

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 21-Apr-18 12:54 PM GMT

A very Happy New Year's Butterflying to One and All!

They're back!



Having emerged from my Winter chrysalis today I immediately flew down to Dungeness. The first thing I noticed was just how well the flowering plants have done this year compared to last (when the lack of rain caused them to struggle).

This year the plants are healthy and lusty





Particularly (and for Coppers, importantly) the Sorrel



A very good sign indeed.

And it was whilst I stood admiring the flowers that I saw out of the corner of my eye, an unmistakable coppery flash



A fine male Copper and my first of the year



I spent nearly an hour with him



He patrolled his little empire, intercepted a bee and performed the mysterious "stalk dance".

After an absence of five months it was wonderful once again to be in the company of this marvellous butterfly



I saw two more during the course of my walk



My first sighting for 2017 was 6th April, so a late start this year but if the weather stays fair the Coppers will soon catch up

I also saw a Painted Lady



But today was about Small Coppers



Welcome back!

Re: Hoggers

by ernie f, 21-Apr-18 02:00 PM GMT

Hi

I'm a new member to this website but I have been dipping into your diary for about a year now and that is because I found a fairly large summer brood near me in 2016. I counted 118 across four connected lowland heaths in Hampshire in the summer of that year. The heaths are called Kingsley, Broxhead, Sleaford and Shortheath. They more or less surround the village of Kingsley near Alton in north-east Hampshire. I have witnessed the behaviours you have described (The Stalk Dance or Walk and the Turkey Trot). They are fascinating. Do you have any ideas yet as to why they do the Stalk Dance?

Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 21-Apr-18 03:59 PM GMT

Hi! Hogger's, great to see your Copper's again, 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 21-Apr-18 04:24 PM GMT

Welcome back Hoggers !

Like yourself I found my first Small Copper (s ?) today at Dungeness , one on a Dandelion ,and another probable fly-bye ,both in the moat ,needless to say ! Good to see a good show of plants as well ,I dare say we,ll bump into each other in the near future !

Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 22-Apr-18 05:23 PM GMT

Hello Goldie and Allan , good to hear from you both and best wishes for the 2018 butterfly season.

Hi Ernie and a belated welcome from me to UKB.

As to your question : ideas,yes ; but a conclusive answer? Alas, no!

I've watched female Coppers tapping plants and it's easy to guess why : they're probably checking for Sorrel and whether it's suitable to lay their eggs on.

But why male Coppers do it isn't obvious.

I've made general pleas for help from the experts and Atropos magazine was kind enough to publish a letter in which I asked for views and opinions on the point but I've yet to receive a definite answer.

Are they marking their territory as private? Or marking to lure in the ladies? Or exploring their surroundings, trying to establish whether there's Sorrel near-by?

Perhaps none of the above!

I wish I knew!

Any answers gratefully received,

Hoggers

Re: Hoggers

by Andrew555, 23-Apr-18 03:07 PM GMT

Very nice shots Hoggers. Great to see that Copper colour again. 😊

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 23-Apr-18 10:52 PM GMT

Glory be!!! Hoggers is back....which means Small Coppers are back too!

Some things go just like clockwork! 😊

Nice to see the return of *phlaeas* in your part of the UK, and I look forward to seeing it in mine very soon.

Re: Hoggers

by ernie f, 26-Apr-18 07:53 AM GMT

Hi Hoggars

I, too have tried to puzzle it out. I have seen these behaviours too as I think I mentioned. There is a place near me that contains a late summer heathland brood. It can grow big but not as big as at Dungeness!!! I have therefore been able to study them like you to a certain extent but have no definitive answers. I have not seen a Small Copper yet this year but when I see my first one I shall be writing a long diary entry about them and maybe we can compare notes.

Regards to you and yours

Ern

Re: Hoggers

by bugboy, 28-Apr-18 11:32 AM GMT

bugboy wrote:

Hi Hoggers, hope you had a good Christmas.

I was randomly mulling over the whole male 'stem dance' thing at work today and the more I thought about it the more I concluded it must be some kind of display. I'll try and go through my train of thought as logically as possible.

Firstly we have to assume nothing in nature is done by accident, there's always a reason. Secondly we can assume that ultimately, the sole purpose for a butterfly's existence is to procreate.

In order to procreate butterflies have to have energy which they get from A) the surrounding temperature and B) food. The stem dance doesn't seem to facilitate either of these. They also need to evade predation and on the odd occasion I have seen it (just not often enough to realise it's a 'thing' that is done regularly) the stem dance seems to draw attention to them rather than conceal them so it must have some other advantage.

From your observations it's only the males which do this and since they are a territorial species as opposed to a wanderer (such as a Brimstone) then they need to get the females to come to them. One way would obviously be to have a territory that females would naturally frequent, be it having a good nectar supply, or well sheltered from inclement weather. Another way would be to advertise your presence, which this stem dance could potentially do. It would be interesting to know what they look like with the ability to see UV light, perhaps they are showing off something in the patterning which we are blind to? It's just a theory but I think it fits all the available evidence.

I hope you can follow my train of thought there.

Anyway happy new year and hope to see lots more Coppers next year!

Took a bit of searching (eventually found it on page 50 of your pd) but I knew I'd postulated something a while back on that stem dance thing they do 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 06-May-18 04:38 PM GMT

Cheers Buggy : If you know an entomologist looking for something to do a Ph.D on let me know!

The Coppers of Dungeness were in fine form today



It was so hot they looked like melting



After a late start the first brood has caught up rapidly



My Copper-O-Meter reached 107



This chap has pollen on his "nose"!



A very satisfying total indeed



The vegetation is lush and healthy (my only regret is that I've missed the Blackthorns in flower as they've now almost all gone over)



So all the signs are there for a bumper second brood this year



I saw several females giving lusty males the brush off with some nice "Turkey Strut" dances





All in all, another delightful visit to CopperNess!





Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 06-May-18 06:09 PM GMT

Great stuff Hoggers ,Sorry I missed you ! I saw 45 between 7.30 – 9 am ,some absolute beauties on the wing ,I reckon if I could have stayed longer ,I may have racked up the 100 as well ,we also saw 58 late Friday afternoon.
Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by millerd, 06-May-18 08:57 PM GMT

Amazing! I'm not sure there are any other Small Coppers anywhere in the UK at the moment – they are all in Kent! 😊 It really is an extraordinary spot.

Dave

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 07-May-18 10:01 AM GMT

Lovely sequence again, Hoggers. I dread to think what your Copper count may reach over the next couple of days with these perfect conditions. What is your record?

Re: Hoggers

by Maximus, 07-May-18 10:37 AM GMT

Hi Hoggers

It's amazing the difference three days and some good weather makes. We struggled to make a double figure count of Small Coppers at Dungeness and you recorded over one hundred! Lovely images by the way 😊

Mike

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 10-May-18 03:47 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments, much appreciated.

107 is a very good count for the first brood (in my experience) so it's looking promising for the rest of the season.

I saw your Copper photos, Maximus – gorgeous as ever! What you note about the population is something I've definitely experienced before : modest numbers then after just a few sunny days there's an explosion in their numbers!

To answer your question David, on 16th July 2016 I counted 291 Small Copper ; I returned the next day but to a different area of the Reserve and counted 244 : so my total for that weekend was 515 Small Copper!

I'd still covered only a small portion of Dungeness, so the total population was undoubtedly far greater.

All the best

Hoggers

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 10-May-18 11:28 PM GMT

[quote] To answer your question David, on 16th July 2016 I counted 291 Small Copper ; I returned the next day but to a different area of the Reserve and counted 244 : so my total for that weekend was 515 Small Copper!

I'm wondering if anywhere else in Europe can compete with such statistics! It's not even a colony species (such as Small Blue, Marsh Fritillary, etc). That

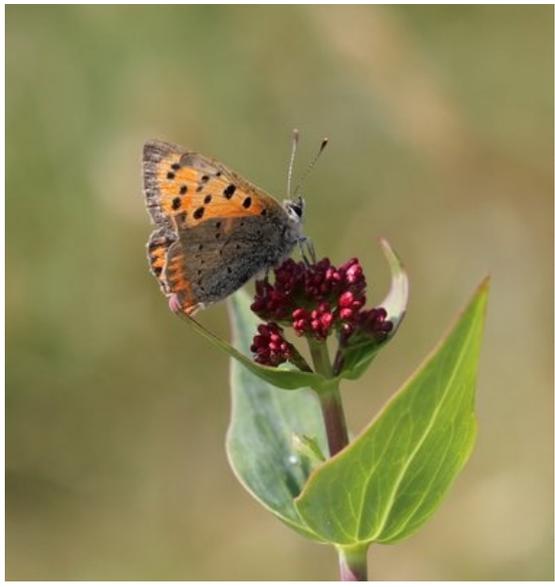
figure is quite astounding and probably exceeds what I see in an entire decade!

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 21-May-18 04:40 PM GMT

I visited Dungeness this afternoon. It was very still and warm (about 20c) and the air was heavy with a delicious cocktail mix of scents from all of the many flowers now in bloom.

As for Small Coppers, I counted 43 on my walk. The first brood has been running for exactly a month now and overall condition is in decline





I watched males perform their "stalk dances" from top



to bottom



And females "turkey strut"



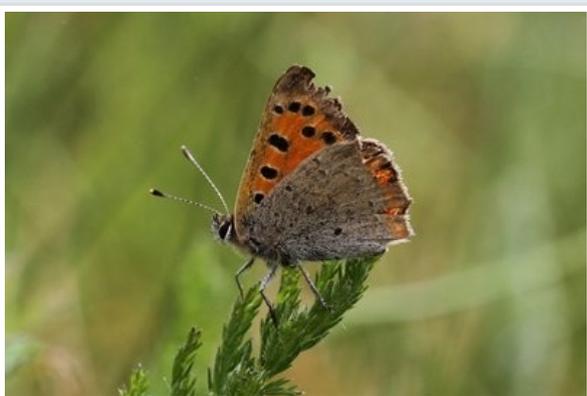
This behaviour of the female is usually enough to throw a bucket of cold water over the most ardent of suitors and must be a huge energy saving device for them, particularly those living in such a large community of Coppers as we have at Dungeness.

But not all males get the message for some reason. Today I watched these two:



The male simply did not give up pestering the female despite her clear (to me anyhow!) visual signals. He pursued her when she attempted to fly away from him, twice, and ignored her "turkey strut". Eventually she crawled down into the darkness of a bush where he gave up trying to follow her.

Although the first brood is on the wane now, it was particularly strong (surely because the Reserve was well watered this year!) and so the signs are there for a record breaking second brood!



Re: Hoppers

by ernie f, 21-May-18 05:24 PM GMT

Hi, Hoggars - I'm glad of your pics and text re Small Coppers. I have a brood near me (much smaller of course) and have been studying them. I don't get to see the Stalk Walk/Stalk Dance/Stem Dance very often (which do you prefer? - and I shall call it that from now on). On the only occasion I have seen one do it on Sheep's Sorrel it stopped when it got past the blooms and flew onto something else. You now have a pic of it getting right to the bottom of the stem. Fantastic. This means something. I'm not quite sure what it means - but it definitely means something!

Regards

Re: Hoggars

by Goldie M, 22-May-18 08:20 AM GMT

Really enjoying your Copper shots Hogger's , still to see them here so it's great to see your photo's. Goldie 😊

Re: Hoggars

by David M, 24-May-18 10:21 PM GMT

Always interesting to see the mix of ragged and pristine specimens, Hoggars. I wonder how the next brood will respond as a result of this first brood having largely fine weather conditions. Could we be in for even bigger numbers later in the summer?

Re: Hoggars

by Hoggars, 27-May-18 03:40 PM GMT

Hi David, there's every good reason to expect a bumper second brood of Coppers at Dungeness: this year the whole Reserve is displaying a sumptuous abundance of Sorrel



and recently the Warden was making counts of over 200 on his daily patrols



For now though, it is the fag end of the first brood



I had to work hard to find 38 today in ideal conditions



It's that time of year when the freshly emerged Brown Argus are out-jousting tired Small Coppers (an unhappy sight for the committed Copper Head!) But it won't be long before the newly minted and pugnacious second brooders reclaim the Small Copper's rightful place at the top of the butterfly hierarchy



Plenty of life still in these combat-hardened campaigners



And although worn there's always an enjoyable variation in the markings





I don't suppose the terrific thunderstorms and downpours of last night did anything to help these Old Timers, but Small Coppers are irrepressible



and keep on shining through!



Re: Hoppers

by ernie f, 27-May-18 04:50 PM GMT

Just fantastic, Hoppers.
I like the big blobby one.

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 28-May-18 03:35 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie – even at the end of the brood there's still a lot to see.

I went back to Dungeness today, this time with my brother, for a gentle stroll. It was 21C according to my car dashboard with just a slight breeze. The entire estate has come in to bloom now so is a real treat for the eyes and the nose too!

I counted 21 Small Copper



As the morning grew hotter so the Coppers got faster and I grew slower!



But we managed to see Coppers in action, including jousts and a "stalk dance"



This male was in the best condition of all those I saw today



But my goodness, he was active! Whizzing about his territory, a mere blur most of the time, a mighty little atom!

Visiting the Coppers of Dungeness is a privilege and always a delight



Re: Hoppers

by Pauline, 28-May-18 05:27 PM GMT

Hoppers wrote:

I had to work hard to find 38 today in ideal conditions

Quite surreal Hoppers. I struggle to see that many in a season 😊 I would love to know if there is anywhere else where such numbers have been recorded on such a regular basis. That area must be perfect for them.

Re: Hoppers

by David M, 30-May-18 06:39 AM GMT

Indeed, Pauline. Counts of 38 or 21 would be spectacular just about anywhere else!

Re: Hoppers

by Janet Turnbull, 30-May-18 08:29 AM GMT

Amazing photos Hoggers. I like the action pictures. Surely you have found the Copper HQ! And this is the 'fag end'? I found only 5 at the height of the season!

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 09-Jun-18 04:18 PM GMT

Hello again and thanks for the comments : after posting about the Coppers of Dungeness for some time now and reading all the messages from my fellow UKBers expressing amazement at the numbers we get here I am indeed, Janet, beginning to think Dungeness is the UK's Copper HQ!

But you wouldn't guess it if you visited today: I found only three



All tired First Brooders



We are in the annual Copper Doldrums, right at the end of the first brood and just before the second has emerged



But it will not be long before we see more fresh Coppers whizzing about.

The Reserve is still well worth visiting just to see all the flowers, a riot of Viper's Bugloss and Valerian (and lots of other ones that I don't know the names of!)

I've recently started to get interested in Lichens, having discovered that they are in fact little ecosystems, partnerships between fungi and algae (that's the simple version and at present about as much detail as I'm able to give!), so there being little to keep me occupied on the Copper Front today, I did a bit of Lichenology as I walked along:



Rather attractive things I think



I'm afraid I can't help with the names of these ones as my "Observers Book of Lichens" is on order (£9 on eBay!)





At least they don't disappear when you try to photograph them



(unlike the next subject of today's diary entry!)

During my walk I also spotted a NCCFO (Non Copper Coloured Flying Object):



Terrible photo because it buzzed off through the power station fence the moment I saw it. I guess it's a Common Carder Bee but what really caught my eye was its light-coloured thorax: it really stood out and my first thought was that it must be some rarity just flown in from abroad. Bad photo but it gives some idea of the contrast.

Re: Hoggers

by ernie f, 09-Jun-18 06:08 PM GMT

Ha. Even your NCCFO is a little bit coppery. 😊

I usually do my lichen watch in late autumn and winter. They are fascinating and like you I find getting an exact ID almost impossible in many cases. Don't forget to look for them on the ground. If you haven't already you might be surprised.

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 09-Jun-18 11:29 PM GMT

Hoggers wrote:

But you wouldn't guess it if you visited today: I found only three...



Must be the single day's lull you have down there, Hoggers. I'm sure normal service will be resumed very quickly.

Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 10-Jun-18 09:28 AM GMT

Hi! Hogger's , not seen any Coppers here yet, I usually see them on my visits South, it's strange though at the beginning of August for the last two Years i've seen a copper at Hall-Lee-Brook, always in the same place, yet when I look for them at that place at this time of year when they should be out there's never any there 😊 I've been to that spot every week for the last few and nothing. i'm wondering when you post and mention a second batch you've always seen the first batch in the same place why I don't here 🤔 Any Idea's 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 11-Jun-18 02:39 PM GMT

Hi Ernie, once my Observers Book of Lichens arrives I hope to be able to put a name to some of what I find – and I will definitely tread carefully!

Hi David, you're right : It won't be long before the second brood appears and there's a good chance it will be a bumper one!

Hi Goldie, I'm lucky in that Dungeness is pretty much a Small Copper Reserve (they get a few birds there as well apparently..!) and a huge area where the Sorrel grows and is safe, so pretty much guaranteed to get successive broods in the same place.

Today's entry is just to report no less than 4 Painted Ladies in my garden today



I live in central Ashford (Kent)



And saw on the Dungeness Reserve Website that they had 10 there yesterday



So there's a migration going on!

Re: Hoppers

by David M, 12-Jun-18 10:57 PM GMT

Hoppers wrote:

...So there's a migration going on!

Seems like it, Hoppers. When Silver Y moths suddenly flood in you usually find Painted Ladies in tow. Saw one on my neighbour's flowers the other day so if they've reached Swansea, there must be plenty about further south and east.

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 20-Jun-18 03:03 PM GMT

On 15th June I went down to Dungeness : conditions for butterflying were excellent but despite a long search I did not see any Small Coppers (although I did come across my first Small Skippers of the year.) So this year's first brood was well and truly over.

I've heard scientists say that "Zero is a result", but when that means no Small Coppers it's not a very happy result!

However, I returned to Dungeness this morning : it was 17C, thick cloud and a lively wind blowing, so not ideal, but I was over the moon to find two brand spanking new Coppers sheltering from the elements



The first of the 2018 second brood



I never get tired of looking at them and the closer I look the more I see, like this one for example with one "blue badge" on its right hindwing represented by just three shining points



Yet a different "blue badge" on its left hindwing (and a subtly different forewing pattern too)



Real beauties!



(I also saw my first Marbled White there.)

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 20-Jun-18 06:42 PM GMT

So you DO get blank days!!

Beautiful new emergences, Hoggers. They seem quite dusky, rather like the ones I see in France. I dread to think what numbers you will record by early July!

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 24-Jun-18 03:33 PM GMT

Believe it or not, David, that is the only day I've ever drawn a blank! It's true that there's a very sharp divide between the first and second broods (not so for the other broods), numbers plummet, but I can usually come up with at least one Copper!

And you are spot on about the duskiess : it's something we do not come across in the first brood but (as you will see below) is common in the second. I do not know why this is.

Today, in glorious conditions, I found this dusky little gem



He also has a marvellous iridescence to his left forewing that truly caught the eye. That dazzling flash made me wonder how one Small Copper looks to another? I bet they see far more than we do!

You'll see more "dusky types" in my selection from today's Copper Hunt

This one is impressive



Dusky and almost an extensa!

I took note of some typical Copper Perches



These butterfly fire-crackers are a constant source of delight, all brimming with vim and verve, and now is a perfect time to see them





I saw 31 in all, so numbers have jumped since my last visit four days ago





Today I noticed how very dry it is on the Reserve. Flowers are bountiful but the grass is parched and, importantly for Coppers, the Sorrel is withered and sere. I may be getting ahead of myself but I wonder if we do not get some rain soon how this will impact on the third brood?



But for now, the second brood is just gathering momentum and there's plenty to enjoy





Re: Hoggers

by ernie f, 24-Jun-18 05:42 PM GMT

I bet there are UV patches on the wings, Hoggars. That iridescence may be a give-away. I keep meaning to buy a UV-lamp, they are cheap enough – and then chose an overcast day to shine it on them to see what happens....

Re: Hoggers

by Neil Freeman, 24-Jun-18 06:12 PM GMT

Hoggers wrote:

...And you are spot on about the duskiness : it's something we do not come across in the first brood but (as you will see below) is common in the second. I do not know why this is...

I have also noticed that the second brood Small Coppers around my patch are often darker /duskier than the first brood, although here they only usually show up in ones and twos.

Great report and photos again on your Small Coppers Hoggers 😊

Cheers,

Neil

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 24-Jun-18 07:06 PM GMT

Some beauties there Hoggers ! I can see a weekend visit to the shingle is in order this weekend !!
also following some help from yourself a while back ,I finally scored my first High Brown at Aish tor .on the way back from Cornwall,at the weekend .
Thanks for that Hoggers !
Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 25-Jun-18 05:01 PM GMT

Hi Ernie, UV sprang to mind – let me know how you get on with your lamp!

Hi Neil, that's most interesting. By comparing notes we are gradually learning new things about this amazing butterfly!

Hi Allan, I remember us talking about Aish Tor – I bet you were delighted to see the High Browns. I look forward to seeing your photos and doubtless we'll bump into each other down at Copperness soon!

All the best

Hoggers

ps It was 27C in Canterbury today : I bet the Coppers were whizzing about at Dungeness!

Re: Hoggers

by ernie f, 25-Jun-18 05:08 PM GMT

Hoggers – a question for you.

Have you ever seen a Small Copper do a wing-roll? When the brood at Broxhead starts to build-up I am going to investigate but seeing as you are very acquainted with this species, maybe you have seen it. I know someone said they had seen it but I can't remember who. Please post any reply on the General discussion topic that I have opened up on it. Thanks.

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 28-Jun-18 09:50 AM GMT

That first Copper is an absolute stunner, Hoggers. The second isn't far behind....and the rest are merely very attractive! Keep 'em coming. I love seeing the variation in this (in fact any) species.

Re: Hoggers

by millerd, 28-Jun-18 10:00 AM GMT

Those fresh Coppers are a lovely sight, Hoggers. I think I read somewhere that the duskiness is temperature-related, and that in southern parts of Europe they can be very dark. That might explain why the second brood are darker than the first and might also mean we are in for a particularly dusky lot this time round.

Dave

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 07-Jul-18 03:56 PM GMT

Hi Dave, that's just what I suspected, and it certainly has been hot for the second brood!

It was 23C at Dungeness today and I was delighted to see the Small Coppers in tip top condition



My walk covers only a small part of the Reserve yet I counted 104

The only unhappy note being the state of the Sorrel : it is parched and I fear that unless we have sufficient rain to revive it (and there's little sign of it) the third brood will suffer.

But lets enjoy the second brood!







I saw courtship



And mating, but I've never seen this before!



The male swinging in the breeze!

I was so concerned he might be dead I put out my finger and was relieved to see all was well



I saw two males that were noticeably smaller than the norm, and others with more spots than usual



I came across this bumble-bee



It was huge! I've been unable to identify it :



help please!

My Copper of the Day was this one



I've only rarely come across a Copper like it



Very unusual



But it's just the sort of surprise that makes visiting Copperness such fun!



Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 07-Jul-18 05:16 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers ,

Some absolute beauties there ,particularly the Extensa ,nice find ! I have seen the swinging male , with Coppers and Wall (+ various Browns) and I also found last week a very dark dusky individual (Sightings) .Your Bee could be (and I,m no expert !!) the very rare but recently introduced at Dungeness Short haired Bumblebee ,may be worth a look .

I think an early trip to Dungle ,may be in order.

Regards Allan.W.

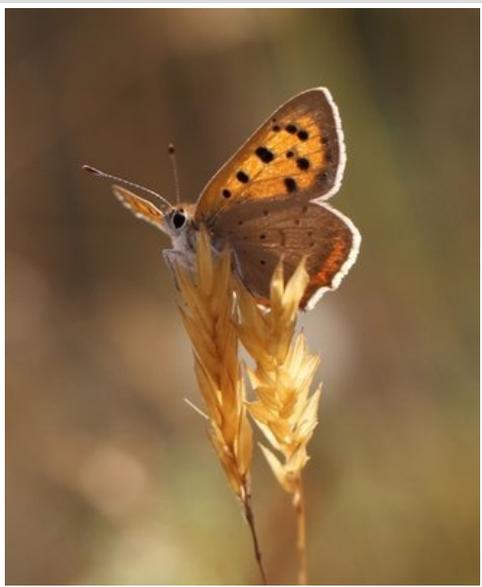
Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 09-Jul-18 03:10 PM GMT

Hi Allan, I was stuck on Household Duty yesterday otherwise I'd probably have seen you at Dungeness.

I took advantage of being a member of Bumblebee Conservation and they've identified my bumblebee as a female Southern Cuckoo. I've got a guide book but still find bee ID very tough indeed.

It was already very warm indeed when I arrived at Dungeness early this morning



The Coppers were putting on a fine display



Nice blue on this one.

I'm never sure if it's a case of me watching Coppers or Coppers watching me



They certainly do not miss a trick





I bumped into a chap walking his dogs. He was very interested in butterflies and one of the first things he said was that there are lots of Small Coppers about



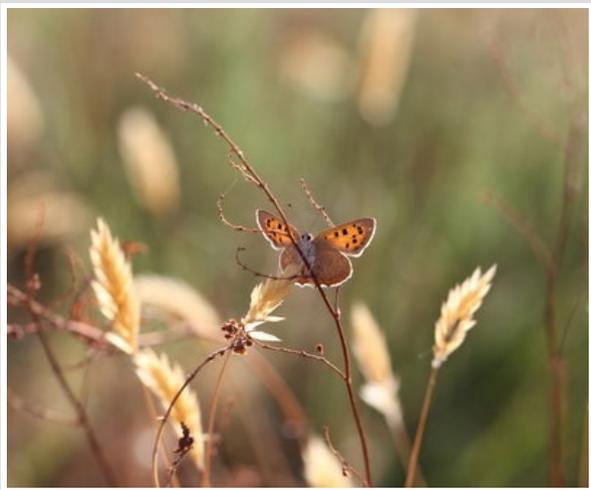
He also told me about how when he was abroad many years ago he found a nest of Camberwell Beauty caterpillars which he brought home to the UK, raised to adults then released about 20 of them in New Romney! What a sight that must have been.

But Coppers are enough for me





I counted 117 today



Re: Hoggars

by ernie f, 09-Jul-18 04:32 PM GMT

Hoggars – amazing stuff. Especially...

1. The pair mating on your hand
- 2: The one that looks like it has spectacles on its wings
- 3: The pic you took of one from the front showing all four wings underneath.

I can't understand why I've seen no summer brood coppers around here yet. They had at least begun this time last year. Maybe the heat has got the better of them? Or their food plant perhaps – quite a lot of the Sheep's Sorrel round here seems shrivelled or scorched.

I'm keeping my fingers crossed I'll see one soon.

Re: Hoggars

by Hoggars, 10-Jul-18 03:19 PM GMT

Hi Ernie, thats for your comments, they are much appreciated.

The Copper aberration that you like



Reminded me very much of one I found last year



And of this one too (from 2015)



Wing ground colour and spot patterning are similar, the overall effect being greasy (rather like you can find greasy forms of Marsh Fritillary)

It's certainly an aberration I have only rarely come across.

I don't know if this is a recognised Copper aberration with a name to it or not

Hoggers

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 10-Jul-18 10:09 PM GMT

I remember those ones Hoggers! Radiata at Dungie today ! (10/7) + 60+ on the wing,getting pretty battered now ! have you noticed theres very few blue spots about ? but there are some stunning Common Blues !
Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 11-Jul-18 07:09 AM GMT

More cracking Coppers, Hoggers. It'll be interesting to see whether the proportion of aberrants increases significantly given the prolonged hot weather.

Re: Hoggers

by Hogggers, 11-Jul-18 10:56 AM GMT

Very nice Allan! David Walker spotted one amongst the first brood, you've found one in the second ..maybe I'll be lucky in the third!

(I wonder if we should start calling ourselves "The Three Copperteers"? Just a thought... Maybe have a badge made up, or matching T-Shirts?..)

I thought the same thing, David : my only worry is that because of the drought the Sorrel is more dead than alive and it's going to impact on the third brood.

When I visited last monday I walked out into "The Desert" between the Obs moat and the trapping area : I saw 6 female Coppers all looking for Sorrel to lay on. This "in-between" area is usually devoid of male Coppers, so the females go there unmolested. But the state of the Sorrel this year is parlous, all withered and dry. I got down on my hands and knees to get a closer look at it : some certainly appeared dead while in other patches I saw tiny green leaves poking through the brown parched stems. So some green shoots of hope!

Still (and rather oddly for a butterfly enthusiast) I am praying for rain!

"One for all and all for one!"

Hoggers

Re: Hogggers

by David M, 11-Jul-18 10:28 PM GMT

Hoggers wrote:

I thought the same thing, David : my only worry is that because of the drought the Sorrel is more dead than alive and it's going to impact on the third brood.

Yes. This is a major concern.

Last year I saw upwards of 1,000 Scarce Coppers in the French Alps. It was a miraculous year for them. Sadly, the hot & dry weather persisted and thus far this year I've only seen three!! Like you say, let's hope for a dose of rain very soon.

Re: Hogggers

by Wurzel, 11-Jul-18 10:40 PM GMT

A cracking range of abs recently Hogggers, somehow I keep missing you on here 😊 I wouldn't worry it'll rain soon enough, the school summer holidays begin in a fortnight 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hogggers

by Hogggers, 14-Jul-18 04:13 PM GMT

Hi David, we had an unusually large first brood this year and the general consensus is that this was due to the great success of the Sorrel which was well watered and so grew lush and healthy. Because of the large first brood I'd hoped for an even more prolific second brood but numbers are pretty average for a second brood at Dungeness.

It makes for an interesting comparison : David Walker counted over 200 Coppers one day during the first brood (normally expect about 80) ; the most I've managed for this year's second brood is about 120. So in a topsy-turvy way, this year the second brood is smaller than the first! And I can only wonder if the reason for this is that the drought set in and began to affect the Sorrel at an early stage.

Today I saw again just how crisp and dry the Sorrel is, although if I delved down into some of the apparently withered clumps I managed to find a few small green leaves. Some hope then for the third brood. But as you say Wurzel, the schools break for summer soon so it's sure to rain!

Another peculiarity of this year's Coppers at Dungeness is that there are hardly any "Blue Badgers" amongst the second brood. I know you've asked me, Allan, if I have noticed this and I have! The only Copper I've found that I could properly call a "Blue Badger" is the one I posted earlier this week: here's a selection from my visit today which show the general situation for this year's second brood



The blue (such as it is) is dull and faint.

You know Allan, that we've always said that the best Blue Badgers appear in the later broods : well, not so for this year's second brood. Why do you think this is? The heat? The drought setting in and affecting the quality of the Sorrel?
Just when you think you've got a grip on how Small Coppers tick they turn the tables on you!

I had a wonderful morning down at Copperness today : the second brood is showing how living fast and furious takes a toll





But there's still some fresh Coppers about



And some unusual ones



This female really caught my eye : the pale dusting on her hind wings was very noticeable



As I hope this photo demonstrates



I had a great time with the Small Coppers today





Re: Hoppers

by ernie f, 14-Jul-18 08:05 PM GMT

Hoppers - That silvery copper is an interesting form. I like your pic of the copper backlit and seen directly from the front. Also, I have seen only one or two 2nd brood coppers so far this year inland. I too put this down to the drought (and I think we can call it that now). Do you think "Copperness" has the benefit of sea-mist to keep things a little more moist down there?

Re: Hoppers

by David M, 15-Jul-18 09:31 PM GMT

Yet again you have unearthed some major variations there, Hoppers. It just goes to show that when you specialise in a particular species, your 'eye' is so much more attuned than that of the general observer.

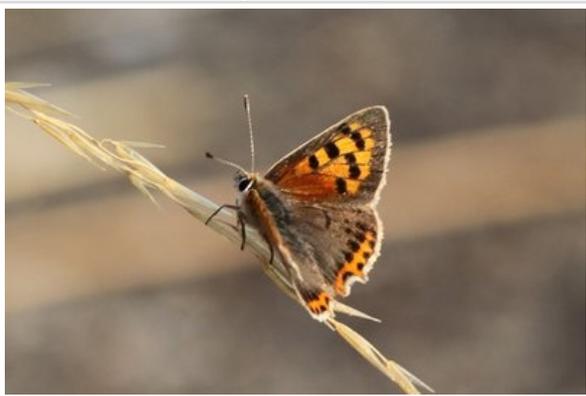
You're practically a species champion for *phlaeas* now in my opinion.

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 27-Jul-18 12:07 PM GMT

That's very kind of you to say, David! Thank you. If my enthusiasm for Small Coppers inspires anyone to take an interest in them then I'm most honoured!

Sadly, I haven't been able to get down to Copperness as often as I would have liked this year, but I managed it today and counted 85





They're battle scarred



And the brood is gradually fading away



But still plenty to see



You'll notice the dusky models



But Blue Badgers have been harder to come by this season



I liked the black spotting on this one's hind wings



And the markings on this female are lovely



I've previously voiced my worries for the third brood because of the drought :



well, I'm told we're in for some thunderstorms tonight!



I hope Copperness gets what rain it needs to replenish the Sorrel and that it hasn't come too late



Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 28-Jul-18 03:50 PM GMT

A Small Copper in my back garden this afternoon (central Ashford)...!

The fact that there's a gale blowing probably has a lot to do with it. In this wind it'd take about 5 minutes from Dungeness!

Hoggers

Re: Hoggers

by Old Wolf, 28-Jul-18 08:27 PM GMT

Hello Hoggers. That is a mighty load of Small Copper. It makes the five to ten or so I have seen (and that is the most I have ever seen) this year pale in comparison.

If I get to see more I will certainly look at their markings a little more closely after looking at your pictures.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 03-Aug-18 02:52 PM GMT

Good luck with it Old Wolf – they're always worth a closer look!

My diary entry today is going to be very brief but concerning a most unusual sighting : when I got home from work today I found a fine Wall, in tip top condition, flying around my garden!

I've lived in Ashford all my life and never had a Wall visit the garden.

After last week's surprise Small Copper in the garden I'm beginning to wonder if the drought has anything to do with it, i.e., causing butterflies to wander further afield, or making it easier for them to do so?

Whatever the reason, for me at least it is a once in a lifetime garden record!

Hoggers

Re: Hoggers

by trevor, 03-Aug-18 03:33 PM GMT

Great to read of your Wall discovery, always a pleasure to find one "off piste".
I found a small colony of Walls in a Wiltshire grave yard last year, will check up on them next week.

Good to see the Coppers still going strong!
Trevor.

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 03-Aug-18 04:18 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers,

Funny that, I don't live too far away from your good self, and a few years back I also had a single Wall in the back garden, and as I remember that was also during a prolonged warm spell. The oddest record locally was (believe it or not) a Chalkhill Blue, well seen by a very competent butterflyman in Birchett Wood!! And there is also a record a few years back of a Wood White (again seen by a competent observer) along the road at Shadoxhurst. I reckon some species must wander in times of Drought which may explain the Chalkhill, but not so sure about the Woodwhite!

Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 03-Aug-18 04:34 PM GMT

Hi! Hogger's, I couldn't get the family to travel to your spot whilst in Kent, now it looks like I've missed out on the Coppers 😞 may be one will come into my Garden but I doubt it, 😞 I'll have to wait for next year now.

Great you found a wall in your Garden, I like to chalk up the different Butterflies I see as well in my Garden 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 03-Aug-18 05:29 PM GMT

Hello again Hoggers,

Nipped out after posting the above, on arriving back was amazed to see a Small Heath tootling about my neighbours front garden, a first for me from the gardens!

Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 04-Aug-18 11:49 AM GMT

I do think something unusual is going on. During this heat wave I've seen one Common Blue and two Brown Argus in the garden. Not unheard of but rare. Then a Small Copper (rare again) and to top it all there was yesterday's Wall.

The nearest Wall colony (as far as I know) is on top of Wye Downs, so finding one in my garden was a great surprise!

Dungeness this morning was very warm indeed

I counted 39 Coppers



They're mostly worn and dented



I saw just a couple that looked in fair nick



Very faint blue on this one (typical of this year's second brood)



Good numbers of Common Blue and Brown Argus (and of the latter, one was unusually small) and a Painted Lady.

They had some rain a week ago so I did look at the Sorrel : still mostly brown and parched, but I saw a few clumps with green leaves.

So more in the way of Phantom Coppers at the moment, ghosts of their former selves



I'll be very interested to see what lies on store for the rest of the season!



Re: Hoggers

by David M, 06-Aug-18 11:35 PM GMT

The rest of the season will be very interesting, Hoggers. In spite of the glorious weather lately, I'm not seeing huge numbers of butterflies. However, conditions are now improving markedly for early stages and one hopes we may be in for a late season bonanza with additional broods complementing the usual adult hibernators.

You may well record a November *phlaeas* if things continue as they are.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 25-Aug-18 04:04 PM GMT

I am delighted to introduce to you the newest recruit to Team Copper



Pip

After the loss of our beloved Springer, Monty, earlier this year we thought it was time to let another little life into our home and our hearts.

Today was his first visit to Dungeness and he loved it!

I am training him to sniff out Small Coppers, and in particular those cracking abs that we get down here



Sadly, there was little for Pip to do today : we saw only 3 Small Coppers.

One was fresh



A third brood Copper.

The other two were worn second brood



How different to past years! 25th August 2016 : 146 Coppers. 26th August 2017 : 91 Coppers.

We also saw 4 Brown Argus, a few Common Blues and 3 Painted Lady



Still, I've a feeling that Pip will make a great addition to the Team



Re: Hoppers

by Allan.W., 25-Aug-18 05:48 PM GMT

Hello Hoggers ,

We must have just missed you today ! We found 4 Small Coppers (at Dungeness) 3 second brood and one glorious 3rd brood male , and in keeping with everyones findingsVery small . Also 5 Painted Ladies ,3 Hummingbird Hawks a few Meadow Browns and Commojn blues. Later in Orlestone ,I found 3 Coppers ,all 3rd brood2 males and 1 female,all normal size.
Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 25-Aug-18 07:52 PM GMT

The third brood Copper is a real beaut Hoggers 🤗👍 Is the lack of Coppers because they've been and gone early due to the heatwave that we had? Good luck training Pip the Copper Sniffer 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Old Wolf, 25-Aug-18 07:58 PM GMT

Well I haven't seen any more since last I posted to take a closer look! They appear to have vanished from my neck of the woods. Maybe next year.

Pip is a beauty. I wish him all the best in his training 😊

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 26-Aug-18 12:51 PM GMT

I love the Springer, Hoggers. I've a feeling that dog's going to have a very happy life! 😊

Regarding the Coppers, those statistics are quite revealing. Is the disparity due to timing given how early the season is this year or was the long, dry spell a few weeks back to blame, with suitable foodplant in short supply leading to fewer emergees?

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 26-Aug-18 07:32 PM GMT

Hi All, I thought I'd turn a wet and windy afternoon to good use so I dug out some of my old butterfly notebooks from storage (I moved home a few months ago, still in Ashford but also still unpacking !)

Here are a few Small Copper counts from Dungeness and all relate to the third brood :

22nd August 2012 : "numerous" (that's what appears in the notebook – not very scientific but it gives an idea)

24th August 2013 : "many" (ditto!)

27th August 2014 : 34 (I'd started to make the effort to count them!)

28th August 2015 : 68

25th August 2016 : 146

26th August 2017 : 91

25th August 2018 : 3

I saw only one third brood Copper yesterday so it does appear that things are running late. I am very interested to see how the brood develops this year. I have mentioned before that the Sorrel crop really suffered through lack of rain and I expressed my concerns about how this might impact upon the third brood. Maybe this late start is the first sign?

Thanks for welcoming Pip – He looks like a born Copper Detector to me!

All the best,

Hoggers

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 30-Aug-18 10:14 AM GMT

Some amazing fluctuations there, Hoggers, given that they are only a few days apart each year. I guess Dungeness is a fairly dry site anyway so it probably suffered more than most other sites during that long, dry spell.

Hopefully things will recover in due course, especially since the usual 'cool and wet' has returned, with the promise of better things to come in early September.

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 31-Aug-18 03:33 PM GMT

A return to lovely warm sunny weather on the last day of August so I went to see how the third brood of Coppers is getting on at Dungeness



I counted 7 in all



One was a bit off colour



But this one (with just a touch of blue) absolutely glowed



A gorgeous sight



With the fine weather set to last it will be interesting to see how the third brood develops



Re: Hoggars

by Allan.W., 31-Aug-18 04:43 PM GMT

Hello Hoggars ,

I had a couple of hours there as well this afternoon ,I managed 4 Coppers , all 3rd brood and two of them already showing a bit of wear !
I also saw several very small meadow Browns (fresh !) including a pair ,high numbers of Large White,many egg-laying females (Sea Kale)
A Painted Lady ,and several Common Blue and Brown Argus ghosts ! mind you I did see one fresh male Common Blue .(3rd brood ?)
Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggars

by ernie f, 01-Sep-18 07:46 AM GMT

Hi, Hoggars. Great pics yet again. I think the Small Copper must be my favourite UK butterfly. My book gives the flight times of each brood and has a gap between the third week of August and the second week of September. Around here this has until now been approximately correct but not so this year. I have been seeing what appear to be fresh third brooders flying during the last week of August and yesterday at my prime site at Broxhead Heath I counted 22 individuals! It sure is a strange year. I expected the long, hot summer to have decimated these fellows but they seem unharmed by it and yet...

... where are all the Brimstones? I have not seen a single one for about a month now.

Re: Hoggars

by David M, 01-Sep-18 09:18 AM GMT

Things are looking up already, Hoggers. I've seen more Small Coppers than normal in my area recently so hopefully your counts will be back in the high dozens very soon.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 01-Sep-18 03:15 PM GMT

Hi All, it's a curious thing but I too am seeing more Coppers than usual : I counted 4 yesterday where I walk Pip close to home.

Today Pip and I popped back to Dungeness



The Coppers now emerging are stunning : I mean, look at this beautiful creature



Simply glorious!

Pip sniffed out 11



Including this one with wing marks that look so perfect it could be an illustration from an identification book



And this one with lighter colour and slightly embellished spotting



It is very exciting to watch a brood begin its emergence



And how lovely to see true Blue Badgers once more after a virtual absence during the second brood





I wonder what the explanation for this variation is?

Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 01-Sep-18 03:50 PM GMT

Hi! Hopper's, I'd a great time at Fleetwood last Thursday I counted 15 coppers on the front there, that's the most I've ever seen in one go and they looked so fresh, let's hope they come every year. Goldie 😊

Re: Hoppers

by Wurzel, 01-Sep-18 05:40 PM GMT

Looks like Pip is coming into his own Hoppers 😊 He sniffed out some cracking looking Coppers. 😊 Could the Blue badgers in the the later brood be something to do with 'dazzling' as a protection? At this time of year the Copper can really stand out against the straw coloured background so perhaps the flash of blue badges confuses a predator to strike at the hind wing rather than the main part of the body? 😊 Just an idea... 😊 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 01-Sep-18 08:01 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel, I'd never have though of that in a million years! What an imaginative and insightful suggestion! I've often wondered how Small Coppers look to other Small Coppers, but never thought to consider how Small Coppers look to hungry birds!

We normally see more Blue Badgers in the second and third broods than in the first. This year was very odd in that there were hardly any of them in the second but from what I've seen of this emerging third brood Blue Badges are making a come back.

Here are a few photos of my local Coppers (I moved home a few months ago and have recently discovered a small colony of them where I walk young Pip)



I've counted 4 so far (of which two are pictured)



Heartening to see them doing well and so close to home



Re: Hoppers

by David M, 03-Sep-18 08:00 PM GMT

Nice selection again, Hoppers.

Given the numbers of Coppers that are appearing in areas where they are normally scarce (such as my neck of the woods!) I anticipate a surge over the next couple of weeks round your way. 😊

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 06-Sep-18 07:46 PM GMT

It was very warm and bright when I got home from work today. I went straight back out, this time with Pip in tow, and headed to my newly discovered local Small Copper site. Sure enough I found Small Coppers in exactly the same place as before



Today I counted 5



One at least I'd seen there a week ago



This isolated little colony interests me greatly and I hope to keep an eye on it in the future



Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 06-Sep-18 08:05 PM GMT

Hi! Hogger's. I went to Southport yesterday and saw more Coppers and yet another Blue Badge 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 06-Sep-18 11:17 PM GMT

Things are looking up, Hoggers. Good luck keeping tabs on your new site.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 08-Sep-18 04:43 PM GMT

Hi Goldie and David, I get the impression that more people are spotting Small Coppers this September than at any time for many years and I can only think the long hot summer has done it.

Today started off dull and rather cool with thick grey cloud cover. I had little hope of doing any Coppering at Dungeness but decided to give it a try nevertheless, if only to let young Pip stretch his legs.

But good luck was on our side because it wasn't long after arriving that the sky cleared and it became bright and warm

Pip was soon at work



sniffing out the Coppers



This third brood although modest in size is producing a high number of Blue Badgers



Near absent in the second brood they've made a strong come back in the third



I wonder why?

It was becoming so warm that Pip went in search of, and found, some shade



And quickly made himself at home



But the Copper Hunt soon resumed and we saw this beautifully marked female



The oddest Copper was this one : I couldn't get near it so forgive the poor quality photo, but the marks are unusual



In all we saw 29 Small Coppers



And needless to say, had a great time!

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 08-Sep-18 06:08 PM GMT

Loving the shots of Pip (as well as the Coppers), Hoggers. We've now got two butterfly-hunting dogs (Guy Padfield's Minnie being the other) to follow on the forum. 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 15-Sep-18 04:41 PM GMT

Thanks David, he's certainly very keen although I'm not sure yet whether it's Coppers he's after or bird watchers : he introduced himself to quite a few of the latter who I got the impression would rather have met him another time and not when they were looking for an elusive Wryneck!

He's a friendly little chap



We had a glorious time there this morning, plenty of Coppers about





It got quite hot and while Pip took a break



I had the chance to watch some jousting Coppers



They're so fast they make me giddy



Observing Copper behaviour is my favourite past time



(next to walking Pip of course!)

Pip's Copper Count today was 49



Still many in tip top nick, lots of Blue Badgers and I was pleased to see just how well the Sorrel has recovered from the drought, so all in all things look good for the Coppers of Dungeness



Re: Hoggers

by David M, 16-Sep-18 11:55 AM GMT

Things are looking up, Hoggers! 😊

I love those in-flight shots. The butterflies are extremely fast so you must end up with quite a few air shots?

Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 16-Sep-18 01:35 PM GMT

Hi! Hogger's , love the shots of your dog 😊 the Butterflies look good too 😊 I was amazed when you said " it was too Hot" , we've had to put the heating on a few times here so it's good to see some Butterflies again 🍀😊 I thought they'd all gone!!

Goldie 😊

Re: Hoggers

by ernie f, 17-Sep-18 11:00 AM GMT

Great Copper Shots, Hoggers (and great Pip shots too!)

I was fascinated by your head-on shot of a jousting Copper.

It is good news the Copper numbers have picked-up more or less everywhere.

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 29-Sep-18 03:47 PM GMT

Last Saturday was cold and dull so Pip and I saw only one Small Copper when we visited Dungeness. Today was much better

Warm and sunny and Coppers on display



Pip's Copper Hunting skills are still at the basic stage : I see things go flying up out of the grass as he capers about and I'm sometimes quick enough to snap a picture of a startled Copper



But most of the time he seems to be seeing how much ground he can cover in the shortest time rather than sniffing out butterflies





But it's early days in his training



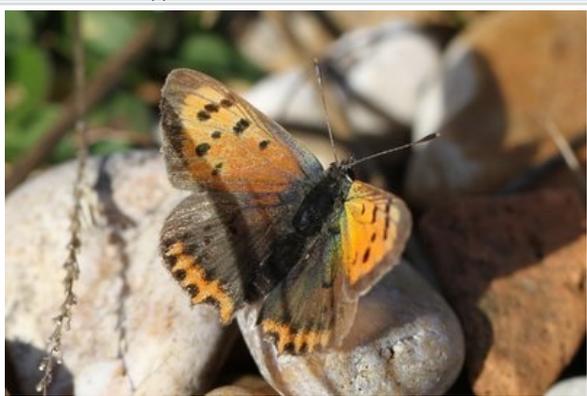
and after cooling off



we were seeing Coppers again



We counted 15 Coppers





Great fun!

Re: Hoggers

by ernie f, 29-Sep-18 03:56 PM GMT

Hoggers – One of those Coppers you pictured recently certainly looks as though its drinking from a berry. Is that the way you see it?

Love the Pip sequence as he runs toward you. I was fully expecting the last shot to be one of the sky as you fell over when he collided with you. 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 29-Sep-18 07:58 PM GMT

Hi Ernie, at the moment I'd say young Pip is less of an asset to Copper Hunting and more of a hindrance but I've so quickly got used to him being with me that I can't imagine going to Copperness without him!

Hopefully he'll calm down somewhat as time goes by (i.e., in the next 12 years!!)

As for that Copper, I've certainly seen them supping juice from ripe Blackberries but not from the red unripe berries– but I've seen them drink dew from plant surfaces so maybe that's what it was doing.

All the best

Hoggers

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 30-Sep-18 09:24 AM GMT

"Love the Pip sequence as he runs toward you. I was fully expecting the last shot to be one of the sky as you fell over when he collided with you. 😊" Me too Hoggers 😊 I hope his further training goes well 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 30-Sep-18 10:48 PM GMT

I'm enjoying the vicarious pleasure of you and your dog having a great time amongst several dozen Small Coppers in a truly wild location, Hoggers.

Do you reckon the season will stretch into November this year?

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 06-Oct-18 05:04 PM GMT

Yesterday was absolutely glorious down here in Kent and every minute of it I was stuck at work wishing I was at Dungeness. Today when I did get down there it was dull and damp, so not promising for butterflies.

I've trained Pip to point out Ornithologists



We occupied ourselves with that for awhile but when a small flock of them passed by and Pip showed no interest in them



I guessed he had other sport on his mind and he was soon on the scent of a Small Copper



Although innocent looking



Don't be fooled : he may be just one puppy but he conducts himself like ten!

We had a bit of luck when the cloud thinned and for a few minutes it warmed up



Our first Copper of the day!



Then another



Despite the poor conditions we eventually counted 7 Small Coppers



Pip had a great time : he met the Warden and his wife, saw some Coppers and then as we were leaving Pip watched his first steam train up close as it came into Dungeness station.

Pip clearly loves it down at Dungeness and as a Copper Sniffer he's coming along just fine



The weather forecast for next week is very good indeed, so I think the Coppers of Dungeness have an excellent chance of getting into November.

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 06-Oct-18 05:31 PM GMT

Hello Hoggers ,

I was at Dungeness yesterday ,in near perfect conditions ,took a slightly different (and longer) route than usual ,taking in some usually very productive "Copper" areas ,but I didn,t come across a Copper ,until I finally hit the moat ,where I managed 12 ,and along the power station fence I found another 2 (plus a singleton at Dengemarsh ,a bit later on) I reckon the third brood is now on the way down , it will be interesting to see if any manage to emerge for a fourth . Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 06-Oct-18 07:16 PM GMT

Hello Allan, the weather was just amazing yesterday, so warm, sunny and calm – being stuck inside all day was torture!

But not so good today, alas. Fortunately we did get some sunshine and it brought out the butterflies.

At the moment my visits to Dungeness are more dog walk than Copper Hunt so I did well to see 7 today! Since Pip joined the team I've rather had to be satisfied with brief glimpses of butterflies as they fly away from him! Hopefully that will improve...!

Yes, I'm hoping to see a fourth brood,a last Hurrah for 2018. That'd be great. Fingers crossed.

Best wishes

Hoggers

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 07-Oct-18 04:58 PM GMT

Warm sunshine and just a gentle breeze this afternoon,much better than yesterday, so I headed down to Dungeness for a Copper Hunt.

Not many left of the third brood





But still a few attractive ones



My total for today was 12



While wandering along I saw a dazzling female Copper with a white forewing. I squatted down and managed to take this photo



Whereupon my four legged friend came charging in and knocked her flying!

I also saw what looked like a fresh female Copper but my efforts to photograph her were again impeded by the newest recruit to Team Copper

Somewhat abashed



but keen.

He made up for it by helping me find this beautifully marked female



A lovely Autumnal Copper.

What with the fine weather forecast I think we'll be seeing (and if Pip doesn't scare them off) photographing fourth brood Coppers very soon.

Re: Hoppers

by David M, 08-Oct-18 10:33 PM GMT

LOL! That dog is a handful, Hoppers, for sure! 😊

I'm sure Pip will learn patience and stealth in due course, but meantime, I shall look forward to seeing your promised NEXT brood of *phlaeas* very soon....maybe this week, given the temperatures that are forecast.

Re: Hoppers

by Maximus, 10-Oct-18 04:22 PM GMT

That's a nice *ab.extensa* in your last shot, Hoppers 😊

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 13-Oct-18 03:48 PM GMT

Hi Maximus, I'm lucky enough to see varying degrees of *extensa* Coppers quite often at Dungeness, they are very eye catching.

Hi David, being of a hopeful disposition and what with the outstanding weather we've been having of late, I'd have put money on there being a fourth brood this year. Unfortunately I didn't see any sign of one today.

Although it was windy at Dungeness this morning it was very warm indeed (my car dashboard read 21C) and with long clear spells too we had very strong sunshine. I saw two fresh male Common Blues and a Meadow Brown, but of Coppers I found only third brood individuals



This one has taken a bashing!

I watched this worn male perform the "stalk dance"



Given how tired he looked (he must be getting towards the end of his life) and how sources of nectar are greatly diminished, it's remarkable how nevertheless doing the "stalk dance" is still an important duty for him to carry out.

So tired are some of the Coppers that, I regret to say, young Pip was seen to chase one then leap up and catch it..! Clearly he still has a long way to go in his training..

We walked to the lake so he could cool off



Later, his transgression was forgiven when he found this handsome male for me, holding a territory near the Observatory



The second pale fore-winged Copper I've seen recently (the first, a female, Pip didn't eat but he managed to knock flying..!)

So it was nice to spend some time with this one without it being terrorised by a hyperactive Springer pup. Of all the Coppers I saw today this one was in the best condition



We saw 14 Coppers today. Fingers crossed the weather stays fair for a time yet and gives us a chance of seeing a healthy fourth brood before the season is over.

Re: Hoggars

by David M, 14-Oct-18 11:57 PM GMT

[quote]We saw 14 Coppers today. Fingers crossed the weather stays fair for a time yet and gives us a chance of seeing a healthy fourth brood before the season is over.

There doesn't look to be anything threatening on the horizon, Hoggars, so hopefully there WILL indeed be an additional brood of Coppers before the cold weather sets in!

Re: Hoggars

by Hoggars, 20-Oct-18 04:19 PM GMT

Hi David, they've made a better job forecasting the weather than I have of predicting a fourth brood of Coppers!

We've had generally fine sunny days of late with today being the absolute best of them : It was gorgeous at Dungeness this morning, bright sunshine, about 16C and not a puff of wind.

Unfortunately I could find only 3 Small Coppers



all were third brood



and included the chap I found last Saturday, still in exactly the same place in the moat by the Obs Valerian



His pale fore-wing makes him instantly recognisable. As anyone who visits the moat will know, this part is favoured by Coppers as it's a sun trap with plenty of flowers. So he has picked a good spot for his territory.

No sign then of a fourth brood and I can't help thinking the Coppers are nearly over for this year.

Still, Dungeness is a marvellous place to visit and I know someone who'll want to keep going back, Coppers or no Coppers!



All the best,

Hoggers

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 20-Oct-18 05:15 PM GMT

Hello Hoggers ,

Had lunch at the Britannia early afternoon ,couldn,t resist a quick look along the power station fence ,and just up from the first bungalow on the right (the one with the sheep !) I saw one fresh 4th brood Copper ,but very little else ,although a Speckled Wood along the front (sea) wall was unusual and a single Clouded Yellow ,I was at Dungeness ,late afternoon yesterday as well ,some worn Common Blues ,3 Red Admirals ,another Speckled Wood and a Peacock but no Coppers !

PS; Forgot ,a single Painted Lady Regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 21-Oct-18 07:12 PM GMT

Hoggers wrote:

Hi David, they've made a better job forecasting the weather than I have of predicting a fourth brood of Coppers!

Well, Hoggers, they've a week to live up to your expectations because by next Saturday we'll have northerly winds and 9c temperatures....and I'm sure new broods of Small Copper won't want to be emerging in that!!

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 22-Oct-18 01:06 PM GMT

Hi Allan and David, I looked at the Dungeness Observatory website this morning and most tantalisingly the report for yesterday was "very fresh Small Coppers were seen " !

So maybe my prediction wasn't as bad as I thought!

But as you say David, the Coppers better get on with business because it's turning chillier!

Hoggers

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 25-Oct-18 09:27 PM GMT

I hope reports of fresh specimens are true, Hoggers, as I fear things are closing in and there will be an abrupt end to this feast within the next few days!

