

# BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION UPPER THAMES BRANCH

## Silver-studded Blue Report 2007

Grahame Hawker

The dire prospects of this species were not helped by the weather in the summer of 2007. There were no sightings at all reported from 2 of the 3 colonies that returned records in 2006 and might still exist in Berkshire, but they were not visited frequently and several visits were made in less than ideal weather.



The only site to return a positive result in 2007 was Broadmoor Bottom. 10 adults were seen in late June and early July.

The butterfly's desperate showing is not down to a lack of effort to restore areas of habitat to the required condition.

All the managers of Heathland and various other key players have been contacted and many attended meetings to discuss the management required to get the 'heathy' landscape they need returned to a suitable condition. Obviously a major problem faced by the species is the loss of Heath. Even where it persists it is frequently covered in secondary woodland, though this is gradually being cleared back to expose the remnant heather underneath. Too often the problem is lanky, overgrown heather that simply smothers any chance of the butterfly finding the warmth and shelter it needs in the turf between heather plants.

Similar meetings will continue in 2008, including those exploring the possibility of a re-introduction to the Greenham Common Nature Reserve.

