

Re: philm63

by philm63, 27-Nov-17 08:10 AM GMT

Hi all

Since my last post in April 2014 I have been loitering around the fringes and still keeping up with people's diaries and sightings. I decided it was time to start posting again, so I hope you all will all excuse the absence, and hopefully I can manage to post the odd image to brighten up your day
Have just summarised the period 2014 to 2017 to bring the local situation up to date
A selection of images from that period follow for my local species

Skippers

Large Skipper

With the loss of two sites locally to housing developments I now look for this species at two main sites, Bingley Bog North and Eldwick Reservoir. Both held the species in the period 2014 to 2017, mid-June to mid-July. No great numbers were seen but it was reliable at both sites. Knotford Nook also holds a small colony along the river-line









Small Skipper

Appears a short while after the first Large Skipper, but tends to stay around a bit later. They also appear at the same sites, Bingley Bog North and around Eldwick Reservoir, with the occasional ones elsewhere. 2017 was an average year in numbers, but some nice behavioural sightings







Re: philm63

by Goldie M, 27-Nov-17 10:54 AM GMT

Love the shots of the Skipper on your finger, 😊 How'd you manage to get one to stay long enough to do that , they're usually so quick 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: philm63

by Andrew555, 27-Nov-17 02:05 PM GMT

Some lovely Skippers Phil, that one on your finger is great. 😊

Re: philm63

by philm63, 28-Nov-17 08:01 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie and Andrew

The Skipper was photographed on the 23 July this year, it was not at a site I usually see them and was very lethargic but looked in good condition. The hardest bit was operating the camera in my other hand and trying to get a focus at such close range

Goldie.

I also ran into a WLH, actually my first, this year; it is shown later in this post. It was nectaring at a spot within a mile of my home and where I had no idea they occurred. It doesn't seem to fit the norm though as it was about 2pm on the 9 July I saw it, a warm and sunny day indicated by my notes. Glad about that, though, as I would never have seen it otherwise. The thistles it was nectaring on were about 20 yards from a single elm in an area with no other elms. I know to keep an eye on that site next year

Hairstreaks, Blues and Coppers

Green Hairstreak

In 2014 the moorland colony at Whetstone Gate had 27 on the 17 May which was near the time seen in 2013. In 2015 had only a single at Bradup in June and in 2016 saw none on the moors (probably bad timing on my part) but found a new small colony, of around 6, at Glovershaw. Oddly enough these were along a woodland edge at the bottom of a bracken covered slope and the butterflies were in the trees, that sighting on the 30 May was the only one that year. Saw none in 2017. In the period 2011 to 2013 I had got used to seeing them mid-April to mid-May, but late spring has been poor locally the past few years





Purple Hairstreak

A species that does occur locally but still eludes me on a regular basis. Limited to the odd sighting in the treetops, and none at all in 2017

White-letter Hairstreak

I had never seen one locally till this year, but they do occur at a few sites I do not visit. So I was utterly surprised to find one within a mile of home on 9 July this year. The site is a secluded copse with a single Elm, The butterfly was nectaring on creeping thistle in the early afternoon. It was a delight and a real buzz at the time. Not seen again on subsequent visits





Common Blue

None were seen locally in most years. In May 2017 found three small groups along the paths above RSPB Fairburn Ings. Only males were seen, and all very flighty, at that time. Then found a single male at Bingley Bog North in mid-June, a first for me at this site, so will check the site for more next year

Holly Blue

I only expect to see the odd individual and 2014 to 2017 were no exception. At the right time I usually get one passing through my back garden, and then expect the odd individual elsewhere, and this proved to be the case; with other sightings spread over a number of sites, almost always only singles



Small Copper

The best two sites locally disappeared under housing developments and subsequently it is hard finding them elsewhere locally so far. I do not doubt that there will be a site where I can find them reliably, have just got to turn it up. Otherwise it is the odd individual like this year produced



Phil

Re: philm63

by philm63, 29-Nov-17 07:40 AM GMT

Browns

Gatekeeper

None seen locally for a few years, but was only sporadic before that. In 2017 had a single that was retrospectively identified in these posts, I had assumed it was another Meadow Brown. That will teach me to be more observant



Small Heath

There is a reliable site, with a small colony, at Bradup. But I could not connect with them at all in 2017. Three visits at around the usual time produced no butterflies





Wall

I usually find these along the road-sides and pathways in small numbers, but the sightings got better in 2014 and continued into 2017. The bridleway down to Eldwick Reservoir was turning up 6 or more on some days in either May - June or August, with 8 on one trip in May 2014. It is now a butterfly I expect along this walk at the right time, and I am not usually disappointed







Re: philm63

by Wurzel, 29-Nov-17 09:15 AM GMT

Great to see you back Phil 😊 and with a great selection of shots – White-letters great and those Walls brill – especially the final one, really interesting posture 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: philm63

by essexbuzzard, 29-Nov-17 09:42 PM GMT

Agreed. These days, a good Wall site nearby should be cherished.

Re: philm63

by philm63, 30-Nov-17 07:48 AM GMT

Cheers Wurzel, essexbuzzard

I seem to think that the Walls in angled-wings shots seem to show more texture and a richer colour, or maybe I just need to get my glasses changed!!

Browns continued

Meadow Brown

It can be the commonest butterfly at the higher elevations locally, with good numbers in June and July, and the odd stragglers into August. 2017 followed the normal pattern but I felt the main flight period was limited this year, and the main bloom of thistles saw very few butterflies utilising them





Ringlet

Occurs locally in most spots I usually see Meadow Brown and the two are on the wing together, though Ringlets disappear sooner. In 2017 I had 12 on one day in late June and it was regular till mid-July with counts of over 20, then they all vanished. The area down to Eldwick reservoir was good this year in July, whilst the lower altitude Bingley Bog was better in late June





Phil



Re: philm63

by Andrew555, 30-Nov-17 07:57 AM GMT

Enjoying your shots and reports Phil, love the White-letter Hairstreak and you can never have too many Walls. 😊

Re: philm63

by David M, 30-Nov-17 06:14 PM GMT

Lovely sequences, Phil. Bring on the next instalment.

Re: philm63

by Goldie M, 01-Dec-17 10:58 AM GMT

Great shots Phil, keep them coming, Goldie 😊

Re: philm63

by philm63, 01-Dec-17 11:47 AM GMT

Cheers Andrew, David and Goldie

Browns continued

Speckled Wood

This was again another species that had a few good years till 2016, but appeared thinner on the ground in 2017. The best spot locally Prince of Wales Park suffered from the over-removal of ground-level shrubbery and this robbed the butterflies of some of their favourite haunts. I gather the intention is to let it grow back which may improve things in the next few years. Still turning up at other sites, so no major concerns as yet







Whites

Brimstone

I only see the odd individual and the period 2014 to 2017 was no exception. At RSPB Fairburn Ings in May I saw two

Green-veined White

Locally common in 2014 seen from 23 April to the 9th September with a peak of 15 on one day, 2015 to 2016 were quieter, with some sites not producing many at all. I also noticed a reduction in the number that were nectaring when the thistles were out, which had produced more photos in the earlier years. 2017 had sightings from April to July with 14 seen at Strid Woods in May. However sites such as Bingley Bog North, which are usually very good for this butterfly, did not seem to hold as many this year





Re: philm63

by Wurzel, 03-Dec-17 09:55 AM GMT

Cracking set of shots Phil 😊 I think a Hedge Brown snook into your Meadow Brown sequence 😊 Great Specklies and Green-veined especially the grand finale – what a beauty! 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: philm63

by philm63, 03-Dec-17 06:56 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel – Glad you like them. Which image do you think is a Gatekeeper, could it be the last one, is that what you think

Whites continued

Large White

Common enough in the right places, I got the impression numbers were down in 2017 and the sightings were limited to the period May to July with just a single seen in August





Orange Tip

It is usually limited to sighting in April and May. 2016 was a good year and I saw some still on the wing in early June. It is becoming more frequent in the garden as well. 2017 saw only sighting in May but at a number of sites





Small White

The years 2014 to 2016 were about average but 2017 was poor for this species locally as well. I was hard-pressed to turn them up at any of the usual sites





Phil

Re: philm63

by essexbuzzard, 03-Dec-17 11:25 PM GMT

Yes, the last one in your meadow brown sequence is definitely a gatekeeper, of hedge brown. I think your speckled woods will be ok if, as you say, the maintenance is not too intensive, as they prefer lush grass for the eggs and caterpillars.

Re: philm63

by Andrew555, 04-Dec-17 08:19 AM GMT

More great shots Phil, lovely Orange Tips. 😊

Re: philm63

by philm63, 04-Dec-17 12:46 PM GMT

Cheers essexbuzzard, Andrew

I have amended the posts appropriately

Nymphalids

Comma

2014 was not a bad year with a few sightings throughout the summer, the first on 2 July and the last on 10 September. 2015 was quieter with only a few seen in August. None seen at all in 2016 and seen twice in 2017 in July with three at Bingley Bog North on the 16th





Red Admiral

Normally ranks 3rd in the frequency of nymphalids seen locally and 2014 to 2016 were in that pattern. However, there was an explosion in 2017 and the late summer saw bumper numbers locally. In one day in September I had 5 together in the garden, it was the only nymphalid I saw on most days in late summer, and some days the only butterfly I saw







Phil

Re: philm63

by Wurzel, 04-Dec-17 10:47 PM GMT

More great shots Phil – that first Comma is really well marked 😊 Glad you managed to round up the errant Hedge Brown 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: philm63

by philm63, 05-Dec-17 09:18 AM GMT

Cheers Wurzel

Remaining Aristocrats

Painted Lady

No good years for this species locally since 2009, none in 2014, 2 in 2015, none in 2016 and a single in 2017



Peacock

Normally Peacock is a reliable local butterfly, and 2014 to 2016 followed the general trend. However, in 2017, the late spring and early summer were promising but the late summer was dismal, with very few sightings at all. A picture shared with Small Tortoiseshell







Small Tortoiseshell

Usually seen in good numbers at the right time but 2017 started well and ended badly like the Peacock with very few seen in the late summer period and none after late July. The garden buddleias were only attracting Red Admirals when in late bloom, with few STs or Peacocks at all







Phil

Re: philm63

by David M, 05-Dec-17 07:32 PM GMT

Beautiful images that make me yearn for spring, Phil. Sadly, it's likely to be three months at least before I see my next Small Tortoiseshell. 😞

Re: philm63

by Andrew555, 06-Dec-17 11:40 AM GMT

Lovely, I especially like your Small Tortoiseshell shots Phil.

Re: philm63

by philm63, 06-Dec-17 07:25 PM GMT

Cheers David, Andrew

Spring cannot come quick enough, I have had enough of winter already and it hasn't really started yet

Memories

Having re-capped the butterflies during the period I couldn't finish without mentioning the memories stirred as I went back over 3 years' worth of Trip Reports and the photographic memories included within them

Travel broadens the mind!

Swallow and Wheatear – North Norfolk Autumn 2014

My local area sitting in the foothills of the Pennines can be just a bit barren at times (a gross understatement). In September 2014 I went with the wife to the Titchwell area, on the north Norfolk coast, for a few days. Gorgeous weather and a profusion of wildlife, this reminded me that I need to get out a bit more from my local area and see what else is on offer around the country; if only to keep fuelling that desire to see, enjoy and try to understand. Despite the numerous shots of species I see all too infrequently, I chose two of my favourite shots from the trip which show species that may have been visitors like myself, who knows they could even have been in my local area in the spring and summer



Conservation!

Juvenile Spotted Flycatcher – Local 2016

Quite a few species across the board are being added to the Threatened List in the UK, butterflies in particular. Birdwise, in my local area we have lost Willow Tit, Marsh Tit, Yellowhammer and Yellow Wagtail, although the latter has started re-appearing in small numbers. So it is nice to see that one threatened species, Spotted Flycatcher, is appearing more frequently. Now I expect to see them annually at some sites in the summer and on passage in the autumn; and this year I had family groups at two different spots on the same day during the autumn return passage



Perseverance pays off!

Little Owl and Grey Partridge – less than a mile from home

After trudging round my local patch week after week especially in winter and seeing little apart from a few crows and a couple of passerines attempting to hide from the wind: it is nice now and then to see it rewarded. That stray Merlin and Stonechat, the over-wintering Long-eared Owl, the White-letter Hairstreak and other summer butterflies. And every now and then you manage a really close-encounter with one of the usual species, as shown by these two images. That makes it all seem worthwhile in the end



The reason for doing it at all!

Snipe and Red Grouse at Bradup

On any sunny day from middish-April to late May if the chance is there I head to Bradup. It sits at the transition from rough grazing to heather moorland and has a good, but quiet, access road. Getting out the car the air is full of displaying Lapwings, Curlews call all around, drumming Snipe buzz over. If I am lucky Redshank and Golden Plover will also show. In the background the "go-back go-back" calls of Red Grouse, numerous Meadow Pipts with accompanying Skylark, Reed Bunting and occasional Stonechat and Linnet. The first of the spring butterflies braving the higher and harsher terrain; and then the occasional raptor breaks the skyline somewhere. It is almost primordial and never fails to lift my spirits and remind me what it is all about, this communication with nature I believe we all need





Retain a sense of humour!

Roe Deer - Walsh Lane June 2017

Out in all weathers, little seen, subject moved just as you were going to press the shutter button; we all will have suffered it. So it is nice now and then to be able to have a chuckle at it all. So when your subject does something amusing it is an added bonus. This female Roe Deer was not far from my home and I was within 30 metres of it. There is a series of photos, some very good, of that encounter. But I just loved the pose on this one with its tongue sticking out - almost a "and this is what I think of you standing there taking my picture" moment



The artistic element!

Little Egret - Fairburn Ings 2016

I seem to have read a number of articles on wildlife photography on the web. Rule of thirds, depth of field, exposure compensation, shutter or aperture priority, composition, post-editing methods. Most of it goes over my head it seems. I tend just to point and click and consider myself fortunate to get an image I can appreciate and use. However, the rule of averages means that every now and then, one of the photos will be that little bit special. Personally I just love the subject here surrounded by still water with the reflective images of the vegetation on the water, the photo is straight out of the camera with just a little cropping



Enjoy the unexpected!

Wood Mouse? – Eldwick Reservoir June 2017

I almost missed this little mouse as it foraged in a fallen tree near the reservoir; just looking in a different direction at the wrong time would have been enough. It happily sat there whilst I watched from a few feet away. It is nice to be able to see the occasional different thing whilst out looking for the expected or hoped for. I presumed it was a Wood Mouse but if anyone has a proper ID I would be interested to know



Phil

Re: philm63

by Wurzel, 07-Dec-17 02:15 PM GMT

More cracking shots there Phil – especially like the Red grouse as that's a species I still haven't seen 😊👍 Also some really lush looking Small Torts – if they were rarer they would probably be even more desirable than a Purple Emperor i reckon. 😊
Your rodent ID meant I had to use my mammal ID App for the first time and I reckon it's a vole (the more rounded face with smaller, rounded ears), probably Bank Vole (?) as it was active during the day.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: philm63

by philm63, 11-Dec-17 01:10 PM GMT

Cheers Wurzel and thanks for the mammal ID

The old offer still stands, if you ever venture up this way in spring would be more than happy to show you my local moorland stomping grounds, weather permitting. What is glorious on a sunny day can be harsh and uninviting on a bad one

Phil

Re: philm63

by Andrew555, 13-Dec-17 01:38 PM GMT

Great shots Phil, of some lovely creatures. 😊

Re: philm63

by David M, 14-Dec-17 11:38 PM GMT

More uplifting images, Phil, especially the one of the owl, which is absolutely superb.

I can't wait till winter retreats, whereupon we will all be able to get out and about in comfort again, and hopefully experience some of those moments you have shared with us.

Re: philm63

by philm63, 15-Dec-17 08:01 AM GMT

Cheers Andrew, David

I couldn't agree more about wanting next Spring to come quickly, hopefully we are going to have a decent summer in 2018, and who knows a repeat of 2009, with a good year for Painted Ladys. I certainly have plans to widen my visiting area at the appropriate periods. I know of two sites within a hour or so driving that would give me two butterflies I have yet to see. It is just getting that combination of available time and correct weather right

Phil

Re: philm63

by philm63, 20-Dec-17 12:52 PM GMT



And a good 2018

Phil

Re: philm63

by Wurzel, 21-Dec-17 08:40 PM GMT

Happy Solstice and a very Merry Christmas to you to Phil 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: philm63

by David M, 24-Dec-17 09:59 PM GMT

Thanks for the recent images, Phil, and I look forward to more of the same in the New Year.

Here's wishing you a Merry Christmas.