



BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION HIGHLAND BRANCH



NEWS-SHEET 11

Spring Meeting – Strathpeffer 15th April

Last year the AGM, scheduled for March, had to be cancelled because of snow so it was held in November. The Committee decided that this was quite a good time to hold the AGM anyway coming after a season of recording. This year's AGM will, therefore, also be held in November, but a spring meeting has now also been organized.

With the National Moth Recording Scheme just about to start and a batch of new Vice-County moth recorders recently appointed (see item below) there is good reason to hold a meeting with moth recording as the main theme but there will, of course, also be time for discussion on butterfly recording and field trips etc. The programme will include an Introduction to the National Moth Recording Scheme by Tom Prescott (a summary of the talk given by Richard Fox, the National Organiser, at the Moth Recorders' Conference in Perth), followed by general discussion and a demonstration of MapMate, the recording software used by many moth recorders, and ending with more from Tom on Conservation of Priority Moths in Scotland.

The meeting will be held at the Strathpeffer Community Centre on Sunday 15th April starting at 10.30am for teas and coffees with the main meeting from 11.00am to 1.00pm.

The room has been booked till 3.30pm to allow the moth recorders to meet after lunch to discuss plans, recording details, procedures etc in more detail. Anyone else interested in staying on for the afternoon session will be more than welcome.

Those staying for the afternoon in particular might be as well to bring something with them for lunch though there are also plenty of places to eat nearby in Strathpeffer. Tea and coffee will be available.

Field Trips 2007

We have arranged the following trips for 2007 and would hope as many of you as possible can manage along. As usual pin this to your fridge door for reference. All welcome!

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| 28 April | <u>Culbin Binns Ness from Well Hill</u> - Kentish Glory? or a walk in the forest, a chance to kick start the year. Meet at 11:00am at Well Hill car park
NH997613 OS Sheet 27 | Leader Jimmy McKellar |
| 02 June | <u>Loch Arkaig, Allt Mhuic</u> – A chance to visit our only Highland reserve to see Chequered Skipper and much more. Meet at 11:00am at Allt Mhuic car park
NN120911. OS Sheet 34 | Leader Tom Prescott |
| 30 June | <u>Camore Wood / Dornoch</u> To have a look for the colony of Ringlets found last year and to look at the Small Blue colony at Dornoch. Meet at 11.00am at Camore Wood car park
NH767887 OS Sheet 21 | Leader Tony Mainwood |
| 22 July | <u>Littleferry, Loch Fleet</u> a public guided walk (as part of National Save our Butterflies week 21 - 29 July) Grayling and Dark-green Fritillary. Meet 2.00pm at Littleferry car park
NH806955 OS Sheet 21 | Leader Tony Mainwood |
| 28 July | <u>Findhorn Dunes</u> : Exploring the dunes. Meet at 11.00am at RSPB car park opposite Findhorn Foundation, on the shore side just before entering Findhorn.
NJ052632 OS Sheet 27 | Leader : Jimmy McKellar |
| 11 August | <u>Ferrycroft Visitor Centre, Lairg. National Moth Night</u> Meet at 8.00pm
NC 579 061 OS Sheet 16. | Leader Tony Mainwood |



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Watch for the mixture of days and dates and start times! It is essential that you contact the chairman or David McAllister before the trip to confirm details of venue and time.

Contact: Jimmy McKellar Tel: 01463 241185 David McAllister Tel: 01862 892302

It is advisable to be well equipped with the correct footwear and clothing for the conditions, boots, waterproofs and carry enough to eat and drink for the trip. Nets will be available.

For the Moth nights remember to bring a torch and warm clothing – and maybe even midge repellent.

Butterfly Conservation Cairngorms Events

A number of workshops and events, led by the local rangers, are being run under the Butterflies and Moths Mean Business project and full details can be found on the Butterfly Conservation website.

Go to www.butterfly-conservation/bcuk/scotland and see under Butterflies and Moths Mean Business or contact Yvonne Malcolm, Butterfly Conservation Cairngorm Project Officer e-mail y Malcolm@butterfly-conservation.org or Tel: 01479 873535

Tain & District Field Club also have a programme of field trips in the summer

Mid May (Sat or Sun) to Beinn Eigh NNR – flora and fauna

22 May (Tue) 10:00 – 21:30 Black Rock Gorge, Evanton - geology & gorge habitats.

10 June (Sun) 14:00 Rosemarkie Beach Beach habitats, caves, geology and butterflies particularly Pearl-bordered Fritillary.

16 – 17 June (Sat/Sun) Scourie weekend – Handa and Loch a'Mhuilinn NNR

for further details contact David McAllister Tel: 01862 892302

Highland Biological recording Group are running a wide variety of trips and events.

See the HBRG website www.hbrg.org.uk for further details

Highland Council Ranger Service

The Highland Council ranger service run a variety of walks and events throughout the region some of which may have a butterfly or moth element. Details are available on the Highland Council website (look at Leisure – Countryside – Rangers – Countryside Ranger Events) or on locally focussed leaflets available at libraries, tourist information centres etc.

Butterfly Conservation – Highland Branch Website

Don't forget to log on to the Branch website for news and updates on field trips and meetings.

www.highland-butterflies.org.uk

Electronic versions of the Newsletters and News-sheets and e-mail addresses.

Both the Newsletter and the news-sheet are produced on computer and it is a very simple matter to send out these electronic documents to members who have access to the internet. In future it is planned to offer the option of an electronic version instead of (or as well as) the printed one.

These days many people find it easier to keep documents on their computers rather than taking up space on their bookshelves or in their filing cabinet. Considerable saving in printing and postage costs can also be made if people just receive an electronic version and now that the Branch membership is passing 150 it is becoming an increasingly onerous task to collate and staple the Newsletter.

Downloadable versions will be available on the website but for those without internet access we will of course continue to send out paper copies.

A branch e-mail list will also mean we can send out reminders and updates on field trips and events nearer the time. Messages can be sent as a "blind copy" so that others do not see your e-mail address if that is what you would prefer. Please e-mail Tony Mainwood (tony.mainwood@btinternet.com) to add your name to the list.



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National Moth Recording Scheme

2007 is a very important and exciting year for moths! It marks the start of a new four year project; the National Moth Recording Scheme (NMRS). The project is being led by Butterfly Conservation in partnership with several organisations and funders. The overall aim of the NMRS is to stimulate and encourage moth recording throughout the UK and to establish an ongoing recording scheme for the 900+ species of macro-moths. More specifically, we plan to:

- Encourage a greater appreciation and enthusiasm for moths among a new, wider audience, including people who have not previously participated in wildlife recording or conservation
- Develop a broad base of expertise by recruiting, training and encouraging new recorders, and supporting existing moth recorders and recording groups/networks
- Develop a comprehensive, accurate and accessible database showing the distribution of the UK's larger moths
- Contribute to the long-term conservation of moths by making available the data needed to implement effective conservation policies and action.

The network of vice-county moth recorders across the UK are central to the scheme, acting as collators, and where possible verifiers, of local records. Until very recently David Barbour has taken on this role for most of the vice-counties covering the Highlands primarily due to the lack of active moth recorders. However, there has been a recent dramatic increase in interest in moths in the Highlands and there are now far more active and enthusiastic moth recorders. A number of these new recruits have offered to help with the scheme by becoming new vice-county moth recorders. Many, by their own admission, are relatively new to moths and a system of verification of problematic species is being devised. These records will be checked by more experienced lepidopterists while the new vice-county recorders gain experience.

The new line-up of vice-county moth recorders covering the Highlands is:

- **VC95 Moray and VC96 East Inverness-shire** - Jeff Waddell
Bonavista, Heatheryett, Galashiels, Selkirkshire TD1 2J; E-mail: jeff.waddell@ukf.net
- **VC97 West Inverness-shire** - Tom Prescott
Mill House, Mill Road, Kingussie, Inverness-shire, PH21 1LF; Email: tomprescott@btconnect.com
- **VC 104 North Ebudef - Small Isles** - Jessie Mackay
Carsfad, St John's Town of Dalry, Castle Douglas, DG7 3SU;
E-mail: mackay@entomology.freeserve.co.uk
- **VC 104 North Ebudef - Skye and VC 105 West Ross** - Brian Neath
Culag, Carr Brae, Dornie, Kyle, Ross-shire, IV40 8HA; E-mail: bandj@culag.plus.com
- **VC 106 East Ross** Barbara Ballinger
Upper Flat, Station House, Fearn Station, Tain, IV20 1RR; E-mail: Barbara@garrickwood.org.uk
- **VC 107 East Sutherland** - Tony Mainwood,
13 Ben Bhraggie Drive, Golspie, Sutherland, KW10 6SX,
Email: tony.mainwood@btinternet.com
- **VC 108 West Sutherland** - Sue Agnew
78 Strathkanaird, Ullapool, Ross-shire, IV26 2TP; Email: sue.agnew@virgin.net
- **VC 109 Caithness**
Mary Legg, Clett Cottage, Barrock, Caithness, KW14 8SY; E-mail: mary.legg@highland.gov.uk

The success of the scheme is obviously dependent upon receiving moth records. I'm sure many of you have moth records lurking in your notebooks or diaries or on scraps of paper. Now is the time to let them see the light of day and send them to the new team! That's what they are there for! In



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In addition any offers of assistance to the current VC recorders will be warmly accepted along with any new or old moth records.

To find out more about the NMRS visit www.mothrecording.org.uk
or contact Tom Prescott, Mill House, Mill Road, Kingussie, Inverness-shire, PH21 1LF,
Email: tomprescott@btconnect. Tel: 01540 661469

Tom Prescott

MapMate software for keeping records.

Many moth recorders use MapMate software for recording their moths and the National Moth Recording Scheme is likely to use MapMate as one of several means of collecting data. It would be useful to know how many people might be interested in getting a copy of MapMate so that we can investigate the possibility of a bulk purchase to minimize costs and also to investigate obtaining funding with a view to possibly make it free to members. Please let Tony Mainwood know if you are interested in getting a copy of MapMate. (e-mail or phone as above).

Orange-tip postcard survey

Remember to encourage your friends to take part in the Orange-tip postcard survey. The last Scottish survey was in 1997-98 and it is more than likely that they will have spread further north since then. Cards should be available at public libraries and you can pick up a batch at the Strathpeffer meeting.

Butterflies in the wider countryside

In 2007 the focus will be on pilot studies in upland habitats so we can make a valuable contribution to developing the methodology. See the item in the Spring issue of Butterfly and for more information contact Katie Cruickshanks at kcruckshanks@butterfly-conservation.org or on 01929 406036

Butterfly Recording Sheets

A yellow Butterfly Conservation 'Butterfly Casual Records Sheet' is included with this news-sheet. The forms have been invaluable in contributing to the more than 30,000 records gathered in the Highland Branch area since 1995. These records have been used in both the *Millennium Atlas of Butterflies in Britain and Ireland*, and its recent follow-up *The State of Butterflies in Britain and Ireland*

The distribution of the different species over the past 12 years is now reasonably well known but things are changing fast, most likely because of climate change. Many southern-based species are moving northwards and some northern species may be declining. Keeping track of these changes is vital to understanding the most pressing ecological issue of our times.

Do please continue to contribute records in 2007 either using the Casual Records form or by other equivalent methods if you prefer. The form is *not* difficult to use but it is probably best to fill it in as you go along rather than letting it become a major chore at the end of the season.

The habitat codes are not essential and not particularly well suited to our area so you can ignore this part of the form if you like.

Grid references are a bugbear for some but the Ordnance Survey maps have instructions for working out a six figure grid reference, though a four figure grid reference (giving the 1km square) would be sufficient for most butterfly records. Do please ask if you would like help with grid references.

The position on data security is dealt with clearly in the small-print paragraph at the top of the form.

The yellow forms are a key source of the information that is at the heart of everything Butterfly Conservation does. Extra forms are of course available on request. Please, please, do use them!

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E-mail DbFIS@aol.com; Tel 01340-871850