

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 13-Mar-18 11:15 PM GMT

Thanks Paul, Trevor, David – and apols for not thanking you sooner!

Isle of Wight

I made the most of today's sunshine by visiting various chins on the Isle of Wight looking for Glanville Fritillary larval webs since the larvae are now out of hibernation. I'm pleased to say that I found well over 50 webs (when I stopped counting) which equates to approximately 5000 larvae! I hope this bodes well for a good year on the island. Most larvae are still in their hibernating 5th instar, but some are now in the penultimate 6th instar. I also bumped into Andy Butler (Butterfly Recorder to the Isle of Wight) and Patrick Wood (BC staff) who were surveying the larval webs and had a good natter!



A shot to provide some context



5th instar larvae



5th instar larvae with a 6th instar – easily distinguished based on the size of the head



6th instar larva (mostly!) having built a new dense web

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Wurzel, 14-Mar-18 12:12 AM GMT

Fantastic Pete the prospects look good for the Glanville Frits, those red heads really are distinctive 😊
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 14-Mar-18 11:25 PM GMT

Wow! I didn't realise they made themselves so visible! There's no attempt at camouflage with these larvae...I suspect the black and red colours along with the sharp spines make a powerful statement of their own.

Re: Pete Eeles

by Andrew555, 15-Mar-18 08:54 AM GMT

Very interesting Pete, I hope as you say this will be a good year for them. 😊

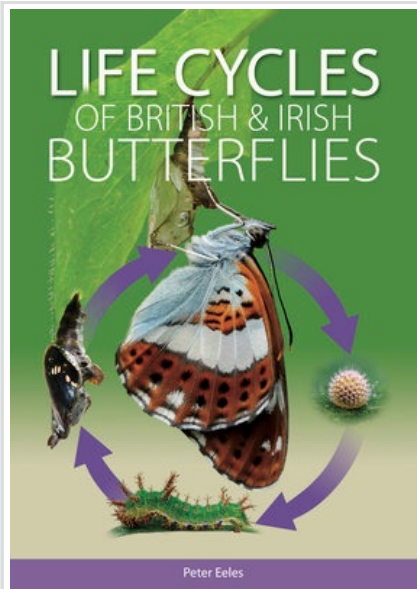
Cheers

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 06-Aug-18 07:09 PM GMT

Life Cycles of British and Irish Butterflies

I've not posted in my personal diary for some time, but thought I finally had something worth sharing! I spent a couple of hours today with Peter Creed (at NatureBureau, who publish under "Pisces Publications" and produced The Butterflies of Sussex) finalising the cover of my book – due out in October 2019. I know that sounds an age away, but it will come around soon enough! The timing is simply down to the time it takes to write the species descriptions (approximately one per week) and I'm about half way through.



Mulling things over with Pete Creed

I'm pleased to say that I now have photos of every stage and every larval instar of all 59 species that the book will cover. Unsurprisingly, getting to this point has taken a huge amount of time and effort, involving a significant amount of travel and captive rearing to support this effort. I thought I'd share a few photos here to give an indication of what to expect but would like to thank everyone from UKB (and further afield) that has been so supportive over the last year. A special thanks goes to Mark Colvin and Vince Massimo who have reviewed every species description as it's been written. It's difficult to state the highlights thus far, but here are a few images selected at random since it's difficult to know what to post! Requests welcome 😊



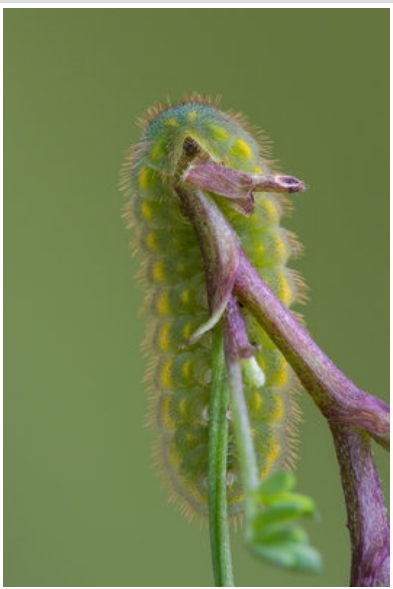
Small Blue



Northern Brown Argus – you can see the white dot!



Essex Skipper



Chalk Hill Blue



Large Blue – final instar

Capturing the Large Blue life cycle was a challenge for obvious reasons, but thanks to the support of Dave Simcox and Sarah Meredith, we managed to get everything needed for the book 😊 So – watch this space, as they say!

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Wurzel, 06-Aug-18 08:43 PM GMT

That looks like an utterly awesome read a real magnum opus 🤩🤩🤩 I've already put it on my Christmas List 2019 😊 Huge congratulations on getting this far and so close to the end 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pete Eeles

by bugboy, 06-Aug-18 09:56 PM GMT

You are the next Frohawk!

Re: Pete Eeles

by Paul Harfield, 06-Aug-18 11:12 PM GMT

Hi Pete

That looks like a fantastic piece of work and well worth all that immense time and effort. I can hardly wait 😊

Re: Pete Eeles

by MikeOxon, 07-Aug-18 04:37 PM GMT

This looks to be a valuable contribution to the literature. I'm fascinated by the different strategies the various species use to get through the winter, with techniques based around each of the life stages.

I do hope that you have a smoother run to publication than the Borneo Butterflies book, which I've been awaiting for three years – it seems to be what the computer world calls 'vapourware'.

Re: Pete Eeles

by Padfield, 07-Aug-18 05:41 PM GMT

When you are knighted (probably along with Neil H), please, please ask the Queen if Minnie can come to the ceremony.

I think this will be the most important book on British butterflies to appear since Frohawk.

Guy

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 08-Aug-18 06:52 PM GMT

Those early stage images plus the intended cover for the book look positively mouthwatering, Pete.

There's certainly a niche in the market for this and you've homed in on it.

I shall look forward immensely to buying the finished product.

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 23-Sep-18 08:03 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, Bugboy, Paul, Mike, Guy and David! It's all very exciting and writing the species descriptions is very time-consuming ... I'm averaging out about one species per week given the amount of material that is available on most of them that I need to read, but I'm learning a heck of a lot in the process! The book also now has a website 😊

<http://www.butterflylifecycles.com>

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Wurzel, 23-Sep-18 08:44 AM GMT

This looks amazing Pete 😊 Just sponsored a species - early Christmas present to myself 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pete Eeles

by CallumMac, 23-Sep-18 09:51 AM GMT

As Wurzel's already said, it looks absolutely fantastic! 😊 I'm also going to head straight over and bag myself a species. Might it be possible to include a very short dedication in the sponsorship slots (as per the upcoming Moth Atlas) or is the space too limited?

Wurzel wrote:

Just sponsored a species - early Christmas present to myself

Looking at the species which have already gone, and remembering your comments on my PD this year, I think I can guess which one! 😊

Re: Pete Eeles

by millerd, 23-Sep-18 10:01 AM GMT

Wow. This really does look brilliant, Pete. 😊 I've also dived in and sponsored a species - many on here will be able to guess which one! 😊

Don't work too hard - looking forward to seeing you at the Social in November.

Cheers,

Dave

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 23-Sep-18 10:18 AM GMT

Thanks all!

CallumMac wrote:

Might it be possible to include a very short dedication in the sponsorship slots (as per the upcoming Moth Atlas)?

Yes, that's fine.

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Wurzel, 23-Sep-18 01:00 PM GMT

I reckon there's a new game in this – pin the species to the sponsor 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 23-Sep-18 01:04 PM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

I reckon there's a new game in this – pin the species to the sponsor 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Yeah – I'm learning a lot about the UKB members as species get sponsored – some "matches" have surprised me!

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 23-Sep-18 01:08 PM GMT

Had to be Brown Hairstreak for me as it's my #1 most loved species!

Good job it wasn't Purple Emperor as they'd already been bagged – I reckon I can predict who two of the sponsors were! 😊

Re: Pete Eeles

by Neil Freeman, 24-Sep-18 07:28 PM GMT

Really looking forward to this. Just sponsored a species, no prizes for guessing which one I have gone for 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 24-Sep-18 10:53 PM GMT

Neil Freeman wrote:

...no prizes for guessing which one I have gone for

I guess one that regularly appears in your garden, Neil? 😊

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 26-Sep-18 08:44 AM GMT

This sounds like a good game for the Xmas social!

Anyway – I reared through a few Holly Blue larvae this year for one reason – to get a decent shot of the ichneumon wasp *Listrodomus nyctemerus* whose sole host is the Holly Blue. The wasp lays its eggs in early instar Holly Blue larvae, one egg per larva, with the adult wasp eventually emerging from the Holly Blue pupa, as shown here with the decapitated pupal case where it made its exit. I guess this is a male since it has no ovipositor – but a spectacular insect nonetheless!



Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 26-Sep-18 08:49 PM GMT

Thanks for this, Pete. We read a lot about these parasitic wasps but rarely do we actually see them.

I presume your book will go a long way to putting that right?

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 26-Sep-18 09:49 PM GMT

David M wrote:

Thanks for this, Pete. We read a lot about these parasitic wasps but rarely do we actually see them.

I presume your book will go a long way to putting that right?

Thanks David. Due to space constraints, I'm having to limit a few things (e.g. no aberrations are included given the focus of the book) and parasitoids is one of those areas where we'll only be including those that are a significant element of the life cycle – such as those associated with the Holly Blue (*Listrodomus nyctemerus*), Large White (*Apanteles glomeratus*) and Marsh Fritillary (*Cotesia bignelli*).

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 27-Sep-18 08:58 AM GMT

Thanks for that, Pete. I'm looking forward to it immensely. It should fill many gaps in our collective understanding of the life cycle of butterflies and the threats they face.

Roll on publication.

Re: Pete Eeles

by Butterflysaurus rex, 27-Sep-18 05:46 PM GMT

Hi Pete,

When I saw your photo of the (*Listrodomus nyctemerus*) wasp I did a double take because I'd seen an insect that looked very similar before. At first glance it could be easy to confuse the two so to avoid any misidentifications in the field I thought it might be worth showing it here. The green markings are more extensive and it's probably quite a bit larger. When I first saw one I thought it might be a type of ichneumon wasp but after a bit of research I discovered it was a predatory Sawfly (*Rhogogaster viridis*)

Best Wishes

James.



Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 28-Sep-18 03:12 PM GMT

Thanks James – similar indeed! Thanks for sharing.

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Paul Harfield, 13-Oct-18 12:03 PM GMT

Pete Eeles wrote:

Due to space constraints, I'm having to limit a few things (e.g. no aberrations are included given the focus of the book) and parasitoids is one of those areas where we'll only be including those that are a significant element of the life cycle – such as those associated with the Holly Blue (*Listrodomus nycthemerus*), Large White (*Apanteles glomeratus*) and Marsh Fritillary (*Cotesia bignelli*).

Cheers,

– Pete

Hi Pete

'The Parasitoids of British Butterflies'that sounds like the title of your next book 😊

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 20-Nov-18 04:14 PM GMT

Apologies for not responding, Paul! Yes, I would love to see that book, but the number of parasitoids of British butterflies is a VERY large number!

Cheers,

– Pete