

Back from the Brink – Species summary

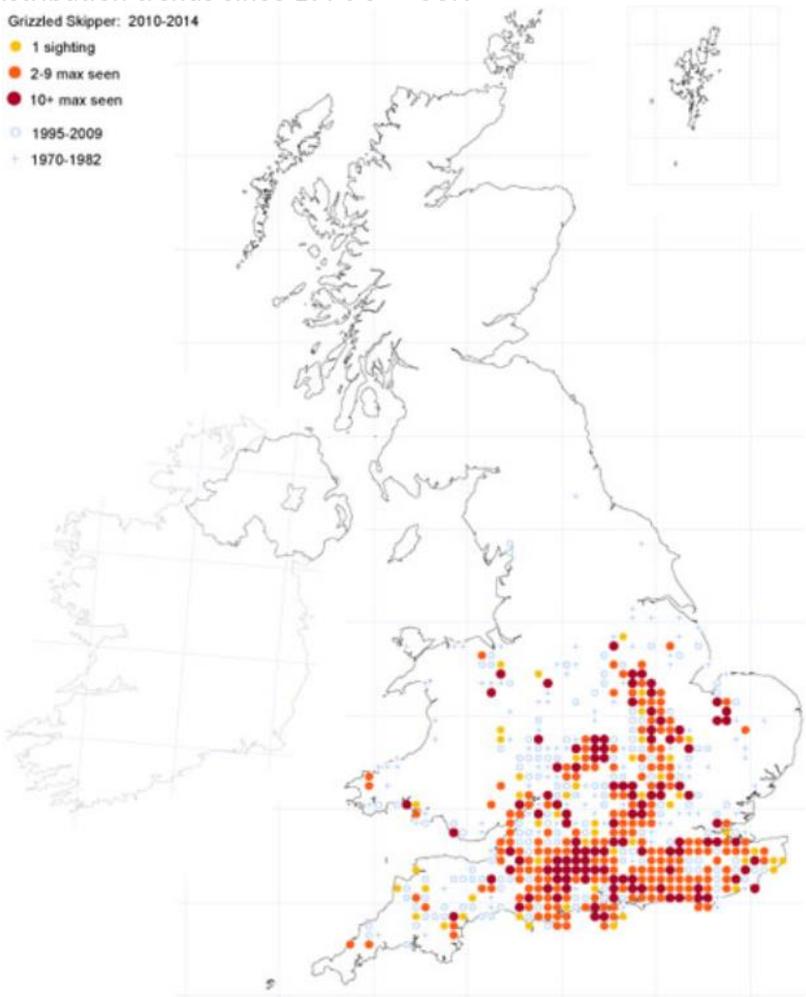
Grizzled Skipper

BftB project: IPO6 Roots of Rockingham

Project lead organisation: Butterfly Conservation

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Species name – common & scientific	Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus malvae</i>
Photograph	 <p>© Dave James / Back from the Brink</p>
Taxon group	Lepidoptera
Conservation status	Section 41 species of principal importance under the NERC Act in England Listed on Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 UK BAP: Priority Species Butterfly Conservation priority: High

<p>UK distribution</p>	<p>Occurs across central and southern England, commonly in small colonies, and has declined in several regions. In Wales it is restricted to the south coast and post-industrial sites in the northeast.</p> <p>Distribution trends since 1970's = -53%</p> <p>Grizzled Skipper: 2010-2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 sighting ● 2-9 max seen ● 10+ max seen ○ 1995-2009 ○ 1970-1982  <p>Map: Butterfly Conservation</p>
<p>Habitat associations</p>	<p>Three main types are used: woodland rides, glades, and clearings; unimproved grassland, especially chalk downland but also on other calcareous soils including clays; recently abandoned industrial sites such as disused mineral workings, spoil heaps, railway lines and even rubbish tips. Occasionally, it breeds on heathland, damp grassland, and dunes. Larval foodplants include: Agrimony <i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>, Creeping Cinquefoil <i>Potentilla reptans</i> and Wild Strawberry <i>Fragaria vesca</i>. It may also use Barren Strawberry <i>Potentilla sterilis</i>, Tormentil <i>P. erecta</i>, Salad Burnet <i>Sanguisorba minor</i>, Bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i>, Dog-rose <i>Rosa canina</i>, and Wood Avens <i>Geum urbanum</i>.</p>
<p>BftB work carried out:</p>	
<p>Survey & Monitoring</p>	<p>Timed counts carried out at the 4 known project sites. Walkover surveys carried out across woodlands with potential habitat.</p>

Site habitat management works	<p>Site 1 & 2: Scrub clearance. Creation of bare ground/early successional habitat using diggers to scrape off scrub and surface vegetation</p> <p>Site 3: Scrub clearance, using brush cutter and hand tools. Treating of scrub with glyphosate to reduce regrowth. Creation of bare ground/early successional habitat using diggers to scrape off scrub and surface vegetation. Plug planting of Creeping Cinquefoil and Wild Strawberry. Scrub control facilitated by providing pesticide training for 1 volunteer.</p>
Technical advice provision	Site visits with landowners. Section on managing woodland for Lepidoptera was included in each of the three landowner workshops and in the video 'Managing woodlands for nature' available on YouTube
Links made with other taxa / conservation work?	Bare ground creation and disturbance also beneficial for Basil Thyme (where present) and Dingy Skipper. Early successional habitat also good for several other plant species and invertebrates.
Wider engagement & advocacy activities?	Guided walks, ID & survey training, family engagement events, talks, volunteer work parties, education workshops with schools, surveys and advice to input into rewilding project on neighbouring estate.
BftB results obtained:	
Recorded Distribution (in BftB focal areas)	Breeding populations on 4 project sites. Recent sightings of Grizzled Skipper at 2 additional project sites where it hadn't been seen for several years are encouraging, indicating there is the potential for colonisation of suitable habitat within these sites. Also, good populations at 2 sites on outskirts of project area.
Recorded Abundance of species populations	<p>Peak adult count (per hr timed count)</p> <p>Site 1 - 4 (2018), 7 (2021)</p> <p>Site 2 - 4 (2018), 3 (2021)</p> <p>Site 3 - 2 (2019), 2 (2020), 6 (2021)</p> <p>Site 4 - 1 (2018), 2 (2019), 1 (2020), 1 (2021)</p>
Species Recovery Curve progress made	<p>Moved from 3 to 7.</p> <p>Scrub control has been carried out and bare ground created at three of its key sites to promote early successional habitat. Seeding with Bird's Foot Trefoil has also been carried out at one site to increase availability of the larval food plant. Scrub control and supply of early successional habitat (through scrapes and/or rotational cutting) has been adopted by sites with Grizzled Skipper present. Whilst initial response has shown a small increase in numbers of GS at 2 sites, this could be due to annual variability and would need several more years of data generation to observe trends and determine if species is recovering.</p> <p>Landowners/managers have better knowledge of appropriate management for this species and are building in continued habitat management work in order to maintain suitable conditions.</p>
Recommendations for future work:-	Continue with scrub control and creation of rotational bare ground scrapes. Carry out annual timed counts to monitor response of Grizzled Skipper to management interventions. Expand surveys to monitor several other (non-project) Grizzled Skipper sites within or on outskirts of Rockingham Forest area including Great Morton/Little Morton Sale (Rockingham Forest Park), Prior's Hall Quarry, Weekley Hall Wood/Quarry & Old Wakerley Quarry.