

# BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION UPPER THAMES BRANCH

## DINGY SKIPPER REPORT – 2007

**Dave Wilton**



*Photo © Dave Wilton*

**The first Dinky Skipper sighting nationally was on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2007 in Kent. Within the UTB area the first was seen on 14<sup>th</sup> April at Grangelands, Bucks which was more than two weeks earlier than our first record in 2006. Sightings at other locations in the Chilterns followed very quickly but colonies on the Oxford Clay didn't get going for another week. The first record at my local site, along a disused railway cutting in Westcott, Bucks, was on 21<sup>st</sup> April and peak numbers (20+) had been reached there by 28<sup>th</sup> April. This level was sustained until at least 18<sup>th</sup> May and the last sighting was of three individuals on 10<sup>th</sup> June. I'm not aware of sightings anywhere else beyond 12<sup>th</sup> June.**

Due to my own lack of mobility during the main flight period I have few personal records on which to base an opinion, but anecdotal evidence points to the species having done quite well this year as it was seen in good numbers at sites in Bucks (e.g. Buttler's Hangings and Ivinghoe Beacon), Berks (Seven Barrows and Crog Hill) & Oxon (Hartslock) which traditionally have strong colonies. At least two new small colonies were discovered. One was at Moor Copse, Berks in a part of the BBOWT reserve's new extension known as "Corner Field" (SU 6473), where a single example was noted by Jan Haseler on 29<sup>th</sup> April. The other was at Arcott, Oxon on MoD and HM Prison Service land. During a group search of the area on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, nine were found in MoD area B73 (one in SP6016 and eight in SP6216) while another was seen in the grounds of Bullingdon Prison (SP6217).

Unusually, although not entirely unexpected due to the excellent weather conditions in April and early May, a partial second brood began flying at a handful of Chilterns sites towards the end of July. The first sightings were of five at Hartslock, Oxon on 24<sup>th</sup> July, two days after the first national record that I'm aware of, which was again from Kent. There was no sign of a second brood on any of the Oxford Clay sites local to me.

While moth trapping after dark at my local disused railway cutting site on 12<sup>th</sup> May a Dingy Skipper came to the actinic light, probably because it was roosting very adjacent to the spot at which I'd chosen to locate the trap. The following day remained dull, enabling me to get some decent close-up pictures of it in the unusual roosting posture adopted by the species, shown below.



*Photo © Dave Wilton*

**Dave Wilton, September 2007**