

THE BUTTERFLIES OF ISLAY

Islay is a little too far west and north for some butterflies, but thanks to the variety of its habitats, the species total is quite respectable. This list gives brief status details for the species which have been reliably recorded in the last 20 years or so, plus some other possibilities. Knowledge of several of them is incomplete and more records are needed.

Dingy Skipper *Erynnis tages*

A 1960s record in north-west Islay is the only possible sighting.

Clouded Yellow *Colias croceus*

This migrant has reached Islay in major invasion years, e.g. 1947 and again more recently in 1992 and 2000.

Large White *Pieris brassicae*

Most records come from the Rinns and around Port Ellen and Port Askaig. Migrants arrive in some years.

Small White *Pieris rapae*

Not as common as the Large White, but liable to turn up anywhere.

Green-veined White *Pieris napi*

Common and widespread, May to Aug.

Orange Tip *Amthocharis cardamines*

Recorded on two occasions during the 1970s, then not until the late 1990s, when there were two more records.

Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi*

Regular on the Rinns, sometimes in large numbers on the moorland; fewer reports from elsewhere.

Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*

Recorded from the Rinns and south-east Islay; status elsewhere uncertain.

Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*

Widespread in lowland areas, especially on the limestone and dunes. The only 'Blue' on Islay.

Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*

Summer migrant, usually in small numbers but occasionally abundant, usually appearing May, occasionally Apr, when probably over-wintered, through to Sep.

Painted Lady *Cynthia cardui*

Summer migrant, less common than Red Admiral, with no records in some years.

Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*

Widespread and common.

Peacock *Inarchis io*

Once rare, with singles in 1985, 1992 and 1994, but since then has colonised whole island and is now widespread.

Dark Green Fritillary *Argynnis aglaja*

Locally common; identified by its strong, direct flight, rarely settling. The only large fritillary.

Marsh Fritillary *Eurodryas aurinia*

A nationally scarce species quite widespread on Islay, and locally common.

Scotch Argus *Erebia aethiops*

A single record from the south-east of the island in the mid-1980s, then three together at Rubha a'Mhail in 2000.

Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria*

Apparently confined to broad-leaved woodlands, e.g. Bridgend, Ballygrant and Kildalton.

Wall Brown *Lasiommata megera*

Two 1970s records, from the Rinns and from the Port Askaig area.

Grayling *Hipparchia semele*

Widely distributed in the south and west; status elsewhere uncertain.

Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*

Common and widespread.

Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*

Common and widespread.

Large Heath *Coenonympha tullia*

Locally common on the Rinns and in a few places in the east.

Ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus*

Recorded from much of the west and south of the island, as well as near Ballygrant; locally common.

In addition to the above, there are single pre-1975 records of **Silver-studded Blue** *Plebejus argus* and **Northern Brown Argus** *Aricia artaxerxes* from Port Ellen, but the former is now probably extinct in Scotland, while the latter occurs no nearer than Ayrshire. There is also a 1941 record of **High Brown Fritillary** *Argynnis adippe*, but its origins are considered doubtful.

Other species worth looking out for include: **Large Skipper** *Ochlodes venata*, **Brimstone** *Gonepteryx thamni* and **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** *Bolinia euphrosyne*, all of which have been recorded on Mull; and **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** *Bolinia selene*, which is regularly recorded on Jura.

THE DRAGONFLIES OF ISLAY

As with the butterflies, the list of dragonflies on Islay is related to its geographical position, though the abundance of wetlands provides plenty of suitable habitat. Brief status details follow for the species which have been recorded in the last 20 years or so, plus some other possibles. Knowledge of several of them is incomplete and more records are needed.

Common Hawker *Aeshna juncea*

Mainly found on the Rinns and in woodlands at Ballygrant, Bridgend, and in the south and east.

Golden-ringed Dragonfly *Cordulegaster boltonii*

Widespread and quite common in open habitats as well as woodland.

Keeled Skimmer *Orthetrum coerulescens*

Two records from north-west Islay; in 1971 and 1992, the latter a mating pair.

Four-spot Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata*

Recorded from the Rinns and from parts of the south and east.

Black Darter *Sympetrum striolatum*

Most records come from the Rinns, but probably occurs widely elsewhere.

Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum*

Probably occurs quite widely, but difficult to separate from Highland Darter.

Highland Darter *Sympetrum nigrescens*

Widespread and locally common.

Beautiful Demoiselle *Calopteryx virgo*

Found in a few localities, mainly on burns running off the limestone.

Emerald Damselfly *Lestes sponsa*

Widespread and locally common; few records from the south-west or the north-east.

Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrhosoma nymphula*

Well distributed on the Rinns but few records from the south or east.

Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans*

Widespread and quite common.

Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum*

Widespread and quite common, but perhaps less so than Blue-tailed Damselfly.

Found on Jura, but not so far on Islay, is the **Azure Damselfly** *Coenagrion puella*. Other species worth looking out for are the **Azure Hawker** *Aeshna caerulea*, the **Hairy Dragonfly** *Brachytron pratense*, the **Scarce Emerald Damselfly** *Lestes dryas*, the **Irish Damselfly** *Coenagrion lunulatum* and the **Variable Damselfly** *C. pulchellum*.