

## Long Meadow Butterflies 2019

Small skipper	17/6 (2) , 28/6, 2/7 (2), 5/7 (4), 17/7 (3)
Essex skipper	28/6 (2), 5/7 (5), 10/7 (9), 17/7 (15)
Small/Essex skipper	17/6 (3), 28/6 (3), 5/7 (2), 10/7 (7), 17/7
Large skipper	28/6 (2), 2/7 (2), 5/7 (15), 10/7 (7), 17/7 (4)
Brimstone	17/4 (5), 21/5 (2), 1/6 (19 caterpillars on buckthorn)
Large white	17/7
Small white	30/3(2), 30/4, 10/7 (2), 17/7 (2) 23/7 (3)
Green-veined	30/3, 30/4(3), 10/7 (7), 17/7
Whites	12/5(3), 28/6, 5/7 (6), 10/7 (9), 17/7 (15), 5/8 (4), 21/8(8), 28/8(10)
Orange tip	17/4 (5), 30/4, 12/5(3), 21/5
Small copper	10/7, 17/7 (3), 23/7, 22/8 (2), 4/9, 10/9
Brown argus	17/7 (2), 5/8, 20/8, 28/8 (2), 4/9
Common blue	1/6 (2), 17/6, 5/8, 21/8(5) 28/8
Holly blue	17/4 (2), 30/4, 12/5(5), 10/7, 5/8, 28/8
Red admiral	26/2, 28/6
Painted lady	28/6 (3) , 2/7, 20/8, 4/9
Small tortoiseshell	-----
Peacock	17/4
Comma	10/7, 17/7, 5/8 (3), 20/8(2)
Speckled wood	30/3, 17/4, 30/4(3), 12/5, 1/6(4), 17/6, 28/6, 10/7 (3), 17/7 (4), 23/7, 5/8 (4), 21/8 (7), 28/8 (6), 10/9 (2), 17/9 (2)
Marbled white	28/6 (6), 5/7 (21), 10/7 (11), 17/7 (7)
Gatekeeper	5/7, 10/7 (20), 17/7 (66), 23/7 (43), 5/8 (11)
Meadow brown	1/6(2), 17/6 (35), 28/6 (80), 5/7 (64), 10/7 (47), 17/7 (40), 23/7 (11), 5/8 (10), 21/8 (3)
Ringlet	28/6 (7) , 5/7 (25), 10/7 (31), 17/7 (10), 23/7 (3), 5/8

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Species (21)	First date	Peak count	Peak date	Last date	Total	Status and Habitat	Larval food plant
Small skipper	17/6	4	5/7	17/7	12	Resident in grassland	grasses
Essex skipper	28/6	15	17/7	17/7	31	Resident in grassland	grasses
Small/essex skipper	17/6	7	10/7	17/7	16	Resident in grassland	grasses
Large skipper	28/6	15	5/7	17/7	30	Resident of woodland edge	grasses
Brimstone	17/4	5	17/4	21/5	7	Mobile in woodland & grassland	buckthorn
Large white	17/7	1	17/7	17/7	1	Mobile & widespread	crucifers
Small white	30/3	3	23/7	23/7	10	Mobile & widespread	crucifers
Green-veined white	30/3	7	10/7	17/7	12	Mobile & widespread	crucifers
Whites	12/5	15	17/7	28/8	56	Mobile & widespread	crucifers
Orange tip	17/4	5	17/4	21/5	10	Mobile & widespread	crucifers
Small copper	10/7	3	17/7	10/9	9	Resident in grassland	sorrel/dock
Brown argus	17/7	2	17/7, 28/8	4/9	7	Resident in grassland	rockrose
Common blue	1/6	5	21/8	28/8	10	Resident in grassland	birdsfoot trefoil
Holly blue	17/4	5	12/5	28/8	11	Mobile & widespread	holly/ivy
Red admiral	26/2	-	-	28/6	2	Mobile & widespread	nettles
Painted lady	28/6	3	28/6	4/9	6	Mobile & widespread	thistles
Small tortoiseshell	---					Mobile & widespread	nettles
Peacock	17/4	1	17/4	17/4	1	Mobile & widespread	nettles
Comma	10/7	3	5/8	20/8	7	Mobile & widespread	nettles
Speckled wood	30/3	7	21/8	17/9	41	Resident of woodland edge	grasses
Gatekeeper	5/7	66	17/7	5/8	131	Resident of woodland edge	grasses
Meadow brown	1/6	80	28/6	21/8	292	Resident in grassland	grasses
Ringlet	28/6	31	10/7	5/8	77	Resident in damper grassland	grasses
Marbled white	28/6	21	5/7	17/7	45	Resident in grassland	grasses

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<b>Section</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Total</b>
Small skipper								x			x	x		x		<b>4</b>
Essex skipper		x	x		x					x	x	x	x	x		<b>8</b>
Small/essex skipper			x		x					x	x	x	x	x		<b>7</b>
Large skipper		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		<b>12</b>
Brimstone								x			x	x	x			<b>4</b>
Large white								x								<b>1</b>
Small white		x				x				x	x	x		x		<b>6</b>
Green-veined white						x	x		x	x	x			x	x	<b>7</b>
Whites		x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		<b>11</b>
Orange tip		x				x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	<b>9</b>
Small copper											x	x	x			<b>3</b>
Brown argus												x	x			<b>2</b>
Common blue		x									x	x				<b>3</b>
Holly blue						x		x	x	x	x				x	<b>6</b>
Red admiral								x								<b>1</b>
Painted lady					x						x	x		x		<b>4</b>
Small tortoiseshell																<b>0</b>
Peacock											x					<b>1</b>
Comma					x				x	x	x				x	<b>5</b>
Speckled wood	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	<b>12</b>
Marbled white	x	x	x		x						x	x	x	x		<b>8</b>
Gatekeeper		x	x	x					x	x	x	x	x	x		<b>9</b>
Meadow brown		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	<b>14</b>
Ringlet		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	<b>13</b>
Species per section	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	

## **Long Meadow Butterflies 2019**

### **Summary and Management Plans**

Over the last 5 years the numbers of small and essex skippers have doubled and the numbers of large skippers have trebled.

The white butterflies, small, large and green-veined have declined a little over the last 5 years but are still present in good numbers with a 5 year average of 85. Both brimstone and orange tip were present in small numbers during 2019 consistent with the numbers seen in previous years. 19 brimstone caterpillars were found feeding on the alder buckthorns this year.

Small copper, brown argus, common blue and holly blue were all present in small numbers during 2019, the high numbers of brown argus and common blue seen in 2018 not being repeated. This demonstrates how widely butterfly populations can fluctuate from one year to the next.

There were a few sightings of red admiral, painted lady, peacock and comma consistent with the small numbers seen over the past few years but no small tortoiseshell. There were more painted ladies than in all the previous years combined in line with the 2019 influx of these migratory butterflies into the country from Europe.

With the exception of speckled wood, which was much less numerous in 2019, the grassland browns, meadow brown, gatekeeper, ringlet maintained good populations with gatekeeper and ringlet being present in the highest numbers over the last 5 years exceeding their 5 year averages by big margins.

Marbled whites, first recorded in 2017 and again in 2018, were present in much bigger numbers in 2019 perhaps another early sign of a small colony establishing.

The most butterfly rich areas were sections 10-14 on the warmer sunnier side of the meadow where the grasses are finer and shorter and there are more flowering plants to provide nectar. Sections 11 and 12 are especially butterfly rich with a higher density of flowering, nectar providing plants and section 12 was again excluded from the annual hay cut for this reason. It was cut during the autumn after all butterfly activity had ceased. Section 2, incorporating the backwater, was also butterfly rich as it also receives a lot of warm sun and contains nectar sources.

Some 5-10 years of data will be required to be confident of any meaningful changes in numbers, flight periods and distributions. Butterfly populations can fluctuate widely from one year to the next due to environmental variations so trends only emerge over many years.

Management work to prevent scrub encroachment into the grassland was carried out during the autumn. Additionally some tree thinning to reduce shading and allow more sunlight and warmth to reach the grassland has been achieved due to wind blown branches coming off some of the bigger trees. This work maintains a balance between grassland and woodland edge both of which are key habitats for the butterfly species that live in and visit this site.