

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION UPPER THAMES BRANCH

Silver-spotted Skipper Report 2010

Richard Soulsby



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After the intensive survey led by Exeter University in 2009, the recording of Silver-spotted Skippers in 2010 returned to normal levels. The number of reported occupied tetrads (2km squares) in the Upper Thames Branch area dropped from 15 in 2009 to 8 in 2010, but this is no doubt partly due to the less intensive recording.

Their main sites are situated on south-facing chalk grassland slopes along the scarp of the Chilterns stretching northeastwards up to and including the Aston Rowant Nature Reserve and these all still appear to be healthy. North-east of Aston Rowant, two colonies continue to be reasonably strong, with vagrants or short-lived colonies at a number of other sites up to the north-eastern limit of their range near Ellesborough.

No new colonies were discovered in 2010 and the new sites found in 2009 were not confirmed in 2010, although most of these were not visited. Sites further from the main string appear to be dying out, especially those distant from the scarp of the Chilterns and on the Berkshire Downs, where there were no sightings in 2010. There is no obvious reason for this retraction of range.

The season was exceptionally early, the first reported sighting being at Aston Rowant on 19th July, with 6 males and 3 females, suggesting that the first emergence was several days earlier. The last reported sighting was on 1st September.

Details of the identification, distribution and habitat requirements of Silver-spotted Skippers can be found on the Butterfly Conservation national website.



Roosting Silver-spotted Skipper
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