



Butterflies of Tentsmuir

S.T. Buckland



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All of the butterfly species occurring regularly at Tentsmuir are shown here. This includes the most recent colonists, the speckled wood, the holly blue and the wall brown, and the purple hairstreak which may be a new colonist, or may have avoided detection until recently.

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Large white

The least common of the three 'cabbage whites'.





Small white

Common especially in farmland, but appreciably less common than the green-veined white.





Green-veined white

Common wherever there is suitable habitat.





Orange tip

A late spring and early summer species, common in grassland.





Green hairstreak

Uncommon. A few occur in the dunes east of the ice house at Tentsmuir Point NNR, where they are attracted to patches of dwarf willow in May.





Purple hairstreak

Uncommon. Usually seen high up, flitting around the top of an oak tree as below, or sitting on a leaf high up as above. These were at Morendy Woods near Tentsmuir.





Small copper

Good numbers can be recorded at Morton Lochs and along the edge of the dunes.





Common blue

An attractive small butterfly that is common at Morton Lochs and along the dunes.





Holly blue

The holly blue is a southern species that has spread north. It colonised Fife in the 2020s. These were on or near the Newport and Wormit nature trail in early May 2024. Female above, male below.





Small pearl-bordered fritillary

A scarce species. This individual was at Morton Lochs in early June 2020.





Dark green fritillary

A fairly large fritillary that occurs along the edge of the dunes and at Morton Lochs.





Red admiral

A common species especially in late summer.





Painted lady

A migrant species that sometimes arrives in Britain in large numbers.





Small tortoiseshell

Common in suitable habitats.





Peacock

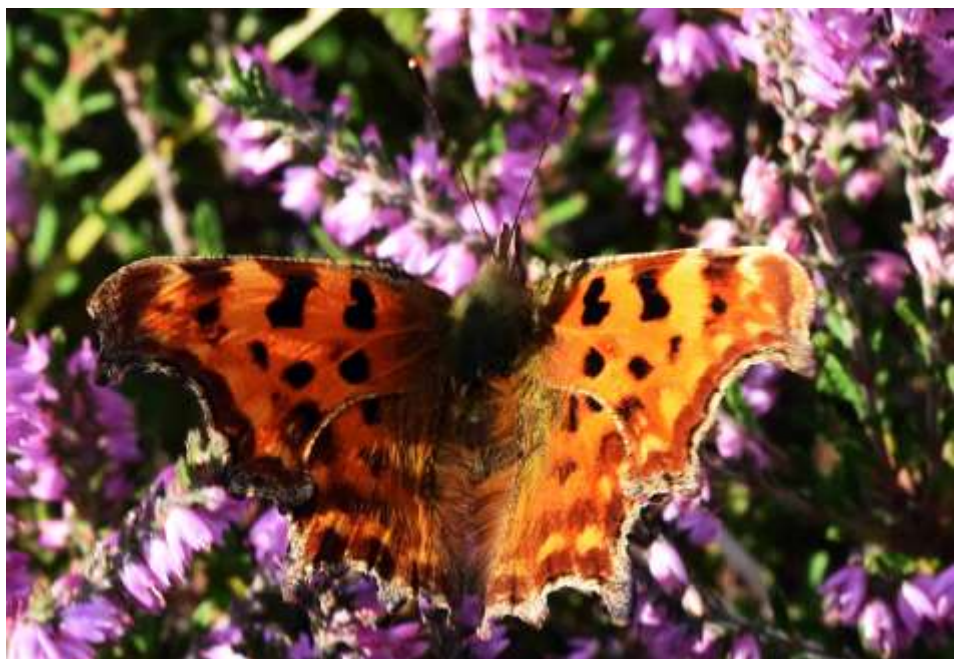
The peacock has spread north in recent years and is now one of the most common butterflies in Fife.





Comma

A distinctive species that is spreading northwards into Fife. The above individual was at Morton Lochs in early September 2015, and the one below was east of Tayport in late August 2017.





Speckled wood

Another species that is spreading, and is starting to colonise Fife. The individual below was at Tentsmuir Point NNR on 30 September 2018, while the above individual was at Morton Lochs on 24 August 2019.





Wall brown

The wall brown is just a couple of years behind the speckled wood in colonising Fife. It has now been recorded from a number of coastal sites. This one was at Tentsmuir Point on 16 August 2021.





Grayling

Numerous along the dunes of Tentsmuir. It often basks along the paths, well camouflaged against the sand.





Meadow brown

Common in grassland and along the edges of the dunes.





Ringlet

Common along edge habitats with grass.





Small heath

Occurs along the edge of the dunes at Tentsmuir.

