

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 25-Jan-16 05:09 PM GMT

Our Butterfly year commences.

Our first butterfly of 2016 was a Red Admiral at Dungeness on the 20th Jan closely followed by a Peacock today (25th), also at Dungeness. Both seen during warm sunny spells and in sheltered spots. Not sure winter is really over yet but none the less still very nice to see. We have also seen a few Bumblebees the last few days although I am not sure of what they were finding to feed on.

Birding wise it has been fairly quiet here in Kent with little changing at Dungeness. There appears to have been a small influx of Bitterns of late with as many as 5 being seen on one day. We managed one on the 19th Jan and 3 the next day. Duck numbers have increased but no big numbers of Smew have arrived. We have only seen one male but up to 7 females. Goldeneye numbers remain around 10, don't the males look very smart.

An obliging Long Eared Owl near the RSPB Visitor centre attracted many visitors over the Christmas period, although it could go missing on wet and windy days.

There are a number of Short Eared Owls wintering in Kent and we have been fortunate to see two regularly at Seasalter most late afternoons in suitable weather. A bit like us, they don't like the wet and wind.

The sea at Dungeness continues to provide a regular and well watched 1W Caspian Gull. It spends long periods just loafing around the fishing boats but has taken a fancy to bread rolls, fish left overs from the fishermen and other goodies. On the 14th January it was joined by a superb 1W Glaucous Gull. This bird is a brute and very white in plumage. When present it shines like a beacon but does go missing for long periods, wandering between the fishing boats and the Patch.

We have also been lucky to connect with one of at 3 Dartford Warblers around the Dungeness Peninsular. Where as our luck so far has failed to connect with either of the 2 Penduline Tits that have been present around the viewing ramp area over the last week or so. Despite many hours looking these beautiful, but tiny, birds have managed to evade many birders. They have such a big area to get lost in. Raven numbers we have seen at Dungeness this winter increased to 3 on the 15th Jan.

Other birds of note are Glossy Ibis still at Pett Level near the roadside pool. A group of 25 Bewick Swans around Walland Marsh, a regular Tundra Bean Goose in with a small flock of White Fronted Geese around the Scotney GP area. Varying numbers of Great White Egrets around Dungeness with a maximum of 7 being seen. A Slavonian Grebe seen occasionally around Dungeness but Black Necked Grebe more often with 6 being seen this past weekend.

The most unexpected record on Dungeness RSPB during the period was the sight of 2 Shags on the 5th Jan during a period of very heavy rain. In nearly 30 years of watching the Dungeness area these are the first that we have seen away from the sea and actually on the RSPB. It just shows that you never know what will turn up.

I attach a few photos of the 1w Caspian Gull. They hopefully highlight the features that enable you to pick the bird out among the many gulls. The main features are the very white head, the long legs, the Black eye and the longer thinner bill. This particular bird is a bully and will easily see off the numerous Herring Gulls when scraps are on offer.

Enjoy.



The 1st Winter Caspian Gull at Dungeness Point.



The 1st Winter Caspian Gull at Dungeness Point.



The 1st Winter Caspian Gull at Dungeness Point.



Record photo of the 2 Shags at Dungeness RSPB in an absolute downpour.



The Long Eared Owl at Dungeness RSPB.



A pair of Egyptian Geese in a flooded field at Dungeness.

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 15-Feb-16 04:34 PM GMT

Another bully turns up as The Tropics send us a surprise

On the last update I mentioned the fact that a bully of a bird turned up at Dungeness in the form of a brute of a Caspian Gull, well another far larger

bully also arrived, this time a 1st winter Glaucous Gull. Even the Greater Black Backs stay clear of this bird at feeding time as it can certainly look after itself. Glaucous Gulls can vary a lot in size with this one being on the large size. It is very white and easy to pick out if it's in the area. It seems to have no mates, for it has a habit of resting on it's own or on the fringes of groups of gulls.

The real surprise these past weeks has been the influx of a creature all the way from the Tropics following periods of very strong SW winds, of gale force strength at times. I am referring to the Goose Barnacle. It has reached our shores not under its own steam but by the usual habit of attaching itself to flotsam, usually plastic bottles or containers. This is one animal that makes use of the junk we dispose of in the sea. Dungeness has recorded about a dozen bunches of the Goose Barnacle this year, which has also been recorded at other Southern locations. Recorded most years in Britain this particular year has seen an usually large influx.

It's nice to report that we have seen our first moths of the year. Spring Usher, Dark Chestnut and March Moth. All at Ruckinge. Our own garden has failed to produce a single one. Also pleasing was our first Small Tortoiseshell on the 11th February at Pett Level.

Bird wise it has been another period of hard toil. There are very few scarce ducks at Dungeness this winter with just one male and a few female Smew. The only Scaup found has been one in the Oare Marsh area although even this has been elusive. Dungeness has seen a few Black Necked Grebes, but so far only one Slavonian Grebe. Wild geese have been restricted to a few flocks of Whitefronts on Sheppey and Dungeness. Not mentioned on our last update was our visit to the Isle of Sheppey on the 21st January where we connected with the long staying Shorelark and Richards Pipit. Both unusual birds in Kent and worth the effort and wait. Another treat was the flock of Brambling wintering in the Teynham Church area. We managed to see 6 of this most delightful winter finch. The males in particular look very smart in their full breeding plumage. The long staying Glossy Ibis remains at Pett Level. It took us a few visits before we connected with it although we now manage to see it on most visits with a little patience. Bitterns and Great White Egrets are still putting on a regular show at Dungeness but the only other decent bird we have seen recently has been a Cattle Egret found at Biddenden. It disappears for days on end before finally appearing for the odd day, or rather late afternoon. Probably the smartest bird we have seen during this period was the stunning male Hen Harrier seen yesterday at Scotney Gravel Pits. This bird has the Wow factor, which makes it even more baffling when certain estates in the North of Britain go to great lengths to deter this species.

By the time of my next update there is an outside possibility of an early summer migrant, or there was until I saw this weeks cold weather forecast.
Dave



Goose Barnacles at Dungeness. An almost annual visitor to Britain but very rare at Dungeness.



1st Winter Glaucous Gull at Dungeness



1st Winter Glaucous Gull at Dungeness



1st Winter Glaucous Gull at Dungeness



Glossy Ibis still lingers on Pett Level by the roadside pool.



Tree Sparrow on Walland Marsh. A declining species in Britain.

Re: Dave Brown

by Goldie M, 17-Feb-16 10:28 AM GMT

Great photos Dave, ages since we've seen Sparrows round here. Goldie 😊

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 27-Mar-16 05:22 PM GMT

The Butterflies and Migrant Birds arrive.

It took a while but Good Friday 25th March 2016 produced the first decent day of butterflies and migrant birds. Butterflies were 4 Small Tortoiseshells (1 at Dungeness & 3 at Hamstreet), Peacock (Hamstreet) and a Small White at Dungeness. Not big numbers but a teaser for what is to come. Bird wise the same and following day produced excellent numbers of Firecrests, we saw 20 plus but the whole area produced a record 101. The Firecrest does winter in Britain but is also a common spring migrant. This bird is one of my favourite British birds and is always a joy to watch. Also seen were a few Black Redstarts and good numbers of Chiffchaffs. Disappointingly we have only seen 1 Wheatear and that took until yesterday, our latest record for many years. Others have seen the first Sandwich Terns, Common Terns, Swallows, Sand Martins and Garganey. Safe to say the Summer has arrived, if only the weather would agree.

We have even seen a decent haul of moths thanks to our friends at Ruckinge. Yellow Horned being the best, but Oak Beauty takes some beating for good looks. Also present were Red Chestnut, Lead Coloured Drab, Twin Spotted Quaker, Early Grey, Common Quaker and Small Quaker.

The period from mid February to today has been fairly quiet with little turn over in variety of birds. The Dungeness 1w Glaucous Gull was regular until

the end of Feb, as was the Glossy Ibis at Pett Level. Other than that it has been the same Great White and Little Egrets, Marsh Harriers, Common Buzzards, Slavonian and Black Grebes, Smew, Goldeneye, Long Eared Ow and Ravens. A Red Kite near Oare on the 23 February was a treat, as was the 2 Rock Pipits of the Scandinavian race (*Littoralis*) at Dungeness on the 20 March.

Our daily excursions have been brightened by the good numbers of Primroses, Lesser Celandine, Cuckoo Flower and Bluebells seen. Hopefully a good sign for the coming months.

I have included a few photographs of moths taken last year for a change. Well, they look almost like Butterflies.
Dave



Striped Hawkmoth at Dungeness. A really late record on the 19 December. An early Xmas present.



Sombre Brocade at Hythe. A most unexpected record for Kent with less than 20 British records. Although now increasing in the South West.



Porters Rustic at Hythe. A rather dull looking moth but a great rarity. Hence left in the tube.



Feathered Brindle. Fairly regular at Dungeness but this was an usual inland record at Ruckinge.



Red Chestnut. A reasonably common enough moth.

Re: Dave Brown

by Pauline, 28-Mar-16 04:58 PM GMT

Interesting report as usual Dave and some smashing moth shots – a spur to get my moth trap out again 😊

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 22-Apr-16 04:15 PM GMT

Is it really Spring?

In our area it seems as if Spring starts and then suddenly stops. Really warm days have been few and the winds are mainly in the wrong direction for migration. At least most days have been dry but a cold Northerly or Easterly wind persists. Consequently nature watching has been hard work with many days of not much.

The 30 March was a teaser with Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock, whilst the next day gave us Dark Edged Beefly. There was also some movement of Buzzards with 35 being seen, including one flock of 14.

The 1st April produced 5 Peacocks at Hamstreet with 3 Brimstones on the 3rd. This date also gave us an inland record at Hamstreet of Raven. This species is definitely on the increase in Kent. The 4th saw a few moths in the form of Square Spot, Pale Pinon, Coloured Drab and Lead Coloured Drab.

The 5th saw a decent fall of migrants at Dungeness with our first Sedge Warblers of the year, together with Redstart, 2 Firecrests and 40 plus Willow Warblers. Moths were looking up with Early Thorn, Twin Spotted Quaker and Clouded Drab. A Wheatear and Black Redstart on the 7th at Dungeness was interesting but it took until the 9th to add another Swallow. The 10th was warm and sunny leading to 10 Peacocks, Comma, 5 Brimstone, Small Tortoiseshell and Yellow Underwing (moth) at Hamstreet. The local woods were covered in Lesser Celandine, Primrose and Wood Anemones, The 12th produced an unexpected record of Glossy Ibis at Oare Marshes, 2 Green Veined Whites, with 5 Wheatears at nearby Seasalter. The next day was slightly better at Dungeness with our first Whimbrel of the year, 4 Wheatears, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, Whitethroat, 16 Sandwich Terns, 5 Common Terns and a Peacock. Also the Grey Backed Mining Bee *Andrena vaga* seemed to be in reasonable numbers. I believe that this colony is the first recorded in Britain of this species, although it was first reported late last year. The RSPB have now put a sign up advertising its presence, safe in the knowledge that it's right by a footpath so can easily be seen near the main car park.

We heard and saw our first Nightingales at Hamstreet on the 14th April. Quite an early date for this beautiful songster. Very easy to hear, seeing them is another matter.

We end this update with a special trip for us. On the 17th we visited Thetford Forest with the prime objective being plants. With information of their presence, and directions, we called at a roadside nature reserve adjacent to a housing estate in Thetford to see Breckland and Fingered Speedwell. Not the tallest of plants, about 75mm, but some of the rarest in Britain. A strange setting for such a rare plant. Even with directions they were not easy to find as many Wall and Ivy Leaved Speedwells were also present. Eventually though we found 2 Breckland and 4 Fingered. Next on the agenda was Grape Hyacinth at Tuddenham. Being a lot taller they were more obvious, we found 16 plants, again on a road side nature reserve. Nearby we found another 3 Breckland Speedwells in a field margin. During the day we called in at an undisclosed site to see 3 Goshawks displaying, a Red Kite drifting around and a Stone Curlew sitting in a field.

The feature of our successful day was the sighting of 6 Muntjac Deer at different locations. A new species for us although I imagine not one that is

welcomed in all areas as they can do some crop damage.
We look forward to a rise in temperature and the increase in species that will bring, including the Grizzled Skipper and Green Hairstreak.
I will add some photos later.

Almost forgot. Speckled Wood in our garden on the 11th April and Small Copper at Dungeness on the 19th.
Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 25-Apr-16 03:11 PM GMT

Added a few photos to update my last diary entry.

With temperatures hovering around the 8 or 9 degree mark over the weekend it came as no surprise that we did not see one Butterfly. This is heading for one of the coldest Aprils of recent times in this part of Kent. Today is no better and looking at the forecast for the week it will not be a surprise if we see no more butterflies here until the 1st May.



The beautiful Firecrest taken at Dungeness Lighthouse Garden.



Small Copper (or Hoggers butterfly) at Dungeness.



Green Veined White near Appledore (Kent).



Distant photo of a Hare at undisclosed location in Kent.



Ruff at Pett Level (Sussex).



Peacock at Hamstreet Forest complex.



Egyptian Goose at Dungeness.



Muntjac Deer trying to hide at a location near Mildenhall (Suffolk). Photo taken from the car.



Our 1st Speckled Wood of the year, and in our garden.



Wild Grape Hyacinth on a roadside nature reserve at Tuddenham (Suffolk).

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 12-May-16 04:15 PM GMT

A Mixed Bag.

I was wrong in my last update for despite the very cold weather we did see a few butterflies before the end of April. Small Copper, Small White, Peacock, Green Veined White and Orange Tip. How they managed to survive I don't know for I was in my winter coat for most of the period. However, a few warm spells brought them out for short periods. On the 28th April it was actually warm enough for a Clouded Yellow to fly in at Samphire Hoe and disappear along the railway bank. The same site also produced 2 Dingy Skippers. It was not until the 1st May that numbers really increased with many Green Veined Whites and Orange Tips being seen on our visit to Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve. It took until the 4th for our first Grizzled Skippers at Dungeness and of course many Small Coppers. The 3rd had produced our first Green Hairstreaks of the year with 2 at Wye NNR. A visit on the 9th saw increased numbers with 4 Green Hairstreaks and 9 Dingy Skippers.

Yesterday (11th) we found 17 Wall Browns within a 200 metre strip along the cliffs at Capel and today we found 4 Small Blues at Kingsdown. So an encouraging start to the butterfly season.

If only I could say the same for our moth trap. Bit of a disaster really. Very low numbers and variety within our garden. I am sure that all the local house building going on is having some detrimental effect. I have had to rely on others to view a few decent moths. Scarce Prominent and Red Twin-spot Carpet probably the best.

The saving grace has been the birds. It started with a Red Kite near Faversham (20th), a fine male Iberian Chiffchaff singing and showing at Northdown Park (23rd). A good find by a hard working and dedicated local patch worker. The same day also saw us watching a Black Brant at Pegwell Bay. Much to our surprise the Glossy Ibis appeared in front of us at Pett Level on the 27th April after being missing for about 3 weeks. Finally the best bird of the period was undoubtedly the Rufous Turtle Dove we saw on a housing estate in Otford on the 1st May. There is a story behind this bird which is from the Central Asia area and an occasional migrant to Europe and even Britain. The bird first appeared in a residents garden late February but was very erratic. He even managed a few photos and kindly sent them to the County Recorder. However his garden could not accommodate the numbers of birders expected so actual site details were withheld.

The County Recorder and others searched the general area to see if the bird could be seen from a public area without affecting the residents. However it was not seen again by any birder until the 30th April and this time it could be viewed from a public road. Over the next week or so a few hundred

birders have seen the bird and without any disturbance to the locals, who incidentally have been encouraging to visitors. Some even offering tea and biscuits, most very inquisitive. Where had it been too for about 2 months can probably be explained by its habit of disappearing for long periods during the day and only being seen early morning and evening and then at some distance. With an improvement in the weather we look forward to some good sightings ahead.

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 31-May-16 04:41 PM GMT

Only a few decent days for Butterflies

Here in East Kent the weather recently has been on the poor side for butterflies and moths. Mainly as a result of cold northerly winds, heavy cloud or cold nights.

Not ideal conditions for May. The lack of moths in particular is effecting all catches along the South East coast so it is of no surprise that little of interest has been seen. Still we keep trying and hoping.

Friday the 13th produced 4 Red Kites around the Hamstreet area and another later over Ashford. Clearly there was some movement of Kites through Kite that day.

Monday the 16th became warmer and Butterflies beckoned. A visit to Bonsai Bank near Canterbury produced the hoped for Duke of Burgundy. At least 10 in total were seen together with 2 Dingy Skippers, Green Hairstreak and Peacock. This is Kent's only reliable site for the Dukes although small numbers do exist in the Wye area where they were formerly more numerous. The next day we only managed to find 2 Brimstones in the Hamstreet area but were more lucky with Hairy Dragonfly with at least 5 and our first Blue Tailed Damsel fly of the year.

Thursday the 19th found us at Swalecliffe (Kent) watching 2 Roseate Terns. They stayed most of the day fishing off shore but always too far for an acceptable photo. Roseate Tern is a good Kent record these days with few lingering for the day. It was about time we checked out the Orchid situation and found a field of 35 Early Purple Orchids near Hastingleigh. Nearby 3 Fly Orchids and 7 Lady Orchids were in full flower but another day of few butterflies.

Things went really quiet until the afternoon of the 22nd when a Gull Billed Tern was found on Dungeness RSPB Burrows Pit. It stayed over 5 hours and delighted its many admirers. It's been 11 years since the last twitchable one in Kent. They have always been scarce on the East side of Britain and always attract some attention.

Another quiet spell was only enlivened by the finding of 10 Fly Orchids at Yockletts nature reserve on the 25th. However the next day was definitely different. First it was warm and sunny, secondly a Adult Laughing Gull was found at Dungeness Beach. After admiring its finer points a walk around the area produced 21 Common Blues, 9 Small Coppers, 4 Small Heaths and 2 Silver Y. Of equal interest was the sighting of Hoggers, head down, looking for his beloved Small Coppers. Head up for 10 seconds to say hello as we passed, then head back down immediately. Can't imagine any Small Copper escapes his attention. The Painted Lady seen later near the New Lighthouse escaped both our attention. Can't say I have heard of too many this year so far.

The next day saw us looking at 12 fine specimens of the Late Spider Orchid near Folkestone, with a fly over Red Kite. We did see 5 Wall Browns and many Common Blues. If only all days could be like this.

Saturday 28th saw us back at Dungeness. Passing Hoggers, with friend, in the Moat, again with head down presumably counting Small Coppers, we headed for and saw the Male Common Rosefinch in the trapping area. A stunningly attractive bird in fine crimson dress spent a good deal of time singing but not always showing. Not to be outdone we found 4 Small Coppers, 9 Small Heaths and a late Grizzled Skipper of our own. Like Hoggers we have noted the fall off in numbers of Small Coppers this week so first brood must be nearly over.

To end this review period we visited Parkgate Down yesterday to see 60 plus Monkey Orchids in fine flower, and amazingly for a Bank Holiday Monday, not another person present. The cold winds however meant that we did not see one butterfly on this nature reserve. We called in at a nearby site to see 25 Lady Orchids, 2 Fly Orchids and our first Birds Nest Orchid of the year.

In summary this period has been one of mixed fortunes, but mainly disappointing on the butterfly front. Hopefully we are due some fine sunny weather.

I shall put a few photos on later but I am aware of Pete's request to reduce repetitive photos so will think about what to post.

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 13-Jun-16 04:48 PM GMT

Belated update with photos to match my last two diary entries.

We have only made one distant trip since our last update and that was to see Swallowtails and Norfolk Hawkers in their Norfolk stronghold. More details to follow in our next diary update.



Duke of Burgundy at Bonsai Bank (Kent).



Laughing Gull on the beach at Dungeness. Adult bird in full summer plumage.



Grizzled Skipper at Dungeness.



Green Hairstreak near Wye (Kent).



Late Spider Orchid near Folkestone



Record photo of the Gull Billed Tern at Dungeness RSPB. Always staying towards the rear of the pit.



Birds Nest Orchid near Stelling Minis (Kent).



Fly Orchid at Yocklets Bank (kent).



Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 11-Jul-16 02:37 PM GMT

Firstly I would like to start this diary update by agreeing, like many others, with the excellent analysis of the season so far by Neil Hulme on his PD. He highlights what many of us have been finding, at least here in Kent and Sussex. My own Butterfly counts and sightings agree with his own findings with possibly only the Ringlet and Small Copper approaching decent numbers. Some suitable days I have struggled to find any butterflies, and equally dragonflies. The same situation appears to be happening on the moth front with only the well published invasion of the Diamond Back bucking like trend. We badly need a prolonged period of warm and decent weather.

I had plans to go and see the Large Blue this year, but suitable days were few and far between. The one or two decent days did not coincide with my availability so it will have to be next year.

Well now to my update and to be honest not that exciting update with just one or two exceptions.

Early June was remarkable for the Diamond Back moth. We even had a maximum count of 42 in our garden on the 06th June. Every where we went we were recording very high numbers. If only that was happening to some migrant butterfly species.

02 June 2016. Saw us looking at 26 Late Spider Orchids near Wye (Kent).

04 June 2016. Our maximum count of Red Admirals so far was 9 at Dungeness.

05 June 2016. This date found us at Rye Harbour NR watching a fine summer plumage American Golden Plover. A very smart looking bird which stayed fairly faithful to a particular island for a few days. A check of Walland found our first 14 Red Eyed Damselflies of the year but only one Hobby.

07 June 2016. A check of Wye NR found only 4 Man Orchids, 5 Wall Browns and 7 Common Blues. All well down.

08 June 2016. A struggle but we eventually found 2 Heath Fritillary out at East Blean Woods.

09 June 2016. A piece of good news following some habitat management. 20 Marsh Cinquefoil were found at Dungeness NNR along with excellent numbers of Marsh Speedwell. In a public area and available to all. Nearby at Littlestone many Sand Catchfly were coming into flower.

11 June 2016. Our annual trip to see both Fen Orchid and Swallowtail in the Fens. Numbers of the orchid appeared down, or at least not in flower yet, but we did manage 4 Swallowtails and 5 Norfolk Hawkers. Calling in at Breckland on the way home we found the rare **Marbled Clover moth** at Cranwich, a new species for us, and 86 Military Orchids at the Rex Graham NR.

12 June 2016. A surprise moth caught by our friends at Ruckinge was the Splendid Brocade. A once mega moth for Kent numbers do seem to be slowly increasing. Still, only about the 4th we have seen and much appreciated.

14 June 2016. We found a new to us site for White Helleborine south of Faversham. 22 plants in various state of flowering.

15 June 2016. 20 plus Late Spider Orchids in flower near Folkestone but very few butterflies. 5 large Skippers probably the best.

Nearby 4 Bee Orchids were in flower along Hythe Seafront. This is in an area that has rumblings of possible development. Nearby 4 Lizard Orchids at undisclosed site.

16 June 2016. Back to Wye NR and our annual search for the very rare Black Veined Moth. We managed 7 individuals which is slightly down on last year.

19 June 2016. A mega day. A **Great Knot** has been present in the Titchwell/ Holme area for a few days. Although it went missing on the 18th when news broke early AM that it was back at Titchwell our resistance broke and off we went. We arrived at the RSPB to find the place heaving with Birders/ dog walkers (public path to sea), families and just about everybody in Norfolk. We were lucky to find one parking place as someone left, (the car park holds 120 cars), and even luckier to find that the Great Knot was showing fairly well on the Freshmarsh. We would dearly have loved to stay longer but the pure volume of people, push chairs, dogs and general walkers was slightly off putting for a bird reserve. Titchwell is clearly a popular reserve even for non birders, so we retreated to the quieter environment of the Brecklands. Here we again found a Marbled Glover moth and many Spanish Catchfly. Did I say quieter, the volume of traffic on the A11/ M11 was horrendous. Not sure if it was being Fathers Day that just made everywhere so busy.

21 June 2016. A Cattle Egret on the RSPB at Dungeness and a Greenshank over were the highlights.

23 June 2016. At last a decent haul of Silver Y's with a count of 27 in the Hamstreet Woods. 2 Brimstone but only 7 Meadow Browns. The highlight had to be the Turtle Dove purring along a wood ride. One of a few that seems to have escaped the shooters guns on the Continent.

24 June 2016. For the 2nd day running we saw a Turtle Dove, this time at Wye NR. A quick visit to Hothfield found 8 Keeled Skimmers over the Bog pools. Our first of the year.

25 June 2016. After a few years of looking we finally managed to locate the scarce Oxtongue Broomrape. This odd looking Broomrape is clearly taller and whiter than its Common Cousin. 8 plants were present near Kingsdown (Kent).

30 June 2016. A Spoonbill was present on Scotney GP in its usual mode of sleeping with the bill tucked in. A tour of the Dungeness area found 5 Marbled Whites and the usual Small Coppers but other butterflies were in very low numbers.

02 July 2016. Finally a decent count of Heath Fritillary at East Blean Woods with 52 recorded. Many Ringlets but only 1 White Admiral.

In summary I would say a quieter than normal June with many days of unsuitable weather for insects. Many cold nights that we did not even bother with the moth trap. The start of July is not much better, but as always we will give it our best effort.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 03-Aug-16 03:25 PM GMT

JULY 2016

We started July by doing a count of Common Spotted Orchid along the rides in Birchwood (Orlestone). Our best ever count of 745, which is well up on previous years. Surprisingly few butterflies.

The 5th July saw us checking out Samphire Hoe. We did find 3 Marbled Whites and a few skippers but little else.

With the promise of a fine day it was into Dene Park (Tonbridge) to look for the Purple Emperor. Although numbers are low this wood is probably the best place in Kent to connect with PE, or not in our case. Despite spending 3 hours there we failed to connect with any. It seems that numbers may be as low as 3 or 4 individuals this year. Although they have been photographed this year I have heard of no count over 4. Two Silver Washed Fritillary and 4 White Admirals tried to cheer us up, but some how its not the same missing the glorious Purple Emperor.

Thursday the 7th July turned out to be a warm day so it was into Bourne Wood (Hamstreet) to check out butterfly activity. We were not disappointed, with 10 Silver Washed Fritillary, 3 White Admirals, 20 plus Ringlets, many Meadow Browns, and a fine Purple Hairstreak.

The White Legged Damselfly in Kent is fairly scarce and primary an insect of the west of the county. Lately it has been recorded further east of its known haunts. Over the last few years we have checked several potential new sites for it and today, the 8th July, we struck lucky. Whilst checking a ride in Longrope Wood (Hamstreet) we found 3 males. Probably only emerged over the last day or so. Confirming a East bound spread. I am aware of another private site near Shadoxhurst where the species has been seen the last two years. Not sure of the reason for its expansion but its most welcome.

Saturday 9th July found us in Surrey looking for a new Orchid for us. This is the Narrow Lipped Helleborine. A National scarcity with only a few known sites. The site was a wood called Sheeppleas. A delightful wood with at least 25 plants present and caged. We were a little early and found most plants to be a week or so away from flowering. Not only the Orchid was present but also 34 Yellow Birds Nest in full flower. A strange looking plant of the Beech wood that lacks Chlorophyll and obtains its food from the soil leaf mould. Looking quite similar to the Birds Nest Orchid, of which 20 or so were present but had all but gone over. Our eagle eyes soon found a Magpie Inkcap in the dark undergrowth of the Beech wood. We ended our enjoyable visit seeing 5 Silver Washed Fritillary with many Ringlets and Meadow Browns.

We ended the day at Ashdown Forest. Our hope was to see the Silver Studded Blue but despite extensive searching it was not to be. Also the distinctive dragonflies of this delightful area were a bit on the thin side with only 2 Keeled Skimmers being of any note.

Sunday the 10th July found us at Dungeness looking at the Glossy Ibis which had been present a couple of days. A Whimbrel flew over, as did 150 Swifts, but butterflies were thin on the ground.

Tuesday the 12th July saw us checking out the damselflies at Oare Marshes. We always hope to find a Scarce Emerald as one was photographed a couple of years ago but today it was just 9 of the more expected Common Emerald.

Back into Longrope Wood on the 13th July. This time no sign of any White Legged Damselflies but butterfly numbers were looking good with 2 Purple Hairstreaks, White Admiral, 2 Essex Skippers, 14 Marbled Whites, 90 Ringlets and 61 Meadow Browns. Probably best of all was the two purring Turtle Doves. What a pleasure to hear this now scarce bird of Britain.

Ever the optimistic it was back into Dene Park on the 14th July. Again, no sign of any Purple Emperors in another 3 hours of looking. 5 Silver Washed Fritillary, 1 White Admiral and 1 Purple Hairstreak were some reward but we still left feeling empty handed. We then headed to Lullingstone Park where things were much better with 17 Dark Green Fritillary, 40 plus Marbled Whites and lots of Large Skippers, Ringlets and Meadow Browns. A much more uplifting experience.

Nearby, the group of Green Flowered Helleborine were nearly at their best.

Another trip to Longrope on the 15th July again failed to find any White Legged Damselfies, although 4 Purple Hairstreaks and 5 Marbled Whites were pleasing. Nearby the ditch at Warehorne contained 27 Common Emerald Damselfies. From memory our best count at this site. No sign of any White Letter Hairstreaks in the few remaining Elms.

Sunday 17th July found us again out of the County. This time it was in Breckland again. The many Maiden Pink were in full flower in Ramparts Field, Icklingham, supported by Breckland Thyme, both new plants for us. Many butterflies were present with Brown Argus, Common Blue, Small Copper, Small Heath, Ringlet and Meadow Brown all represented in varying numbers. Again Cranwich Heath failed to deliver the rare Tawny Wave moth but this time Proliferous Pink was in full flower. Another new plant for us. Nearby a Muntjac Deer was seen at Mildenhall and the small nature reserve at Brandon yielded a few plants of Field Wormwood. This small NR is only about 50 metres by 50 metres, in the middle of an industrial estate, but hold one of Britain's rarest plants (Field Wormwood). It appears to be well respected by all the workers as no sign of any litter, damage or other issues you may expect from a very busy environment.

So far you will have noticed a distinct lack of notes about moths from our garden moth trap. That's because basically it has been very poor. For example our best moth on the 18th July was Swallowtail. Other nights its been even poorer. Some nights I have not even bothered with the moth trap. As the words say in the song, *things can only get better.*

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by Allan.W., 03-Aug-16 05:47 PM GMT

Hello Dave'

Good to see you found White legged Damsels in Longrope,nice find ,had no luck there myself but I did photograph at least 2 (poss 3) different males along the back Dyke at Warehorne,haven,t been back to the Shadoxhurst site for a while ,but I know that good numbers have been seen close by, At Warehorne ,as you know the Common Emerald is also having a good season,or at least it was ,but I now see that the tall grasses /herbage has all been cut along the back dyke,same at Kenardington,so that's a great habitat ruined in one foul swoop ! You may also be interested to know that Small Red eyed Damsels,also appear along the dyke that runs parallel with the railway line,on the pumphouse bank ,I couldn,t say how regular it is here ,but I did manage a couple of pics last year. Regards Allan.W.

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 03-Aug-16 07:09 PM GMT

Hi Allan,

Yes I have seen all the cut vegetation along the ditches by the Military Canal. It does seem odd cutting it at this time as it was home to all sorts of Dragonflies, Damselflies and some Butterflies. Presume it was the Environmental Agency doing ditch maintenance rather than the farmer, but either way it has not helped the wildlife. Pity they could not have waited another month when most insect activity would be dying off.

I was aware of the presence of the Small Red Eyed Damselfly thank you although I have only seen Red Eyed there so far this year. Also so far I have only noted one White Letter Hairstreak in the large elm by the railway bridge. Slightly worrying.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by Matsukaze, 05-Aug-16 09:55 PM GMT

Here in Somerset the White-legged Damselfly is hugely under-recorded, almost certainly because it is unobtrusive and keeps to the rivers, avoiding the still-water dragonfly hotspots. It tends to occur in places with good Banded Demoiselle populations and can be found where the grass bordering the river has been allowed to grow long, where it likes to shelter and can easily be disturbed.





Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 04-Sep-16 07:45 PM GMT

Being that I am so far behind with my Diary updates the only way to catch up is just to do a brief summary. I have been so busy lately that paper or computer work is taking a back seat.

I shall start with the 19th July 2016 when the highlight was finding a nice patch of the scarce plant Red Hemp Nettle at Dungeness and being directed to Yellow-wort, another scarce plant at Dungeness. We ended the day watching Speckled and Grey Bush Cricket. The following day (20th) we saw the returning Bonapartes Gull at Oare Marshes, now in Adult plumage.

The 21st saw many fresh Peacocks and Red Admirals in Longrope Wood, Hamstreet but the only other real interest was 2 White Admirals and a purring Turtle Dove. Touring Walland Marsh and area we found several Marsh Mallow plants in full flower. The 23rd July was a really good day with 4 Silver Washed Fritillary in Bourne Wood, 2 more in Birchet Wood and 3 in Longrope Wood (Hamstreet). Longrope was enjoyable as it also produced 2 White Admirals, 2 White Legged Damselflies, 2 Purple Hairstreaks, Marbled Whites, Essex and Small Skippers with many Ringlets, Meadow Browns and Peacocks. Disappointingly we saw our only White Letter Hairstreak of the year, this one at Warehorne. This location used to be reliable for the species but perhaps that is it. Maybe another site lost despite several Elms present.

The 23rd July proved a good day when the noise and sight of many gulls mobbing something brought our attention to a distant Black Stork drifting high and away over the East of Ashford. Despite touring suitable feeding areas in the vicinity we failed to relocate it. Presumably it carried on its merry way still be harassed by the gulls. It was much too brief and distant for any photos.

The 24th found us in the New Forest the intention was to look for Bog Orchid, Southern Damselfly and Scarce Blue Tailed Damselfly. Although mild the weather was dull and cloudy and we failed on all 3 targets. We did see a couple of Silver Studded Blues at Latchmore Brook. The day will be remembered more for the vast numbers of holiday makers and cars every where, plus the traffic jams.

Our good friends at Ruckinge produced Rufous Minor (moth) for our perusal on the 26 July. This was followed by probably our highest ever count of Peacocks when we recorded 117 in Longrope Wood on the 28th July.

31st July saw us watching a Crescent Striped and Sussex Emerald at Dungeness with many Common Blues and Small Coppers in the area. Nearby we saw a Painted Lady on Dengemarsh and 2 more on Walland Marsh. Still more Peacocks with 42 on one Buddleia bush on Walland Marsh.

Nothing much happened until the 4th August when finally our resolve cracked and off we went to see the Purple Swamphen which had been present for nearly a week. We had to wait 45 minutes before it showed well on the pool edge for about 5 minutes before disappearing back into the reeds. The Buddleia bushes near the Visitor Centre were alive with the more common butterflies but did include at least 2 Painted Lady's. The bird was only present one more day before disappearing altogether.

We have struggled to find Willow Emerald Damselflies this year with our best day tally of 5 on the 6th August. Quite the opposite with Common Blue butterflies at Dungeness with a minimum of 100 on the 7th August, 175 on the 14th August and 125 on the 17th. 6 Wall Browns and 2 Silver Spotted Skippers at Wye on the 9th was good.

Even better was the 11th August when we bumped into Goldie and her husband at Lydden. Silver Spotted Skipper was both our targets and we managed 11 that day with 125 plus Chalkhill Blues. 1 Wall Brown and many Autumn Gentians added to the interest. It was so nice to meet Goldie as it is all fellow UKB's.

The 16th August produced 19 Silver Spotted Skippers at Queendown Warren, with a high total of 20 Brown Argus.

We managed a Dungeness rarity on the 18th August when a visitor found a Stone Curlew on the RSPB. This is the first we have managed to connect with in 30 years of visiting the area. They used to breed at Dungeness some 50 years ago so it would be good to see them make a comeback to the area.

The day got even better with a Manx Shearwater at sea and 3 Jersey Tigers and a Restharrow moth at the Observatory. A cracker of a day.

The next few days were back to earth until the 26th when 2 Hummingbird Hawkmoths were seen at Dungeness with 250 plus Autumn Ladies Tresses near New Romney.

We end this update with a little story. On Saturday 27th August we visited Wye NNR with the intention of looking for Adonis Blue, 6 seen. Whilst searching we found a large Green Cricket which I photographed. Not knowing much about Crickets I assumed it was Great Green Bush Cricket. We saw 14 in total and I managed to photograph 4. We didn't think any more about them until we saw David Walker, Dungeness Observatory Warden, on Thursday 01 Sept, when I showed him the photos to ID. I was taken aback when he said that they were all Sickle-bearing Bush Crickets. Even I knew the significance of this species as until then Dungeness held the only known British breeding population. David is proud of this fact and will often escort interested people to see them. The Dungeness population is about 10-12 so our find of 14 at Wye is significant in terms of numbers breeding in Britain. Even better news was when he and GH visited the Wye site on Saturday 03 September and found at least 19 individuals. Many thanks to DW and GH for identifying the species and for visiting the site to confirm numbers. Britain now has two known sites for this species, but being as they are about 25 miles apart it must be likely that others could exist, but yet to be discovered.

PS I really must get a book on Crickets and Grasshoppers.

I almost forgot. We saw 2 Clouded Yellows at Dungeness on the 29th August. I have not mentioned the large numbers of Small Coppers at Dungeness this year. That's Hogg's Territory.

A really good and enjoyable period of wildlife watching.

Re: Dave Brown

by essexbuzzard, 04-Sep-16 09:50 PM GMT

Love reading about your exploits, Dave. Congrats on those bush crickets at Wye, we saw black-veined moths and late spider orchids there in June. Didn't know Silver-spotted skippers were at Queensdown warren, but I have been seeing them at Lydden for many years, and seemed in good numbers on 17 August, I was probably too early for Adonis Blues there. Never seen a Black stork, hopefully my time will come.

Re: Dave Brown

by Pauline, 05-Sep-16 07:03 AM GMT

Smashing report on recent activities Dave and great find with the bush crickets 😊😊

Re: Dave Brown

by Allan.W., 07-Sep-16 07:41 PM GMT

Hello Dave,

Just thought you may be interested, I nipped up to the Kneading trough (bowl), straight from work this evening, and was lucky enough to find 6 (min) Sickle Bearers, as the sun went down, I found them perched on the leaves of the stunted hazels, found 3 together, really pleased to find some, very striking insects, well found you!! also found 3 Wasp spiders, 3 Small Coppers, a few Small Heath, Adonis Blue s several (roosting), but well pleased with the crickets (and the Small Coppers), once again a great find by you.

Regards Allan.W.

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 17-Sep-16 07:20 PM GMT

I thought that it's about time I added a few photos to go with my previous reports. Obviously the finding of Britain's third Sickle-bearing Bush Cricket site, but currently only the second, as the one at Hastings appears to have died out, is the highlight for us of this particular period. I am not into Crickets so cannot take the credit for identifying them but have the Dungeness Bird Observatory Warden to thank for this. Luckily I can identify Clouded Yellow 😊 so was very pleased when the Sickle-bearing Bush Cricket site produced 3 Clouded Yellows on the 6th September. The same date revealed a significant count of 28 Sickle-bearing Bush Crickets, and an indication that they must have been here last year to breed, but clearly overlooked. With such a high number present you would have thought that every visit would have produced sightings but this was not so as a visit on the 9th Sept produced none in dull but warm weather.

On Thursday 01 Sept we visited the other location at Dungeness NNR to see 2 Sickle-bearers but only 1 Tree Cricket. There is a large colony of probably 100 plus Tree Crickets present but they can be very hard to find during the day, but of an evening they sing their hearts out and can be heard some distance away. Lots of Small Coppers also present.



Silver Spotted Skipper at Lydden. (Standing alongside Goldie who has already posted).



One of 3 Clouded Yellows present at Wye NNR for a few days.



Sickle-bearing Bush Cricket at Wye NNR. They are big, almost the size of my little finger.



Sickle-bearing Bush Cricket at Wye NNR



Sickle-bearing Bush Cricket at Wye NNR.



Oxtongue Broomrape near Kingsdown (Kent). One of the rarer Broomrapes in Britain.



3 Jersey Tigers at Dungeness. Once a rarity but now annual and probably breeding in the area.



Mother Shipton Moth at Wye NNR.



A record shot of a very distant Stone Curlew present for just one day at Dungeness. (18 Aug)

Re: Dave Brown

by David M, 17-Sep-16 09:38 PM GMT

You've unearthed some real rarities there, Dave. That cricket looks simply amazing.

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 04-Nov-16 02:15 PM GMT

9th September 2016 to 15th October 2016(yes, a bit behind with the news).

I would like to say that the period in question has been dominated by lots of goodies, but unfortunately that is not the case. Everything has been hard work and after a series of fruitless nights I have even put the moth trap to bed for the winter. I don't really know what to say about butterflies, as apart from Red Admirals they have been none existent in places. Anyway, to put things into some sort of logical order I will put events into date order.

09 September. A day at Dungeness and surrounding area gave BUFF BREASTED SANDPIPER (an American wader), Wood Sandpiper, Cattle Egret and 2 Black Terns.

The urge to see a Butterfly was too much so we visited Wye NNR. No Sickle-bearing Bush Crickets but 5 Small Heaths and 3 Common Blues.

11 September. Wye NNR. 9 Sickle-bearing Bush Crickets. 3 Clouded Yellows, 4 Adonis Blues and 15 Silver Y moths.

12 September. Back at Wye NNR. This time 11 Sickle-bearers, 7 Adonis Blues and 6 Small Heaths. A Hummingbird Hawkmoth in the garden ended a good day.

13 September. Hamstreet/Orlestone area. 9 Small Coppers, 4 Common Blues, 5 Red Admirals, 3 Brimstone, 11 Rush Veneers (moth) and 5 Silver Y's.

17 September. A decent sea watch from Swalecliffe produced 9 Great, 23 Arctic and 1 immature Long Tailed Skua among the more common seabirds.

18 September. A walk around the lanes of Walland Marsh produced 11 Peacocks and 15 Red Admirals and lots of Migrant Hawkers and Common Darters. There

were a few migrant birds with Spotted Flycatcher and Lesser Whitethroat being the best.

20 September. A visit to Dungeness saw a Juvenile ROSE COLOURED STARLING, Black Redstart. Butterflies were represented by many Peacocks and Red Admirals whilst a Red Underwing was about the best of the moths.

22 September. With growing interest in the Sickle-bearing site we again visited Wye but this time only 5 were on show. A nice Roesels Bush Cricket helped

a dull day, with only 1 Small Copper, 1 Adonis Blue and 3 Small Heaths on show.

25 September. It's always nice to see a Osprey and today we saw one sitting on a post distantly from Oare Marsh. Luckily for all it decided to fly around and fish the Swale giving decent views to birders and general visitors alike.

28 September. Being decent weather wise we visited Longrope Wood. Butterfly numbers were low with only 2 Small Coppers, 1 Small White but a good local record of 1 Small Heath.

30 September. A day at Dungeness was interesting. A visiting Lady birder reported to the RSPB, and insisted it was one, a Manx Shearwater on the ARC pit. Being that this would have been the first inland record for Dungeness it should have generated an immediate response from us locals, but we have so many reports of birds that aren't, or could have been, particularly at weekends, that we leisurely made our way to check it out.

Wow. It was a Manx Shearwater, a first record for the RSPB site. Well done to the finder, and for insisting it was one. What it was doing there is anyone's guess. It was not windy and there was no other sea movement. Goes to show the unexpected can and does happen.

We also saw a Clouded Yellow and Painted Lady.

02 October. A decent sea watch from Seasalter saw 2 Juvenile Long Tailed Skuas, 27 Arctic and 7 Great Skuas. A Painted Lady in our garden was nice and one of very few we have seen this year.

05 October. With few butterflies at our regular sites we tried a new strategy of visiting less favoured sites. A walk along the Military Canal at Kennardington was very rewarding for about from 14 Speckled Woods, 5 Large Whites and 1 Small White we found 4 Willow Emerald Damselflies.

To the best of our knowledge this is the first record for South Kent with the nearest other records being at Stodmarsh, some 30 miles away. This is a species that is now expanding its range from the North Kent/ Essex/ Suffolk area having first arrived in Britain about six years ago.

Its interesting that several Dragonfly species have expanded from the near Continent in the last decade, Lesser Emperor, Red Veined Darter, Willow Emerald, Norfolk Hawker, Southern Emerald and Southern Migrant Hawker to name a few, but the same has not happened with Butterflies.

08 October. A day at Dungeness saw the Cattle Egret, Glossy Ibis, a Yellow Browed warbler and 2 Black Redstarts but little else.

10 October. Today we caught up with the Long Billed Dowitcher at Oare Marshes. A Clouded Yellow was the only butterfly we could find.

11 October. A visit to Dungeness saw very little in the way of birds and butterflies but a Bloxworth Snout and Pale-lemon Sallow were the first decent moths for us for a while.

13 October. Distant views of a Osprey at Lade and 2 Ring Ouzels on the RSPB were the highlights.

15 October. A better day at Dungeness with better views of the Osprey at Lade Gravel Pits, a Brambling, 1st winter Caspian Gull, adult Yellow Legged Gull and

a Short Eared Owl at Dungeness.

You will note that we have hardly mentioned any moths. Well Kent in this period appears to have missed out on good numbers and good species.

I should have mentioned in our previous update that we saw a very good moth on the 02 Sept 2016. This was a Fishers Estuarine moth caught by a mother in the Swalecliffe area. He does have a licence to handle this rare Kent species as part of his work. I believe that this is the species only site in Kent, with just a few other locations in Essex. The actual location is managed for this species and is a good example of how wildlife can be supported in an otherwise busy seaside and tourist attraction area.

Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by David M, 05-Nov-16 09:10 PM GMT

You look to have an amazingly productive local patch, Dave. I truly envy you.

Re: Dave Brown

by dave brown, 25-Dec-16 05:36 PM GMT

Late Autumn/ early Winter 2016.

I would really like to say that this period was great here in Kent, but the reality was that it was rather underwhelming. Most Kent birders got their annual fix by travelling to Spurn for the almost mythical Siberian Accentor. Present for almost a week it attracted a few thousand admirers during its stay, many from Southern England. Despite the lack of anything good around here I could not work up the enthusiasm to join them, instead looking for butterflies that didn't seem to exist. Whether it was just me but I couldn't find any good numbers or anything that would have set the heart racing. Hopes of any Long Tailed Blues faded quickly and Clouded Yellows were in low numbers.

A Clouded Yellow on the 22 October at Dungeness was expected but only 5 Red Admirals was disappointing. A flock of 15 Brambling in a local wood on the 23 October was hopefully a sign of things to arrive, but they didn't. Our friends at Ruckinge tried to save the day on the 26 October with a Merville de jour moth. Dungeness produced a Scarce Bordered Straw on the 27th October (remember last years major influx, this year very few). The same day they also trapped a Pallas's Warbler. What a little beauty. The strangest sighting that day was the trapping of a Short-Cloaked Moth. A moth more likely to be seen in June or early July rather than late October.

Two Ringtail Hen Harriers around the Shellness reserve on the 29th October was nice to see, as was a Cattle Egret at Grove Ferry the next day. The 1st November gave us a Shorelark at St Margarets, the 5th a Caspian Gull at Dungeness, the 6th Long Billed Dowitcher at Oare Marshes and the 8th a Lonely Whooper Swan at Hythe.

It was not until the 9th November that things improved with a Male Ringed Necked Duck, Dartford Warbler and Cattle Egret at Dungeness. A stunning Stonechat was found and admired by a few. It's interest at the time was it's remarkable plumage. White and Grey. It was put down as a just a monochrome Stonechat as a few with this colour plumage have been reported over the years. It was present until the 5th December but attracted very few birders. Big mistake. On it's first day a sample of poo was collected and sent away for DNA analysis. A couple of days ago back came the result. It was a Stejnegers Stonechat. One of the Eastern species of Stonechat that breeds across Asia and Siberia. The fact that this individual did not match any shown in the field guides is our excuse for not identifying it correctly. The wonders of DNA. Although it does seem that in addition to carrying binoculars, telescopes and cameras in the field we now need to carry DNA kits.

The Ringed Necked Duck and Caspian Gull has been showing on most days up to the 24th December, with a Long Eared Owl on behind the Dipping pond (adjacent to the Visitors Centre) on most days.

The next highlight was 5 Waxwings near Pegwell Bay on the 25th November but the next day was probably the highlight for most Kent Birders. A Hythe local was driving along the seafront when he saw a tern dropping onto the water fishing. Thinking that any tern was worth a look in late November on went the brakes and an expression of delight, (not repeatable before the 9pm watershed), was said. It was a Fosters Tern from North America. Most Kent birders, and a few from further a field, managed to connect with this beauty during its five hour stay. It then flew in the direction of Folkestone not to be seen again despite many looking.

A flock of 17 Tundra Bean Geese in a field at Stodmarsh on the 3rd December was not the hoped for forerunner of large numbers of Geese from the Continent. Meanwhile East Sussex had a surprise in the form of a Desert Wheatear at Normans Bay. It had been present for about a week before we headed south to view the bird on the 7th December. As normal with this species it was very confiding during its stay and gave most visitors excellent views.

That has been about it. Very few late Butterflies, even fewer decent moths, and apart from late Common Darters, very few Dragonflies. Still, it makes us look forward to 2017 with even more interest.

I will post a few photos soon.

Happy Christmas to you all.
Dave

Re: Dave Brown

by David M, 31-Dec-16 08:24 PM GMT

You may not think the latest period was 'great', Dave, but it's clear you live in a wonderfully diverse part of the UK from a nature perspective so keep making the most of it.

Whilst my area is decent, it's a pale imitation of yours!