

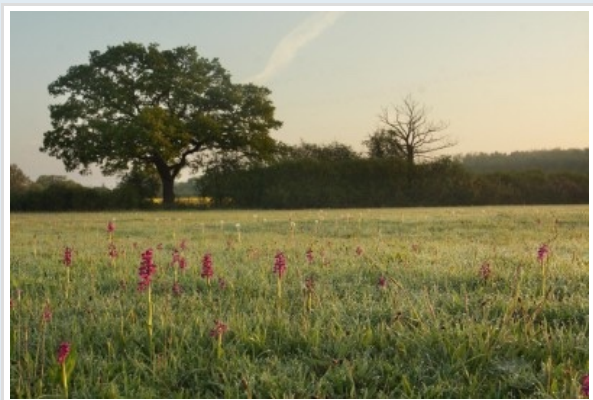
Re: William

by William, 07-Feb-20 08:29 PM GMT

Catching Up

Sadly I haven't had as much time as I did to post on UK Butterflies in the last year or so, but as ever I still enjoy reading about everyone else's butterflies, and indeed looking for my own. Despite this, I thought I'd try and resuscitate my diary and do a bit of catching up (with a few highlights from the last couple of years) to tide over this last lean month before the season gets going again.

I thought I'd start with 2018 where the first highlight came in April at the incomparable Bernwood Forest Meadows. There was much wailing and gnashing of teeth on my part (and others) when the M40 compensation area was closed off (just as I moved up to Oxford!), but this is a really fantastic place to look for Black Hairstreaks too, and a really idyllic to boot – some of my favourite days butterflying have been spent looking for the hairstreaks here with singing Cuckoos, distant Curlews and Hobbys overhead, alongside Foresters and droves of the more common grassland butterflies.



Bernwood Forest Meadows – April 2018

On this particular morning I found my first Black Hairstreak larva wondering around in the blackthorn on the forest edge – beautifully camouflaged with delicate crimped edges and pink trim, just like the unfolding blackthorn leaves it was feeding on.



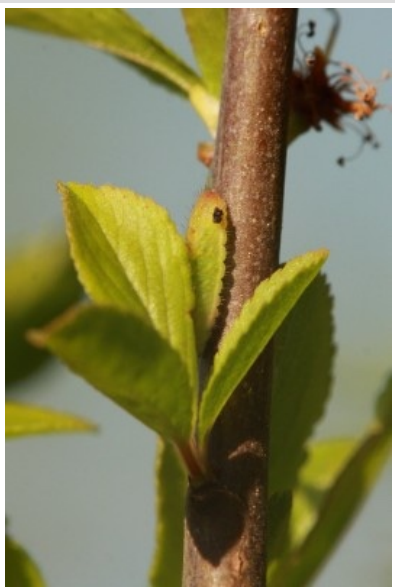
Black Hairstreak Larva



Black Hairstreak Larva

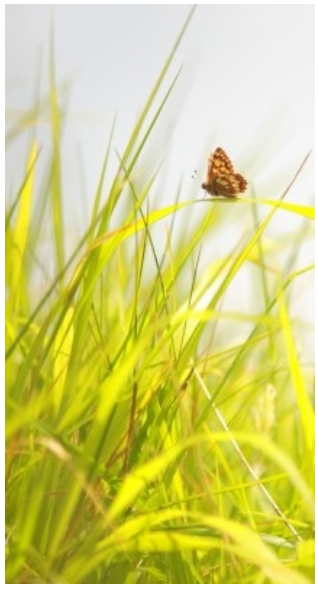


Black Hairstreak Larva



Black Hairstreak Larva - look at that camouflage!

Spring 2018 was relatively quiet for butterflies otherwise, that is apart from a memorable trip down to Sussex to see Dukes and Pearls with the indomitable Neil. We were blessed with fantastic weather, and it was a real privilege to see both species by the lorry-load on some of Neil's lovingly restored sites. Extra excitement was provided by my first White Admiral larva at Eartham Woods, something I'm still struggling to find in Oxfordshire.



Duke of Burgundy



White Admiral Larva



Neil in Action

As June got going, I was back in Oxford and lucky enough to be well-placed for the Black Hairstreak *annus mirabilis* – during a happy two days I counted 167 in various different parts of the Bernwood Forest complex, with courting pairs, egg-laying females and tumbles over the tops of the blackthorn thickets galore.



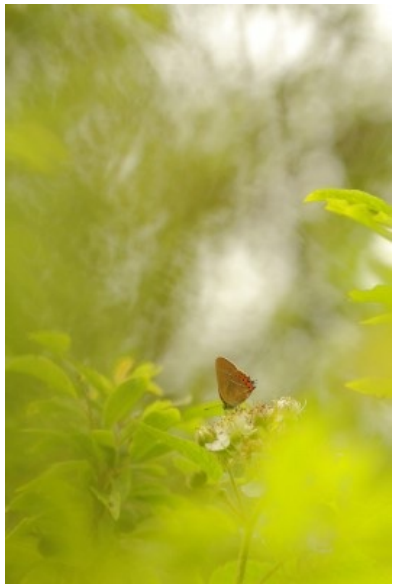
Black Hairstreak



Black Hairstreak



Black Hairstreak



Black Hairstreak

Amazingly, I didn't see another butterfly—er the whole time I was there, Bernwood can fantastically quiet and wild despite being near a large city in the middle of England, and is surrounded by wonderful countryside, in which Black Hairstreak seems to be quite widespread.



A quiet lane near Bernwood – Black Hairstreak country (featuring my (t)rusty steed)

Re: William

by Wurzel, 08-Feb-20 08:30 PM GMT

Absolutely fantastic images of the lack Hairstreaks – love the dreamy soft focus round the margins as well 😊😎🌿 Hopefully you'll have a bit more time and we'll a bit more of you on UKB this year 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: William

by David M, 10-Feb-20 07:51 PM GMT

[quote=William post_id=150563 time=1581107347 user_id=13033]...I thought I'd try and resuscitate my diary and do a bit of catching up (with a few highlights from the last couple of years) to tide over this last lean month before the season gets going again.

Lovely sequence of images as per usual, William. Please feel free to 'resuscitate' away between now and the first mild, sunny days of spring when butterflies will return.

Re: William

by Matsukaze, 11-Feb-20 03:44 PM GMT

Lovely photos of some beautiful places and excellent butterfly sites.

I saw White Admiral just up the path from the car park at Bernwood in June 2017. Technically Buckinghamshire I know, but they are in the woodland complex.