

## Current Status - UK and Local

LBAP Partnership area Status: Local Priority Species

Butterfly Conservation Status: Medium

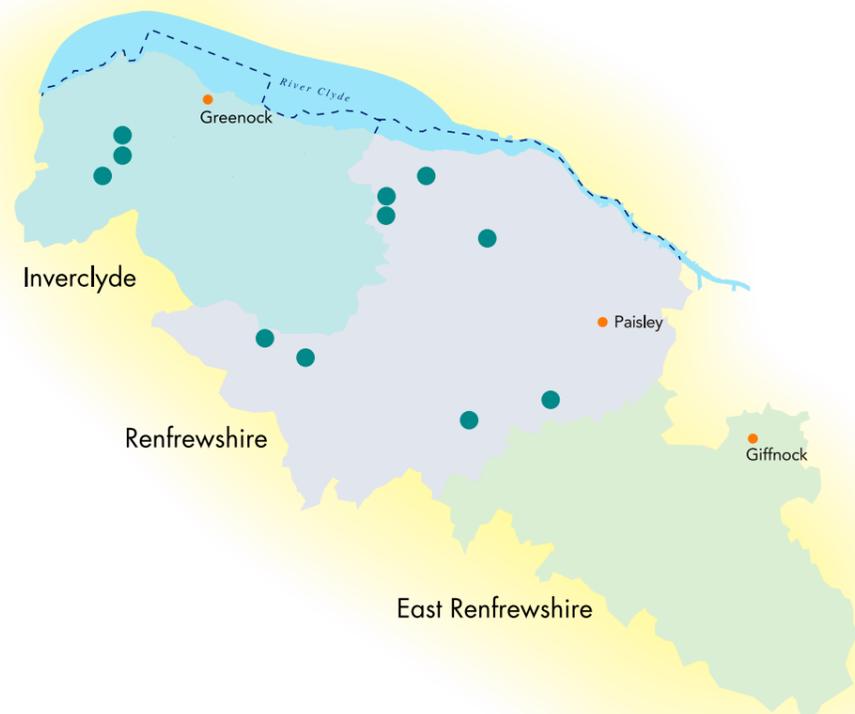
Green Hairstreak is the commonest of the five British hairstreak species. It is stable in most of Europe but has declined in several countries. Colonies may be found on calcareous grassland, woodland rides and clearings, heathland, moorland, bogs, railway cuttings, old quarries, and rough, scrubby grassland. This species occurs on a wide range of soils but is strongly associated with scrub and shrubs, which are usually present at sites where it breeds. A variety of plants are used, but Blaeberry (Bilberry) *Vaccinium myrtillus* is used almost exclusively on moorland and throughout Scotland.

In south-west Scotland the habitat preference is wet heathland with occasional birch to provide shelter from the wind. On these sites blaeberry is recognised as the most common foodplant and indeed within the Partnership area colonies have generally been recorded on sites where this foodplant is present.

Records from throughout the Partnership area are patchy, however, supporting the idea that this species may be subject to under-recording due to its habitat preference. In addition, past records have generally involved single individuals and small colony numbers, suggesting that this species can be overlooked easily.

Records can split Green Hairstreak sites into roughly four areas, two in Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park at Cornalees Bridge and Muirshiel Country Park, one at Glennifer Braes Country Park and one around Dargavel Burn, north of Elphinstone Wood. It is possible that this species is more widespread in the Partnership area than currently recorded, however, because it is a small, fairly inconspicuous butterfly, rarely seen in large numbers.

## DISTRIBUTION OF GREEN HAIRSTREAK BUTTERFLY



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## Ecology and Management

It has what is probably one of the largest range of foodplants of any British butterfly. Early butterfly collectors thought that the only foodplant was Bramble (blackberry) *Rubus fruticosus* hence its scientific name, but as its habits became better understood the list grew and will probably continue to do so. Depending on the habitat it will use Common Rock Rose *Helianthemum nummularium*, Bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, Gorse *Ulex europeans*, Broom *Cytisus scoparius*, Dyer's Greenweed *Genista tinctoria*, Blaeberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, Dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*, Buckthorn *Rhamnus cathartica*, Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix* and Bramble.

This range of foodplants means that it is able to use a range of habitats including chalk downland, heathland, moorland and woodland. The eggs are laid singly and the caterpillars are green with yellow markings along the back. Like other members of the family they are rather sluglike. They are not known to be tended by ants like some lycid larvae but the pupae, which are formed at ground level, emit squeaks which attract ants and it is thought that ants will always bury any that are found. Green Hairstreaks have one brood a year and overwinter as pupae, which results in them being the earliest of the hairstreaks to emerge in spring.

## Factors causing loss or decline

Although a widespread species, localised colonies can be lost due to habitat loss through drainage and subsequent afforestation, scrub regeneration, agricultural improvement and overgrazing.

## Opportunities and Current Action

Habitat conservation is the main opportunity to benefit this species. Ensuring that key known sites are maintained with appropriate food plants will ensure this species' survival. Implementing the Dwarf Shrub Heath and Mire Habitat Action Plans will help to deliver this. Surveying historic sites will establish whether the Green Hairstreak colony is still present and checking potential sites which have suitable habitat may discover new populations. Once Green Hairstreak sites are identified we can look at delivering projects to manage the habitat favourably for these butterflies.



Inverclyde  
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LBAP



Butterfly © N. Gregory

# GREEN HAIRSTREAK BUTTERFLY

(*Callophrys rubi*)

The Green Hairstreak is a small butterfly, which is widespread across most of the UK, although many colonies have been lost in recent years. It is found across Europe and North Africa and eastwards through Asia well into Siberia. The upper side is a uniform dull brown with two paler patches on the male's forewings made up of scent scales. The undersides are a bright green with a thin white line, often reduced to a faint row of dots or even missing altogether. They never rest with their wings open.

## Objectives and Targets

### Objective 1

Determine extent and status of existing populations

### Objective 2

Maintain the current populations of Green Hairstreak in the LBAP Partnership area.

### Objective 3

Increase the breeding population of Green Hairstreak in the LBAP Partnership area.

### Objective 4

Promote awareness of appropriate land management techniques to conserve Green Hairstreak habitat.

Action	Actioned by	Timescale
Conduct surveys to determine location and status of existing populations	LBAP Officer Butterfly Conservation Trust Paisley Museum	2009/2010
Develop policies which protect existing Green Hairstreak habitat	LAs CMRP	2009-ongoing
Implement projects to enhance and create suitable foraging and breeding habitats	CMRP GBCP	2010 2010

## Links with Other Action Plans

Dwarf Shrub Heath

Mire

Further Information can be obtained from The Biodiversity Officer 0141 842 5281

