

MOUNTAIN RINGLET *Erebia epiphron* (ABH 59.007) UK BAP: Priority Species

This is the UK's only truly montane butterfly species, confined to the Highlands of Scotland and the Cumbrian mountains in England. In our region it occurs mainly in the southern Monadhliaths, the Ben Nevis and Mamores ranges and the Glencoe area.

Distribution trend. Due to the remoteness of its habitats and scarcity of good weather conditions in which to record, this is a difficult species to monitor. However, it is thought to be in decline. A single transect site in the region, at Creag Meagaidh, has recorded Mountain Ringlet since 2003, and numbers have fluctuated widely. Research suggests that the average elevation of surviving colonies has risen by 200 metres over the last 40-50 years, in a manner consistent with a response to climate change. With little suitable habitat and increased exposure above 900 metres, this species is being squeezed into a smaller altitudinal band.

Habitat. Montane grassland, between about 300 and 1000m elevation, generally on base-rich ground and usually with a southerly exposure.

Flight period. Mid-June to early August.

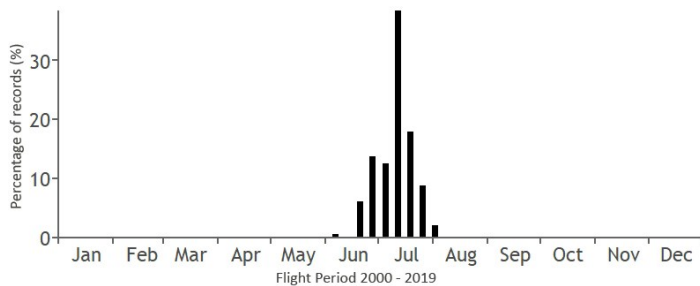
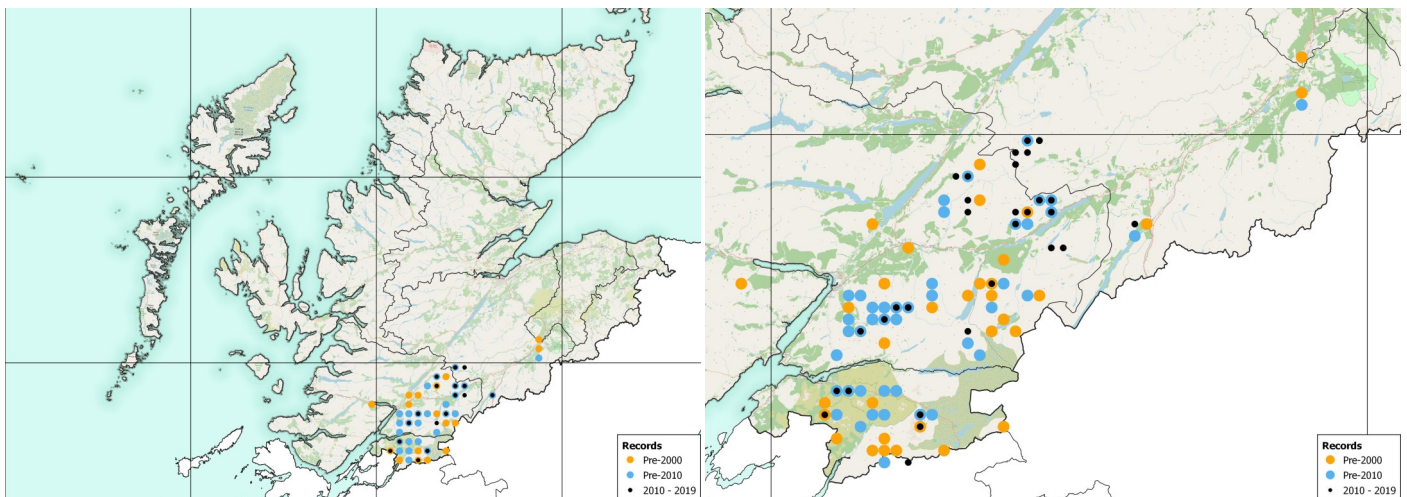
Larval food plant. Mat Grass *Nardus stricta*.

Appearance and behaviour. This butterfly resembles a smaller, duller version of its relative the Scotch Argus. It flies rather strongly in good sunshine, but in overcast cooler conditions, more frequent in its mountain habitat, it settles in the vegetation and is then difficult to find.

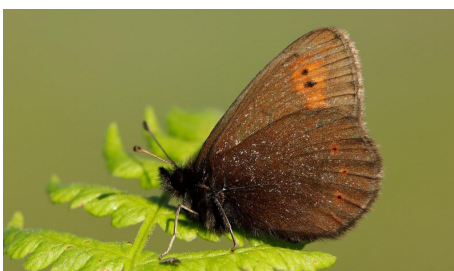


Geoff Ballinger

Left, map at 5KM square resolution, right, map at 2KM square resolution. There are no records from the Northern Isles.



Number of Records	
Pre-2000	97
2000 - 2009	283
2010 - 2019	81



Ian Leach



Peter Eeles



Peter Eeles