

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION UPPER THAMES BRANCH

White Admiral Report 2015

Julia Huggins



Photo © David Hastings

A reasonable season for the White Admiral despite a generally dull (i.e. cloudy) flight period. We had one very warm and sunny week at the beginning of July which brought in the majority of reported sightings, but otherwise the July sunshine was intermittent even though there was little rain. Interestingly a number of White Admiral sightings were from very dull and overcast days when I might not normally expect much activity.

The first sighting was on 24 June (Alan Wilkinson at Whitecross Green Wood, Oxon) and the last came in on 16 August (Martin Kincaid at Little Linford Wood, Bucks) although main activity was limited to a couple of weeks in July. The White Admiral field trip on July 4th to Bowdown Wood near Newbury started with yet another dull and overcast morning but thankfully some sun broke through by late morning and the group were able to have fine views of several White Admirals. It was a very enjoyable walk.

In total, I received 74 sightings of 179 individuals across our region, and there were three instances of double numbers sighted. I received these reports from 30 sites and once again Whitecross Green Wood, Bernwood Forest and Finemere Wood remain reliable sites for seeing this butterfly. It was also fun to note that three sightings were from the gardens of members. I was delighted that several reports have come in from the BBOWT reserve at Moor Copse near Pangbourne in Berkshire. This has always appeared to be an ideal site for this butterfly but it has not been recorded there for a number of years, so this year appears to indicate a welcome return.

Last year I wrote about concerns over tree clearance work at Black Park near Iver Heath destroying honeysuckle stands and therefore having the potential to have an adverse effect on White Admiral numbers. I received only two reports from this site (for three individuals) this year compared to a dozen in 2014, so it remains to be seen if butterfly numbers or visits

are down.

I am very grateful to everyone who has contributed to this report by reporting their White Admiral sightings either direct to me or via the website. There were 37 of you in total. Thank you.

Julia Huggins

March 2016