



The survival of our butterflies and moths requires careful habitat management and Butterfly Conservation are working with other conservation partners and farmers to ensure this is achieved. Most species have very specific egg-laying requirements and require shelter and good access to nectar sources. The exact requirements vary between species but for most the continuation or restoration of traditional management through grazing or measures like scrub control are vital. Fragmentation and isolation of habitat is a major problem and long term survival of many species requires maintenance of quality habitat at a landscape scale.



If you have enjoyed this walk, Butterfly Conservation has developed a number of other butterfly trails which can be obtained from

www.westmidlands-butterflies.org.uk

The same site contains details of our work, regular events, our regional magazine and lots of opportunities to become involved in both essential recording, monitoring and practical conservation work.

In 2016, the *'Butterflies of the West Midlands'* book was published (www.naturebureau.co.uk/book-shop/) which provides detailed



information on the 40 species regularly seen in the region, a selection of 25 butterfly walks and advice on how gardens can be made more attractive to butterflies, moths and other pollinating insects.



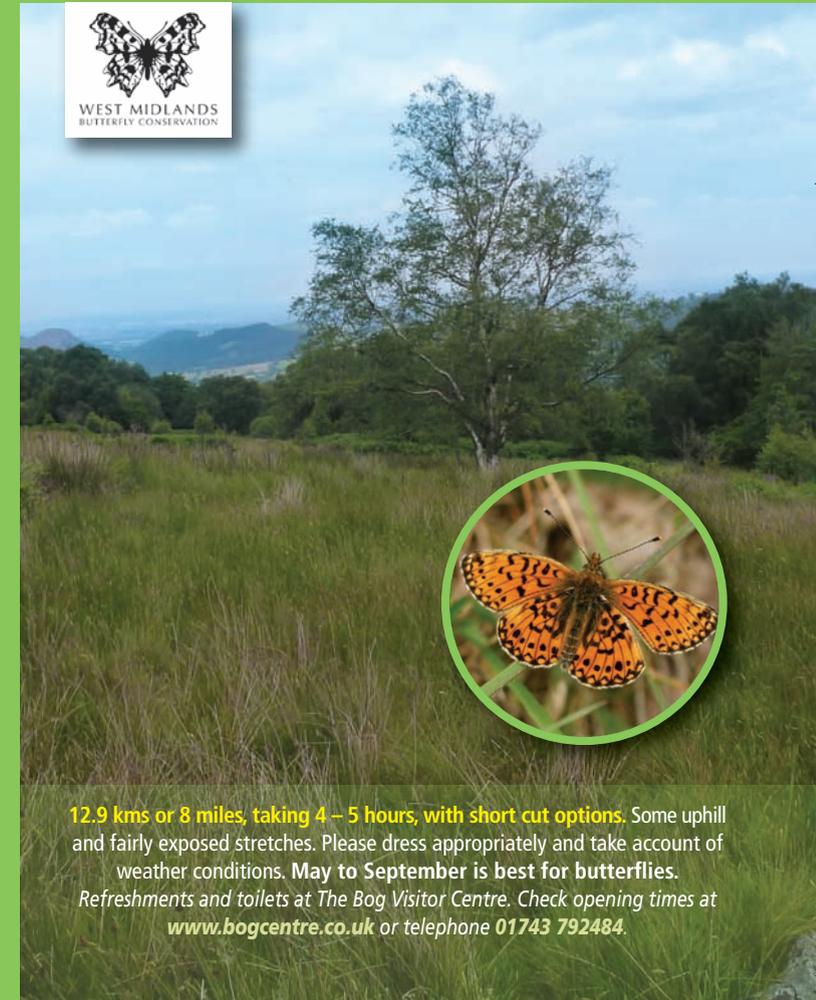
This walk has been developed by volunteers from the West Midlands branch of Butterfly Conservation with funding from the Shropshire Hills AONB Conservation Fund and the Stiperstones & Corndon Hill Country Landscape Partnership Scheme. **Text** by Carol Wood and Mike Williams. **Photos** by Martin Harrison, Roger Wasley, David Williams and Nick Williams. **Design** by Morgan Creative (01939 220776)



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A day's walk and chance to spot some of the special butterflies and moths.

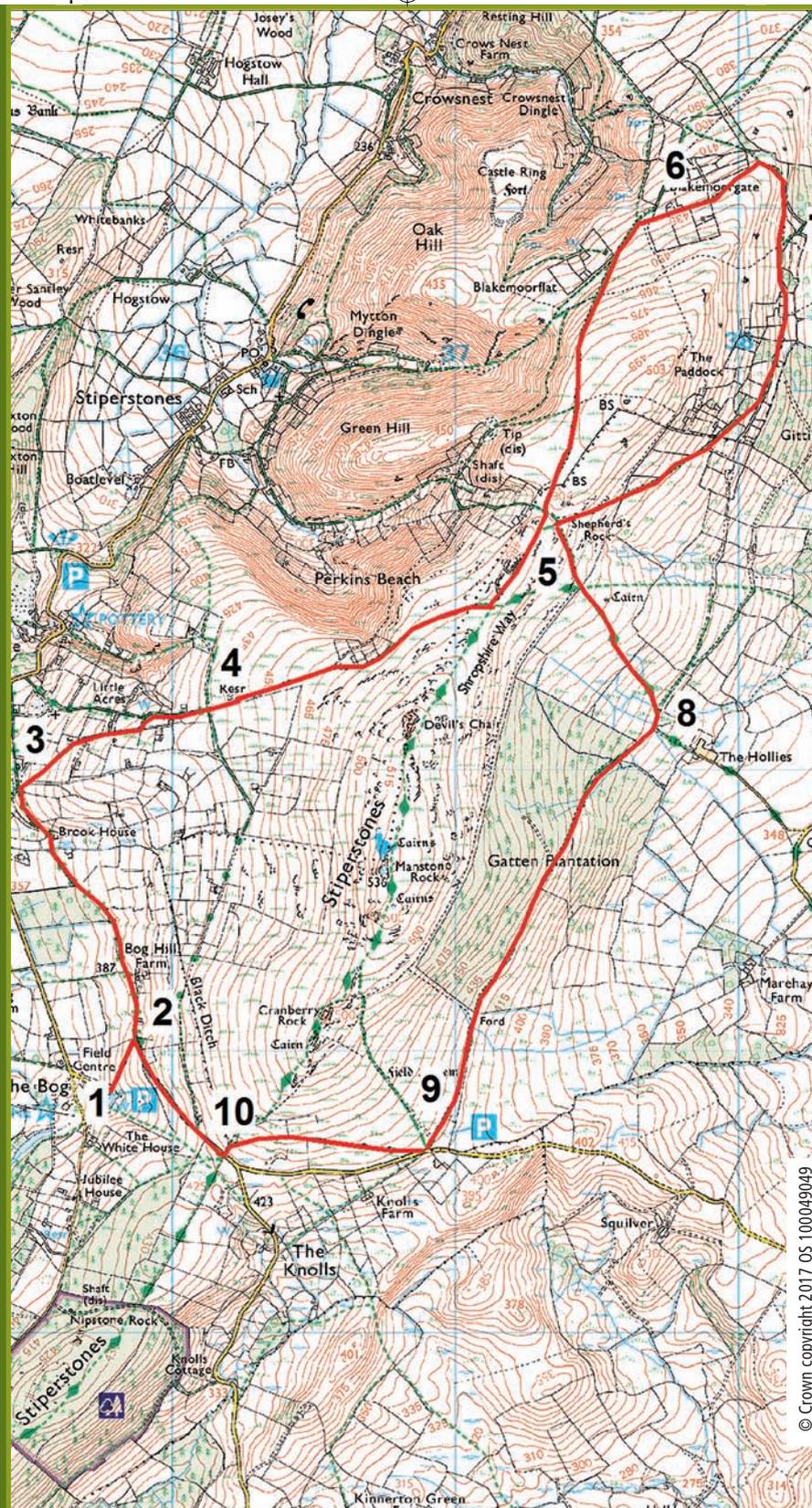


12.9 kms or 8 miles, taking 4 – 5 hours, with short cut options. Some uphill and fairly exposed stretches. Please dress appropriately and take account of weather conditions. **May to September is best for butterflies.** Refreshments and toilets at The Bog Visitor Centre. Check opening times at www.bogcentre.co.uk or telephone **01743 792484**.



Start at the Butterfly Trail Information Board at the entrance to The Bog car park (grid reference SJ 358979 postcode SY5 0NG).

From the car park entrance (1) head uphill using the field edge to avoid the road. Where the road bends sharply to the right (2) take the wide track off to the left heading north. On a sunny day, commoner butterflies like **Orange Tip**, **Peacock**, **Comma**, **Red Admiral** and **Green-veined White** can be seen. The route passes a pond with dragonflies and, in early summer, laburnum is in flower. Beyond Brook House, you reach a X-roads of tracks (3) where you turn right and head uphill past a series of flower meadows. These meadows contain Pignut and support a colony of day-flying **Chimneysweeper** moths. Caterpillars of the moth feed on Pignut which persist as a direct result of the fields being managed as traditional hay meadows. Eventually, the path opens up into open moorland and reaches another x-roads of tracks close to a reservoir (4). If a shorter walk is required a track to the right leads back to The Bog car park past meadows where Wild Pansies grow, but the main Butterfly Trail continues uphill above Perkin's Beach, keeping left towards Shepherd's Rock. This is a great spot in spring to see **Green Hairstreak** butterflies, one of our moorland specialists, plus **Common Blue** and **Small Heath**. From Shepherd's Rock (5) there is another option to shorten your route by picking up the Shropshire Way heading south but the Butterfly Trail swings northwards towards Blake-moorgate following the higher ground. The all-round views are simply stunning and this is a great section to look out for Stonechat, Red Grouse, Kestrel and Red Kites. Blakemoorgate Cottages (6) are an ideal spot for a well-earned picnic (the restored cottages are open the first Sunday of the month, Easter – October) before heading south following the edge of the hill above Brook Coppice and Gittinshay Wood. After a short distance on the left (7), you will see signs for Brook Vessons a Shropshire Wildlife Trust reserve and home to the spectacular **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** in June. Fritillaries are one of our fastest declining species of butterfly but the Stiperstones is a tremendous place to see them. Cattle do a great job here in maintaining an



open sward with plentiful marsh violets on which the butterfly lays its eggs. The site can be rather boggy so beware. From here, the path swings to the south-west to return to Shepherd's Rock. This time, the Butterfly Trail heads off downhill in a south easterly direction across fields and, after half a mile, turn right (8) along a way-marked route running southwards through Gatten Plantation. Ravens are often present and sometimes Pied Flycatchers but it is also good for **Emperor** Moth in March/April. Sunny afternoons are the best time when the males fly rapidly across the heather looking for newly emerged females. The path continues along the all ability trail to a large car park (9) managed by Natural England. From here go through the marked gate and down a rough track to the road (10). Once crossed, continue downhill to return to The Bog car park (1) and the start of the walk. From here, you can take a number of other walks into the surrounding countryside. In the vicinity of the car park, look for **Grayling** butterflies which can be found here in August. They are masters of disguise and are cryptically marked on the underside to blend into the rocks and bare ground on which they often perch with wings tight shut. Nationally, they are becoming very scarce especially away from the coast so the colonies around the Stiperstones are very important. The Grayling eggs and caterpillars rely on the warmer microclimates provided by bare ground adjacent to fine grass tussocks on which they feed. At the Bog Mine, scrapes have been created to ensure scrub does not encroach across this grass/bare ground mosaic. Commoner species like **Ringlet**, **Meadow Brown**, **Speckled Heath**, **Small Heath** and **Common Blue** also occur and you may spot the iridescent **Forester** moth. Earlier in the year, both **Green Hairstreak** and **Dingy Skipper** can be seen.



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary



Green Hairstreak



Orange Tip



Grayling



Emperor Moth