



Big Butterfly Count 2022

This UK-wide annual survey is run by [Butterfly Conservation](#) to help assess the health of the environment. In 2022 the survey ran between 15th July and 7th August. The weather during the survey period this year was remarkably good with lots of warm and sunny days.

This year there were 9 participants who took part in the survey that submitted records from the Plumpton and East Chiltington parishes. Between them they carried out 34 mini-surveys of 15 minutes duration each and recorded a total of 305 butterflies of 17 species as set out in the following table:

Species	Count	First Seen	Last Seen	Number of Surveys Present
Meadow Brown	92	15/07/2022	06/08/2022	26
Gatekeeper	91	15/07/2022	06/08/2022	22
Large White	25	15/07/2022	06/08/2022	15
Small White	22	15/07/2022	31/07/2022	12
Comma	18	15/07/2022	23/07/2022	11
Red Admiral	12	15/07/2022	31/07/2022	6
Ringlet	9	15/07/2022	27/07/2022	6
Speckled Wood	8	16/07/2022	23/07/2022	6
Peacock	6	15/07/2022	27/07/2022	5
Common Blue	5	27/07/2022	06/08/2022	2
Marbled White	5	15/07/2022	03/08/2022	5
Small Copper	5	27/07/2022	31/07/2022	2
Brimstone	2	16/07/2022	16/07/2022	2
Green Veined White	2	15/07/2022	23/07/2022	2
Holly Blue	1	27/07/2022	27/07/2022	1
Small Tortoiseshell	1	23/07/2022	23/07/2022	1
Painted Lady	1	17/07/2022	17/07/2022	1



The Gatekeeper was the second most numerous butterfly recorded during the survey, helped by a remarkable 27 seen during a single mini-survey on the 16th July and another 11 on the 23rd July.

18 commas were encountered during 11 mini-surveys. The maximum seen during any mini-survey was 5 on 23rd July.

Commas seems to be holding their own in England with a 4% population increase over the last 10 years.



Just a single Small Tortoiseshell was encountered during the survey on the 23rd July. A very low return for a species that was once very common but has undergone a 79% population reduction since 1976.

Similarly, only one Painted Lady was recorded during the survey period which is a bit surprising given their 10-year population trend is very much upwards at 469%. It seems unlikely that 2022 will be a spectacular irruption year for the species.



Perhaps surprisingly Speckled Wood was only encountered during 6 of the 34 mini-surveys carried out in the area, but then only 2 surveys were carried out in habitat described as Wood, whereas 15 were carried out in Fields. Although looking at the data none of the Speckled Woods were found in mini-surveys carried out in the woods. They were recorded during 4 mini-surveys described as Field and twice in Other Rural.

Some other butterflies encountered during the Survey but not counted:

Large Skipper



Brown Argus



Wall Brown

