

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION UPPER THAMES BRANCH

Grizzled Skipper Report 2019



Photo by David Hastings

The Grizzled Skipper is a very localised and declining butterfly in 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. 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 but thinly 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 Upton/Lardon Chase/Hartslock region on the Berkshire Downs are currently the main sites in the region. It is also found 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 on time in 2019, with the first sighting being reported at Warren Bank BBOWT reserve and Incombe Hole on April 17th. As is usual with this species, sightings were generally in single figures. Exceptions were twenty at Incombe Hole on April 21st, eleven at MoD Arncott and twenty at Paice's Wood on May 19th, and thirteen at Ivinghoe Beacon on May 21st. The last reported sighting was at Incombe Hole on July 5th. The flight period lasted 80 days, which equalled the 2015 figure.

There were 234 sightings reported. Thanks to all those who submitted their records.

Between 2005 and 2014 there were Grizzled Skipper records from SU35, SU37, SU38 and SP41 in the west, and SU87, SU99, SP81 and SP90 in the east. There have been no records from these 10K squares since. It would be helpful if the appropriate 10K Square champions could make an effort to search their patch for Grizzled Skippers in this and subsequent years.

Flight Periods

2002	21st April to 25th June	(66 days)	2011	3rd April to 26th June	(85 days)
2003	12th April to 21st June	(71 days)	2012	25th March to 28th June	(96 days)
2004	27th April to 20th June	(55 days)	2013	30th April to 30th June	(61 days)
2005	29th April to 27th June	(60 days)	2014	10th April to 24th June	(76 days)
2006	27th April to 21st June	(56 days)	2015	15th April to 3rd July	(80 days)
2007	14th April to 14th June	(62 days)	2016	20th April to 24th June	(66 days)
2008	3rd May to 17th June	(46 days)	2017	8th April to 7th June	(60 days)
2009	13th April to 28th June	(77 days)	2018	3 rd May to 15 th June	(44 days)
2010	17th April to 11th July	(86 days)	2019	17 th April to 7 th July	(80 days)

