

Butterfly Transect at Markstakes Common: 2014 Summary



The Markstakes butterfly transect was walked on 26 of the 27 weeks specified by the United Kingdom Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS) between the beginning of April and the end of September 2014. Sightings of butterflies occurred on all 26 transect walks. Data have been submitted to UKBMS using the online Transect Walker system.

In the 26 weeks when recordings were made 602 butterflies were identified in 25 species. This compares with 591 individuals in 2013. Notable features this year were the large numbers of Small Skippers and sightings of a Purple Emperor and a Dark Green Fritillary.

With a few notable exceptions most species were present in similar numbers to 2013. The exceptions were Small Skippers, Common Blue, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock and Gatekeeper which all recorded a marked increase in abundance while Large White, Small Copper, Comma, Speckled Wood and Small Heath declined. No Ringlets were recorded in 2014.

The three most numerous species account for over half (53%) of all the records:

Meadow Brown	197
Gatekeeper	63
Small Skipper	57

For full list of species recorded, and their abundance, over the past three years see table 1 below.

Table 1 Species recorded in 2012, 2013 and 2014

Family and Species	Common Name	2012	2013	2014
HESPERIIDAE				
Thymelicus sylvestris	Small Skipper	2	6	57
Ochlodes venata	Large Skipper	4	4	5
PIERIDAE				
Gonepteryx rhamni	Brimstone	8	29	32
Pieris brassicae	Large White	22	73	33
Pieris rapae	Small White	3	4	12
Pieris napi	Green-veined White	6	16	2
Anthocharis cardamines	Orange Tip	10	5	5
Colias croceus	Clouded Yellow		2	1
Leptidea sinapis	Wood White		1	
LYCAENIDAE				
Lycaena phlaeas	Small Copper	1	8	4
Celastrina argiolus	Holly Blue	1	1	3
Polyommatus icarus	Common Blue		15	33
NYMPHALIDAE				
Limenitis camilla	White Admiral	9	10	6
Vanessa atalanta	Red Admiral	5	3	13
Inachis io	Peacock	8	20	51
Polygonia c-album	Comma	4	10	6
Argynnis paphia	Silver Washed Fritillar	14	35	27
Argynnis aglaja	Dark Green Fritillary			1
Aglais urticae	Small Tortoiseshell		3	11
Vanessa cardui	Painted Lady		1	
Melanargia galathea	Marbled White		6	7
Apatura iris	Purple Emperor			1
SATYRIDAE				
Pararge aegeria	Speckled Wood	54	55	29
Pyronia tithonus	Gatekeeper	36	44	63
Maniola jurtina	Meadow Brown	83	225	197
Coenonympha pamphilus	Small Heath	7	12	3
Aphantopus hyperantus	Ringlet		3	

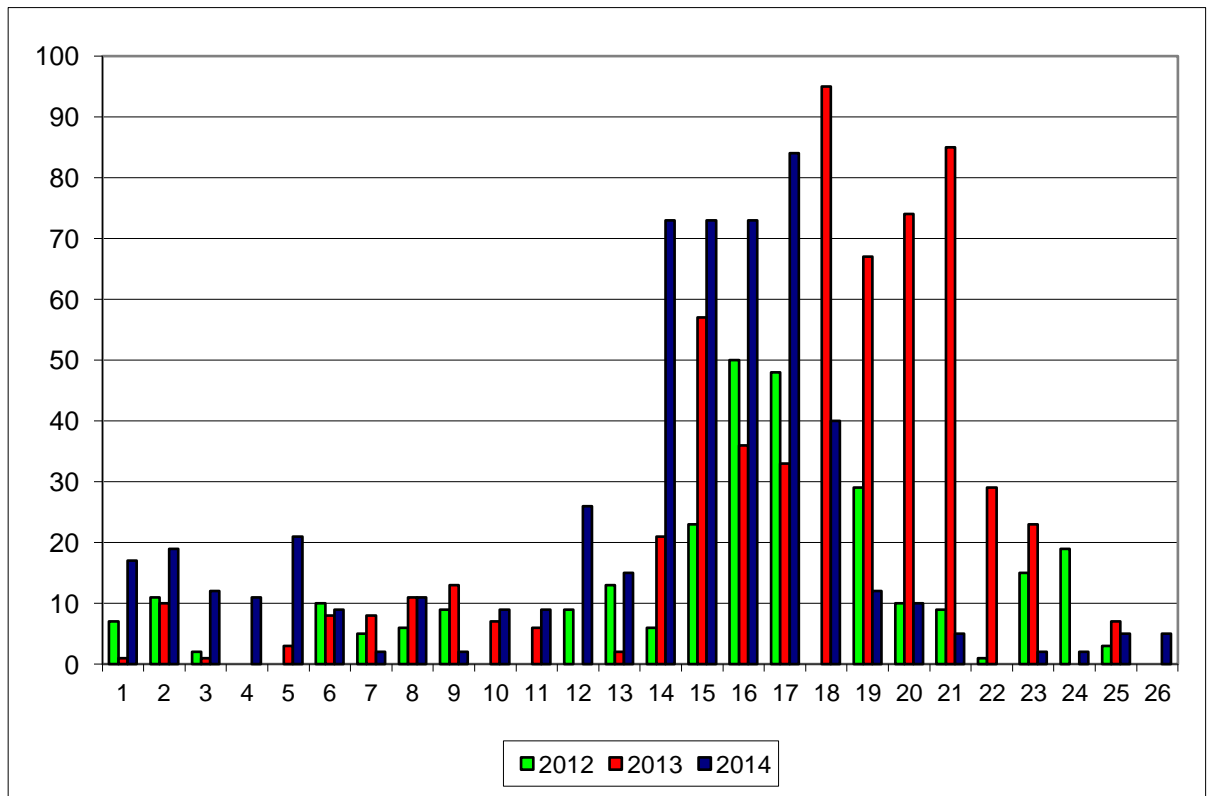
The records show a very uneven distribution of butterflies across Markstakes. Section 7 (the mire) had 19 of the 25 species present and 36% (219) of all recordings. Section 5 (which includes the butterfly glades) had 15 species and about 12% (69) of recordings. In contrast section 3 and 10 each had fewer than 5 species and very low numbers. Table 2 shows the number of species and butterflies in each section of the transect in 2014.

Table 2 Number and distribution of species by transect section 2014

Section	No. of species	No. of butterflies	% total
1	9	12	2.0
2	10	46	7.6
3	5	6	1.0
4	10	34	5.6
5	15	69	11.5
6	12	56	9.3
7	19	219	36.4
8	11	66	11.0
9	6	11	1.8
10	3	4	0.7
11	8	16	2.7
12	9	63	10.5
Total		602	100.0

Chart 1 below shows the number of butterflies recorded each week over the past three years. 2014 saw numbers peak earlier – in July which accounts for 57% of all records – compared with 2013, and tail off very rapidly in August and September. More butterflies were recorded in the fourth week of July (84) than in the whole of April (80), May (24), June (59), August (27) or September (14). The chart also shows that more butterflies were present in the spring than in previous years.

Chart 1 Number of butterflies by week, 2012-2013



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