

PAINTED LADY *Vanessa cardui* (ABH 59.024)

Numbers of this migratory species are highly variable from year to year. Years of high influx are known as “Painted Lady years”, our most recent being 2019. There are records across the whole of Highland, including offshore Shetland islands and St. Kilda.

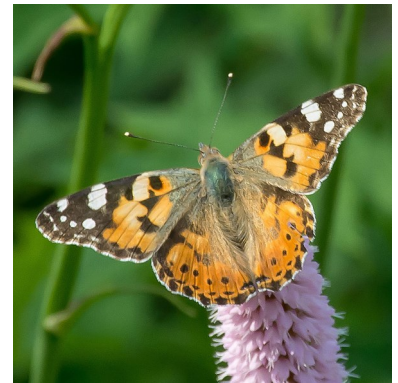
Distribution trend. The 2007 atlas comments on an increase in numbers since the mid-1990s, but the current distribution map shows no significant change from the 2007 atlas.

Habitat. Widespread in open country, often favouring gardens and flower-rich areas of waste ground.

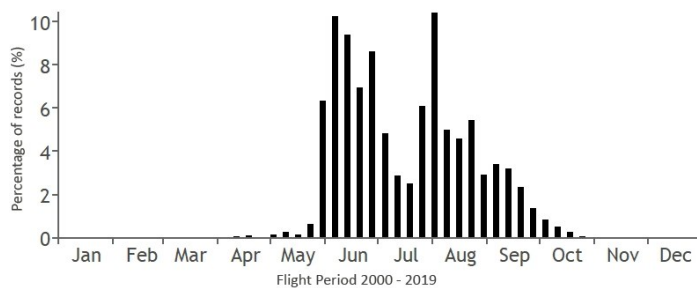
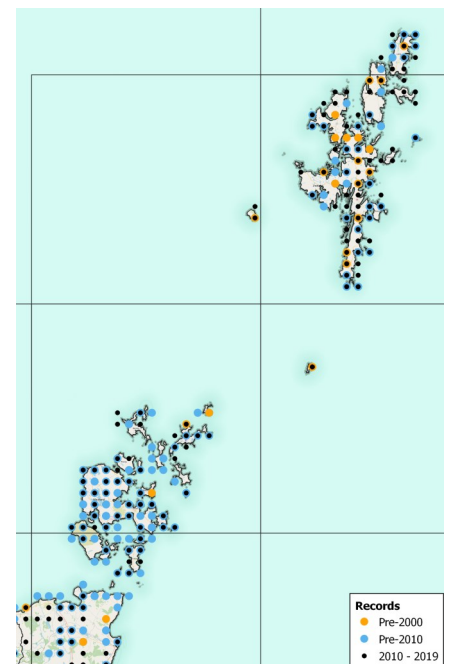
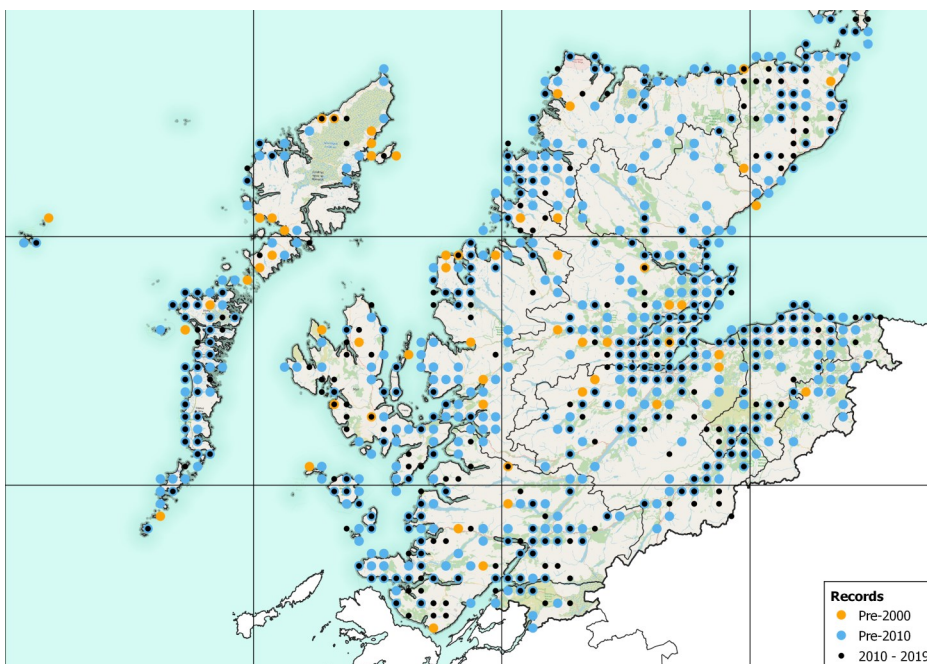
Flight period. The timing of immigration can vary between years. The overall pattern would be of a main migratory influx end of May to mid-July, and a second generation locally-bred mid-July to end of October. Exceptionally recorded in April.

Larval food plants. Thistles *Cirsium vulgare* and *C. palustre*, and Borage *Borago officinalis*.

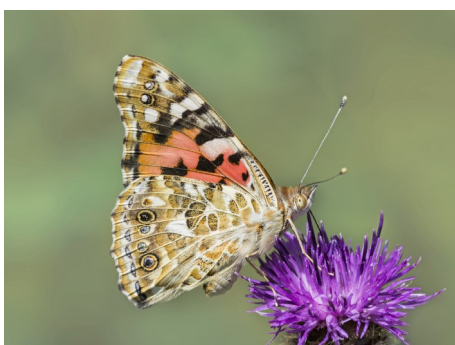
Appearance and behaviour. A distinctive large butterfly with salmon-pink upper side and elaborately patterned underside markings. It is, like the other Vanessid species, sometimes seen at high altitudes on mountains, in the phenomenon known as ‘hill-topping’ which seems to be a feature of the migration or dispersal behaviour.



Michael Taylor



Number of Records	
Pre-2000	741
2000 - 2009	2894
2010 - 2019	2278



Jim Black



Nigel Richards



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