

BUTTERFLIES OF FINESHADE WOOD

An ancient woodland in the heart of Rockingham Forest, Fineshade is a mixture of broadleaf and conifers. The broadleaf sections with open areas and structure of wide rides are suitable for a range of butterfly species. The table below is based on regular visits over two decades by Butterfly Conservation member David Holland and occasional visits by others. Thirty-four species have been recorded, all within the past five years, making this a site of major importance for this group, outlined in the table below. Of species recorded annually in Northamptonshire, only Wood White has been absent. The Purple Emperor is expanding its range in the county, particularly in Rockingham Forest and was found in 2015 for the first time in the wood, as was the Chalkhill Blue, a vagrant specimen. The site was one of the ten sites highlighted for people to visit for butterflies in *The Butterflies of Northamptonshire* (Goddard and Wyldes 2012).

Table of Species present with status below:

Species	Status in Fineshade Wood
Large Skipper	Generally distributed throughout the wood and recorded annually.
Small Skipper	
Essex Skipper	Recorded 18/7/14 for the first time
Dingy Skipper BAP Species	Rare in the wood, usually recorded in ones or twos. Recorded at SP998976 (top of Wood Lane), SP993977, SP998998, SP996987, SPSP980990, SP988988 and SP995995.
Grizzled Skipper BAP Species	Status as for Dingy Skipper. Recorded at SP990970, SP993977, SP990993, SP987988, SP980990, SP983987, SP988988, SP991992 and SP998976 (top of Wood Lane)
Brimstone	Generally distributed and common throughout the wood
Clouded Yellow	Migrant species occasionally recorded during 'invasion' years
Large White	Generally distributed throughout the wood, recorded annually but subject to natural population fluctuations.
Small White	
Green-veined White	
Orange-tip	

Green Hairstreak	Rare resident of Fineshade's woodland edge. Noted at SP989987, SP998977 (old Wood Lane sawmills), SP987988 and SP998976 (top of Wood Lane)
Black Hairstreak	Recorded in 2010 and with an historic record at SP979984. An elusive species with a short flight period in which to search for it. Much suitable habitat exists in the wood and it may be overlooked.
Purple Hairstreak	Fairly common most years around oak trees, but may be under-recorded owing of its high canopy lifecycle.
White-letter Hairstreak BAP Species	Breeds on elm and all trees are worth checking for this species. Known sites are at SP978984, SP978987 and SP981979.
Small Copper	Recorded in low numbers most years
Holly Blue	Recorded most years in low numbers with occasional years of abundance
Common Blue	Main colony was located at SP993977 on flower-rich wide ride verges between Little Watkinson and Hither Miers. Recent brutal treatment of the verges has reduced this. Can be found in small numbers throughout the wood in suitable habitat.
Chalkhill Blue	Vagrant species recorded in 2015
Brown Argus	A small colony existed alongside that of the Common Blue but seems to have been all but exterminated by the same treatment of the verges. Found in several locations 2015.
Purple Emperor	Recorded for the first time in 2015
White Admiral BAP Species	Once common in the shadier rides. Opening up of some of the rides led to a recent decline but can still be found where honeysuckle grows.
Red Admiral	Recorded in small numbers most years, the population supplemented by immigration from the continent.
Painted Lady	A migrant species recorded most years with wide fluctuations in numbers.
Comma	A common woodland butterfly recorded annually.

Small Tortoiseshell	Recorded annually and now recovering after a recent decline.
Peacock	Common most years, but numbers can fluctuate widely.
Silver-washed Fritillary	Has re-colonised Northants in the last decade and Fineshade, along with Wakerley Wood, now holds a strong colony, from which it has spread to other areas.
Speckled Wood	A common butterfly here throughout the season.
Marbled White	A species which is spreading rapidly in the county, first recorded in Fineshade in 2013, two specimens at SP993994.
Gatekeeper	Common species found throughout the wood in varying numbers.
Meadow Brown	
Ringlet	Very common and often abundant.
Small Heath BAP Species	Present in very small numbers in shorter grassy areas on the woodland edge, rarely recorded.