the bird colonies. Arctic and Sandwich terns are the first to greet you, the arctic terns in particular are very defensive of their nests, a hat is advisable! This gives way to puffins, which nest in the underground burrows. Further up, on the cliffs, guillemots, razorbills, kittiwakes, shags and more puffins are seen, most of which are just a few feet away, giving great photo opportunities. The weather was good, and the many visitors, ourselves included, had a great time here. Time flew by and all too soon, it was time to board the boats again, and return to Seahouses, where, in the harbour, several families of eiders were present.



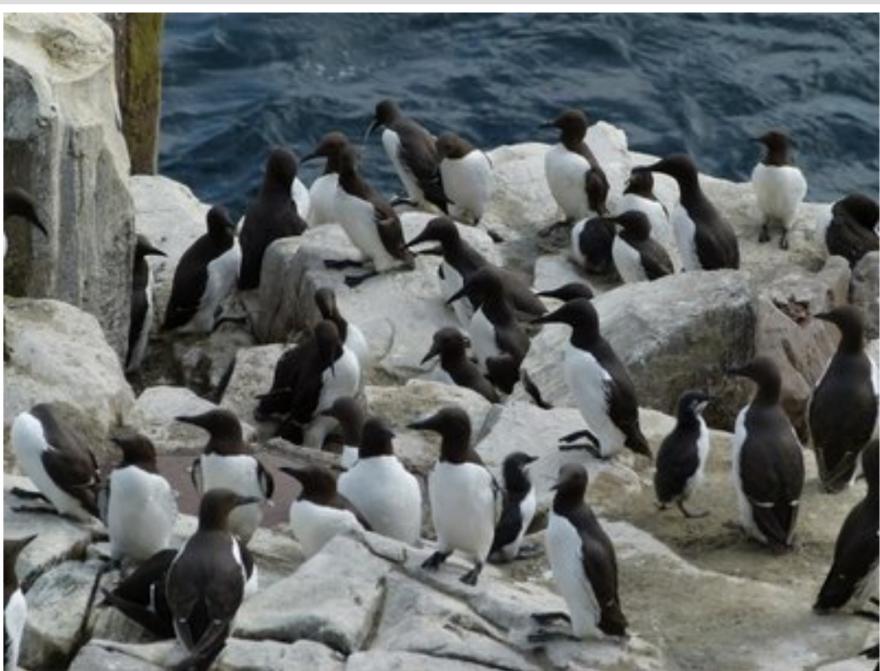
*grey seals*



*razorbills*



*shags*



*guillemots*



*puffin*

**Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 13-Jul-14 11:58 PM GMT

A few more pic's from Tuesday



*kittiwakes*



*arctic tern*



*Sandwich terns*



*eiders*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by Pauline, 14-Jul-14 06:33 AM GMT

Brings back memories Mark. When growing up in the North East an Auntie took me to Seahouses as a birthday treat but never got to the Farne islands and didn't see a Puffin - which I have always regretted. I even took an evening cruise around the jurassic coast for that very reason but only 1 seen that night with the help of very strong bins. Great account and lovely photos.

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 14-Jul-14 10:58 PM GMT

Thanks Pauline. A bit of a haul from Hampshire but if you ever get the chance, you really must go!

WEDNESDAY 9 JULY.

Today dawned clear, so a short road journey saw us at Meathop Moss by 7AM. Here flies the Large Heath. It's been several years since I've seen one, so this was a priority of mine in 2014. We soon began to find adults and, because of the early hour, some settled, with a bit of patience, for pictures. Many were already showing signs of wear, while others had bird-peck marks, a narrow escape from death. But a few were in good condition, and showed for the pictures below. By 9AM, though, temperatures were much higher, and the picture-taking for them was over, they being much more active by now. So we admired the bog plants, and many black darter dragonflies, before heading out.



*large heath*



*meathop moss*



*black darter*

## Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 14-Jul-14 11:13 PM GMT

Stunning markings on those Heaths Essex 😎 Cracking shots too 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 15-Jul-14 11:43 PM GMT

WEDNESDAY 9 JULY (CTD)

Than onto Arnside Knott. Arriving 10.15, it was already clear it was going to be a hot day, and everything was already zooming around supercharged. We spent a couple of hours, but couldn't get near anything, so we went into the town to find some shade, and to get lunch.

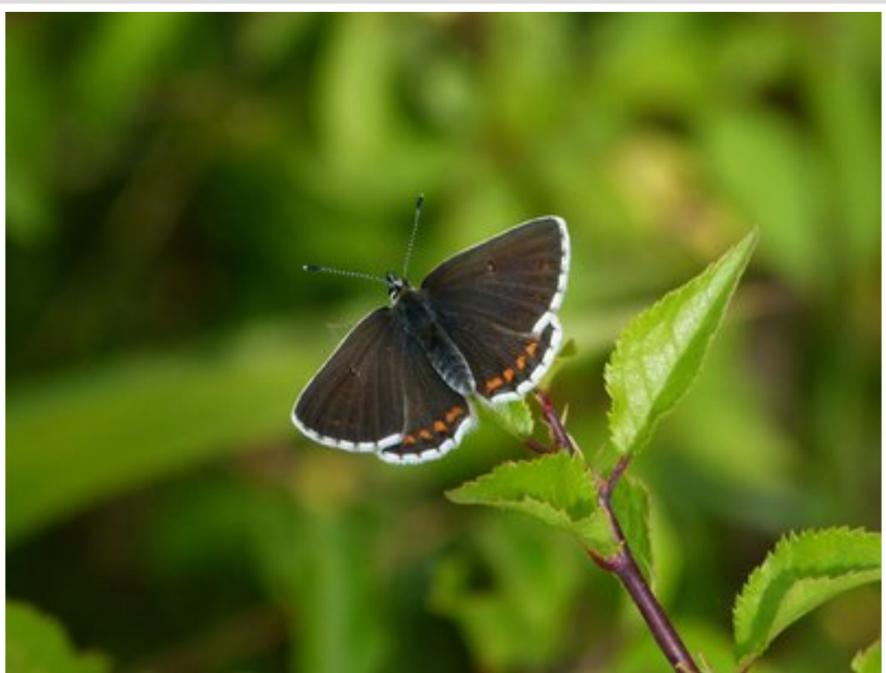
Returning mid-afternoon, it was even hotter than before, and nothing landed, even for a few seconds, before 5PM. Several speeding fritillaries were seen, but identification was impossible.

We eventually saw several Northern Brown Argus, most were old males, but then a nice female which at last showed well for several minutes, giving good views. But overall the Knott was disappointing, with far fewer butterflies than I remember from past visits. But in the evening, a few fritillaries settled, most were worn and all were Dark Green Fritillaries. The only thing present in good numbers were Grayling, with about 15 seen.

Anyone thinking of visiting, this place is crawling with ticks—i've never seen so many. So no shorts, unless you want to be pulling ticks for a week afterwards!



*arnside knott*



*northern brown argus*



*dark green frit*



*gatekeeper*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 15-Jul-14 11:48 PM GMT

The only sniff i got of a High Brown Fritillary is this cropped picture,taken at full zoom,at a distance of about 20 or 30 feet,which landed for about 10 seconds after 7PM.I believe it is a HBF(to follow).

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 15-Jul-14 11:56 PM GMT

HBF (i think).



### **Re: essex buzzard**

by lee3764, 16-Jul-14 12:48 PM GMT

[color=#800080:2f8pe36w]Hi Mark,

I visited Arnside Knott on Monday 7th July with my 10 year old son, Robert and like you had no success with photographing anything as everything had new Duracell batteries in & were flying at speed without stopping. Ticks were everywhere too!! I would think from your photo that it IS a High Brown Fritillary judging by the look and shape of the wings on the upperside! We did also see close (ish) up a Dark Green Fritillary female with one of it's hindwings completely albino whilst the other 3 wings were normal! Hope you had a good time up North as we all did & ticked all the species boxes!

Cheers mate,

Lee Slaughter (and Robert)...Cornwall. 😊 [color:2f8pe36w]

### Re: essex buzzard

by Neil Freeman, 16-Jul-14 07:37 PM GMT

Hi Mark,

I would go with HBF as well for that last shot, I can just make out the raised forewing veins of a male.

I have visited Arnside Knott the past couple of years in late July/early August for Scotch Argus and seen High Browns mainly in the lower clearings and down the Heathwaite path although they are past their best by then. I have had the advantage of staying up there for a few days and usually gone up the Knott between 09.00-11.00 and again after 4.00pm when things usually slow down a bit. When it gets too hot the butterflies are either in super speedy mode, as you found, or hiding away in the shade somewhere.

Cheers,

Neil.

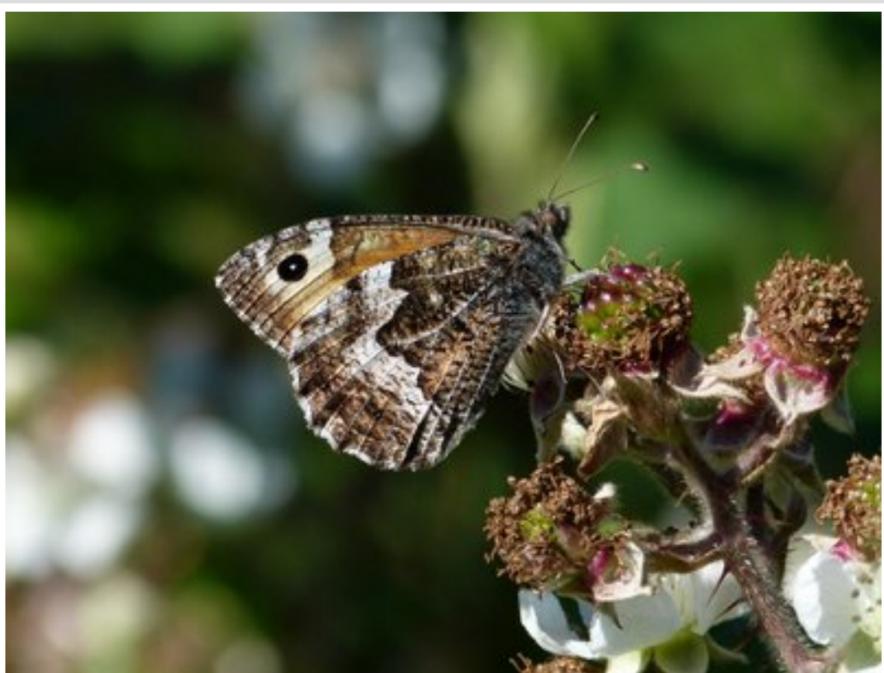
### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 17-Jul-14 11:14 PM GMT

Cheers Neil,that is exactly what we found. So on our last day,Thursday 10 July,we were on the Knott by 8AM. It was already very warm,and butterflies were active. But we did manage to see a few Dark Greens settled,and a nice Grayling was feeding on bramble. But by 10 it was too hot so,after a nice couple of hours,we headed to Bowness-on-Windermere for an early lunch. Trust me to find probably the only real Cornish Pasty shop in the Lake District! 😊😂

After enjoying it,we were off to Liverpool for the afternoon where a breeze off the Mersey made it more comfortable. Then home.

Thanks Lee.With the concave edge and sex-brand just visible,this goes down as my only HBF of the year. 😊



### Re: essex buzzard

by Maximus, 17-Jul-14 11:40 PM GMT

Great Large Heath shots Buzzard and I agree thats a definite HB frit. 😊

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 20-Jul-14 10:28 PM GMT

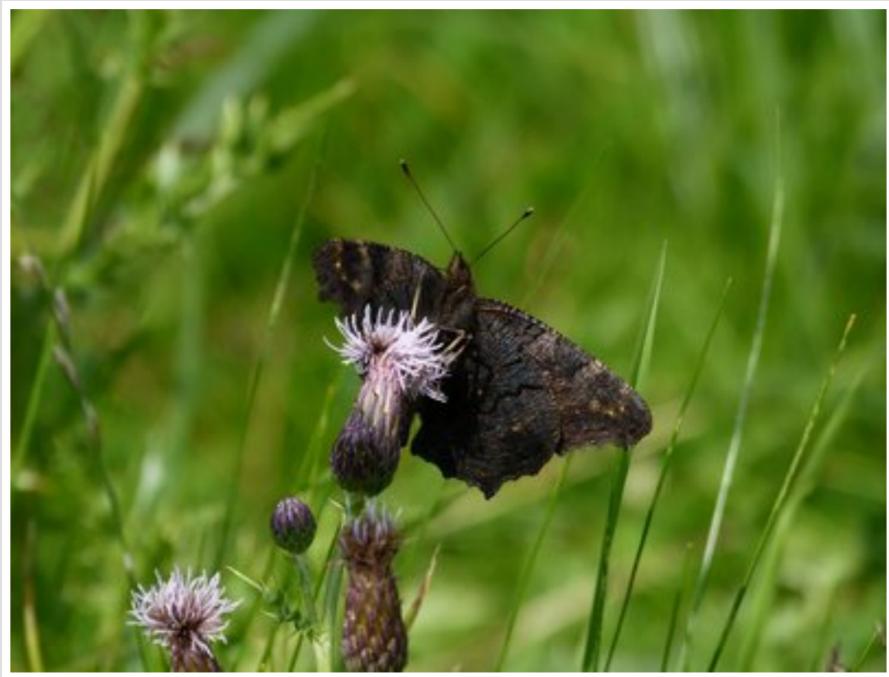
Thank-you very much for the feedback.

### CATCHING UP

In the last two weeks,there has been a big emergence of fresh Peacocks,and the gardens and woods are full of them. There are still a few caterpillars about,too. We are so fortunate that this,one of our most spectacular butterflies,is also one of the commonest 😊 . Through a hand-lens the markings are exquisite. If the weather is good,they will feed up for another two or three weeks,then start looking for hibernation sites as early as mid August.

Plenty of summer generation Small Tortoiseshells are still to be seen,and there are lots of caterpillars on the nettles as well.It's been a pleasure to witness another great year for this lovely species.

The Ringlets are getting worn now,and most will be gone within a week-what a short life they have 😞 .Hutchinsonii Commas are still common in the evenings,and Purple Hairstreaks abundant. I must have seen hundreds,if not thousands,of these in my life,but i have never got a decent photograph. Large,Small and Essex Skippers remain common,as do Large,Small and Green-veined Whites. The odd Red Admiral is seen most days,and Silver Washed Fritillaries are common in the woods-i had the great pleasure of watching their courtship the other day-the female flying straight and the male looping behind. The hedgerows,and woodland edges and rides have plenty of Gatekeepers.





## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 25-Jul-14 09:53 PM GMT

It's been another hot, though not always sunny week. On Wednesday, we went up to the Devils Dyke, near Newmarket racecourse. After a mostly cloudy, humid but windy day, it was hot, sunny and windy when we arrived. Straight away, there were Chalkhill Blues in the car-park, my first of the year.

By time we got onto the Dyke proper, there were hundreds of Chalkhill Blues everywhere, though they were impossible to photograph in the hot conditions. So we slowly walked along the Dyke up to the A14 and back, enjoying the flowers and the swallows and housemartins, which were probably scooping up my Chalkhill Blues!

By the time we got back, the sun was dipping, and at last the butterflies were slowing a little, giving me the chance to take a few pic's, and check the identification of the blues. Most were Chalkhills, but a few were Common, and it was nice to see a few Brown Argus, including 3 together in a roosting group - i haven't seen many BA yet this year. A few Marbled Whites were present, as well as my first new Brimstones.

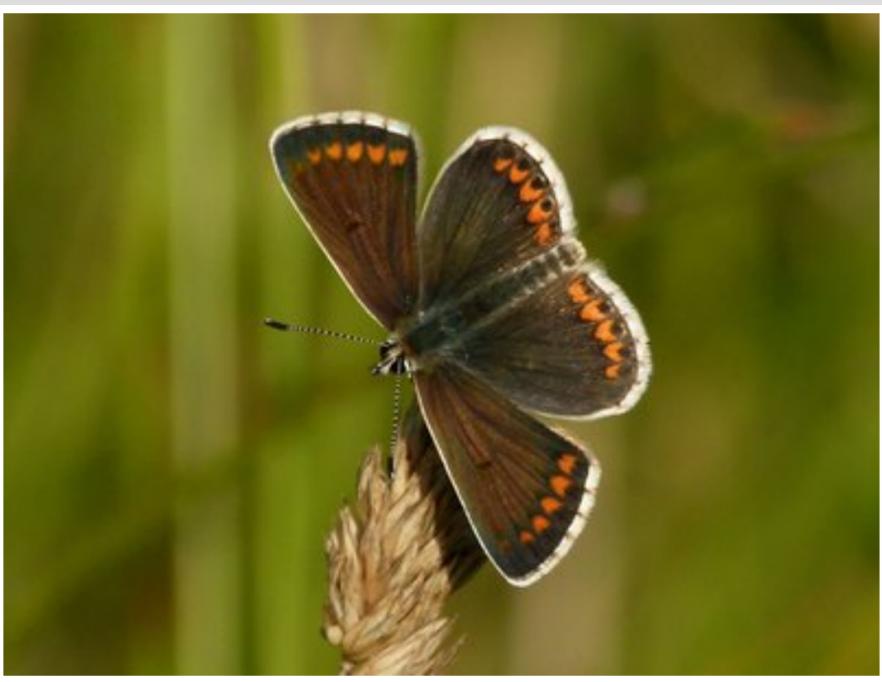
Two kestrels were hovering over the Dyke.



*devils dyke newmarket*



*chalkhill blue*



*brown argus*



*chalkhill roosting group*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by Wurzel, 26-Jul-14 04:52 PM GMT

Cracking shots Essex, the Brown Argus is lush and the Chalk Hills roosting looks like a proper "butterfly Orchid" 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 01-Aug-14 10:37 PM GMT

WELCOME to August. We now expect to see the last species emerge tough, this year with early emergences, all our species were out by the end of July which has caused me a few problems as i can't keep up! We also now see a rapid shortening of the days, by the end of this month it will be going dark by 8PM in southern England.

The Scotch Argus is a species i have not seen for several years. Again with the early flight this year, getting the time right for a species whose closest colony is 300 miles away has been a challenge! Thankfully the weather has been favorable and, on Monday, we visited one of the English colonies.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, we arrived at Arnside Knott later than we would have liked, at mid morning. But it was a super day, slightly cooler than last time we were here, and it wasn't long before we were watching Scotch Argus adults in good numbers. In the sunshine, males were very active but when the sun went in, they dropped to the ground. By afternoon, it was warm enough for adults to remain active during cloudier spells. We found a female that was laying eggs. The first was laid, as expected, on the foodplant, blue moor grass. But then she surprised us by laying the next egg halfway up a tree trunk! Many adults were nectaring, and some found marjoram attractive.

We spent most of our day enjoying these Scotch Argus, but wandered at times to see what else was around. Fresh Brimstones and Peacocks were seen, as were a couple of High Brown Fritillary females, one of which was feeding on a large betony patch. Graylings were again found, rather more faded by now. Fresh Walls had emerged.

By evening, we had had our fill, it was time to start the long journey home, and a chance to reflect on a rather good day!

Full species list; Small Skipper, Large, Small and Green-veined Whites, Northern Brown Argus, Common Blue, Peacock, Red Admiral, High Brown Fritillary, Speckled Wood, Gatekeeper, Grayling, Wall, Meadow Brown and Scotch Argus.



*narrow escape from death!*



*scotch argus female*



*high brown fritillary*



*scotch argus habitat at arnside*

**Re: essex buzzard**

by millerd, 01-Aug-14 10:50 PM GMT

Lovely Scotch Argus pictures, EB. I missed you at Arnside by a couple of days, and missed seeing either NBA or Walls too. Looks like it wasn't quite as hot as Saturday was!

Dave

**Re: essex buzzard**

by David M, 01-Aug-14 11:08 PM GMT

Nice images, EB. I have never done this butterfly justice but I intend to go up north myself early next week to rectify that.

**Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 01-Aug-14 11:17 PM GMT

Thanks for your comments. Good luck next week,David,though you wont need it,as long as the weather is reasonable.They are a fantastic species,and it was great to see them again,after several years.

### Re: essex buzzard

by Neil Freeman, 02-Aug-14 10:00 AM GMT

Great report and photos from Arnside Knott EB, one of my favourite places 😊

I have been up there the past couple of years in late July /early August for Scotch Argus which is usually too late for NBA hence my earlier visit in June this year. I am thinking I may try a time somewhere in between next year and try for fresher DGF and HBF (hee hee!!, already thoughts going around my head for next year 😊)

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 02-Aug-14 10:43 PM GMT

Cracking stuff Essex – that's another one of those species that I've never seen but would love too 🍷 Do they take the place of Meadow Browns in that habitat?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 02-Aug-14 10:53 PM GMT

SUPER SUNNY SWANAGE!

We usurally have a holiday on the Isle of Purbeck in mid to late August. I have always seen the Lulworth Skipper on these trips but with everything running early this year,i couldn't take the risk of waiting and missing them,so i drove down on Wednesday for a day trip.

We arrived at Durlston Country Park and,in the first patch of long grass,were several Lulwoth Skippers–butterflying has never been so easy! Walking round the site,Lulworths were everywhere. As i expected,many were old,tired adults and i wondered if any would have been present had i left it until late August. But there was a sprinkling of fresh females,and all were a delight to see–there is a certain pleasure in watching these cracking little butterflies–there rarity and certainly their charisma. One of the females we watched for several minutes,as she crawled down a grass stem,and pumped 6 glorious white eggs,surprisingly large for so small a butterfly. I wanted to take a picture,but if i unfurled the grass stem to show the eggs,it may have broke,so i decided not to–it wasn't worth it.

Many other species were around,including a few late Dark Green Frits and plenty of Marbled Whites. A pair of stonechats near the lighthouse,with young in tow,were amongst the bird hilights. Another super day. 😊

Full list for Durlston; Small Skipper,Lulworth Skipper,Brimstone,Large White,Small Copper,Common Blue,Brown Argus, Peacock,Red Admiral,Painted Lady,Small Tortoiseshell,Wall,Meadow Brown,Marbled White,Gatekeeper and Speckled Wood. Photo's to follow.

hi Wurzel,you must go and see the Scotch Argus. They don't take the place of Meadow Browns,as both were common,flying side by side,and have different LHP. But,where they occur,they are as common,but Meadow Browns are on the decline by time the first male Scotch Argus emerge,so its more about extending the season,and keeping the northern season going through August.

### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 02-Aug-14 11:22 PM GMT

Cheers for the info Essex 😊 I'd love to get up there for SA so I'll have to try and wangle a family holiday up that way 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 03-Aug-14 11:08 PM GMT

Pic's from Wednesday at Durlston;



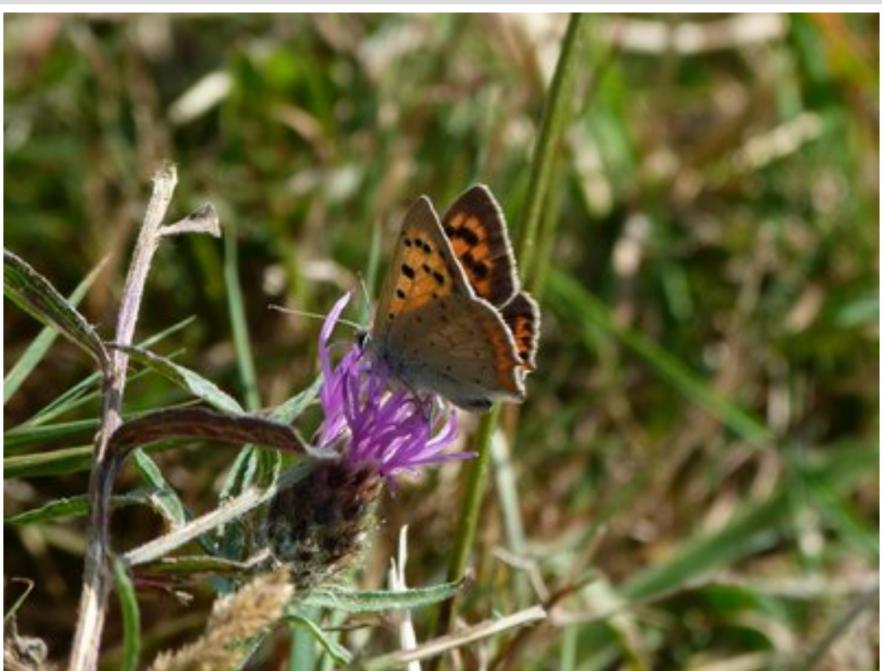
*lulworth skipper*



*marbled white*



*common blue*



*small copper*



*painted lady*



*durlston cp*

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 07-Aug-14 11:16 PM GMT

TUESDAY 5 AUGUST

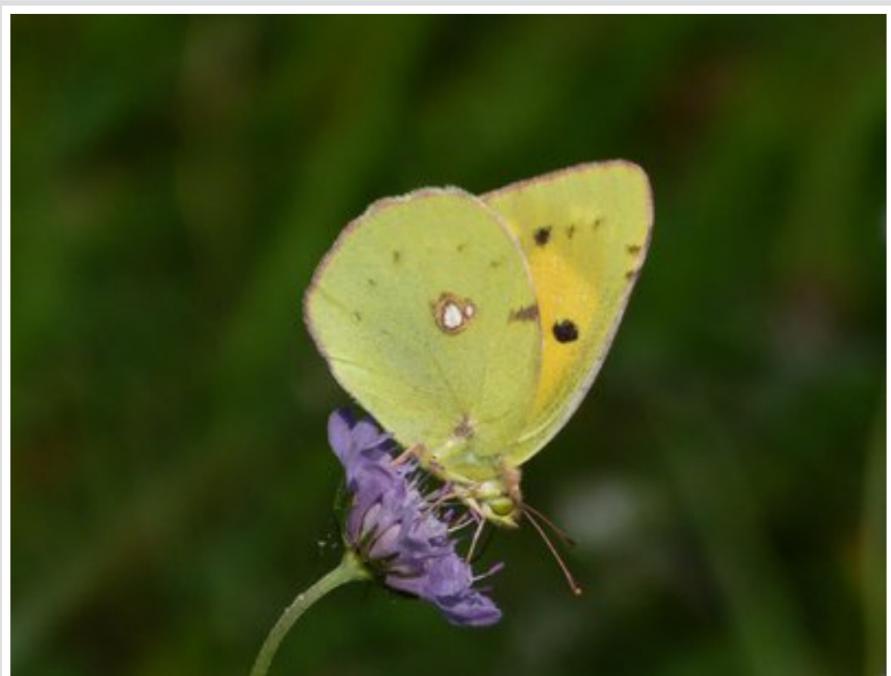
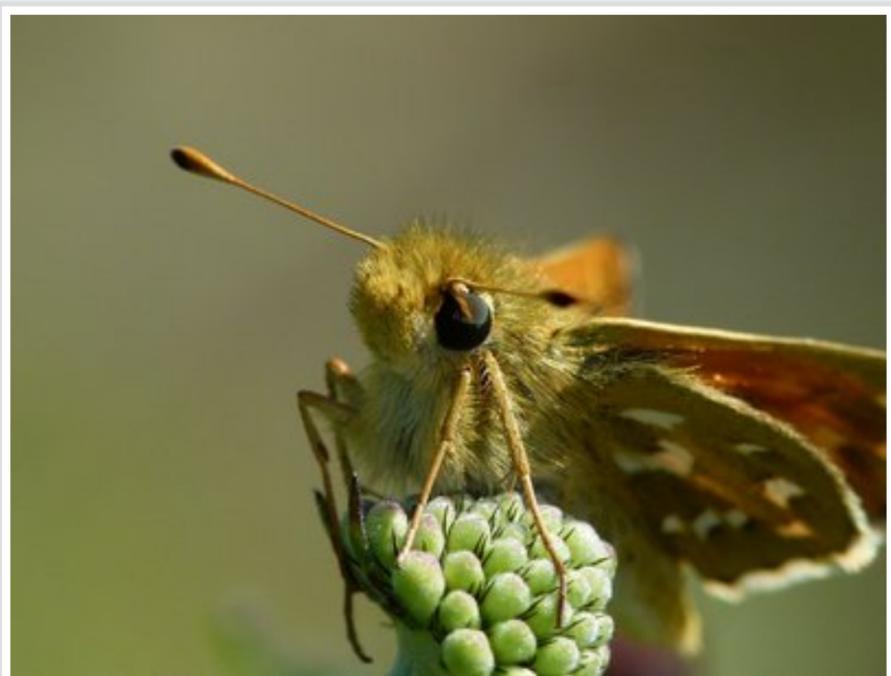
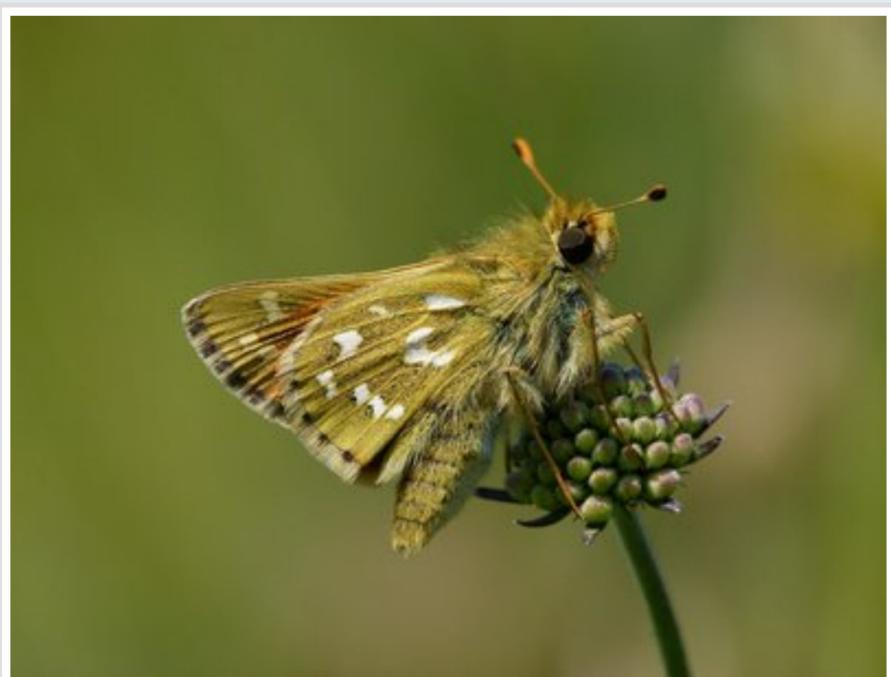
Today i was going to go to Malling Down in Sussex, but then i heard there were miles of jams on M25 near the QE2 bridge so plan B-Aston Rowant. The forecast today was for sunny spells, with nothing more than an increasing risk of a shower. When i woke to blue skies, this seemed to be borne out. So imagine, after delays on M25 that way as well, i eventually arrived at Aston Rowant just in time to see the last of the blue sky disappear over the horizon. I stayed for half an hour to see if the weather improved and, walking around, i disturbed a Silver-spotted Skipper. My first of the year, but hardly the way i wanted to see it-kicking it out of the grass on a cold, gloomy day.

All i could see was a conveyer-belt of cloud, so i ignored the forecast and used my instinct-if the cloud and rain was coming in from the west then i should head as far east as possible to get away from it. 💡 Plan C-Lydden Temple Ewell Downs, near Dover. So back in the car to brave the dreaded M25 again! However, when i got onto the M20, i got back into the sun-magic!

It was 1.30 by time i got there, but the rest of the day was truly splendid, and well worth the (considerable) effort! Hundreds of Silver-spotted Skippers were seen, and thoroughly enjoyed, i was a great pleasure to actually see them feeding, chasing rivals and mates, and watching their lively behavior. At times, i just sat and watched the spectacle. Sometimes a female would fly over and a male would fly up from the ground to give chase, then another, and another, until clumps of Skippers would be flying low over the down, a fabulous sight. I simply cannot get enough of this species, and its lively character.

Though we have to wait until late summer to see it, a trip to see these is one of the highlights of my season.

Several Clouded Yellows were seen, my first British ones of the year. Chalkhill Blues were abundant, as were Meadow Browns. Several Walls were present. In fact, this place was alive with butterflies! With the sun continuing into the evening, I was able to watch them going to roost, to make the most of my afternoon and evening. 😊😊😊





*lydden temple ewell*

### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 08-Aug-14 09:53 PM GMT

Greta shots Essex and that close up of the Silver Spot is a real gem of a shot 🍷 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 08-Aug-14 10:37 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel. After all the hassle earlier in the day,i was double pleased to see them!

MALLING DOWN

The following day,we took a rather more relaxed trip to Malling Down,near Lewes,Ssex. This gave me another chance to see the fantastic Silver-spotted Skipper. Though the wind was blowing up the slope,there was plenty of action and,having rushed things a bit yesterday,today i watched them going about their buisness-though i couldn't resist a few pictures! We observed several males trying simply to mate with the female as she sat there-

but the females were having none of it! We also saw a female laying on sheeps fescue,picture below.

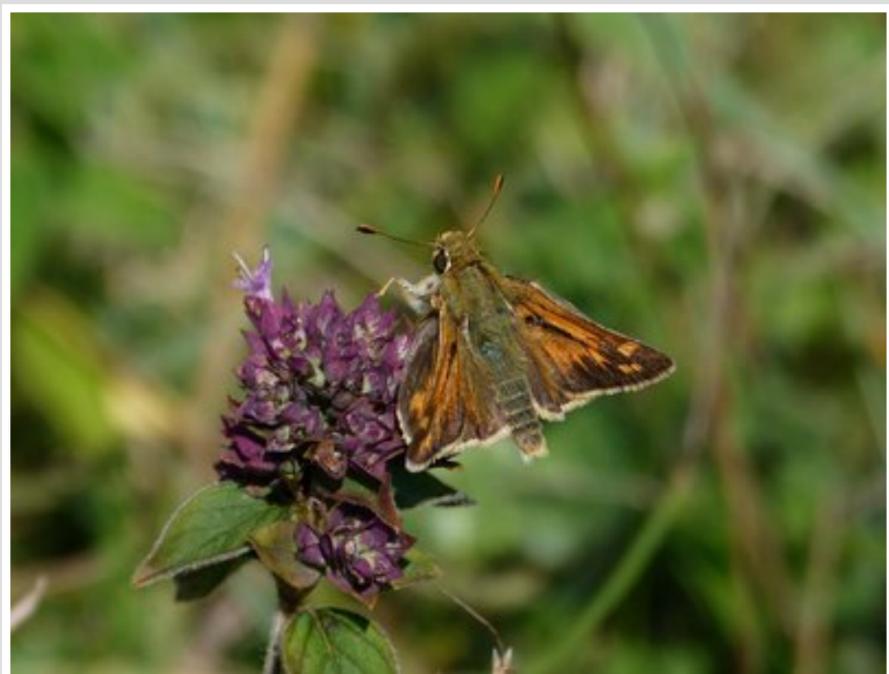
The emergence of the second generation Adonis Blues signals the end of summer. Several fresh males were at the bottom of the slope. Many more to come here in the next two weeks. Most of the Chalkhill blues are showing their age now. We found a mating pair,picture below. However,look carefully,the unfortunate female had been got by a spider.I tried to free the male,but he was unable to break free.

A nice Painted Lady was photographed,and several Clouded Yellows were present. Full list for today; Essex Skipper, Silver-spotted Skipper, Large and Small Whites, Clouded Yellow, Small Copper, Brown Argus, Common Blue, Chalkhill Blue, Adonis Blue, Painted Lady, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Comma, Wall, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Marbled White and Small Heath.

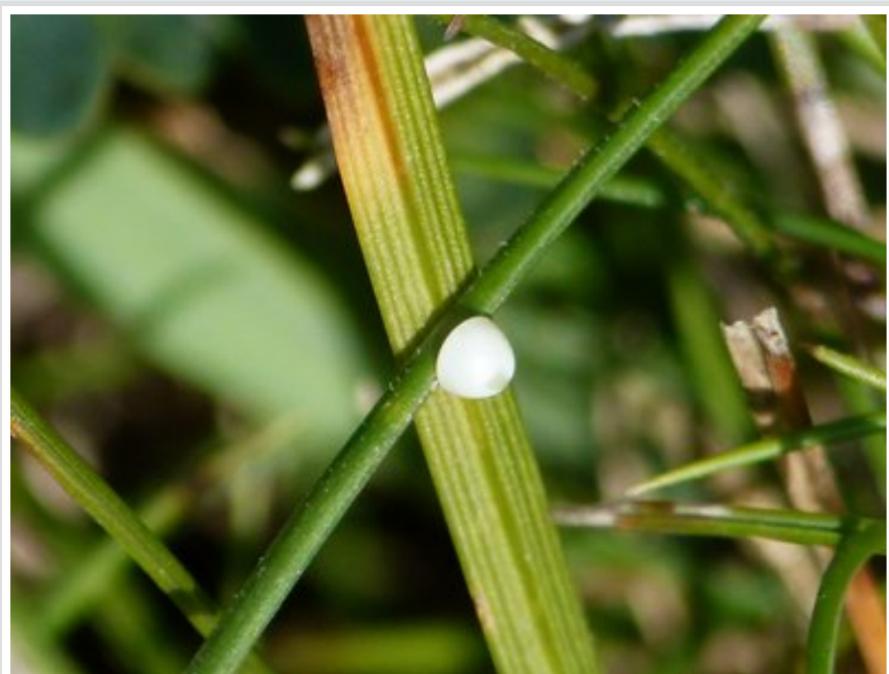
Plenty of buzzards live near the south coast. We also saw kestrel, kite and ravens. We also saw the round headed rampion. 😊



*silver spotted skipper female*



*male*



*silver spotted skipper egg*



*round headed rampion*



*painted lady*



*chalkhill blue pair*



*adonis blue*



*mallig down*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by William, 09-Aug-14 09:45 AM GMT

Hello Essex Buzzard,

Superb photos as ever 😊, there's a small chance I might be stopping off at Malling Down in the next few days, I just wondered if you had any advice as to where to search for Adonis Blue and Silver – Spotted Skipper in particular?

BWs

William

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 10-Aug-14 10:41 PM GMT

Hi William, from the car park on the B2192, take the path on the right. This takes you to a series of low mounds or hills, not 300 yards from the car park. Silver-spotted Skippers are right here!

For Adonis Blues, walk to the top of these mounds, admire the view, and then look for the golf course. Keeping this course on your left, walk along the top of the down, and then downhill when you are able, keeping an eye out for the alotments. Adonis are here at the bottom, especially in the evenings when, if it is sunny and not too windy, they gather to roost here.

If there is a choice, try to pick a day when it is not windy, as the wind funnels up this valley. Also contact Neil Hulme, who knows this site better than I do, and may be able to point out further hotspots!

Given good weather, both species are easy here.

Bws, Mark.

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by William, 11-Aug-14 11:43 AM GMT

Thanks Essex Buzzard,

I didn't get your comments until it was too late, but Silver – Spotted Skippers were exactly where you said they would be, lovely little butterflies! 😊

BWs

William

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 14-Aug-14 11:08 PM GMT

**BROWN HAIRSTREAK DAY!**

The last new species I was hoping to see this year was the Brown Hairstreak. So yesterday, Wednesday, we went to Neil Hulme's guaranteed site at Steyning in Sussex. We arrived at 11AM, and I spotted one straight away – I hadn't even got the camera ready!

We watched this female for several minutes in the blackthorn and bullace thickets that are specially managed for them here, then she flew back up into the canopy. Suddenly a shout came, another female was laying eggs further on. She was crawling up and down the vigorous young growths, stopping to bask and warm up, then going back into the thorn where we saw her laying several eggs. After several unsuitable weather days, she was probably getting desperate to lay a few! After doing so, she flew up into the trees.

This gave us the chance to have a look around the site. A patch of marjoram halfway up the slope looked interesting, so we headed that way. Suddenly, another Brown Hairstreak flew up in front of us, wasn't expecting to see it here! Lots of Common Blues and several Brown Argus were here, as were Small Tortoiseshells and Meadow Browns. At the top, several Brimstones and Walls were seen, along with a late Gatekeeper of two. Small White, Peacock, Holly Blue, Speckled Wood and Small Heath complete the picture.

About 6 Brown Hairstreaks were seen by the group. We saw three, two of which I spotted. 😊



*egg laying female*





habitat

## Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 17-Aug-14 10:03 PM GMT

Fantastic stuff Essex and great shots, I particularly like the open winged shot 😊👍 That shot of Steyning looks quiet similar to the approach to Shipton Bellinger which suggests that they're both great habitat for Brostreaks 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 24-Aug-14 10:11 PM GMT

Evening everyone,just back from our annual end of summer break on the Isle of Purbeck,in south Dorset. One of the most remarkable things about last week is how cold it's been,for late summer at least. Temperatures droped to single figures most nights,and rarely struggled above 15C by day-in southern England,this is roughly the average for October! Abnormal cold apart,the weather was reasonable though rather windy. Most days were dry,with intermittant sunshine and just the odd shower.

Buzzards and ravens were common and on our last day,an osprey and spoonbills were seen at Arne. Wheatears were migrating through,and several stonechat families were on the coast. Kestrels and the odd peregrine were also noted. Sand martins were at Old Harry Rocks.

Though hardly a vintage year,Clouded Yellows were present,with two or three seen at most of the sites we visited. We enjoyed these,and hopefully,the autumn weather will be a bit warmer than last year,and the eggs we saw being layed will be able to complete their cycle,and emerge as new adults in October. Something to look forward to now the season is comming to an end.

Hummingbird Hawkmoths were also seem most days. At Lulworth Cove,two were feeding together on the same clump of red valerian.

On the Monday morning,we started with a few hours at Aston Rowant,before driving down to West Lulworth in afternoon. So i'll finish for now with some Chiltern Gentians,and Silver-spotted Skippers. 😊





### Re: essex buzzard

by nomad, 25-Aug-14 09:01 AM GMT

Lovely Brown Hairstreak images. Steyning does seem a very reliable site for the females, I will have to make the trip one year. 😊 Good capture of a Silver-spotted Skipper on the beautiful Chiltern Gentian.

### Re: essex buzzard

by lee3764, 25-Aug-14 01:33 PM GMT

The usual brilliance of Mark's photos is something I always look forward to! That shot of the SS Skipper on Gentian is superb!! Keep up the good work Mark!  
Did you see I posted about the European Swallowtail in South Devon recently? My 10 year old son, Robert found it!!  
Cheers,  
Lee Slaughter (Cornwall). 😊 😊

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 26-Aug-14 09:50 PM GMT

Just seen it, Lee. What a stunning find! Young Robert is getting quite an eye for this sort of thing...

#### ISLE OF PURBECK

Last week, we spent Monday to Friday in Dorset. Normally, I do a day-by-day diary of events and sightings on these trips, but the weather was a bit hit and miss, with cold, cloudy conditions at times, so it is perhaps more prudent to mention some of the sites we visited, and sightings highlights.

Graylings were common at nearly all the sites we visited, and were seen every day. They are now extinct in Essex, so it was great to see so many colonies here. The photo below was taken at Bindon Hill, next to Lulworth Cove.



#### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 26-Aug-14 10:11 PM GMT

Bindon Hill is right next to where we stayed, and I had several walks here, including a couple before breakfast. Most butterflies were still asleep on these early visits, due to the cold, but during the day, Chalkhill blues were common. Most were faded, tattered adults but a few were quite good, and I was pleased to see them, given the early season this year, I thought I may be too late.

Last year, this hill was full of Walls but this time, I only saw a couple of worn individuals, reflecting the earlier flight time this year. A stunning Adonis Blue was seen, though, which had probably only emerged that morning! On one of the early visits, the Small White in the picture was warming up. 😊





*durdle door*



**Re: essex buzzard**

by Wurzel, 27-Aug-14 09:10 PM GMT

That Chalk Hill is in great nick Essex and I'm loving the view of Durdle Door 😊

Have a goodun

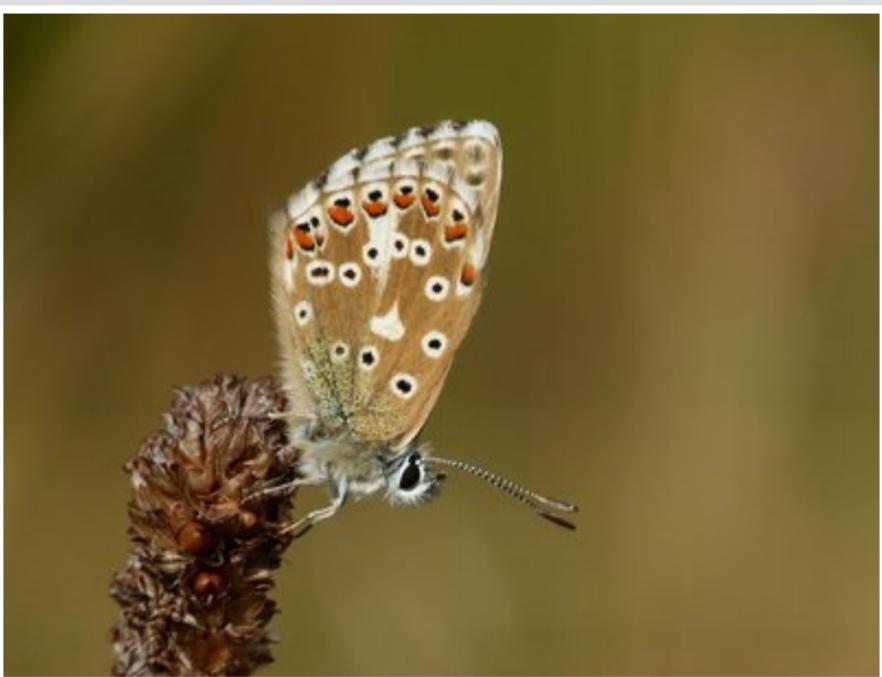
Wurzel

**Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 27-Aug-14 10:40 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel,it's a great spot down there,isn't it?

Ballard Down was a little disappointing. Last year,we saw Adonis Blues by the hundred here but this August,numbers have tumbled and we only saw about twenty. After a good summer,this was most unexpected. A few Brown Argus and Common Blues were present,too.





*old harry rocks*

### Re: essex buzzard

by Pauline, 28-Aug-14 06:48 AM GMT

You might not have seen many Mark but you've got a couple of great shots there. I love how the background compliments the butterfly.

### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 29-Aug-14 09:45 PM GMT

I thought the Chalk Hill was in good nick Essex but that Adonis is electrifying 🍷 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 30-Aug-14 10:03 PM GMT

Hi Paulne, thanks for your comments. I guess it's quality over quantity! I am working on my backgrounds and trying to improve my images, where possible.

Thanks also Wurzel. Fresh Adonis Blues are, arguably, our most stunning butterfly.

When walking the south west coast path west of Durdle Door, I always look for the Autumn Ladies Tresses. This tiny orchid is the last to flower and is so small, it goes unnoticed by most people. In some years, mid-August is too early for it but this year, they were abundant, especially on the downs just off the coast path. As its Latin name suggests, the flowers are usually arranged in a spiral, which can be in a clockwise or anticlockwise direction.

In these areas of short, sparse turf, Small Heaths were common, particularly on the lower slopes.



*lulworth cove*



*autumn ladies tresses*



*small heath*

## Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 31-Aug-14 10:12 PM GMT

More stunning vistas Essex and the orchids are delightful 😊 I've noticed a sudden resurgence in Small Heath recently too 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 31-Aug-14 10:13 PM GMT

While in Dorset,we spent a morning at Arne RSPB reserve. A few butterflies were around–Graylings and a few worn Gatekeepers and so–on. But far more interesting was a pond and its surroundings,which were pink with cross–leaf heath and Dorset heath–a kind of heather which is restricted to Dorset and Cornwall,i believe.

In this heather,were several wasp spiders. Although crickets and grasshoppers are their main food,they will happily eat butterflies too–on the downs i have often seen blue butterflies wrapped up in their webs. On the pond were several raft spiders,a first for me. One was seen to catch and drown a small green beetle on the water surface,before eating it.

Lots of dragonflies were nearby,including a late male emperor,which was trying to catch some of the smaller ones. A common darter flew into a spiders web where,quick as a flash,it was dispatched and wrapped up by the spider. Others were laying eggs by dipping their tails in the water.

The heaths were resplendant in pink ling heather,with the occasional sprig of yellow dwarf gorse thrown in.



*raft spider*



*dorset heath*



*wasp spider*



*arne*



*spider with a common darter*

## **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 02-Sep-14 10:36 PM GMT

### **FONTMALL DOWN**

OUR last port of call before we left Dorset was Fontmell Down. It was the first time i had visited for several years,and it was good to be back.

A small colony of Silver-spotted Skippers is here and,late in the season,several were seen. A female is below. A Brimstone and 3 Clouded yellows were seen,including one that was laying eggs on short sprigs of clover on the footpaths,ignoring big,lush plants nearby. Every now and then she would stop and bask for a minute or two,then lay a few more on this chilly day.

Numbers of Adonis Blue were low at Ballard,but here there were plenty. Nearly all were males,many fresh,too. A few Common and faded Chalkhill Blues were also around,as were lots of Meadow Browns. A nice end to our Dorset break. 😊



*clouded yellow*



*adonis blue*



*common blue*



*fontmell down*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by David M, 02-Sep-14 10:40 PM GMT

That's a highly productive return this late in the season, EB.

Glad to see you made the most of it.

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 02-Sep-14 10:42 PM GMT

Female Silver-spotted Skipper at Fontmell Down is below.



### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 02-Sep-14 10:47 PM GMT

Thanks David. Because of the earlier season this year, i felt that it might just be Adonis Blues in Dorset by late August, therefore i was pleased to still see a good variety of species.

Cheers, Mark.

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 05-Sep-14 10:44 PM GMT

DUNGERNESS

Inspired by the reports and excellent images on Hoggers' PD, i felt it was time to pay a visit to Dungeness this week, in the south of Kent. With its huge nuclear power station and almost endless shingle, it may at first glance seem a barren place, but a closer look reveals Dungeness is full of good stuff.

Amongst the shingle plants, including yellow horned poppies, were Small Coppers. Some were males, which lept out at anything that flew past, others were feeding on ragwort blooms. Several Brown Argus and Common Blues were here, too. Further on, near the power station, were wild cabbage, with attendant Large Whites. A Clouded Yellow was here, too, with another Small Copper or two. A Hummingbird Hawkmoth was on the shingle beach, and as we headed back, a couple of Small Heath were spotted.

So a most enjoyable couple of hours here, before we headed towards Dover for the afternoon. 😊



*small copper*



*common blue*



*brown argus*



*large white*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by Wurzel, 06-Sep-14 08:03 AM GMT

Lovely Small Coppers Essex 😊 Is it just me or do the later broods seem to have more pronounced 'tails'?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by Hoggers, 06-Sep-14 09:39 AM GMT

Hi EssexB, glad you had such a productive visit to Dungeness. Great report as usual!

I hope you popped into the pub for a bit of well earned refreshment!

Best wishes,

Hoggers.

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 08-Sep-14 09:58 PM GMT

Now you mention it,you could have something there,Wurzel.

Sadly,Hoggers,there wasn't time for any liquid refreshment in the pub! As we were soon off to...

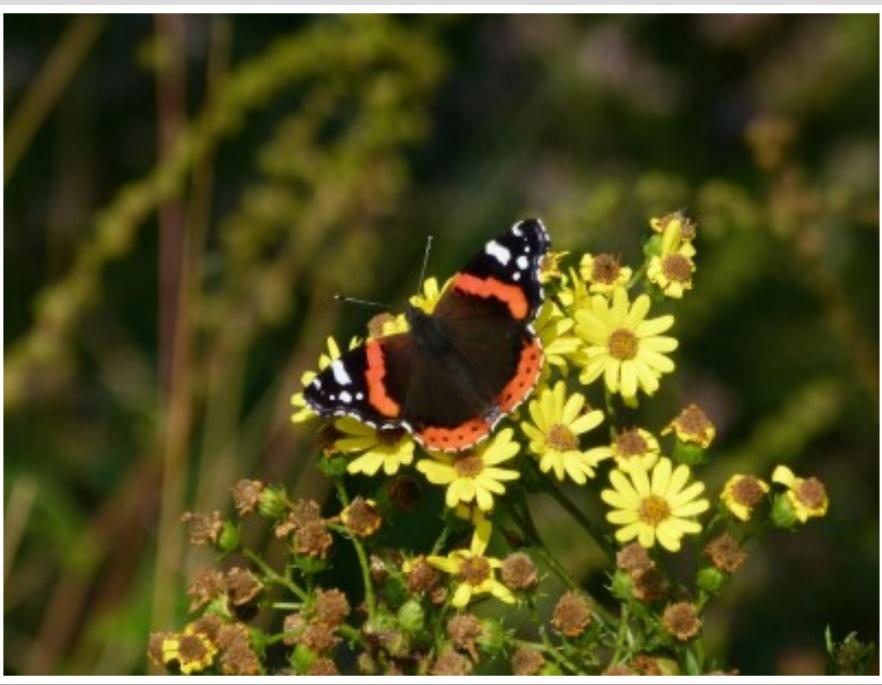
... Lydden Downs,near Dover.With warm early autumn sunshine continuing, There were still plenty of butterflies-16 species in all-quite impressive for September!

Surprisingly,there were still some Silver-spotted Skippers in good condition,mostly females. There were also a few mint Adonis Blues,but numbers were low-this has been the case at most of the Adonis Blue sites i have been to this summer. I wonder why this is? With good weather this summer,i was expecting a better 2nd emergence.

I was surprised,but delighted to see a Peacock. Meadow Browns were everywhere,even some fresh males. The devils-bit scabious is now in full bloom at this site,attracting many insects. Throw in another Hummingbird Hawkmoth,great green bush-cricket and a fox amongst other things,and this amounted to a very good day,for so late in the season. 😊

Full list: Silver-spotted Skipper,Brimstone,Large White,Small White,Small Copper,Brown Argus,Common Blue, Chalkhill Blue, Adonis Blue,Small Tortoiseshell,Peacock,Red Admiral,Painted Lady,Meadow Brown,Speckled Wood and Small Heath.





## Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 08-Sep-14 10:16 PM GMT

A lovely collection of atmospheric shots Essex, you've spurred me on to sometimes 'take a step back' when photographing the butterflies as that Peacock shot is fantastic 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 08-Sep-14 11:05 PM GMT

Just thought i would try something different,Wurzel-glad you like it!

## Re: essex buzzard

by David M, 09-Sep-14 08:16 AM GMT

### "essexbuzzard" wrote:

Full list: Silver-spotted Skipper,Brimstone,Large White,Small White,Small Copper,Brown Argus,Common Blue, Chalkhill Blue, Adonis Blue,Small Tortoiseshell,Peacock,Red Admiral,Painted Lady,Meadow Brown,Speckled Wood and Small Heath.

Good lord! It's like being in a time warp. Vanessids and Whites apart, there ain't much on the wing here in. s.Wales.

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 09-Sep-14 10:09 PM GMT

To be fair,David,as the autumn progresses i'm having to go a bit further to get my butterfly fix. But with a long winter to come,i will keep the season going as long as i can,if the weather holds.

Thanks for your feedback!

## Re: essex buzzard

by Neil Freeman, 09-Sep-14 10:21 PM GMT

Just catching up with you diary Essex, great reports and photos recently 😊 Interesting to compare your experiences in Dorset with mine although it looks like I was luckier with the weather.

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: essex buzzard

by Pauline, 10-Sep-14 06:54 AM GMT

Great reports and photos Mark, especially the Clouded Yellow ..... but where's the fox? 😊

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 12-Sep-14 10:23 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,actually i did photograph it-at great distance! This was a country fox,and as soon as it spotted us,it was gone in a flash. If i can crop it to a resonable image,i'll post it. 😊

### SOMETHING A LITTLE DIFFERENT

This week,we headed up to Martins Meadow,north of Ipswich. These meadows are great in spring and early summer,with many orchids, snakes-head fritillaries and other flowers. But in autumn i come to look at the meadow saffron,a crocus-like flower whih was once common but has died out in most places,leaving just a few protected populations. The blooms are pink or white,and several grow from each bulb. I have a few in my garden but seeing them in the wild means so much more.

Southern and migrant hawker dragonflies were seen near the hedges. At one end of this Suffolk Wildlife Trust reserve is an old orchard. As old trees die out,they are being replaced with old,traditional varieties.

Butterflies were not ignored,of course,and Large and Small Whites were present. There seems to have been a third,autumn brood of these this year.Certainly there are a lot more around now than a month ago. Common Blue,Small Tortoiseshell,Red Admiral and Speckled Woods were spotted,and a barn owl was lovely to see. 😊



*martins meadows, suffolk*





### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 13-Sep-14 10:19 PM GMT

After lunch, we headed down to Bedfords Park. This is a favorite site of mine for autumn Small Coppers and, sure enough, several fresh ones have emerged. Some of the Coppers were feeding on Devils-bit Scabious. Another was laying eggs on the sorrel plants, choosing the leaves that were growing in warm, sheltered conditions.

Large White, Common Blue, Comma and Speckled Wood were seen too.



## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 26-Sep-14 10:08 PM GMT

END OF THE SEASON-OR IS IT?

DESPITE the good weather so far this autumn-or perhaps because of it? the butterfly season seems to have come to an early end this year,with nothing much left apart from the odd Comma, cabbage white or Red Admiral. Commas in particular seem to be scarcer this year,with very few feeding on blackberries. I am still hoping an autumn generation of Clouded Yellows and Walls will emerge in October,if the weather holds.

So it's time to head west,and visit the Exmoor National Park. I have been coming here for many years,and it never loses its appeal. With splendid scenery and plenty of wildlife,this is a lovely place to get away from it all.The continuing good weather also helps!

On Wednesday,we parked at Horner woods,and walked up through the woods,on to the lower slopes and right up to Dunkery Beacon,at 1705 feet,the highest point on Exmoor. A tumbling stream runs through the woods,often there are dippers here, and in the clearings were Speckled Woods. Higher up,there were ravens,buzzards,a sparrowhawk,kestrel and a family of stonechats. At the very top,it was quite windy and cold,so after enjoying the view right over to south Wales and,in the other direction to Dartmoor on this clear day,we headed down. Much of the heather had gone over by late September,but there was still some in good colour,with yellow western gorse as a contrast.Near the tree line,several groups of red deer were grazing,including two stags.

Once back at the bottom,we stopped for a delicious and well eared Exmoor cream tea at the Horner tea gardens (other tea gardens are available!). While we enjoyed it,and the warm sunshine,a Comma and Small White were seen.



*speckled wood*



*exmoor*



*western gorse*



*heathery exmoor*



*exmoor cream tea*



*dunkery beacon*



*dunkery-view to porlock and south wales*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by Neil Hulme, 26-Sep-14 10:25 PM GMT

Hi Mark,  
I love the cream tea selfie. Great report as always.  
BWs, Neil

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 26-Sep-14 10:31 PM GMT

While on Exmoor, we also drove up onto the high moor, taking the road from Minehead and Porlock, up over the moor and down to Lynton and Valley of Rocks.

On the high ground, several groups of beautiful Exmoor ponies were found, including foals—everybody say ahh—some of which were still very small. It's amazing such young ponies can survive the cold, wet Exmoor winter—let's hope the weather is kind to them.

The views where Exmoor meets the sea, at Lynmouth, are spectacular. At the Valley of Rocks, lots of wild goats were seen—both on the rocks themselves, and at the bottom. It's a good job goats are so sure-footed, as those grazing the cliff-tops had a sheer drop of hundreds of feet if they make a mistake!



*exmoor ponies*



*valley of rocks*



*valley of goats!*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 26-Sep-14 10:35 PM GMT

Thanks Neil. I will be keeping an eye on Sussex sightings over the next few days, in case there is a good Clouded Yellow emergence. Love your report from Mill Hill, great pictures of Walls there. Congratulations. 😊🍷

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 29-Sep-14 09:31 PM GMT

#### **CLOUDED YELLOW CATERPILLARS**

WHILE i was in Dorset in August, i watched a Clouded Yellow laying eggs, and i couldnt resist taking a few. But when this happens, what do you do, if you watch the female, you loose sight of where she layed the egg, but if you take your eyes off the female, she is half-way down the slope when you look up!

I collected four eggs. I don't do much rearing, but when i do, i normally keep my caterpillars in the shade, to stop them developing too quickly. But although these Clouded Yellow eggs hatched after about a week, the tiny caterpillars grew at a snails pace and by mid September, they were still very small. Aware that this is a species that cannot survive our winters and has no dormant stage, they were in danger of running out of time. So i decided i needed to speed things up, and i put my net cage in full sunshine. The result was immediate and, ten days later, the three surviving cats are fully grown.

I took this picture on Saturday. Any day now they will pupate.



### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 29-Sep-14 11:22 PM GMT

Stunning scenery shots Essex, almost as good as some in Dorset 😊 I wouldn't have thought that a bit of sunshine would have made that much difference when it comes to speeding cats on but it certainly seems to do so 😲 – could it be due to increased enzyme action? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 03-Oct-14 10:01 PM GMT

I think that's probably it–this is really an exotic species after all, and only able to survive here during the warmer months.

Last week i mentioned that i was hoping an autumn generation of Clouded Yellows and Walls would emerge. Well i'm delighted to say they have. With a couple of spare afternoons this week, i headed down to Canvey Island. Today especially, there was lots of wery warm sunshine, and temperatures topped 20C–probably for the last time this year, sadly.

At Canvey West RSPB, there are several grazing marshes and fields, some full of clover and various hawkweeds. Flying over these fields were several mint-fresh Clouded Yellows. Males were zig-zaging around, whereas females tended to spend more time feeding. They were all a great pleasure to see, and confirmed the butterfly season is not quite over. 😊



*clouded yellow female*



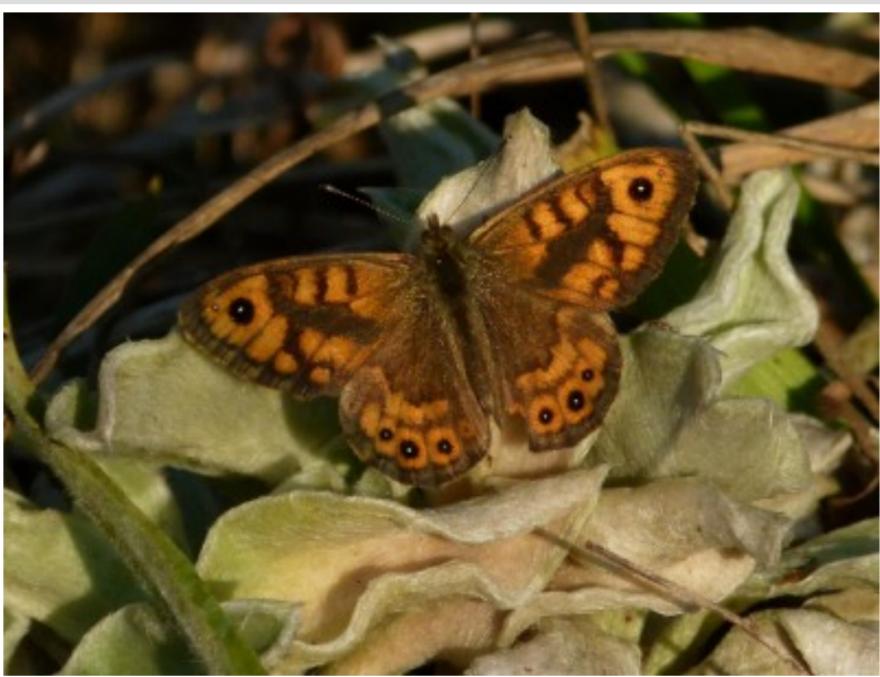
*clouded yellow male*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 03-Oct-14 10:26 PM GMT

Several Walls were also seen at Canvey West, but a nearby site is probably even better for them. So I also visited Canvey Wick brownfield nature reserve. In the 1960s, this was to be developed for oil storage tanks, but then the oil market collapsed, and the site was abandoned. The spoil heaps and rubble, while not attractive to look at, have developed just the thin, broken turf the Wall prefers.

Ten to 15 Walls were seen, and as it declines in the general countryside, such brownfield sites could become invaluable to the Wall's survival in future, at least at a local scale. Wall sightings, especially in October, are always welcome. 😊 😎



*wall male*



*wall female*



*wall pair*

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 03-Oct-14 10:58 PM GMT

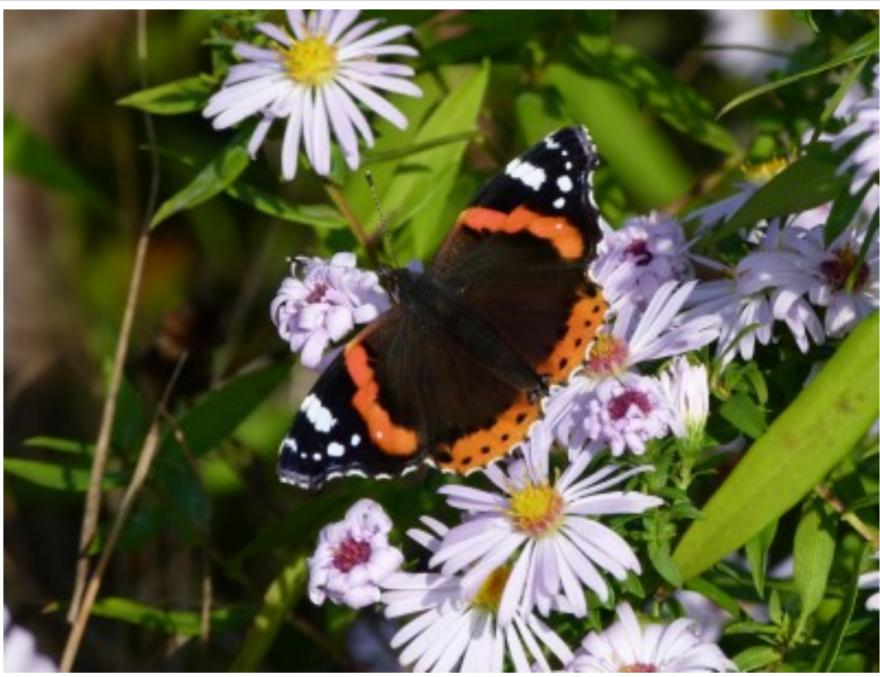
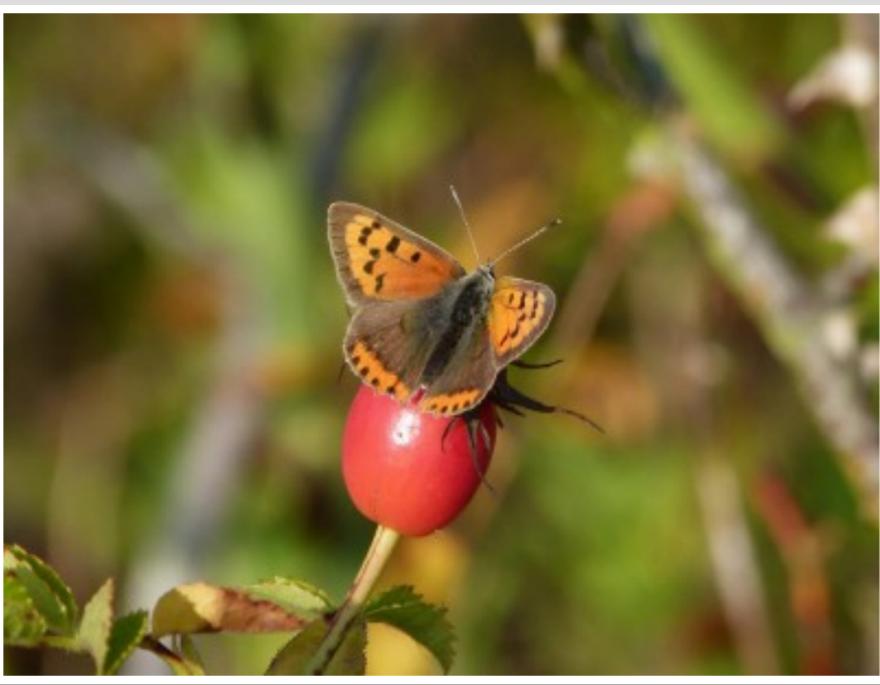
Several other kinds of butterflies were seen at the two sites. Surprisingly, 3 Peacocks were feeding on Michlemas Daisies, and several Red Admiral were flying south, migrating. A very nice Painted Lady was great to see. Large and Green-veined whites, Small Coppers, Common Blue, Brown Argus and Speckled Woods were also enjoying the warm autumn sunshine, as, indeed, was I! 😊😎

A few more pic's to follow!

### **Re: essex buzzard**

by essexbuzzard, 03-Oct-14 11:13 PM GMT

A few more pictures as promised!



### Re: essex buzzard

by Goldie M, 04-Oct-14 01:59 PM GMT

I love that Small Copper on the berry, all the Photo's are great Essex but that one is super Goldie 😊

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 08-Oct-14 12:20 AM GMT

Thanks,Goldie. I am so pleased the warm weather lasted just long enough to keep the season going into October.

Meanwhile,late last week,my three Clouded Yellow cats pupated. They last about two weeks at this stage,so this would give an emergence date of around 16 October. Hopefully there will still be just enough warmth left to allow them to migrate south.

Unfortunately,they attached themselves to the side of the cage,ignoring the sticks i had provided,which spoils the photograph a little;



### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 08-Oct-14 11:21 PM GMT

Great reports of the Cloudy and your visit to Canvey Essex 😊 That's a nice range of species to still be seeing and great shots 📷 – it's gone very, very quiet over this way what with the low pressure systems sprawling in 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 23-Oct-14 10:49 PM GMT

#### CHRYSALIS UPDATE

Last weekend, my Clouded Yellow chrysalis's had still not hatched, though they have changed colour slightly. They have taken slightly longer than I hoped, and this is a little concerning, as it is now too cold, cloudy, windy for flight most days. With warm weather, I would like to let the adults go on Sunday. There are also very few nectar flowers left in the countryside.

This is how they looked on Sunday, when it was warm and sunny outside;



### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 23-Oct-14 11:16 PM GMT

However, the first one hatched on Monday, followed by another on Tuesday. I took the picture below yesterday (Wednesday).

I can only hope they find some way of feeding up and migrating south, before the last warm weather vanishes. At least they have a chance, had I not collected the eggs, they would presumably have developed more slowly, and perished in the wild at the caterpillar stage.

I would like to think I have helped these in some small way!



### Re: essex buzzard

by lee3764, 24-Oct-14 04:37 PM GMT

[b[color=#804000:3c7w92b0]]Hi Mark.....You have helped them! They would probably have perished in the wild. You have also learnt a bit about the natural history of the Clouded Yellow too! Well done to you mate!

All the best,

Lee Slaughter (Cornwall).[/color:3c7w92b0][[/b] 😊

### Re: essex buzzard

by David M, 24-Oct-14 08:43 PM GMT

You've certainly given them an advantage, EB.

The weather is still mild right now and these critters are powerful flyers, so there's a chance for all of them, which wouldn't have been the case had you ignored them.

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 25-Oct-14 11:37 PM GMT

Thank you for your kind and reassuring messages. All the more welcome,as i was beginning to doubt myself. You are right, Lee,i have learnt much and have enjoyed doing this.

A Comma and two Red Admirals seen at work today,plus a kite,two kestrel and a buzzard.

Here are a few more pictures of my released Clouded Yellows,which all turned out to be female. Plus red admirals feeding on Hedera 'Paddy's Pride' at work,which i took earlier this week.



*two red admiral*



*an empty chrysalis*



*clouded yellow, reared*



## Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 26-Oct-14 08:42 PM GMT

Stunning images Essex 🇬🇧 Is it just me or do some if the markings appear more 'block' like than dotted – particularly in the first emerged? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 02-Nov-14 10:28 PM GMT

WHAT A WEEK!

This week has seen sunshine, fairy light winds and record-breaking temperatures! Almost 24C was recorded in London, and also on the north Kent coast, with 21C exceeded over quite wide areas of the country. The previous highest late October temps I can find are the extraordinary reading of 22.2C at Cape Wrath, north-west Scotland on 22nd 1975 and 22.6C at Portsmouth in 1969.

The wet then warm weather has resulted in a great crop of fly agaric mushrooms in my local woods this week. However, by time I got there with my camera, some new residents had moved in! 😄



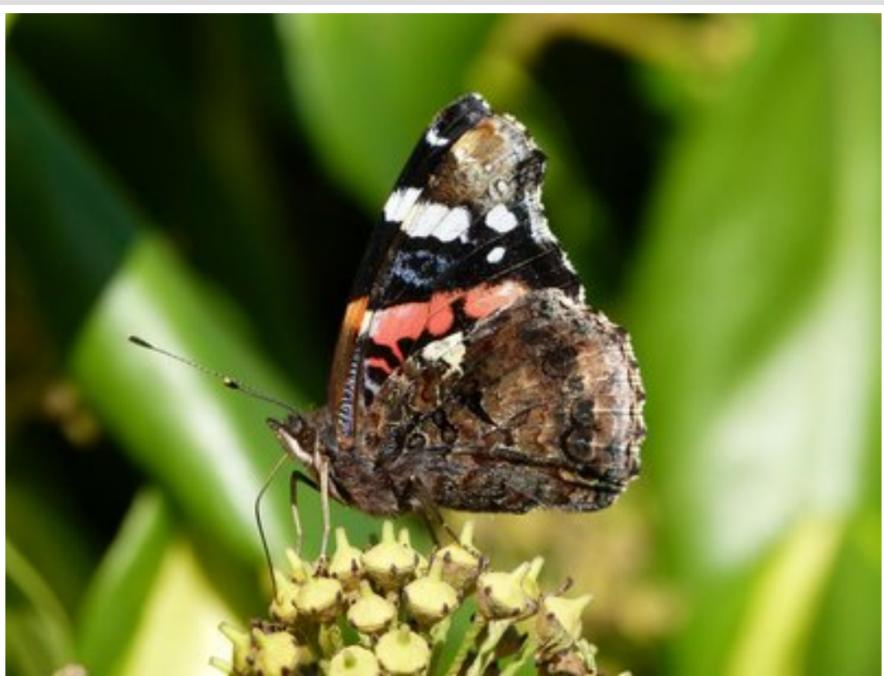
## Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 02-Nov-14 10:38 PM GMT

WELCOME TO NOVEMBER

Yesterday (1 Nov) was another warm day with plenty of sunshine, 😊 and 3 Red Admirals were active on ivy at work.

Earlier this week, on another warm day, this Small Tortoiseshell was at Maldon, with a couple more Red Admirals. 😊



*red admiral, 1st november*



### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 03-Nov-14 10:53 PM GMT

That's a great find and shot Essex 😊 I wish I could find a November butterfly 📷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by Goldie M, 04-Nov-14 12:53 PM GMT

Love the Red Admirals Essex, I saw one yesterday but I'd no Camera I won't leave it behind again Goldie 😞

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 23-Nov-14 10:17 PM GMT

#### REVIEW OF 2014

Here is my short review of 2014, from an entirely personal perspective.

A good spring and summer, with long spells of fine weather, that somehow failed to produce a bumper crop of butterflies. After great abundance in 2013, most summer species dropped back to average numbers this year. But after a run of poor springs, the weather relented this year, and spring species seemed to do much better. 😊

While it was distinctly average in terms of butterfly numbers, for me it was an excellent year, and I saw and photographed 56 of the 59 British and Irish species. Good weather through most of the season was a great help in finding especially butterflies whose colonies are a long way from home. Only Chequered Skipper, Irish Wood White and Glanville Fritillary were missed. Meanwhile, Esther managed to chalk off a few lifers, missing only Irish Wood White and Black Hairstreak. 😊

#### HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights this year were my March trip to Gibraltar and Malaga, where Spanish Festoons and Provence Orangetips put on a cracking display, and lifers included Monarch, Green-stripe White and Black-eyed Blue. Seeing hundreds of Marsh Fritillaries in a field in Cornwall stands out, too, as do my short trips to northern England, the first for several years. It was great to see species like Northern Brown Argus, Mountain Ringlet, Scotch Argus and Large Heath again. And, as always, I love to see the Silver-spotted Skippers in late summer. 😊

#### LOWLIGHTS

My continued inability to get a decent photo of one of the most abundant butterflies of all- the Purple Hairstreak! 😞

### Re: essex buzzard

by David M, 23-Nov-14 10:33 PM GMT

#### "essexbuzzard" wrote:

#### LOWLIGHTS

My continued inability to get a decent photo of one of the most abundant butterflies of all- the Purple Hairstreak! 😞

I empathise with you, EB.

That phenomenon represents a lifetime 'lowligh' for me, and I won't be satisfied until it is rectified!!

I think this is a species that you simply have to get lucky with.

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 23-Nov-14 10:57 PM GMT

I've got close, David. When I was at Fermyn Wood in July, we were watching a White-letter Hairstreak in a wych elm when a Purple Hairstreak flew up from under our feet! Having perhaps just emerged from the chrysalis guess what? It flew straight to the top of an oak. 😊

One for another day.

### Re: essex buzzard

by trevor, 24-Nov-14 11:39 AM GMT

Hi Essex

How I agree with you about the Purple Hairstreak! Every year I travel miles to see either new or rare species which I can't find locally, and usually come home with lots of shots. But there are Purple Hairstreaks in an Oak in the corner of my garden, not one shot! they are always 50ft up. I wonder if Neil Hulme has any special potions to bring them down. 😊

TREVOR.

### Re: essex buzzard

by peterc, 24-Nov-14 04:05 PM GMT

Trevor,

It is often luck when you see Purple Hairstreaks low down but I might have already mentioned elsewhere on this forum that after some days of rain when honeydew may be washed off on the oak leaves that the PH may look elsewhere, possibly on lower vegetation.

Peter

### Re: essex buzzard

by Wurzel, 25-Nov-14 11:26 PM GMT

Alright Essex – I feel your frustration with the Purple one – I don't know if it'll help but all of my low down Purple Hairstreaks have been on Bracken 😊  
See you Saturday 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: essex buzzard

by essexbuzzard, 26-Nov-14 11:06 PM GMT

See you Saturday.

Anyone know where I can get a cherry picker? 😊

Somehow, I think a few eyebrows might be raised if I drove one of them through my local woods! 😊