

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION UPPER THAMES BRANCH

Grizzled Skipper Report 2017

David Hastings



(Photo © David Hastings)



(Photo © Tom Dunbar)

The Grizzled Skipper is a very localised and declining butterfly in Britain; its stronghold is in central southern England. It occurs in discrete colonies in open, sunny but sheltered, unfertilised grassland, woodland rides and glades, and abandoned industrial sites, breeding where the vegetation is sparse and there are patches of bare ground. The best sites occur where there is a mosaic of short and long vegetation. The longer vegetation is for the adults to roost overnight, and the shorter turf is where the larvae feed on rosaceous plants such as Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*), Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*) and Bramble (*Rubus* sp.). There is one generation per year, with adults usually being on the wing from the middle of April to the middle of June. Peak emergence is in mid-May.

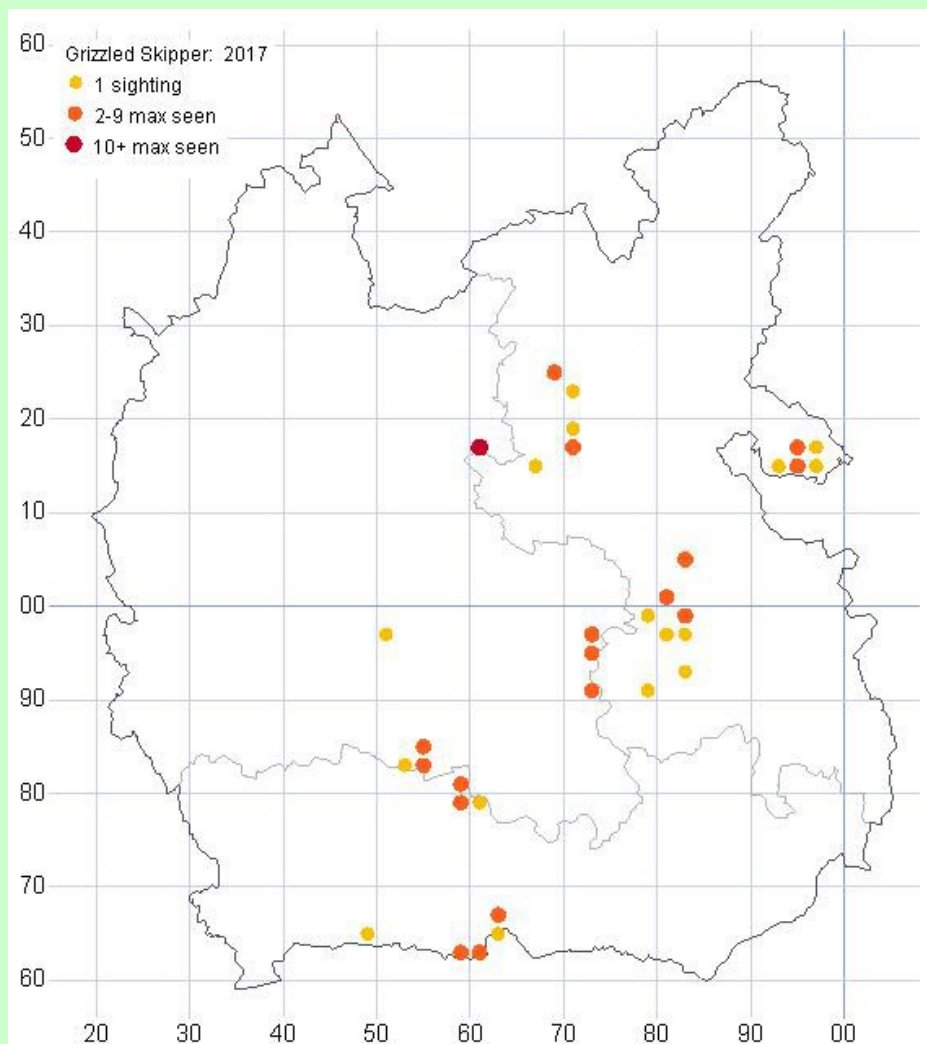
The Grizzled Skipper is quite widely distributed in the Upper Thames region, with sightings reported from Ardley Quarry and Calvert Jubilee in the north, Greenham Common and Upton Nurvet in the south, and the Ivinghoe Beacon complex in the east. The Chilterns north and west of High Wycombe and the Aston Upthorpe/Lardon Chase/Hartslock region on the Berkshire Downs are currently the main sites in the region. It is also thinly but widely spread in the wooded complex between Calvert and Quainton in Buckinghamshire, and the various railway lines that permeate this area.

The Grizzled Skipper flight period started very early in 2017, with the first reported sighting at Incombe Hole, Bucks on April 8th. This was the earliest since 2012. The flight period was quite short, at only 60 days; this was the shortest flight period since 2008. The last sighting was at Paice's Wood, Berks on June 7th.

One hundred and nine reports were received during the season from 37 sites. Most sightings were in the low single figures, but 10 were recorded at St George's Barracks, Arncott, on May 20th, nine at Ardley Quarry on May 10th, and eight at Aston Upthorpe Downs on May 2nd and 21st.

Flight Periods

2002	21st April to 25th June	(66 days)	2010	17th April to 11th July	(86 days)
2003	12th April to 21st June	(71 days)	2011	3rd April to 26th June	(85 days)
2004	27th April to 20th June	(55 days)	2012	25th March to 28th June	(96 days)
2005	29th April to 27th June	(60 days)	2013	30th April to 30th June	(61 days)
2006	27th April to 21st June	(56 days)	2014	10th April to 24th June	(76 days)
2007	14th April to 14th June	(62 days)	2015	15th April to 3rd July	(80 days)
2008	3rd May to 17th June	(46 days)	2016	20th April to 24th June	(66 days)
2009	13th April to 28th June	(77 days)	2017	8th April to 7th June	(60 days)



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