

zone
5



©John Black

Red admiral

Vanessa atalanta

Dark chocolate with a fiery red ribbon emblazoned across each upper wing makes this one of our most handsome and distinguished insects. Migrating from North Africa and Southern Europe the female will then lay her eggs here when a fresh batch of butterflies emerge in July and can be seen up until late November.

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On creeping thistle in late summer and flowering Ivy in the autumn.

Common blue

Polyommatus icarus

A distinctly lack lustre title for one with such sparkle. The male's brilliant iridescent violet-blue wings finely edged in black with a white margin, play in stark contrast to the female whose wings are brown, edged with orange dots with a dusting of blue close to and over the body.

zone
3



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In late summer, roosting head down on grass stems in meadows.

Peacock

Aglais io

When the wings are folded up it can resemble a dead leaf, but when opened, often with a hiss made by the wings rubbing together, the striking signature eye patterns are revealed, with a dazzling palette of red, purple, blue and honey suckle yellow. These eye patterns are thought to startle any would be predator.

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On knapweed, teasel and creeping thistle in summer, willow blossom in spring or even basking in the first warm sun of February.

butterflies

easy to find

Skylarks Nature Reserve

zone
4, 5



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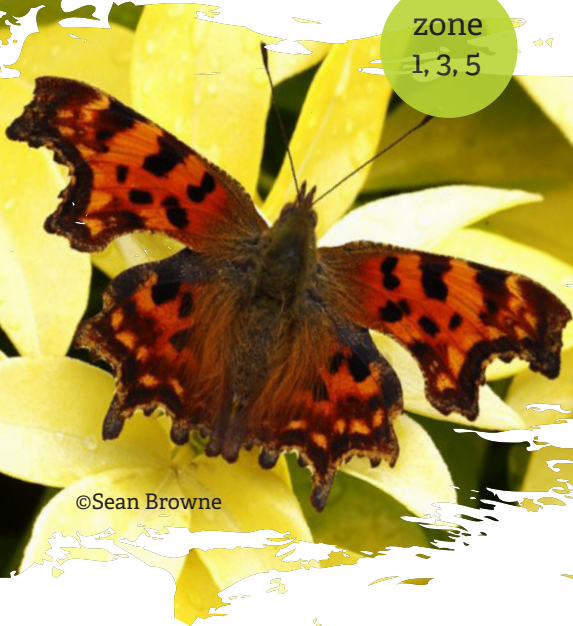
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butterflies

hard to find
Skylarks Nature Reserve



zone
1, 3, 5

Comma

Polygonia c-album

With ragged scalloped edges to the wings, that when opened give this delicate butterfly the appearance of a small tortoiseshell that has been pecked at by a bird. However, with its wings closed it resembles a brittle dead leaf with a small curved white mark punctuating its name.

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Any time of year, even warm winter days, at the edges of woodland and in clearings, or feeding on overripe fruit such as blackberries in autumn.

©Sean Browne



©Neil Pinder

Large skipper

Ochlodes sylvanus

zone
3

Whilst large in name this stocky treacle brown butterfly has a wing span that is less than the width of one wing of a red admiral. Often mistaken for a moth, possibly due to their classic 'V' shaped jet fighter resting pose, this small butterfly is sometimes found in the company of its smaller relatives, the Essex skipper and small skipper (also found at Skylarks Nature Reserve), and can be identified by the

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chequered tile patterns on the upper side and underside of the wing.

Sitting on sunlit grasses and vegetation, or gambling along woodland rides from May to July.



Brimstone

Gonopteryx rhamni

Always alighting with its wings closed this species is a master of disguise. When at rest amongst foliage it perfectly mimics a leaf in both shape, colour and even the pattern of veins. The soft sulphur yellow of the male's wings is commonly believed to be the origin of the word butterfly as in "the fly that is the colour of butter". In all fairness both male and female possess a hint of green.

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Visiting primroses and bramble in spring or teasel and thistle in autumn.

zone
6

©Matt Berry

butterflies

a **real** find

Skylarks Nature Reserve

Green hairstreak

Callophrys rubi

©Simon Jenkins

zone
3, 4

In flight this secretive butterfly, sporting a chestnut brown upper-side to its wings can easily be missed, but on landing becomes an iridescent green jewel. Standing sentry amongst hawthorn leaves, the male devotes

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In sheltered warm shrubby areas favouring hawthorn and gorse from May to June.

his time to guarding his territory, dashing out to confront any passing intruders.

Brown argus

Aricia agestis

A silvery blue flight can lead the eye to believe it has seen a female common blue, yet on landing with wings open we are treated to a feast of rich chocolate brown, with fiery tangerine orange spots dotting the outer wing, all hemmed in pristine white. Also worth

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In a range of habitats from woodland clearings to heathland and verges from May to September.

noting is that the female common blue often lacks orange dots on the upper wing and has a dusting of blue towards the base of her wings.

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zone
3



Painted lady

Vanessa cardui



zone
2

©Simon Jenkins

An elegant powerful flier with wings of a colour somewhere between marmalade orange and salmon pink, the tips of which appear dipped in black, then decorated with white spots. Migrating from North Africa each year, often in spectacular numbers. 2009 had one of the largest recorded migrations when an estimated 20 million butterflies arrived in the UK.

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From May to October worshipping the warmth of the sun on ground and rocks, or in other warm places where flowers are in abundance.

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