

Butterflies of the Pentlands



Peacock



Small
Tortoiseshell



Painted Lady



Red Admiral



Comma



Green Veined White



Small White



Large White



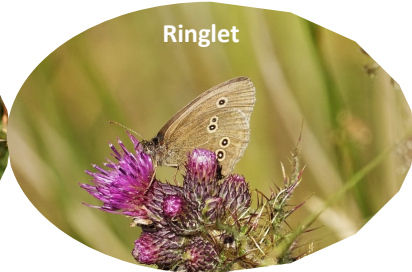
Male



Female



Meadow Brown



Ringlet



Small Heath



Speckled Wood



Wall



Green Hairstreak



Small Copper



Common Blue

Male



Female



Northern
Brown Argus



Holly Blue



Small Pearl-
Bordered Fritillary



Dark
Green Fritillary



Small Skipper

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Vanessids

The **Peacock** and **Small Tortoiseshell** hibernate as adults through the winter and may emerge on sunny days in April or even March. Both are widespread across the Pentlands. Numbers build to a peak in late summer. Look for areas rich in thistle, ragwort, Devil's bit scabious, Michaelmas daisy.

The **Painted Lady** is a migrant, often coming from North Africa. In good years it can be fairly abundant and occasionally we have a Painted Lady year when huge numbers arrive. 2019 was the last Painted Lady Year. Once here, it will be attracted to the same flowers as Red Admirals.

The **Red Admiral**, another migrant, is fairly widespread around the Pentlands, but doesn't tend to survive Scottish winters. Early arrivals will breed here, with numbers supplemented by summer arrivals.

The **Comma** is much scarcer, and is more likely to be found in gardens rather than in the hills. A few decades ago it was restricted to the south of England before extending rapidly northwards.

Whites

The **Green Veined White** is the same size as the Small White, and is probably the commonest butterfly across the Pentlands. It can be easily distinguished from the Small White by the very pronounced vein markings in the wings, especially the underside of the hind wing.

The **Small White** is common across the Pentlands.

The **Large White** is much less common, and can be recognised by the extended black border on the fore

wing, (as well as being larger).

The **Orange Tip** is aptly named, but it is only the male which has the orange tips. The female looks very similar to a Green veined white, but the chequered pattern on the hind underwing is faintly visible through the wing. It is fairly widespread and a relatively common sight on sunny spring days.

Browns

The **Meadow Brown**, **Ringlet** and **Small Heath** are widespread in meadows and grassy hillsides across the Pentlands. Numbers peak in late June (Small Heath) to mid-July (Meadow Brown & Ringlet).

The **Meadow Brown** is a fairly strong flyer.

The **Ringlet** is a velvety brown and tends to fly gently close to the grass. The distinctive rings on the upper-side of the wings are almost invisible on some males, but can be clearly seen on the underside of both male & female.

The **Small Heath** is a quite a small inconspicuous butterfly which always settles with its wings closed.

The **Speckled Wood** is a recent arrival in the Regional Park. It favours dappled shade around woodlands and has been found in Bonaly Country Park and beside Erraid Wood.

A **Wall** butterfly was seen for the first time in 2021 on the flank of Caerketton above Boghall.

Skippers

A recent arrival, the tiny **Small Skipper** is now a common sight in grasslands across the Pentlands.

Hairsteaks, Coppers and Blues

The **Green Hairstreak** is restricted to small colonies and known ones exist near the firing range on Castlelaw and beside Torduff Hill. It flies in early spring and always settles with its wings folded above its back, revealing the emerald green underwings.

The **Small Copper** is the last of the grassland species on the wing, and can be seen as late as September. It can be difficult to spot in flight. A good spot is the hillside above Boghall Farm.

The male **Common Blue** is a striking flash of colour as it patrols grassy areas looking for the much browner female. The female can be mistaken for the very similar Northern Brown Argus Butterfly ...

The **Northern Brown Argus** butterfly is another tiny species that lives in colonies in relatively small areas. In 2021 a colony was found beside the river North Esk just above Carlops.

The first **Holly Blue** was spotted in Malleny Garden in 2023.

Fritillaries

The **Small Pearl-Bordered Fritillary** is relatively common in damp areas in the west of Scotland, but scarce on the eastern side. There are believed to be three small colonies in the Pentlands at Bavelaw, Harperrig and Carlops. Flies from mid-June to mid-July.

The **Dark Green Fritillary** is relatively common across the UK. A strong fast flier, by the time you realise you've seen one it has usually disappeared. Best location is from Carlops up the North Esk and across to Spittal Hill. Flies from Late June to early August