

Wood White *Leptidea sinapis* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Lep: Pieridae) at Penny Hill, Martley, Worcestershire.

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Wood White *Leptidea sinapis* has been confirmed as a breeding species at Penny Hill, near Martley. During unseasonal blustery conditions on 26.07.2021 I encountered a female ovipositing on Tufted Vetch *Vicia cracca* in the hedgerow forming the southern boundary of Penny Hill Bank Nature Reserve opposite the public footpath up to Penny Hill Quarry. The distribution map on the NBN Atlas website shows an 'unconfirmed' record for this area, the details of which are unknown. It is unclear if the species has dispersed here naturally from the known Monkwood population three miles to the east, or if the Wood White has always maintained a tiny population in the difficult to access wooded hill tops along the ridge between Penny Hill Quarry, and Great Witley to the north. This sighting of a single individual remains my only record here.

The female observed ignored all the Tufted Vetch growing out in the open and flowering profusely and instead chose only the smallest specimens quite close to ground-level in deep shady, sheltered spots; making photography distinctly challenging!

Penny Hill Bank Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is a species-rich limestone grassland owned and managed specifically for its important plant communities and associated invertebrates by Worcestershire Wildlife Trust (WWT), but with limited access by permission only. I am therefore very grateful to Dominique Cragg, the WWT Officer responsible for managing this and other sites, for granting permission for me to monitor the site regularly, particularly regarding any species of conservation concern.

The following has been copied directly from the NBN Atlas website: "Although there is no UKBAP action plan for the wood white, it has been identified as a Species of Conservation Concern. A number of conservation organisations, including Butterfly Conservation and English Nature, have prepared an action plan detailing the problems associated with this species. The principle concerns are to limit the decline of the butterflies' populations and to research suitable woodland management for this species. Isolated colonies that are at risk of local extinction require special attention to ensure their survival".



01. Wood White (female) ovipositing on Tufted Vetch along the Penny Hill Bank boundary hedgerow on 26.07.2021. K. McGee.



02. Wood White (female) along the Penny Hill Bank boundary hedgerow on 26.07.2021. K. McGee.

References

NBN Atlas *Species search* [on-line] <http://www.nbnatlas.org/> [Accessed 04.10.2021]

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust *Reserves search* [on-line] <https://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/nature-reserves/penny-hill-bank> [Accessed 04.10.2021]

Images

01. Wood White (female) ovipositing on Tufted Vetch along the Penny Hill Bank boundary hedgerow on 26.07.2021. K. McGee.

02. Wood White (female) along the Penny Hill Bank boundary hedgerow on 26.07.2021. K. McGee.