## Get involved! Send in your butterfly sightings!

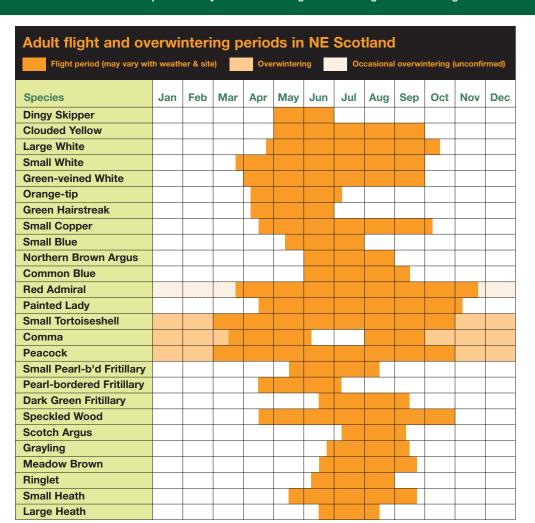
Records of all butterflies, even common species are important, as they can be valuable indicators of change, giving up-to-date information on the locations of butterfly colonies to help direct conservation actions. Please provide the following: species name, numbers seen, life cycle stage (i.e. adult, egg, caterpillar, chrysalis), place name, grid reference from map/GPS or postcode (if known), date, and your contact details. Send records (& photos if you're unsure of ID) to your local butterfly recorder who checks and collates them before they appear as dots in distribution maps:

Moray is in Butterfly Conservation Highland Branch area: www.highland-butterflies.org.uk/your\_records.html

Aberdeenshire & Aberdeen are in Butterfly Conservation East Scotland Branch area: http://www.eastscotland-butterflies.org.uk/butterflyrecords.html

You can also send any NE Scotland & Cairngorms National Park records to the North East Scotland Biological Records Centre: www.nesbrec.org.uk/recording-services/ Paper records may also be sent to the BC Scotland Office (address on back page).

For more information see: https://butterfly-conservation.org/110/recording-and-monitoring.html





These are some of the best butterfly sites in NE Scotland, from gardens with easy access for all, to more remote locations that require walking a few miles. Many are near public transport, all have parking - map grid references given - and paths. See weblinks for details, e.g. maps, facilities, parking/entry fees, if applicable. Species to look out for are listed. ('5 Vanessids' refers to R Admiral, P Lady, S Tortoiseshell, Comma & Peacock). Site numbers correspond with numbered butterfly symbols on map.

- Mar Lodge Estate National Nature Reserve Main Linn of Dee car park off minor road 3 miles/5km W of A93 at Braemar NO063897; various routes - Glen Lui/Luibeg & Clais Fhearnaig good. G-v White, L & S Heath, S Argus, Ringlet, 3 fritillaries, G Hairstreak, C Blue. www.nts.org.uk/Visit/Mar-Lodge-Estate/
- Morrone Birkwood Car park at SW end of Chapel Brae, Braemar NO143910; waymarked paths. O-tip, G-v White, S Heath, S Argus, Ringlet, M Brown, 3 fritillaries, S Tortoiseshell, N B Argus (by viewpoint), C Blue, www.walkhighlands.co.uk/cairngorms/morrone-birkwood.shtml
- 3 Craig Leek & Keiloch Crag, Invercauld Keiloch car park off A93 3 miles/5km W of Braemar NO188913; waymarked paths. G-v White, L Heath (bog SE of Craig Leek), S Heath, S Argus, Ringlet, M Brown, 3 fritillaries (P-b on Keiloch Crag), Peacock, S Tortoiseshell, G Hairstreak, N B Argus, C Blue. www.walkhighlands.co.uk/cairngorms/craig-leek.shtml www.walkhighlands.co.uk/cairngorms/keiloch-crag.shtml
- Cambus O' May Forest Car park off A93 2.5 miles/4km NE of Ballater NO403981; waymarked paths. O-tip, G-v White, S Heath, S Argus, Ringlet, 3 fritillaries, Peacock. http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/visit/cambus-omay
- Muir of Dinnet National Nature Reserve Main Burn O' Vat visitor centre car park off B9119 1.5 miles/2.5km N of A93 at Cambus O' May NO429997; waymarked paths. O-tip, G-v White, S Wood, S Heath, S Argus, Ringlet, M Brown, 3 fritillaries, 5 Vanessids, G Hairstreak, N B Argus, C Blue. www.nature.scot/Muir-of-Dinnet
- Crathes Castle Gardens & Estate Main car park at end of entrance drive off A93 3 miles/5km E of Banchory NO734968; gardens & waymarked paths. O-tip, 3 whites, S Wood, Ringlet, M Brown, 5 Vanessids, S Copper, C Blue. www.nts.org.uk/Visit/Crathes-Castle
- 7 Drum Castle Gardens & Estate Car park at end of entrance drive off minor road 1/3 mile/0.5km NW of A93 at Mains of Drum NJ795005; gardens & waymarked paths. O-tip, 3 whites, S Wood, S Heath, Ringlet, M Brown, S P-b Fritillary, 5 Vanessids, S Copper. www.nts.org.uk/Visit/Drum-Castle
- St. Cyrus National Nature Reserve Car park off minor road 1 mile/2km NE of A92 at bridge over River North Esk NO741634; waymarked paths. 3 whites, S Heath, Ringlet, M Brown, Grayling, D G Fritillary, R Admiral, P Lady, Peacock, S Tortoiseshell, S Copper, S Blue, N B Argus, C Blue. www.nature.scot/St-Cyrus
- Skatie Shore & Garron Point Parking at end of road past golf club 1 mile/1.5km NE of B979 at leisure centre roundabout NO883877; core path across road from parking area leads via Den of Cowie to coast. G-v White, S Heath, Ringlet, M Brown, Grayling, S P-b & D G Fritillaries, R Admiral, P Lady, S Tortoiseshell, S Copper, N B Argus, C Blue. www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/15261/stonehaven-cpp.pdf
- Cove to Nigg Bay Coastal Path Car park off harbour road opposite Balmoral Terrace, Cove Bay NJ956007 & parking on St. Fittick's Road, Torry NJ963049; core path. 3 whites, S Heath, Ringlet, M Brown, D G Fritillary, R Admiral, P Lady, Peacock, S Tortoiseshell, S Copper, C Blue. www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/leisure-culture-and-sport/nature-reserves-and-ranger-service
- Scotstown Moor Local Nature Reserve / Perwinnes Moss Car park off Scotstown Road, Bridge of Don NJ932117; core paths. G-v White, S Heath, Ringlet, M Brown, S P-b Fritillary, R Admiral, Peacock, S Tortoiseshell, S Copper, C Blue.

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/leisure-culture-and-sport/nature-reserves-and-ranger-service www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/aberdeen-cms/files/P16\_Area\_Map\_Middleton\_Pk\_0.pdf

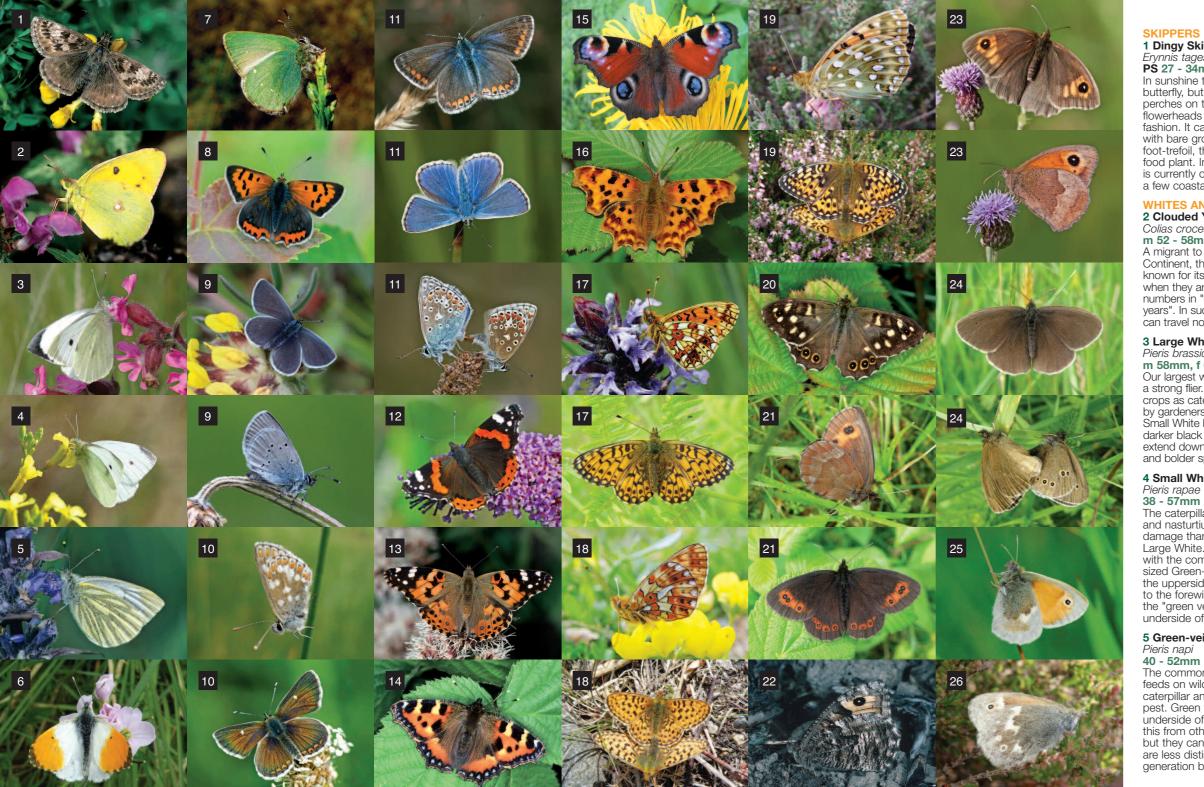
- Balmedie Country Park Car park at E end of North Beach Road, Balmedie NJ976181; core paths. G-v White, S Heath, Ringlet, M Brown, Grayling, D G Fritillary, R Admiral, S Tortoiseshell, S Copper, C Blue. www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/communities-and-events/country-parks/balmedie-country-park/ www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/15194/balmedie-blackdog-potterton-cpp.pdf
- 3 Foveran Links Car park at SE end of Beach Road. Newburgh NK001247: core path. G-v White. S Heath. M Brown, Gravling, D G Fritillary, R Admiral, P Lady, Peacock, S Tortoiseshell, C Blue, www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/15242/newburgh-cpp.pdf
- 4 Forvie National Nature Reserve Car parks off A975 1 mile/2km N of Newburgh NK003270 & at end of visitor centre drive off B9003 0.5 mile/1kmNW of Collieston NK034289; waymarked paths. G-v White, S Heath, Ringlet, M Brown, Gravling, S P-b & D G Fritillaries, R Admiral, P Ladv, Peacock, S Tortoiseshell, S Copper, C Blue, www.nature.scot/Forvie
- 5 Haddo House & Country Park Car park at end of entrance drive off minor road at Raxton, 1 mile/2km N of B999 at Tarves NJ867344; gardens & path network. O-tip, L & G-v Whites, Ringlet, M Brown, D G Fritillary, R Admiral, P Lady, Peacock, S Tortoiseshell, S Copper, C Blue, http://visithaddo.com
- 6 Castle Fraser Gardens & Estate Car park at end of entrance drive off minor road 4 miles/6km NW of A944 at Dunecht NJ722128; gardens & waymarked paths, O-tip, 3 whites, S Wood, S Heath, Ringlet, M Brown, S P-b Fritillary, 5 Vanessids, S Copper, C Blue. www.nts.org.uk/Visit/Castle-Fraser
- 7 Leith Hall Gardens & Estate Car park at end of entrance drive off B9002 0.5 mile/1km NW of Kennethmont NJ539298; gardens & waymarked paths. O-tip, 3 whites, S Wood, S Argus, Ringlet, M Brown, S P-b Fritillary, R Admiral, P Lady, Peacock, S Tortoiseshell, S Copper. www.nts.org.uk/Visit/Leith-Hall
- Bin Forest Car park off A96 2 miles/3km NW of Huntly NJ505419; wavmarked paths, O-tip, L & G-v Whites, S Wood, S Heath, S Argus, Ringlet, M Brown, S P-b Fritillary, R Admiral, P Lady, Peacock. S Tortoiseshell, C Blue. http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/visit/the-bin
- 9 Portsoy Coastal Path Car parks at E end of St Combs Road, Portsoy NJ594660 & N end of Target Road, Portsov NJ582663; core path, L & G-v Whites, Ringlet, M Brown, Grayling, D G Fritillary, P Lady, Peacock, S Tortoiseshell, S & C Blues. www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/15253/portsoy-fordyce-cpp.pdf
- O Portknockie to Cullen Coastal Path Parking on/near Addison Street. Portknockie NJ491686 & car park off Port Long Road, Cullen NJ512674; waymarked path, L & G-v Whites, S Heath, Ringlet, M Brown, Grayling, D G Fritillary, R Admiral, P Lady, Peacock, S Tortoiseshell, S Copper, S & C Blue. www.morayways.org.uk/long-distance/mct-10.html
- Spey Bay Wildlife Reserve West car park at W end of Beach Road, Kingston on Spey NJ334656; waymarked path (the Lein), D Skipper, O-tip, L & G-v Whites, S Wood, S Heath, S Argus, Ringlet, M Brown, Grayling, S.P.-b & D.G. Fritillaries, R. Admiral, P. Lady, Peacock, S. Tortoiseshell, S. Copper, S. & C. Blue, https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/reserve/spev-bay
- 2 Findhorn Dunes & Hinterland East Beach car park at N end of Dunes Road, Findhorn NJ042648: path network. D Skipper, L & G-v Whites, S Wood, S Heath, S Argus, M Brown, Grayling, D G Fritillary, R Admiral, P Lady, Peacock, S Tortoiseshell, S Copper, C Blue. www.findhornhinterland.org/ecology/
- 3 Culbin Forest Main Wellhill car park off minor road 2.5 miles/4km NW of A96 at Brodie NH997614: path network, D Skipper, O-tip, L & G-v Whites, S Wood, S Heath, S Argus, Ringlet, M Brown, S P-b & D G Fritillaries, R Admiral, P Ladv. Peacock, S Tortoiseshell, S Copper, G Hairstreak, S & C Blue. http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/visit/culbin
- 4 Glenlivet Estate Main visitor centre car park at SW end of Main Street, Tomintoul NJ172182; various waymarked paths. O-tip, L & G-v Whites, S Heath, S Argus, Ringlet, M Brown, 3 fritillaries, R Admiral, Peacock, S Tortoiseshell, S Copper, N B Argus, C Blue, www.glenlivetestate.co.uk/outdoor-activities/walking



# **Butterflies of North East Scotland** an identification guide



Butterflies are beautiful insects and a joy to observe. This guide will help you identify 26 species that occur in Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen and Moray, including part of the Cairngorms National Park. It also contains a chart showing which species are on the wing at a given time, and suggests some of the best and most easily accessible places in the region to see them. We hope this leaflet will encourage you to help with butterfly recording.



#### 1 Dingy Skipper Erynnis tages

**PS 27 - 34mm** In sunshine this is an active butterfly, but in dull weather it perches on the tops of dead flowerheads in a moth-like fashion. It can be found in places with bare ground and bird'sfoot-trefoil, the caterpillar's food plant. In NE Scotland, it is currently only known from a few coastal sites in Moray.

## WHITES AND YELLOWS

2 Clouded Yellow Colias croceus m 52 - 58mm, f 54 - 62mm A migrant to the UK from the Continent, this butterfly is wellknown for its mass immigrations when they arrive in huge numbers in "Clouded Yellow vears". In such vears, some can travel north to Scotland.

## 3 Large White

Pieris brassicae m 58mm, f 63mm

Our largest white butterfly and a strong flier. Feeds on brassica crops as caterpillars so disliked by gardeners. Differs from the Small White by its larger size, darker black wing tips which extend down the wing edge, and bolder spots.

### 4 Small White

38 - 57mm

The caterpillars eat brassicas and nasturtium but cause less damage than those of the Large White, Easily confused with the commoner and similar sized Green-veined White, but the upperside has dark tips to the forewings, and it lacks the "green veins" on the underside of the wings.

#### 5 Green-veined White Pieris napi

40 - 52mm

The commonest of the whites feeds on wild crucifers as a caterpillar and is not a garden pest. Green veins on the underside of the wing distinguish this from other white butterflies. but they can fade with wear and are less distinct in 2nd (summer) generation butterflies

### 6 Orange-tip

Anthocharis cardamines

40 - 52mm Males are unmistakable with bright orange wing-tips, but females have no orange so can be confused with Small or Green-veined Whites, However, Orange-tips have distinctive mottled green undersides - see cover photo. Lays orange eggs on flowers of crucifers, e.g. cuckoo flower, garlic mustard

**COPPERS AND BLUES** 7 Green Hairstreak

Callophrys rubi 27 - 34mm Despite the bright green appearance of this small butterfly, which always sits with wings closed, it can be difficult to spot. Prefers warm, sheltered sites in open birch woodland. moorland and edges or clearings of conifer plantations where its main caterpillar food plant, blaeberry (bilberry), is found

## 8 Small Copper

Lycaena phlaeas m 26 - 36mm, f 30 - 40mm This dainty butterfly is a widespread species found in a range of habitats, but in small colonies. Its caterpillars feed on common and sheep's sorrel. Adults fly in 2 overlapping spring and summer broods.

## 9 Small Blue

Cupido minimus **PS** 18 - 27mm

UK butterfly occurs in

In NE Scotland, the smallest This migrant is unable to coastal Moray/Banffshire, but Kincardineshire colonies may have been lost. Found where kidney vetch (caterpillar food sometimes in spectacular plant) grows, usually on dry sheltered grasslands. Similar to the commoner day-flying Chimney Sweeper moth, but has a white border all around early summer; adults stay into autumn before migrating south

at high altitude.

**PS** Priority Species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) Wing spans m = male, f = female

## 10 Northern Brown Argus

Aricia artaxerxes PS 26 - 35mm

This small, upland and coastal butterfly is often overlooked, but can be easily identified by the gleaming white spot on each forewing. It can also be found by searching for its conspicuous white eggs laid on the upper side of the leaves of its food plant, common rock-rose.

## 11 Common Blue

Polyommatus icarus 29 - 36mm

m 63 - 68mm, f 67 - 75mm A widespread butterfly found An unmistakable butterfly and in various grassy habitats. regular garden visitor, eating where its main caterpillar food stinging nettle as a caterpillar plant, bird's-foot trefoil, occurs. It colonised NE Scotland from The brightly-coloured males are the south in the mid 1990s conspicuous, but females are and is now a common garden blue-brown with orange spots species. One of the first In Scotland it usually has only butterflies to be seen in spring one adult generation a year. having overwintered as adults. its summer broods can be

#### RITILLARIES 12 Red Admiral

Vanessa atalanta

m 64 - 72mm, f 70 - 78mm A familiar and distinctive garden butterfly that migrates to the UK every year from S Europe and N Africa. It can breed in Scotland but rarely survives our winters. The major influx starts in late spring and is reinforced until late summer, with adults seen until late autumn. The caterpillars feed on stinging nettle.

#### 13 Painted Lady Vanessa cardui

17 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary m 58 - 70mm, f 62 - 74mm Boloria selene **PS** m 35 - 41mm, f 38 - 44mm overwinter anywhere in the UK This locally occurring species and re-colonises each year from occupies damp, grassy habitats, mainland Europe and Africa. woodland clearings and moorlands. The caterpillars feed numbers. They can be seen on marsh or dog violet. It can be congregating on thistles, which confused with the much scarcer serve as both caterpillar food Pearl-bordered Fritillary (see 18). plant and adult nectar source 18 Pearl-bordered Fritillary Immigration usually peaks in

## Boloria euphrosvne

PS m 38 - 46mm, f 43 - 47mm This species is distinguished from the commoner Small Pearlbordered Fritillary by observing the underside of the hindwing: it has a smaller central spot, 2 (not 7) white central cells and all cells have a much paler border compared to the S P-b Fritillary.

#### 14 Small Tortoiseshell Aglais urticae

it is one of the first butterflies

seen into autumn, in much

Distinguished by its ragged

wings and white 'comma'

overwinters and emerges

in early spring, producing a

second summer generation.

The caterpillars eat elm, stinging

north in recent years, but is still

nettle and hop. It has spread

uncommon in NE Scotland.

underside mark, the Comma

larger numbers.

Polygonia c-album

16 Comma

55-60mm

to emerge in spring.

15 Peacock

requirements, found mostly in m 45 - 55mm, f 52 - 62mm dry glades, on south-facing This well-known butterfly can be slopes with bracken and dog violet (caterpillar food plant), in seen in any month of the year in almost any habitat. It is familiar in Deeside and the Cairngorms. gardens and feeds on stinging Adults emerge before S P-b nettle as a caterpillar. Adults are Fritillaries, but flight periods regularly found overwintering in houses, sheds and outbuildings;

#### 19 Dark Green Fritillary Argynnis aglaja

It also has more specific habitat

A large butterfly that feeds on violets as a caterpillar. It is widespread and often found in flower-rich habitats with scrub patches. Compared to the other fritillaries in the area it is a more powerful flier, much larger and has a green background to the hindwing underside.

20 Speckled Wood Pararge aegeria

m 46 - 52mm, f 48 - 56mm A butterfly of shady woodlands this species is spreading in NE Scotland from the NW as well as the SE. Males are often seen perched in sunlit spots ready to defend their territory or intercept females. The caterpillars feed on various grasses.

#### 21 Scotch Argus Erebia aethiops

m 44 - 48mm, f 46 - 52mm Widespread in Moray and W Aberdeenshire, this butterfly can be found up to an altitude of about 600m. It breeds in tall, damp grassland where the caterpillars feed on various grasses. In sunshine males car be very active, but may stop flying completely in cloudy

### 22 Grayling Hipparchia semele

PS 55 - 60mm A large, fast-flying coastal species that always sits with wings closed. Very well camouflaged at rest and often encountered when flushed from stony or sandy ground on dunes, beaches and undercliffs. The caterpillars eat fine-leaved grasses.

#### 23 Meadow Brown Maniola iurtina

m 40 - 50mm, f 42 - 60mm This butterfly is seen in many grassy habitats, flying even in dull weather when most other butterflies are inactive. The caterpillar feeds on various grasses. Males tend to be much darker than females, but the amount of orange on both is variable. The hindwing underside spotting pattern also varies.

## 24 Ringlet

Aphantopus hyperantus m 42 - 48mm, f 46 - 52mm This species has a dark, velvety appearance when newly emerged. Males tend to be smaller and darker than females with hardly any markings on the upperwings. The "ringlets" on the underwings vary in number and size and can be virtually absent. Favours tall grassland on damp, heavy soils, where the caterpillars feed on coarse grasses. Can be very common and flies even in dull conditions.

#### 25 Small Heath Coenonympha pamphilus

**PS** m 33mm, f 37mm A bright but inconspicuous little butterfly that flies only in sunshine and always keeps its wings closed at rest. It occurs on dry grasslands where the sward is short, but sparse with bents, fescues and meadow grasses upon which the caterpillar feeds. In Scotland it only has one late spring to late summer generation.

#### 26 Large Heath

Coenonympha tullia PS 35 - 40mm This species is restricted to upland blanket bogs and

in NE Scotland may also still occur on a few lowland raised bogs, where its main caterpillar food plant, hare's-tail cottongrass grows. It always sits with wings closed and can be distinguished from the Small Heath by its larger size, duller colour and hindwing spots. However, the spots are not always present.

Choose warm, sunny days to look for butterflies, when they are most active. A camera, binoculars, notepad and pen can be useful for recording. Take a map, phone, food and drink when visiting more remote sites, wear stout footwear and take warm, waterproof clothing and sun protection as weather can change quickly. Always follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code: https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/ and check for ticks after your visit: www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk







## Why Not Join Butterfly Conservation?

Butterflies and moths are among the most threatened groups of wildlife in the UK. Without the support of our members we cannot continue our vital work to protect them. Our conservation projects restore natural habitats and create a healthy environment for butterflies, moths and all wildlife. As a member you will receive an informative welcome pack; our exclusive magazine *Butterfly* three times a year; plus membership of your local branch that runs public butterfly and moth events. Join online or find out more at: www.butterfly-conservation.org/join

### **Butterfly Conservation Scotland - What we do**

We work closely with the Scottish Government, Scottish Natural Heritage, other conservation partners and local communities to safeguard Scotland's butterflies and moths, by:

- ◆ Advising landowners on managing land for butterflies and moths
- Carrying out surveys, monitoring and research on our most threatened species.
- ◆ Training volunteers to enable them to take action for butterflies and moths.
- Making recommendations to the Scottish Government on its environmental policies.
- Encouraging everyone to cherish and enjoy butterflies and moths.

Scotland Office Balallan House 24 Allan Park Stirling FK8 2QG Tel: 01786 447753 Email: scotland@butterfly-conservation.org

www.butterfly-conservation.org

Text by Butterfly Conservation Scotland & Helen Rowe (BC East Scotland Branch & Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service). Map by North East Scotland Biological Records Centre. Photographs by: Alan Barnes, Jim Black, Tim Melling, Helen Rowe, Julie Stoneman, Martin Warren & Butterfly Conservation.

Butterfly Conservation

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