

PEACOCK *Aglais io* (ABH 59.026)

Until the year 2002 this butterfly was no more than a vagrant to this region, appearing as scattered single individuals at irregular intervals. In September 2002 there was a sudden huge influx (presumably migratory, but the origins of the flight are uncertain) to the whole of eastern Inverness-shire and Moray. Since then, the Peacock has been a permanent resident and has extended its distribution into the rest of the region, including the Western Isles and Orkneys, and is a migrant on the Shetlands.

Distribution trend. Since 2002 numbers were good each year in the original influx area. A further major increase and spread occurred in 2006, since when the species has continued to expand its range.

Habitat. A wide range of habitat types is used for breeding, otherwise also on mountains where it sometimes seems to migrate in large numbers.

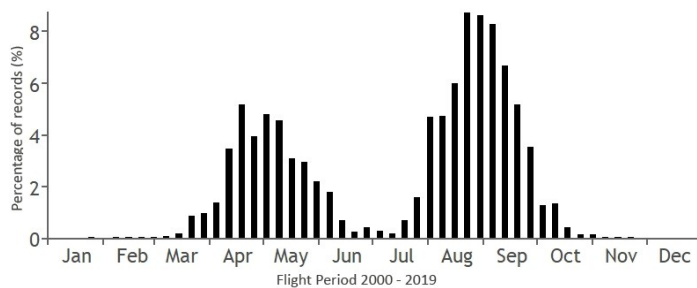
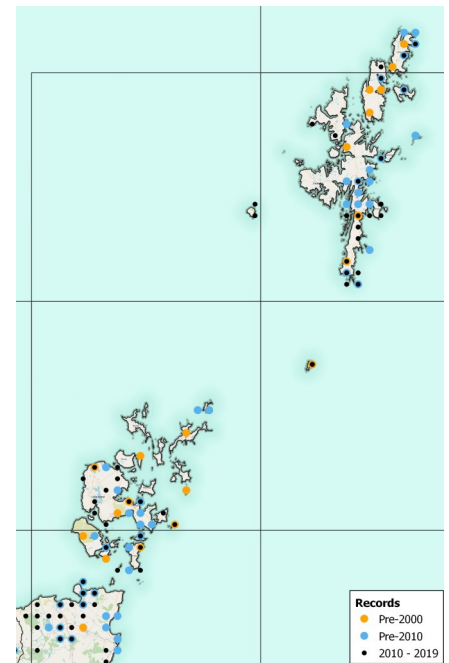
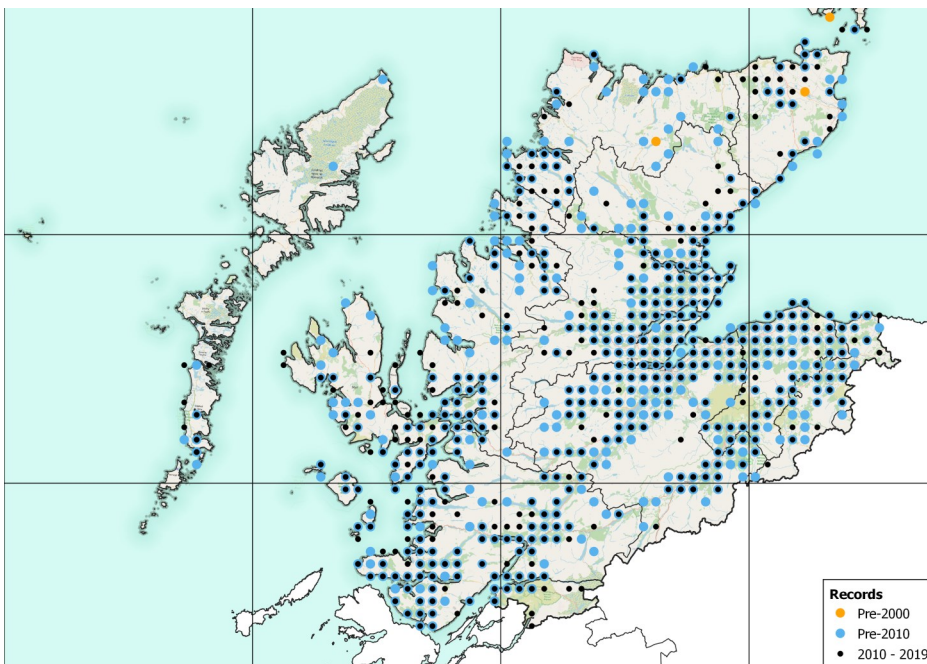
Flight period. Mid-March to end of June, then again early July to end of October (after which it enters hibernation). Increasingly too we are seeing occasional individuals emerging briefly in fine weather during January and February.

Larval food plant. Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*.

Appearance and behaviour. This butterfly with its prominent eyespots on the wings is recognisable even to non-naturalists. Hibernation behaviour has been confirmed here by the finding of butterflies in wood-stacks, sheds and occasionally in houses. In spring often to be seen feeding on sallow catkins in the wider countryside, in autumn more often seen in gardens. The black spiny caterpillars occur on nettles in mid-summer.



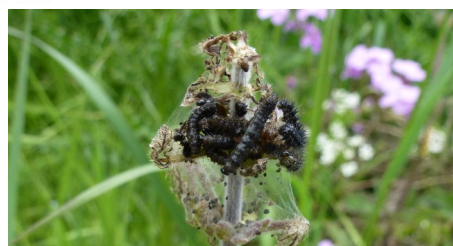
Catriona Matheson



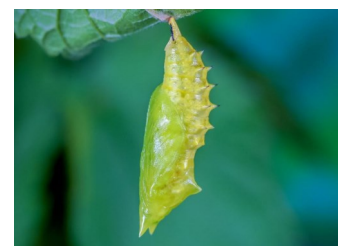
Number of Records	
Pre-2000	137
2000 - 2009	4243
2010 - 2019	3991



Bob Turner



Audrey Turner



Adam Grochowalski