

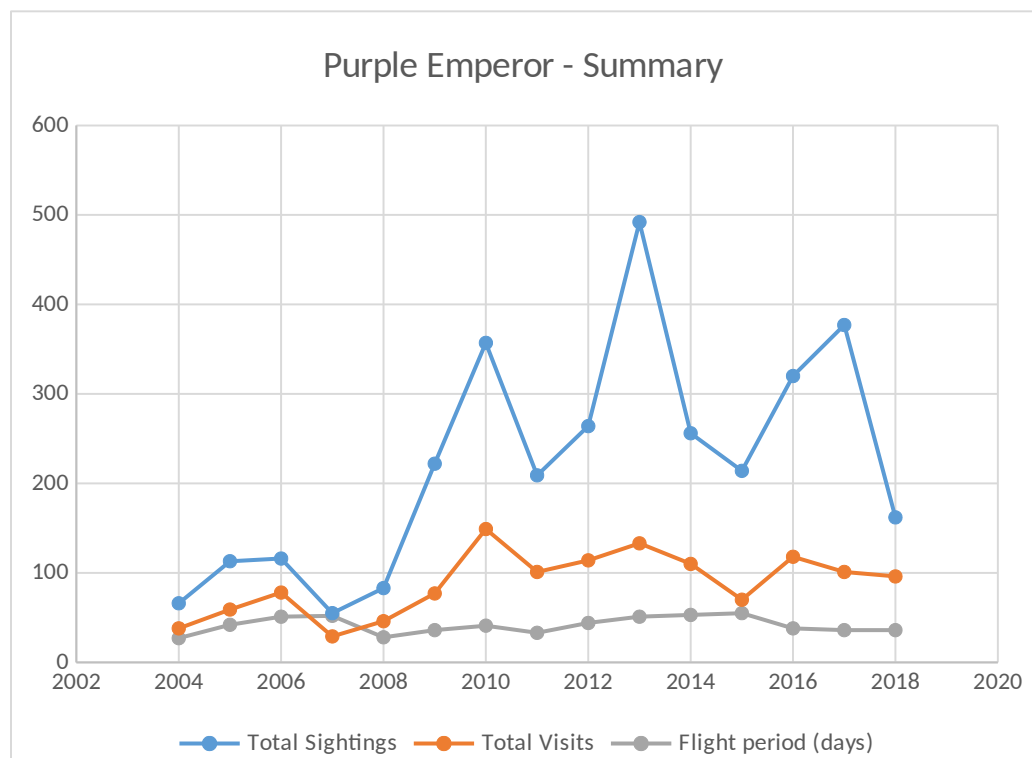
BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION UPPER THAMES BRANCH

Purple Emperor (*Apatura iris*) Report for 2018

Martin Robinson

Summary

Year	Total Sightings	Total Visits	Date First Sighting	Date Last Sighting	Flight period (days)
2004	66	38	04-Jul	31-Jul	27
2005	113	59	27-Jun	08-Aug	42
2006	116	78	25-Jun	15-Aug	51
2007	55	29	19-Jun	10-Aug	52
2008	83	46	29-Jun	27-Jul	28
2009	222	77	25-Jun	31-Jul	36
2010	357	149	28-Jun	08-Aug	41
2011	209	101	21-Jun	24-Jul	33
2012	264	114	04-Jul	17-Aug	44
2013	492	133	01-Jul	21-Aug	51
2014	256	110	16-Jun	08-Aug	53
2015	214	70	14-Jun	08-Aug	55
2016	320	118	03-Jul	10-Aug	38
2017	377	101	17-Jun	23-Jul	36
2018	167	96	19-Jun	25-Jul	36



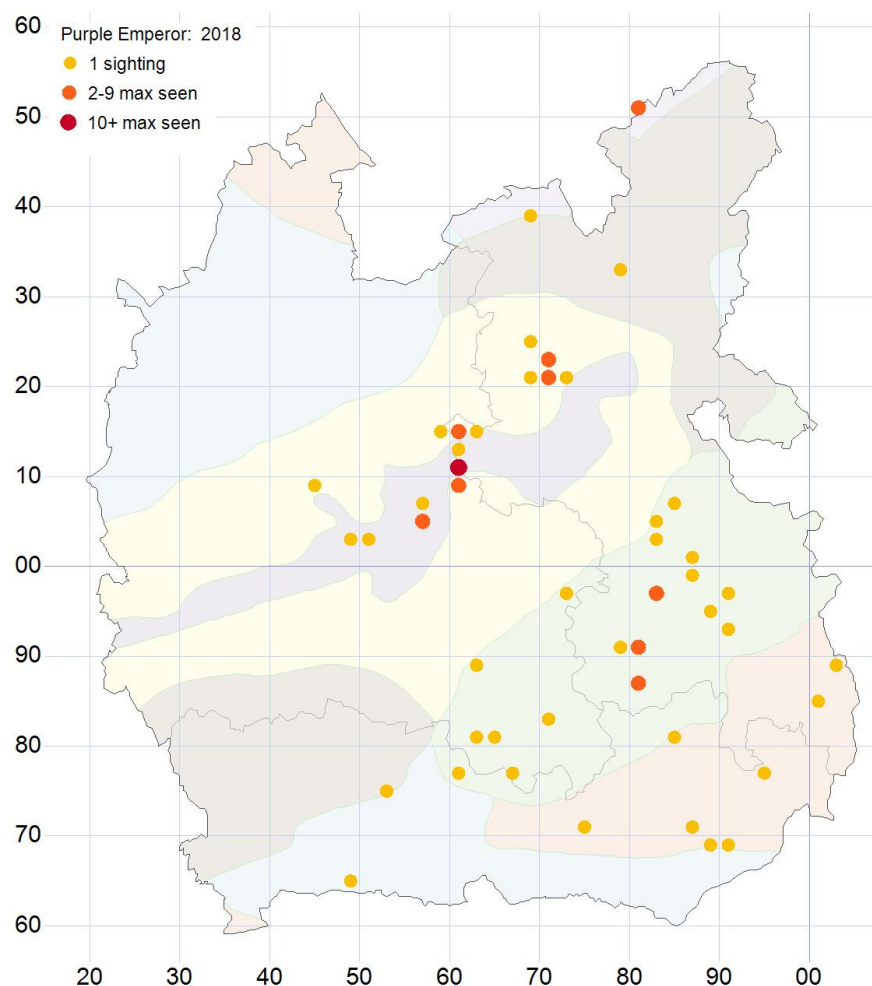
Number of sightings - 2018

The total number of sightings was down compared to the previous year with 167 sightings from 96 visits (compared with 377 from 101 visits for the year 2017). Nearly half the Purple Emperor sightings for 2018 were reported from Bernwood Forest (73/167). This may be a reflection of both the number of specimens in this area and the popularity of this forest with recorders. There were 20 separate reports from this site alone.

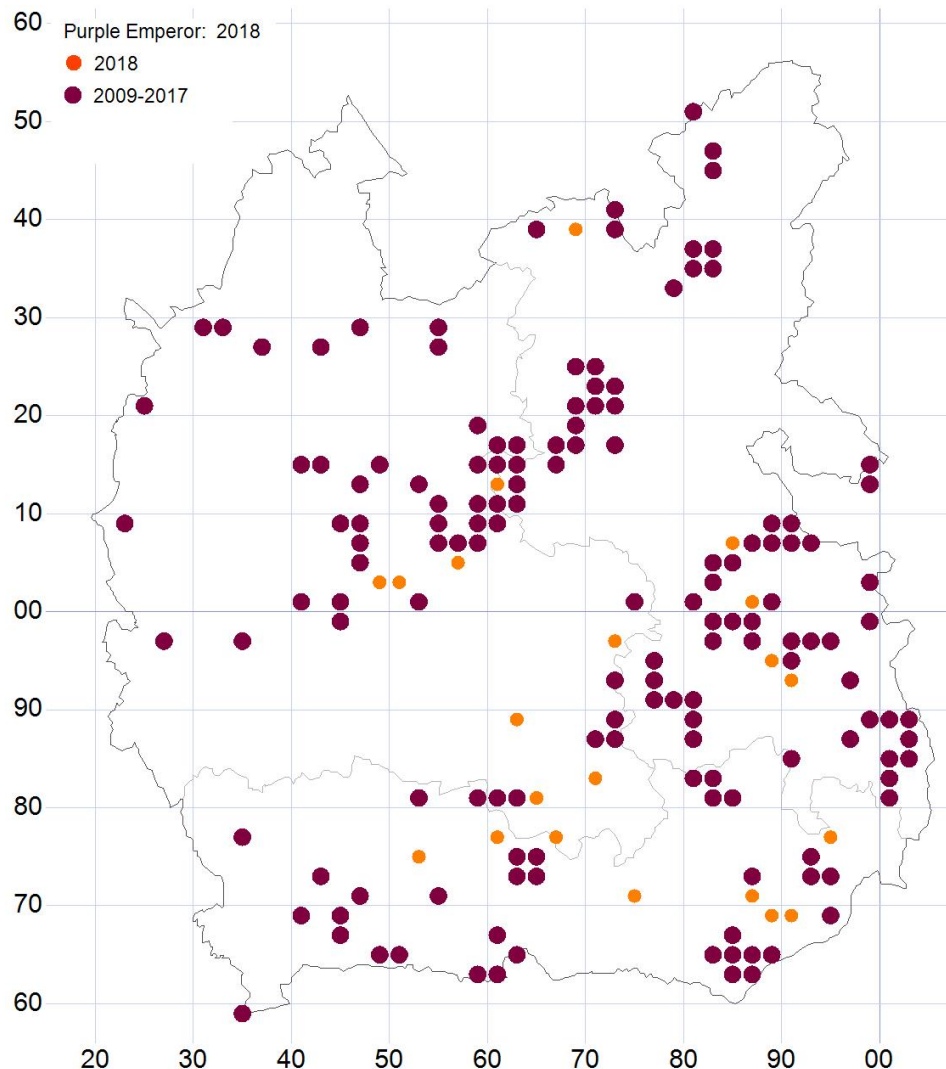
Data from the UKBMS website indicates little change nationally in Purple Emperor sightings between 2017 and 2018.

Obtaining accurate population numbers for this butterfly is particularly challenging given its liking for forest canopies, so drawing significant conclusions about its population variations from year to year is probably unwise.

The distribution throughout the three counties in 2018 is shown below with 38 separate locations having a sighting of only a single insect.



There were a number of new locations in 2018 of sightings compared to the period 2009-2017 – the vast majority of these being sightings of a single insect. Many of these are close to existing populations. Further work will be done in 2019 to determine how established these potential new colonies are.

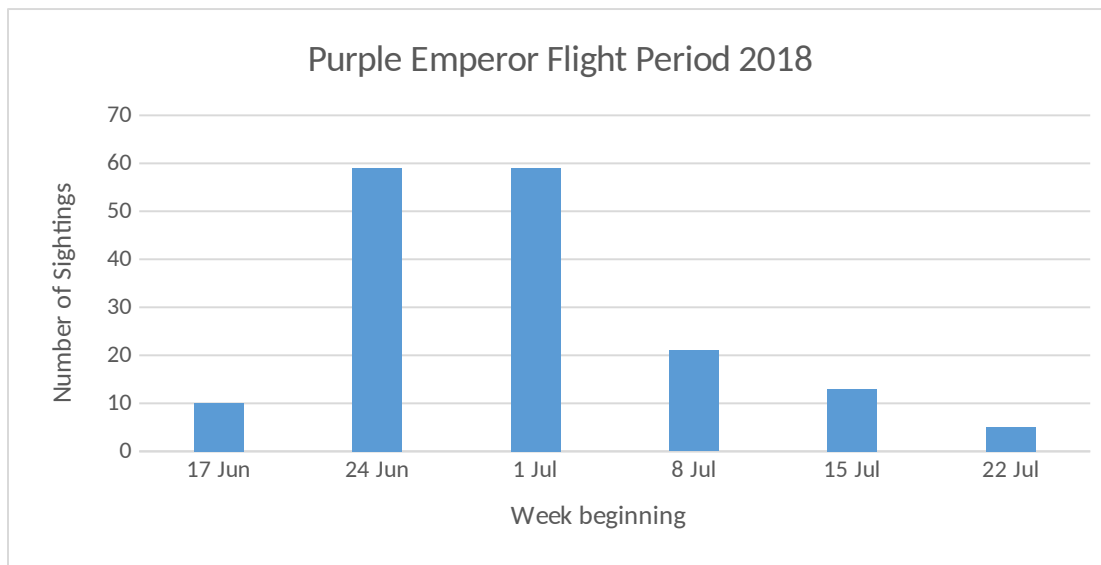


Weather

The weather in 2018 was a mixture of extremes with the 'Beast from The East' arriving in late February bringing sub-zero temperatures and snow to southern counties. This was followed by further snow in mid- March. The summer was characterised by a long hot dry spell during June and July, which covered the main flight period of the Purple Emperor.

Flight period for 2018

The flight period for 2018 shows the number of sightings peaked quite sharply during the weeks beginning the 24th June and 1st of July.



Acknowledgements

Thanks to all the people who sent in sightings. There were 65 of you in all. Special thanks to Dennis Dell (the retiring champion) who collated much of the data for this report and also to Peter Ogden who supplied results and charts from the 10 km square surveys.