

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION UPPER THAMES BRANCH

Purple Emperor (*A. iris*) Report for 2013

Dennis Dell



Photo © Ian Alston



Photo © David Hastings

Acknowledgements

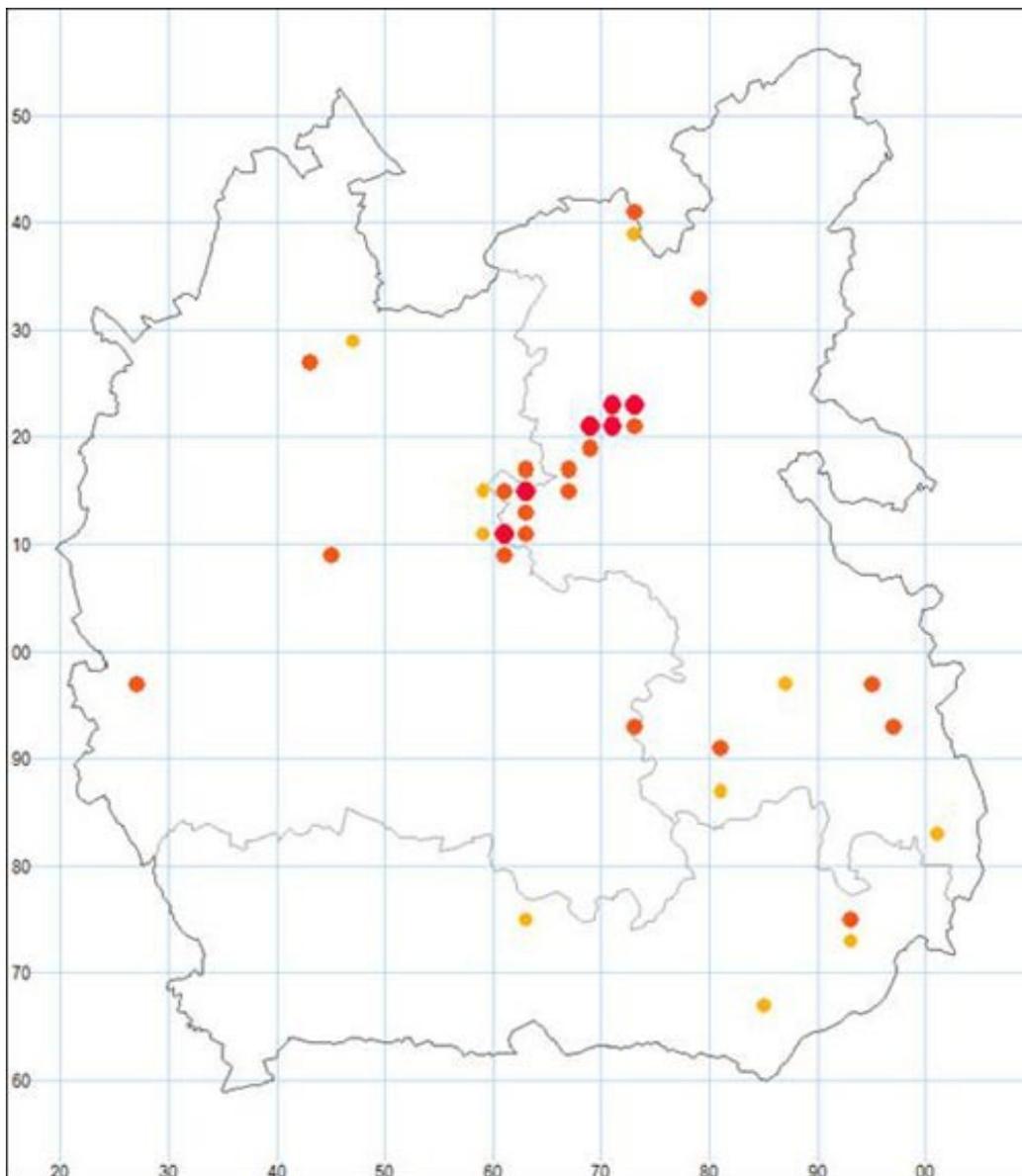
Thank you all once again for sending me your sightings. The Appendix indicates the recorders, not all members, who contributed to this report. I often don't receive all sightings directly, so I am indebted, as usual, to those of you who have passed on observations of third parties. Although one should not single out particular members, I must nevertheless mention the efforts of Wendy and Mick Campbell who, once again, sent by far the most records and explored potential habitats during the winter and were rewarded with a new location in north Oxfordshire, a previously '*iris* poor' area.

1. Introduction

The details of the individual observations are in the Appendix and the difficulty of recording numbers of individuals is always with us, so that the numbers given here can only be used as an approximation, but is still useful for comparing trends from year to year. In this respect, I have also divided the number of sightings by the number of visits, because I believe this will allow a better year on year comparison [see diagram below]. To illustrate this approach with a fictitious example: on the 17th of July, Fred, Marion, and Felicity visited Finemere Wood, quite independently, at different times of the day. They recorded 10, 8, and 12 PEs respectively. I note these individual records and I also divide the total by three and record 10 as the average number of sightings for that day and that wood.

2. Summary

- The sightings, at **490 (35 x 2km squares)**, were even better than the bumper year of 2010 (393).
- 9 new habitats were found.
- Territorial behaviour was rare this year.
- It was a late season, not starting properly until July 8th.
- The last sighting was on August 21st.



A. iris distribution 2013 (data from Levana with acknowledgement to Jim Asher)

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Weather 2013

The larvae emerge from hibernation and start feeding when the Sallow buds open, the latter being determined by the weather in March. The cold March delayed this process until about mid April [normally, buds open at the beginning of April].

The continuing below-average spring temperatures slowed the larval development and this resulted in the late emergence of the adult, which did not get going properly until about July 8th, which is almost two weeks later than average.

March: This was one of the coldest Marches in the historical series, dominated by easterly winds, with high pressure often to the north blocking the milder Atlantic air. It was especially cold during the second half of the month. There were some spells of rain and substantial late-season snowfalls in certain areas between the 6th and the 27th, but also a lot of cold, dry weather. Many overcast days led to sunshine totals being well below average in eastern and south-eastern areas.

April: The cold dry weather of late March continued into the first few days of April. Temperatures did return to near the seasonal average as the month progressed, as the persistent easterly winds finally gave way to winds from a westerly or southerly quarter around 11th. Temperatures rose as high as 23°C in some eastern areas on 25th, but it then became rather chillier once again, especially at night with some late-season frosts occurring quite widely on 29th and 30th.

May: The cool theme which characterised spring continued into May, with temperatures somewhat below average for much of the month. Winds were often from a northerly direction, although there were a few warmer days in some areas. It was also unsettled at times, particularly in northern and western areas; the 14th was particularly wet over much of England and Wales. In between the unsettled spells there was some pleasant spring sunshine.

June: June began settled and quite sunny in most areas with high pressure established over the UK, though temperatures barely exceeded their seasonal averages over England. After the 9th it became rather more unsettled and cooler. A muggy and humid spell over the south for a time after mid-month made for locally very warm conditions in any sunshine. The latter part of the month was again mainly settled and fine, especially over England, but again barely warmer than the seasonal average. June overall was a rather cool month over England and Wales, especially towards the south-east, although western parts of Scotland and Northern Ireland were slightly warmer than average. Rainfall was mostly below normal except in Northern Ireland. Some western areas were rather sunny.

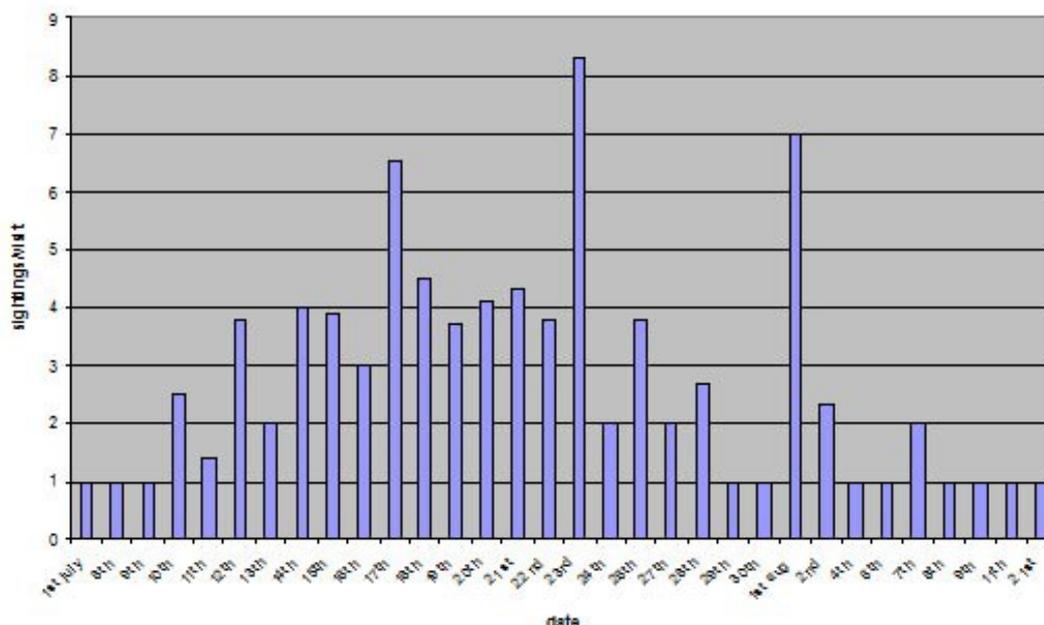
July: Much of July was settled with high pressure established over the UK and with plenty of sunshine in most areas. As the month progressed there was an increasing tendency for high daytime temperatures, exceeding 28°C somewhere in the UK on 19 consecutive days from 6th to 24th, with values exceeding 30°C on several days. This was the UK's most notable summer heat wave since 2006. The UK overall had a rather dry month compared to normal, with nearly all of the month's rain falling during the last ten days, often as thundery outbreaks.

August: The month opened with some unsettled weather, but a southerly feed of hot and humid air led to very high temperatures across South East England on the 1st, giving the highest temperatures of the year so far. Many areas received plenty of showery rain over the first few days of August, with some persistent heavy rain and torrential downpours in Wales on the 4th. The rest of the month saw generally quieter weather, with temperatures near average. Frontal systems brought rain at times, mainly to the north-west, but there was also plenty of fine, sunny weather, particularly in the south and east. The main exception was Saturday 24 August when 30-50mm of rain fell across parts of eastern England, with torrential downpours causing flash flooding in Essex.

3.2 Sightings

The y-axis of the diagram below denotes the ratio of sightings to number of visits on each date, this being a more realistic representation of the abundance/date correlation than obtained by simply plotting the total sightings against date. Most sightings were made between the 11th and 23rd of July, which is about one week later than the normal peak period. The spike on August 1st may well have been due to the fact that this was the hottest and sunniest day of the month, with temperatures above 30 degrees in most regions. Thereafter, August weather was normal. After August 1st, small numbers were seen every day until the 11th; subsequently, none were seen until 21st August, when one was seen by more than one observer in Homefield Wood. The flight season, at 7 weeks, was rather longer than usual.

A. iris 2013 sightings



3.3 Territories [male assembly areas]

- Bernwood Forest [includes Oakley, Shabbington, Yorks Woods and Hell Coppice]**
 It is very interesting to note changes over long periods. Thirty to forty years ago, the Oaks surrounding the old car park at Hell Coppice were very clearly an assembly point; this has been no longer the case for at least 10 years. Up to a few years ago, we had the strong impression that the Oakley Wood car park, the highest point in this large forest, was a territory. However, although we can rely on always seeing males here, they are usually flying quite low around the car park and not settling high up, or fighting in the Oaks in any numbers. There appears to be no distinct territory in this forest, although it is so large, we may still have missed it.
- Piddington Wood**
 The south east corner of the wood is an established territory, with many observations recorded here.
- Little Wood**
 Significant thinning work was carried out during the winter. The territory along the top edge was occupied again, but not as many observations were made here as in previous years. The focal point for the population this year was the south-west facing edge lower down the slope.
- Waterperry Wood**
 Recent years have seen males congregating around a group of trees a few hundred yards from the northern edge, where two tracks meet. This is not a high point, and it is not obvious why this spot is so popular, except that there are several big Sallows.

3.4 'New' habitats

Nine new habitats were reported in 2013.

- Stratfield, Bracknell, Berks, private garden:**
 This is not far from Swinley Forest which is a known habitat, or Wildmoor Heath BBOWT reserve where a sighting was made for the first time.
- Private Woodland between Faringdon and Lechlade, west Oxfordshire:**
 This wood was visited three times in July by the same observer and he saw one/two specimens on each occasion.
- Queen Wood, Christmas Common, Bucks:**
 Another new Chilterns locality.
- Private wood in mid Bucks:**
 This was to be expected, because iris is seen in the other woods on this private estate.
- Worton Wood, north Oxfordshire:**
 This small wood is very isolated; there are no other woods anywhere nearby.
- Woods surrounding Old Amersham Crematorium, Bucks.**

- **Moor Copse/Park Wood Berks:** this is a BBOWT reserve.
- **Great Kingshill, Bucks:**
One specimen was seen settled on the ground in the middle of the village. Another new Chilterns sighting.
- **North Aston, north Oxfordshire:**
A male was photographed on the ground in a tree nursery. The nearest wood is Worton Wood [above] which is about 5km to the west. This is the furthest from any wood that we have ever seen *iris*.

3.5 Noteworthy Events and Comments

- The numbers which were seen during the middle two weeks of July were unprecedented. Between the 14th and 23rd of July, double figures were seen in five woods, on 11 occasions, with 30 in a private mid-Bucks wood on two occasions, 6 days apart, and 19 and 15 in Little Wood on two occasions.
- In Little Wood on July 17th, Mick Campbell watched 6 males pursuing a female up in the Oaks.
- On the same day, Steve Croxford and Dennis Dell were buzzed by a male as they parked their car, several hundred metres from a wood. This male then flew off, further away from this wood.
- July 17th was an extraordinary day. 76 sightings were made in 12 different woods.
- The first sighting was on July 1st, and then none were seen, despite members looking every day from then on, until July 8th, when the numbers started to pick up.
- On 18th July in Wytham Wood, an *ab. lugenda* was seen; the first time we have had a report of an aberration in our region.
- On August 1st, 4 females were seen at a knothole on an Oak trunk in Rushbeds wood, presumably feeding on sap, or some other secretion. On subsequent days, this spot was revisited and between 1 and 3 females were seen there until August 6th.
- Very little territorial activity noticed this season [i.e. males assembling and jousting around the tops of trees].

4. Conclusions

2013 was the best season since we have been keeping detailed records [from 2003], with nearly 500 sightings, all the more remarkable since the start was so late [July 8th]. The enthusiasm of our members has allowed us to note new habitats every year. A distribution map produced by Jim Asher covering the last 10 years shows records covering 110 tetrads.

Dennis Dell

November 2013

APPENDIX: Details of A. Iris Sightings in the UTB area during 2013

(Red denotes a new habitat)

DATE	OBSERVER	LOCATION ^a grid reference	MICRO-LOCATION ^b grid reference	NUMBER SEEN AND SEX ^c	TIME ^d	WEATHER CONDITIONS	BEHAVIOUR ^e and comments
1.7	Tony Croft	Rushbeds Wood	SP667155	1	13.45 to 14.00	18 degrees overcast	Two brief gliding flights at the top of an ash tree from the second of which disappearing into an adjacent oak.
8.7	Wendy and Mic k Campbell	Piddington Wood	SP6316	1		ideal	At the edge of the Piddington Wood meadow ("Oates' Corner") we stood watching the oak & ash territory. After 10 minutes a Purple Emperor took off from the top of the main oak tree and was just starting its glide when a huge gust of wind caught it and blew it out of sight We waited for another 5 minutes but no further sightings. We moved on to Little Wood and watched both sides of the main territory ashes for 30 minutes but no activity there yet.
9.7.	Jeremy Sammes	Chalfont St Peter	TQ 014 899	1	3.15pm	Sunny	I looked out of a bedroom window and saw this large dark brown butterfly dropping down swiftly from a high tree, with markedly erratic flight, sweeping across a patch of lawn quite quickly before sailing over the rooftop and out of sight. By the time I arrived outside it was long gone and didn't reappear whilst I stayed put for 5 minutes or so.

10.7	Wendy and Mick Campbell	Bernwood Forest	SP627107 Shabbington Turning Circle	2	14.10	started sunny but became cloudy	The first PE flew from ground/near ground almost vertically up and over the top of a tall fir tree & disappeared after a brief glide. We watched for about another 10-15 minutes before HE reappeared, this time with a second PE. There was a short aerial skirmish before they split up. One headed for us and did a quick loop around our heads before returning to his territory in the top of the fir tree, the 2nd one flew along the top of the row of fir trees and disappeared from view at the far end.
10.7	Dave Law	Finemere Wood		3M	12.00 to 13.30	sunny, 28 degrees	On the main ride from the sign board 2 males were grounded feeding on dog faeces and a banana skin and further up the ride; just before the cattle enclosure [turning circle] I was circled by another male
11.7	Wendy and Mick Campbell	Little Wood	main territory at top of wood	3M		ideal	two in Ashes, one in Oak
11.7	Wendy and Mick Campbell	Stanton Little Wood		1		ideal	flying along track and then into wood
11.7	Steve Croxford	Finemere Wood	SP719218 new glade created last year	1M		ideal	circled me several times
11.7	Steve Croxford	Romer Wood	SP714232	1M		ideal	looked to settle on track before moving off
11.7	Becky Woodell	Oakley Wood		1M			Mainly flying close to the ground around a black plastic bag which probably contained dog faeces somewhere between the first intersection from the car park and the big fenced meadow area.

12.7	Dave Cleal	Homefield Wood	SU814867	2	14.15	ideal	flew around us and alighted on a young oak at about eye level, opened it's wings sufficiently to see the purple sheen, then flew tightly around us almost as though it was going to land on me before flying quickly off into the wood in a southerly direction. It or another, was viewed briefly another 200yds down the track.
12.7	Ewan Urquhart	Bernwood Forest		3			one on track ,2 in oaks
12.7	Wendy and Mick Campbell	Oakley Wood Waterperry Wood	SP6111 SP6009	7 3		ideal	None of the <i>iris</i> were in territories or grounded today, all seen flying above tracks or heading off into the trees, so perhaps newly emerged and just scouting around for a territory or a female. All were males apart from the last one, a female low to the ground, examining a couple of dogs then away!
12.7	Richard Soulsby	Wytham Wood	SP458084 and SP462087	2, 1M			1. a fresh male settled and then flying at about 12:00 for about 5 mins at the 'Swiss chalet' (SP458084) 2. another PE at about 12:15, seen flying first high up, then down at ride level (but didn't settle), at about SP462087 - couldn't tell whether it was M or F. The weather was hot and sunny when they were seen - earlier it had been overcast and chilly in the wood.
12.7	Dennis Dell and Steve Croxford	Finemere Wood	at southern end of main track	1	13.30 to 14.30	ideal	Seen briefly flying at top of Oak
13.7	Mark Griffiths, Andy Hoskins, Gavin Bennett: independantly	Bernwood Forest		4			2 near Oakley car park

13.7	Dennis Dell	Oakley and Shabbington Woods	all along main track to Shabbington turning circle	6	9 to 11 am	21 degrees, sunny	first seen in Oakley car park at 9.10. Only one down on ride, the rest Oak edging and ride skimming
13.7	Andy Hoskins	Oakley Wood	SP616117	1	11.00	hot [29 degrees] and sunny	flew along main ride and swooped up to the top of a pine tree on the south side of the ride
13.7	David Hastings	Bernwood Forest	SP615111	1M	11:00	Sunny and hot	One male was taking minerals from the ground
13.7	David Hastings	Bernwood Forest	SP611116	2M	12:00	Sunny and hot	Two males were taking minerals from the ground, and also flying up into trees. One was observed feeding on honeydew.
13.7	Mick Campbell	Rushbeds Wood	SP6615	1	16.45	ideal	Flying above big ashes, half way along ride between car park & crossroads in middle of wood, approx. 4.45pm (in 3 hours of searching).
14.7	Andy Hoskins,	Finemere Wood	SP720215	1M	16.00	hot [29 degrees] and sunny	1 x Flew down the length of the main ride (between the 2 wildlife notice boards) and landed, after circling me a couple of times, on the main path 10 yards up from the first notice-board. It appeared to be tasting the crushed creeping buttercups.
14.7	Andy Hoskins, Chris Botterill	Oakley Wood	SP611116 SP611115	4M	10.55-11.30	hot [29 degrees] and sunny	one landed on the lower branches of a tree by car park footpath entrance; one on footpath along from car park, on dog faeces; one at the side of the path just before the pond; one 15' up on Ash along main ride

14.7	Wendy and Mick Campbell	Romer Wood	see under behaviour	11	12.00 to 15.00	28 degrees	<p>3 x male PE @ SP71375-23141, 12.30pm, half way along main ride near sallows (large pile of scalpings there which seemed to be attracting them). Flying around us and landing frequently; one male shared our Cranberry juice!</p> <p>3 x male PE @ SP71472-22964, 1.15pm, further along main track, flying & clashing above tall firs, ashes & oaks.</p> <p>2 x male PE @ SP71493-22777, 1.30pm, flying & clashing above tall firs at top of wood (go through gate & stand in field).</p> <p>On our way back (at 2.15pm), the scalpings pile was still pulling them in and we counted another 3 iris, flying low over the track, grounding and landing low down in sallows & oaks. At one point all 3 were grounded together. We haven't added them to our total as they could have been the same 3 we saw earlier ... but I doubt it.</p> <p>The grand finale occurred at the Poplar tree territory (we hadn't seen any in this territory earlier on).</p> <p>3 x PE, 2 males & 1 female @ SP71344-23231, 2.30pm. One of the males was engaged in a slow pursuit of the much bigger female, as she flapped slowly around the tree tops. After about 3 minutes of slow chasing they disappeared into the top of one of the Poplars and didn't reappear - we assume they were</p>
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							engaged in private matters!
14.7	Steve Croxford	Rushbeds Wood		1M, 1F	am	ideal	male flew past me slowly along the main ride. 10 minutes later another presumed female glided past me. Both seen near crossroads
14.7	Oliver Fox	private wood between Faringdon and Lechlade, west Oxon.		2M	11-12		
15.7	Becky Woodell	Whitecross Green Wood SP6014		1M	9.30		in car park.
15.7	Nick Board	Leckhampstead Wood (private) SP726405		2			both high up in flight; one in middle of wood, the other along the eastern bridleway.
15.7	Lee Evans	Finemere Wood SP7222	main ride	4M 2F	0700 to 1200	ideal	
15.7	Dennis Dell, Steve Croxford, Tim Read [BBOWT]	Finemere Wood SP7222	main ride right through to top of wood	9	10..to 1300	ideal	<p>As soon as we stepped out of the BBOWT jeep by the wood entrance at 10 am, an iris alighted on the ground by the front wheels: we knew we were in for a good morning!</p> <p>In 45 minutes, between the entrance and just before the turning circle, 9 individuals were seen, mostly flying at low level and landing. Some activity in the big Sallows was noted, as well as an elegant flight across the tops of the corsican pines. We walked up to the top of the wood opposite Finemere Hill House, where the Ashes have been used as territories in past years. Nothing was seen, apart from a fleeting glimpse, which could</p>

							not be confirmed. On our return along the main track, between 12.15 and 12.45, another four sightings were made including a male [photo], which had alighted a few feet from the ground on a hazel bush in complete shade, with his wings open
15.7	Steven Falk	Windsor forest	Higstanding hill Woods SU931741	2			
15.7	Steve Croxford	Greatsea and Romer Woods		6			1 x PE SP71472281 male at gated entrance to the wood 1 x PE SP71452298 half way down track probable male 3 x PE SP71372314 at the track low point near junction with main ride. One definite male on ground, 2 probable males 1 x PE SP71352321 near tall ash territory, definite male
15.7	tom dunbar	bernwood and waterperry	SP606092	1			
16.7	visitor's book	whitecross green wood SP6014		2			
16.7	steve croxford	finemere wood	SP7222	5	10.00		four males in the ground within a couple of feet of each other. Another male was also buzzing me over head so a definite 5 individuals. Near top of track
16.7	Oliver Fox	private wood between Faringdon and		1M	08.30		

		Lechlade, west Oxon.					
16.7	wendy and mick campbell	runt's wood	SP7323	3	11.30 to 12.45	ideal	<p>1 x PE female @ SP72644-23465, 11.30am -</p> <p>flew within 3 feet, very low along the track then over a low hedge and disappeared across a meadow away from the wood.</p> <p>1 x PE probable male @ SP72512-23308 @ 11.45am, seen flying above us through the canopy.</p> <p>1 x PE male @ SP72469-22683 @ 12.45pm, seen flying around in the lower branches of a big oak situated on its own in a field bordering the wood. He scouted around the tree for a short time before settling and feeding on a sap run on a lower branch. He stayed there for about 5 minutes.</p>
16.7	david fearn	Oakley wood	SP6111	5	8.45 to 11.45	ideal	<p>1st sighting @ 09.10 1 flying at head height along gravel path left at 1st crossroads, then settling on gravel; another at top of oak on corner of 1st crossroads; one more in Sallows between car park and 1st crossroads; then 2 more at head-height in oak in front of car in car park, then seen together feeding on bleached dog faeces in car park, 11.15 until departure</p>
16.7	martin kincaid	college wood	SP792331	2M	15.15		<p>They were duelling over tall oaks well into the wood (SP 792331). I spotted them at around 3.15pm.</p>

17.7	tom dunbar	greatsea	SP715228	2			
17.7	tom dunbar	finemere wood		7			
17.7	mick campbell	waterperry wood	SP6009 and SP 608098	7		ideal	<p>1 x PE @ SP60-09 (southern end of wood, next to newly cleared area), flying over oaks.</p> <p>2 x PE @ SP60-09 (half way down track), 2 males flying over oaks.</p> <p>4 x PE @ SP608-098, 1 female in sallows, 1 male in poplar tree territory, 2 other males chasing high up across track.</p>
17.7	mick campbell	piddington wood	SP6316	2M, 2F			4 x PE @ SP6316, 2 males & 2 females: 1f in willow and 1f being followed in slow chase by a male.
17.7	mick campbell	little wood	SP6215	19			In main territories at top of wood & filling up tree tops 100 yds down main ride. At one point Mick saw 6 males chasing one female, eventually all landing & surrounding the female about 20 feet up in a main territory oak (in full binocular view).
17.7	chris lamsdell	homefield wood		1			
17.7	dave ferguson	finemere wood	SP7222	8			
17.7	matt may	black park	northern end of lake	1M		ideal	basking on a litter bin close to the narrow pointed end of the lake in Black Park, Bucks. The weather was hot and the contents of the litter bin were 'pretty disgusting'. The lake is about half a mile from the Strawberry Wood area of the park where people usually see them.

17.7	nicholl williams	moor wood		1M, 1F			
17.7	rob ryan	queen wood, christmas common	SU723921	1M	11.30	ideal	The butterfly was first recognisable in the shade of the trees by its size and white bands, then in the sunshine the purple coloration became clear. It went from tree to tree above head height, and then flew up a ride. 5 mins later, as I was working the clearing with my sweep net, it/another approached me within touching distance and then flew off towards the tops of some tall oak trees.
17.7	steve croxford and dennis dell	private wood in mid bucks		30	10.30 to 13.00		. It was clear it was going to be a special day when a male Emperor circled our cars and the pylon a full 200 yards from the wood edge. We then found two very fresh males grounded in the gateway as you enter the wood. So three before we had even got into the wood. We only saw two females. The other 27 were distributed throughout the wood .
17.7	becky woodell	whitecross green wood SP6014		1			in oak tree by pond.
17.7	mike reed	homefield wood		1M	9.30		On main path.
18.7	Oliver Fox	private wood between Faringdon and Lechlade, west Oxon.		1F	18.15		
18.7	mike reed	rushbeds wood SP6616		2	14.00		.1 seen each first two clearings treetop height ,approx 2 pm.1 seen head height chasing SWF last clearing of right main turning.It was

							huge, assumed female. Warden saw 2 as I spoke to him. Treetop height fighting, at main junction. Rushbeds.
18.7	steve croxford	private wood, mid-bucks		3			
18.7	steve croxford	little wood		15			<p>1 - probable male around large Ash territory SP62451576</p> <p>3 -, including males clashing SP623157</p> <p>3 - by exit to the wood 3 individuals clashing SP62201585</p> <p>6 - males Oak edging including 2 pairs clashing SP621159</p> <p>1 - male searching Sallows in scrub area SP62101587</p> <p>1 - searching Sallows for females SP62241597</p>
18.7	wendy and mick campbell	moor end common		3		ideal	<p>1 @ SU80195-90151, 10.51am - flew around the car while we were parking and continued circling while we fell out of it in our hurry to get a good look at HIM. HE flew off to the nearest house, came back to circle us again & then disappeared into the wood.</p> <p>1 @ SU80165-90500, 11.15 am - flying above oaks on main 'top' part of Common.</p> <p>1 @ SU80299-90320, 11.45am - flying over oaks at lower end of Common (near electricity cables).</p>

18.7	wendy and mick campbell	moor wood		1F			1 x PE female @ SU81800-89995, 2.00pm - flying low along track and landing several times to drink from muddy puddles. Looked very fresh.
18.7	chris and pat dennis	bernwood forest		2			
18.7	chris hazell	finemere wood		10	9.00 to 11.30	ideal	. I even had two land on me, one on my leg and the other landed on my hand and started licking the sweat...amazing.
18.7	graham taylor	wytham wood		2M			two male purple emperor along the Singing Way (the track running along the ridge). One of these was ab. lugenda!
18.7	nick board	Leckhampstead (private)	SP727397	7	900 to 1015		4 males on the bridleway close to where we parked our cars and 3 others distributed throughout the wood - of which 1 female on the ground
19.7	mike reed	bernwood		several			
19.7	wendy and mick campbell	worton wood		3		ideal	1 x PE male @ SP43361-27882, 12.05pm - flying low along the road, landing occasionally (to give us time to catch up I suspect!) & finally flying off into the wood. 1 x PE female @ SP43040-27751, 1.30pm - she flew low and slow along the main sallow ride, landed briefly in a sunny spot then continued along to the end of the ride where we lost sight of her. 1 x PE male @ SP43035-27789, 2.00pm - gliding across the tops of

							the conifers.
19.7	dave wilton	finemere wood		11	10.30	ideal	<p>grounded male on what appeared to be a rotten apple core along the main ride at about SP 7192 2172.</p> <p>Between 11.30am and 12pm I had sightings of single probable males circling oaks at SP7211 2160 (this area has certainly been a territory in the past), at SP7218 2162 and at SP 7246 2176, the latter spot right at the far eastern end of that ride. At about SP 7222 2164 I saw an obvious large female flying round sallows and she landed on the shady side two or three times, one of them long enough to have laid an egg.</p> <p>In transect section 'B' (the Oriel College meadow) I had another probable male circling a field maple at SP 7205 2151, then from Finemere Meadows further sightings of single males around oaks along the wood edge at SP 7167 2172, at SP7159 2176 and at SP7156 2183.</p>
19.7	emma turnbull	Windsor Forest	garden of cottage in middle of forest	1			a male iris flew over my duck pen. I think he was aiming to land but the wind which is gusty today blew him off course
19.7	roger kemp	finemere wood		10			Must have been at least 10 PE's flying and settling high in the trees today at Finemere but none yet coming down to the rides. Some were lower on sallow in the ride to the right as you enter the wood.
19.7	lee evans	Hodgmoor Wood SU 968 939		2M	11.00	hot and sunny	

		Old Amersham Crematorium, 2 males, 1330 hours, Hot & sunny SU 945 966		2M	13.30	hot and sunny	
19.7	steve croxford	finemere wood	along main ride	6	11.00		
		rushbeds wood	near main crossroads	1M	10.00		
19.7	dennis dell	balmore wood		1	17.00	ideal	flying high above main bridleway between greatsea and balmore woods
19.7	Oliver Fox	private wood between Faringdon and Lechlade, west Oxon.		1F	18.15		
20.7	mike reed	rushbeds wood		5			1 flushed from right path,flew straight down path,and disappeared.Mid day.Several treetop sightings at main junction.1 seen on left path near junction flushed from vegetation in shaded area,disappeared into trees.
20.7	Oliver Fox	private wood between Faringdon and Lechlade, west Oxon.		4	11.30		flying high in oak canopy
20.7	dennis dell field meeting, 12 participants	bernwood forest		13	10.30 to 13.00	mainly cloudy with sunny intervals, 20 to 22 degrees	PEs spread along the main track from the Oakley car park to about 300m before the turning circle. They were all flying rapidly in amongst the trees at a few metres height; no territorial behaviour and no low level ride skimming flights or landing; quite different behaviour from one week ago when the six I saw here were all engaged in low level flights. A thirteenth was seen in Yorks Wood by two participants who had split off

							from the main party. This specimen flew to the top of an Oak and remained there for at least 20 minutes.
20.7	steve croxford	ham wood SP695189 private wood in mid-bucks		1 1			Ham Wood: couple of sightings in the tall ashes near the pond. The sightings were a couple of minutes apart but could well have been the same individual. Later I had another odd sighting seeing one in a private wood. This was not seen from the bridal way but from a ditch that runs parallel to the bridal way. It was a male checking the trees growing along the edge of the wood.
20.7	mick campbell	waterperry wood		4	late pm		4 x PE (1f in Sallow, 2m chasing @ SP608-098, 1m half way along the main track oak-edging SP60-09).
20.7	Sandy Gill	Moorend Common Bucks	Garden adjacent to the N. side of common	1			Settled in garden which has boundary with wooded part of the common
21.7	becky woodell	whitecross green wood		1	17.15		in trees in the carpark

21.7	nick bowles	private wood mid bucks		10	pm		<p>Two of the PE were in the grass, 1 was a female testing leaves with her feet at about 2m above ground ; I also saw 3 other PE here chasing at about 3m above ground straight down the ride.</p> <p>Most quite possibly did go into siesta as I saw more early on. One on ground and my sock, another much larger searching floor near fox poo; and 1 fem egg laying.</p>
21.7	steve croxford	little wood piddington wood	SP621159 and SP622159 SP631164	8 3 1	from 3 pm		<p>I took a walk over to Little Wood this afternoon at around 3pm. I saw nothing in the usual Ash and Oak territory. However the bottom of the wood was quite active again. From the grass strip between the wood and the new planting I saw 8 Emperor. Most of these were Oak edging in the tall Oaks. However I did see another Emperor searching the Sallows along the newer planting edge. In the wood itself I saw another 3 Emperors circling the Oaks at the bottom of the slope.</p> <p>Back at Piddington Wood I saw a single male flying along the hedge towards the road. It appeared to fly over my car and over the road into the Oak across the road. I lost it at that point.</p>
21.7	wendy and mick campbell	hell coppice waterperry wood		5		ideal	<p>Great Wood, Fingest (quite near the pub at Skirmett where one had been seen on wall last year), mid-day to mid-pm.</p> <p>Zero PE. This is the third year we've looked in this wood for iris. There are plenty of sallows and we feel sure iris must be in there but difficult to look</p>

							<p>in all parts of the wood due to lack of footpaths.</p> <p>Hell Coppice, 4pm</p> <p>1 x PE @ SP612-102 - worn male. Flew out of oaks, across the road and back into Hell Coppice.</p> <p>Waterperry Wood, 4.10pm onwards.</p> <p>1 x PE f. in willow, 4.45pm @ SP60866-09781</p> <p>2 x PE males flying & chasing between ash trees, 5.20pm @SP60989-09711</p> <p>1 x PE f. flying in willow, 5.40pm @ SP60945-09951</p>
21.7	martin and penny wainwright	bernwood forest		2			Two Purple Emperors were flying high above oaks just off the main track.
22.7	tom dunbar	moor park wood	SU814908	1			
22.7	steve croxford	finemere wood	SP7222	6			6 x PE along the main track including 4 on the track
22.7	dennis dell	finemere wood	SP722216	4	11.35 to 13.00	24 degrees ideal	all 4 were along the east-west ride at the southern end
22.7	mike reed	bernwood forest		10			Bernwood from 10am ,and saw about 10,prob all males,Photographed several including 1 on my car,which then flew on to my shoe.
		ham home wood	SP693189	1			Ham Home Wood about 2 pm ,entered wood by pub and saw I

							assumed male at treetops, in first clearing
22.7	matt dodds	finemere wood		1			on muddy patch in one of the new clearings created at the northern end
23.7	mick campbell	pidlington wood little wood		5 11		ideal	<p>Piddington Wood:</p> <p>PE x 4 in meadow corner territory, SP6316</p> <p>PE x 1 SP6216 along footpath half way to 'vista' in new ash & oak tree territory (2nd sighting in this territory).</p> <p>Little Wood, SP6215:</p> <p>PE x 1 in first oak tree territory (at top of ride/newly opened out area)</p> <p>PE x 2 males clashing in main ash</p> <p>PE x 8 through rest of wood, 6 seen oak-edging, plus a male & female in courtship flight.</p>
23.7	tom dunbar	private wood mid bucks		29			
23.7	richard hicks	Moorend Common Bucks SU801907	In garden which borders the common	2	10.00		Purple Emperor female in garden and the following day another on the north side of the common
23.7	huw morgan	bernwood forest		2		ideal	One just off ride by main car park and one flying overhead on the slope up to Piccadilly Circus.
23.7	michael mcneill	moor copse, park	SU637742	1			An early morning visit to Moor

		wood BBOWT reserve					Copse/Park Wood, Berks.. Purple Emperor perched on a bush, which proceeded to drop to my foot for a minute or two.
24.7	Richard Hicks	Moorend Common Bucks	Open part of the N side of the common	1			Flew across path.
24.7	steve croxford	finemere wood		3			3 x PE along the main track Oak edging males looking for females.
24.7	dennis dell	boarstall wood, eastern edge		2			one above ashes by cottage, and one flying low down along edge of road to Oakley
26.7	nick board	Leckhampstead wood (private)		1M	12.30	ideal	located on the ground at SP72339
26.7	malcolm brownsword	Oakley wood	SP6111	3		26 degrees, sunny	grounded male Purple Emperor in the car park at Oakley Wood (Bernwood), Bucks this morning. We also had 2 further sightings, the second about 200 metres past 'Piccadilly Circus.' The third sighting, of a male, was probably the first one seen again 45 minutes later in the car park.
26.7	maggie sproule	finemere wood	along main track	6			they were reluctant to come down early....maybe too many people about. However after everyone else has gone at about 1230 one came and sat on a field maple near the pamphlet dispenser and then sat on the track briefly.
26.7	steve croxford	little wood piddington wood		5 1	mid afternoon		Little Wood around the Large Ash 3 individuals 2 x PE Little Wood Oak edging in

							main wood 1 x PE Piddington Wood Female disturbed from path near vista
26.7	wendy and mick campbell	berwood forest	along main track	8	12.00 to 15.30		<p>1 x PE male, 12.00pm @ SP6111 (on dog deposit in Oakley Wood Car Park - photographed by Malcolm Brownsword)</p> <p>2 x PE, 12.53pm SP62104-10926, oak topping assumed males</p> <p>Turning Circle:</p> <p>1 x PE, 2.00pm SP62710-10696, female flew into sallow & sat with wings open, sunbathing. Wings very thin but otherwise undamaged.</p> <p>1 x PE, 2.10pm SP62710-10696, male, circled twice around top of the sallow (looking for the female??).</p> <p>1 x PE, 2.20pm SP62742-10689, female, flying in a small (15') narrow-leaved sallow bush, appeared to be egg-laying. Undergrowth too thick to get near enough to look for eggs. Female was in fairly good condition apart from missing one wing-tip.</p> <p>2 x PE, approx 3.30pm, SP61480-11193, main ride, 1 male oak-edging, 1 f. in sallow.</p>
27.7	mick campbell	little wood	main territory	2		ideal	2 x PE in main ash territory, SP6215. Several clashes/chases during half an hour but confident it was the same 2 males each time. None seen in rest of

							wood.
28.7	david hastings	whitecross green wood	SP599146	1M	16.00	sunny and hot	flying around top of oak on the main north/south ride
28.7	tom dunbar	laplands farm	SP666161	2			
28.7	wendy and mick campbell	waterperry wood		5	14.00 to 15.00	mixed	Waterperry Wood, north gate end, SP60-09, 2-3.00pm. 5 x PE, 1f. in sallow about 200yds along track from gate; 1 unknown gender flying above track; 2m. chasing, clashing & perching in oaks; 1f. flew from sallow very close to gate.
29.7	tom dunbar	piddington wood	SP630162	1			
29.7	peter daltry	great kingshill SU8898		1F	10.30		The butterfly was sunning itself on some bare ground on an allotment opposite the Red Lion in Great Kingshill [adjacent to the common there]. The butterfly disturbed and flew off rapidly towards Stag Lane and Heath End.
30.7	tom dunbar	laplands farm edge	SP666162	1			
1.8	mike reed	rushbeds wood	SP668155	4			4 using oak sap knothole.
1.8	wendy and mick campbell	waterperry wood		9	11.30 to 15.30	ideal	1 x PE f. 11.50am, SP60973-09990, very 'see-through' wings, flying over & landing in sallow. 1 x PE f. 11.58am, SP6097-0999 (very close to the first one seen), in very good condition, flying down low in shrubs 'hopping' from one shrub to another.

							<p>1 x PE 12.30pm, SP60632-09272 flying across track and disappeared over oaks.</p> <p>2 x PE m. 12.45pm, SP60629-09238 at the x-roads half way along main track, flying over firs and then disappeared into wood.</p> <p>1 x PE probable m. 1.45pm, SP60369-08937 tree-topping along edge of new clearing (near line of big sallows).</p> <p>1 x PE f. 2.00pm, SP60200-08913 flying from sallow and off through a fir tree.</p> <p>1 x PE 2.30pm, SP60428-09139 seen in flight heading towards sallows.</p> <p>1 x PE f. 3.00pm, SP60596-09152 flying & landing in sallow. In quite good condition.</p>
2.8	dennis dell	rushbeds wood	SP668155 and SP666157	3F	14.00 to 15.30		2 using oak sap knothole, and one near exit gate to laplands farm meadow, testing Sallows
2.8	steve croxford	little wood		1M, 1F			. One was at the bottom of the main wood, a probable male. The other was almost certainly a female sailing over the scrubby area just outside the main wood
3.8	wendy and mick campbell	Stanton little wood		1M	12.45	moderate	1 x PE m. SP58989-11374 @ 12.45pm, several sightings of the same individual gliding round & over oaks on sheltered side of wood (first time we've seen one here). Very thin wings.

3.8	steve croxford	rushbeds wood	SP668155	3F	am		<p>. There were two females on the knot hole. I also saw a third high up just under the canopy about 70m away from the first knot hole. Looked like another female searching for a different knot hole.</p> <p>– Feeding from knot holes</p>
4.8	mike smith	Bracknell garden		1	13.45		<p>. The sighting was in our garden in, Bracknell, Berkshire, at 1345 on Sunday 4th August 2013, he remained stationary for about two minutes. The house backs onto woodland which is part of the Bramshill Forest.</p>
6.8	tony croft	whitecross green wood	SP605141	1F	15.00	21 degrees, sunny intervals	Settled in a large willow tree adjacent to the pond; flew around a couple of times before settling out of sight in the back of the tree.
6.8	steve croxford	rushbeds wood		1F			feeding on sap in oak knothole
7.8	wendy and mick campbell	waterperry wood		3F		mixed	<p>.1 x PE f. @ SP60542-08997, 2.40pm. Seen from main track close to where it bends sharply. Flew through an oak and into nearby willow. Wings very 'see-through'.</p> <p>1 x PE f. @ SP60994-08685, 3.20pm. Flying over & landing in willow near the tall Poplars at Drunkard's Corner. Looked in fairly good condition.</p> <p>1 x PE (probable male) @ SP60519-08553, 4.08pm. Seen from outer, southern edge of wood. Gliding/oak</p>

							topping along trees at edge of wood.
7.8	neil wood hagley	whitecross green wood	SP60281443	1F	11.00	ideal	Single in flight about half way down the main ride from the car park. Seen above the trees and then descended and almost landed on me before climbing high, over and gone.
8.8	clive sims, tim pridmore	north aston oxon	nicholson's tree nursery	1M			this sighting was a long way from any woods; a photo was attached and there is no doubt that it is iris. The nearest wood, where iris has been seen this year, is 5km to the west
9.8	steve croxford	finemere wood		1F	pm		I saw a female Emperor at Finemere this afternoon. It was in the central meadow not far from the access gate. It floated in past my head from the direction of the turning circle before striking into one of the large Sallow in the meadow. I lost it shortly after that but I am sure it was still egg laying.
11.8	wendy and mick campbell	waterperry wood		1F	13.45	moderate	@ SP60808-09816, Seen flying & gliding above main track then landed in sallow. Wings in fairly good condition - no chunks missing, but slightly see-through.
21.8	malcolm brownsword	homefield wood	along main track, 250m from car park	1			