

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION UPPER THAMES BRANCH

Dark Green Fritillary Report 2018

The Dark Green Fritillary had an excellent year in its main strongholds, and many sightings were reported away from regular sites. There are a few caveats, however, as some sites which have recently produced higher than average numbers had few records in 2018.

As usual, Ivinghoe Beacon produced the most reports and largest numbers seen per visit, and also gave the earliest sighting where Sarah Chatterley saw one on June 6th at Incombe Hole. Many reports came from Aston Rowant NNR, and counts from Ivinghoe and Aston Rowant peaked in the thirties in the first week in July. A remarkable count of 15 was reported by Michael McNeill at an Oxfordshire site close to Mapledurham.

Buttlers Hanging and Bradenham had a poor showing in 2018, but did get reports from the Gomm Valley and at last a reliable report from our reserve at Holtspur Bottom after a number of years absence in that area.

The situation in Berkshire changed in 2018. Normally few sightings get reported, possibly due to the isolation of some of the breeding areas. I have not visited any Berkshire site, but reports arrived from Bowdown Woods and Greenham Common. South-west Oxfordshire sites close to the Berkshire border are Uffington Castle, Hackpen Hill and the Punchbowl, and Oven Bottom.

There are normally sporadic reports from a number of sites in the north-west of our counties but other than sightings at Sydlings Copse, Bruern Wood and Calvert Jubilee, there were no others reported. Peter Cuss managed to find one or two in Wytham Woods west of Oxford. Calvert Jubilee has produced reasonable numbers in recent years but a dearth of records arrived at the database, but this may be an oversight.

I was expecting the reports from Incombe Hole and Grangelands on August 6th to be the last of the year, but a very late record came from Swyncombe Downs on September 27th. Was this for real? We would have liked photographic evidence to prove that this species was flying on such a late date. There is a possibility that there was at least a partial second brood.

Ched George