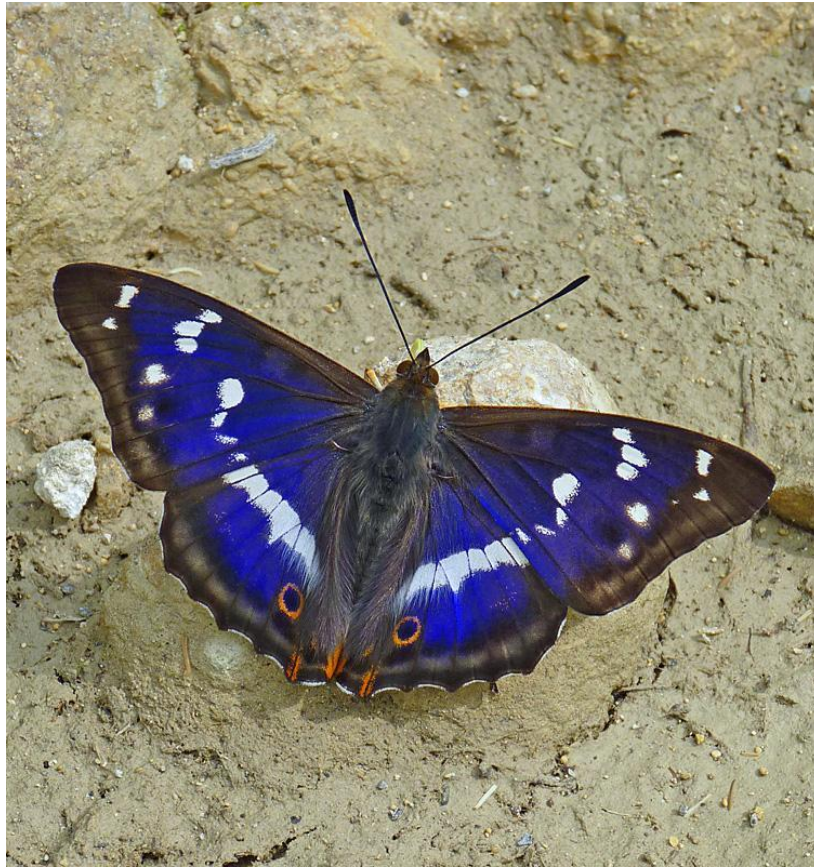


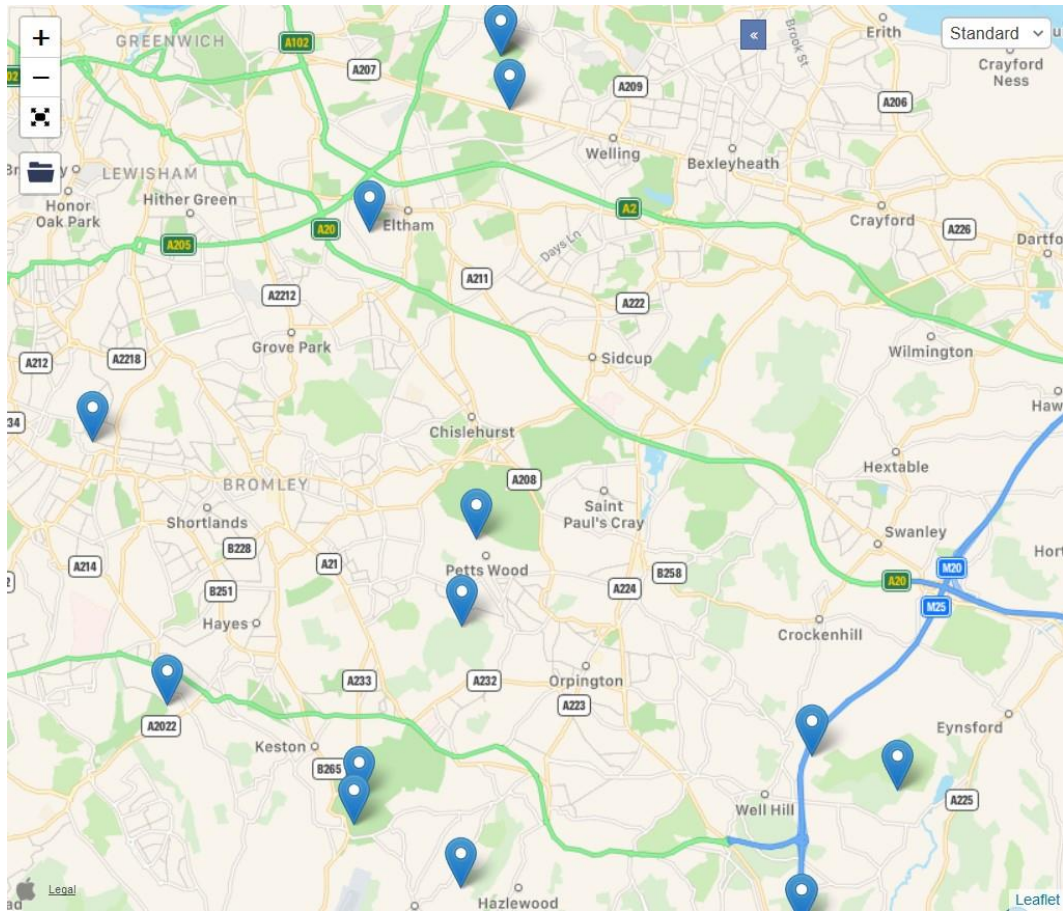
Purple Emperor Butterfly Report 2018



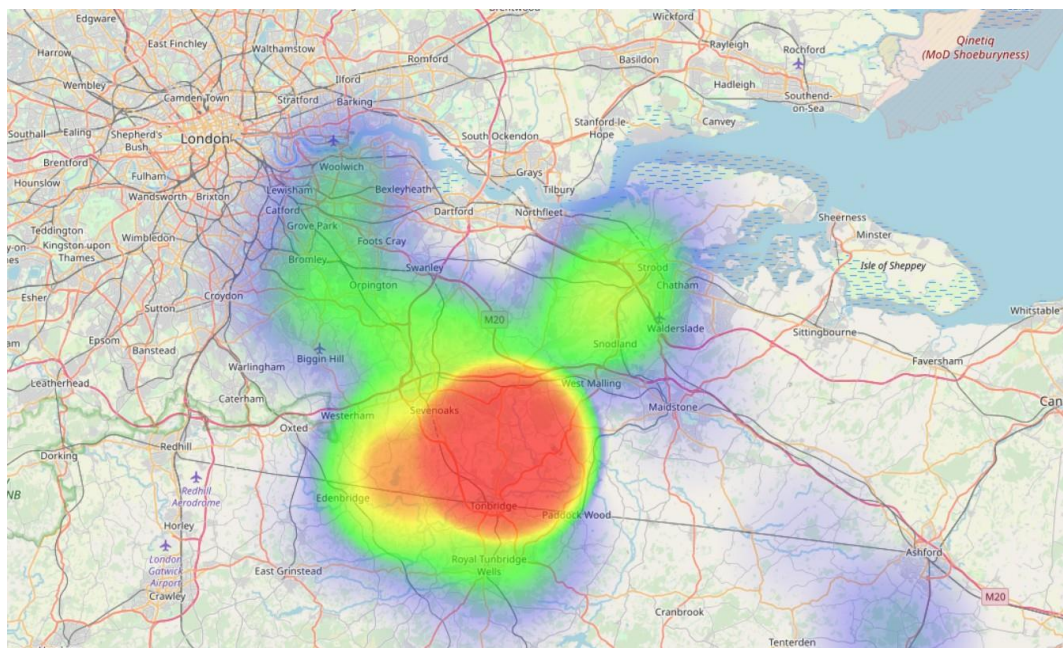
In response to the poster asking for sightings of Purple Emperor we collected three records of adult male Purple Emperor that may otherwise have gone unrecorded. Although the number of sightings are low, it is nonetheless encouraging to know that this rare butterfly is present in the London Borough of Bromley. The survey will be repeated in 2019 with the poster being distributed across Bromley as widely as possible.

Purple Emperor Butterfly Records 2018				
Taxon	Site	Grid ref.	Recorder	Date
Purple Emperor	Holwood Estate	TQ 42091 63173	Steven Lofting	29.06.2018
Purple Emperor	Fairoak Close Crofton Wood	TQ 43940 66847	Public Survey	24.06.2018
Purple Emperor	Wood Lodge Lane West Wickham	TQ 38515 65266	Janet Blackman	04.07.2018

Distribution



Local records including data from Kent Butterfly Conservation dating back to 2010.



The Hotspot map of sightings since 2010 shows that although not as densely populated as mid-Kent, Bromley does have higher than average Kent County populations of Purple Emperor.

Larval Food Plants

Larval Food plants are usually Goat Willow, *Salix Caprea* or Sallow, *Salix cinerea* although other *Salix* species are occasionally used. The preferred food plant trees have large crowns or grow at ride edges with the eggs being laid in the shady part of the willow canopy. We should look to favourably promote these somewhat unfashionable trees at sites where we have recent sightings. *Salix* sp. Require a damp habitat near to rivers or on poor draining soils and Crofton Wood SSSI would appear to be an ideal site for selective management of these trees and is thought anecdotally to be a historic host to Purple Emperor and we now have a record there for 2018. Caterpillars of a large number of moth species also feed on *Salix* sp., including Puss Moth, Willow Ermine, Eyed Hawkmoth, Poplar Hawkmoth, several of the Prominent family and Red Underwing.

Extracts from Butterfly Conservation Species Action Plan, Purple Emperor *Apatura iris* (2000):

The Purple Emperor is univoltine with adults flying from late June until mid-August. The males occasionally descend to the ground, usually in mid morning, where they probe for salts either from road surfaces or from animal dung. Males set up territories on prominent 'master trees' from mid day onwards and can occasionally be seen perching on outer, south-facing branches, or soaring gracefully between trees. Some of these trees are used in successive years but others are more temporary. Contrary to popular belief, such trees are not always oaks and alternatives are nearly always found if a 'master' tree is felled (though loss of such trees is still undesirable). The Purple Emperor requires large blocks of broad-leaved or mixed woodland or clusters of smaller woods and/or dense scrub where willows such as Goat Willow are abundant. The Purple Emperor has always been associated with well-wooded districts, often on clays or in valleys where damp conditions promote abundant growth of suitable willows. Although the butterfly is often associated with ancient woodland, it can spread to adjacent secondary woodland if suitable willows are abundant. The butterfly has undergone a modest re-expansion during the last two decades and has re-appeared (or has been re-discovered) in several counties after long absences: including east Devon, Kent, Nottinghamshire and Northamptonshire.

Management

Retain numerous willows wherever possible, especially along ride edges, in damp areas and in new woodland planting. In addition to rotational ride management, the provision of willow bushes and trees of different ages away from ride edges, in scallops, glades and at box junctions will help maintain populations. It is also important to ensure continuity because the food plants are comparatively short-lived trees. They can regenerate freely in damp conditions but, if natural regrowth is sparse, they can be readily propagated by pushing cuttings into the ground during the autumn. Unfortunately, low re-growth is often threatened by deer browsing and trees may need to be protected.