

Re: Andy Wilson

by Andy Wilson, 31-May-19 12:35 PM GMT

Two Small Pearls at Abbots Wood

Having seen some Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries at Park Corner Heath last week and reading about how well they are doing there, I have been keen to see if there are any at Abbots Wood, near Hailsham, where they were introduced two years ago. Yesterday afternoon I was lucky and saw two: one of which had abnormal dark markings.



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary (possible ab?)



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary

There were also a few rather worn Pearl-bordered Fritillaries still flying, but numbers are well down now.



Pearl-bordered Fritillary

Re: Andy Wilson

by Wurzel, 31-May-19 10:11 PM GMT

Definitely an interesting individual Andy - it's unusual to see such an asymmetry in their markings what with the left hand fore wing with it's dark band across it 🤔👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Andy Wilson

by David M, 01-Jun-19 12:26 PM GMT

I can't work out whether that's an aberration or just that something has happened to it during emergence. It looks as though the left forewing has suffered greater dark suffusion than the right.

Re: Andy Wilson

by Andy Wilson, 14-Jun-19 04:59 PM GMT

Knegative at Knepp today

I went Emperor hunting at Knepp this afternoon, more in a spirit of hope than expectation.

Conditions were marginal. Only about 18C with a lot of cloud cover and a fresh, gusty wind. Very little was flying apart from a few Meadow Brown and Small Heath, all of which were hunkering down. No PE, WA or SWF -- just a singleton Red Admiral nectaring on bramble.

The forecast is better for early next week, so I plan to go back on Monday.

Re: Andy Wilson

by Andy Wilson, 17-Jun-19 05:19 PM GMT

Knepp still not yet Purple

I spent about 5 hours at Knepp today, searching Green Lane and other parts of the southern block. At first there was some cloud cover and a cool, gusty wind, but in the afternoon things warmed up with plenty of sunshine and the wind calmed down a little.

No Purple Emperors were seen, despite a lot of neck-craning and scanning the canopy with binoculars. To be honest, the only species flying in any numbers were Meadow Brown and Large Skipper. There were also a few Small Heath, Speckled Wood, Red Admiral and a single Green-Veined White. No Marbled White, nor any typical summer woodland species, such as Silver-washed Fritillary, White Admiral and Purple Hairstreak. These are all species that I usually see here during the Emperor flight period.

I think we've got a few days to go before we see a 2019 Knepp *iris*.

Re: Andy Wilson

by David M, 17-Jun-19 10:58 PM GMT

Andy Wilson wrote:
Knepp still not yet Purple..

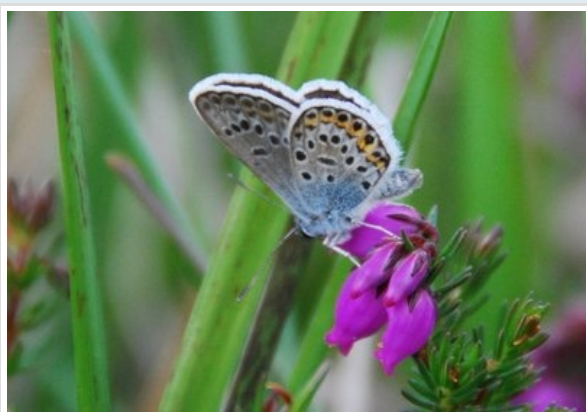
That doesn't surprise me, Andy. Even in warm years Emperors are rarely out prior to midsummer's day. Give it a week and I'm sure things will kick off.

Re: Andy Wilson

by Andy Wilson, 25-Jun-19 04:47 PM GMT

Silver-studded Blues on Ashdown Forest

I was pleased to find some Silver-studded Blues out on the Ashdown Forest this afternoon. This was just west of the B2026, near the Smugglers car park. 4 individuals were seen, including 2 males that were having repeated dog-fights low down over the Bell Heather.





Re: Andy Wilson

by David M, 26-Jun-19 08:26 PM GMT

Very nice, Andy. Sadly, I won't get to see them in the UK this year which is a shame as they are such a wonderful species.

Re: Andy Wilson

by Wurzel, 27-Jun-19 01:57 PM GMT

Cracking shots Andy especially the middle one – a 'floating in mid-air Blue' 😊 I really need to get out to try and find some for myself...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Andy Wilson

by Andy Wilson, 30-Jun-19 09:34 AM GMT

A hot day at Botany Bay and Knepp

I visited Botany Bay yesterday morning. No sign of Emperors and this was confirmed by a local enthusiast who had been there since 9 am. However, in the heat of the day, Silver-washed Fritillaries and White Admirals were coming down to the ground in Emperor fashion, searching for moisture.



Silver-washed Fritillary



White Admiral

On the way home we called in at Green Lane, Knepp and were almost immediately rewarded by single Purple Emperor that had been spotted by another couple (their first ever sighting!). Further down the lane, at a known assembly point, I saw two battling it out at canopy level, and they were briefly joined by a third that tried its luck in the melee.

At the next assembly point, we bumped into Neil and Mark Hulme, and a family of people who had never seen an Emperor. Neil demonstrated his expert mud-slinging skills (!) and managed several times to get an Emperor to take to the air. It was wonderful to witness the enthusiasm of these newbies to Emperor hunting, from grandfather down to grandson.

Also, for the first time, I tried my theory of using a UV torch to tempt them down from the canopy. It wasn't exactly a scientific experiment, but early results suggest that it doesn't work!

Re: Andy Wilson

by Wurzel, 30-Jun-19 10:22 PM GMT

Cracking shots of the WA and SWF Andy - I'm intrigued by this 'mud slinging' trick 🤔😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Andy Wilson

by David M, 01-Jul-19 08:56 PM GMT

Lovely Silver Washed Fritillary, Andy, and the White Admiral is even more impressive.

It's quite a late start for Emperors this year but it's good to know they're now starting to emerge.

Re: Andy Wilson

by Andy Wilson, 02-Jul-19 10:56 AM GMT

Caught Knepping Again!

I bagged a total of 16 Purple Emperors at Knepp yesterday, far less than the real experts but it was good to see them starting to emerge in decent numbers. All were at high level, apart from one I saw briefly come to ground but flew up again quickly. I got one heavily cropped shot of a male that decided to use a fir tree as his vantage point.



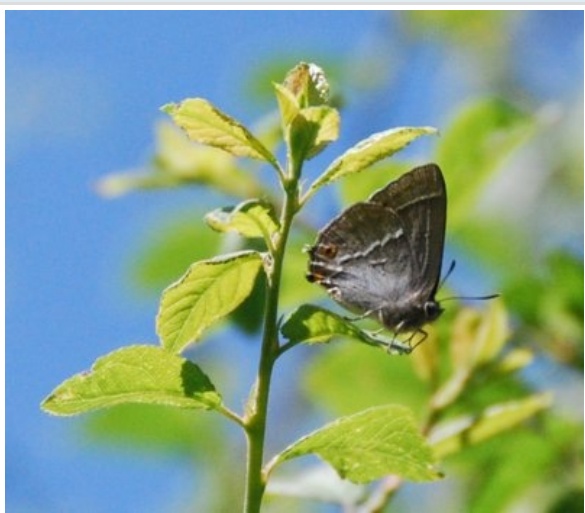
Purple Emperor up a fir tree

It was also good to see many people who were new to Knepp and give them some guidance on how to look for Emperors. One young Dutch couple had no idea what to look for, but they were delighted when I managed to find them a couple of males that were going for each other in the canopy.

I also got a picture of my first Gatekeeper of the year and one obliging Purple Hairstreak that came down to head height.



Gatekeeper



Purple Hairstreak

Re: Andy Wilson

by Wurzel, 03-Jul-19 06:33 PM GMT

It's great when the Silly Season start in earnest Andy 😊 Nice low Purple Hairstreak 😊🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Andy Wilson

by David M, 03-Jul-19 10:04 PM GMT

Unusual for Hedge Browns to emerge prior to Emperors descending to ground level to indulge themselves with their mineral imbibing en masse.

It's been a strange season to date with quite a few odd happenings and chronological hiccups.

Re: Andy Wilson

by ernie f, 04-Jul-19 07:32 AM GMT

Andy – nice to see you are having luck with purples (both Emperors and Hairstreaks). I only saw my first two Emperors yesterday – and you are already on 16 – but that's Knepp for you I suppose!

AND you got a Gatekeeper. It's difficult to keep up. We wait in anticipation for all this to happen after the butterfly "lull" in June and then all hell breaks lose and you are spoilt for choice.

Re: Andy Wilson

by Goldie M, 04-Jul-19 05:00 PM GMT

Great shot of the Emperor Andy, there a beautiful Butterfly when the Sun catches them. 😊 Goldie 😊

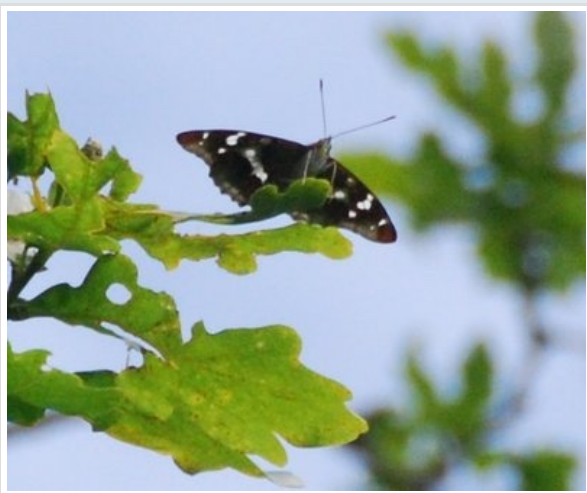
Re: Andy Wilson

by Andy Wilson, 05-Jul-19 06:56 PM GMT

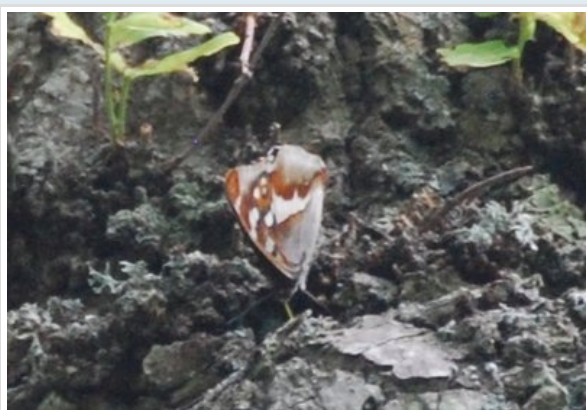
Yet another visit to Knepp

I'm lucky enough to live only 45 minutes from Knepp, but at this rate, I need to move nearer! Having said that, with family commitments coming up, this morning may possibly be my last visit this year.

I parked at the north end of Green Lane and almost immediately scored my first Emperor in one of the tall oaks beside the bridleway. Several others were seen as I made my way down to the pond, but they seemed rather lethargic and I never saw more than singletons. Making my way eastwards towards Bentons Gorse, I met up with Neil Hulme who was working with a couple of guys who had some serious professional video equipment. Neil showed them (and me) an oak with a sap run, and right on cue, an Emperor flew in towards it. I got some shots of him on the foliage and others where he was on the trunk getting plastered on the sap. They are long range and heavily cropped, but I hope they are worth posting. The professionals will have got much better shots.



Purple Emperor (m)



Purple Emperor (m) taking sap

I wasn't doing a scientific count, but I must have seen over 20 Emperors in about 3 hours this morning. I also saw a nice female White Admiral in a little

glade on the south side of Bentons Gorse.



White Admiral (f)

Re: Andy Wilson

by David M, 07-Jul-19 08:05 AM GMT

Andy Wilson wrote:

...I must have seen over 20 Emperors in about 3 hours this morning....

That's good going, Andy. I think if I lived near such a site I'd find it irresistible on an almost daily basis!

Re: Andy Wilson

by Andy Wilson, 27-Aug-19 10:59 PM GMT

Long-tailed Blues in Kent

I've read reports of Long-tailed Blues from Cornwall to Sussex recently, but I had a fruitless search for them last week at Newhaven Tide Mills. However, today I was given a strong recommendation to leave my home county of East Sussex and "Go East, old man!". So I did...

Kingsdown Leas is a lovely place. It's on the coast between Dover and Deal. On the cliffs going south from the golf club there is plenty of Broad-leaved Everlasting Pea (BLEP) plus a lot of Hemp Agrimony (despite it's going over now) and Buddleia. I saw several species of Blues: Chalk Hill, Adonis and Common, but also several Long-tailed Blues: at least 6 individuals, probably more. Clearly, they favour the short sea crossing here, rather than flying across to the West Country! This is probably the best place to see LTB in the UK, and with climate change, they will probably turn up more frequently.

If the weather holds, there will be another generation here in early October.





Re: Andy Wilson

by millerd, 27-Aug-19 11:21 PM GMT

That's where I saw mine on Sunday, Andy. It is indeed a great spot when the sun shines. There were certainly LTB eggs as well, so as you say, here's hoping for local-grown ones in six weeks or so.

Good shots – that tailless male looks a lot like one I saw. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

Re: Andy Wilson

by Goldie M, 28-Aug-19 10:47 AM GMT

That's great news Andy, I'll be in Kent for a while in a few weeks, hope fully I may just be lucky and see some, I know my way to Kingsland having been there before, love your Shots, Goldie 😊

Re: Andy Wilson

by Andy Wilson, 28-Aug-19 06:02 PM GMT

millerd wrote:

Good shots – that tailless male looks a lot like one I saw. 😊

Just found the pic you posted and I think you're right. The pattern of damage on the forewings is very similar, so it could be the same individual. It was around a patch of Hemp Agrimony that has some BLEP mixed in, only about 50 yards up from the golf club car park.

I've already made a diary note to revisit in early October, if the weather holds!

Re: Andy Wilson

by Wurzel, 28-Aug-19 08:57 PM GMT

Great stuff Andy – any chance you can send a few further West...say to Salisbury? 😊👍🇬🇧

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Andy Wilson

by jenks, 28-Aug-19 11:30 PM GMT

Wurzel said " Great stuff Andy – any chance you can send a few further West...say to Salisbury? "

How about making that Cardiff ?

Jenks (wishin` and a hopin`).

Re: Andy Wilson

by Andy Wilson, 29-Aug-19 12:12 AM GMT

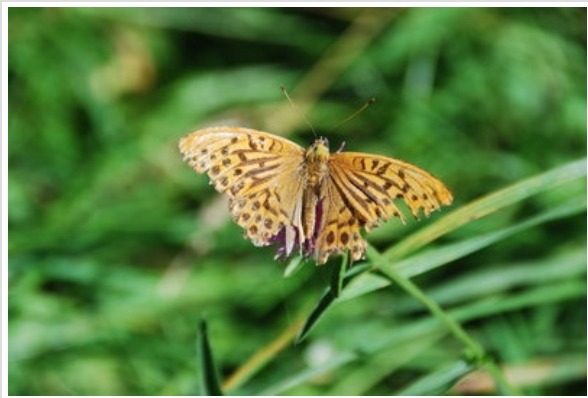
Hehe, I wish 😊 But I understand they have been seen in Devon and Cornwall.

Re: Andy Wilson

by Andy Wilson, 29-Aug-19 05:24 PM GMT

A late Silver-washed Fritillary

During a walk today in the Friston Forest area of the South Downs, it was a surprise to encounter this poor old male Silver-washed Fritillary, who looked well past his sell-by date. Other species seen were Painted Lady (dozens of them), Common Blue, Brown Argus, Meadow Brown, Small Heath and lots of Whites.



Silver-washed Fritillary (male)

Re: Andy Wilson

by Wurzel, 29-Aug-19 08:03 PM GMT

He's holding up quite well for this time of year...the ones I've seen at the tail end of August usually only have about a third of their wing area remaining 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Andy Wilson

by essexbuzzard, 29-Aug-19 08:21 PM GMT

Good stuff, Andy. Many of us got our first sightings of Long-Tailed Blues at Kingsdown, back in 2013, and it's great to know they are there again. My Essex and Kent searches have so far drawn a blank but, as you say, Kingsdown is a great place with plenty of foodplant, so a trip there could well be on the cards in a few weeks...

Re: Andy Wilson

by David M, 31-Aug-19 03:56 PM GMT

Great that you got to see the Long Tailed Blues, Andy, and yes, they're becoming ever more commonplace. It's only a few years ago when people were turning up with nets due to the rarity value but that no longer seems to be happening now, thankfully.

Your Silver Washed Fritillary is a real warrior! I often see them in Pembrokeshire in both late August and even early September, but of course they emerge that bit later here so it's not too unusual.