



# Butterflies of Stover Country Park

## Introduction

Stover Country Park was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 1984 because of its invertebrates, including butterflies and dragonflies, and overwintering wildfowl. It also became a Local Nature Reserve in 2001.

Since 1992, when specific management for butterflies commenced, the number of species recorded has increased from 26 to 38. This is a good proportion of the 59 resident species found in the UK.

Rare species include the white admiral, high brown fritillary (not recorded since 1980) and heath fritillary (not recorded since 1981). Other notable species include wood white, brown hairstreak, brown argus, marsh fritillary and grayling as well as a small population of pearl-bordered fritillary.

Areas of flower-rich grassland, marsh and woodland edges, glades and rides all help make this site a haven for these colourful insects. Adults feed solely on nectar and are attracted to pink and purple flowers especially. Caterpillars have different needs for food and eat the leaves of various plants including trees, grasses and herbs; each species having its own preferences.



Green-veined White

## Species List

large white	marbled white
small white	meadow brown
green-veined white	gatekeeper
wood white	ringlet
orange tip	small heath
brimstone	speckled wood
clouded yellow	wall brown
white admiral	grayling
peacock	brown argus
red admiral	green hairstreak
painted lady	purple hairstreak
small tortoiseshell	brown hairstreak
comma	small copper
pearl-bordered fritillary*	holly blue
small pearl-bordered fritillary	common blue
fritillary	grizzled skipper
silver-washed fritillary	dingy skipper
marsh fritillary	large skipper
high brown fritillary	small skipper
heath fritillary	

\* cover photo by Ron Chapman



**Stover**

**Country Park**

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## Habitat Management for Butterflies

Several grassland areas are actively managed for butterflies. They need flowers as nectar sources for the adults to feed on, and a variety of food plants, including trees and grasses, for the caterpillars.

Sunny rides and glades are kept clear of encroaching scrub to allow plants to flower. Wild flower areas such as the heathland, fire break and flower meadow provide good habitats for both adults and larvae.

Many 'brown' butterflies need grasses for their larvae to feed on so areas are kept free of scrub and heavy shade. Butterfly caterpillars, like peacock, red admiral and comma, feed on nettles; so patches are left undisturbed during the summer.

Fritillary butterfly larvae feed on violets and prefer areas with violets under bracken. While admiral butterfly caterpillars feed on honeysuckle, a woodland plant.

Clearing rhododendron is ongoing as it is non-native and invasive and suppresses plants that are important for butterflies.

The varied habitats on site all help to make this an important butterfly site.

## Records and Sightings

We hope you have enjoyed your visit. Please let us know if you see anything unusual by calling in at the Visitor Centre. A daily logbook of butterflies is kept in the Ranger's office.

The Visitor Centre has more information about the wildlife on site.

## Butterfly Information

### Green Hairstreak



During the breeding season you can see some unusual behaviour. Some butterflies are territorial and can be seen in frantic aerial battles with rivals. Females produce an attractive pheromone to entice the males and sometimes you can see them fanning their wings to spread the scent around.

After fertilisation the eggs are usually laid directly onto the food plant. These tiny eggs are no more than 1 mm tall and often have intricate patterns on them.

The colour on the butterfly's wings is made up of tiny colourful scales that overlap. As the butterfly gets older the scales rub off and the colour becomes dull.

Small tortoiseshell caterpillars feeding on nettles.



# Where to look for Butterflies

Stover is an important site for butterflies and its variety of habitats means that many different species can be seen here; 38 have been recorded so far. The summer is the best time to come when the adults are flying. When the sun is shining and the flowers are out butterflies are particularly abundant.



View of firebreak.



Gatekeeper



Silver-washed Fritillary



Wall Brown



The Carriage Drive is shady, but the dappled sun is still good for some butterflies.

## Firebreak

Plenty of sunshine, grasses and wild flowers in the summer.

Look for: pearl-bordered fritillary, the 'browns', grayling, brimstone, grizzled skipper, dingy skipper, marbled white.



Pearl-bordered Fritillary

## Carriage Drive

A shaded walk, but butterflies can still be seen, especially nectaring on brambles and basking in sunny patches.

Look for: Speckled wood, brimstone.



Speckled Wood

## New Plantation

Sunny patches and brambles are good places to look for: pearl-bordered fritillary, silver-washed fritillary, peacock.



Peacock

## Outlet Channel

Look for: White admiral, silver-washed fritillary.



White Admiral

## Flower Meadow

Grasses are good for the 'browns' whose larvae feed on them. Wild flowers provide valuable nectar.

Look for: marbled white, common blue, dingy skipper, grizzled skipper, pearl-bordered fritillary, brown argus, brown hairstreak.



Common Blue



Marbled White

## Car Park

Sunny patches and brambles are good places to look for: speckled wood, white admiral, silver-washed fritillary, brown hairstreak.



Brimstone



Green-veined White

## Marsh

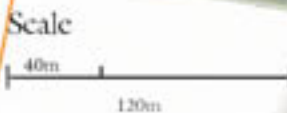
A good place to look for the 'whites'. Orange tip caterpillars feed on lady's smock, a marsh plant. Many marginal plants provide nectar for adults.

Look for: orange tip, green-veined white, brimstone.



Comma

Marshy area is good for 'whites'.



Scale

40m

120m

