

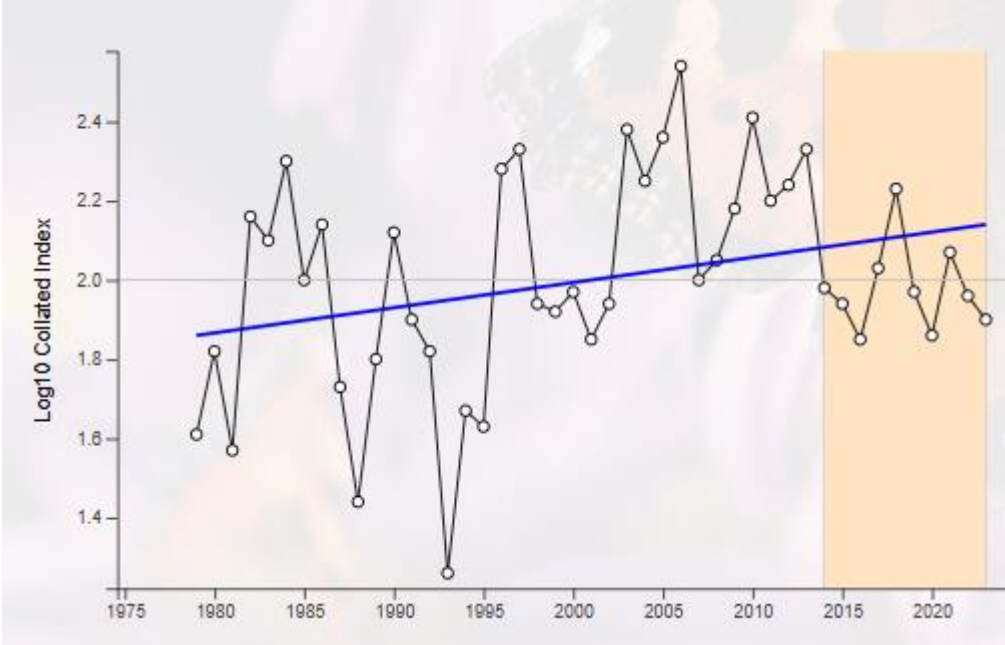
# BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION UPPER THAMES BRANCH

## Adonis Blue – 2024

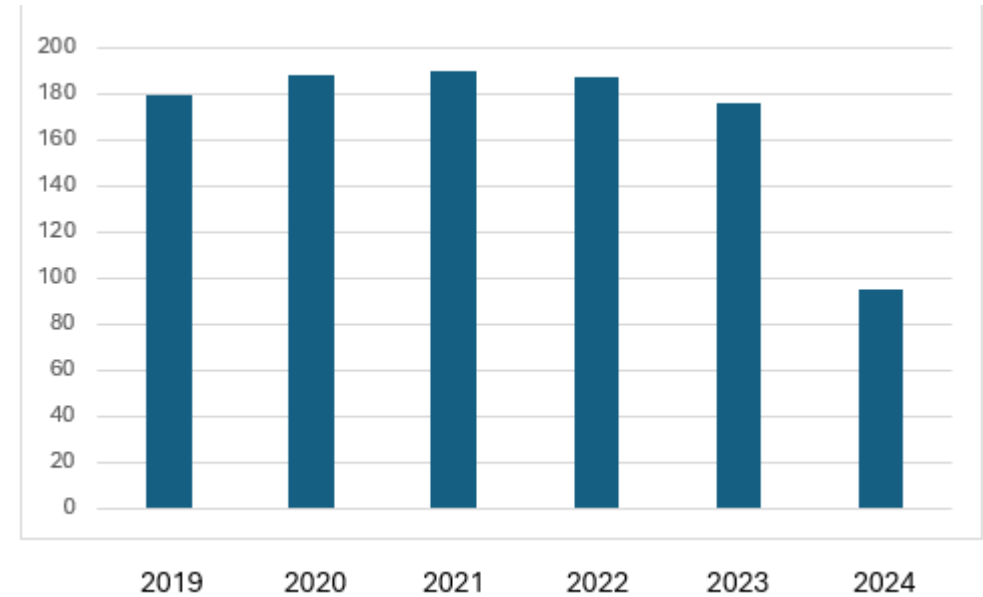
The latest national statistics show the status of Adonis Blue as follows:

- since 1979 *Rapid increase* with a change of 89.2% since monitoring began for this species
- over the last 20 years, *Rapid decline* with a change of -60.8%
- over the last 10 years, *Stable* with a change of -3.1%

***This chart shows the index of abundance (LCI = Log Collated Index) over time.***

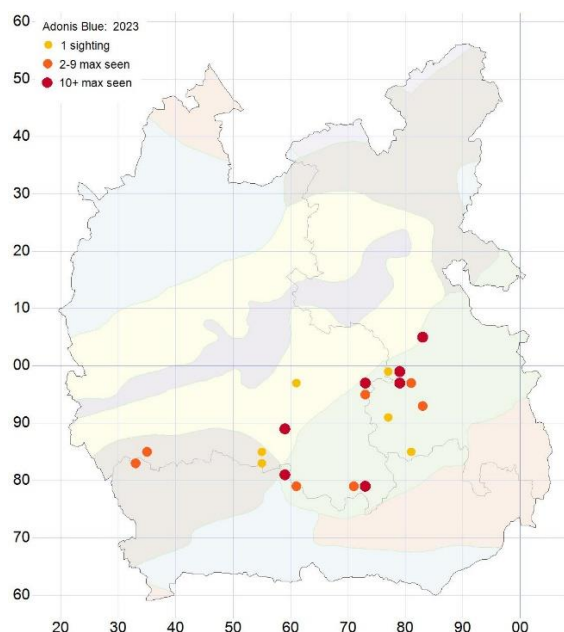


However, in common with many other butterflies this year in the UTB area, Adonis Blue showed a massive decline in both the number of records (chart below) and the number of individuals recorded. The number of records halved in 2024 probably due to the difficulty in finding suitable weather in which to make survey visits.

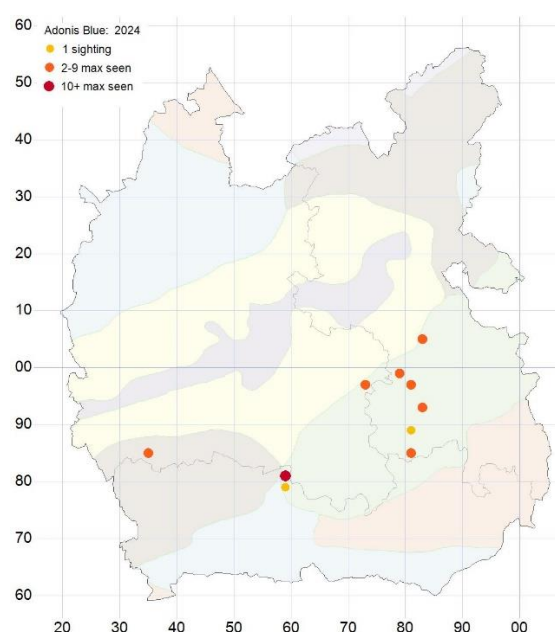


***Number of Records – Adonis Blue 2019 – 2024***

The number of individuals recorded reflected both the drop in records and the poor weather experienced during the season. Sightings were noticeably fewer, as can be seen from the maps below, and a number of sites appear to have been lost. Checking in 2025 will attempt to confirm their status.

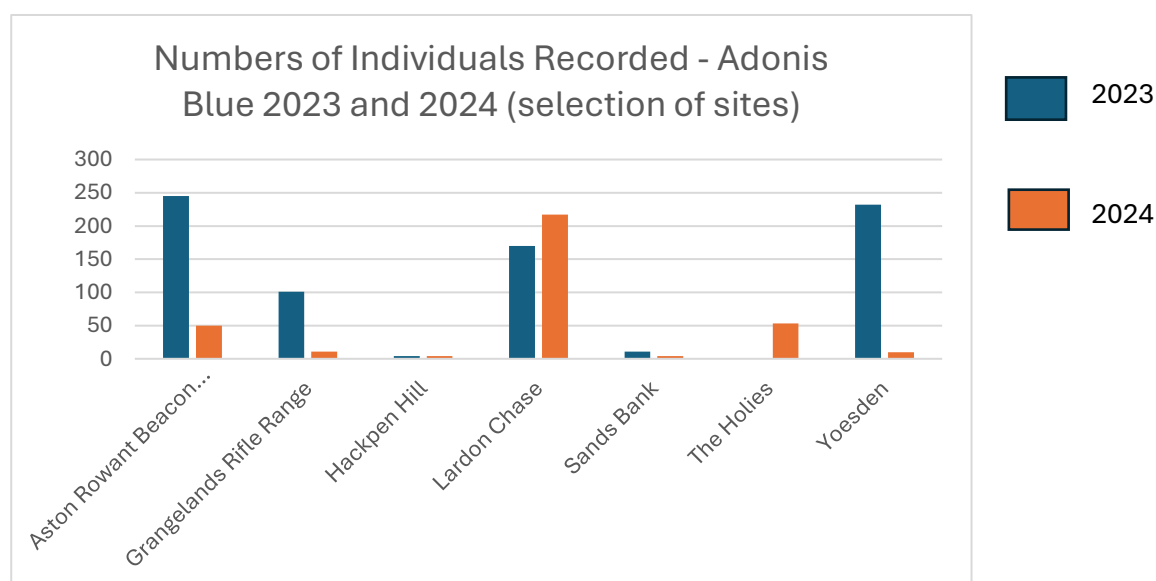


**Sightings – Adonis Blue 2023**



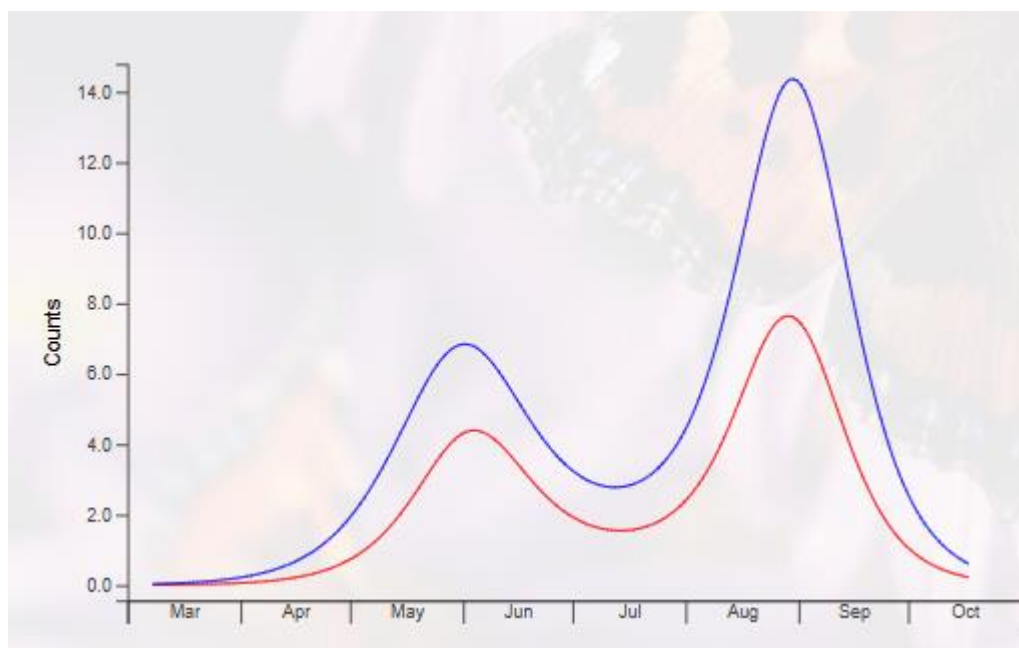
**Sightings – Adonis Blue 2024**

Numbers of individuals recorded at most sites were fewer, particularly in the more northerly sites where numbers have been growing strongly in the past few years, such as Granglands and the Rifle Range, Aston Rowant and Yoesden. As can be seen from the chart below, numbers dropped significantly at these sites whilst remaining higher or increasing at Lardon Chase and the Holies. Colonies persist in low numbers at other sites such as Hackpen Hill in the far west of the UBT area (4 individuals in each year) and Sands Bank in the east (11 in 2023 and 4 in 2024).



National Emergence Data – Average Number of Adonis Butterflies on Transects – shown below, reveals little difference in the timings of emergence since 1976. This is reflected in the first and last sightings reports from the UTB area. In 2024, the first sighting nationally was at Denbies Hillside in Surrey on 15<sup>th</sup> May (UTB – Lardon Chase 17<sup>th</sup> May); of the second brood, 25<sup>th</sup> July in Duffryn, S Wales (UTB – 30<sup>th</sup> July at Lardon Chase); and the

last record nationally was on 5<sup>th</sup> October in East Kent (UTB – 24<sup>th</sup> September at Sands Bank). The highest number recorded in a single visit was 39 in the first brood at The Holies, and 30 in the second brood at Lardon Chase.



**Emergence Adonis Blue** ( — = Average counts 2024; — = Average counts since 1976)

We are grateful for careful management by both private and public/charitable landowners who look after sites where Adonis Blue can be found. Closer monitoring of the sward characteristics and grazing regimes may become more necessary if numbers remain low and to prevent the loss of colonies in the future.

With thanks to those who have submitted records of Adonis Blue from across our region.

**Margery Slatter**

**April 2025**