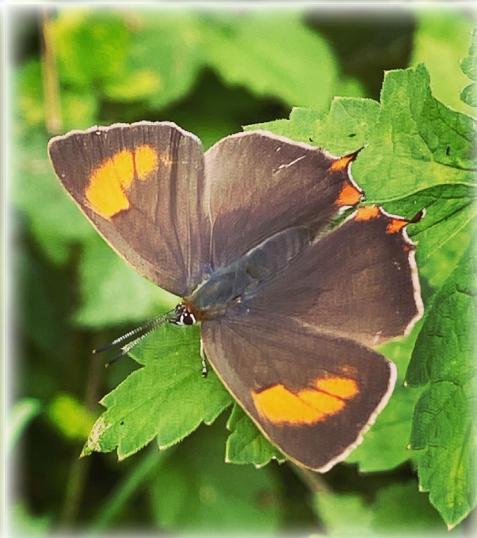


Brown Hairstreaks and other Sussex Wildlife

17th August 2021

Led by Terry Goble



Greenwings Wildlife Holidays

Tel: 01473 254658

Web: www.greenwings.co.uk

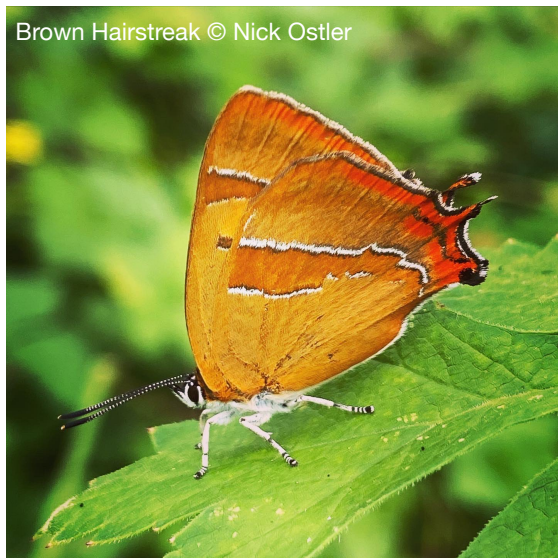
Email: enquiries@greenwings.co.uk

Brown Hairstreaks and other Sussex Wildlife Greenwings Day Trip 17th August 2021

This trip was designed to give the best possible chance of seeing Brown Hairstreak, although there was also a fine support cast of downland species. The grey and overcast conditions were not ideal, but not necessarily troublesome for spotting butterflies, however the cool northeasterly wind was more of a worry keeping temperatures down. This combined with the cold and wet summer meant that we could be hopeful, but not overly optimistic about connecting with our target species.

The group met at the station at 8:45am, before liaising with co-leader Matt and the rest of the group at Erringham Road in Shoreham. After introducing ourselves we discussed the itinerary for the day and then set off for our first target species. We drove the short distance to Steyning Rifle Range and were lucky to be able to park nearby and walk the 200 metres to the site entrance.

At the rifle range we had a brief discussion about the ecology of the Brown Hairstreak, stressing the importance of young blackthorn as a larval food plant. We then set off down



Brown Hairstreak © Nick Ostler

the valley and looked high in the ash trees for sightings of the hairstreak. We didn't take long to see the typical jerky flight of these diminutive butterflies, although they stayed quite high in the tree canopy. We walked along the valley floor to the downland slopes keeping an eye out as we walked slowly along the hedgerows. We saw mostly Meadow Browns and a couple of Speckled Woods, one in very good condition.

We had turned to return to the start of the walk, again walking slowly and occasionally spotting likely candidates that were frustrating high in the trees. However this all changed when Nick spotted a pristine female Brown Hairstreak sitting quietly on a leaf, just a meter off the

ground! It sat very obligingly, for us to enjoy this very attractive butterfly. The photographers took their fill of pictures, even close up macro shots and it remained passively on the leaf, seemingly oblivious to the admiring crowd. After all this activity the butterfly opened its wings, displaying the orange patches of the female; this resulted in a second battery of cameras snapping away. It did eventually take off and flew around the shrubs and trees, joined by at least two other individuals before disappearing out of view. This was our cue to head off, elated with our sightings of these stunning little butterflies.



Brown Hairstreak © Helen Bovill

We stopped off on route to Mill Hill to purchase lunches and use the facilities at the



Brown Argus © Andrew Fusek Peters

local superstore. We then continued on our way up to the top of Mill Hill, a local nature reserve. We explored the top slopes and noted a few interesting plants, such as Knapweed Broomrape, Yellow Rattle and Fleabane among others. There were a few Common Blues and some lovely fresh Brown Argus around to keep the cameras busy. A Small Copper remained elusive and was only seen by a few of the group.

Setting off down the slope along a narrow path we were pleased to

almost immediately find first the milky blue Chalk Hill Blue and then the cobalt blue of our second target the Adonis Blue. Nick again came up trumps finding the Silver Spotted Skipper the last of our target species...all just after mid-day! We sat and ate our lunches in the slightly warmer afternoon temperatures. We then continued



Adonis Blue © Matt Andrews

exploring the lower slopes and found some

interesting moths and spiders, Treble Bar, Mint Moth among others and Wasp and Nursery Web Spiders. Other butterflies seen included Walls, Painted Ladies and probably Large Whites.

Having seen all we felt we could there, we traveled further west to the RSPB reserve at Pulborough in search of other wildlife. We managed to see about five beautiful dark male and female Adders and at the new pond a few Common Blue-tailed Damselflies and a small Pirate Wolf Spider. On the return to the minibus we also saw a Migrant Hawker and a few common birds.

It was nearly time for the trip to come to an end, but for the last hour we decided to try to look for Little Owls at a nearby site. When we arrived the owls were not in their usual spot, but we did eventually find one along the flint wall. A little distant but in full view. It was a lovely ending to a superb day looking for butterflies and wildlife in Sussex. It was now time to drop people back to the station and their cars before the trip came to a close as we bid each other goodbye.



Chalk Hill Blue © Helen Bovill



Adder © Andrew Fusek Peters

Species Lists

Butterflies

Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>
Silver spotted Skipper	<i>Hesperia comma</i>
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>
Chalkhill Blue	<i>Polyommatus coridon</i>
Adonis Blue	<i>Polyommatus bellargus</i>
Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis</i>
Brown Hairstreak	<i>Thecla betulae</i>
Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>
Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>
Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>
Painted Lady	<i>Cynthia cardui</i>
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>
Comma	<i>Ploygonia c-album</i>
Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>

Moths

Blood-vein	<i>Timandra comae</i>
Common carpet	<i>Epirrhoe alternata alternata</i>
Treble Bar	<i>Aplocera plagiata plagiata</i>
Shaded broad-bar	<i>Scotopteryx chenopodiata</i>
Common purple and gold	<i>Pyrausta purpuralis</i>
Garden Grass Veneer	<i>Chrysoteuchia culmella</i>
Meal moth	<i>Plodia interpunctella</i>
Common marble	<i>Celypha lacunana</i>
Cinnabar (caterpillar)	<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>
Straw dot	<i>Rivula sericealis</i>
Red piercer	<i>Lathronympha strigana</i>
Yellow-spot twist	<i>Psedargyrotoza conwagana</i>
Sharp-angled carpet	<i>Euphyia unangulara</i>
Rosy footman	<i>Miltochrista miniata</i>

Other Taxa

Migrant Hawker	<i>Aeshna mixta</i>
Common Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>
Wasp Spider	<i>Argiope bruennichi</i>
Nursery web Spider	<i>Pisaura mirabilis</i>
Pirate Spider	<i>Dolomedes fimbriatus</i>
Orb weaver	<i>Araneus diadematus</i>
Hornet hoverfly	<i>Volucella Zonaria</i>
The footballer hoverfly	<i>Helophilus pendulus</i>
European Adder	<i>Vipera berus</i>

Birds

Mute Swan
Moorhen
Herring Gull
Common Buzzard
Little Owl
Green Woodpecker
Great spotted Woodpecker
Woodpigeon
Stock Dove
Carrion Crow
Jackdaw
Rook
Jay
Great tit
Blue tit
Blackbird
Mistle thrush
Starling
Goldfinch
Chaffinch
House Sparrow
Dunnock

Cygnus olor
Gallinula chloropus
Falco tinnunculus
Buteo buteo
Athene noctua
Picus viridis
Dendrocopos major
Columba palumbus
Columba oenas (Heard only)
Corvus corone
Corvus monedula
Corvus frugilegus
Garrulus glandarius
Parus major
Cyanistes caeruleus
Turdus merula
Turdus viscivorus
Sturnus vulgaris
Carduelis carduelis
Fringilla coelebs
Passer domesticus
Prunella modularis

Notable Plants

Lords and ladies
Round-headed rampion
Devil-bit scabious
Lesser Stitchwort
Fleabane
Knapweed Broomrape
Tufted Vetch
Greater Knapweed
Lesser Knapweed
Ragwort
Hemp Agrimony
Agrimony
Rough Hawkbit
Marjoram
Wild Basil
Carline Thistle

Arum maticulartum
Phyteuma orbiculare
Succisa pratensis
Stellaria graminea
Pulicaria dysenterica
Orobanche eliator
Vicia cracca
Centaurea scabiosa
Centaurea nigra
Jacobaea vulgaris
Eupatorium cannabinum
Agrimonia eupatoria
Leontodon hispidus
Origanum majorana
Clinopodium vulgare
Carlina vulgaris



Silver-spotted Skipper
© Andrew Fusek Peters



Chalk Hill Blue © Helen Bovill



Adonis Blue © Nick Ostler



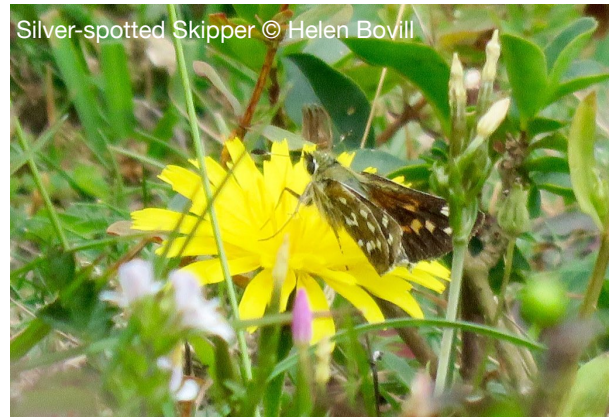
Brown Hairstreak © Matt Andrews



Brown Hairstreak © Matt Andrews



Adonis Blue © Helen Bovill



Silver-spotted Skipper © Helen Bovill



Brown Hairstreak © Andrew Fusek Peters



Silver-spotted Skipper
© Nick Ostler



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