

Review of non-avian sightings 2019

January

January started dry and settled but mostly cloudy with high pressure dominant, and it remained generally dry and often mild during the first half of the month. The second half became markedly cooler with overnight frosts and the last week saw a little precipitation, some which was occasionally wintry.

With the mild weather continuing from December 2018 there were a small number of migrant moths noted in January, comprising a Dark Sword-grass at Seabrook on the 5th, a Silver Y there on the 13th and 2 *Plutella xylostella* (Diamond-back Moths) there on the 15th, whilst a very unseasonal Dark Arches at Hythe on the 4th may have been of immigrant origin.



Dark Sword-grass at Seabrook (Paul Howe)



Dark Arches at Hythe (Ian Roberts)

More typical species involved *Epiphyas postvittana* (Light Brown Apple Moth), Satellite, Mottled Umber, Winter Moth, Chestnut, Spring Usher and Early Moth.



Early Moth at Seabrook (Paul Howe)



Spring Usher at Seabrook (Paul Howe)

The only butterfly noted was a Red Admiral at Nickolls Quarry on the 1st but the mild weather encouraged single Buff-tailed Bumblebees to appear at Seabrook on the 7th and Mill Point on the 8th, whilst a Minotaur Beetle was attracted to light at Seabrook on the 6th.

A Common Seal and two Grey Seals were noted regularly off Folkestone, whilst at Hare was seen near Botolph's Bridge on the 1st and a Mink was noted there on the 17th.

February

After a cold start to the month it was generally mild from the 5th onwards. It was unsettled until the 10th but very mild and sunny weather developed between the 13th and 15th and again between the 21st and 27th, with record-breaking daytime temperatures in the latter spell (in Kent temperatures approached 20°C and this was exceeded elsewhere in the UK for the first time in February). With clear skies it quickly became much cooler in the evenings and frost and fog developed on some nights.

The only migrant moth noted was a single *Plutella xylostella* (Diamond-back Moth) at Seabrook on the 19th, but seven species of micro and 15 species of macro were added to the year list. The more noteworthy additions included Small Brindled Beauty at Seabrook on the 11th (the first record locally since 2013), Dotted Border at Cheriton and *Tortricodes alternella* (Winter Shade) at Seabrook on the 22nd, Red Chestnut at Seabrook on the 23rd, Early Grey at Cheriton on the 24th, *Agonopterix alstromeriana* (Brown-spot Flat-body) at Seabrook on the 26th, Bloxworth Snout at Hythe on the 27th and Early Thorn and Twin-spotted Quaker at Seabrook on the 28th.



Small Brindled Beauty at Seabrook (Paul Howe)



Red Chestnut at Seabrook (Paul Howe)

The unseasonably mild weather led to some particularly early emergences of butterflies, with the earliest ever records of Brimstone (one at Hythe on the 23rd, with a further five at Asholt Wood on the 26th) and Small White (at Seabrook on the 23rd), whilst Comma and Peacock at Seabrook on the 23rd and Small Tortoiseshell there on the 25th were also new for the year.