

Briantspuddle Wildlife News

October 2025

Thanks to all those who have sent photos and news, it looks like this newsletter will be more often than quarterly!

If you see anything of interest on your walks or from your kitchen window, or even from your tractor please let me know by mail angie@pbtalbot.plus.com

When submitting pictures for inclusion in the newsletter please ensure they are in JPEG format, i.e. the file name containing the picture is in the form <filename.jpeg>

If you have a neighbour who does not receive emails please consider printing a copy of this newsletter for them.

Butterfly Report for 2025

A wet winter followed by a hot and dry spring did not help the wild flowers bloom, which in turn did not help the butterflies to get the nectar they required, and it got even worse with the long hot summer; butterflies do not like it too hot. Therefore overall numbers were down, but we did have 31 species.

Brimstone, Peacock and Red Admiral were okay. On the 19th March a Large Tortoiseshell was reported on TURNERSPUDDLE HEATH. The Comma butterflies had a good year, as did the Speckled Wood, but the Orange Tip numbers were down a bit. I only saw 4 Small Tortoiseshell all year which was really poor. Green Veined White, Small White and Large White were about average numbers, as was Painted Lady. Wall Brown had a good year, the most I have seen in our parish. Silver Studded Blue did well again, with numbers improving on ERICA TRUST LAND.

Grizzled Skipper was another butterfly that had a very poor year, but Holly Blue and Common Blue were only slightly down. Small Heath and Grayling were okay, but I found Large Skipper down in numbers and Small Skipper just about average. I failed to spot an Essex Skipper; I think I just missed it! Marbled White was okay as were Silver Washed Fritillary and Gatekeeper. Ringlet seemed to have a poor year as did Small Copper, but Brown Argus was okay.

Purple Hairstreak did well, but I only saw a couple of Clouded Yellows. A good sighting was a Dark Green Fritillary at ROGERS HILL FARM. I am finding Green Hairstreak hard to find, only 1 recorded, and we have plenty of habitat for it. Another butterfly that was down in numbers was the Meadow Brown, they are our most populous butterfly but well down this year.



Grizzled Skipper



Wall Brown

These next four butterflies I have not been seen this year - Adonis Blue, Small Blue, White Admiral and Dingy Skipper.

On reading the BUTTERFLY REPORT FOR 2024 from the DORSET BRANCH it included a piece about the decline of the SMALL TORTOISESHELL - I will just quote a short bit of it. One reason for its decline is a parasitic fly called *Sturmia bella* which also affects the PEACOCK and RED ADMIRALS though not as badly, the fly lays its eggs on stinging nettles, the food plant of these butterflies, and the caterpillars eat the fly's eggs and the maggots develop inside the caterpillar eventually killing it.

The loss of habitat and over-use of pesticides all contribute to the decline of so many of our butterflies.

Moths

It's been an average year for my moth trap with overall numbers down. These photos are some of the best sightings – the first photo is one of our biggest moths the CLIFDEN NONPAREIL, the second is the STRIPED HAWKMOTH and the third one is the SPECKLED FOOTMAN a local rarity breeding in WAREHAM FOREST.

Roger Hewitt



Clifden Nonpareil



Striped Hawkmoth



Speckled Footman

Karin's Lunch

On my way back from getting the watercress for the shop, I drove down the Hollow and to my surprise I saw the most delicious cep *Boletus edulis* growing just within reach at the side of the road. I stopped the car, hoping that nobody would come round the corner at high speed.

Anyway I used to go mushroom picking with my grandfather a long time ago in Germany and know which ones are edible. The warm, damp weather is just ideal at the moment. I fried them in butter with a little salt and we had them for lunch and supper. What a treat.



Karin Gray

Firecrests

These tiny birds are often found high up in conifer trees, their whereabouts given away by the high pitched contact calls.



Part of a flock, probably with Goldcrests in Sares Wood, Affpuddle.

Helen Frost

Recent sightings



Egyptian Geese - 2 adults and 1 juvenile on the fishing lake 13th October.



Red Kite

The Red Kites are starting to show again, there were 3 over the village on the 10th October. I never tire of seeing these birds.

Roger Hewitt

Take a moment.

I work out the various stresses of life by either spending time in the garden or going for a walk. I will often start these activities with vigour and purpose but I soon slow down. It is then that I start to notice what is taking place around me, such as the appearance, earlier in the year, of these two amazing caterpillars.



Being a mast year, there is an abundance of fruit, nuts, berries and fungi all within walking distance of my front door so I have been wandering through the local woodlands foraging for chestnuts and capturing photographs for an art project. Next time you venture outdoors, why not take a moment to discover the wonders of nature!



Fly Agaric



Unidentified

Dianne George

More Fungi

I found these large Parasol Mushrooms *Macrolepiota procera* just inside the Erica Trust woodland at the top of Bladen Valley after a spell of rainy weather.

Angie Talbot



Parasol Mushrooms



Cattle Egrets return to Briantspuddle



Cattle Egrets

Photo - Roger Hewitt

These Cattle Egrets were spotted by Philippa and Joy in the field just past Pheasant Cottage recently, the first ones since January.