



INSECT SURVEY FOR MARKSTAKES COMMON, EAST SUSSEX

Report No.2:
for site visits on 7th June, 26th & 28th July, 4th August & 10th October 2023

by
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CONTENTS

	Page No.
1. Introduction	1
2. Recording Areas	1
3. Assessment for invertebrates	2
4. Notable species.....	2
5. Species recorded in 2023	3

1. Introduction

This survey is a follow-up to the survey carried out in 2010, although the methodology is different so will not serve as a direct comparison. After briefly examining the northern half of the common it was decided to concentrate survey effort in the heathy habitats in grid squares TQ397178 and TQ397179.

The results of five survey visits on 7th June, 26th and 28th July, 4th August and 10th October 2023 are listed in Table 1.

2. Recording Areas

In my 2010 survey the site was divided into five recording areas, these have been adapted for the current survey as follows, with names taken from the Markstakes Common Full Map, dated 1.10.13.

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|---|
| 1) | Northern Bracken Field | TQ398182 (default grid reference for centre of clearing). |
| 2) | Heather Glade | TQ397179 (default grid reference for centre of clearing). |
| 3) | Azulox Glade & Mire | TQ397178 (default grid reference for centre of clearing). |

3. Assessment for invertebrates

Northern Bracken Field

Briefly sampled on 7th June 2023 but not assessed.

Heather Glade

Ongoing work by the Friends of Markstakes Common has resulted in significant regeneration of heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) in recent years. Although many insects recorded were off tree foliage, a special effort was also made to search for species associated with heather. These are flagged “H” in Table 1. Of the butterflies recorded, the Holly Blue was especially plentiful, although its abundance from year to year is more related to the cycle of it being attacked by parasites than to the prevailing habitat conditions. A Purple Hairstreak was recorded settling on oak foliage on 26 July and on the same day it was pleasing to record a Silver-washed Fritillary flying at speed across the glade. The tiny moth, *Tischeria dodonaea*, is likely to be a new record for this part of East Sussex, but confirmation is required in the form of a better reference specimen, because the example collected on 26 July was damaged. An example of the strikingly marked day-flying moth *Dasycera oliviella* was swept off oak foliage on 28 July. This species is associated with just a few ancient woodland sites in south-east England and has apparently not previously been recorded from the Chailey district before.

Azulox Glade and Mire

Only briefly sampled during the current survey and with relatively few species recorded it is hard to make a meaningful assessment. An example of the parasitic fly *Gymnosoma rotundatum* was swept off vegetation on 28 July which is a new species for the common. Historically this fly was a scarce species in East Sussex although it has become more frequent in recent years, most probably influenced by climate change.

4. Notable species

The following species were selected as being the most noteworthy of the insects recorded in 2023.

COLEOPTERA (Beetles)

Cantharidae (Soldier beetles)

N *Rhagonycha lutea*

This pale orange-brown soldier beetle prefers woodland margins with long grass and scrub and is widely distributed but local in Britain. Both larvae and adults are probably predatory. This species may no longer be regarded as especially Notable.

DIPTERA (Flies)

Tachinidae (Parasitic flies)

N *Gymnosoma rotundatum*

A locally distributed parasitic fly which is largely restricted to south-east England. It can be numerous where it occurs. Found on dry sandy or chalky soils, often on grassland which is partly overgrown with shrubs. Apparently its only confirmed hosts are shield-bugs of the genus *Palomena* and therefore in Britain it must be assumed that it is associated with the very common Green Shieldbug *Palomena prasina* (Pentatomidae).

LEPIDOPTERA (Moths)

Oecophoridae

N *Dasycera oliviella* (Scarce Forest Tubic)

A very local species, associated with ancient deciduous woodland in south and south-east England. In Sussex it has been recorded from only a few sites. The larvae feed on the decayed wood of oak and sloe. Not previously recorded from National Grid square TQ31.

Tischeriidae

N *Tischeria dodonaea*

A local species with a scattered distribution in Sussex. Larvae mine the leaves of oak.

4. Species recorded during summer & autumn 2023

The following symbols are used:

- + = species present
- H = species associated with heather or heathland
- N = Notable species

Table 1: Species recorded

SPECIES	Northern Bracken Field TQ398182	Heather Glade & Friends Glade TQ397179	Azulox Glade & Mire TQ397178
COLEOPTERA (Beetles)			
ANTHRICIDAE			
<i>Anthicus antherinus</i>		+	
APIONIDAE (Weevils)			
<i>Exapion ulicis</i>		+	
BUPRESTIDAE (Jewel Beetles)			
<i>Agrilus laticornis</i>		+	
BYRRHIDAE (Pill Beetles)			
<i>Byrrhus pilula</i>		+	
CANTHARIDAE (Soldier beetles)			
<i>Malthodes marginatus</i>	+		
<i>Malthinus seriepunctatus</i>		+	
<i>Rhagonycha fulva</i>		+	
<i>Rhagonycha lutea</i>	+N		
CARABIDAE (Ground beetles)			
<i>Cicindela campestris</i> (Green Tiger Beetle)		+H	
<i>Dromius quadrimaculatus</i>		+	
CHRYSOMELIDAE (Leaf beetles)			
<i>Lochmaea suturalis</i> (Heather Beetle)		+H	
COCCINELLIDAE (Ladybirds)			
<i>Coccinella septempunctata</i>		+	
<i>Propylea quattuordecimpunctata</i>		+	
CURCULIONIDAE (Weevils)			
<i>Curculio glandium</i>		+	+
<i>Curculio venosus</i>	+		
<i>Micrelus ericae</i>		+H	
<i>Orchestes signifer</i>		+	
<i>Phyllobius argentatus</i>		+	
<i>Polydrusus cervinus</i>		+	
<i>Sitona regensteiniensis</i>		+	
ELATERIDAE (Click Beetles)			
<i>Agriotes pallidulus</i>		+	
<i>Athous haemorrhoidalis</i>		+	
MELYRIDAE (Malachite Beetles)			
<i>Malachius bipustulatus</i>	+		
PYROCHROIDAE (Cardinal Beetles)			
<i>Pyrochroa coccinea</i> (Black-headed Cardinal Beetle)		+	
SCRAPTIIDAE			
<i>Anaspis lurida</i>		+	

SPECIES	Northern Bracken Field TQ398182	Heather Glade & Friends Glade TQ397179	Azulox Glade & Mire TQ397178
DIPTERA (Flies)			
SYRPHIDAE (Hoverflies)			
<i>Episyrphus balteatus</i>	+		
<i>Xylota segnis</i>	+		
TACHINIDAE (Parasitic flies)			
<i>Gymnosoma rotundatum</i>			+N
HEMIPTERA -HETEROPTERA (Bugs)			
ACANTHOSOMATIDAE (Shield bugs)			
<i>Elasmostethus interstinctus</i>		+	
COREIDAE (Squash-bugs)			
<i>Coreus marginatus</i>		+	
MIRIDAE (Capsid-bugs)			
<i>Calocoris quadripunctatus</i>		+	
<i>Cyllocoris histrionius</i>		+	
<i>Phylus melanocephalus</i>		+	
<i>Orthotylus ericetorum</i>		+H	
NABIDAE (Damsel-bugs)			
<i>Nabis ericetorum</i>		+H	
PENTATOMIDAE (Shield-bugs)			
<i>Dolycoris baccarum</i>		+	
<i>Palomena prasina</i>		+	
<i>Pentatoma rufipes</i>		+	
<i>Piezodorus lituratus</i>		+	
<i>Troilus luridus</i>		+	
RHOPALIDAE			
<i>Rhopalus subrufus</i>		+	
SCUTELLERIDAE			
<i>Eurygaster testudinaria</i>			+
HYMENOPTERA (Bees, Wasps & Ants)			
POMPILIDAE (Spider Wasps)			
<i>Anoplius nigerrimus</i>		+	
LEPIDOPTERA (Butterflies)			
LYCAENIDAE			
<i>Celastrina argiolus</i> (Holly Blue)		+	
<i>Favonius quercus</i> (Purple Hairstreak)		+	
<i>Polyommatus icarus</i> (Common Blue)			+
NYMPHALIDAE			
<i>Inachis io</i> (Peacock)		+	
<i>Argynnis paphia</i> (Silver-washed Fritillary)		+	
<i>Maniola jurtina</i> (Meadow Brown)		+	
<i>Pararge aegeria</i> (Speckled Wood)		+	
<i>Pyronia tithonus</i> (The Gatekeeper)		+	
PIERIDAE			
<i>Pieris brassicae</i> (Large White)		+	

SPECIES	Northern Bracken Field TQ398182	Heather Glade & Friends Glade TQ397179	Azulox Glade & Mire TQ397178
LEPIDOPTERA (Moths)			
GELECHIIDAE			
<i>Aristotelia ericinella</i>		+H	
GEOMETRIDAE			
<i>Lomaspilis marginata</i> (Clouded Border)		+	
GLYPHYPTERIGIDAE			
<i>Glyphipteryx fuscoviridella</i>		+	
NOCTUIDAE			
<i>Acrionicta rumicis</i> (Knotgrass)			
<i>Anarta myrtilli</i> (Beautiful Yellow Underwing)		+H	
<i>Cosmia trapezina</i> (The Dun-bar)		+	
OECOPHORIDAE			
<i>Alabonia geofrella</i>		+	
<i>Dasycera oliviella</i> (Scarce Forest Tubic)		+N	
<i>Metalampra italica</i>		+	
PLUTELLIDAE			
<i>Plutella xylostella</i> (Diamondback Moth)		+	
PYRALIDAE			
<i>Endotricha flammealis</i>		+	
TINEIDAE			
<i>Monopis weaverella</i>			+
TISCHERIDAE			
<i>Tischeria dodonaea</i>		+N	
TORTRICIDAE			
<i>Eudemis profundana</i>		+	
<i>Gypsonoma dealbana</i>		+	
<i>Spilonota ocellana</i>			+
<i>Tortrix viridana</i> (Green Oak Tortrix)		+	
ORTHOPTERA (Grasshoppers & crickets)			
TETTIGONIIDAE (Bush-crickets)			
<i>Leptophyes punctatissima</i> (Speckled Bush-cricket)		+	
<i>Meconema thalassinum</i> (Oak Bush-cricket)		+	

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