

Green Hairstreak

Callophrys rubi

Insects · On the wing Apr-Jun · one brood



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A small butterfly whose underside is a vivid metallic leaf-green, often with a faint broken white line. The upperside is plain brown but is almost never shown, because the butterfly invariably rests with its wings closed. Green hairstreaks live on scrubby heath, moorland edge, gorse banks and rough hillsides around the region, and are far easier to overlook than to see.

BEHAVIOUR

Perched among fresh spring foliage the green underside is superb camouflage, and the butterfly is usually noticed only when it flies. Males hold territory on a prominent gorse or hawthorn sprig and dart out at rivals. It is unusual in using a wide range of foodplants — gorse, bilberry, bird's-foot trefoil, broom — which is why it can turn up on very different ground.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Blues and coppers (Lycaenidae)
WINGSPAN	2.5-3 cm
STATUS	Native; widespread but local and easily missed

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