

BARTON COMMON
TRANSECT REPORT
2024



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Many thanks also to those listed below for allowing walks to take place and for their support in producing this report.

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UKBMS Database Entry:	Trevor Bumfrey

Section 1 – Introduction and Transect background

This report summarises the findings of the weekly butterfly transects undertaken at Barton Common in 2024, providing comparison with previous years' walks where possible. It is designed to provide feedback to the landowner and land managers who have allowed this transect walk to take place and to the volunteers who have carried it out. The transect has been walked since 2013.

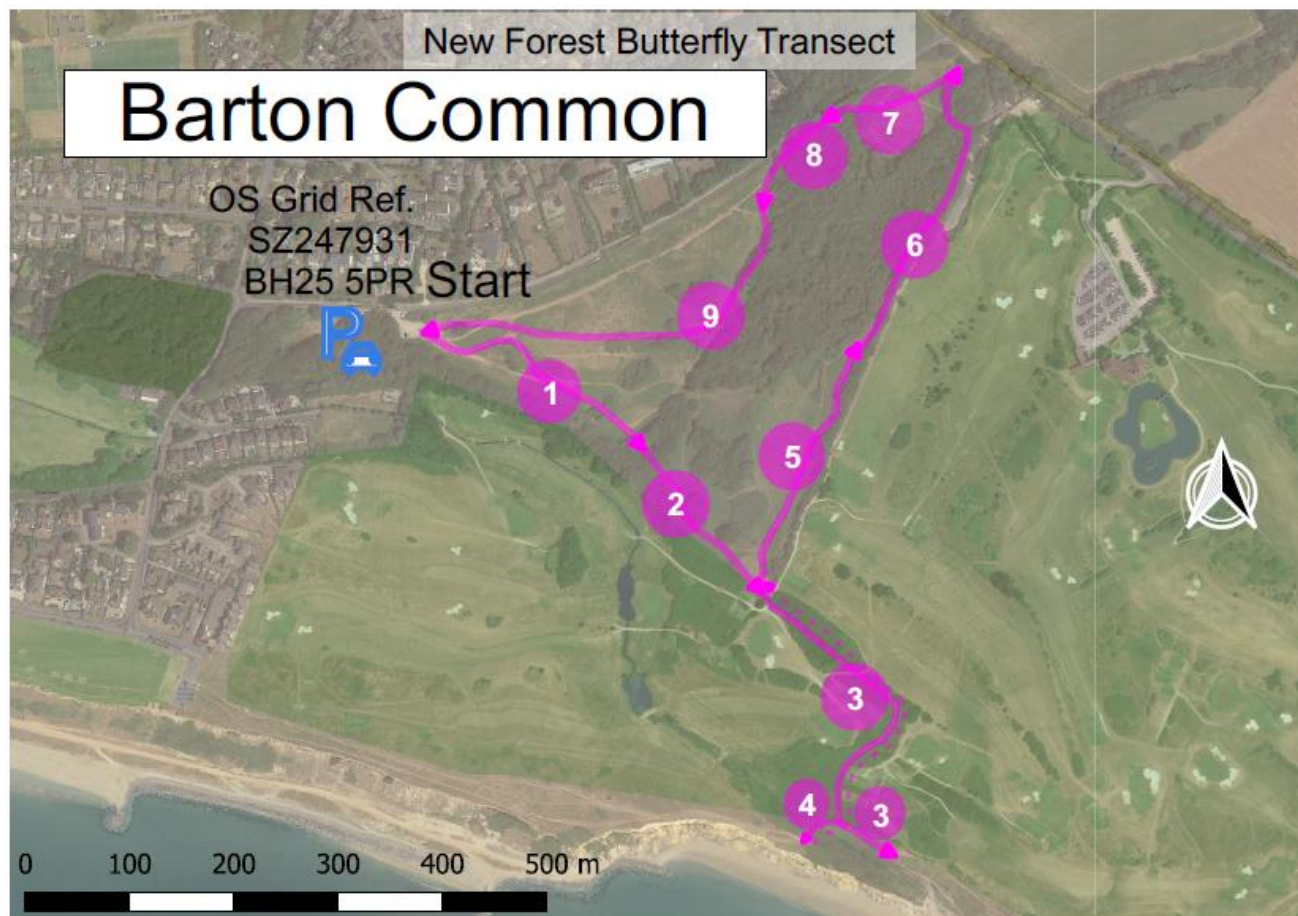
Monitoring walks have been carried out using the Fixed-route (Pollard Walk) transect methodology as promoted through the United Kingdom Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS). This involves walking a fixed route each week during the recording season which runs for 26 weeks from 1st April to 30th September, recording all butterflies within a 5m cube ahead of the walker. This produces an index for the numbers of each butterfly species seen, which may also be referred to in the report by various terms, such as 'count' or 'record'. Adopting this methodology means that it is possible to make a meaningful comparison of species indices and, over time, identify trends in their abundance. A more detailed analysis, together with the raw data is available to Group Members and Landowners on request.

Transect walkers are also encouraged to record any moths seen on transect that they can identify in the field, in the same way as they do for butterflies. They may also record any other sightings of note which can be entered into UKBMS and are passed to the relevant conservation body.

Transect Description

Barton Common transect is situated south of the New Forest on the cliff top adjacent to a golf course and managed by New Milton Town Council. Conservation activities started in 2015/6 to return the common to two thirds grassland and one third scrub and woodland. Unfortunately, the ponies have been taken off the common because of the poor state of the boundary fence, so the habitat is being improved and maintained by a conservation group which was established in the Autumn of 2022. 5 sections traverse open grasslands, 2 sections (6 and 8) go through mature woods, 1 section (3) is a scrub lined track across the golf course and 1 (4) is a short section on the cliff top.

Transect Route



Section 2 – Season Overview

Weather Summary

The winter of 23/24 was milder than average but very variable with cold, wintry spells in early December and mid-January contrasting with milder, wetter and unsettled periods. Spring was warm, unsettled, very wet and dull with a succession of low pressure and frontal systems bringing rain and wind. This was the warmest spring on record, due mainly to May. Summer was cooler than average, with mean temperatures in both June and July below average and temperatures in August only slightly above average. Summer sunshine was close (97%) to the average. April started with a complex low-pressure area with heavy rainfall and flooding in the south. May was the warmest on record, 2.4C above average. June was cooler than average even though the mean temperature was lifted for a few days at the end of the month when the temperature reached 28C. July was again cooler and wetter than average, but ended in a hot spell with temperatures reaching 30C. August saw unsettled weather with a predominance of Atlantic weather systems and only brief settled interludes when temperatures reached 30°C on several occasions. It was drier in the south than the rest of the country. September saw unsettled weather across the UK, with variable temperatures and persistent showers, southern areas were particularly wet and dull.

The NFBTG Season

A frustrating season mainly down to the changeable weather, numbers especially were affected by the cool and wet spell just as the summer butterflies were emerging. The total number of butterflies recorded across 54 transects was 44262 at a density (butterflies per kilometer walked) of 13.10. This was our second lowest density, only 12.08 in 2016 was worse. Five transects improved on 2023, although one was due to limited access in 2023, with three under 50% of their 2023 total. Overall, the transects recorded 78% of their average. Of the recorded species only Purple Hairstreak, Green Hairstreak, Orange-tip and Brimstone improved on 2023 and Holly Blue, Small Tortoiseshell, Pearl-bordered Fritillary, White Admiral and Red Admiral all declined by over 70%. No Grizzled Skipper, Purple Emperor or Clouded Yellow were recorded but a single White-letter Hairstreak and a (first) Marsh Fritillary meant that total species was 33, down by one of 2023.

Transect Summary

Total abundance was down 20% compared to 2023 but only 3% down on the long term average since the transect started in 2013, which had a much higher abundance than any other year.

There were 22 different species recorded, in line with previous years. Brimstone, Speckled Wood, Small Heath, Meadow Brown, Green Hairstreak and Common Blue exhibited a higher abundance than 2023. Skippers, Whites, Gatekeeper, Marbled White, Red Admiral and Holly Blue all had a lower abundance than the previous year.

Section 3 showed a marked decline compared to previous years whereas the other sections were similar.

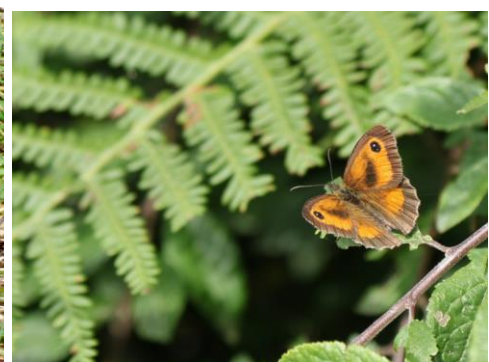
The summer peak occurred in week 18, two weeks later than previous years.



Small Copper



Peacock (Michael Barnes)



Gatekeeper

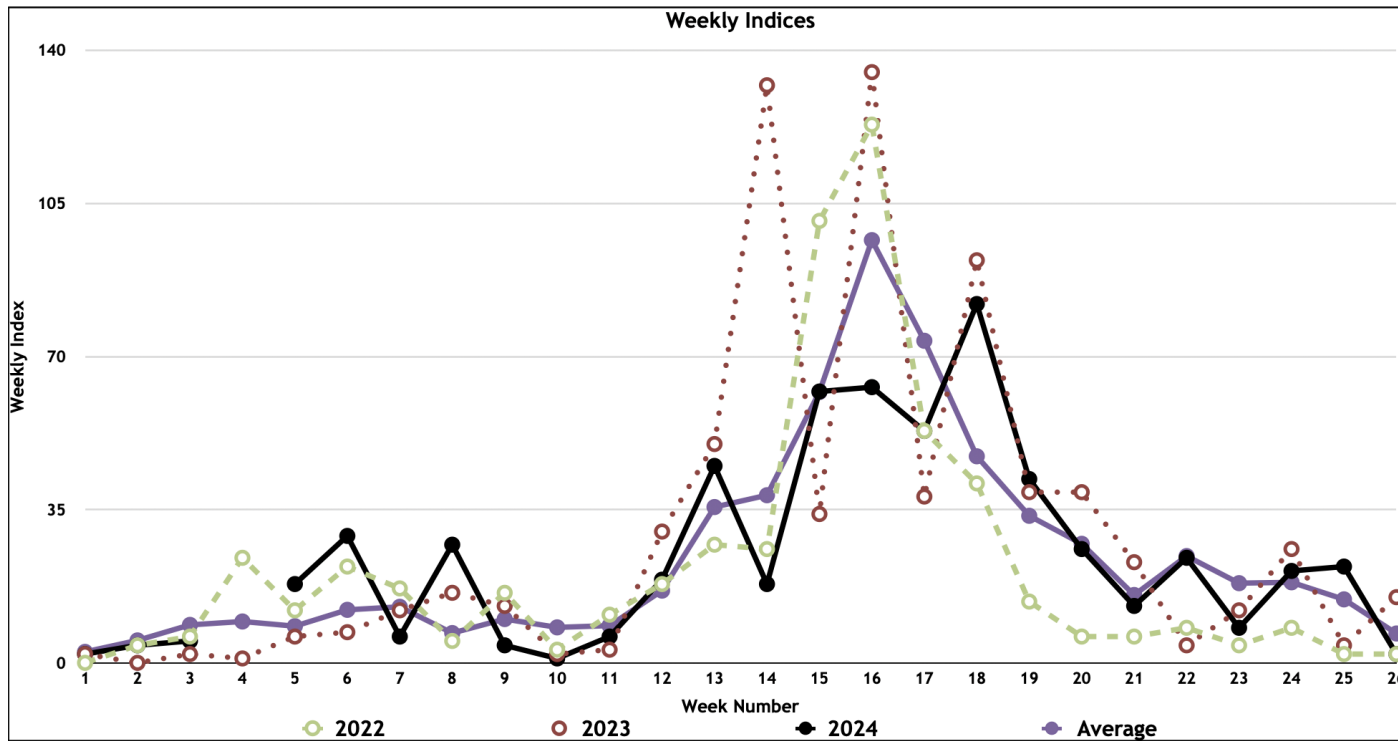
Section 3 – Weekly Flight Periods and Indices

Flight periods are based on New Forest Transect Group historic data supplemented by Alan Thornbury's Hampshire Flight Chart.

2024		Weekly Records																										TOTAL	Weeks Recorded
Week		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		
Sun (%)		100	96	96		100	100	100	100	68	2	100	100	100	58	74	100	64	100	77	27	50	89	6	96	97	64		
Temp (°C)		13	14	13		15	18	16		20	18	19	17	24	19	19	20	21	25	20	21	19	21	19	15	20	17		
Small/Essex Skipper														1		4			3										
Large Skipper															1														
Orange-tip									3																				
Large White										1						2	4	1	4				2		3	8			
Small White							7		3	1						1	2	2	2			3	12	4	5	5	1		
Green-veined White									1															1					
Brimstone						8	10	1	10	1									1	1	1								
Speckled Wood		1								2		1	1		1				4	5	10	12	4	4		3			
Small Heath											1	2	12			2	1			1	1	1	4	3	1	2			
Meadow Brown											4	15	30	15	23	18	4	1	3	1									
Gatekeeper															2	24	32	38	62	25	9	5	1						
Marbled White														1	1	2	1												
Silver-washed Fritillary																	1	1											
Dark Green Fritillary												1																	
Red Admiral		1						1								1	1	1					1		3	1			
Painted Lady												1																	
Peacock		2	2	3		3	1		1									2											
Comma																	2	1	1	1									
Small Copper							1		1											2		3			2	4	1		
Green Hairstreak				1		7	8	1	6	1																			
Holly Blue				1			2	2	1												1								
Common Blue																				1	1				1	3	2		
TOTAL		2	4	5	0	18	29	6	27	4	1	6	19	45	18	62	63	53	82	42	26	13	24	8	21	22	2		
Weekly Species		1	3	3	0	3	6	5	8	4	1	3	4	5	3	10	10	9	10	7	5	4	6	3	8	6	2		
Week		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		
		Normal flight Period †				Inside Normal Peak Flight Period						Outside Normal Peak flight period						Outside Normal Flight Period											

† Normal Flight Period is derived from actual New Forest sightings from 2011 to 2018 and Hants Flight Periods by Alan Thornbury

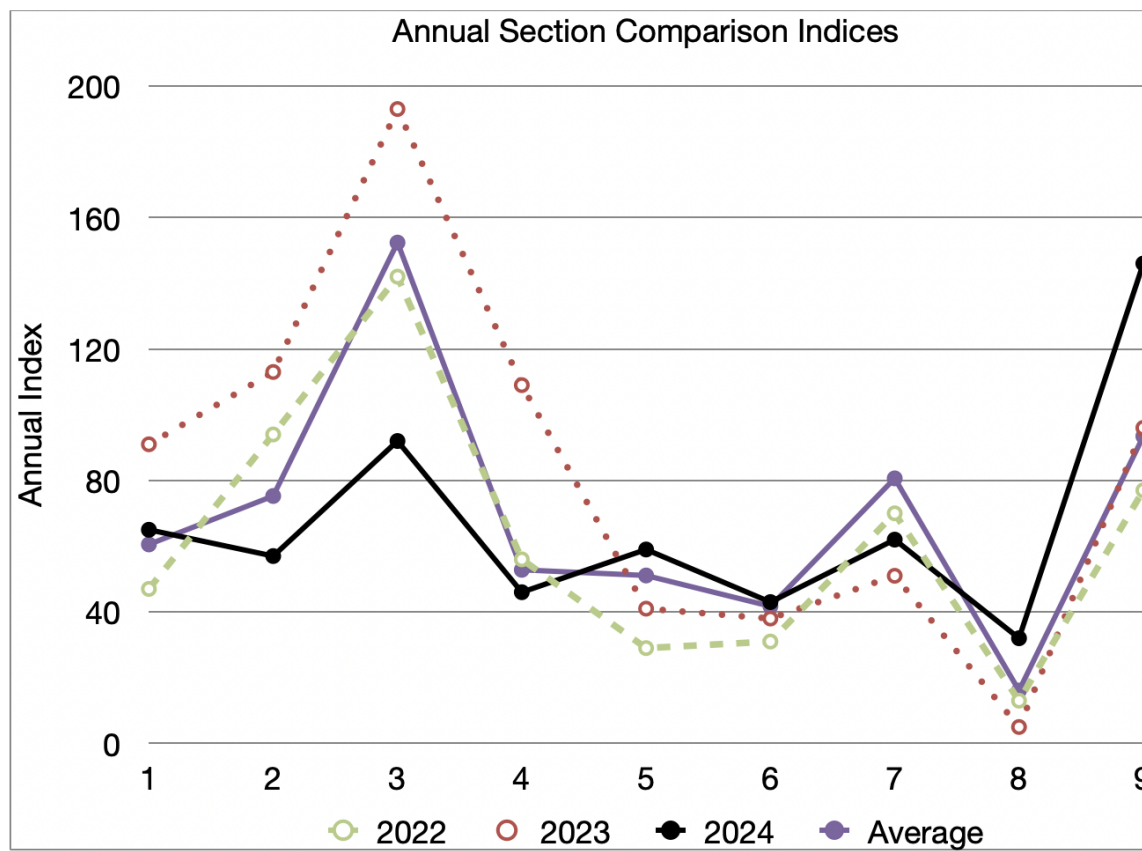
FAMILIES
Hesperiidae
Pieridae
Nymphalidae 'Browns'
Nymphalidae 'Aristocrats'
Lycaenidae



Summary of Transect Indices by Week																										Highest Index	Totals
Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
2013		0	2	2	11	8	15	12	17	30		30	12	8	56	282	81	45	108	126	43	91	11	16	20	0	1,026
2014	1	5	13	3	15	19	15	3	3	8	20	7	22	38	90	63	153	90	18	9	11	14	9	26	20	14	689
2015	5	3	13	17	1	13	5	10	13	21	7	12	14	50	70	31	39	124	33	16	19	11	7	10	3	7	554
2016	2	2	1	6	4	5	16	15	6	0	0	0	5	12	8	39	35	24	22	7	6	16	6	6	1	8	252
2017	4	14	11	13	6	3	4	7	3	3	3	16	63	33	23	65	14	39	35	28	8	22	32	10	18	12	489
2018	6	4	10	5	4	15	17	5	21	6	12	27	131	130	88	111	93	24	6	4	12	7	6	37	5	8	794
2019	0	9	18	13	14	23	28	1	5	3		5	28	28	82	95	132	43	22	16	33	30	26	46	40	4	744
2020						8	5	8	7	10	42	46	34	71	72	32	20	38	22	4	21	21	15	18	1	495	
2021	2		4	2		1	3	5	8	0	5	8	8	24	30	85	104	22	40	38	13	24	60	10	18	11	525
2022	0	4	6	24	12	22	17	5	16	3	11	18	27	26	101	123	53	41	14	6	6	8	4	8	2	2	559
2023	2	0	2	1	6	7	12	16	13	2	3	30	50	132	34	135	38	92	39	39	23	4	12	26	4	15	737
2024	2	4	5		18	29	6	27	4	1	6	19	45	18	62	63	53	82	42	26	13	24	8	21	22	2	602
Average	3	5	9	9	8	12	13	7	10	8	9	17	36	38	62	97	74	47	34	27	16	24	18	18	15	7	613

Section 4 – Section Species and Comparison Indices

Species↓	Section→	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	Total	No. Sections
Small/Essex Skipper					1	1		1	1	4	8	5
Large Skipper							1				1	1
Orange-tip				1	1				1		3	3
Large White		4	4	7	2	2	1			5	25	7
Small White		3	6	10	7	4	2	2	1	13	48	9
Green-veined White			1	1							2	2
Brimstone		1	7	2	3	6	2		2	10	33	8
Speckled Wood		6	4	15		3	13	3	2	2	48	8
Small Heath		3	1		1	2		3	2	19	31	7
Meadow Brown		8	9	14	6	11	8	16	9	33	114	9
Gatekeeper		34	14	22	16	19	10	34	12	37	198	9
Marbled White			1			2	1		1		5	4
Silver-washed Fritillary								1		1	2	2
Dark Green Fritillary					1						1	1
Red Admiral		4	1	2	1					2	10	5
Painted Lady									1		1	1
Peacock			1	4	5	1	1	1		1	14	7
Comma		2		1	1			1			5	4
Small Copper			2	2						10	14	3
Green Hairstreak			6	8	1	5	3			1	24	6
Holly Blue				3		3	1				7	3
Common Blue										8	8	1
Total		65	57	92	46	59	43	62	32	146	602	
No. Species		9	13	14	13	12	11	9	10	14	22	

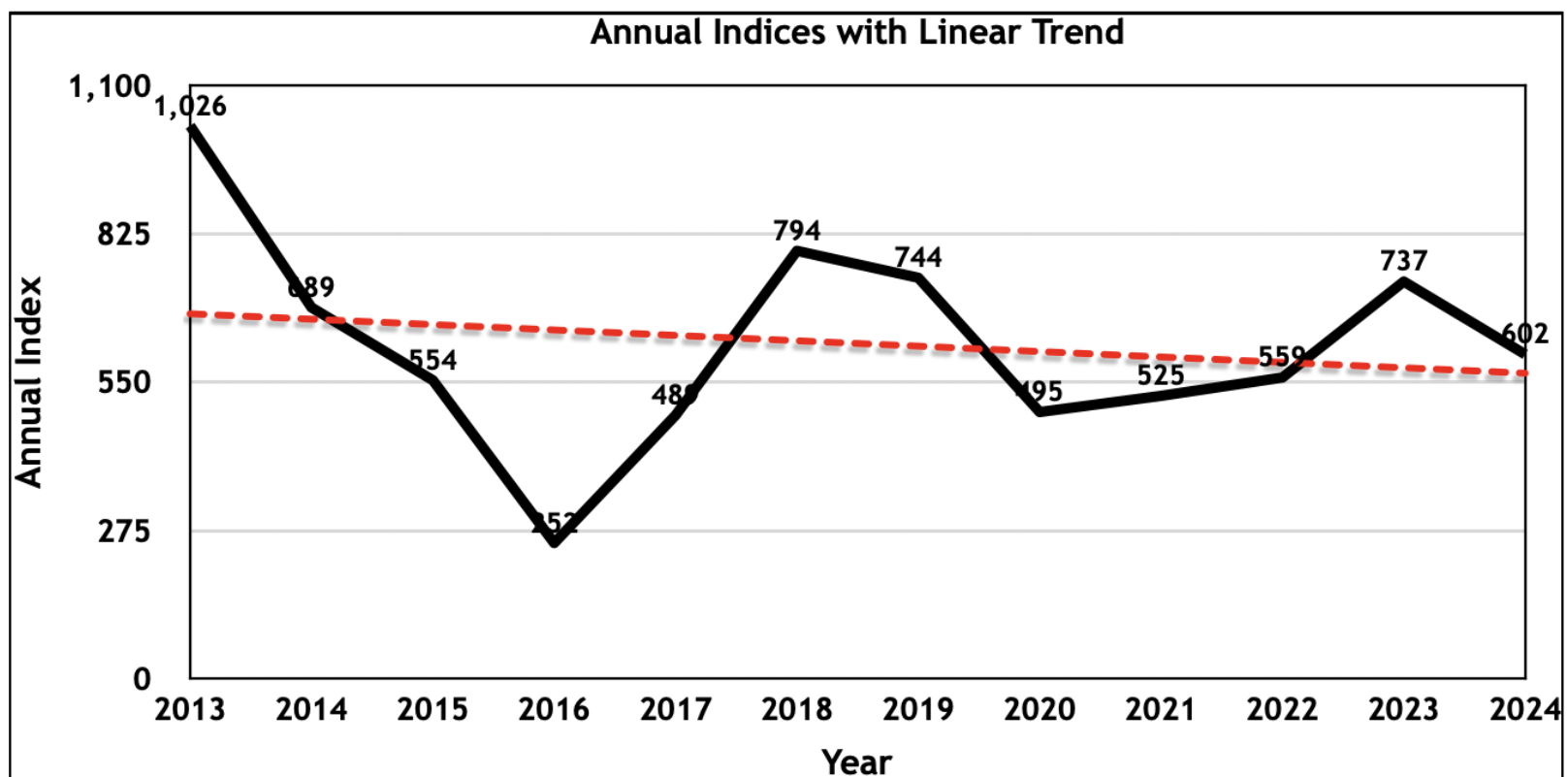


Annual Section Indices														Average Excl Current Year	Change 2024 v Average	Change 2023 v 2024
Section↓	Year→	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024			
1		127	66	38	17	35	56	54	77	58	47	91	65	61	4	↓
2		87	73	36	21	67	118	102	50	67	94	113	57	75	-18	↓
3		155	209	191	75	122	192	202	88	107	142	193	92	152	-60	↓
4		60	55	36	36	36	53	52	47	41	56	109	46	53	-7	↓
5		86	66	67	26	31	44	93	41	38	29	41	59	51	8	↑
6		89	48	45	21	29	41	49	37	31	31	38	43	42	1	↑
7		195	75	62	15	79	128	71	63	78	70	51	62	81	-19	↑
8		8	10	12	6	27	38	24	15	19	13	5	32	16	16	↑
9		219	87	67	35	63	124	97	77	86	77	96	146	93	53	↑
Annual Index		1,026	689	554	252	489	794	744	495	525	559	737	602	624	-22	↓

Section 5 – Annual Species Variation

Annual Indices													Average Excl Current	Change 2024 v Average	Change 2023 v 2024		
Species↓	Year→	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023				2024	
Essex Skipper												1					
Small Skipper																	
Small/Essex Skipper		66	63	20	6	12	37	4	7	9	11	45	8				
Small & Essex Skipper Total		66	63	20	6	12	37	4	7	9	11	46	8	26	-18	↓	
Large Skipper		52	13	15	5	1	14	2	3			6	1	12	-11	↓	
Orange-tip			1					2		3	2		3	2	1	↑	
Large White		120	14	33	20	31	72	85	75	31	41	44	25	51	-26	↓	
Small White		68	14	10	19	10	46	57	55	98	29	83	48	44	4	↓	
Green-veined White		5	3	6	2	24	20	8	13	1	1		2	8	-6	↑	
Clouded Yellow		3	2	2	1		1		1			2		2	-2	↓	
Brimstone		15	27	44	18	6	9	24	2	4	23	9	33	16	17	↑	
Speckled Wood		80	101	45	12	92	96	64	13	42	60	29	48	58	-10	↑	
Small Heath		120	35	22	4	18	36	28	36	27	17	2	31	31	-0	↑	
Ringlet		7		2		7	4	1	1	1		1		3	-3	↓	
Meadow Brown		126	75	54	30	113	150	90	74	92	83	81	114	88	26	↑	
Gatekeeper		208	237	198	64	84	188	248	139	142	205	301	198	183	15	↓	
Marbled White		103	31	28	7	12	29	26	22	17	12	11	5	27	-22	↓	
Silver-washed Fritillary		1	1	1		7	1	2	4	1	4		2	2	-0	↑	
Dark Green Fritillary									4			2	1	3	-2	↓	
Red Admiral		3	10	5	14	16	3	12	10	20	15	41	10	14	-4	↓	
Painted Lady						2		6		2	1	1	1	2	-1	↔	
Peacock		20	22	21	7	23	21	15	2	14	10	16	14	16	-2	↓	
Small Tortoiseshell		1	6	3	2	4					1			3	-3	↔	
Comma		3		8	4	5	8	1		2	4	5	5	4	1	↔	
Small Copper		2	7	6	9	10	25	14	13	8	1	13	14	10	4	↑	
Purple Hairstreak							1							1	-1	↔	
Green Hairstreak		7	17	13	8	5	12	28	4	4	11	5	24	10	14	↑	
Holly Blue		11	1	14	20	5	15	26	16	1	21	38	7	15	-8	↓	
Common Blue		5	9	4		2	6	1	1	6	7	1	8	4	4	↑	
Total		1,026	689	554	252	489	794	744	495	525	559	737	602	624	-22	↓	
Different Species		22	21	22	19	22	22	22	21	21	21	21	22	21	1	↑	
Max. Weekly Species		9	10	10	11	11	12	11	11	13	10	15	10	11	-1	↓	

FAMILIES	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Hesperiidae	118	76	35	11	13	51	6	10	9	11	52	9
Pieridae	211	61	95	60	71	148	176	146	137	96	138	111
Nymphalidae 'Browns'	644	479	349	117	326	503	457	285	321	377	425	396
Nymphalidae 'Aristocrats'	28	39	38	27	57	33	36	20	39	35	65	33
Lycaenidae	25	34	37	37	22	59	69	34	19	40	57	53



Section 6 – Moths recorded on Transect

Transect walkers are encouraged to record any moths seen within their standard transect 'cube' that are distinctive enough to be identified in the field. The records below provide an insight into moth species that are

around during the daytime, including a number that will be missed or under-represented through more traditional methods of moth recording.

Unlike butterflies, this is not a comprehensive record of the moths that are in the area. Many more moth species are likely to be present but either not seen as they are not active during the day or not recognised as they may be too small or not distinctive enough to be identified accurately during a transect walk.

Given that the numbers of moths spotted on individual transects is generally quite low, an overview report, collating data from all NFTG transects, is also produced to give context to sightings and provide sufficient data to identify trends in more common species seen in the daytime. The overview report is available on request.

Species	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Meadow Long-horn		1						
Humming-bird Hawk-moth	3					2		
Orange Underwing				1				
Cream Wave		1						
Brown Silver-line	4	1	2	2		3	1	
Brimstone Moth							1	
Yellow Shell				1				
Cream-spot Tiger				1				
Jersey Tiger		1						
Cinnabar	2		2					
Dingy Footman							1	
Silver Y	1						1	
Total	10	4	4	5	0	5	4	
Larval								
Brown-tail		1						
Number of Species	4	5	2	4	0	2	4	
Total Species (2018-2024)								13