

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 06-Apr-17 02:14 PM GMT

I made the first of my 2017 Small Copper Hunts today at Dungeness and found this beauty



Just the one



But if the weather forecast for the coming weekend holds true many more will join her

Also two Holly Blues, a Brimstone and a Speckled Wood in my garden.

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 06-Apr-17 07:15 PM GMT

Nice one Hoggers!! (welcome back) See you on the shingle !! Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 06-Apr-17 08:52 PM GMT

Nice one Hoggers – surely that's the first for 2017? 😊🍷
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by millerd, 06-Apr-17 09:08 PM GMT

Great to see what I'm sure will be the first of many lovely Coppers. 😊

Dave

Re: Hoggers

by bugboy, 06-Apr-17 10:29 PM GMT

Good to see you back Hoggers 😊

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 07-Apr-17 11:24 AM GMT

Great! Hoppers is back...and that can mean only one thing:

Small Coppers are about again. 😊

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 07-Apr-17 02:18 PM GMT

Many thanks for all the messages - I've emerged at the same time as the Coppers.

Warm and sunny again at Dungeness and I found another Copper



Plenty of flowers for her to nectar on



I also saw that the orchids are beginning to open



I saw some Peacocks and Tortoiseshells too as well as my first Large White of the year.

The weather looks amazing for the weekend which I'm sure will really get the Coppers going!



Re: Hoggers

by Neil Freeman, 07-Apr-17 07:54 PM GMT

So then Hoggers, how is this season for you...are you also emerging early 😊

Welcome back to you and your Small Coppers 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 07-Apr-17 11:08 PM GMT

Thanks for the encouragement, Hoggers. I will now ensure I keep my own eyes peeled for them in south Wales this weekend!

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 08-Apr-17 04:44 PM GMT

When I visited Dungeness this morning it was calm, sunny and warm (13C according to my car dashboard). After having come across two female Small Coppers during the week, today I hoped for a male. It is still very quiet there of course (early days yet) so I was over the moon to find not one but two males, sunning themselves in close proximity to each other

This chap



And this young Turk



They were both in a area that, over the years, I've come to realise is favoured by the males as a place to set up a territory. I did not have long to wait before the two began to spar with each other – my first duel of the year!

I watched as they whirled around and around, then both flew off together out of sight. I waited and after a couple of minutes only one returned.

I did not see the other again. I'd guess he'd decided to make a territory for himself elsewhere.

I decided to watch the victorious Copper. He favoured this pebble



He'd go on brief snappy forays around his patch, returning to the pebble (or to one close by). It wasn't long before he went on a "Stalk Dance" (another first for the year!)

Flitting from one piece of vegetation to another (be it fresh or old), alighting at the top and proceeding headfirst to walk downwards whilst quickly tapping his feet



I managed to follow this Copper on a number of such expeditions today and what struck me was the distance he covered from his starting point : on the general forays they do not range very far from their favoured perch, but this chap must have travelled at least 30 yards from his pebble base whilst engaged in one of these "Stalk Dances"





Yet despite having flown so far away from the perch he managed to return back to it (or sometimes close by).

When I think of it in Copper Terms, ie, on their scale, I can see what a remarkable achievement it is for this tiny creature

They never fail to amaze me



Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 09-Apr-17 04:30 PM GMT

When I arrived at Dungeness this morning my car dashboard said it was 15C outside. Certainly it was very sunny with hardly a puff of wind.

I checked to see if the male Copper I've been keeping my eye on this week was still holding his territory: he was



Conditions were perfect for a spell of Copper Watching so I sat down and spent nearly an hour in his company.

He spent long periods sitting quietly on the shingle but went on three forays around his Kingdom, nectared twice, intercepted an intruder (a Bluebottle) once and made two excursions to do a "Stalk Dance", all in the time I was with him

Today, rather than tap-dance headfirst down the plant stems, he walked horizontally across sprawling plants



then went headfirst UP a stalk, all the while quickly tapping his feet



I decided to leave him to it and continue my walk. I saw Peacocks, a Small White and Small Tortoiseshells and then I came across my first Grizzled Skipper of the year



Before returning to my car I'd seen two more Small Coppers (both male)



So not the Copper Bonanza I'd hoped for when I saw the weather forecast, though it's still very early for them at Dungeness (they usually emerge around the 18th April)

But as I've said before, one Small Copper is enough!



At home I found two Holly Blues and a Speckled Wood in my garden.

Re: Hoggars

by Allan.W., 09-Apr-17 04:45 PM GMT

Hi Hoggars,

I managed an hour or so at Dungeness ,late morning,and managed 4 Coppers,and like yourself watched a Male for fifteen–twenty minutes,in his territory,and also witnessed his half hearted "stalk dance", no Grizzlies alas, but 3 Small Torts and a couple of Peacocks, but pleased to be off the mark with the Coppers. Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggars

by Goldie M, 09-Apr-17 04:51 PM GMT

Lovely shots of the Coppers Hogger's, even with the nice weather not much stirring here yet and today the weather's taken a turn for the worse, a cold wind and the Sun's disappeared, it's still early in the year though so hope fully it'll be a better year than last year. Goldie 😊

Re: Hoggars

by Hoggars, 11-Apr-17 06:25 PM GMT

I hope the weather turns better for you Goldie. Down here today it was sunny but with a sharp breeze. I had the chance to spend an hour at Dungeness and although my car dashboard said 15C it felt a lot cooler in the wind. But despite that and my being pressed for time I quickly came across 8 fresh Small Coppers





Much easier to find now



They're gathering momentum



Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 14-Apr-17 07:09 PM GMT

On 14th April 2016 I went to Dungeness and came across my first Small Copper of the year (on earlier visits I failed to find any at all). This year I made my first visit to Dungeness on 6th April and found one Small Copper. Today I visited Dungeness with my brother and we counted 19 Small Coppers. It was mostly sunny but with a chilly breeze. I was watching a pristine female roosting on the sun-warmed pebbles



when in flew a male



They both immediately took off. Luckily for me they did not travel far but after swirling about each other, soon landed on the pebbles where I was able to relocate them. I saw the male make advances towards her and noted that she did not go in to the classic refusal behaviour of the "Turkey Strut" but rather remained calm.

The male brought his abdomen forwards (I could see that its tip had opened out) and sought to engage with her





This however failed to result in coupling and she went flying off again with him in ardent pursuit

Again, luckily for me they did not fly very far and I was able to watch a repeat performance



Nor did they mate on this occasion but after another attempt on his part the two went whizzing off on the breeze and this time I lost them.

At no time did the female "Turkey Strut" but rather gave the impression that she was receptive so I began to wonder whether it was all part of the courtship ritual and that rather than accept this male suitor after the briefest of introductions she was determined to put him to more of a test

Of the Coppers that I saw today two were members of the Blue Badge Club



I liked the markings on this one



And this one too



My brother enjoyed being reacquainted with the Small Coppers and it was good to bump in to AllanW for a chat in the moat.

Allan, further to something you said and without wishing to share the fate of Captain Ahab, here's hoping we do find "A White One", (a *schmidtii*), the Moby Dick of the Small Copper World!

All the best,

Hoggers



Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 16-Apr-17 05:06 PM GMT

Despite a very chilly breeze the Coppers of Dungeness were up and at it this morning



I watched several sparring contests amongst the males





After several bouts these two landed for a rest



The paler of the two began to "crowd" his opponent, advancing in close and invading the other's personal space



This is behaviour that I've seen before. It's reminiscent of courtship when the male will come up close to the female from behind. Here of course we had two males and there was no attempt to mate but the behaviour seemed more akin to the one Copper goading the other into another duel



The darker male was having none of this and he signalled his lack of interest by quickly and very briefly fluttering his hindwings at his harasser, just as the female Copper will flutter her wings at an unwanted male suitor to indicate that she does not want to mate with him (although I've never seen a male embark on the full "Turkey Strut" rejection display)



This wing flutter is I think Small Copper semaphore for "Leave me alone!"

It was lovely to watch the Coppers on the Spring flowers



I liked the markings on this chap



Shades of Blue began to appear, from the minimalistic



To Seurat-like pointillism



And finally magnificent heavy thick brush strokes



It felt like the Coppers were emerging around me



I counted 41 today



Last year I had to wait until early May to reach so high a total



Re: Hoppers

by Wurzel, 16-Apr-17 08:55 PM GMT

That is Copper heaven Hoppers 🍷 41! 🤪 I don't think I've seen 41 in 6 years of butterflying! 🤪 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoppers

by David M, 16-Apr-17 09:05 PM GMT

It's not taken you long to get back into your stride, Hoppers.

That's another excellent sequence of images and your *caeroleopunctata* is very impressive.

Sadly, they seem to be reluctant to emerge in Wales. I've been searching for them twice but it has yet to pay dividends. Hopefully that will change in the next week.

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 19-Apr-17 02:20 PM GMT

Thanks for your comments Wurzel and David: it was certainly a very good total for the time of year.

It was very sunny when I arrived at Dungeness this morning but a cold wind was blowing. My car dashboard indicated 10C outside but it felt significantly colder in the wind.

Nonetheless I began finding Coppers immediately after stepping out of the car



And there were many places out of the cold wind where I found them



I watched a couple of males sparring



I counted three "Blue Badgers" and began noticing individuals with wing damage



It looked as if someone had tried to erase one black mark from the wing of this Copper



My Copper-O-Meter reached 58 today





Including this notable Copper showing reduced markings



It's a variation I see now and again amongst the Dungeness population



Quite attractive in its own way.

And I also see the occasional "yellow" Copper too



So despite the cold wind there was plenty to see and admire



Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 19-Apr-17 07:22 PM GMT

Lovely Copper shots Hogger's, I'm lucky if I see one round here, one was last years count, great to see your's Goldie 😊

Re: Hoppers

by David M, 19-Apr-17 09:39 PM GMT

Wow! You've posted more Coppers than I'll probably see in the whole of 2017, Hoppers, and it's still mid April!

That patch of yours must be one of the best in the country.

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 23-Apr-17 05:00 PM GMT

Cheers David, I think Dungeness Nature Reserve is the Piccadilly Circus of the Small Copper World!

A cold and dismal Saturday and an equally unpromising Sunday morning threatened to ruin any chance I might have of getting some prime Copper Time in this weekend. Late morning I thought I saw a slight lightening of the dark clouds and it seemed to be at least trying to warm up a bit so remembering Willow's inspirational advice of "When in doubt venture out" I picked up my Copper-O-Meter and headed down to Dungeness.

Shortly after my arrival the cloud began to break up, the sun appeared and so did the Coppers



I so love to see them on the flowers





This male was still on the exact same patch where I found him last tuesday (he's easily recognisable because of the single black spot on his left forewing that looks as if someone has tried to rub out!)



but he was acting oddly: I watched him crawling around the thistle as if looking for something, he even got himself right down in between the leaves. I could see his proboscis was extended



I guess he was looking for water.

I watched two Peacocks soar up high into a blue sky, spiralling around each other to about 30 feet when suddenly, like a little rocket, a male Copper zoomed up and intercepted them! It was an amazing sight



I came across this stunning Copper



Another pale individual



And this one with coppery mirrors on its hindwings



Then later on I had the pleasure of meeting Maximus in the Moat. He had just rescued this Copper from the Desert and placed it in a more sheltered spot with some sources of nectar close by



It was good to see you again Maximus.

I ventured out to the Trapping Area where I found a Grizzled Skipper



And more Coppers



I walked back to the Moat where I came across a most unusual Small Tortoiseshell (apologies for the out of focus photographs – they're the best I managed whilst standing on tip toes with my camera raised above my head!)



It was a beautiful looking insect and I'm only sorry I couldn't get a half decent photograph.

My Copper-O-Meter reached 63



And before heading home I was delighted to see courtship



And mating



The weather forecast for the coming week is a bleak one, with a prospect of Winter returning : I hope the Coppers get through it

Re: Hoppers

by David M, 23-Apr-17 07:45 PM GMT

That's another staggering Copper count, Hoppers. I spent nearly two hours today in a dune system which is perfect for them but didn't see a single one. 😞

Good job I've got you to provide me with my *phlaeas* fix!

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 27-Apr-17 03:25 PM GMT

Happy to oblige, David! Good luck with seeing them in your neck of the woods.

When I got up at 630 this morning my car was frosted over, the air was very cold but the sky was clear and there was no wind. By the time I got to Dungeness it was still cold and there was a steady icy breeze but the sun was shining and I quickly began to find Small Coppers



I was surprised by how active they were: this one was busily involved in a Stalk Dance even though it was so chilly in the breeze



My car dashboard said it was 8C outside but it felt colder



Note the large black spot on this one.

As time went on it grew warmer and I watched the Coppers at play: this male (with lovely copper mirrors on the hindwings) was determined to get inside the wire cages that protect the Early Purple Orchids



And he succeeded!

As well as the Blackthorn



they really like Hoary Cress



I noticed more females today. They'll be nectaring with their wings open but if a male comes close they shut up their wings and sit quietly until sure they'll be left alone. This handsome yellow male Copper made a play for the female



but a quick Turkey Strut was enough to dissuade him from trying to take things any further



Look at this heavily marked female



She makes an interesting comparison with this scantily spotted individual



This female interested me



Looks like a bird strike, but she survived

My Copper-O-Meter rang up a healthy 69 including a few with pale wings



Very good indeed considering how cold it was this morning



Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 29-Apr-17 04:03 PM GMT

What a relief! The beastly cold wind that has plagued us for the last week has gone! I could actually feel warmth in the sunshine and it was pleasant to be outside in the open air in sunhat and shirtsleeves rather than beanie, scarf and jacket.

The Dungeness Coppers seemed to appreciate this improvement in the weather too





My Copper-O-Meter peaked at 78



Last year I had to wait until 17th May to reach anywhere near this number



I counted a large number of females, all of which had mated (and so I saw plenty of Turkey Strutting!)



A gem amongst the pebbles



Most are in fine fettle but a few now look a bit dented



And amongst the Coppers I saw today were a few surprises: here's the Lesser Spotted Copper



He's been holding the same territory now for 10 days!

Then a gorgeous Greater Spotted Copper



And finally, my first radiata of the year



Very handsome indeed



I also saw 7 Grizzled Skippers and this lovely beetle



Which I'll call " [] " ..!

I hope the weather holds out for this Copper Bank Holiday



Re: Hoppers

by Wurzel, 29-Apr-17 08:09 PM GMT

Such variation Hoppers 🤔🍷😄 Great to see you got your first radiata too 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoppers

by Wurzel, 29-Apr-17 08:12 PM GMT

Such variation Hoppers 🤔🍷 Glad to see you got your radiata too 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoppers

by David M, 29-Apr-17 10:33 PM GMT

Another wonderful range of Coppers, Hoppers. Those *radiata* seem to crop up with unusual regularity on your patch.

Re: Hoppers

by Maximus, 01-May-17 09:26 AM GMT

Well done with the radiata, Hoppers 😊 a nice find 😊

Re: Hoppers

by bugboy, 01-May-17 03:16 PM GMT

I like how you say 'first radiata of the year' like you expected to find one and expect to find more 😊

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 02-May-17 06:08 PM GMT

Hi Buggy, I live in hope!

The radiata variety is quite rare at Dungeness. We see Coppers with reduced orange bands on the hind-wing but the full radiata is a lucky find.

That said, last August there was a spate of them! Something to do with the weather last Summer, perhaps?

The one I found on Saturday looks about 2 weeks old. It's a male so there's a chance it's holding a territory : I'll have look next time I'm down there

Thanks for all the messages

Hoggers.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 06-May-17 04:15 PM GMT

Mess with a Small Copper



And there'll be trouble





Here's typical behaviour of one male goading another into a punch up



The one sitting quietly but the other pushing him



then fluttering on top to provoke a reaction



These three young Blades put on a great display





No shivering Peacocks today: my car dashboard read 15c outside



The first brood still has a lot of life in it





But numbers are on the wane



I counted 50 today



Not bad given it was very windy



I also saw my first Small Heath



and 6 Grizzled Skippers



A good day's Coppering



Re: Hoppers

by David M, 06-May-17 10:18 PM GMT

Wonderful images, Hoppers, especially the in-flight shots, which are very difficult when you're dealing with such a small subject.

I've seen 9 Small Coppers myself today, so I suppose I shouldn't complain, but having the wealth you have on your local patch must be wonderful, and I thoroughly enjoy all the posts you publish as few if any of us can see such numbers of this delightful butterfly on a single site.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 07-May-17 04:39 PM GMT

Thanks for your comments David, much appreciated.

I remember visiting Dungeness in the Spring of 2010 and the Blackthorns were absolutely covered in Small Coppers! It was amazing and made a lasting impression on me.

I love to watch the male's aerial displays but it's so fast it's just a blur. When I take snap-shots it freezes the action, I can see what's going on and really appreciate what highly skilled, agile and acrobatic creatures they are.

Hoggers

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 07-May-17 05:35 PM GMT

Some absolutely brilliant in-flight shots there, Hoggers, and some very interesting observations, haven't been able to get to Dungeness much for the first brood, so I'm making do with looking at yours! Hopefully will get more time for brood 2!
Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by SimonC69, 07-May-17 07:01 PM GMT

Oh Wow! those in flight shots (especially the first one) are awesome.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 08-May-17 02:30 PM GMT

Thanks for you kind comments Allan and Simon - much appreciated.

I always enjoy watching these sparring matches and try to get some photographs. Most come out completely blurred (or I get a beautiful shot of the pebbles!) but now and again I'm lucky and can see what they're doing. It opens up a whole new world!

Best wishes,

Hoggers.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 13-May-17 03:12 PM GMT

When I arrived at Dungeness today I was greeted by my first Painted Lady of the year



And later saw a second individual

As for Small Coppers, I counted only 26



They're in the sort of numbers (and condition) I associate with the last week in May



The males battered and worn



And a high percentage of females



with the occasional individual in pristine form



It's certainly been an early season for them



I bumped into the reserve warden and he said they'd had rather cold conditions and some heavy rain this week, which would have had an impact on numbers.

I also saw three Brown Argus, Small Heath, Red Admiral and Peacock

Re: Hoppers

by David M, 14-May-17 10:44 PM GMT

Hoppers wrote:

As for Small Coppers, I counted only 26

For many of us, this would be an **annual** tally, Hoppers!

I'm pleased to say I'm seeing more and more of them on my patch, although my 2017 total still hasn't reached 20, and I will consider it an achievement if I can mark off a century or more.

Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 15-May-17 10:54 AM GMT

Hi! Hopper's fantastic Coppers in flight, I didn't realise the Grizzlies were there has well, I must try to get down to Kent in May but that may take some arm twisting 😊 I try when I'm down there in July or August to get to Dungeness with out success , it's difficult when your visiting family, you've to go a long with the flow.

How long do the Grizzlies last at Dungeness 🤔 Goldie 😊

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 16-May-17 11:07 AM GMT

Hi Goldie, thanks for your comment – The in-flight photos are a favourite of mine. I can really see what's happening in those very fast duels!

I found my first Grizzled Skipper at Dungeness in early April and I know about 6 were spotted over the last weekend, so I'd say the sooner you can visit the better!

Hoppers

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 16-May-17 01:51 PM GMT

David Walker (the warden of Dungeness Nature Reserve) has just emailed me this photo of a stunning Small Copper found by him just outside the reserve



As I'm stuck at work I don't know if to thank him or throttle him!

Hoggers

Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 16-May-17 02:32 PM GMT

I'd get there has quick has I could Hogger's 😊 thanks for your feed back, I can't get there now but I'll have to get down there in May instead of July next time I visit, hope you see the that Copper! Goldie 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 20-May-17 03:01 PM GMT

Walking the dogs this morning I was delighted to be joined by a Small Copper which flew past me along the footpath.

Seeing a Small Copper before breakfast was inspiration enough to head down to Dungeness.

The whole estate is in bloom and there were plenty of butterflies including Painted Lady



Brown Argus, Common Blue, Small Heath, Red Admiral, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell and a Small White.

As for Coppers, I counted only 8



This is the sort of number I'd expect in late May/early June.

I didn't find any fresh models



This Lesser Spotted Copper caught my eye



It's an interesting variation I see now and again.

And this female with a nice "Ray" pattern on the hindwings



But we're definitely at the fag end of the first brood now



Still, that means the second brood is on its way!

ps. A photograph I took of a beetle at Dungeness on 29th April was seen by the reserve warden who then took expert advice and it's been identified as *Hister quadrimaculatus*, only the fifth British record!



I'd named it the "Open Bracket - Close Bracket Beetle"...

I think I'll stick to Small Coppers!

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 21-May-17 04:08 PM GMT

It's not often I allow anything blue in my diary



But with the emergence of fresh Common Blues at Dungeness I couldn't resist



Just as I photographed this pair



They separated



The female flew away pursued by the male (not something that happens with Small Coppers)

I noticed that the male Brown Argus often behave like their Copper counterparts



Sallying out to intercept passing butterflies

As for the Coppers, they're in low numbers, bashed and very faded



Though a few are not so bad



Amongst them however I did find this interesting individual

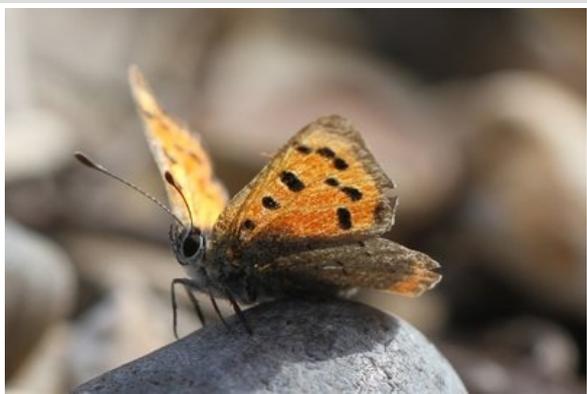


The tail-band looks like a row of orange diamonds

This is the only fresh Copper I found (a female)



These last remaining members of the first brood may be faded and worn, but they're ever vigilant and full of vim



Re: Hoggars

by trevor, 21-May-17 07:07 PM GMT

Keep this up Hoggars and you'll be getting a reputation for Common Blues ! 😊
Great to see your Coppers too. Dungeness is on my to do list this year.

Best wishes,

Trevor.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 27-May-17 11:10 AM GMT

Hi Trevor, Dungeness is well worth a visit: should be lots of second brood Small Coppers later in June.

I went there today and saw 2 Small Coppers and a thunderstorm!

It was about 20C when I arrived this morning, blue sky and full sunshine. Valerian in abundance but no Viper's Bugloss as yet. It still looks very dry down there despite recent rainfall but the Sorrel is plentiful and healthy.

I saw several Painted Lady and notably 8 fresh Small Tortoiseshell.

But just the 2 Coppers



One treated me to a "Stalk Dance"



Both faded and tired.

This year's first brood at Dungeness started on 6th April and has now run its course. Compared with 2016, the Copper season this year has been about 12 days early. I haven't noticed the usual overlapping (or continual brooding) that we usually see: this year there's a definite cut off between the first and second brood.

I noticed it was getting cooler and looking up this is what I saw



My cue to leave!
Soon we had thunder, lightning and heavy rain : well, it is a Bank Holiday!

Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 28-May-17 09:41 AM GMT

Dungeness is certainly on my list Hogger's for July, love the mating pair of Blues Goldie 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 29-May-17 03:31 PM GMT

July will be perfect for Coppers, Goldie!

I returned to Dungeness this morning where it was very warm and sunny indeed. It's wonderful to see all the Valerian in full bloom (although I'm slightly concerned at the absence of Viper's Bugloss – hopefully it will be coming along soon)

There were Painted Lady, Red Admiral, fresh Small Tortoiseshell, Brown Argus and Common Blue but the only Small Copper I saw were the same two males I found on Saturday, firstly this one



very alert and active indeed



And this chap enjoying the first of the Blackberry flowers to open



I just hope both hang on long enough to find themselves a freshly emerged female of the second brood



While walking around the observatory moat I looked down and found this



I guessed it must be a moth wing but had no idea from which species.

Later on near the Old Lighthouse I saw this beautiful creature resting on someone's car



Its hindwings reminded me of what I'd found in the moat. At home I looked it up : Cream spot Tiger.

Very handsome indeed.

Re: Hoggers

by trevor, 29-May-17 04:30 PM GMT

Stunning Cream spot Tiger, Hoggers. What a find!. Never seen one in the UK.

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 29-May-17 10:21 PM GMT

Lovely shot of the Tiger Hoggers 😊 How soon til the next brood of Coppers will be coming through as those from your most recent posts certainly seem more than a little tired 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 30-May-17 03:44 PM GMT

Hi Trevor and Wurzel, thanks for your messages : the Tiger was a new one for me! Very attractive indeed.

As for the second brood of Dungeness Coppers, not long to wait at all : last year it began on or around 19th June; this season has been running 12 days early, so if that runs true (big "if" I know, but lets see what happens!!) we will be seeing fresh Coppers around 7th June.

That's my prediction!

Hoggers.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 03-Jun-17 04:09 PM GMT

Leaving work in Canterbury yesterday I saw a Magpie pounce on something then repeatedly pick it up and dash it down hard onto the pavement as if trying to crack a nut. I walked closer and could see that the "nut" was in fact a very large beetle. The Magpie flew off as I approached leaving the beetle stunned and seemingly lifeless. It was the biggest beetle I've ever seen. I picked up this monster of a beetle and was pleased to see that it wasn't dead, just concussed, so I moved it out of harm's way and before leaving took a photo with my mobile phone



I looked it up as best I can and have identified it as a female Stag Beetle. If I'm right then I'm delighted because I've never seen one before!

This morning was comfortably warm and bright at Dungeness. On my walk I found this chap



He's the last of the 2017 first brood, still perky, chasing Brown Argus and Common Blues, but all on his own and no other Coppers to play with



I was pleased to see some Viper's Bugloss in flower, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Small Heath, Brown Argus, Large White and Common Blues



I also saw my first Large Skipper



My visit ended on a high note : on the walk back to the car I saw a sudden coppery flash and there before me was the first Small Copper of the 2017 second brood



In 2016 the second brood began on 19th June; as this year the Dungeness Coppers have run 12 days early I predicted 7th June as the likely second brood start date, so this chap has surprised me, which only goes to show that Small Coppers keep their secrets and will not be told what to do!

Re: Hoppers

by David M, 03-Jun-17 04:23 PM GMT

Hoppers wrote:

..on the walk back to the car I saw a sudden coppery flash and there before me was the first Small Copper of the 2017 second brood

In 2016 the second brood began on 19th June; as this year the Dungeness Coppers have run 12 days early I predicted 7th June as the likely second brood start date, so this chap has surprised me, which only goes to show that Small Coppers keep their secrets and will not be told what to do!

That's quite an advance on 2016, Hoppers. Beautiful individual though. Dark shaded with big forewing spots, a bit like the ones I see in southern France.

Re: Hoppers

by Wurzel, 03-Jun-17 07:54 PM GMT

You weren't wrong about the second brood nearly being upon us Hoppers 😊 Cracking shot 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 04-Jun-17 12:11 PM GMT

There's nothing finer than a fresh Dungeness Small Copper



I saw three today, two males



And a female





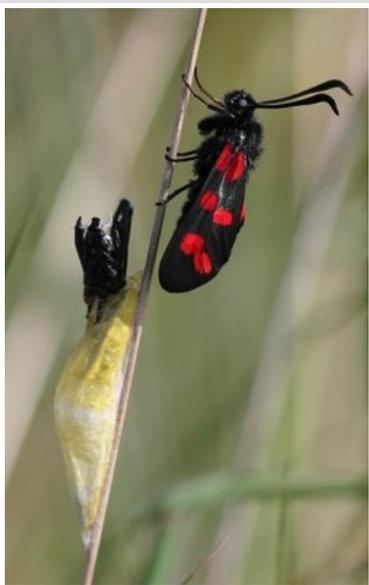
Just the one surviving member of the first brood



But beautiful newcomers joining him



I was impressed by this gorgeous Burnet



I wonder if it had just emerged from the yellow cocoon in the photo?

And I saw my first Small Skipper too



Marvellous to see newly minted Coppers again!



Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 04-Jun-17 03:31 PM GMT

Hi! Hogger's, great shots again, I'm still looking for the Large Skippers to come out , they seem to come out first here before the Small, hope fully this next week weather permitting, weathers to be bad up here I think. Goldie 😊

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 10-Jun-17 03:39 PM GMT

Hi Goldie, we've had some very stormy weather down here too over the last week but today was warm and sunny.

The first thing I noticed when I arrived at Dungeness this morning was that the Small Skippers have emerged en masse: last Saturday I saw just one, but now they are pretty much everywhere.

I came across a mating pair



They were constantly harassed by another male



As for Coppers, I counted 11



I didn't find a single individual from the first brood, all were fresh second brood butterflies including this magnificently marked male



I bumped into David Walker the reserve warden who pointed out to me a rare plant called Yellow Vetch. I asked him about Greenfinches : For many years I had them in my garden and they were a common sight when I walk my dogs; but I've noticed that I do not see (or hear) them anymore and I wondered why. David said that there's been a huge drop in their numbers due to a disease that's been killing them off. Such a common bird I always took them for granted, but not anymore!

On a more positive note, 11 fresh Small Coppers at this time of year is a very good sign



Hopefully they'll have another bumper season

Re: Hoppers

by Wurzel, 10-Jun-17 10:18 PM GMT

Great shots of the Fuzz as always Hoppers 😊 Great to see the Small Skippers as well, won't be long til they're round this way 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoppers

by David M, 10-Jun-17 10:39 PM GMT

Another great sequence of Coppers, Hoppers. I find it hard to reconcile myself with seeing Small Skippers before I've even seen Large Skippers!!! There's quite a difference in emergence times round the country this year.

Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 11-Jun-17 01:32 PM GMT

Lovely shots Hopper's, the Large Skipper's been seen at Brockholes (Preston) so I'll be off to there weather permitting soon. Goldie 😊

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 14-Jun-17 11:54 AM GMT

The weather down here in Kent has been glorious. I took my usual walk at Dungeness this morning and amongst the hundreds of Small Skippers I counted 16 Small Coppers





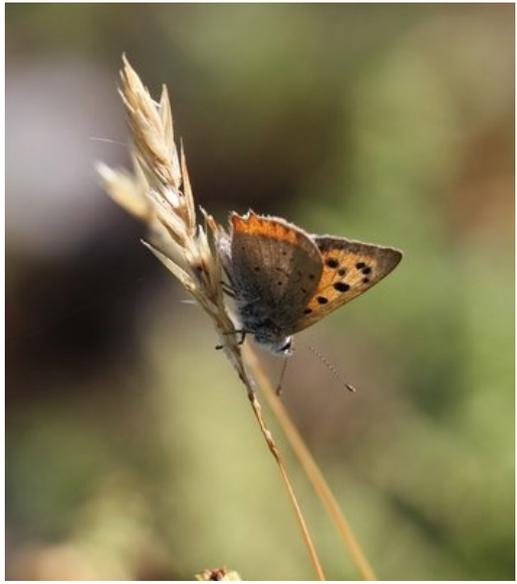
Two males were particularly well marked



I came across a fine male showing off his new blue badges



Another male treated me to a "stalk dance"



I love watching them when they do this.

So although thinly spread at the moment the second brood is gathering momentum





Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 17-Jun-17 03:43 PM GMT

Blazing sunshine made for Molten Coppers today at Dungeness



They were whizzing about so fast trying to follow them made me giddy



(That and the heat and sorting them out from the hundreds of Small Skippers!)

But I was delighted to note how much easier they were to find than just three days ago



27 today



Last year I had to wait until 25th June to record them in such numbers. While this year the first brood ran almost 2 weeks earlier than last year a readjustment seems to be taking place with the second brood which is now only about one week in advance of 2016



Exciting times!

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 18-Jun-17 03:09 PM GMT

According to my car dashboard it was 23C when I arrived at Dungeness this morning: it felt more like 32C to me! Boy, it was HOT! Even the Coppers looked about ready to melt





My Copper-O-Meter overheated at 43



A superb count for the time of year



But I wonder how many Coppers these cold blooded critters account for?



I thought this chap looked splendid with his wide bordered wings



He makes for an interesting comparison with this one



And I liked the minimal markings on this male



Hundreds of Small Skippers



The heat reached a point where the Coppers had speeded up and I had slowed to a stop



So I decided to head for home



And leave the Coppers to it



Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 18-Jun-17 03:20 PM GMT

Lovely Coppers Hogger's hope to see some in July, Goldie 😊

Re: Hoppers

by bugboy, 19-Jun-17 09:43 AM GMT

Good to see the Dungeness Coppers are still going from strength to strength, you really do get an incredible array of markings down there!

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 19-Jun-17 09:48 PM GMT

It's amazing the sheer variety of wing markings you see, Hoggers. I suppose we'd all be in a similar position if we could rack up 3 dozen or more in an average day! 🍷

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 19-Jun-17 10:11 PM GMT

Hello Hoggers ,

Some unusual Coppers there Hoggers, I was at Dungie ,myself from around 6.45 – 9.15 ,but concentrated mainly on the Northern Long pit (a circuit) for butterflies and a plant, and although there were hundreds of Small Skippers on the wing ,+ a few Mead; Browns, and Marbled Whites,not a single Copper ! most surprised. Over the road on the RSPB (opp; Boulderwall) section, I found 4 Small Coppers,all males ,and very feisty !!

Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 21-Jun-17 03:08 PM GMT

Many thanks for all the comments,as always they are much appreciated. Because of the size of the Small Copper population at Dungeness I'm able to enjoy a wide range of variation amongst them,to the point where I begin to wonder whether there really is such a thing as a "typical" Copper!

Certainly the differences between individuals is a constant source of joy to me

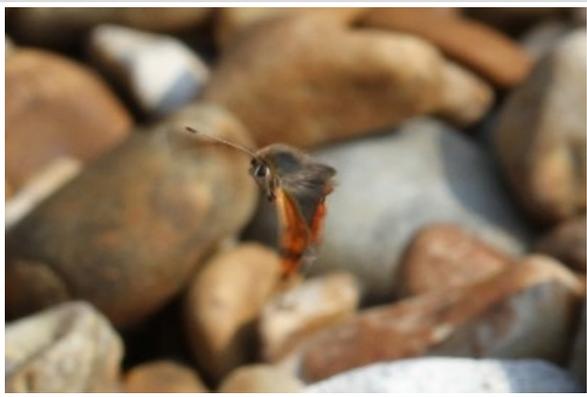


Today for example I found a couple of Sooty Coppers



where dark scales overlay the usual brightness

I watched several Small Copper tourneys





The combatants flashing in the sunlight



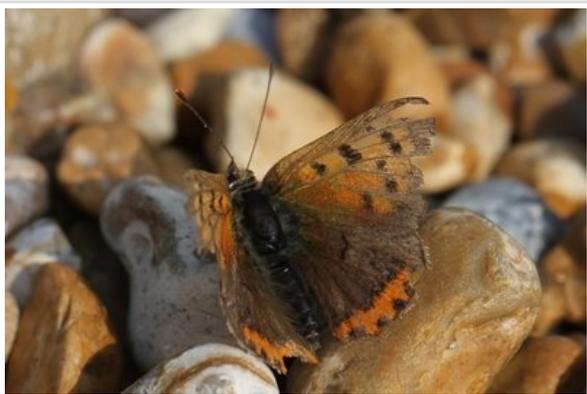
The second brood is gathering speed



My Copper-O-Meter detected 59 today



I was very interested to find this chap



I can't believe he's a second brood who's had a particularly difficult last couple of weeks! He must surely be the last survivor of the first brood, battle scarred but still with a twinkle in his eye.

Small Skippers are in plague numbers at present and amongst them I found a single Large Skipper



I also came upon this Bumblebee lying dead on the path : look how much pollen he'd collected (from its colour I'd guess from the Viper's Bugloss)



As the number of Small Copper grows I increasingly see them nectaring on the Bramble flowers where they look a treat



Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 01-Jul-17 04:05 PM GMT

There was plenty of cloud today at Dungeness today but also sustained periods of very warm sunshine, although it was very breezy. I followed my usual route, counting Coppers as I went along



It was quickly apparent that numbers were going to be modest. I'd hoped for an increase on my last visit and even wondered if we were going to see another Copper Bonanza like last year (when, for example, on 2nd July I counted 141)



When it's breezy I often fail to achieve a high tally, but even so I felt disappointed with just 42 today



It's possible that the the population will suddenly explode (and I hope it does!) but if it doesn't then this year's second brood will be rather a damp squib. I've started to wonder what might explain the difference between this year's second brood and last year. What immediately comes to mind is the startling difference in plant growth:2016 was remarkable for the lushness and abundance of plant growth throughout the Dungeness estate. By the time we reached the second brood I was often knee-deep in rich vegetation (and this profusion included the Sorrel). But 2017 could not have been more different: it has been so dry that the plant life has struggled and "The Desert" has really earned its name! I think this has taken its toll on the 2017 second brood.



Although numbers were low I enjoyed watching some jousts



And I came across a few Curious Coppers, this beautiful male for example



And this chunky chap



This male was busily courting a female that wanted none of him



But I noticed his peculiar colouring (which as he whizzed about looked grey)

Fascinating variations!



Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 01-Jul-17 09:30 PM GMT

Hello Hoggers,

I think you're spot on concerning the second brood at Dungie, the plants have really suffered ,with very little (compared to the last couple of years !) Sorrel and other plants have just given up the ghost,through lack of rain ,last year I found superb clumps of Rough and knotted clover just about everywhere,but found practically none this year,the Vipers Bugloss seemed late flowering and certainly not as lush ,when I have managed to get down to Dungeness,i,ve really struggled to find many Coppers,particularly in the second brood,lets hope its just a blip !
Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 02-Jul-17 06:50 PM GMT

Hi Allan, if I look back at my notes, on 27th June 2015 I saw 81 Coppers and 118 on 4th July. In 2016 on 30th June I counted 67 then a whopping 141 on 2nd July (and these are just an idea of the numbers present). This year 59 on 21st June and 42 yesterday. I'm no botanist but even I've noticed how poor the vegetation has faired this year. Yesterday I watched a female Copper apparently looking to lay her eggs. She was investigating some Sorrel and when I got closer I could see how meagre it was, with yellow and brown leaves. It will be interesting to see how the rest of the season develops.

All the best,

Hoggers

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 02-Jul-17 09:20 PM GMT

Hello again Hoggers,

Managed a one hour flying visit to Dungie,early evening,and managed twelve(Coppers) ,all in nice condition ,bar one ,an absolute " Ghost" I,m thinking last first brood survivor ? several Marbled Whites, 3 fresh 2nd brood Brown Args,and 3 Essex Skips.....so not all bad !
Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 04-Jul-17 08:26 PM GMT

Hi! Hogger's , hope to visit in a couple of weeks, fantastic Coppers 🍷 not seen one here yet. Goldie 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 08-Jul-17 03:26 PM GMT

Hi Goldie, I've no doubt that you'll find plenty of Small Copper when you visit, but it's a pity that this year's second brood has been much smaller than usual and this is the reason



It has been so dry that many plants, including Sorrel,have struggled

Today at Dungeness was very warm and calm but overcast. I managed to find only 54 Coppers



A good total for many sites but about a third of what I'd expect at Dungeness in early July



It's interesting that although the Coppers haven't done so well, other butterflies have thrived: Small Skippers were in plague numbers (but have dwindled now) and today I saw many Gatekeepers. I also saw good numbers of Brown Argus, 8 Painted Lady and this stunning Peacock



Together with an Essex Skipper, a few Common Blues, Large White, Marbled White and Small Tortoiseshell.

I noticed that the Coppers are beginning to look worn





And I came across this derelict



Amazingly, still able to fly!

But a good number of fresh Coppers too



Including this boldly marked female



And this one with a pale forewing



(something we see here fairly often)

I was treated to a "stalk dance"



Is this Granddad popping out of bed?



I'll be interested to hear how you get on Goldie



Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 09-Jul-17 03:56 PM GMT

I thought I'd visit Dungeness today before it got too hot. There are many flowers in bloom but they look sadly vacant without the usual throng of Small Coppers that I'm accustomed to seeing. I stood gazing out over a rich bouquet of Ragwort and the like, magnets for Small Coppers, yet saw not a single one.

I could hear the Peregrine chicks calling to their parents and looking up I could just make out one of the adults perched high on a pylon



Closer to ground level I began counting Coppers



Only 37 today



This time last year they were in their hundreds



But every year is different!



This rabbit seemed interested in me



But returning to Small Coppers



I wonder what the third brood will be like this year (if there is one!)



Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 10-Jul-17 12:59 PM GMT

Hope there's still some Copper's around when i visit next week, I'm determined to make it this year 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Hoppers

by Hoggars, 15-Jul-17 03:41 PM GMT

On my morning walk with the dogs I was passed by a Clouded Yellow, my first of the year. It was seen in Ashford, Kent, so a fair distance from the coast.

Hoggars

Re: Hoggars

by Hoggars, 16-Jul-17 11:48 AM GMT

Dungeness this morning was very warm (about 20C) and calm but overcast, so the butterflies were rather subdued. I walked my usual route whilst on the look out for Small Coppers and soon came across the odd one here and there



Most looking rather worn now



But nonetheless always a delight to see



I watched this one perform the "stalk dance"



You can see from this next photo how his front leg is blurred



I hope this illustrates just how fast he is tapping his foot!



On 16th July 2016 I counted 291 Small Copper but today I saw only 15 on the same route. My highest Copper Head Count for this year's second brood was 59 (on 21st June)



Last year the second brood started on 19th June (approximately) while this year I saw my first second brood Coppers on 3rd June. So you can tell from the above that this year (so far) has been very different to last. While I feel sad that this difference is a negative one, I have to admit that watching the Small Copper population of Dungeness over the last few years and being able to compare one year to another has been fascinating



I spent some time today looking at the Sorrel: we've had some decent rainfall over the last week and it has helped because although the clumps still look more dead than alive I did notice fresh growth of healthy green leaves, which is encouraging.

And I did find one fresh Copper too



Hopefully a sign of good things to come!

Re: Hoppers

by Wurzel, 16-Jul-17 10:02 PM GMT

A fantastic array of Coppers as always Hoppers, the variation is a wonderful thing 😊 I saw a few today myself including a couple of very fresh ones but nowhere near as many as you've seen 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 21-Jul-17 11:43 AM GMT

Friday and a day off for me so I nipped down to Dungeness. It was bright, warm (about 19C) with a lively breeze.

I took my usual walk and counted 9 Small Coppers



Very low in numbers



Most were rather worn





But one fresh female nectaring on Dodder made for a cheery sight



Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 21-Jul-17 05:41 PM GMT

Lovely Coppers Hogger's has always, we were going to come to Dungeness today, my Daughter's car however broke down in the morning on the Duel Carriage way and it shook her up a bit so we took our car and her to White Cliffs instead.

I've recently got a few Copper's but I was wondering if you've seen any Clouded Yellow there yet? I've missed out on them three times this week and would like to go some where now where I'll get a chance to see them and get some shots before I go home.

Goldie 😊

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 21-Jul-17 07:19 PM GMT

Hi Goldie, Clouded Yellows have been seen this week at Dungeness in ones and twos. I didn't see any there this morning but clearly worth a try. I live in Ashford and so far I've seen 3 Clouded Yellows in the last week on waste ground when I walk my dogs (all were quick fly pasts) so there's a slight migration going on at the moment – Good Luck!

Hoppers

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 23-Jul-17 03:40 PM GMT

A Copper on Ragwort



A rare sight at Dungeness this Summer, sadly



Plenty of fine Ragwort but precious few Coppers



So I made the most of it today



I counted 15 Small Copper



Most of them tired looking



And dented



But a couple of fresh males



And a rare (for this year) Blue Badger



Enough to keep a Copperologist happy



I had a chat with one of the wardens (Owen): he takes part in a Botanical Survey of Dungeness and New Romney each year and told me that it has been noted that the smaller flowering plants (including Sorrel) were badly hit by the drought this Spring. He asked after the Small Coppers and said that he too had noted the drop in their number.

As the second brood started early this year I am pretty sure it is now almost over



I'd guess that the third brood will be modest this year but with Small Coppers you never can tell!

PS, Goldie, if you're reading this, a male Clouded Yellow was patrolling up and down the power station wall by the red and white metal gate

PPS, When I got home I saw this Red Admiral on my Buddleia: It's got an extra white spot!



Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 23-Jul-17 06:05 PM GMT

Hi! Hogger's, I got your message 😊 I f we can get there I'll be very pleased but the weather doesn't look great until Tuesday now so we'll have to wait and go with the weather I think. 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Hoppers

by David M, 24-Jul-17 12:12 AM GMT

Glad to see the Coppers still going strong on your patch, Hoppers, in spite of the perceived lower numbers this year. I'm delighted when I see a mere singleton so that puts things into perspective.

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 06-Aug-17 04:00 PM GMT

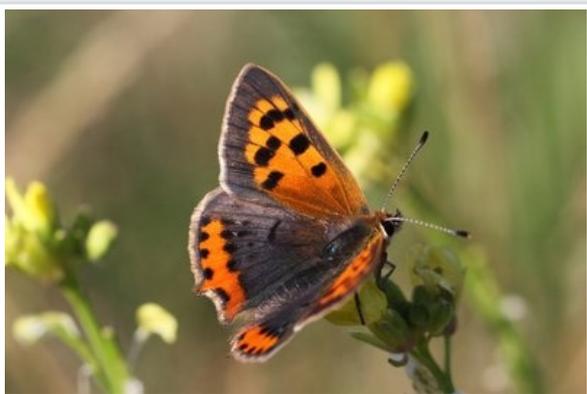
I went down to Dungeness today and was delighted to discover that the third brood of Small Copper has begun!



My Copper-O-Meter detected 30



All but two were fresh





A female doing the "Turkey Strut" had a confused male Brown Argus for a suitor!



Among the beautiful Coppers there were a number of surprises, firstly this stunningly marked male



Gorgeous

And then this remarkable individual





To the eye he appeared to have just two spots (and if you look at the underside you can see why)



But also the general appearance was rather greasy



He reminded me of a couple of other Coppers that I've found in the past :



A rare and very interesting aberration



Then I stumbled upon my second radiata of the year



What a thrill! Such a beautiful variation my heart always skips a beat when I find one



So all in all a marvellous day at Copperness!



Re: Hoppers

by Allan.W., 06-Aug-17 06:11 PM GMT

Hello Hoppers ,

That Radiata is a beauty !! as is the other unusually marked individual ,had a flying visit there myself yesterday ,but only managed 3-4 ,+ A couple of Hummingbird Hawks . once again ,nice finds ! Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoppers

by Allan.W., 06-Aug-17 06:11 PM GMT

Hello Hoggers ,
That Radiata is a beauty !! as is the other unusually marked individual ,had a flying visit there myself yesterday ,but only managed 3-4 ,+
A couple of Hummingbird Hawks . once again ,nice finds ! Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by Katrina, 06-Aug-17 10:29 PM GMT

Great work finding the radiata and a bonus ab!

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 07-Aug-17 12:28 AM GMT

Your first aberrant is absolutely remarkable, Hoggers. I've never seen anything like that before. The undersides are particularly striking.

Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 07-Aug-17 10:52 AM GMT

Hi! Hogger's, after the weather was so bad the second week and reports of very few Copper's about we decided being has I'd seen an ab on the first Sunday I was there to give Dungeness a miss and look for Clouded yellow instead having seen them at different places and not got a shot. Your twelfth photo looks a lot like the one I got a shot of at Bossingham on the 16th of July it was lovely. Goldie 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 08-Aug-17 09:36 PM GMT

That is a cracking aberrant as all have commented 😊👍 Also your radiata 👍 but doesn't that also have some blue badges as well 👍👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 13-Aug-17 04:30 PM GMT

Thank you all for your kind comments, much appreciated as always.

The second brood of Small Copper at Dungeness was abysmal. Numbers were far below normal. I've spoken to a number of people about this including AllanW (who I bumped in to there this morning) and David Walker (the reserve warden) and the general consensus is that the drought this Spring hit all small flowering plants, Sorrel included, very hard indeed and that this had a devastating effect on the second brood. Indeed, numbers were so unusually low that I feared there'd be no third brood at all.

So given this background it is little short of miraculous that not only has there been a third brood but that it has come through so strong



Today I counted 74 Small Copper



The few second brood did their job (and also the rain did eventually come to revive the Sorrel)



End result : a glorious, healthy third brood



I saw a few Blue Badgers today (always a pleasure)



Signs of bird strikes!



This Copper has held the same territory for at least 7 days now



I also came across this chap



He was chased quickly away by another Copper so I managed only 3 photos



He's clearly very similar to the one I found 7 days ago



I've tried to compare the two butterflies and I've concluded that it is not the same individual but if I'm wrong, he's had a very difficult week!

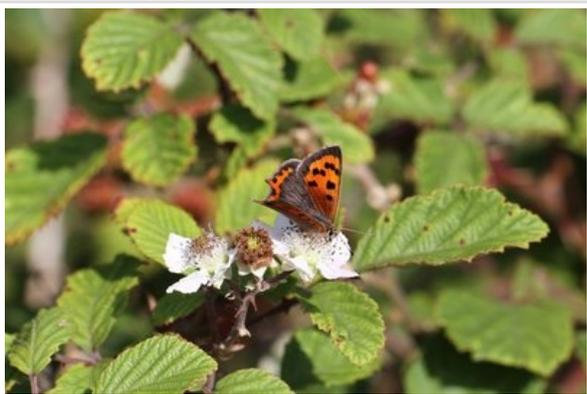
It's an interesting variation, reduced spotting and a greasy appearance. AllanW found one like it as well today. I wonder if the variation is pathological rather than genetic?

74 for the third brood is an excellent count





There's no keeping a good Copper down!



Re: Hoppers

by David M, 13-Aug-17 07:48 PM GMT

Hoppers wrote:

74 for the third brood is an excellent count

74 annually would be good for most of us, Hoppers! Always a delight to see your Coppers. There's such a range of variation and it's nice to see individuals previously recorded turning up again.

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 19-Aug-17 03:34 PM GMT

Cheers David : by repeatedly visiting Dungeness over the years I've been able to watch male Small Coppers hold territories and some become familiar faces!

Today I counted 101 Small Copper



The rain came and revitalised the Sorrel just in time for the second brood caterpillars



Result : a bounteous third brood





Wing fluttering is something I see mostly among the female Coppers: here's a male courting a female



She wants nothing to do with him and so goes into the "Turkey Strut", wings all a-flutter



But I've seen males wing flutter too : these two were chasing each other about. Upon landing the first Copper (nearest in the picture) would crowd in on second



The response to this crowding was that the second Copper would take flight, whereupon the chase would begin again



But after settling and being crowded again, the second Copper fluttered his wings at the first, and the first then just left him alone



I've been noticing a number of Coppers that have sustained bird strikes, including this one



Now it might be my imagination, but this one looks like a radiata! It must have been magnificent before some bird came along and chomped off most of its hind wings!

I also came upon this stunner



Which makes an interesting comparison with this one



The most unusual Copper today was this



I'll be corrected if I'm wrong, but I think it's *ab remota*, where the spotting is thrown out towards the wing margins. It flew away seconds after I saw it so only two bad photos I'm afraid



But it's a striking aberration and the first I've ever seen.

A great day's Coppering!



Re: Hoggers

by Katrina, 19-Aug-17 04:05 PM GMT

I am loving the last photo Hoggers. Well done also for finding another ab!

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 19-Aug-17 05:15 PM GMT

Hello Hoggers,

Some great shots there as usual,must admit I,ve not seen a Copper like the Ab you posted ,very unusual ,nice find,and thanks for comments re; the Adonis Blues in the sightings section. I do enjoy looking through the Blues as they go to rest and they are generally very obliging in the evenings, (as are the Common Blues in the gulleys Dengemarsh). One small word to the wise ,I made the mistake of not spraying up with the "jungle" spray,whilst up on the downs and got bitten to pieces !! Once again nice AB. regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 19-Aug-17 05:55 PM GMT

Your *remota* is most unusual, Hoggers. I've certainly never seen one like that before.

Nice to hit 3 figures in a day. I reckon it'd take me 3 years to do that in the UK!!

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 26-Aug-17 04:41 PM GMT

Many thanks for your comments, much appreciated.

The first day of this August Bank Holiday weekend dawned very warm and calm but overcast. I took my usual walk at Dungeness and immediately began finding Small Coppers





I was interested to note that the number of "Blue badgers" (either with a full set or the vaguest suggestion of blue) is very high



And indeed, over the past several years I've had the notion that this charming aberration turns up most often in the third brood





There are still many fresh Coppers about



But I noticed signs of wear becoming more evident



This female caught my eye



She was quite alone, descending whilst quickly tapping her feet



Then going into the "Turkey Strut" performance (even though I was the only male in the vicinity!)



I've watched females tap their feet on plants before, particularly when looking to lay their eggs, but I've not seen a female go so far as to copy the male's "Stalk Dance" routine



I bumped into the "remota" that I found last week, still in exactly the same spot



So he's been in this territory for at least 7 days. It's interesting to be able to get evidence like this of Small Copper behaviour.

I also saw this chap with a pencil thin hindwing band



Very smart!

And this one with yellow on the forewing



This chap roosting up in the bushes had a peculiar scale defect



On my walk noted how well the Sorrel is growing. This successful third brood (I counted 91 today) after a near catastrophic second brood it is a testament to this little butterfly's ability to survive



The signs are there for a good fourth brood!



I also saw a Clouded Yellow



As well as several fresh Brown Argus.

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 26-Aug-17 05:49 PM GMT

Hello Hoggers,

Some beauties there as usual, your individual with a scale defect also has a very large almost joined spots, shame you never managed any more shots, would have been good to see its full topside, was your "Remota" near the end of the Bird trap? if so I think I may have spotted it yesterday afternoon, but it never hung around so was unable to get a shot! was pleased with a count of 62 in about an hour and a half, with some absolute beauties on the wing. Some great pictures there Hoggers!.

Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by Maximus, 26-Aug-17 06:23 PM GMT

I'm glad that the Small Coppers have recovered their numbers in the third brood, Hoggers, and that the Sorrel is growing well too. You've captured some little gems in your photos 😊

Re: Hoggers

by essexbuzzard, 26-Aug-17 11:04 PM GMT

Yes, some lovely coopers there, and good to see a bit of rain has revived both the foodplant and the butterflies. Fingers crossed for a nice autumn and a new brood of coopers!

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 26-Aug-17 11:11 PM GMT

I know it won't win any technical awards, but I just love that image of the male Clouded Yellow zooming by the wire fence – I guess it encapsulates how ephemeral this species is in the UK; you rarely get more than a passing glimpse as the butterfly motors along on its way.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 27-Aug-17 04:07 PM GMT

Hello Allan, yes the chap with the scale issue did appear to have its dots joined but he was so flighty I just couldn't get a decent look at him! And the remota is where you say (again a very active little Copper!)

Hi Maximus and EssexB, the contrast between this year's second and third brood has been startling: during the former I'd stand forlornly by clumps of Ragwort and not see a single Copper; but now it's a case of if you see a sprig of Ragwort you are sure to find a Copper or two!

Hi David, soon after being buzzed by the Clouded Yellow I was stopped by two butterfly enthusiasts who asked if I'd seen any Clouded Yellows! I had to say that 5 minutes ago one had flown right by me and make do with pointing them in the direction it had disappeared (I hate it when you ask someone if they've seen what you're after and they say "Yes,It was right here 5 minutes ago!!") I hope they caught up with it in the end.

I left home in brilliant sunshine this morning but by the time I reached Romney Marsh I was driving through a fog that Russell Thorndike would have been proud of! I expected Dungeness to be lost in a pea-souper and for my expedition to be a case of "Coppers in the Mist" but by the time I arrived it had just begun to lift and very soon it became hot



I decided to take a different route for my walk and began counting Coppers



I got to 88 when I decided to stop counting and just enjoy the butterflies





Blue Badgers are strongly represented in this third brood





This chap was very active and actually glinted a shade of green in the sun



And this one had a pale forewing



I watched some aerial displays





Always a joy



A sleek bird of prey flew right past me and I just managed to get a record photo



Is it a Sparrow hawk?

I saw a few Painted Lady too



By about 1130 it was getting too hot for me so I headed for home



It is wonderful to see so many Coppers again, a real joy



Re: Hoppers

by trevor, 27-Aug-17 05:16 PM GMT

One of your best Copper images to date. (the last one)
A real picture !. Small Copper on some Blackberries with a backdrop of blue sky.

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Hoppers

by Allan.W., 27-Aug-17 05:27 PM GMT

Hello Hoppers,

Sorry I missed you this morning ,funny you should mention "Peasoup" when I arrived around 7.15 am it was just that ! but within half hour it had lifted , I managed 52 Coppers ,including a couple of Blue Spots and another unusually marked Dusky individual, your bird is a Sparrowhawk as you suggested ,they did trap one sometime during the morning, Small Heaths ,fresh Brown Argus and 8 Humming bird Hawks warming up on the power station wall when I arrived. was good but I tried for your "Remota " but no joy ,but I did glimpse it yesterday .At Brookland ,dozens of Whites ,and Small Heath,but dissapointingly only 1 Copper ,but very good to see 3 Clouded Yellowbodes well for later on !
Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 28-Aug-17 03:04 PM GMT

Cheers for the comments Trevor and Allan, much appreciated.

With reports of a poisonous gas cloud coming in off the sea at Eastbourne yesterday, it was with some trepidation that I ventured down to Dungeness this morning. Fortunately all was well



My brother was able to come along with me.He has some mobility issues (bad knees) so instead of the hard core extreme Coppering I'm accustomed to we took things at a far more leisurely pace



Whilst taking a break I was delighted to be well and truly "trousered" by a Copper



This is the first time I have been honoured in this way. I do not pretend that my "Matalan Chinos" can approach the mythic status of Neil Hulme's moleskins and their power over The Emperor, but I have decided never to wash them again.

A dream ending to my August Bank Holiday weekend



Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 02-Sep-17 04:50 PM GMT

Autumn at Dungeness means busy times at the Ragwort



Conditions there today were perfect for Coppering



It seemed that every flower had at least one Small Copper



And the brambles had their own attractions



I counted 128 Small Copper today



Some boldly marked



but this one with reduced spotting



Dungeness is a wonderful place to be!



Re: Hoppers

by David M, 04-Sep-17 08:10 AM GMT

That penultimate one is another very striking specimen, Hoppers. You sure have a varied range of individuals at that site. Small Coppers always seem to be attracted to yellow flowers....seeing one on ragwort is a real September scene for me.

Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 04-Sep-17 10:35 AM GMT

Hi! Hopper's, My September scene is definitely the Copper on the Red Berries, Beautiful, Goldie 😊

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 09-Sep-17 03:31 PM GMT

The third brood of Small Copper at Dungeness is still going strong



But has past its best



I noticed worn individuals now outnumber the fresh



Here's a Copper with her drinking–straw out enjoying some Blackberry juice



Another female was being pestered by a male



He pursued her for a good four minutes before finally getting the message that she wasn't interested



I saw 2 Humming-bird Hawk Moths, about 10 Painted Lady



And 2 Clouded Yellow



I also glimpsed a Redstart on migration.

I enjoy Autumnal butterflying



The pace is easier and it doesn't get too hot!





A good opportunity to stock up on some butterfly memories before the season comes to an end



Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 10-Sep-17 11:08 AM GMT

Hi! Hopper's, great shots of the Copper's on the Berries, it's amazing their still going strong 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 10-Sep-17 03:08 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie, they are doing really well : I counted 74 yesterday, although overall condition is in decline. But I expect there to be a small fourth brood if the weather stays ok.

I've seen them drinking up juice from the ripe Blackberries in the past but it's not something I've come across very often (and from memory it's mostly the females that do so, rather than the males).

Hoppers

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 24-Sep-17 03:51 PM GMT

After two weeks of Tonsillitis I needed cheering up :



A bright new Small Copper met the bill perfectly



It's my first day out of quarantine and I'm not yet up to strength so I took a shorter walk than usual at Dungeness. I noticed how lush the plants now look



Such a contrast to earlier this year!

I met David Walker who kindly identified this attractive flower for me



Moth Mullien

My Copper-O-Meter registered 18 today



Eleven were worn and dented third brood



I find these old campaigners interesting



An example of how tough these little butterflies are. I look and wonder what hard battles they've fought through the late summer days



But the rest were beautiful fourth brood Coppers



I watched a male pursue a female



During her escape and much to my surprise she completely flattened herself!



This is something I have never seen a female do when repelling all boarders (although I once witnessed a male flatten himself to the ground on a breezy day)

It was a gorgeous day to see some Small Coppers and just what the doctor ordered



Re: Hoppers

by David M, 24-Sep-17 11:18 PM GMT

I hope that tonsillitis is firmly behind you, Hoppers and yes, what better way to consign it to history with such a beautiful array of divine Small Coppers. All being well there'll still be a fair few over the next week or three!

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 06-Oct-17 03:44 PM GMT

Hello David, my tonsils are back to normal thank you. Up until they went wrong I'd never have known they were there!

A day off work and plenty of sunshine. I saw a Clouded Yellow while taking my dogs out this morning so a good start to the day.

Dungeness by 11am and the Coppers were getting busy



What a treat to be able to find fresh Small Coppers so late in the year





Though a few old timers are still on the wing



I watched males in combat





After which the two contestants would sit in the sun for a rest



I counted 23 today





A real pleasure





It felt more like July than October!



Re: Hoppers

by millerd, 06-Oct-17 03:51 PM GMT

What a glorious sight those new Coppers are, Hoppers! 😊 Long may they continue to appear down there. I had to make do with just the one on my local patch today... 🍷

Dave

Re: Hoppers

by Allan.W., 06-Oct-17 04:16 PM GMT

Hello Hoppers,

I had a day off as well today ,and we made a short visit to Dungeness as well,i recognise your second to last Copper ,with fairly distinctive forewing markings , I photographed it as well ! nearby I saw a very unusual Copper which I was unable to get a pic of ,it appeared to have just two spots on each forewing..... can't win them all ! Also managed 10 + Clouded Yellows and about a dozen Coppers .

Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 08-Oct-17 02:27 PM GMT

Hi Millerd and Allan, it is a wonderful thing to be able to see fresh Small Coppers at this late stage in the season (and the one with the crescent markings was gorgeous)

My car dashboard indicated 17C when I arrived at Dungeness this morning and I immediately began finding Coppers



This Autumnal emergence is very exciting indeed



Most of the Coppers I saw today (26 in total) were newly minted



Some seem to glow with a fire all their own



I saw several newly emerged females and watched a male pester another male into having a fight with him



The one that was minding his own business nectaring ended up shimmying his wings at his opponent who eventually got the message and flew off.

I also saw 3 Clouded Yellows and a Speckled Wood



I'm pretty sure this is the first one I've ever found at Dungeness. Quiet why it was on the beach by the Power Station I can't guess!

Still, the Coppers don't mind it there



My favourite Copper of the day was this stunner



Drop dead gorgeous!

So a real bonus fourth brood at Copperness



Marvellous!



Re: Hoppers

by Wurzel, 08-Oct-17 06:19 PM GMT

There is a such a subtle range of variation Hoppers that it's difficult to judge which one is 'normal' 😊 Some were definitely at the back of the queue when it came to getting their markings painted on 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoppers

by millerd, 08-Oct-17 08:43 PM GMT

More lovely glowing Coppers, Hoppers. I swear they must be internally lit when they are fresh! 😊 I wonder how long this emergence will carry on?

Dave

Re: Hoppers

by David M, 08-Oct-17 11:31 PM GMT

Keep those Coppers coming, Hoppers. We love 'em and in a month we'll all be yearning for the first specimens of 2018.

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 14-Oct-17 04:19 PM GMT

14th October : Dungeness : T-Shirt and Sun Hat the order of the day. Must have been 19C and the Coppers were loving it!



My Copper-O-Meter registered 42



This has been an outstanding fourth brood



I saw Red Admiral, Peacock, Painted Lady and Clouded Yellow too but Coppers are the most plentiful butterfly now at Copperness

This female interested me



Coppery pixels outnumbering the blue



I can't recall having seen this before



I've noticed the number of individuals this brood with reduced spotting



I came upon a male with magnificent blue badges but only managed this photo before he whizzed away



Another fine day is forecast for tomorrow



I can't wait!

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 14-Oct-17 05:41 PM GMT

Hello Hoggers,

Some interesting individuals there Hoggers, the one with the Copper marks above the hindwing band is similar to one I found at Dungie today as well. I can't make my mind up whether it's the same one as yours, very unusual! There is a description in the Abberations thread that sort of fits the bill, as AB; *Cupreopuncta*, but unfortunately no pics!

I agree that the fourth brood has been excellent, I too have seen many Blue Spots, and reduced spotted individuals, still some beauties on the wing, may even have another look myself tomorrow!

Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 15-Oct-17 03:11 PM GMT

Hi Allan, "*Cupreopunctata*" certainly sounds right – a definite first for me!

Brian, an old school friend, came down this weekend from Norfolk. He said he'd never seen a Clouded Yellow before: I said I knew how to put that right!

We arrived at Dungeness in strong sunshine but it was much cooler and breezier than yesterday. There were no Cloudies to be seen at first so we turned our attention to the butterfly that gives Dungeness its real attraction



We counted 28 in all



And I was delighted to find a mating pair



The male looks to be at least 2 weeks old so he's hung on in there and beaten all the younger males to the prize. This is the first mating pair I've found since May.

I think Brian began to suspect I'd forgotten about the Cloudies, so we set off to look in the best place for them (along the power station wall) and upon arrival there was his first ever Clouded Yellow



Which was soon joined by a second



We followed one of these butterflies around the wall then bumped in to two fellow Butterfly enthusiasts photographing the Cloudie. We got to chatting about butterflies, Dungeness and Small Coppers in particular and soon we realised that this was the first meeting of UKButterflies' own EssexBuzzard and Hoggers!

It was great to meet you EssexB and I hope you managed to find plenty of Coppers



Brian had to be getting home so we went on our way with very fond memories of an excellent morning at Copperness



Re: Hoggers

by essexbuzzard, 15-Oct-17 10:14 PM GMT

We did, and plenty of other stuff besides! Great to meet you, Hoggers! We had a great time. 😊

Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 16-Oct-17 03:38 PM GMT

Hi! Hogger's, your so lucky to live in Kent, I m seeing lots of Butterflies but if I didn't get Kent in Summer I'd Have a very low Butterfly count for the Year 😊 Love the Small Copper shots . 🍷 Goldie 😊

Re: Hoppers

by David M, 21-Oct-17 02:01 PM GMT

Coppers & Cloudies in mid-October! What a site you have on your local patch, Hoppers. Wish we had a 'West Dungeness' somewhere on mine. 😞

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 25-Oct-17 03:23 PM GMT

Hi EssexB, Goldie and David,I am very lucky indeed to be within easy striking distance of Copperness!

We've had some very butterfly unfriendly weather since I bumped into EssexB. I had today off work but although warm it was gloomy with drizzle at first. By midday however conditions had improved so I thought I'd have a look for some Coppers.

It was 17C and calm when I arrived but unfortunately it just would not brighten up! Coppers love the sunshine, it brings them out to play, but dull weather grounds them. Nonetheless I followed my usual walk and began finding some Small Coppers



Now weathered and battered





But still brilliant : this chap had a nice copper sheen to his hind-wings



If only it had been sunnier!



There didn't seem much chance of the sky clearing so I decided to head back to my car. I always say "One Copper is enough" and I'd counted 6 so no complaints really but I confess to having felt a little disappointed that I hadn't seen more.

I should have known better than to feel down hearted : Copperness was not going to send me home depressed. Just before I reached the car I looked down and saw this



What a magnificent butterfly



Cleopatra in all her finery couldn't have come close to this true Queen of the Coppers!

Re: Hoggers

by millerd, 25-Oct-17 04:03 PM GMT

Wow - that last female is stunning. Different enough to look like a different species, almost. Those are the largest blue badges I've ever seen, and the understated forewing spots just make the blue even more prominent. What a lovely insect. 😊

Dave

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 25-Oct-17 05:38 PM GMT

Nice find Hoggers ! what a little stunner ,imagine it when it was fresh !!
Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by essexbuzzard, 25-Oct-17 08:51 PM GMT

At least you saw some, and the last is a stunner. It's November next week, I will be interested to see if you can find a Copper then!

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 25-Oct-17 11:57 PM GMT

That last specimen is as bold a *caeroleopunctata* individual as I have ever seen, Hoggers!

Wonderful insect!

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 28-Oct-17 04:03 PM GMT

Hi All, many thanks for your comments : I think there's a very good chance indeed of the Coppers hanging on into November,(ie, until Wednesday next!), although the weather has turned much colder than of late and, sad as I am to say it, we are at the end of 2017 Copper Season.

We had a frost last night here in Ashford and when I arrived at Dungeness it was decidedly nippy (one of the wardens said he didn't recognise me at first in my coat and bobble-hat!)

The first butterfly I saw was a Peacock sheltering from the cold breeze in the mouth of a rabbit warren (I later saw 2 more Peacocks) and as the morning became warmer (it got up to 13C), I began finding Coppers



Back on 14th October I found an unusual female that AllanW later identified for me as a *Cupropunctata* : It was on the footpath along the power station fence



This morning I found this Copper in the observatory moat



It looks so much like the *cupropunctata* I found on 14th that I'm inclined to say it is the same butterfly.

Coincidentally, this morning in the moat I also re-found my Queen of the Coppers



Well at least I think it's her! It's sometimes difficult to tell!

When I saw her on wednesday she was by the car park at the Red and White metal gate (a considerable distance away)! This sort of thing fascinates me : clear evidence of how these tiny butterflies move around the site, gravitating towards the observatory moat.

If it is her then it was good to see her again



If it's not her, I seem to be very lucky when it comes to finding Blue Badgers!

Re: Hoggars

by Goldie M, 28-Oct-17 05:23 PM GMT

Fantastic shots Hogger's , it's so great to keep seeing postings of them 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Hoggars

by David M, 28-Oct-17 11:32 PM GMT

So glad you saw your precious *caeruleopunctata* female again, Hoggars. You spend so much time there they must seem like family?

Re: Hoggars

by Hoggars, 02-Nov-17 04:59 PM GMT

Winter Coppers

My 2017 Small Copper season began on 6th April : seven months later and they are still on the wing



Just!



Dungeness today enjoyed glorious weather, calm and sunny with the temperature at about 13C. I got there around 11am and walked to the Observatory moat where I began finding Coppers



I also bumped in to Mark (EssexBuzzard) and his partner. While we stood talking a gorgeous Clouded Yellow flew in



This male had set up his territory by a clump of flowering Ragwort



Not only did he have a ready supply of nectar but the Ragwort attracted other butterflies : he chased off the Clouded Yellow, but was then later joined by my Queen of the Coppers



Her Highness wanted nothing to do with him, poor chap. I went to find Mark so that he could see the Queen but by the time we returned she had decamped (I hope you managed to find her Mark.)

This female was busily searching for something



I watched her for a few minutes but despite looking like she might lay an egg she didn't



And I also got to watch a male do the "stalk dance"



Despite numbers being low (I counted 9), there was so much going on it felt like Summer!



Re: Hoppers

by trevor, 02-Nov-17 05:07 PM GMT

A great haul of November Coppers, Hoppers.
Well done capturing that Clouded Yellow in flight.

Great stuff,
Trevor.

Re: Hoppers

by Allan.W., 02-Nov-17 06:56 PM GMT

Hi Hoppers ,

Actually I think that nine is an excellent count for early November, it shows just how hardy these little beauties can be ,considering we've now had several frosts !(all be it ,mild ones !),I wonder if at this time of the year the coppers still roost as high and prominently as they do in earlier broods (when its warmer) ? Well done againroll on the weekend ! (and weather permitting !)

Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoppers

by Maximus, 02-Nov-17 08:09 PM GMT

That's a beautiful caeruleopunctata you found, Hoppers 😊

Re: Hogggers

by millerd, 02-Nov-17 09:14 PM GMT

Great to see the Coppers still flying down at Dungeness, Hogggers. They don't give up, do they! 😊 Unfortunately we lost the sunshine further north today, but it looks as if it was lovely down there on the coast. 😊

Dave

Re: Hogggers

by essexbuzzard, 03-Nov-17 09:28 AM GMT

Unfortunately, we failed to find the Queen, Hogggers, but what a great time we had down there! Nice to meet you again, and thanks for coming to find me anyway. We stayed, and watched our last three Coppers of 2017 go to roost, at around 3.30PM. 😊

Re: Hogggers

by Hogggers, 03-Nov-17 09:37 AM GMT

Hi All, many thanks for your comments.

We've had frosts inland thus far but I don't know if they've had a frost at Dungeness yet? Nevertheless, what strikes me is just how long the Small Copper flight period is there : numbers fluctuate through the season of course, but I've found them every time I've visited from 6th April until yesterday, which is surely remarkable.

Hi Mark, every time I see you a Clouded Yellow seems to appear! Sorry the Queen didn't stay around for you - I think she'd had enough of the male Copper's attentions. But it was marvellous on a November day to see how active they were : I watched males chase off other butterflies, court females and perform the "stalk dance", and I saw a female appear to look for somewhere to lay eggs. What with the weather being so pleasant it could have been Summer!

Re: Hogggers

by Goldie M, 03-Nov-17 03:22 PM GMT

Hi! Hogger's, there must be some thing really special at Dungeness to attract the Coppers every year and for so long in the year, I don't know of any other place in the UK where they stay for so long year after year 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Hogggers

by David M, 08-Nov-17 08:34 PM GMT

Nice to see those November Coppers, Hogggers, even of most are looking a bit on the worn side. Their longevity on that site is remarkable.