

Butterflies of Montgomeryshire (VC47)

This document outlines the butterfly species recorded in Montgomeryshire, focusing on the county status of each species and their basic biology, rather than their identification.

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Resident and common migratory species thought to occur in the county:

- Dingy Skipper
- Grizzled Skipper
- Essex Skipper
- Small Skipper
- Large Skipper
- Orange-tip
- Large White
- Small White
- Green-veined White
- Clouded Yellow
- Brimstone
- Wall
- Speckled Wood
- Small Heath
- Ringlet
- Meadow Brown
- Gatekeeper (Hedge Brown)
- Marbled White
- Grayling
- Pearl Bordered Fritillary
- Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary
- Silver-washed Fritillary
- Dark Green Fritillary
- Red Admiral
- Painted Lady
- Peacock
- Small Tortoiseshell
- Comma
- Small Copper
- Purple Hairstreak
- Green Hairstreak
- White-letter Hairstreak
- Holly Blue
- Common Blue

Species that have bred in the county but are now presumed extinct:

- Large Heath
- High Brown Fritillary
- Marsh Fritillary
- Brown Hairstreak
- Brown Argus

Vagrants, releases, and unconfirmed records:

- Scarce Swallowtail
- Monarch (The Milkweed)
- Purple Emperor
- Camberwell Beauty

Species not recorded but could be found in the county in the near future:

- Wood White

Introduction

Montgomeryshire (vice-county 47) is relatively under-recorded in terms of butterflies, and as a result, the data used to produce this summary are unlikely to fully reflect a species' distribution.

This document is by no means comprehensive, nor is it a field guide. It has been produced to allow people to ascertain the county status of each species.

All butterfly records from around VC47 are very welcome (see [recording butterflies](#) section) and should be sent to the county butterfly recorder, Douglas Boyes:

info@douglasboyes.co.uk

Please feel free to use this email for any identification queries, further information, etc.

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Distribution maps and species richness maps were made with QGIS software and Rich Burkmar/Field Studies Council's Tom.bio plugin. Map background: Ordnance Survey (contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0).

First published: February 2014. Maps and text last updated: January 2021.

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Organisations and websites

Butterfly Conservation (www.butterfly-conservation.org)

The charity specialising in the protection of our butterflies and moths.

They own and manage over 30 reserves across Britain and are involved in habitat management and restorations projects. Furthermore, the charity works to raise awareness of our butterflies and moths and their plight.



Butterfly Conservation is heavily reliant on membership and donations to carry out their work.

There is a North Wales branch of Butterfly Conservation who work at a regional level. They manage Eyarth Rocks Nature Reserve in Denbighshire.

UK Butterflies (www.ukbutterflies.co.uk)

An excellent website with photos and information about all species of butterflies found in the UK.

North Wales Lepidoptera (www.trawsgoed.com)

A great website providing detailed information about the butterflies and moths of north Wales.

Grid Reference Finder (www.gridreferencefinder.com)

A very useful online tool for finding the grid reference for a point on the map.

Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust (www.montwt.co.uk)

Owning many important reserves across the county, the wildlife trust aims to preserve biodiversity as well as engage the public.

Montgomeryshire Moth Group (www.montgomeryshiremoths.org.uk)

The county moth group promotes moth recording in the county.

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Recording butterflies

Butterflies cannot be conserved unless we know where they live. Due to factors like habitat loss and climate change, our butterfly fauna is changing. Sadly, many species of butterfly are in decline. Recording butterflies allows these changes to be monitored and the records used to better focus conservation efforts. As previously mentioned, Montgomeryshire is under-recorded in terms of butterflies and there are lots of areas lacking records of even our commonest butterflies. To help build up a better picture of the distribution of the county's butterflies, you are encouraged to note down the butterflies you see and submit them to the county recorder.

The record

A biological record has several key components: what (the species), where (six-figure grid reference is preferable, accompanied by a site name which would be visible on an OS map), who (the recorder's full name) and when (a date, ideally an exact date, though a year date is acceptable). An indication of abundance is useful. Exact numbers may be counted, or the lettering system used where: A= 1, B=2-9, C=10-30, D=31-100 and E =100+. This system is generally used for the number of individuals seen in an hour. A description of the habitat may also be useful.

Records can be collected in a number of ways, there is no set method. Some people like to meticulously log every butterfly they see; others simply keep a list of all the butterflies seen at a single site during the year. There are various butterfly hotspots around the county. However, records from all locations are important, be this a back garden, a local nature reserve or even a supermarket car park!

Identification

Many butterflies are distinctive; however, some can be difficult to identify. A record should only be made when the recorder is sure of the species. Records like 'cabbage white' or 'white species' are unhelpful. Butterflies are a well-studied group and there are many excellent field guides to assist identification.

Verification

For scarce species, or for species with which the recorder is unfamiliar, it's preferable to have the record verified. This is most often done with the help of a photograph. If a photograph was not taken, it is useful to provide as much information as possible about the sighting, including behaviour, appearance, immediate habitat, etc. Unconfirmed records of rarer species may not be accepted, and this is done at the discretion of the county recorder.

Flight times

Flight times provided below are the most likely period a species will be seen in the county. It is important to be aware that butterflies may occasionally fly at unusual times of the year. Records may be queried if a butterfly is seen well out its normal season.

Ways of submitting records

There are several ways you can submit records. Most commonly, records are entered into an excel spreadsheet (with each record taking up a row); a template can be provided upon request. Other options include paper forms, recording software, iRecord, and Butterfly Conservation's smartphone app. Please contact the county recorder for details.

Species monitoring

Whilst records of all species are needed, there are certain species within the county for which increased recording effort may be especially beneficial. Below is a list of suggestions of species that are either under-recorded or need more work to assess their status in the county. Many of these are on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and, as a result, may be the focus of conservation work in the future.

For more information, please contact the county recorder.

- BAP** **Dingy Skipper** and **Grizzled Skipper** - Both species are declining nationally. They inhabit warm sites with unimproved grassland. No colonies are known outside Llanymynech Rocks for both species. It seems especially likely that the former species might be more widespread. Suitable sites elsewhere in the county should be visited in May and June.
- BAP** **Large Heath** - Not seen in the county for many years, though it may still be present. Most likely to be found in flat, boggy upland areas with the foodplant.
- BAP** **Wood White** - Unrecorded in the county but occurs nearby. Any county colonies would be significant.
- BAP** **Grayling** - Much declined in inland areas. Known sites should be monitored and any other suitable sites should be visited in July and August.
- BAP** **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** - Known sites are already carefully monitored. Locally and nationally this is a priority species. It is possible that there are additional colonies in the northeast of the county. Any sites with suitable habitat should be visited.
- BAP** **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** - This species is probably fairly common in the uplands, yet there are relatively few recent records from these areas. Damp upland should be visited in June and July.
- BAP** **High Brown Fritillary** - Any county colonies would be extremely significant nationally. Commons around the Welshpool area could host this butterfly and should be visited in July. It is probable that the species is now extinct in the county. Regardless, visiting these habitats at this time of year would still be useful for recording some of the other species of fritillary that are probably present.
- BAP** **Marsh Fritillary** - This species has probably been lost from the area, however, there may be undetected colonies. Damp, unimproved grassland in the county should be checked for this butterfly in June.
- BAP** **Brown Hairstreak** – Historic records from Dyfi Valley in the 1970s were unearthed in 2020, now representing the most recent records of this species from North Wales. The species is quite likely to have been lost from the county; however, the butterfly is secretive and few people are likely to have looked for it, so it may still be present. Untidy blackthorn hedgerows should be examined for eggs over the winter.
- Purple Hairstreak** - Probably fairly common in most oak trees (*Quercus* sp.) across the county, though the records do not reflect this.
- Green Hairstreak** - As the species breeds on plants including gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), it seems likely it is more common and widespread than records suggest.
- BAP** **White-letter Hairstreak** - Probably far more common than the few records suggest. Elms, *Ulmus* sp. (especially wych elm, *U. glabra*) in sunny locations should be checked.
- Brown Argus** - Only likely to be seen at Llanymynech Rocks. However, the site is fairly well visited by butterfly enthusiasts, so it seems likely the species is now extinct. It is possible the species could recolonise the site.

Vice-county 47

Vice-counties are the standard county boundaries used in biological recording. Figure 1 shows the area of northern Powys that forms the vice-county of Montgomeryshire. An interactive map showing the vice-county borders can be found at: www.cucaera.co.uk/grp.

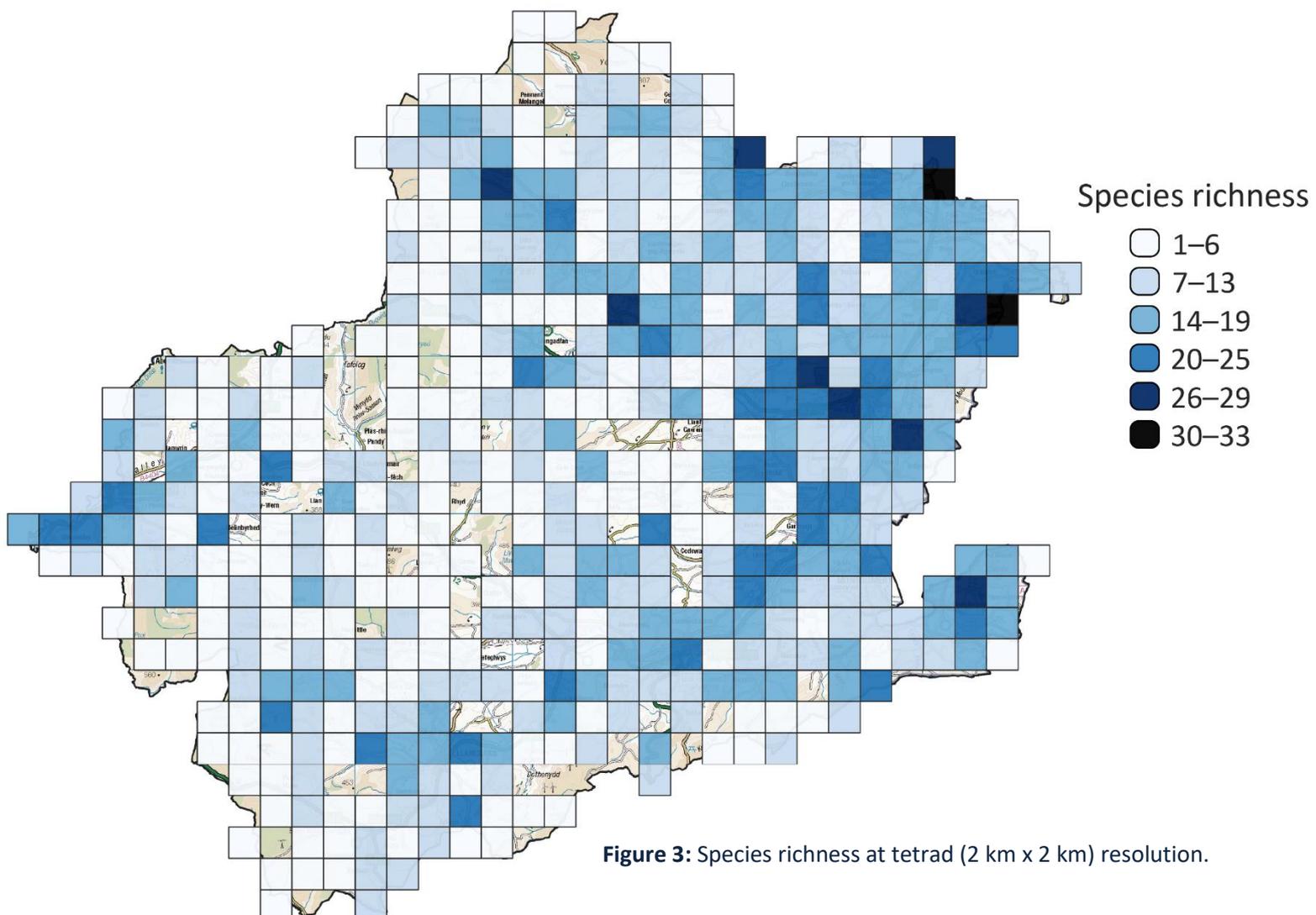
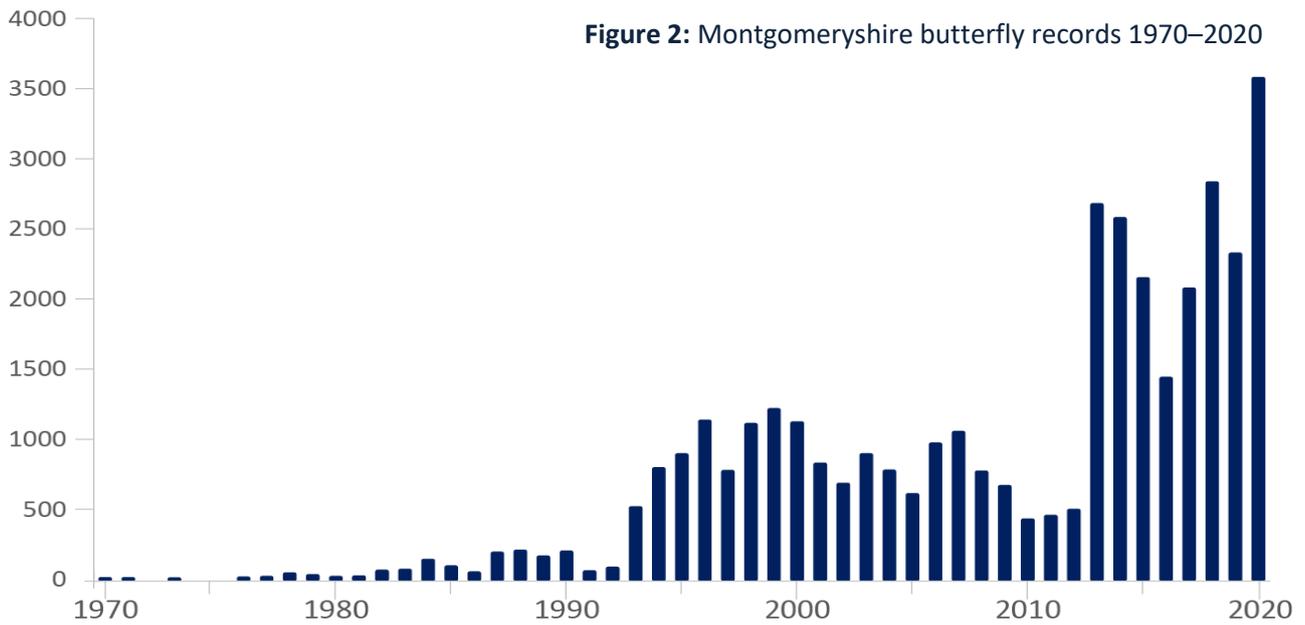


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Figure 1: Map showing the vice-county of Montgomeryshire.

Records contributing to this atlas

This atlas is based on 37,073 records of 43 species. Records stretch back to 1898, though the vast majority of records are from recent decades (Figure 2). More species have been found in the east of the county (Figure 3), though this is largely a reflection of the recorder bias towards these areas.



Under-recorded areas

It is hoped that by producing a map highlighting the most under-recorded parts of the county (Figure 4), recorders will be able to target these areas.

If you can visit any of these squares, please help by recording any butterflies you see (remember to stick to public footpaths or gain the landowner's permission). If you'd like a higher resolution map, a different map (e.g. highlighting those areas with zero records), or a specific area to target, please contact the county recorder.

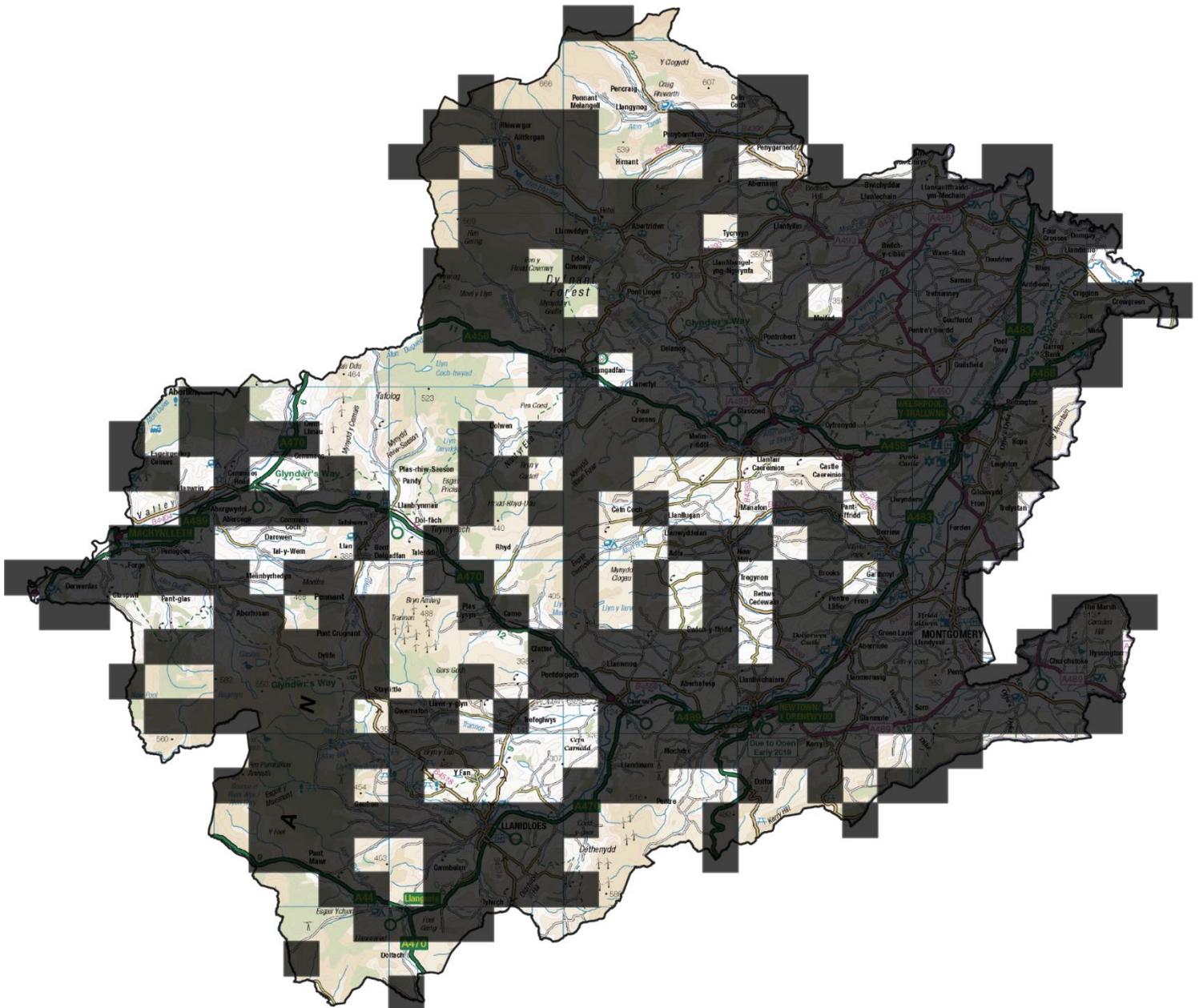


Figure 4: Map showing under-recorded areas ('white holes'). These tetrads have had no butterfly records since 2010. Dark shaded squares have had recent butterfly records, though many of these have only a handful of records...

Dingy Skipper (*Erynnis tages*)

National status: Locally distributed through most of Britain. Declined nationally in recent years; loss of suitable habitat is the most cause.

County status: Very local. A breeding colony exists at Llanymynech Rocks where it is found in good numbers. It has also been found at a scattering of other sites in the east of the county, though these don't appear to represent breeding colonies.

A photo would be useful to confirm any records from sites other than Llanymynech Rocks.



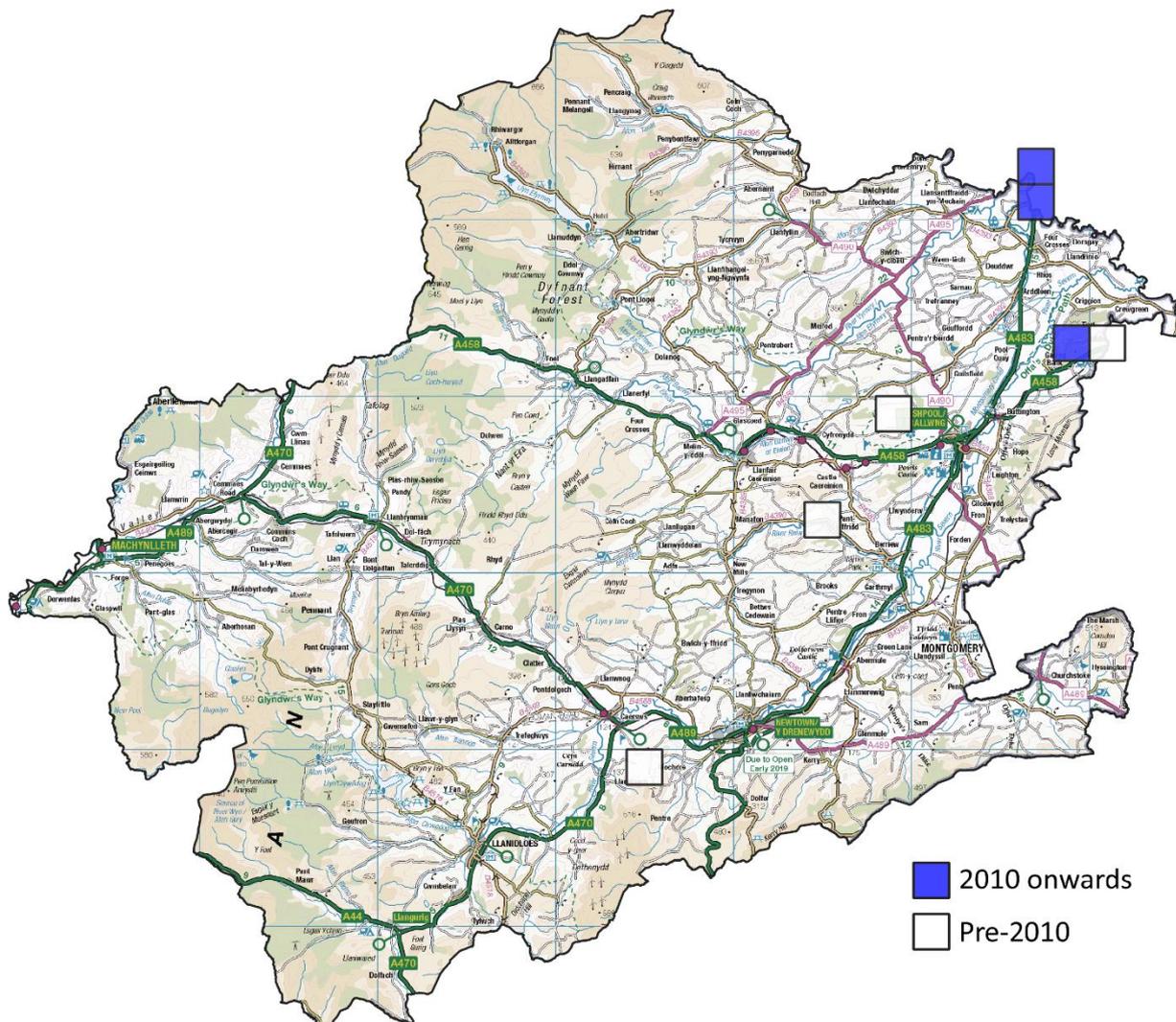
Habitat: Tends to be found in warm, sunny, open areas usually with unimproved grassland. Including abandoned quarries (as is the case in the county), railway embankments and south-facing slopes.

Larval foodplant: Bird's-foot trefoil, *Lotus corniculatus* (other plants may occasionally be used).

Flight time: May to June.

VC47 Confusion species: Could be confused with some day-flying moths, for example, Burnet Companion, *Euclidia glyphica*.

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Grizzled Skipper (*Pyrgus malvae*)

National status: Occurs locally across the south of Britain but with a patchy distribution. Has undergone a large national decline in recent years.

County status: Extremely local. A healthy breeding colony occurs at Llanymynech Rocks.

A photo may be useful for any records outside of Llanymynech Rocks.



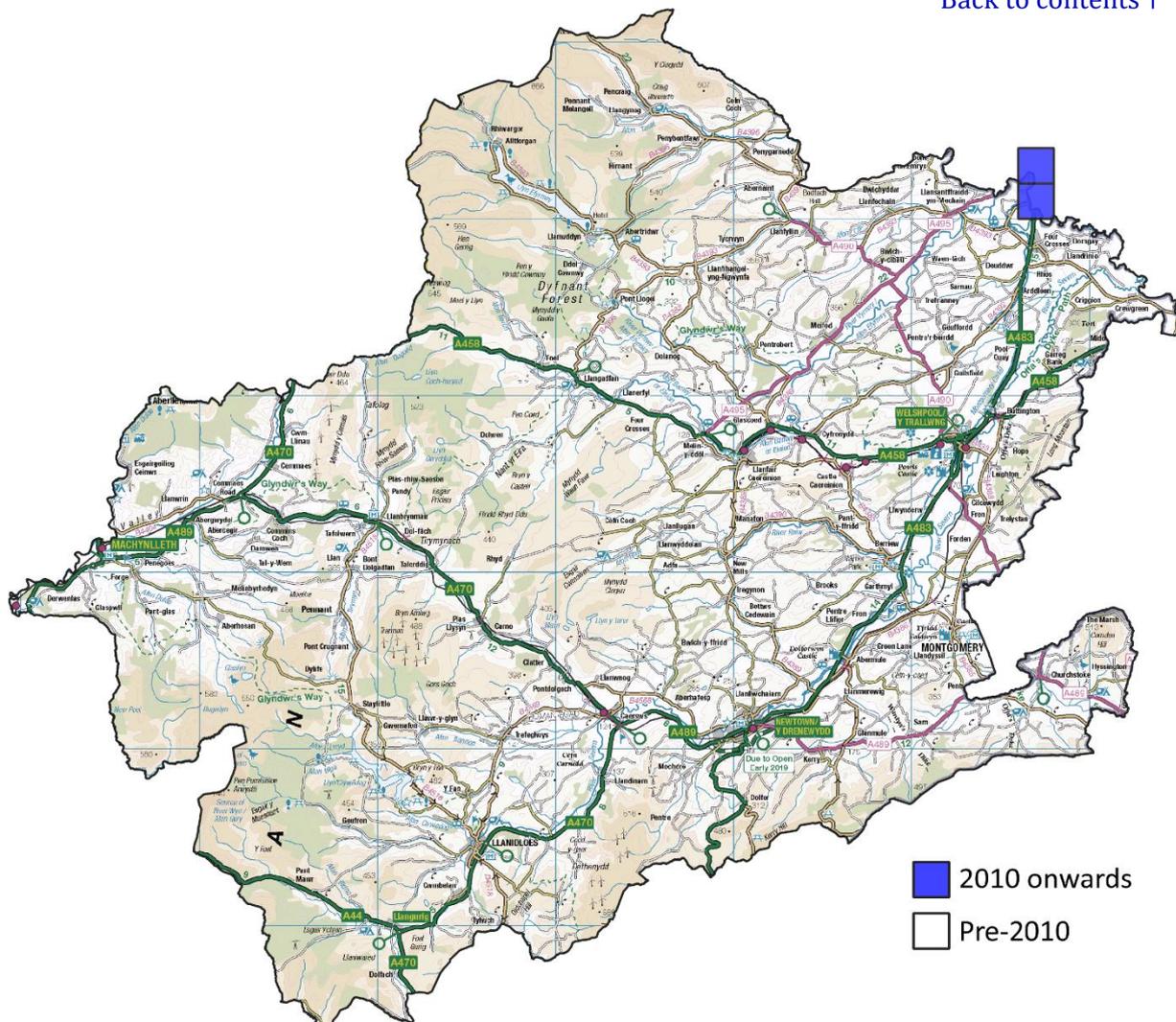
Habitat: Generally warm, grassy sites. Including woodland glades and rides, unimproved grassland and brownfield sites.

Larval foodplant: Various herbaceous plants including wild strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*), agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), creeping cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*) and bramble (*Rubus* sp.).

Flight time: Late April to June.

VC47 Confusion species: Quite a distinctive species with striking markings.

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Essex Skipper (*Thymelicus lineola*)

National status: Fairly common across much of England. The distribution has reportedly doubled in recent decades.

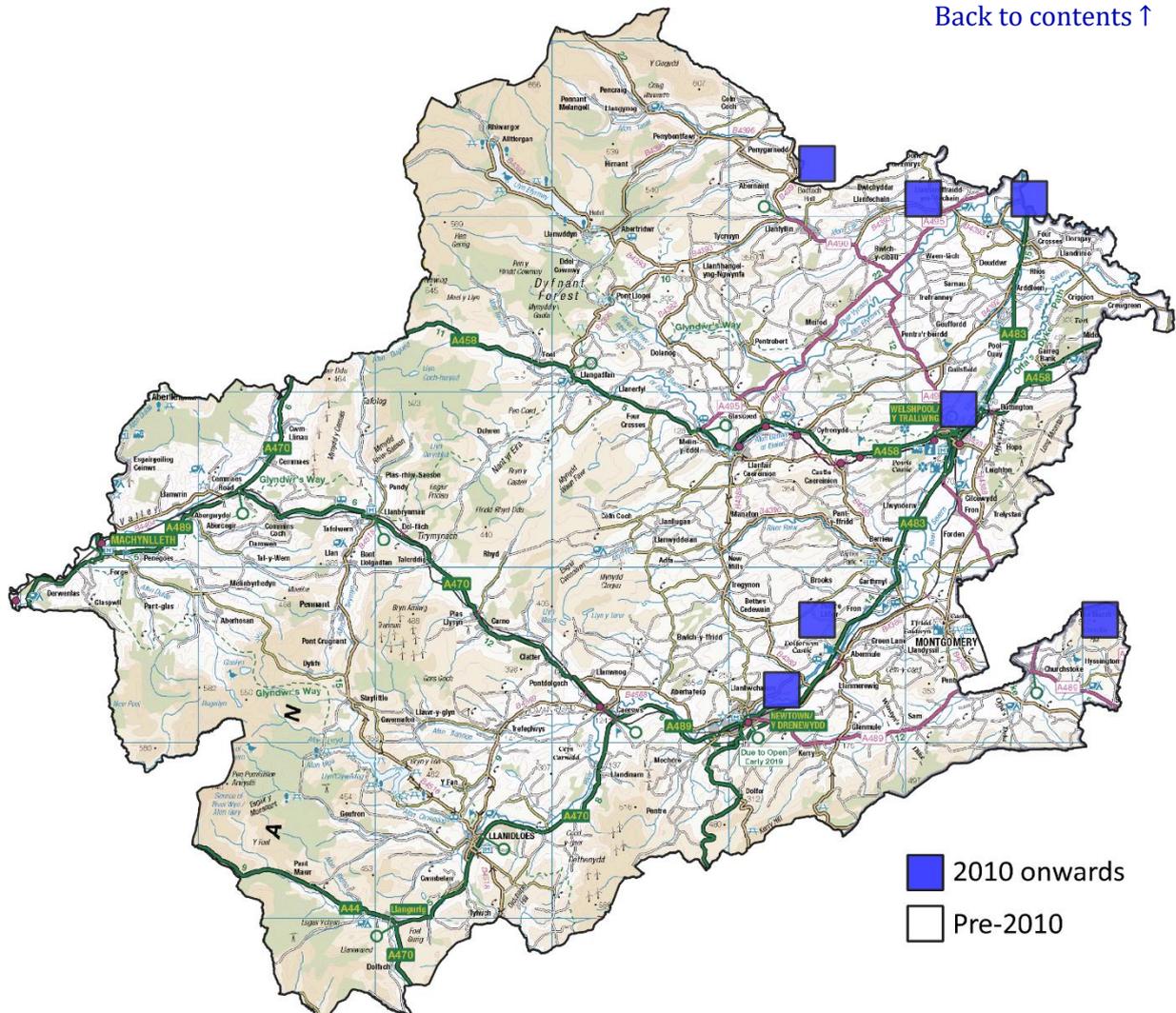
County status: Recent colonist. First recorded in 2017 at Welshpool and since found at a number of sites in the east of Montgomeryshire. This species is likely to expand its range further into the county over the coming years.

Habitat: Rough grassland.

Larval foodplant: Grasses.

Flight time: Late June to August.

VC47 Confusion species: [Small Skipper](#).



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Small Skipper (*Thymelicus sylvestris*)

National status: Fairly common through most of England and Wales.

County status: Moderately common. Largely restricted to sites with at least a small amount of unimproved grassland (which is left long over winter).

Habitat: Rough grassland (needs tall grass). Occurs on roadside verges, woodland rides and heaths.

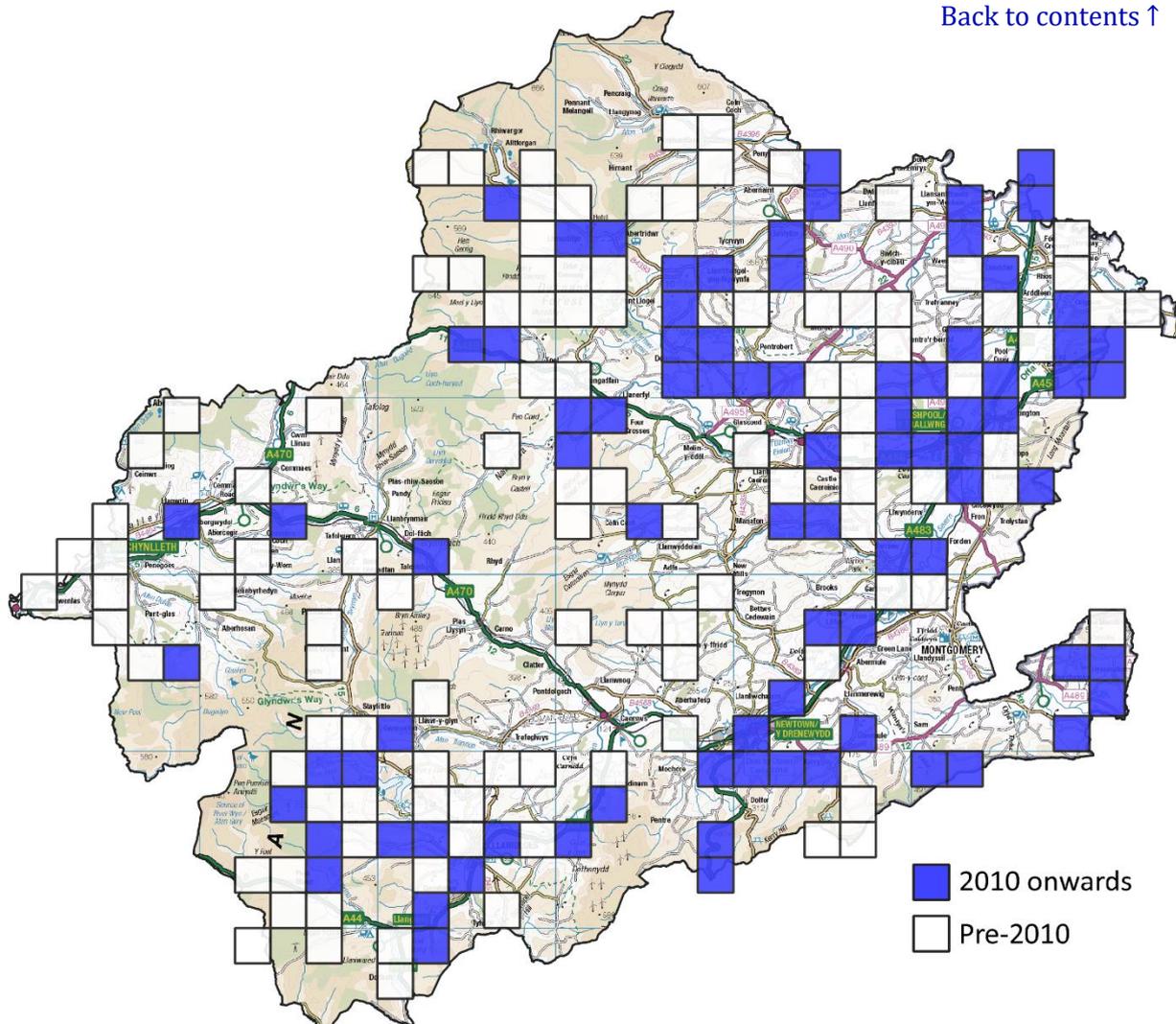
Larval foodplant: Various grasses, especially Yorkshire-fog, *Holcus lanatus*.

Flight time: Late June to late August.

VC47 Confusion species: Can be easily confused with [Essex Skipper](#). Care should be taken with identification. Focus should be placed on wing markings and antenna tip detail. Also see [Large Skipper](#).



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Large Skipper (*Ochlodes sylvanus*)

National status: Fairly common through much of England and Wales.

County status: Moderately common. Can be found throughout much of the county where suitable habitat occurs.

Habitat: Sheltered, grassy habitats. Preferring 'untidy' areas (like most of our wildlife). Including meadows, hedgerows, roadside verges and woodland rides. Can be found in damper habitats than the other skippers.

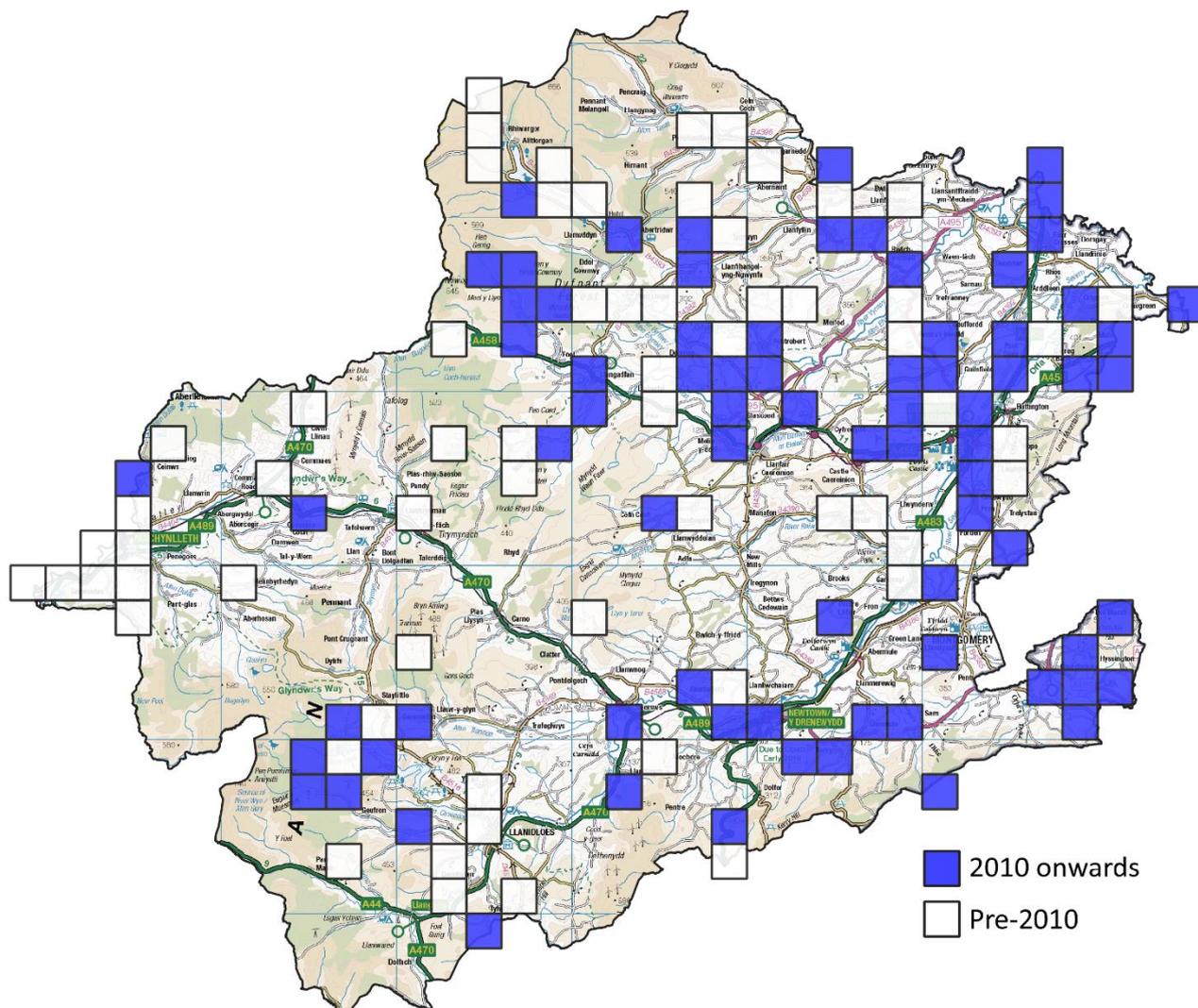
Larval foodplant: Various grasses, especially cock's-foot, *Dactylis glomerata*.

Flight time: Mainly June and July.

VC47 Confusion species: May be confused with [Small Skipper](#) and [Essex Skipper](#). Generally more strongly marked than these species, with the male having a prominent sex brand.



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Orange-tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*)

National status: A common species throughout most of the UK, becoming more local further north.

County status: Common and widespread throughout the county. The males will wander widely and can be found some distance from suitable breeding habitat.

Habitat: A wide range of habitats, especially damp areas. Meadows, open woodland, hedgerows and often visits gardens.

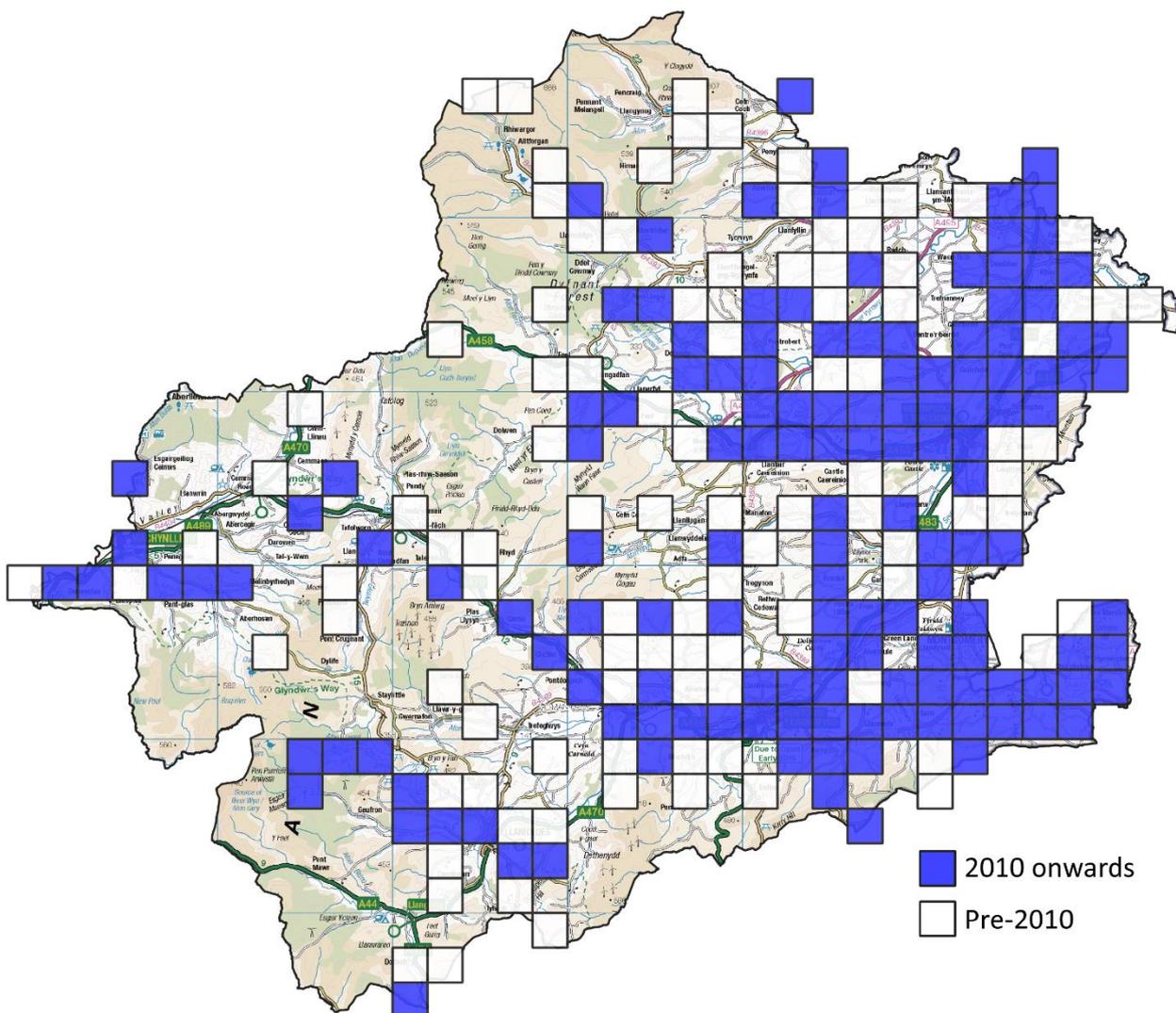
Larval foodplant: Mainly cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*) and garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*).

Flight time: April to late June.

VC47 Confusion species: Males are unmistakable. Females are easily identified from the underwing pattern.



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Large White (*Pieris brassicae*)

National status: A common resident across most of Britain. Numbers are inflated by migrants from the continent.

County status: Common and widespread across the county.

Habitat: Anywhere with the foodplant. Including gardens, grassland and hedgerows. Migrants can turn up anywhere.

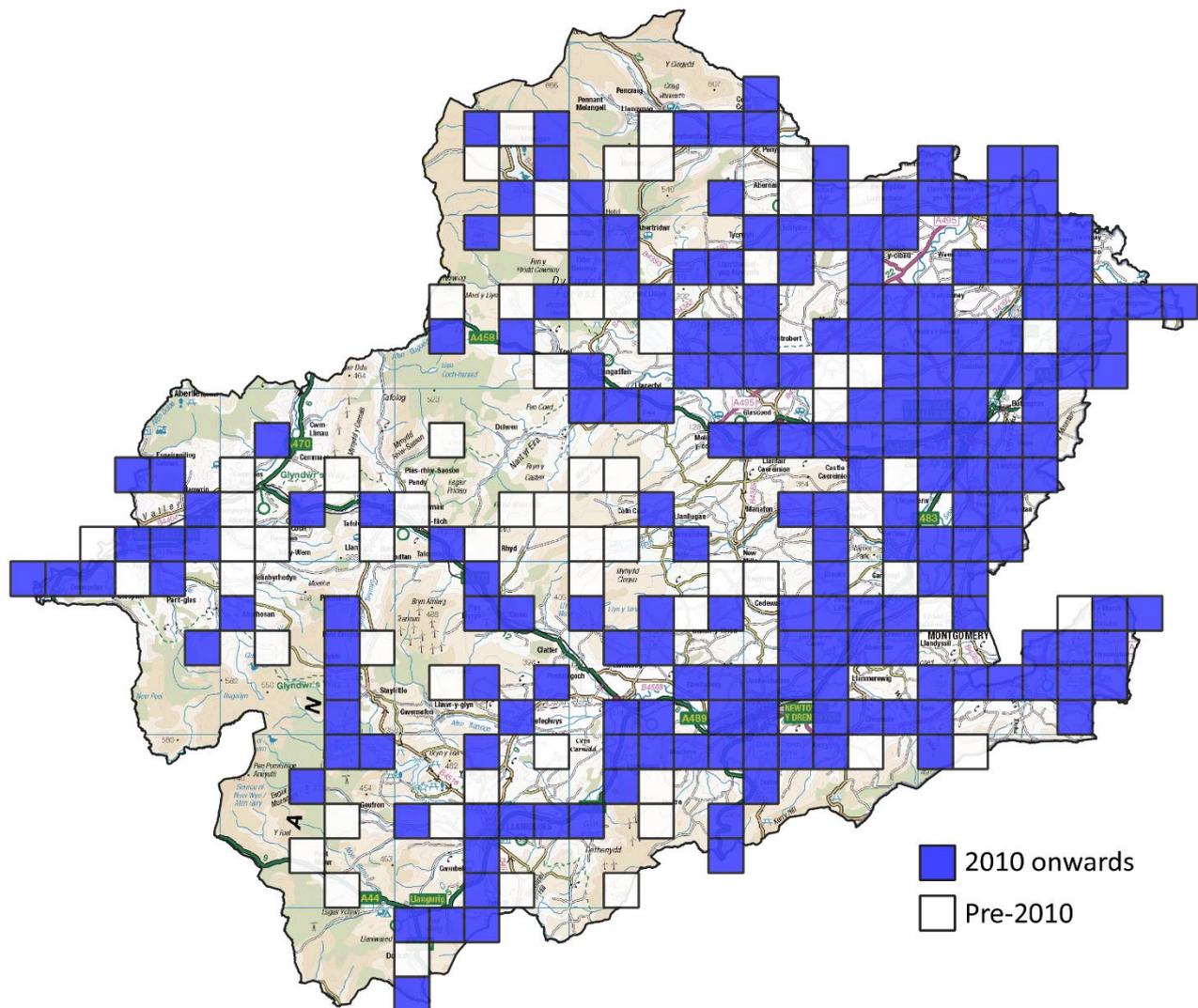
Larval foodplant: Range of plants in cabbage family (Cruciferae). Often cultivated varieties.

Flight time: Two or three generations a year. Can be seen between April and September.

VC47 Confusion species: Several of the other whites are similar and care should be taken with identification. Most likely to be confused with [Small White](#), which can be very similar (size overlaps).



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Small White (*Pieris rapae*)

National status: A common resident across Britain with numbers sometimes further increased by continental migrants.

County status: Common and widespread, though less so in the uplands.

Habitat: Can be found in most habitats.

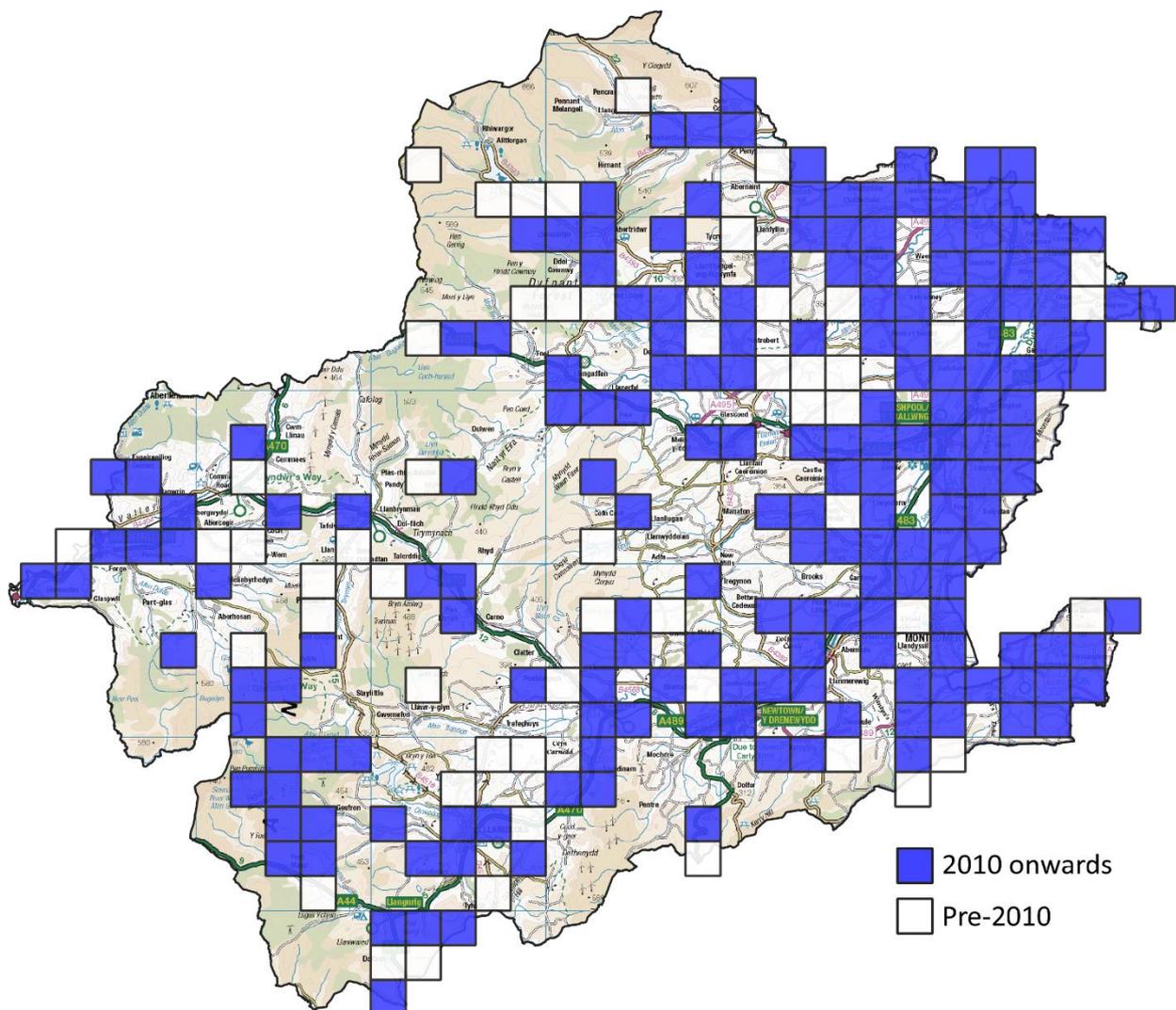
Larval foodplant: A range of plants, especially brassicas.

Flight time: Two or three generations per year. Can be seen from April to early October.

VC47 Confusion species: Several other species of white are similar and care should be taken with identification. Especially [Large White](#) and also [Green-veined White](#).



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Green-veined White (*Pieris napi*)

National status: Common across Britain.

County status: Abundant. Found throughout the county. Most common species of white in open country.

Habitat: Almost anywhere.

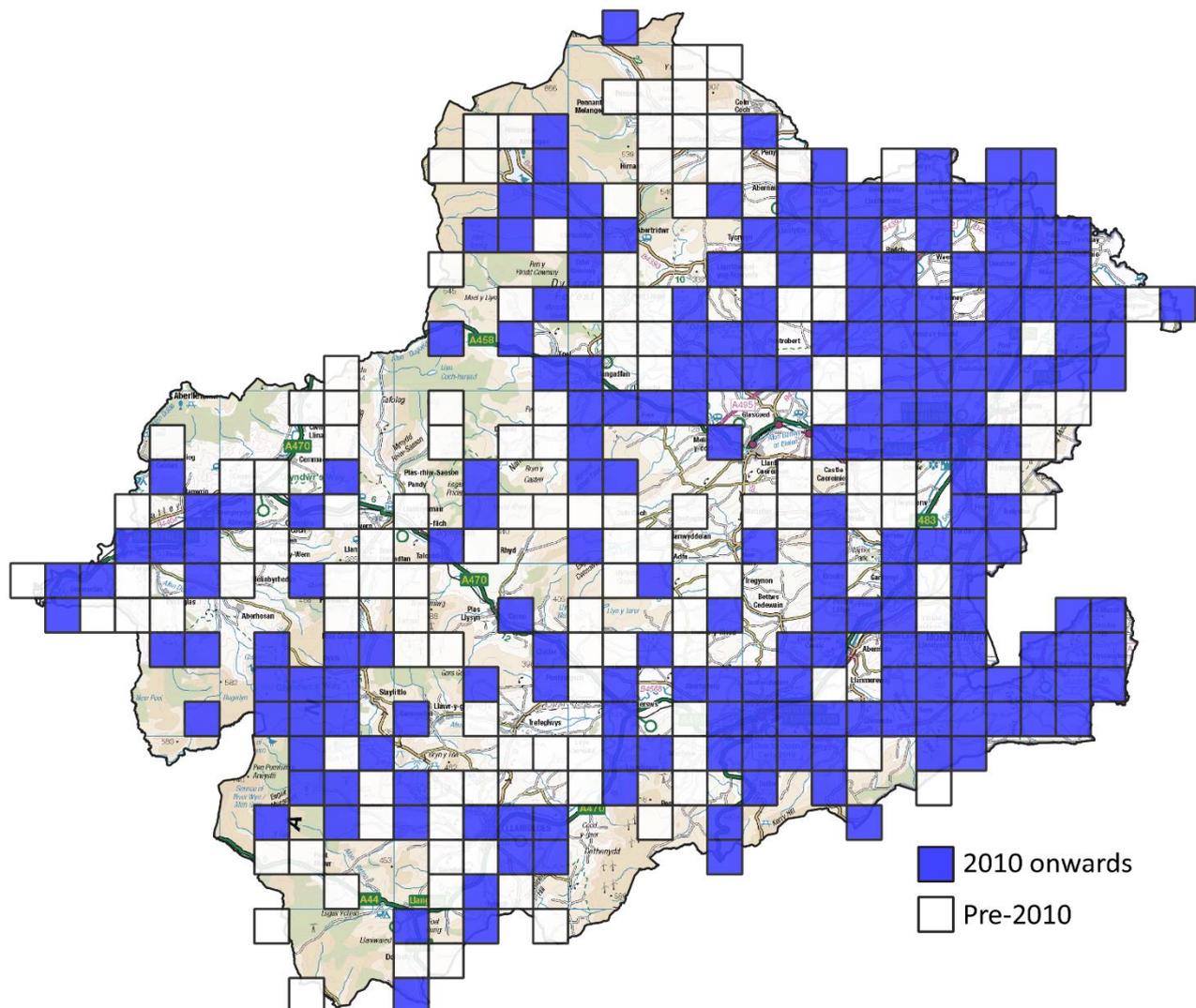
Larval foodplant: Various plants in cabbage family (Cruciferae).

Flight time: Two broods. Can be seen between April and early September.

VC47 Confusion species: Like many of the whites it is difficult to identify in flight, where it may appear similar to [Small White](#) and [Large White](#). If a clear view of the underside is seen, there should be little problem with identification.



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Clouded Yellow (*Colias croceus*)

National status: A migrant species with individuals travelling from southern Europe and northern Africa. Numbers vary widely each year. Usually unable to survive the winter in the UK.

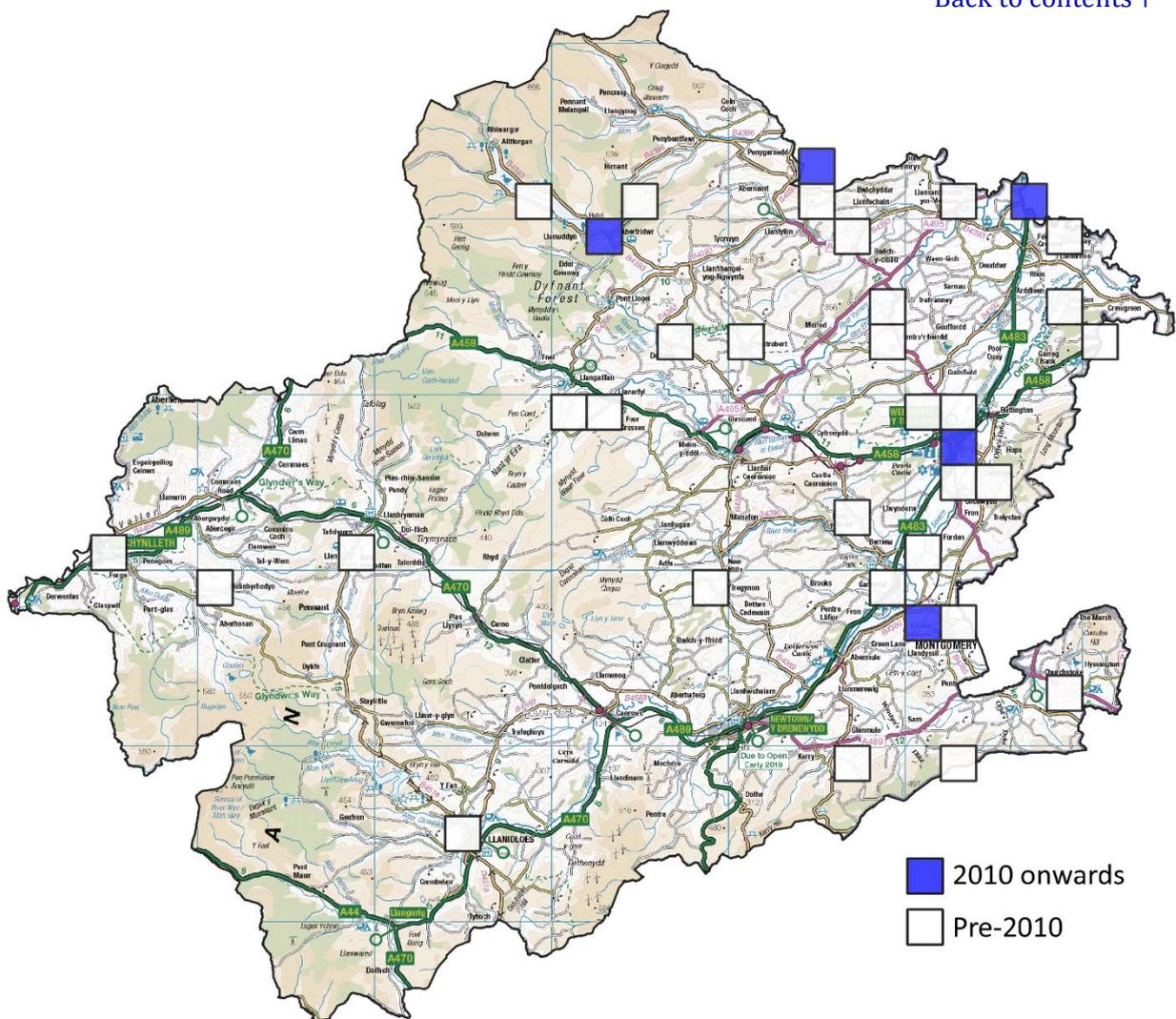
County status: A migrant. Not especially common; not seen every year. Seen in good migrant years, though usually in low numbers.

Habitat: Can turn up almost anywhere.

Flight time: Can be seen between June and October, usually peaking towards the end of this period.



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Brimstone (*Gonepteryx rhamni*)

National status: Fairly common across the southern half of Britain. Distribution largely follows that of the foodplant.

County status: Not uncommon on the eastern edge of the county, bordering England. Less commonly seen in the western half of the county, presumably because of the absence of the foodplant. The Brimstone may be becoming more frequent in the county.

Habitat: Breeds where foodplant is present, often woodland or scrubby grassland. The species wanders widely and can turn up almost anywhere.

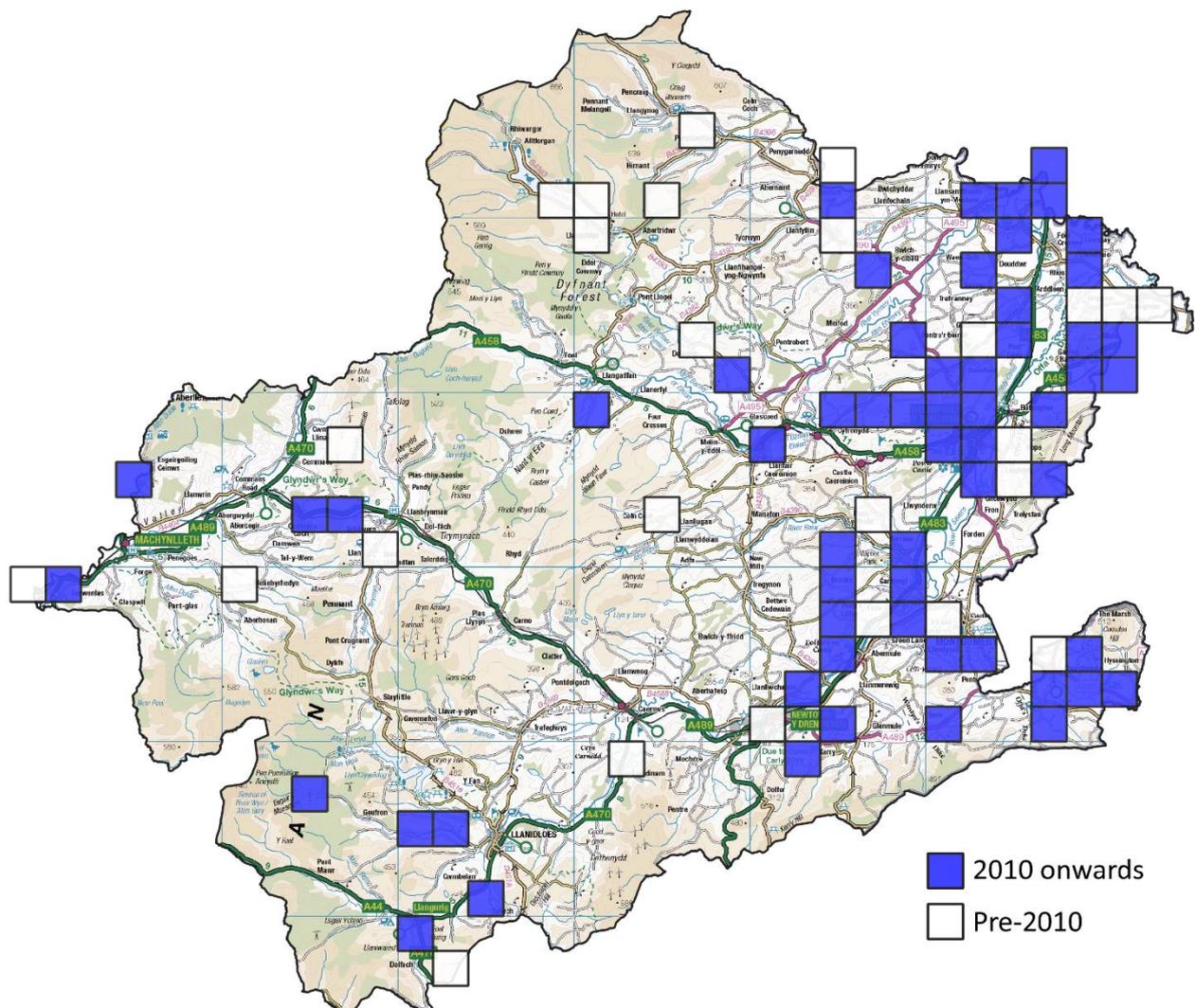
Larval foodplant: Buckthorns (*Frangula alnus* and *Rhamnus cathartica*).

Flight time: Usually seen from April to October (rarely seen in July). Adults emerge in the autumn, overwinter and emerge in the spring when they lay their eggs.

VC47 Confusion species: Distinctive. Females are far less colourful than males.



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Wall (*Lasiommata megera*)

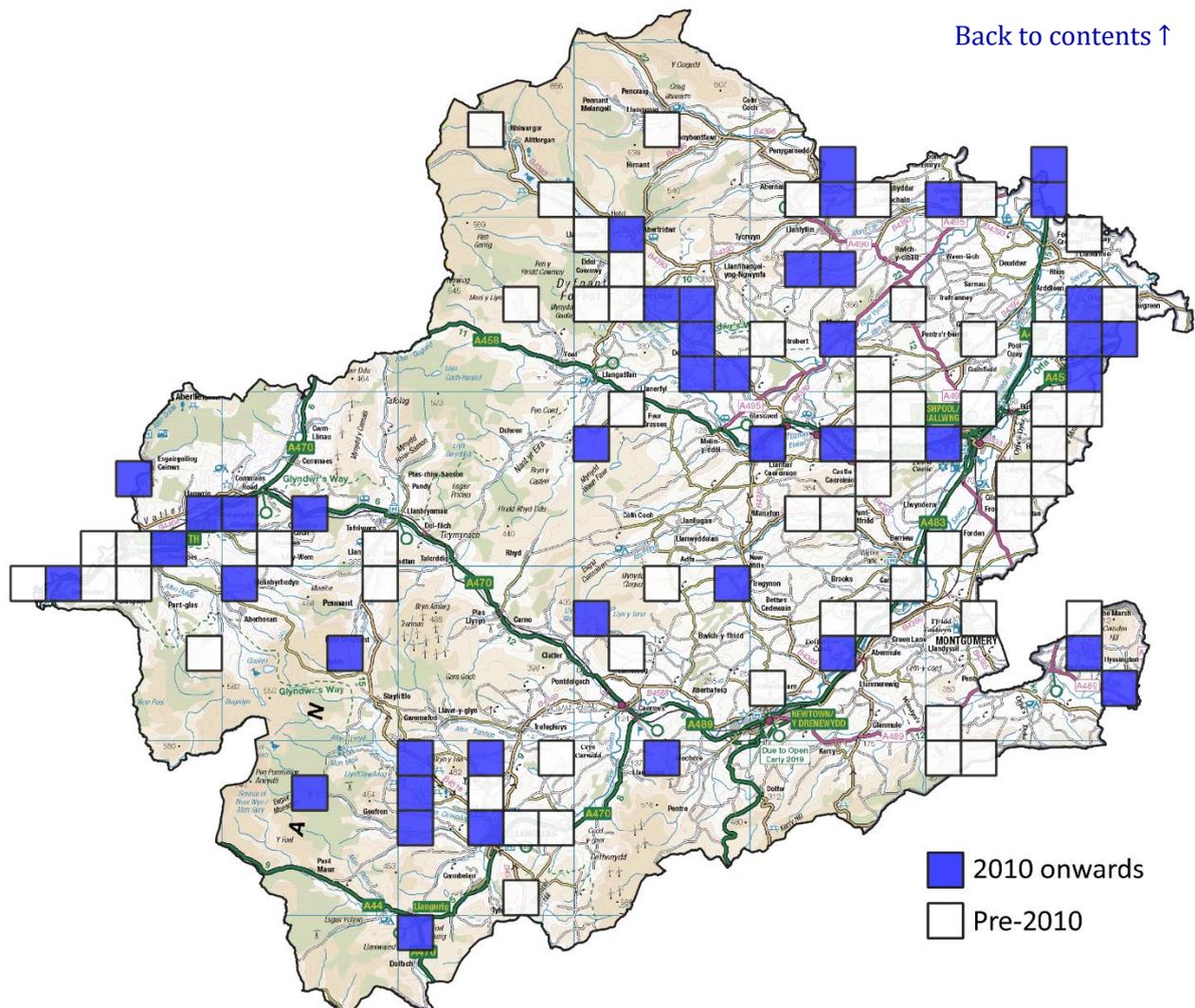
National status: A formerly common species across most of Britain. However, in the last twenty years, it has been lost from much of southern England where it is now quite scarce. Populations in the north and along the coast have fared better.

County status: Not especially common, though it is distributed across the county. Tends to be more of a lowland species.

Habitat: A range of grassy habitats; including waste ground, south-facing grassy slopes and abandoned quarries. This species often basks on bare or stony ground, which seems to be a habitat requirement. Individuals do wander and may be found away from suitable habitat.

Larval foodplant: Various grasses.

Flight time: Two generations. Usually May to June and late July to early September.



Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*)

National status: Common across much of Britain. Has shown an increasing abundance and distribution in recent years, which is largely due to climate change.

County status: Widespread. Usually a common species, especially in lowland areas where it can be found in most woodland. May reach suitable habitat on higher ground, though these populations vary each year.

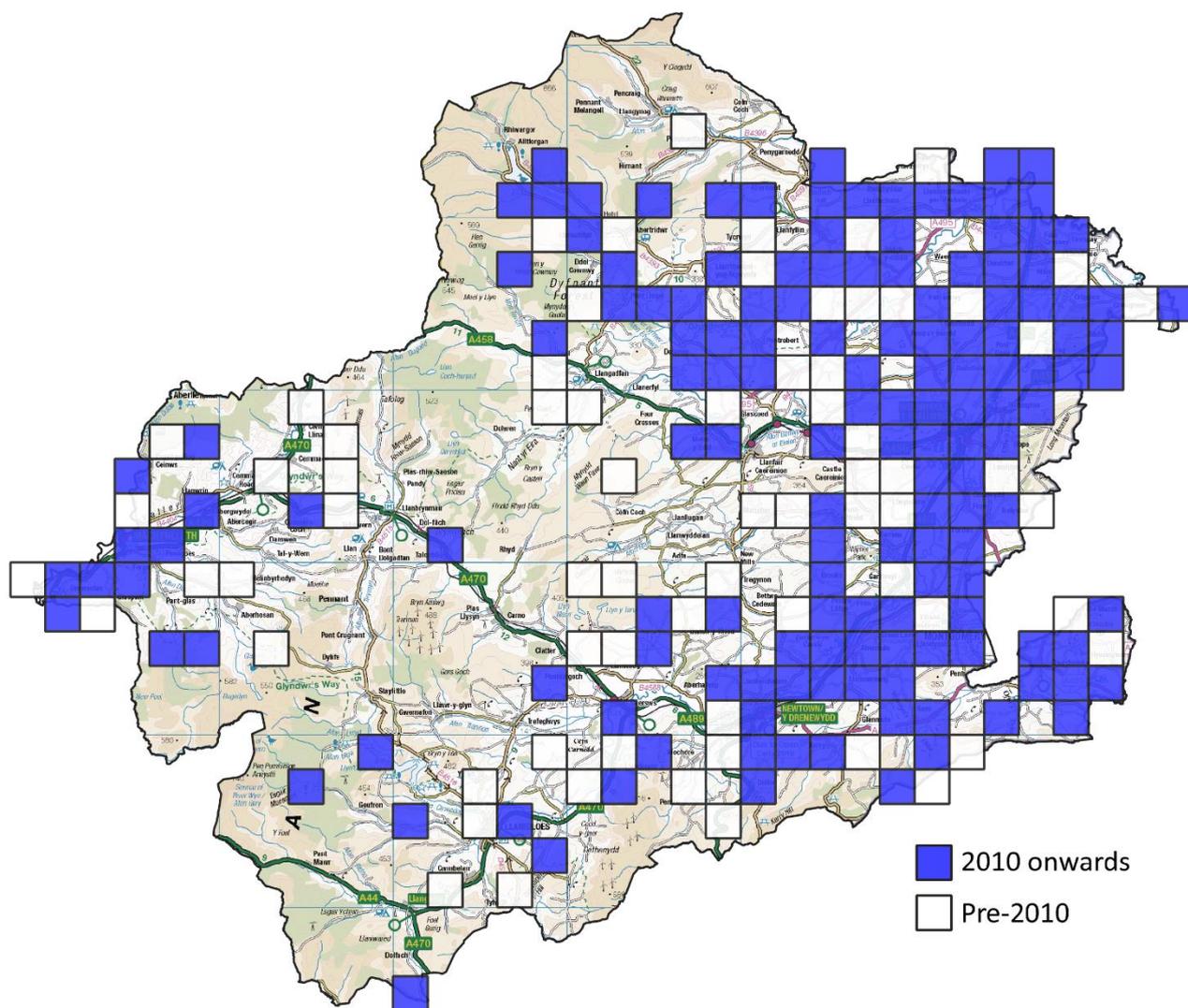
Habitat: Woodland is the main habitat, perhaps favouring damp areas. May occur anywhere with sheltered/shaded conditions.

Larval foodplant: Various grasses.

Flight time: Usually seen April to September. Two or three generations each year.



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Small Heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*)

National status: Common across most of Britain. The species is thought to be in decline nationally.

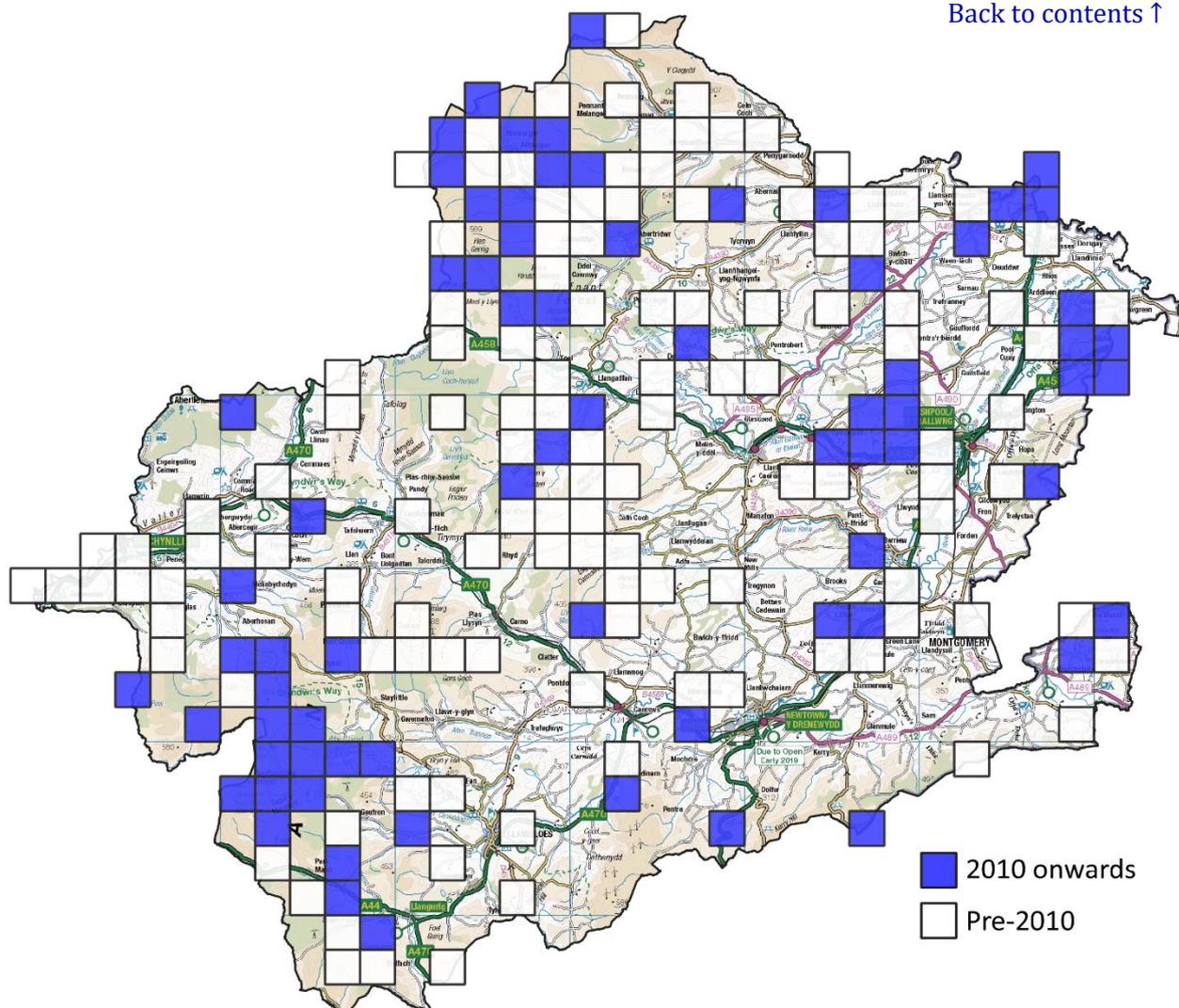
County status: Widespread and often common. Can become very common in ideal habitat. There is a slight record bias towards the western side of the county.

Habitat: A wide range. Usually open, grassy places. Including grassland, brownfield sites, meadows, heathland and woodland rides. Can also occur on mountain slopes.

Larval foodplant: Grasses, especially fescues (*Festuca* sp.), meadow-grasses (*Poa* sp.), and bents (*Agrostis* sp.).

Flight time: May to early September. Two generations.

VC47 Confusion species: Not dissimilar in markings to several other browns; this species, however, is noticeably small.



Ringlet (*Aphantopus hyperantus*)

National status: Widespread and common across large parts of Britain. In recent years this species appears to be on the increase.

County status: A common species found throughout the county.

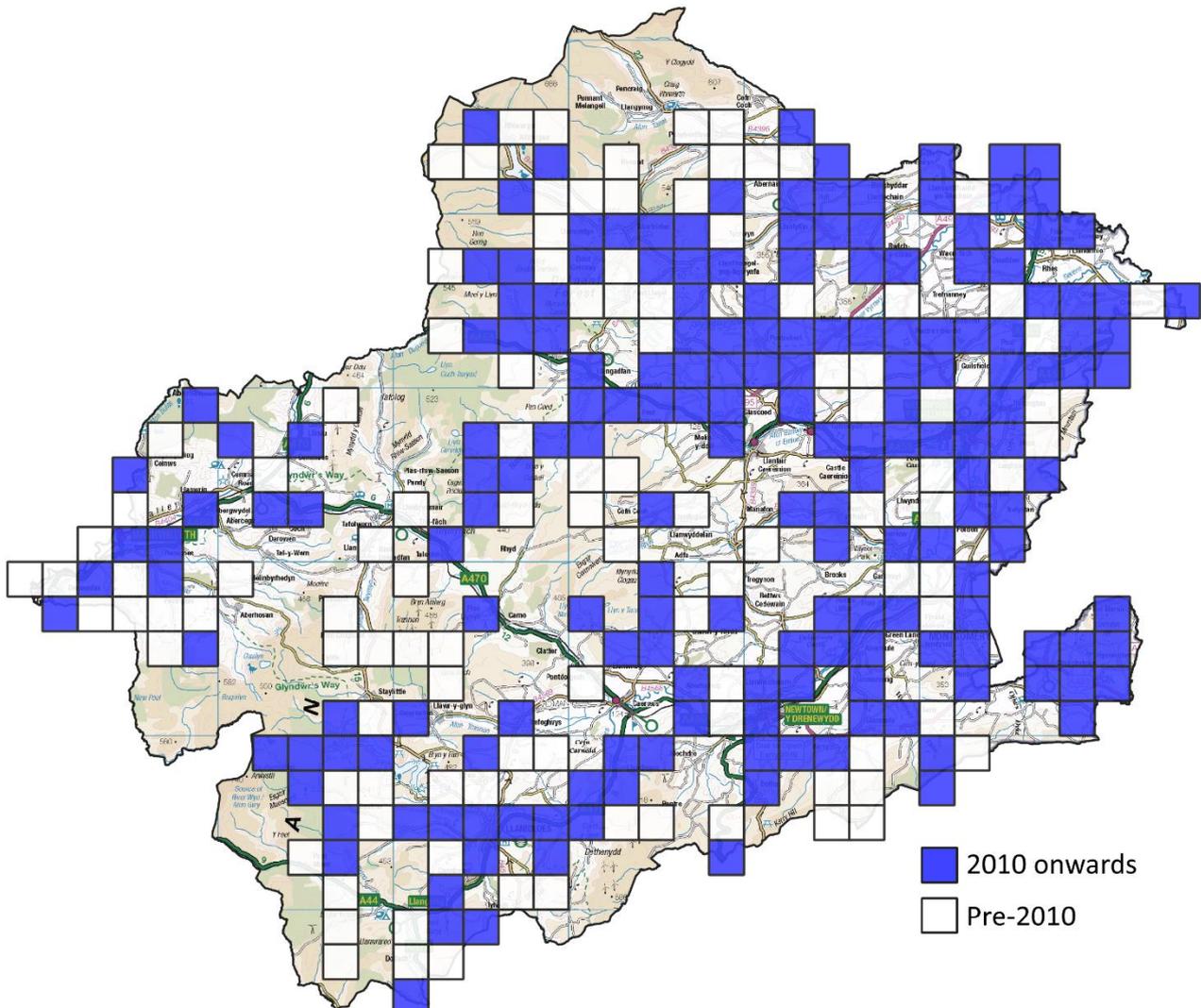
Habitat: Tends to prefer damp areas with lush vegetation. Including woodland rides, meadows, verges and hedgerows.

Larval foodplant: Various grasses.

Flight time: June to August.



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Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*)

National status: Widespread and common.

County status: A very common and widespread species. Can be abundant in places.

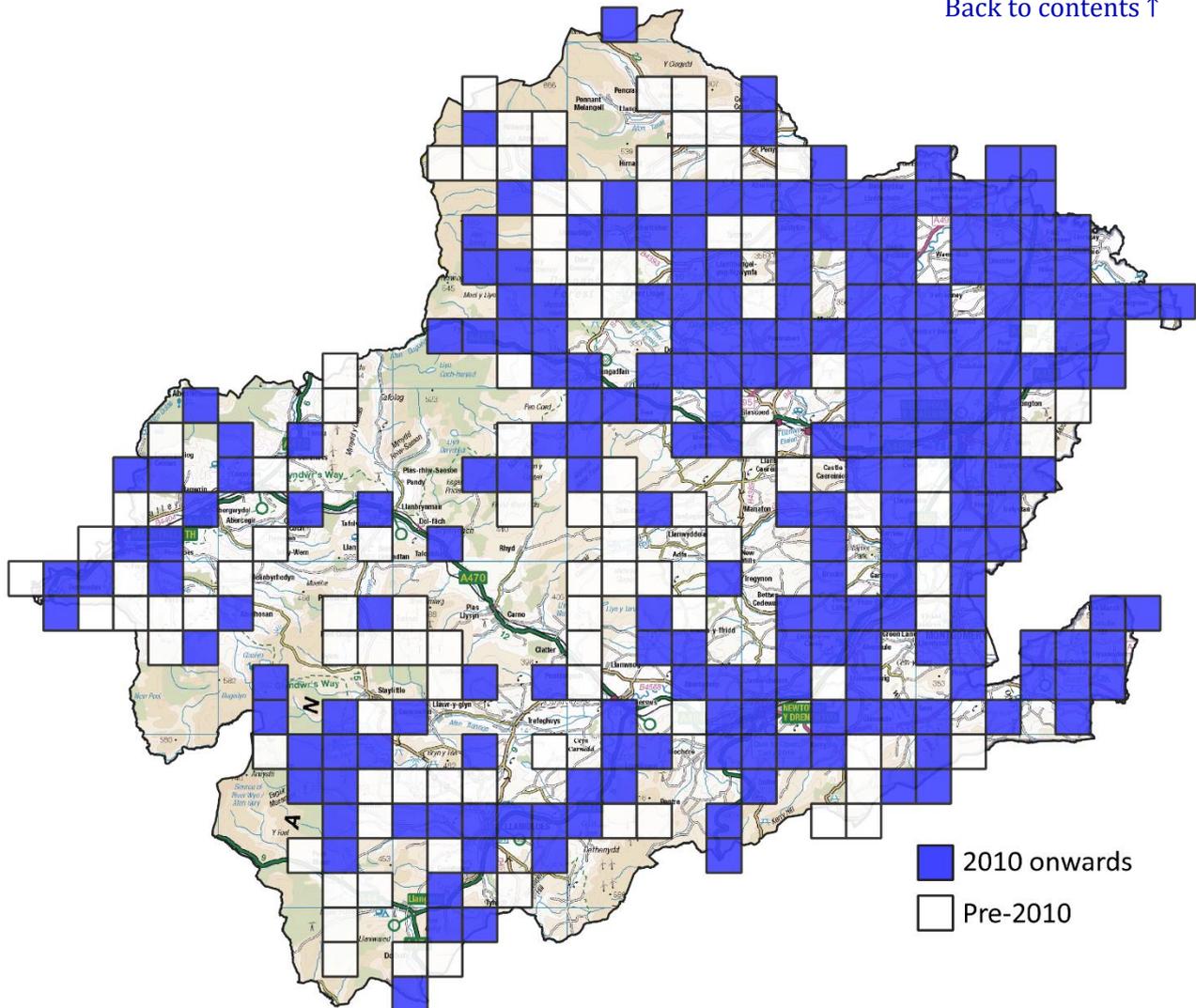
Habitat: Any grassy habitats.

Larval foodplant: A wide range of grasses.

Flight time: Late June to August.



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Gatekeeper/Hedge Brown (*Pyronia tithonus*)

National status: A common and widespread species throughout most of Britain. Spreading north.

County status: A definite eastern-bias for this species where it can be relatively common. This is seemingly a lowland species. Uncommon or absent from most of the western half.

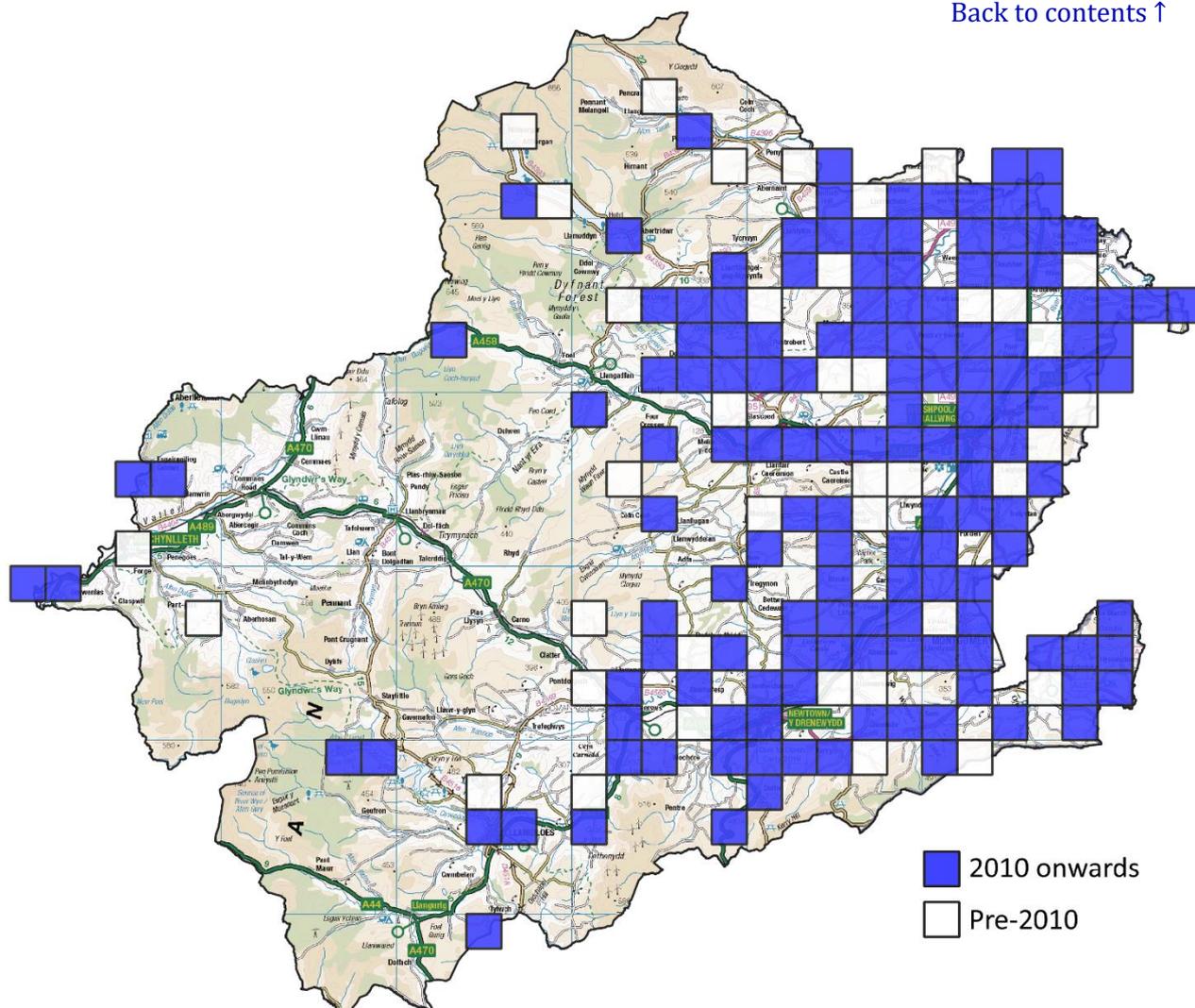
Habitat: Warm, sheltered, grassy sites. Scrubby grassland is preferred. Also field edges and woodland rides.

Larval foodplant: Various grasses.

Flight time: July and August.



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Marbled White (*Melanargia galathea*)

National status: Fairly common across parts of England, usually in the south. Also occurs in south Wales. May have spread in recent years.

County status: Seen in 1999 (probably a stray individual or a release) and then not again until 2018. Several recent records suggest the species has become, or is on the verge of becoming, established in Montgomeryshire.

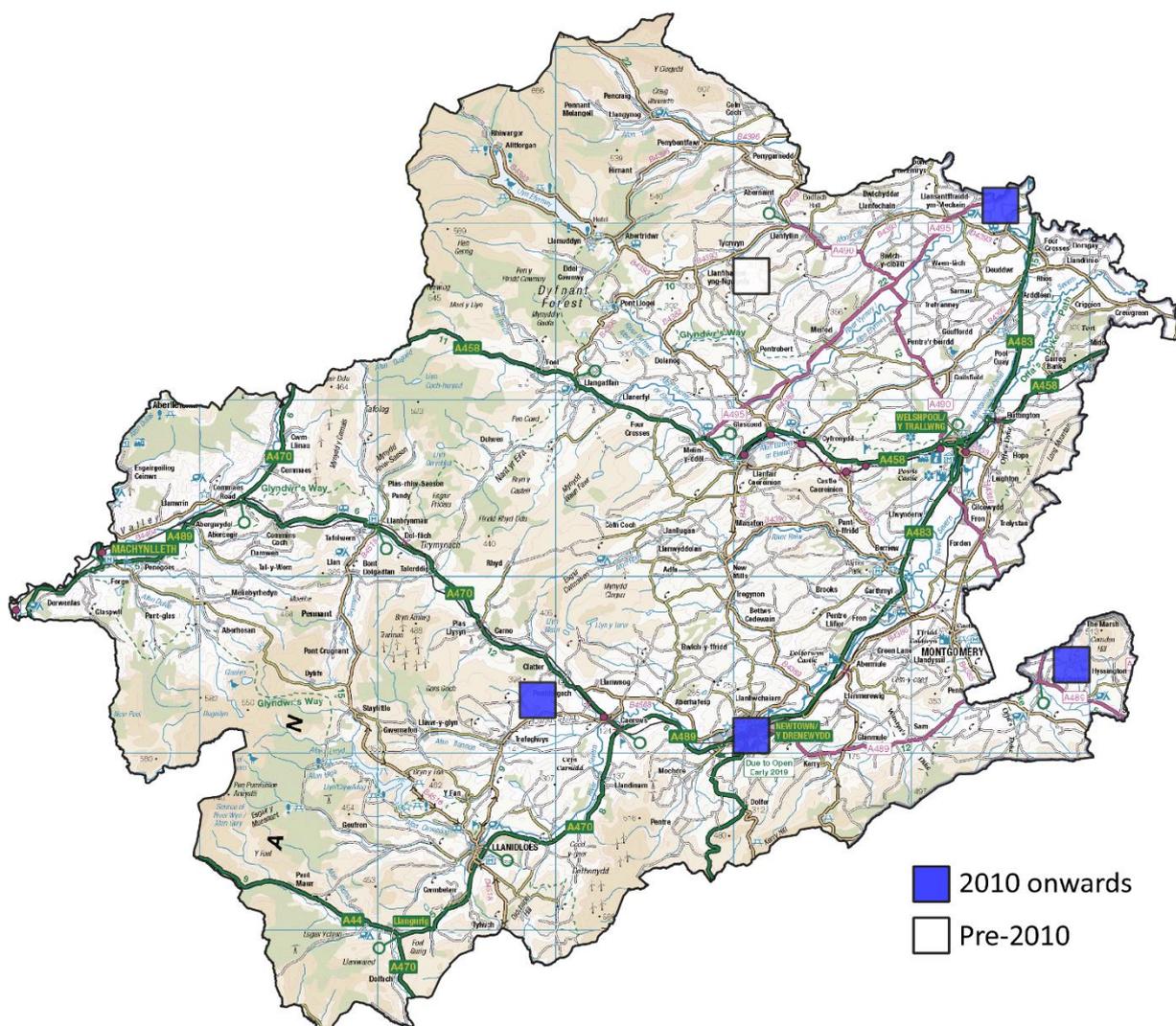
Habitat: Unimproved grassland.

Larval foodplant: Red fescue, *Festuca rubra*.

Flight time: June to August.



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Grayling (*Hipparchia semele*)

National status: Generally a coastal species but also occurs inland. Fairly widespread. A declining species, especially inland populations.

County status: Uncommon and local. Recent records only from a handful of sites, usually in the eastern side of the county. Seemingly favouring hills with bare ground, e.g. Middletown Hill and Roundton Hill. With inland populations in national decline, this is a species of concern in the county. A record photograph may be helpful, especially if from a previously unknown site.



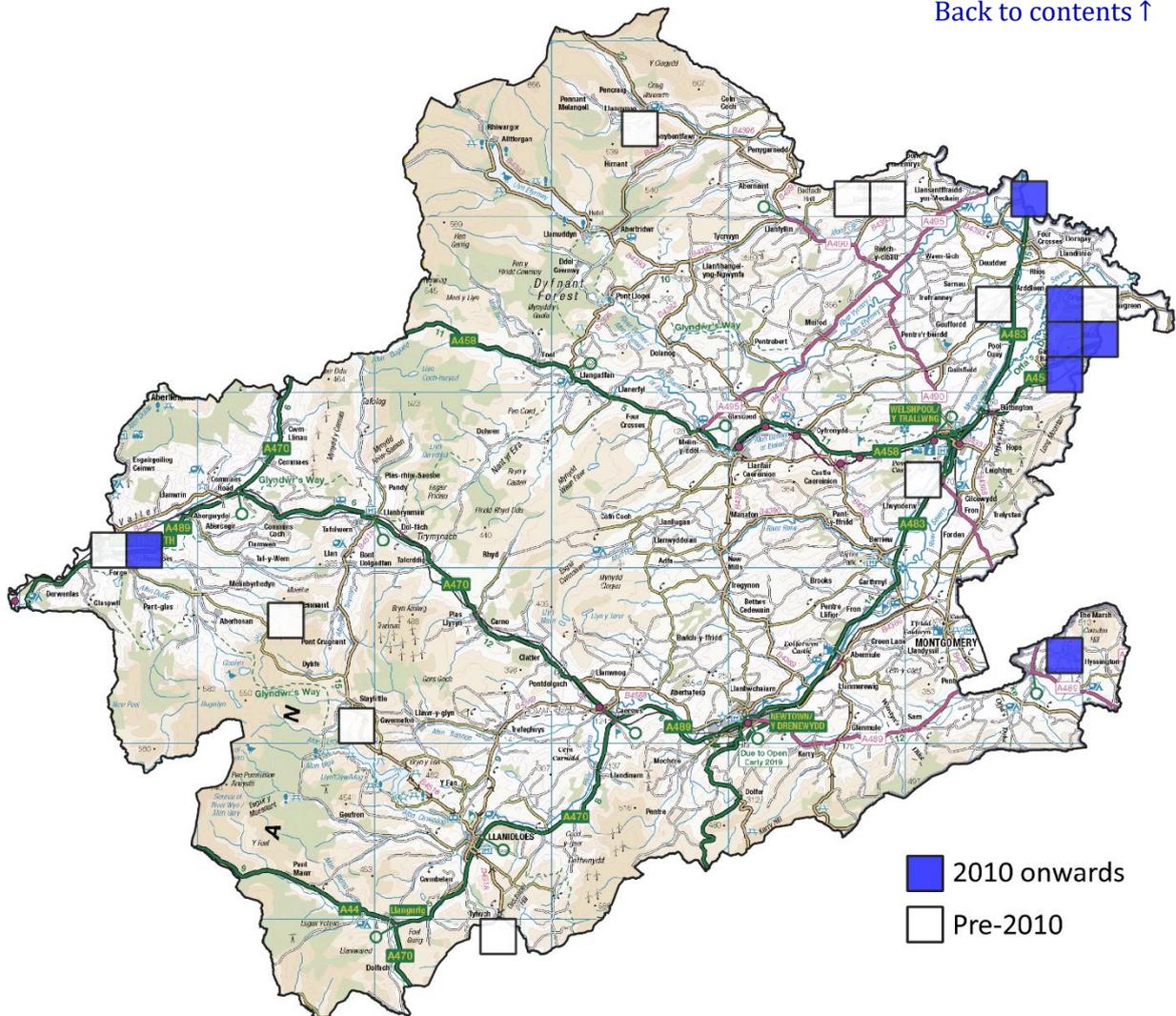
Habitat: Sunny sites with bare ground. Including heathland, brownfield sites and south-facing slopes.

Larval foodplant: Various grasses. Especially fescues (*Festuca* sp.) and bents (*Agrostis* sp.).

Flight time: Late June to August.

VC47 Confusion species: Fairly distinctive, though superficially similar to some other browns.

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Pearl-bordered Fritillary (*Boloria euphrosyne*)

National status: Formerly widespread. It has undergone a significant decline in recent years and is now only found in scattered colonies across much of Britain. Threatened.

County status: Very local. Fewer than ten colonies, all in the northeast quarter of the county; including Y Figyn, Y Frochas and Middletown Hill. The sites share the same habitat: ffridd (see below). Whilst threatened within the county, the species appears to be relatively stable. It has benefitted from extensive habitat management. Records from the end of the flight period (when the confusion species is flying) should ideally be backed up with evidence, as should records from new sites.

Habitat: Generally a species of open woodland. Requires areas with an abundance of violets and without thick vegetation. In the county, the species tends to occur on ffridd (no English translation). This is a habitat found between the lowland and upland; often south-facing slopes dominated with bracken and with small trees interspersed.

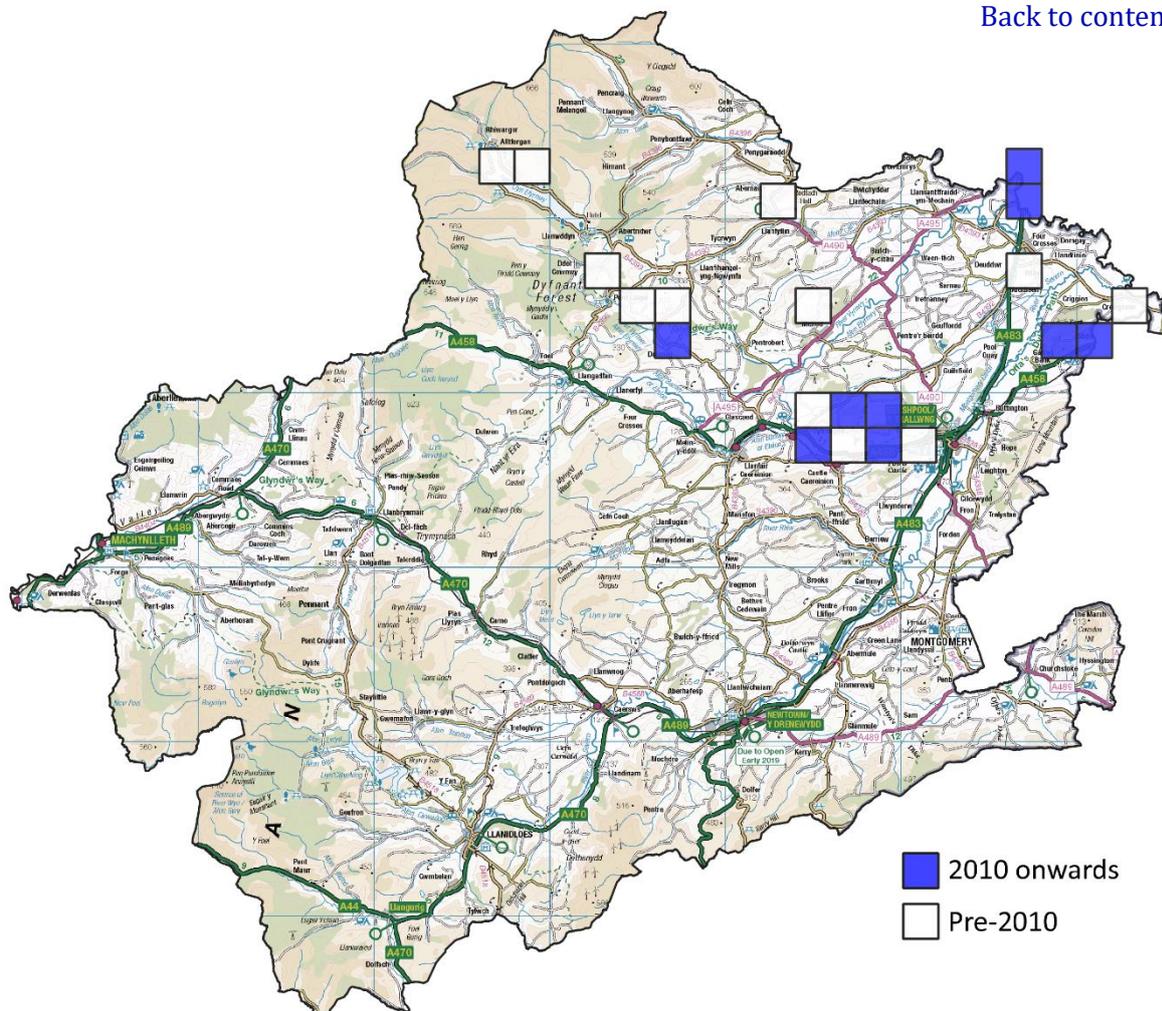
Larval foodplant: Violets, common dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*).

Flight time: Late April to early June.

VC47 Confusion species: [Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary](#). The two species often occur together but can be separated with careful examination. Both upper and underside exhibit subtle differences which can be used to identify the species. Note the difference in flight period (though there is overlap). If in any doubt, please contact the county recorder.



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Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary (*Boloria selene*)

National status: Found in the western half of Britain. Widespread across most of Scotland and Wales. More local in England where the species has severely declined.

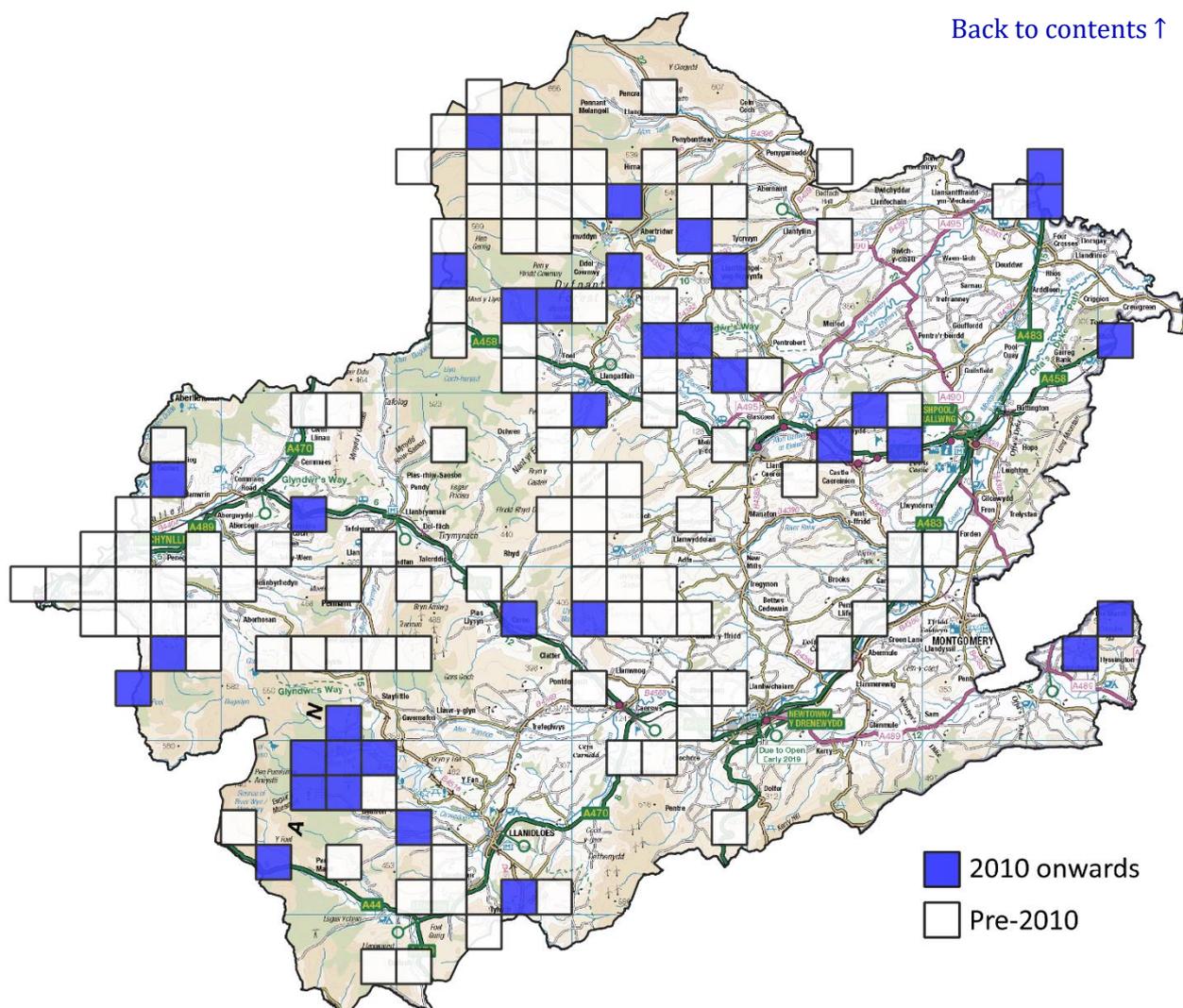
County status: Under-recorded. Scatterings of records from around the county, though there seems to be a preference for the western side. Likely to be fairly common across suitable habitat in the uplands.

Habitat: Able to breed in wetter sites than the confusion species, for example, moorland and damp grassland. Both species are often together in drier sites. In the county, the species tends to occur on ffridd and moorland.

Larval foodplant: Violets. Marsh violet (*Viola palustris*) in upland sites and common dog-violet (*V. riviniana*) elsewhere.

Flight time: Late May to July.

VC47 Confusion species: Easily confused with the scarcer Pearl-bordered Fritillary. The two species can be separated with care.



Silver-washed Fritillary (*Argynnis paphia*)

National status: Widespread across much of southern England and Wales. Fairly common though populations fluctuate, most recently it appears to be increasing in both range and abundance.

County status: Local. Scattered records from across the county. Most frequent along the east border of the county, where the species can be quite common (e.g. around Middletown). Also occurs in the Dyfi Forest at the western edge of the county. In recent years, the species has become more common, appearing to recolonise some of its historic range towards the centre of the county.



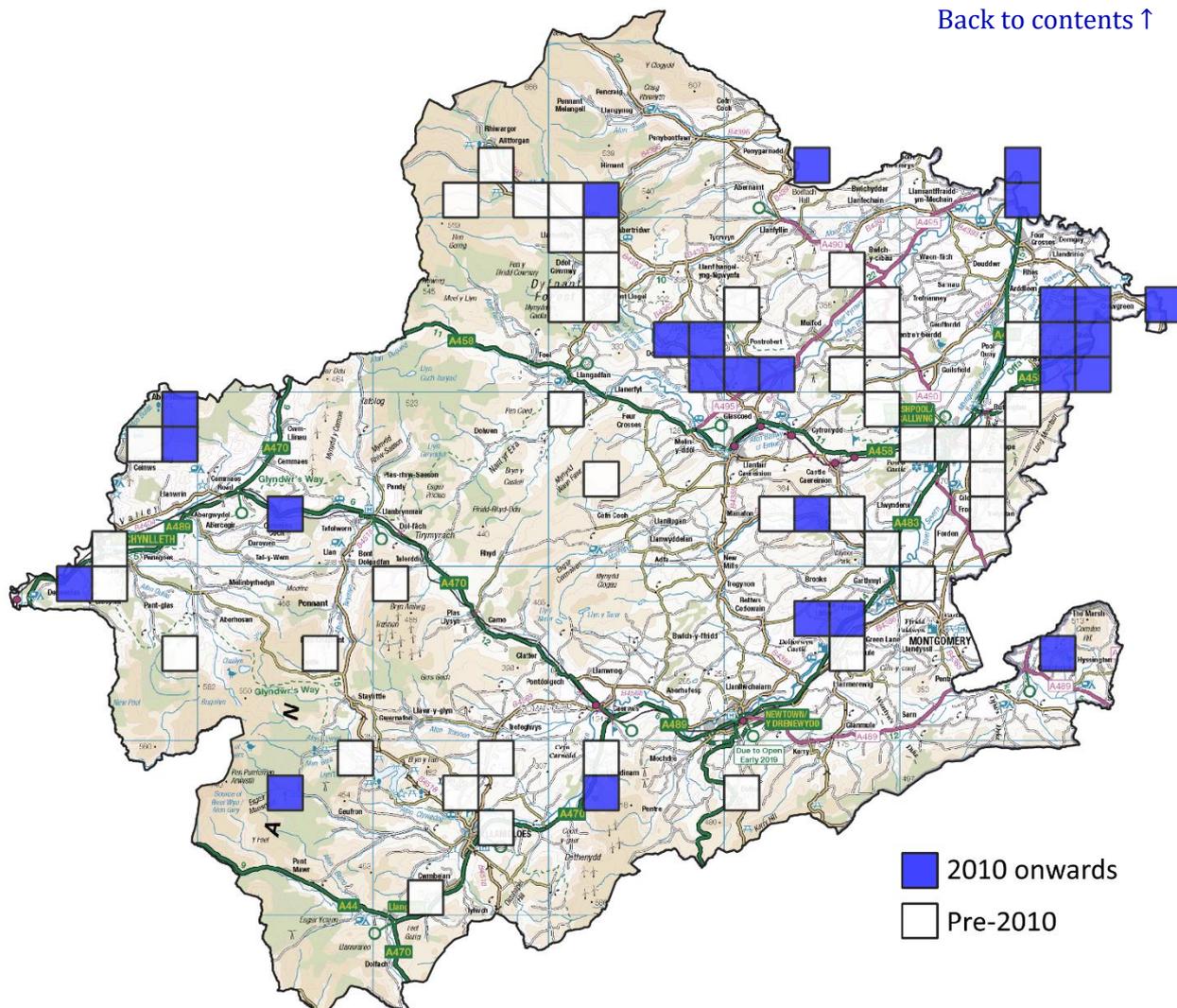
Habitat: Any sunny woodland with sufficient food and nectar plants. Can also be found in more open habitats. In the county, most recent records come from mature broadleaved woodland.

Larval foodplant: Common dog-violet, *Viola riviniana*.

Flight time: Late June to August.

VC47 Confusion species: Similar size and colouration as **Dark Green Fritillary**, however, consistent differences in markings on both upper and undersides allow the pair to be distinguished with little difficulty if given a good view.

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■ 2010 onwards
□ Pre-2010

Dark Green Fritillary (*Argynnis aglaja*)

National status: Widespread and fairly common across most of Britain.

County status: Can be found throughout the county. The species is not especially common and is limited by suitable habitat.

Habitat: A wide range, provided there is sufficient food and nectar plants. Including flower-rich grassland, scrub, moorland and woodland rides.

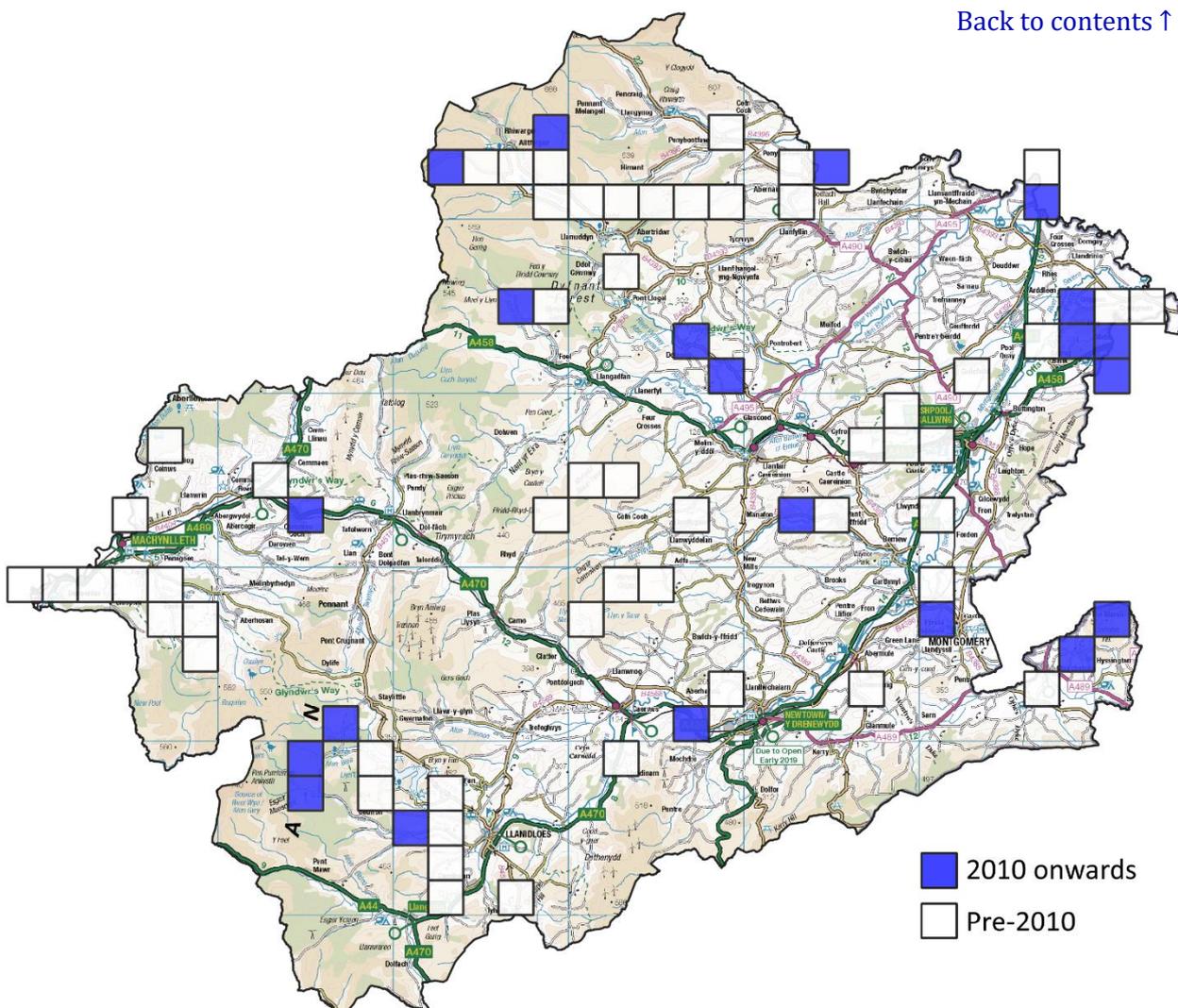
Larval foodplant: Various violets (*Viola* sp.).

Flight time: June to August.

VC47 Confusion species: [Silver-washed Fritillary](#). Very similar to [High Brown Fritillary](#).



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Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*)

National status: Common and widespread across all of the UK. The species is both a resident and a migrant - the latter reportedly makes up a large proportion of individuals seen.

County status: Widespread and often numerous.

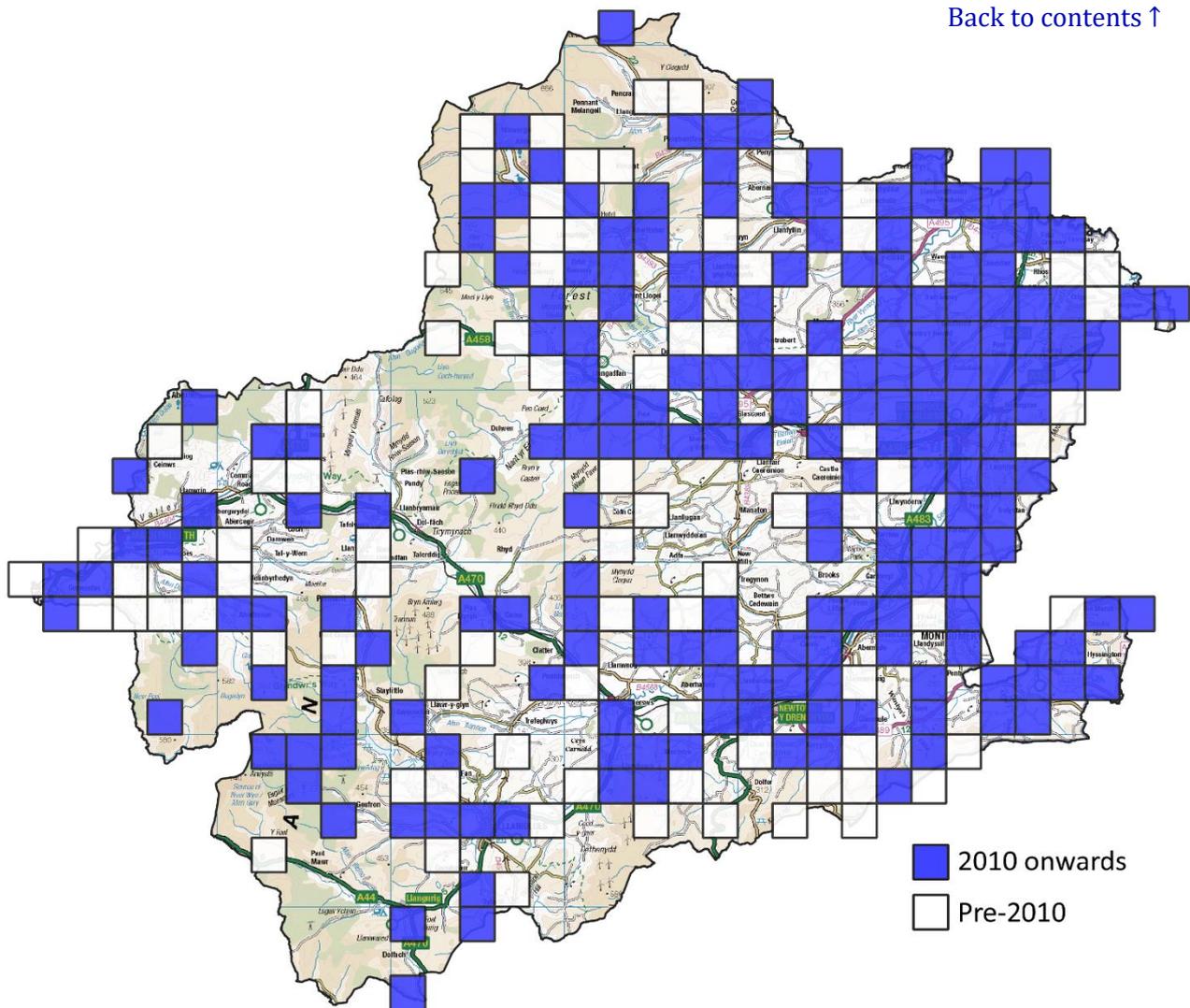
Habitat: Can be found almost anywhere.

Larval foodplant: Usually common nettle (*Urtica dioica*).

Flight time: Usually between June and October, though can be seen throughout the year.



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Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*)

National status: Migrant. Common and can be found across Britain. Some years the species arrives in vast numbers. The species breeds in the UK and can produce several broods; however, it is typically unable to survive the winter.

County status: Records from across the county. Seen almost every year, though only numerous in some years.

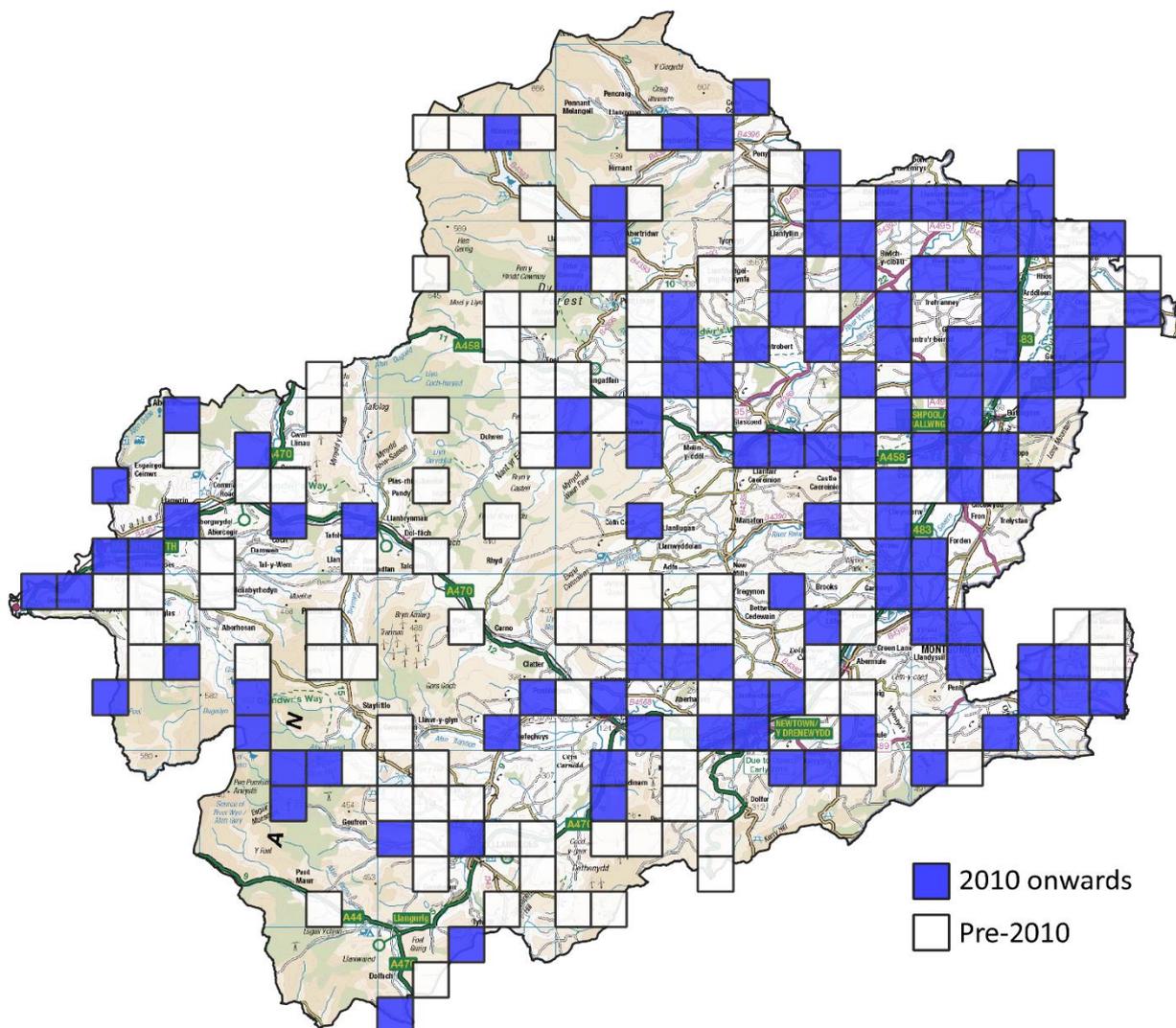
Habitat: Can turn up anywhere.

Larval foodplant: Various thistles (*Cirsium* sp. and *Carduus* sp.) and occasionally other plants.



Flight time: Migrants arrive from May. Numbers tend to peak in late summer.

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Peacock (*Aglais io*)

National status: Occurs throughout the British Isles. Common and expanding range.

County status: Common and widespread.

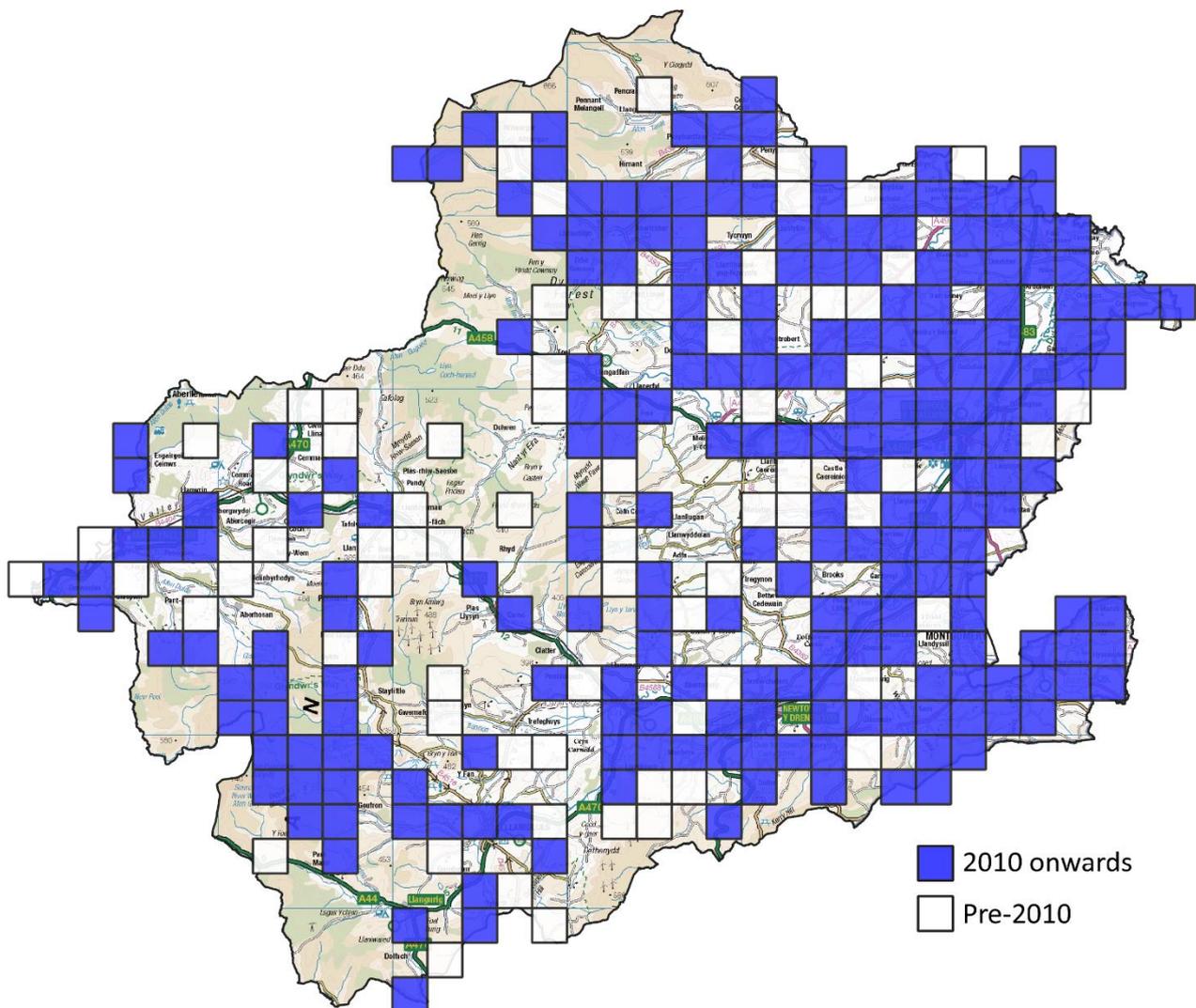
Habitat: Able to breed almost anywhere with foodplant.

Larval foodplant: Common nettle, *Urtica dioica*.

Flight time: Adults emerge around the start of August and can usually be seen until September. The adult hibernates overwinter and re-emerges in late March when it can be seen until early June. May be seen on warm winter days.



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Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*)

National status: Widespread and common across Britain. Recent data suggest the species is suffering a steep decline, especially in the south.

County status: A very common species, found across the county.

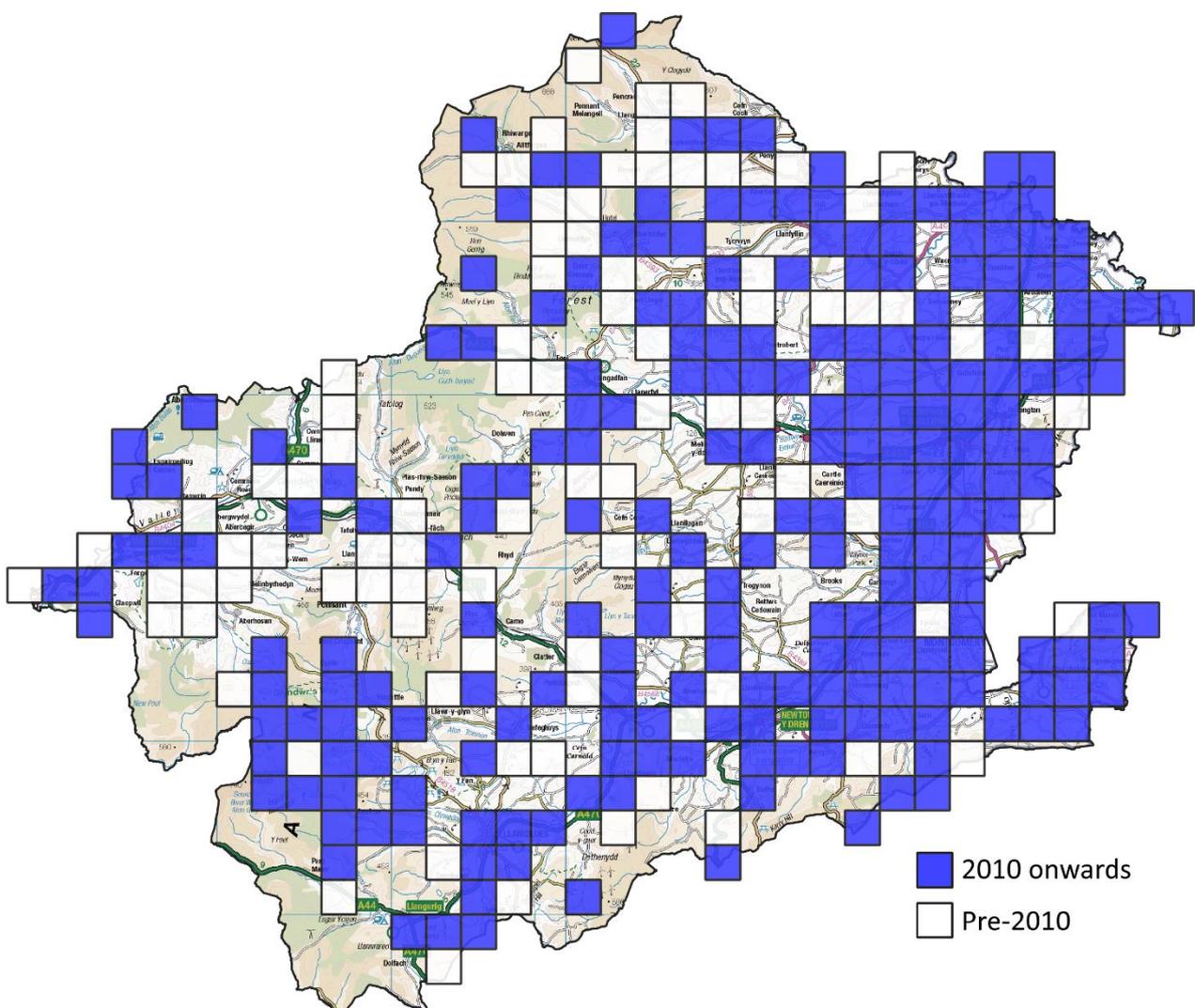
Habitat: Almost anywhere with foodplant.

Larval foodplant: Nettle (*Urtica* sp.).

Flight time: Adults emerge around June or July and can be seen until early October. The species then hibernates and can be seen from March onwards. Numbers peak in late summer. Usually two generations.



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Comma (*Polygonia c-album*)

National status: Fairly common across most of Britain; rapidly spreading north in recent years due to climate change.

County status: Widespread and fairly common through many parts of the county. Uncommon and sometimes absent in upland areas.

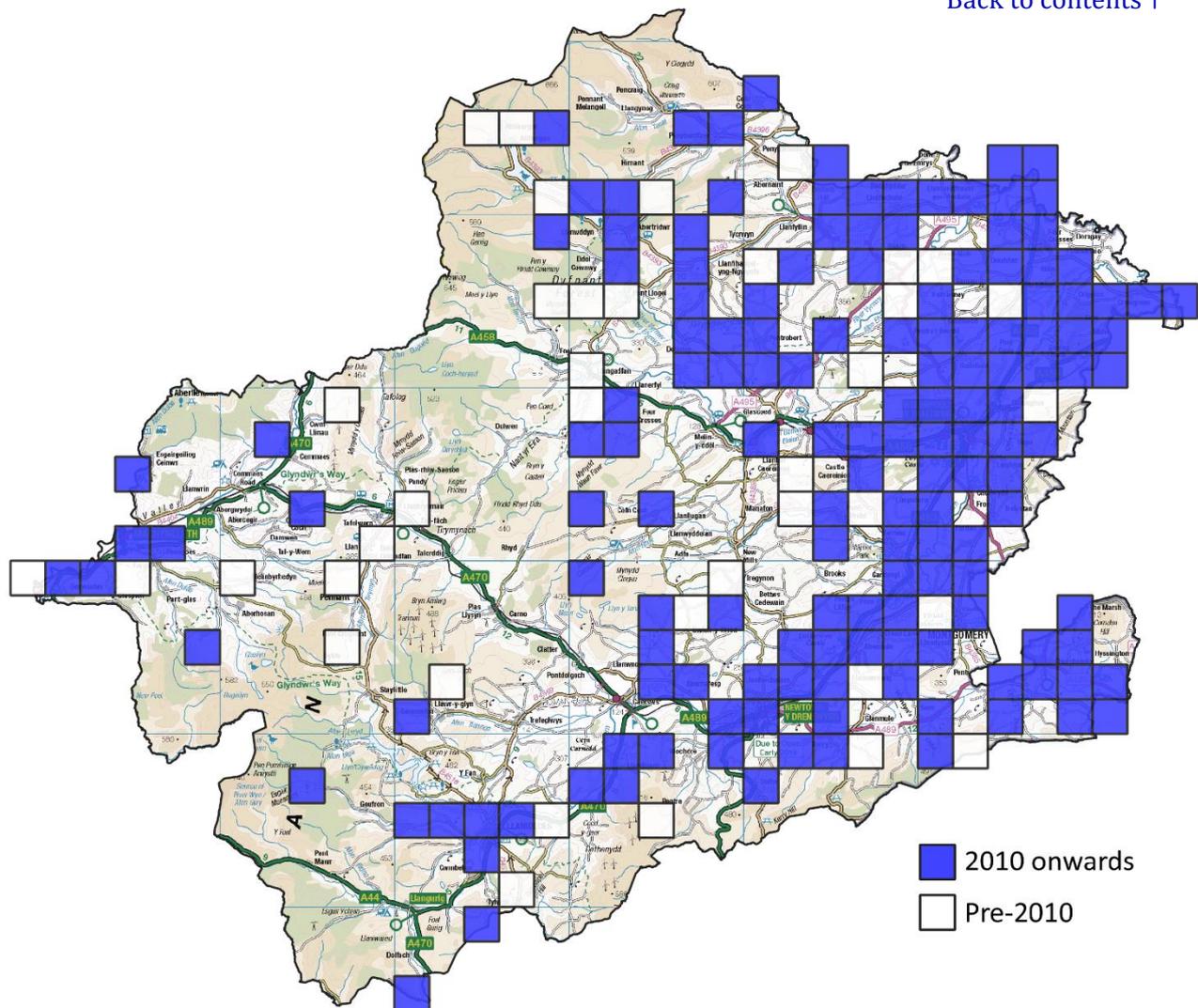
Habitat: Primarily a woodland butterfly, often in open woodland, woodland rides and edges. The species wanders, especially before hibernation, and can be seen in a wide range of habitats, including gardens.

Larval foodplant: Mainly common nettle (*Urtica dioica*). Bramble (*Rubus* sp.) and other plants may also be used.

Flight time: Usually July to October and then March to May. Can be seen in almost any month of the year.



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Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*)

National status: Widespread and fairly common.

County status: Found across the county. Can be fairly common in suitable habitat; however, this itself is often limited.

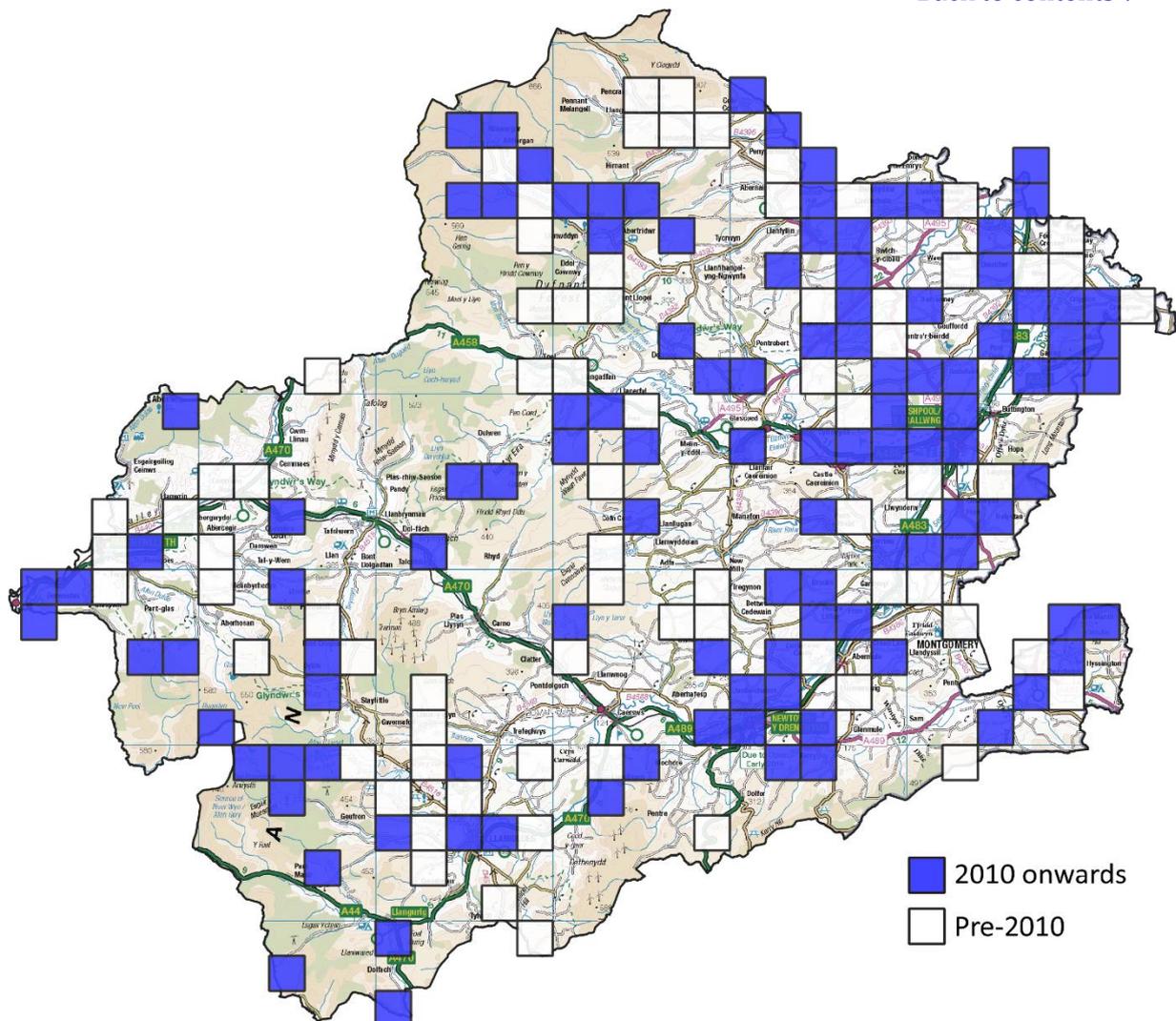
Habitat: Rough, unimproved grassy areas are favoured, especially if hot and dry. Occasionally wanders into gardens.

Larval foodplant: Common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*) and sheep's sorrel (*R. acetosella*).



Flight time: Usually found between May and September. Two or three generations in most years.

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Purple Hairstreak (*Favonius quercus*)

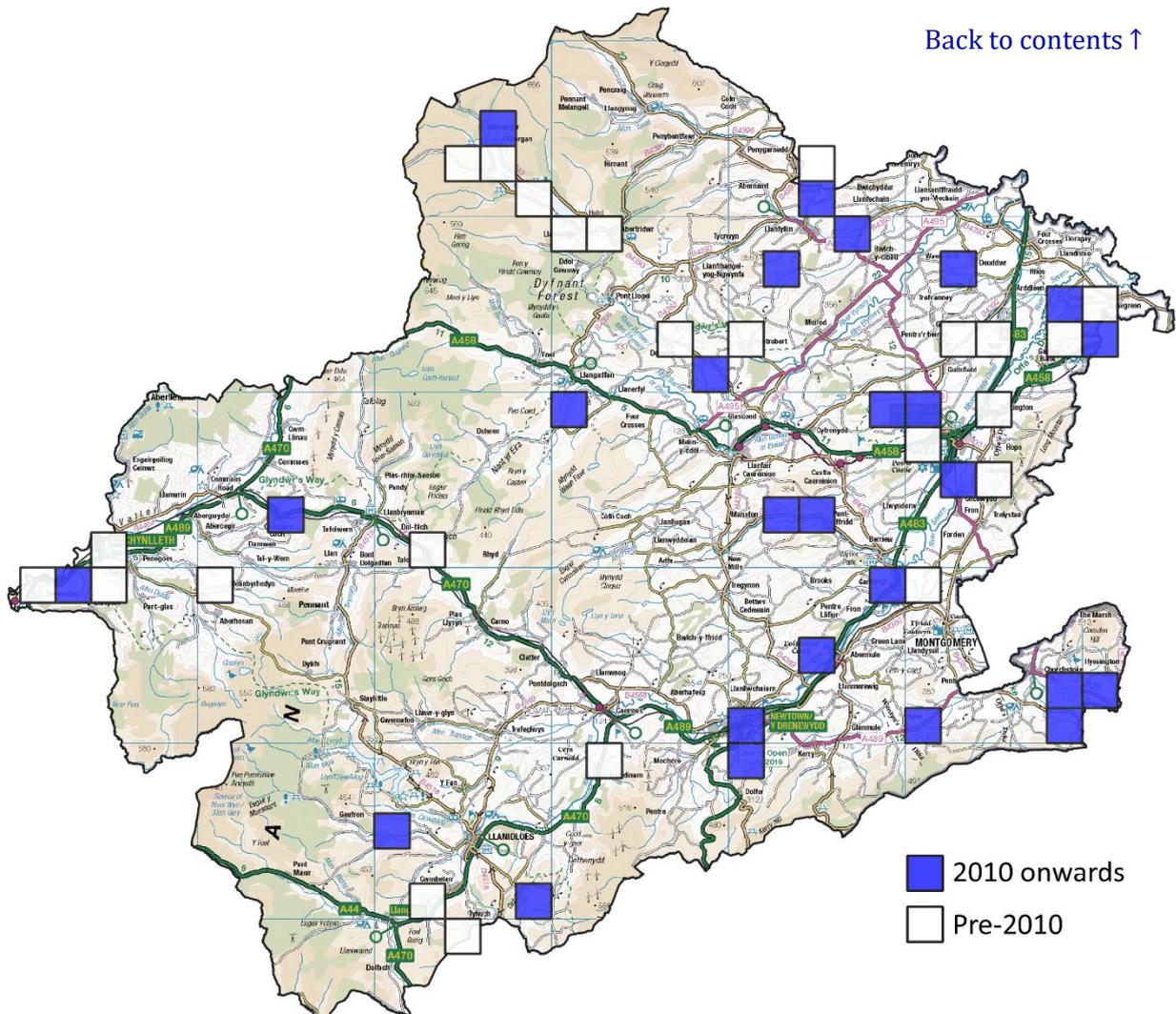
National status: Fairly common in southern Britain, becoming more local further north.

County status: True status unknown; under-recorded. Records from most parts of the county, especially the east. The species is probably much more common and widespread than records suggest. It spends most of its time in the tops of oak trees and rarely ventures out of the canopy, therefore is easily overlooked. Observing the tops of oak trees, especially with binoculars, can be an effective way to record the butterfly (this is best done in the late afternoon and the evening).

Habitat: Anywhere with oak trees. The species is usually seen by oaks in sunny locations, such as woodland edges, rather than in the middle of thick woodland. An isolated oak tree may host a population.

Larval foodplant: Oak (*Quercus* sp.).

Flight time: Late July to early September.



Green Hairstreak (*Callophrys rubi*)

National status: Widespread across most of Britain, though often fairly local.

County status: Probably under-recorded. Found in most parts of the county, though a patchy distribution and generally few records. These records come from a range of different sites suggesting the species makes good use of the habitats and plants described below.

Habitat: A range of rather different habitats. Including moorland, calcareous grassland, ffridd and scrub. Requires warmth and shelter.

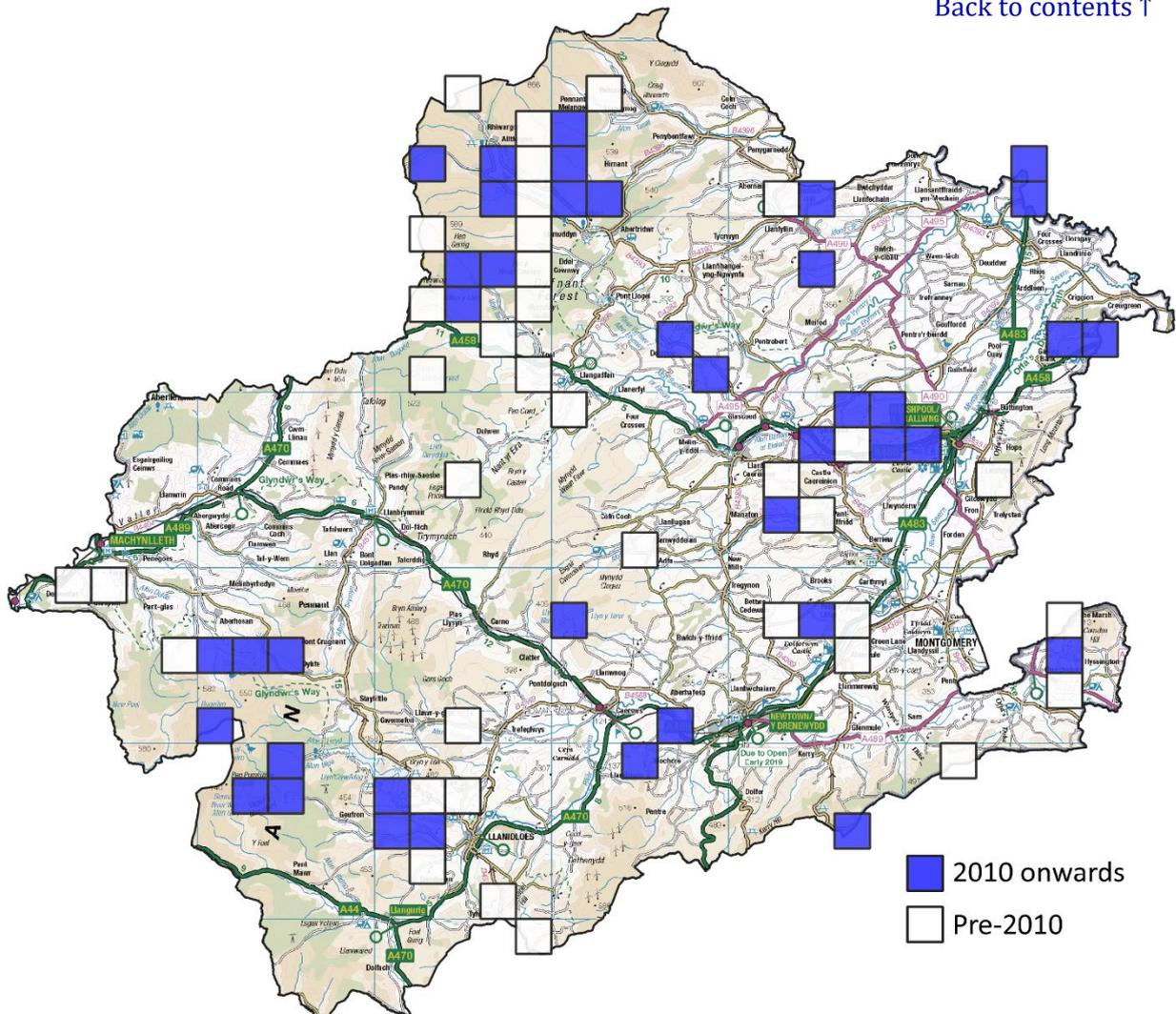
Larval foodplant: Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) on moorland. Common rock-rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*) and bird's foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) on calcareous grassland. Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) on scrub and ffridd.

Flight time: Late April to June.

VC47 Confusion species: Unmistakable. Note the green is not visible when the species is in flight (it will appear dark brown).



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White-letter Hairstreak (*Satyrium w-album*)

National status: The species was affected by Dutch elm disease but appears to have recovered well. Still fairly local. Found across most of England and parts of Wales.

County status: True status unknown. Few records exist on the county database, mostly from the eastern half. It seems likely the species is under-recorded and is probably more common than records suggest. Recorded most years at a wooded garden in Middetown, in the far east of the county. Occasional records exist at a scattering of other sites. It spends most of its time in elm treetops but does come down to ground level, especially to nectar on flowers. Watching the tops of elm trees with binoculars is often the best way to record the adult. The eggs are laid on twigs of the foodplant where they remain over winter but are small and dark so hard to find.

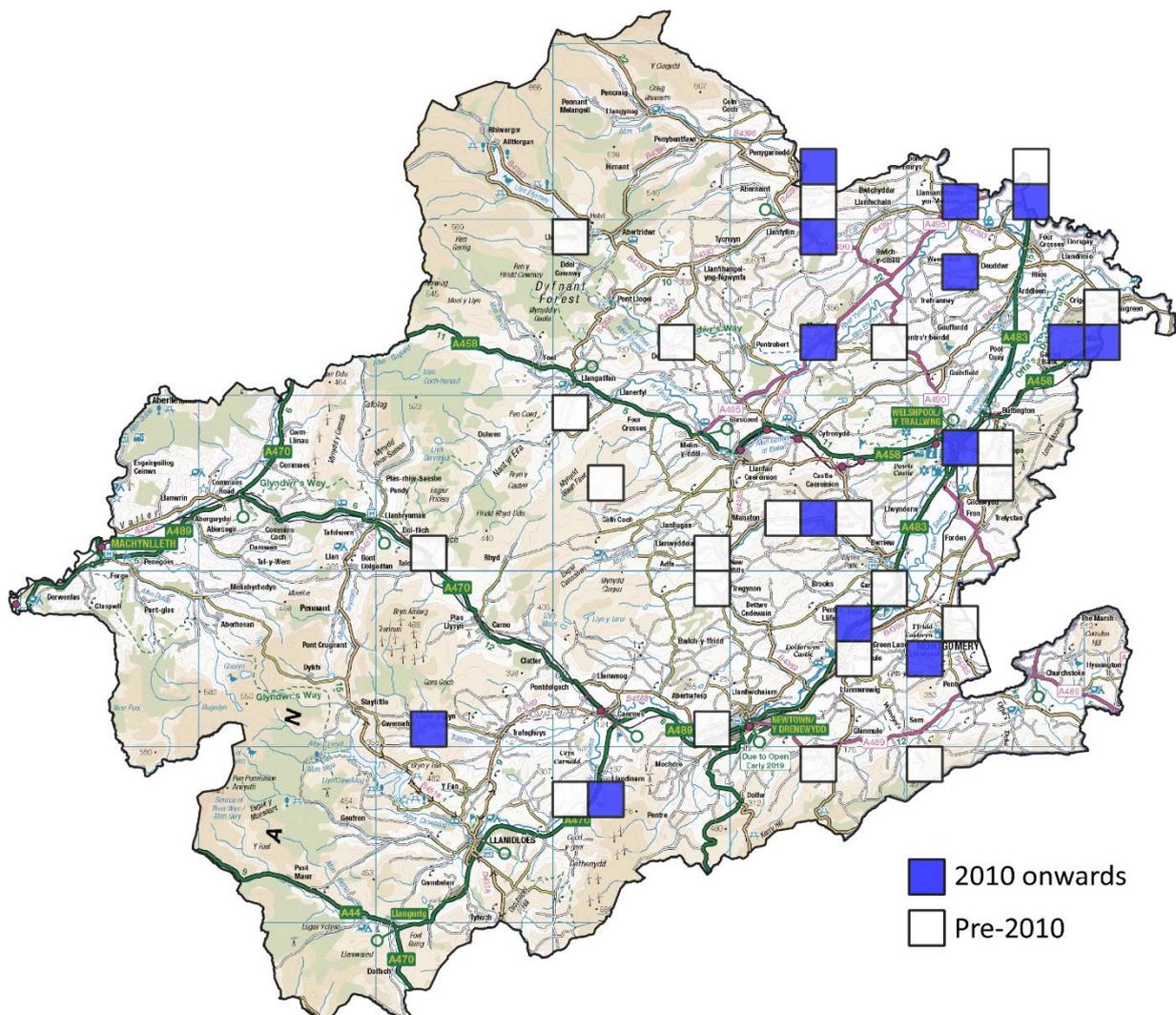


Habitat: Most habitats with suitable elms and nectaring plants. Usually sunny edges of broadleaved woodland and hedgerows.

Larval foodplant: Native elms (*Ulmus* sp.). Wych elm (*U. glabra*) is reputedly preferred.

Flight time: Most records from late July and August, however, the species is said to be on the wing from late June.

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Holly Blue (*Celastrina argiolus*)

National status: Found across most of England, Wales and Ireland. Populations fluctuate cyclically over 4-6 years.

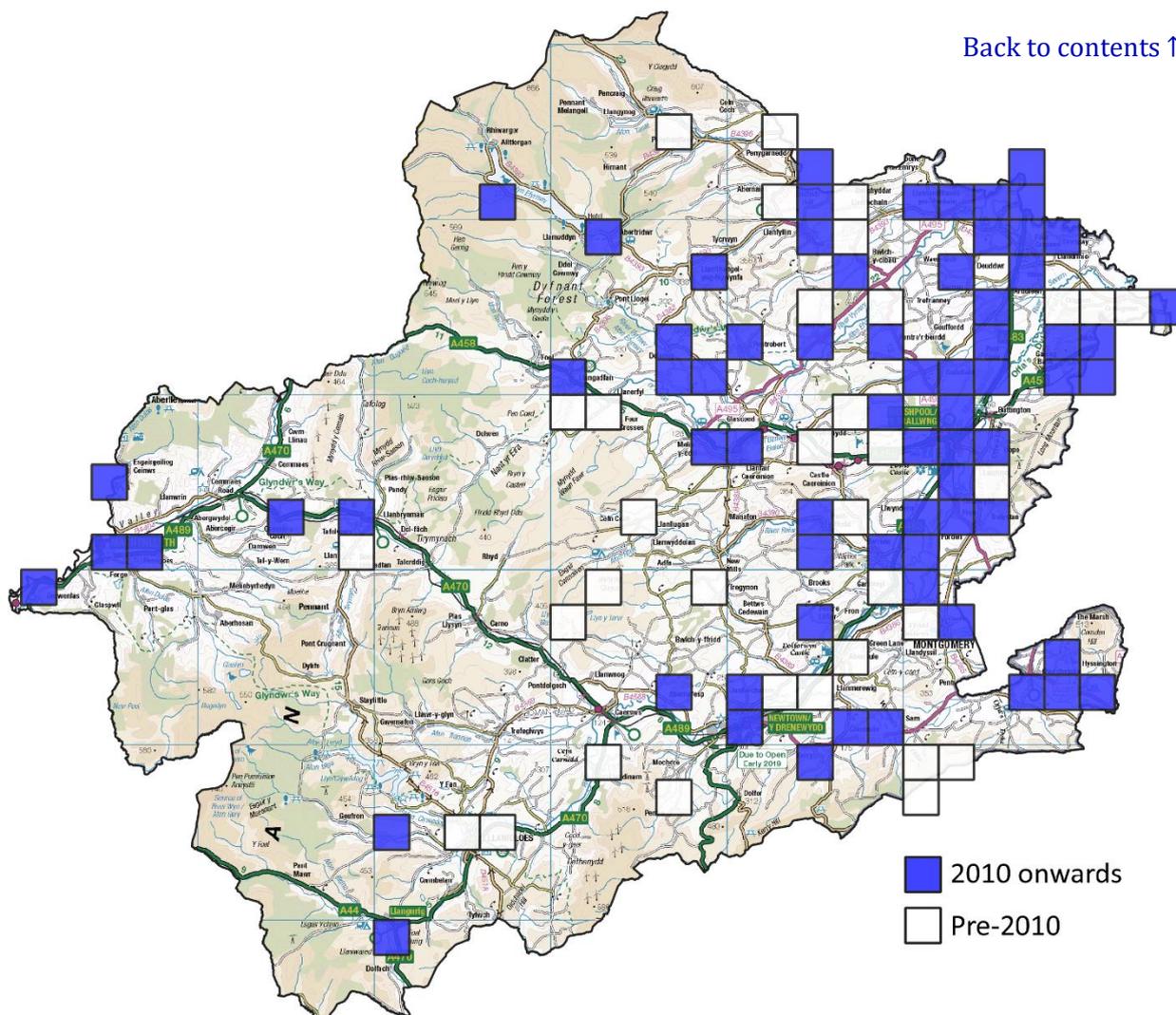
County status: Widespread across the county, with most records coming from the eastern half. Mainly a lowland species. Moderately common.

Habitat: Can be found in most places with the foodplant. A frequent garden visitor.

Larval foodplant: Usually holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) or ivy (*Hedera helix*). Other plants can be used.

Flight time: Usually April to May and July to early September.

VC47 Confusion species: **Common Blue**. If the underside is seen, there should be no confusion. Flight behaviour and immediate habitat may help identify an individual in flight.



Large Heath (*Coenonympha tullia*)

National status: Found only in northern Britain. Tends to exist in distinct colonies. Habitat loss has resulted in this species becoming locally extinct in some areas.

County status: Possibly extinct. Records show a colony occurred at Drum Ddu. It was last seen here in 1999, and this is the last county sighting. Subsequent visits to this site have been unsuccessful. The habitat of this species is often very inaccessible and in areas where butterfly recording is rarely done. It is possible that the species occurs in suitable habitat but has remained undetected, for example, along the Berwyn ridge.

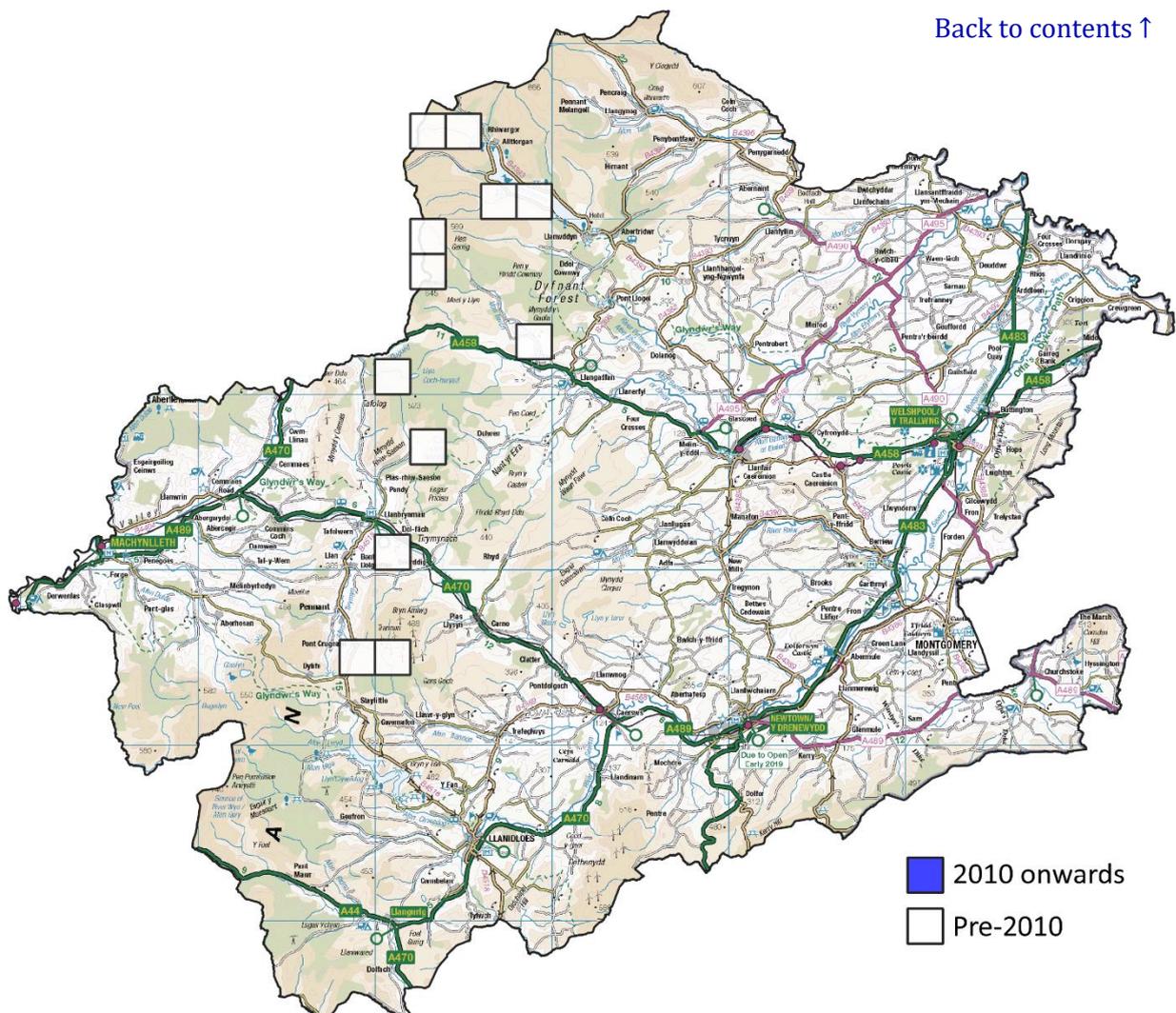


Habitat: Level boggy areas. Including raised bogs, damp moorland and mosses. Most sites have cross-leaved heath (*Erica tetralix*), which the adult nectars on.

Larval foodplant: Usually hare's-tail cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*).

Flight time: June and July.

VC47 Confusion species: Superficially similar to several other browns. The patterning on the underside of the wings, specifically the eyespots, can vary. Most likely to be confused with [Small Heath](#).



High Brown Fritillary (*Argynnis adippe*)

National status: Highly threatened. Formerly widespread but dramatically declined since the mid-twentieth century and is now only found at about 50 sites nationally.

County status: Extinct. Old records from across the county. In more recent years it was recorded from a single colony which persisted at Allt Dolanog until 2004. This was the last county sighting of the species.

Habitat: South-facing bracken covered slopes (ffridd) is the habitat the species inhabited at Allt Dolanog. It can occur in other habitats, though usually ones dominated with bracken (providing a warm microclimate).

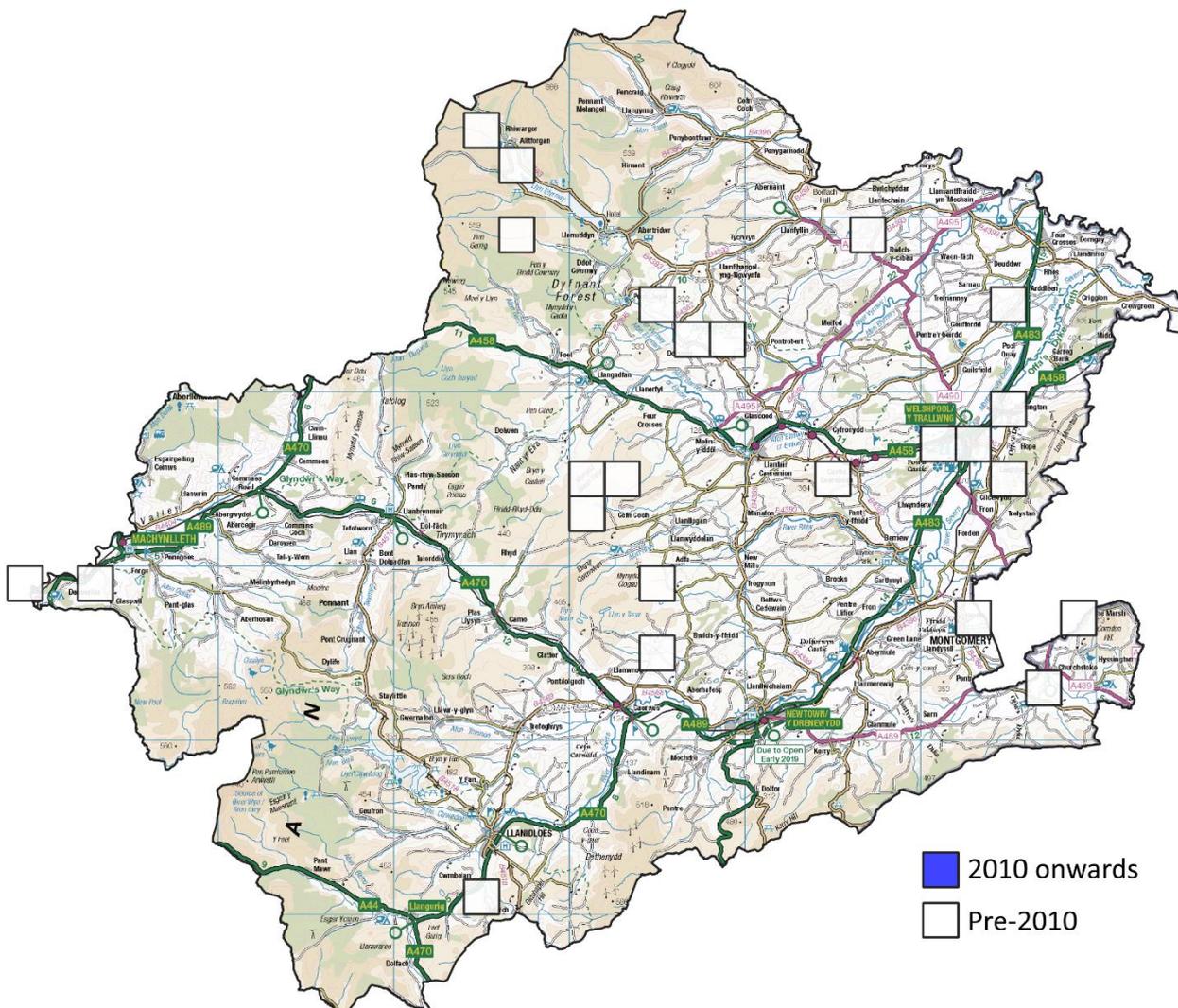
Larval foodplant: Common dog-violet, *Viola riviniana*.

Flight time: Mainly July.

VC47 Confusion species: Dark Green Fritillary. Also Silver-washed Fritillary.



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Brown Hairstreak (*Thecla betulae*)

National status: Scattered distribution throughout southern England and Wales. The species is thought to have undergone a large decline in Britain due to the overly tidy management of hedgerows.

County status: Possibly extinct. Last seen at two sites in the Dyfi Valley during the 1970s, where the species was breeding. Adults can be very elusive and searching for its eggs over the winter is the typical way of recording this species. It is unlikely that much, if any, effort has gone into looking for this species during recent years. As a result, the species could persist in the county undetected (provided that suitable 'untidy' habitat also remains).

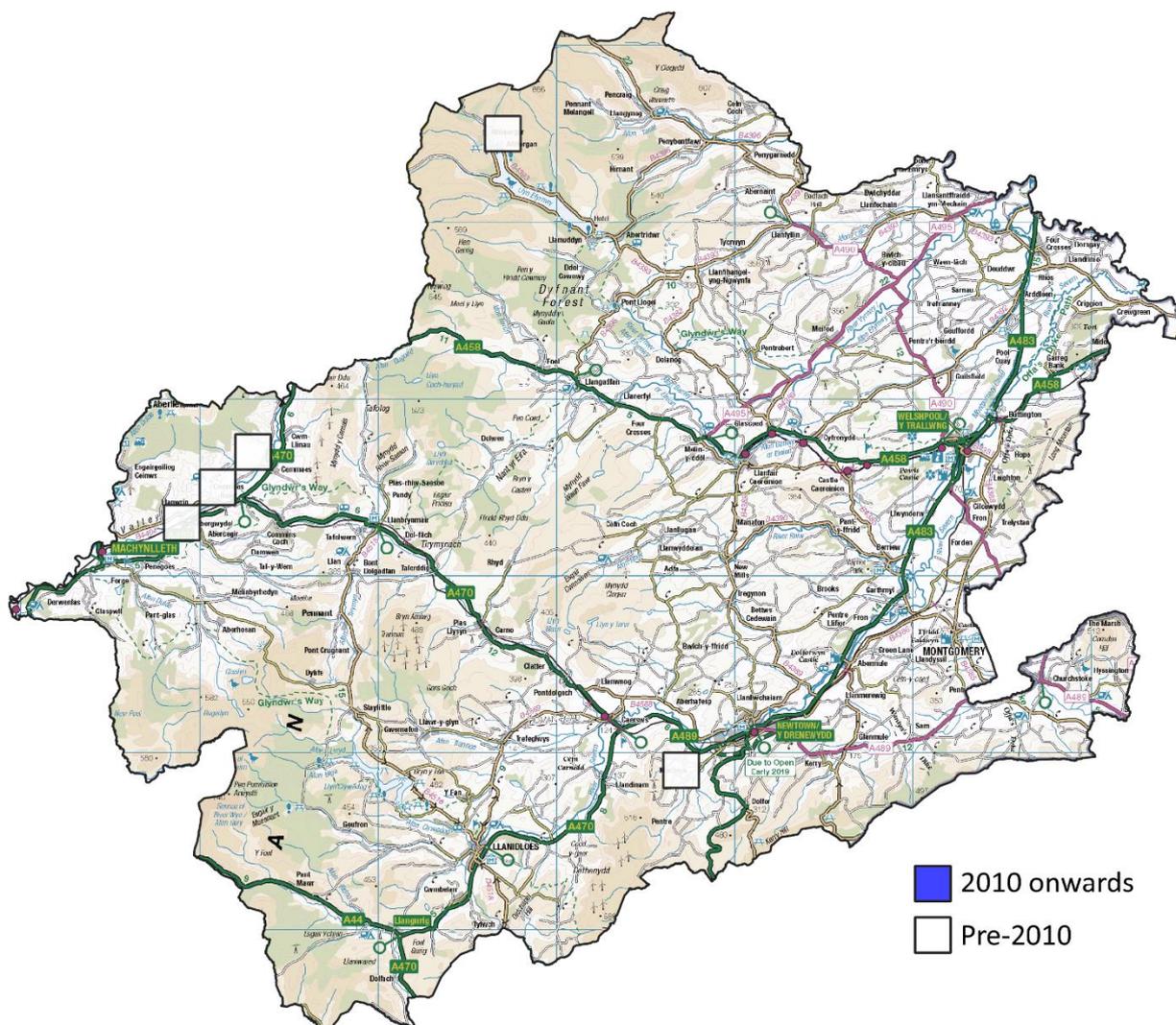
Habitat: Hedgerows, scrub, and woodland edges.

Larval foodplant: Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*).

Flight time: Late July to October.



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Brown Argus (*Aricia agestis*)

National status: Found mainly in southern and eastern England. May be spreading north.

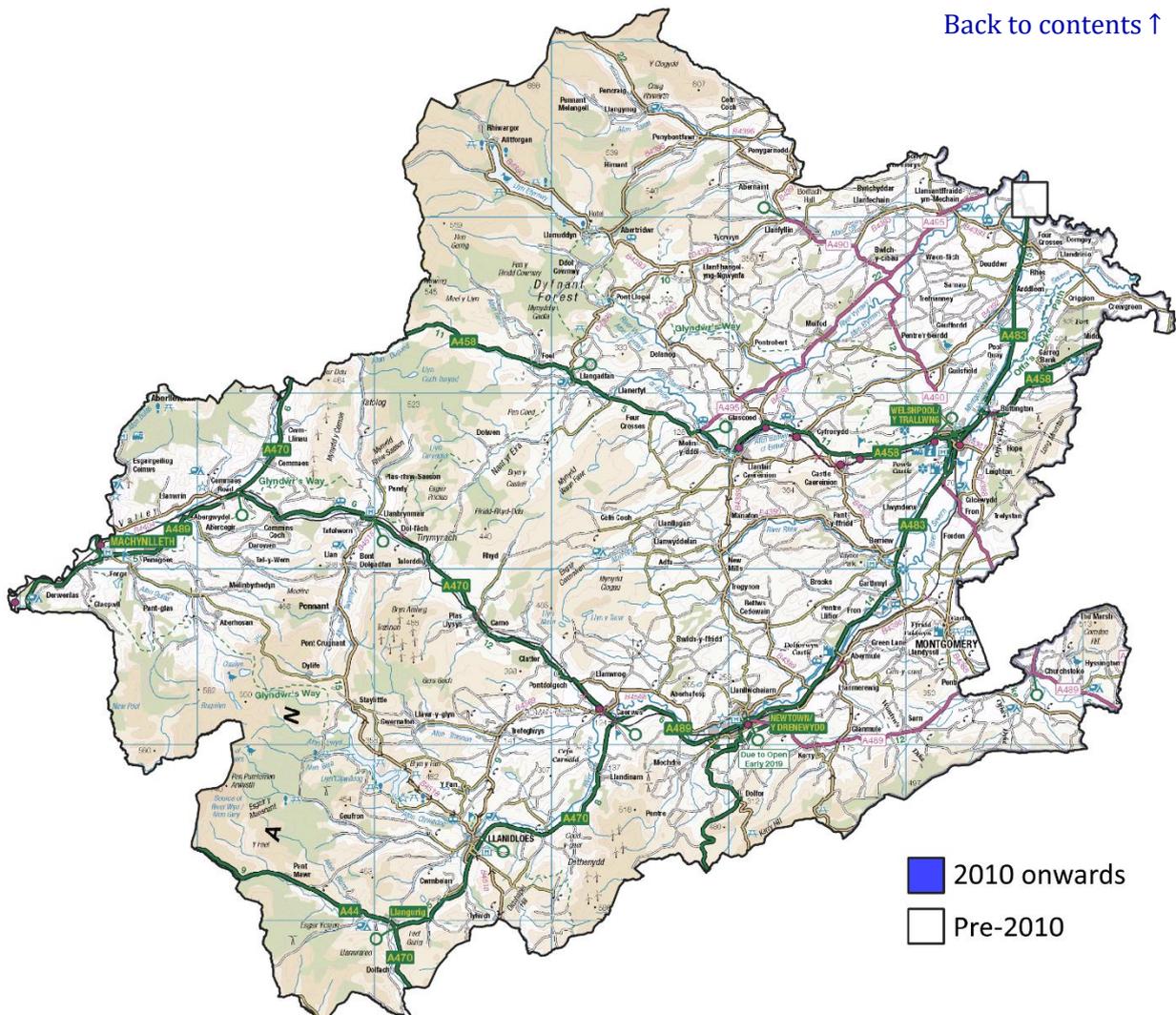
County status: Only two records from 1993 and 1997 exist from suitable habitat at Llanymynech Rocks. It seems probable the species bred here, at least for a short period. Additional records from this site on the Shropshire side would appear to support this. The species can be similar to other blues and as a result, could get overlooked. Any claims must be backed up with strong evidence.

Habitat: Calcareous grassland.

Larval foodplant: Common rock-rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*). In some parts of the country, the species has adapted to feed on different foodplants, including *Geranium* sp., allowing the species to inhabit slightly different habitats.

Flight time: Can be found from May to early September. Two generations.

VC47 Confusion species: Female **Common Blue**. Care should be taken with identification as the two species can appear alike. There are differences between both the upper and undersides of the species.



Scarce Swallowtail (*Iphiclides podalirius*)

National status: Occasionally accidentally imported; may also be a very rare immigrant from the near continent.

County status: Adults recorded in June 2019 at a plant nursery near Welshpool. It is thought the species had been imported as pupae amongst plants grown abroad on the continent (the garden centre confirmed several of the larval foodplants had been imported the previous winter). Seen again in May 2020 at Y Frochas (c. 0.5 km from the same garden centre).

Larval foodplant: A range of trees, including *Prunus*, *Malus*, *Crataegus*, and *Sorbus*.

Flight time: May to July. County records from late May and mid-June.

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Monarch/Milkweed (*Danaus plexippus*)

National status: A rare migrant from north America (or possibly southern Europe). Only small numbers arrive each year but perhaps becoming more frequent in the UK.

County status: Two records - 1971 and 1999 - both from the Welshpool area. Also recorded in 2019 at Powis Castle, but these individuals originated from a wedding release.

Flight time: Usually turns up in September or October.

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Purple Emperor (*Apatura iris*)

National status: Scarce. Scattered colonies in south England.

County status: Just three records: between 1906 and 1947. It is possible the species bred in the county, though these records could be of vagrant individuals.

Habitat: Broadleaved woodland.

Larval foodplant: Goat willow, *Salix caprea*.

Flight time: Late June to early August.



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Camberwell Beauty (*Nymphalis antiopa*)

National status: A rare migrant from mainland Europe.

County status: A single record from 1995, a year when there was an influx from Europe.

Flight time: Usually seen in August and September.

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Wood White (*Leptidea sinapis*)

National status: Very local. Scattered colonies through central and southern England. It is also found in parts of Ireland. Declined in recent years.

County status: Unrecorded. It occurs a few miles over the Shropshire border around Clun, at several woodland sites where the species is reportedly doing well.

It is possible, though unlikely, the species could be recorded in the county, either as an undiscovered colony or, more likely, a wandering individual. The species is however only a weak flyer which doesn't tend to stray far from its colonies.



Habitat: Woodland edge, rides, and clearings.

Larval foodplant: Various legumes. Especially meadow vetchling, *Lathyrus pratensis*.

Flight time: May and June.

VC47 Confusion species: May be confused with other species of white. This species is smaller and always rests with its wings closed.

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