



Green-veined White



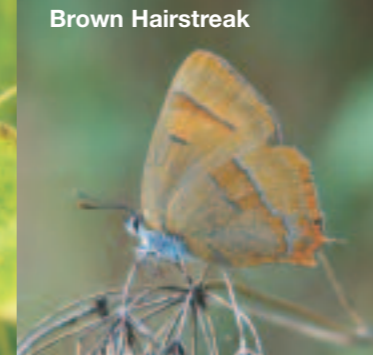
Brimstone



Speckled Wood



Large Skipper



Brown Hairstreak



butterflies
and farmland

Further information and advice - including possible grant aid

Butterfly Conservation

Has a network of volunteer branches and staff who can provide further advice on surveys, monitoring and management for butterflies and moths. Information on species requirements, including factsheets on rarer species, and membership details can be obtained from the address below or from our website.

Natural England

Gives grants for conservation management including the Environmental Stewardship Scheme. They can be contacted through their regional offices, details of which can be obtained from their enquiry service 0845 6003078 or via their website www.naturalengland.org.uk

Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)

FWAG has advisers in every county who will visit farms and give free on-farm advisory visits funded by DEFRA. Their telephone numbers are in the local directory or they can be contacted via 024 7669 6699 or through their website www.fwag.org.uk

Five tips for helping widespread butterflies and moths on the farm

1

Retain and manage sympathetically any areas of unimproved pasture, rough grassland, or flower-rich areas. Avoid use of pesticides and fertilizers, and leave some areas to grow tall.

2

Maintain permanent grassland strips containing native grasses and wild flowers around field margins, along tracks and around farm buildings. Cut once a year or every other year during the autumn to prevent scrub invasion and maintain plant diversity, but leave a few areas uncut. Avoid inadvertent spray drift or fertiliser application.

3

Vary hedge cutting and management across the farm to provide variety. Cut hedges in rotation so that each section is cut every 2 -3 years or longer but with some taller, some wider and some free growth -especially at hedge junctions - and retain hedgerow trees. Do not cut all hedge verges as many butterflies have stages that overwinter in tall or tussocky vegetation.

4

Create sunny rides and glades in farm woodland and leave rough grassy strips around wood edges. Ride edges should be cut piecemeal every few years in autumn. Establishing a shrub margin will provide a gradation of habitats alongside the ride.

5

Retain numerous patches of nettles in sunny sites. If some are cut in mid-July, this creates young growth favoured by the summer brood of Small Tortoiseshell butterflies. Butterflies generally prefer nettles growing in sunny places.



Small Tortoiseshell

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Text by Martin Warren with the help of farmers and farm advisors. Photographs by: Jim Asher, Ruth Feber, Paul Pugh and Martin Warren. Produced in association with FWAG, sponsored by Natural England.

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Ringlet



Holly Blue



Gatekeeper



Burnet Companion Moth



Red Admiral

Encouraging butterflies and moths on the farm



Butterflies on the farm

Farmland is the main habitat for over three-quarters of British butterflies. This leaflet explains some simple measures that can be taken to encourage the more common, widespread species on farmland.

- ◆ Many butterfly species, both widespread and rare, breed on farms
- ◆ Typically, they now survive only on relatively small areas
- ◆ They can be encouraged by simple management techniques
- ◆ The first task is to identify suitable or potential butterfly habitat, work out how best to manage them, and then see where additional habitat might be created
- ◆ Action often needs little or no financial outlay and can often be grant aided
- ◆ Responses to favourable management practices can be dramatic
- ◆ Butterflies can be easily monitored to help assess the impact of farm practices on biodiversity
- ◆ Measures taken to encourage butterflies will also help moths and a wide range of other wildlife



Every year, butterflies go through one or more breeding cycles, making remarkable changes as they grow from egg to caterpillar to chrysalis to adult butterfly. Although the adults can use a wide range of flowers to obtain nectar, the caterpillars feed only on a restricted range of plants, sometimes on just one species. The **Orange-tip** (left) feeds mainly on Wild Garlic along hedgerows or Lady's Smock in damp pastures.



Grassland

Any grassland that contains native grasses and some wild-flowers can provide good breeding and feeding areas for butterflies. Leys and other seeded pasture seldom offer suitable conditions for butterflies except around their margins. Good grassland habitats exist in three main situations:

1 Fields of unimproved semi-natural grassland containing wild grasses and flowers. These rare but vital wildlife habitats (e.g. chalk or damp grassland) may contain over 25 butterfly species, including some rare or declining ones.

- ◆ The ideal management depends on the situation and management history.
- ◆ Some species prefer shorter (and thus warmer) vegetation while others prefer taller or mixed conditions.
- ◆ Extensive or seasonal grazing are often best because this produces varied turf conditions.
- ◆ In other situations, hay cutting may be best, though this supports fewer species.
- ◆ There should be no use of fertilisers or pesticides, except for spot-treatment of problem weeds.
- ◆ If rare butterflies are present, special advice may be needed.
- ◆ Agri-environment scheme grants may be available to manage for the important butterfly species present.

2 Semi-improved grassland, which can be important for some widespread species. Examples include:

- ◆ Wet grassland with rushes for Green-veined White and Orange-tip.
- ◆ Acid and neutral grassland with native grasses and wildflowers for Meadow Brown, Common Blue, Ringlet and other species.



Unimproved grassland is a major habitat for butterflies

3 Strips and patches of grassland along hedges, ditches and tracks, in field corners, within orchards and other uncultivated areas. Such grassland is the main breeding area for most widespread butterflies on farmland and can be encouraged in a variety of situations:

- ◆ Generally the vegetation should be left uncut though the growing season to provide nectar sources and breeding habitat.
- ◆ Where appropriate, rough cutting can take place in August and September, after the peak butterfly season.
- ◆ Some vegetation should preferably be left uncut to provide over-wintering sites (such as grass tussocks) and there should be only very selective use of pesticides.
- ◆ Care should be taken to avoid spray drift into hedge bottoms, and not to plough tight to the boundary.
- ◆ Agri-environment scheme grants may be available to create beneficial grass strips comprised of native grasses and herbs on the edges of intensive grass fields.

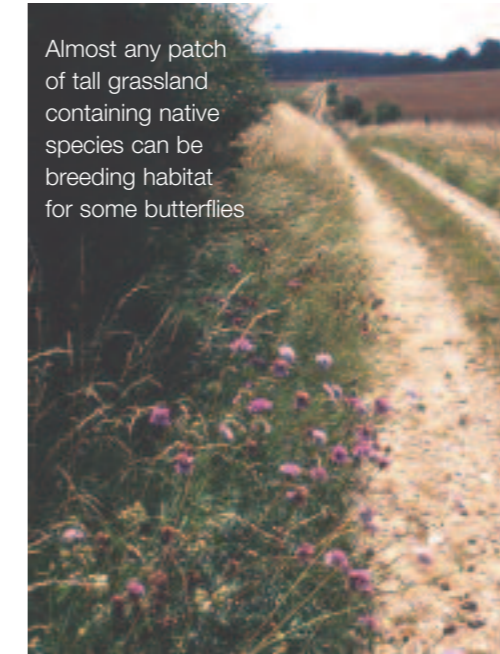


The **Small Copper** is just one of many widespread butterflies that can thrive on farmland

Arable fields

Grassy, flower-rich, field margins can be beneficial to many butterfly species and can be grant-aided. Other important habitats on arable farmland include farm tracks, beetle banks, uncultivated areas, roadside verges, conservation headlands and long term set-aside. As well as supporting butterflies, these features can provide a home for pollinators and beneficial insects that prey on crop pests (e.g. hoverflies, ladybirds and ground beetles).

Long term set-aside can provide good habitat for butterflies, including local species like the Brown Argus and Marbled White which have spread in recent decades. It is best left uncut, or cut after August.



Almost any patch of tall grassland containing native species can be breeding habitat for some butterflies

Hedges, hedge verges and green lanes

Well managed hedges are lifelines for butterflies, especially if they have a grassy margin with wild flowers.

- ◆ Mixed hedges are best - for example, those with blackthorn can support the rare Brown Hairstreak while those with buckthorn or alder buckthorn suit the Brimstone.
- ◆ Trimming on rotation every second or third year provides good sources of nectar.
- ◆ Traditional hedge laying is also very beneficial as it provides a variety of hedge structure.
- ◆ Annual winter cutting can be particularly harmful to some species that overwinter in hedgerows.



Woodlands and scrub

Farm woodlands are crucial habitats for many butterflies, especially if they contain a range of broad-leaved trees and wide sunny woodland rides or glades. For most species rides should be as wide and open to sunlight as possible. Cut the central section of rides in summer or autumn, but try to leave shrub margins and cut edges in sections on longer rotations of 2-8 years.

Patches of scrub provide shelter for butterflies and breeding habitat for species such as Brimstone, Holly Blue and Green Hairstreak. The best management is to cut back periodically in patches and allow to regrow, thereby providing good structure and a range of ages.



Farmland moths

Moths are closely related to butterflies but there are far more species and they live in a greater range of habitats. Many moths fly at night but several colourful species fly during the day, like the Six-spot Burnet above, Magpie, Scarlet Tiger and Burnet Companion .

The abundance and diversity of moths is particularly enhanced by the presence of hedges and woodlands on the farm. Moths and their caterpillars are crucial food for birds, bats and other mammals, and adults are important pollinators of wild flowers and some trees.