**Butterflies 2018 Annual Report**

Richard Brown

**Overview**

2018 gave us a normal season for butterflies in Rutland. Observations started to come in as usual in Mid-March – fully a month after the start of the 2017 season. At the season end Red Admiral and Small Tortoiseshell were again the last species in flight, with a remarkably late Small Tortoiseshell seen on December 19th. Overall 31 Species were recorded, a very similar total to that of the last five years.

Highlight of the year was the record of a Black Hairstreak from Ketton Quarry on the 14th June, the first RNHS record for the last 5 years. The Northamptonshire colony at Glapthorn Cow Pastures is a well-known Black Hairstreak site, but despite global warming and the presence of plenty of food-plant in Rutland, the species has hitherto showed little sign of moving north. Maybe this singleton is a harbinger…….?

Other scarce species maintain their hold in Rutland, with Grizzled and Dingy Skippers at 4 and 3 sites respectively, and both Dark Green and Silver-washed Fritillary recorded from 4 sites. Up to 12 Grizzled Skippers were recorded from individual sites, and 35 Dingy Skippers on one visit to Clipsham. Silver-washed Fritillary were also in good numbers, with “dozens” at Bloody Oaks on 13th July.

Disappointing absentees from the records were Purple Emperor – none seen in 2018, and the Chalkhill Blue – none again at Bloody Oaks Quarry, where the last one was seen in 2015, now three seasons ago. In general Whites had a meagre season, and again there were few migrants – Painted Lady was mostly seen singularly, and no Clouded Yellow observed at all.

Once again thanks to our indefatigable contributors who keep the picture of Rutland’s butterflies so well filled.

**Summary of Annual Observations**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
| Number of species recorded | 29 | 33 | 32 | 31 | 30 | 30 | 31 |
| Number of recorders contributing |  |  | 45 |  | 16 | 17 | 19 |
| Number of sites from which records received |  |  | 48 |  | 37 | 40 | 33 |
| Total number of records received |  |  | 727 |  | 686 | 435 | 446 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |