

Teesdale Butterfly Notes 2020

The huge influx of Painted ladies in 2019 has inspired many people to encourage butterflies into their gardens and to record and photograph them. These notes have been compiled to encourage the conservation and recording of butterflies in Teesdale.

Climate change/global warming have increased the number of species established in Teesdale, with some species moving northward and to higher elevations. The big successes so far have been Speckled Wood and Ringlet. Possible colonists in the next few years are Brimstone and Essex Skipper, which now have footholds in the lower Tees valley.

Some of the scarcer species are, so far, poorly recorded. For example, Purple Hairstreak, White Letter Hairstreak and Holly Blue have only been recorded at Deepdale, but are almost certainly present elsewhere in Teesdale.

A butterfly “garden” with Buddleia, Verbena, Sedums and Buckthorn has been planted at a sunny spot in Deepdale, next to Brightwoods Forest School. Most of Teesdale’s butterfly species can be seen here.

These notes are only an indication of which species are present in Teesdale, and if they are common or rare. More detailed information is available on the websites of Butterfly Conservation

<http://www.northeast-butterflies.org.uk/>

and the Field Studies Council. <https://www.field-studies-council.org/>



Skippers. We have three species, Small, Large and Dingy. They are grassland species, and are all rare in Teesdale.

Whites. Large White and Small White are common on garden cabbages and Nasturtiums. Green-veined White and Orange Tip are also common, feeding on wild plants of the cabbage family.

Brimstone. There are established colonies at Catterick and at Darlington, and several strays/explorers have been seen in Deepdale and elsewhere.

Wall. A grassland butterfly, occasional in Teesdale.

Speckled Wood. Used to be a southern species, but is now one of Teesdale's commonest woodland/woodland edge species.

Small Heath. Rare or infrequent in grasslands in Upper Teesdale.

Ringlet. Once extinct in County Durham, but now occasional in Teesdale grasslands after spreading north again.

Meadow Brown. Common in grassland habitats in Teesdale.

Vanessids. Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Comma, Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock can be common in Teesdale gardens, especially on Buddleia.

Small Copper. In grasslands with sorrels and docks, sometimes in gardens.

Hairstreaks. Purple Hairstreak flies at the tops of oak trees, so is hard to spot. Currently only known near Cat Castle Cottages in Deepdale. White Letter Hairstreak flies in the tops of Elms, but also comes down to feed on thistles. Only known at the Deepdale butterfly garden. Green Hairstreak, in contrast, feeds on Bilberry, and is more easily seen, but is also rare in Teesdale, at Hamsterley Forest and Cockfield Fell.

Dark Green Fritillary. Rare in Teesdale, in places with Dog Violet or Marsh Violet.

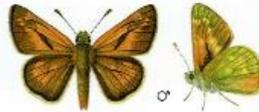
Blues. Common Blue is frequent in grasslands in Teesdale. Holly Blue is rare, in woodlands with Holly and Ivy in Teesdale, and only recorded from Deepdale recently. Elsewhere in the north-east, it sometimes is found in gardens.

Teesdale Butterflies



Small skipper
Thymelicus sylvestris

RARE



Large skipper *Ochlodes sylvanus*

RARE



Dingy skipper
Erynnis tages

RARE



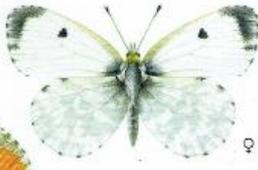
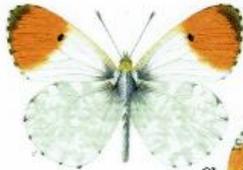
Common blue *Polyommatus icarus*



Holly blue *Celastrina argiolus*



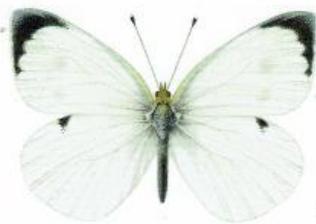
RARE



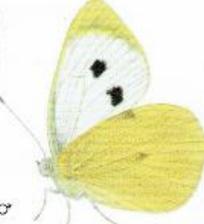
Orange tip
Anthocharis cardamines



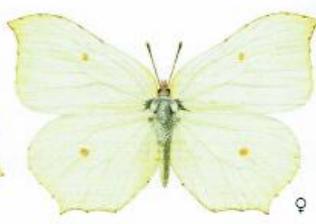
Green-veined white *Pieris napi*



Large white *Pieris brassicae*



Small white *Pieris rapae*



Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni*

RARE



Purple hairstreak *Favonius quercus*

RARE



Green hairstreak *Callophrys rubi*

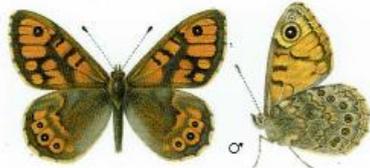
RARE



White-letter
hairstreak
Satyrium w-album

RARE

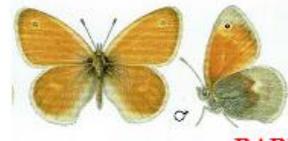




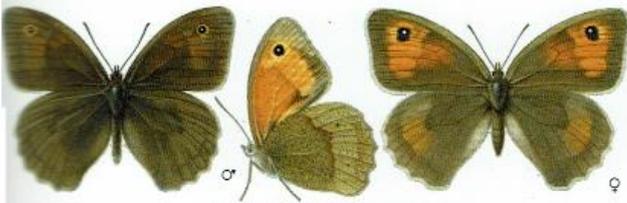
Wall *Lasiommata megera* **RARE**



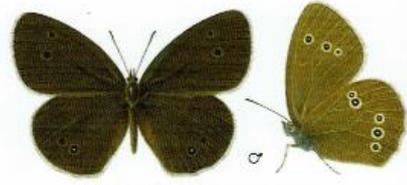
Speckled wood *Pararge aegeria*



Small heath **RARE**
Coenonympha pamphilus



Meadow brown *Maniola jurtina*



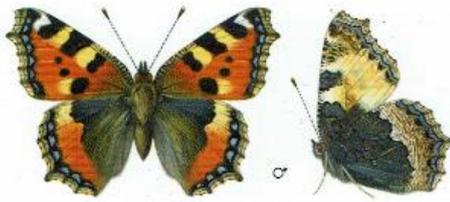
Ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus*



Painted lady
Vanessa cardui



Peacock *Aglais io*



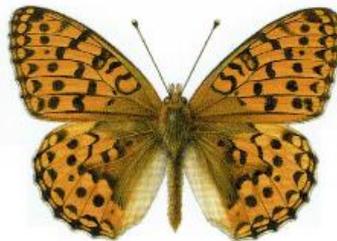
Small tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*



Comma *Polygonia c-album*



Red admiral
Vanessa atalanta



RARE Dark green fritillary
Argynnis aglaja



Small copper *Lycaena phlaeas*

Beautiful illustrations by Richard Lewington.