



ORIOLE BIRDING



TOUR REPORT **NORFOLK BUTTERFLIES & DRAGONFLIES** **11TH – 14TH JULY 2021**

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MONDAY 12TH JULY - *Overcast with some sunny intervals and light rain, 19C*

A superb day in the field today despite the decidedly dodgy weather forecast meaning that, rather than the planned focus on butterflies and odonata, we had to go for a birding itinerary and hope to take any chances that came our way if the sun did appear. Starting down at Cley, we parked at the East Bank and headed down towards Arnold's Marsh – it was already much brighter, and warmer, than the forecast had suggested! A family of **Reed Warblers** were showing brilliantly by the path, with the young sitting on the tops of the umbellifers and reeds to escape the soaked vegetation. Sedge Warbler was seen in similar fashion, and **Marsh Harrier** was also seen over the reedbed. Checking beyond The Serpentine, we could see a few **Black-tailed Godwits** on the pool at the back, plus a roosting **Greenshank** and first-summer **Little Gull**. Down at Arnold's, we added four Dunlin, Sandwich Terns, two adult **Mediterranean Gulls** that breezed over west calling (plus another 3cy bird on the deck) and superb views of a family of **Bearded Tits** by the sluice along the main drain. While scanning down the dyke, we saw not one but three **Water Rails** out in the open including two juvs with dark bills. It was now really quite warm and muggy, and so we began to see our first insects – Ringlet, Meadow Brown, **Essex Skipper**, Small Tortoiseshell and a very out-of-place male **Banded Demoiselle** settled in the grass at the north end of the East Bank! After a quick look offshore, where we saw three **Eider** heading east, single Gannet and lots of passing Sandwich Terns, we decided to take a short walk east along the shingle to look for **Grayling**. We duly found one, and had typical views of this master of disguise laying flat against the pebbles and blending in with its cryptically patterned underwing. **Black-tailed Skimmer** and **Emperor** were also added as we headed back to the car park for a well earned brew.



Grayling, Cley shingle ridge 12th July

Up to the heaths next and despite the rain starting to set in, we did very well with our main target – the **Silver-studded Blue**. Swarms of them were seen fluttering over the heather and we were able to spend some time admiring and photographing them. Large and **Small Skippers** were both seen too, and a pair of **Woodlark** came up from the side of the track. Heading off to explore a bit further for

Dartford Warblers, we had some lovely close views of Yellowhammer and Linnet, and then heard a brief snatch of Dartford song which helped direct our search. We found a pair feeding fledged young, and by standing quietly we had some absolutely superb views of both birds once we'd worked out where they liked to perch before and after feeding their fledglings. A real treat to get such good views. Back to the van then for a rather late lunch, in the rain, before deciding our next move.



Silver-studded Blue, 12th July

With the weather seemingly deteriorating we opted to head next to Stiffkey Fen as we were keen to catch up with some **Spoonbills** – this site is one of their favourite gathering areas post-fledging from the burgeoning Holkham colony. As we squeezed our way along the very overgrown trail alongside the River Stiffkey, we could see about 23 **Spoonbills** at the back of the scrape, but hoped for better views from up on the seawall. A lovely **Comma** was basking on the brambles too, and there were lots of Meadow Brown and Gatekeeper flying in the muggy conditions too. Up on the seawall, we couldn't actually see the **Spoonbill** flock but two were sitting out on the main island with two **Great White Egrets** for company, and we had tremendous flight views of three more **Spoonbills** heading more or less over our heads and out to the harbour. One of these – a juvenile with 'teaspoon' bill – dropped into the creek right next to us and gave some remarkable close views. Brilliant! Other highlights here included two broods of **Little-ringed Plover** (one of two half grown chicks, the other of three tiny youngsters) plus a fully fledged juv and the two adult pairs. Four **Green Sandpipers** and at least two Common Sandpipers were also seen, making for a pretty good selection of birds here..

Our final port of call today was the ever-excellent North Point pools at Wells. A pair of **Grey Partridge** with a chick greeted us as we drove down the track, but scanning the productive east pool was really difficult due to the high vegetation. However, almost the first bird we clapped eyes on

distantly from the car park, was a juvenile **Black-tailed Godwit**. Being early July, this could mean only one thing and sure enough the plain brown scapulars and coverts, pale fringed but lacking any bright orange or gold markings, and the lack of orange wash to the breast, proved this was a **Continental Black-tailed Godwit *limosa***. These exquisite waders are always an exciting encounter, with a brief window of opportunity to find a juvenile in July as they disperse the Ouse Washes before embarking straight to their African winter quarters. We could soon see that the bird was in fact colour ringed, and is therefore probably a headstarted bird released into the wild on the washes earlier this season – a really lovely and subtle bird which we were very pleased to be able to get to grips with. Also on site were another brace of **Green Sandpipers**, three more Common Sandpipers and 5-6 **Ruff** including a smart male still with full breeding regalia. Not a bad end to a great day!



Black-tailed Godwit of the nominate form *limosa*, Wells North Point 12th July (pic by Mark Golley)

TUESDAY 13TH JULY – *Sunny spells and warm, 19C*

A fabulous day today with a feast of dragonflies and butterflies in pretty ideal conditions. We headed out to the heaths first of all this morning, to search for odonata typical of acidic boggy habitats and we really bagged up in the warm sunshine! A song-fighting **Woodlark** greeted us as we wandered out across the heather-clad heath, and soon we found our first **Keeled Skimmer** – a lovely mature male, and the first of dozens we would go on to see during the morning. One or two females of Common Blue Damselfly were observed in the heather (the row of black ‘missiles’ along the top of the abdomen being diagnostic despite the various different colour intensities seen) and once we got in amongst the sedge grass and boggy areas, we began to flush one or two darters. The first ones we saw were **Common Darters**, being quite large and with pale edged legs and only fine black lines on the side of the thorax. But we soon found our first **Black Darter**, an immature male with lots of black along the underside of the abdomen. The downward pointing black triangle on the thorax could be easily observed, and we also compared the broader black bands across the side of the thorax (complete with green spots). We went on to observe a dozen or more **Black Darters**, from ovipositing females to fully mature black males – the best showing we have ever had of this often elusive species on tour. The areas of open water produced a whole host of other dragonflies, including lots of **Keeled Skimmer**, **Four-spotted Chaser**, **Emperor** (a dazzling male, and a female laying eggs), and **Black-tailed Skimmer**. Among the damsels though, we had a real treat in store, with at least twenty male **Scarce Blue-tailed Damselflies** seen superbly well. This new Norfolk

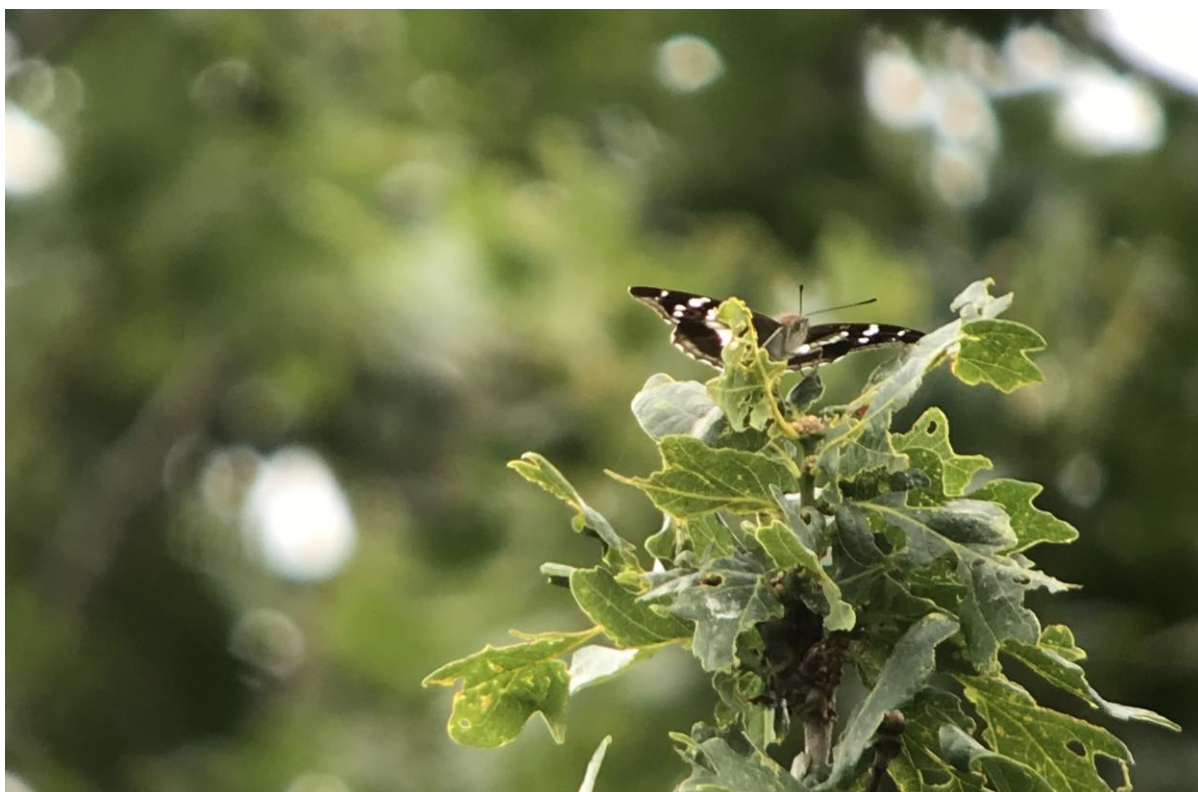
colonist has found a toe-hold here, despite the nearest colony being in the New Forest! We only saw males today, and plenty of them – often alongside common Blue-tailed Damselfly too. Eventually, we had to tear ourselves away, but the walk back produced a few butterflies – **Small Copper**, **Brimstone** and Large Skipper among them.



Black Darter, 13th July

Next we headed to a real butterfly spot, the excellent Foxley Wood which has shot to prominence in the last three years with the appearance of **Purple Emperor** there. We lunched in the car park, noting a **Purple Hairstreak** with the aid of the telescope, high up in the top of an oak. We could just see it peeping out at us from behind an oak leaf! Next up were scope views of a gorgeous male **Silver-washed Fritillary**, and then two **White Admirals** together floating along beside the path. Setting off the to best area for the emperors though, it clouded over and even briefly started to rain! Not ideal! Thankfully this soon cleared and it took about ten seconds of sunshine to bring the first **Purple Emperor** out, flitting and gliding around the top of an oak. Over the next half hour, we watched two **Purple Emperors** gliding around in the canopy, and were able to get some excellent prolonged scope views of them with patience. On the walk back, another male **Silver-washed Fritillary** was taking minerals from the path in front of us, and back by the car park another **White Admiral** was nectaring on bramble blossom. It took us a while to leave in the end, as two more **Purple Emperors** appeared and gave us our best views yet, with one perching beautifully in the open in a pine tree. **Green-veined White** was also added – white butterflies generally seem to be in incredibly short supply this year.

We ended the day checking a local site for Scarce Emerald Damselfly without success, but we did see scores of Common **Emerald Damselfly**, and also several **Ruddy Darters** which were our first of the trip. A really good day, and we were hoping for more of the same tomorrow!



Purple Emperor – a typical view at Foxley Wood this afternoon

WEDNESDAY 14TH JULY - *Overcast with fresh Northerly wind, 18C*

Our plans for the day were somewhat scuppered by the weather forecast, which had suggested we would get sunny spells and temperatures up to 20C. In fact on arrival in Great Ryburgh this morning it was raining! So we had to switch things round and head first to Titchwell for some birding, hoping the day would warm up in the meantime. The freshmarsh was brimming with birds, as is typical for a mid July day - hundreds of gaudy Icelandic **Black-tailed Godwits** and a big flock of post-breeding **Avocets** being the most obvious waders present. Among the godwits was a fabulous leucistic bird with cream plumage spotted all over with black, a superb looking thing. But sifting through the throng, we also saw about 30 summer adult **Dunlin**, a couple of **Spotted Redshanks**, and two lovely summer plumaged **Knot**. **Little-ringed Plovers** numbered at least five, and a single Common Ringed Plover was seen too. We moved round to Parrinder to change the angle a bit and check carefully inside the fenced island for the Pectoral Sandpiper that was seen yesterday. We didn't locate it, but two **Common Sandpipers** were seen and we ended up on eight **Spotted Redshanks**. **Ruff** were very much in evidence too - all males in varying stages of moult, but one close to the path still possessed its full neck ruff.

A dilemma of where to go next, as the weather hadn't improved at all. We opted for Holkham, hoping that at least on the south side of the pines, there would be some shelter from the cool wind. A few Meadow Browns and Ringlets were bouncing around in the grass as we walked west through the meals, but we couldn't see any activity around the elms from the colony of **White-letter Hairstreaks**. We took a short walk up to the beach, where we could distantly see a few hundred **Common Scoters** bobbing in the heavy swell offshore, but it was clear we weren't going to see any butterflies in the widenswept dunes so we retreated back to the shelter of the woods. Back at the elms, it was about a degree warmer than half hour previously and right away we saw a small, dark butterfly flitting around the treetops - a **White-letter Hairstreak**. It shot off and disappeared but by carefully scanning all the leaves for little dark triangles, we found it perched. The views

through the scope were good and we could see the underwing markings clearly. It barely moved for the twenty minutes or so we were watching it and the sun never got out so we were really lucky to see it. Speckled Wood, Green-veined White and Red Admiral were seen by the time we returned to the car park.

One last stop at the Oriole office to check the pond there produced plenty of damselflies - Common Blue, Azure and Large Red Damselfly all being seen. It was still too cool and windy though for any Small Red-eyes to be flying so we eventually accepted defeat around 4pm and wrapped up the tour.

#	Common Name	Scientific Name		12	13	14	
1	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>		▪			
2	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>		▪		▪	
3	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>		▪		▪	
4	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>		▪			
5	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		▪		▪	
6	Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>				▪	
7	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>		▪		▪	
8	Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>		▪			
9	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		▪		▪	
10	Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>					
11	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>				▪	
12	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>					
13	Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>				▪	
14	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>				▪	
15	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>					
16	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>		▪			
17	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
18	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>					
19	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>					
20	Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>		▪			
21	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		▪		▪	
22	Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		▪			
23	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		▪		▪	
24	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		▪		▪	
25	Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>				▪	
26	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		▪		▪	
27	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
28	Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		▪	▪	▪	
29	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		▪		▪	
30	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		▪		▪	
31	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>		▪		▪	
32	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		▪		▪	
33	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		▪		▪	
34	Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>					
35	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>					
36	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>		▪		▪	

37	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	▪		▪	
38	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	H			
39	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	▪			
40	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>				
41	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	▪		▪	
#	Common Name	Scientific Name	12	13	14	
42	Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>				
43	Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>			▪	
44	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>	▪		▪	
45	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>				
46	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	▪		▪	
47	Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>				
48	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	▪		▪	
49	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	▪			
50	Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	▪		▪	
51	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>			▪	
52	Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	▪		▪	
53	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	▪		▪	
54	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	▪		▪	
55	Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	▪			
56	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	▪			
57	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	▪			
58	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	▪	▪	▪	
59	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	▪			
60	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	▪			
61	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>				
62	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	▪		▪	
63	Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>				
64	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	▪	▪		
65	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	▪	▪	▪	
66	Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>				
67	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	▪	▪	▪	
68	Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>				
69	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>				
70	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>				
71	Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>				
72	Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	▪	▪	▪	
73	Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>				
74	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>				
75	Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>				
76	Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	▪	▪	▪	
77	Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	▪			
78	Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>			▪	
79	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	▪	▪	▪	

80	Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	▪	▪	▪
81	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	▪	▪	▪
82	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	▪	▪	▪
83	Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>			
84	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>			
85	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	▪	▪	
86	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		▪	
87	Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	▪		
88	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	▪	▪	
#	Common Name	Scientific Name	12	13	14
89	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	▪	▪	▪
90	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	▪	▪	▪
91	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	▪		
92	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	▪	▪	▪
93	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>			
94	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	▪		
95	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>			
96	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	H	▪	
97	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	▪		
98	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	▪		
99	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	H		
100	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>			
101	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>			
102	Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	▪		
103	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>	▪		
104	Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>			
105	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>			H
106	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	▪		
107	Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>			
108	Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>			
109	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	▪	▪	▪
110	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	▪	▪	▪
111	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>			
112	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>			
113	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>			
114	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		▪	
115	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>		▪	
116	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		▪	
117	Duncock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	▪		
118	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>			
119	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	▪		▪
120	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	▪		▪
121	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>			
122	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>			

123	Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>			▪		
124	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>					
125	Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		▪			
126	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		▪	▪		
127	Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>					
128	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>		▪	▪		
129	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		▪		▪	
	ADDITIONAL SPECIES						
130	Common Eider			▪			
131	Gannet			▪			
132	Corn Bunting					▪	

BUTTERFLIES							
The species list below follows the taxonomy of the checklist of the Lepidoptera of the British Isles; Agassiz (2013)							
#	Common Name	Scientific Name		12	13	14	
1	Essex Skipper	<i>Thymelicus lineola</i>		▪			
2	Small Skipper	<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>		▪	▪	▪	
3	Large Skipper	<i>Ochlodes sylvanus</i>		▪	▪		
4	Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>		▪	▪	▪	
5	Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>					
6	Green-veined White	<i>Pieris napi</i>			▪	▪	
7	Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>			▪		
8	Wall	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>					
9	Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>			▪	▪	
10	Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>					
11	Ringlet	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
12	Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>		▪	▪	▪	
13	Gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia tithonus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
14	Grayling	<i>Hipparchia semele</i>		▪			
15	Silver-washed Fritillary	<i>Argynnis paphia</i>			▪		
16	Dark Green Fritillary	<i>Argynnis aglaja</i>					
17	White Admiral	<i>Limenitis camilla</i>			▪		
18	Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>		▪	▪	▪	
19	Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>					
20	Peacock	<i>Aglais io</i>					
21	Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>		▪			
22	Comma	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>		▪			
23	Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>			▪		
24	Purple Hairstreak	<i>Favonius quercus</i>			▪		
25	White-letter Hairstreak	<i>Satyrium w-album</i>				▪	
26	Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>					
27	Silver-studded Blue	<i>Plebejus argus</i>		▪			

28	Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis</i>					
29	Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>					
30	Purple Emperor	<i>Apatura iris</i>			▪		
DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES							
<i>The dragonfly lists presented below follow the taxonomy of Schorr and Paulson (2013).</i>							
#	Common Name	Scientific Name	12	13	14		
1	Scarce Emerald Damselfly	<i>Lestes dryas</i>					
2	Emerald Damselfly	<i>Lestes sponsa</i>		▪			
3	Banded Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>	▪	▪	▪		
4	Small Red Damselfly	<i>Ceragrion tenellum</i>					
5	Azure Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion puella</i>		▪	▪		
6	Common Blue Damselfly	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	▪	▪	▪		
7	Red-eyed Damselfly	<i>Erythromma najas</i>					
8	Small Red-eyed Damselfly	<i>Erythromma viridulum</i>					
9	Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>	▪	▪	▪		
10	Large Red Damselfly	<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>		▪	▪		
#	Common Name	Scientific Name	12	13	14		
11	Southern Hawker	<i>Aeshna cyanea</i>		▪			
12	Brown Hawker	<i>Aeshna grandis</i>					
13	Emperor Dragonfly	<i>Anax imperator</i>	▪	▪			
14	Broad-bodied Chaser	<i>Libellula depressa</i>					
15	Four-spotted Chaser	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	▪	▪			
16	Black-tailed Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	▪	▪			
17	Keeled Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum coerulescens</i>		▪			
18	Black Darter	<i>Sympetrum danae</i>		▪			
19	Ruddy Darter	<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>		▪	▪		
20	Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>		▪	▪		
21	Scarce Blue-tailed Damsel	<i>Ischnura pumilio</i>		▪			