

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION UPPER THAMES BRANCH

GRAYLING REPORT 2016

In 2016 there were 135 individual Grayling reported from the 28 separate records submitted by 13 different recorders. The recorded flight season was from 14 July to 30 August 2016. In contrast in 2015 just 41 individuals were reported from 20 recorded visits, but the reported flight season was much longer – from 1 July to 9 Sept 2015.

22 of the 28 records were for low counts of 5 or less. There were only 5 records of 10 or more. The count of 28 by Jan Haseler from Hundred Acre Piece, Mortimer was by far the highest count. The next highest was 13 at Greenham Common which had all of the other counts of 10 or more.

The 2016 records came from 7 separate sites across Southern Berkshire. The majority of records were from visits to Greenham Common, with a number of sites only having one 'visit' reported. One of the sites is the large 'supersite' owned by the Crown Estate (Swinley Forest) and MoD (Wishmoor /Broadmoor Bottom) between Bracknell and Sandhurst extending from The Look Out and Caesars Camp down to the county boundary along the Wish Stream. That general area included 7 separate locations where Grayling was recorded, and the Grayling appears to be widely distributed across the whole heathland/forestry complex (which has over 1000 hectares in Berkshire, and extends further across into Surrey).

Most records were from sites with predominantly open heath land habitats, with a significant number from areas of commercial plantation forest, typically from areas where tree felling has provided the open sunny 'early successional' habitats favoured by the Grayling.

It is notable that there were no 2016 records from a number of heath land sites, including some nature reserves. It is not easy to tell if this is due to a lack of Grayling butterflies, or a lack of survey visits/recording effort. At least 5 other separate sites were reported in 2015, and the species' general distribution appears to be fairly stable. The low numbers at some sites do suggest that increased survey effort is needed to give a better idea of populations sizes – it would be great to get a few more sites reporting '10+' individuals.

Many thanks to all who look out for this species and submit records or help with habitat management.

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