

The New Forest Butterfly Transect group recorded 57066 butterflies in 2025, a 29% increase on 2024. Density was slightly below average but hopefully 2025 will form a better base for 2026 than we had for 2025. Exactly half of the transects had an above average year (27) and it is interesting to note that a number of Forestry England inclosures did relatively poorly, with Frohawk just scraping 50% of its annual average. Five other transects, Pondhead Wood, Standing Hat, Great Linford, Hawkhill and Hasley all failed to reach 75% of their average. At the other end of the scale Vales Moor, Acres Down, Hightown Common, Cloven Hill and Copythorne Common all exceeded their average by over 175%, albeit on a smaller dataset for some of them.

Most species had a good season and it is apparent from the species table attached it was the grassland species that suffered from the dry summer, Meadow Brown, Large Skipper, Small Copper and Brown Argus all suffered to some degree. It is unclear why Orange-tip fared poorly though. Like most places there were a lot of Whites around later in the season, and all three species of white had a record season as did Clouded Yellow and Purple Hairstreak, in the latter case presumably the warm weather brought more down to nectar which made them easier to spot.

Annual Comparison table 2016-2025

Total Abundance recorded	Annual Totals										Mean	Median
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025		
Number of Transects walked	30	32	37	44	47	48	51	52	54	54		
Total Abundance recorded	25159	44656	50445	67567	52871	43955	48294	68948	44262	57066		
Density (butterflies per kilometre walked)	12.08	20.48	20.32	22.96	18.17	13.70	15.41	21.17	13.10	16.88	17.49	18.17
Average abundance per Transect	839	1396	1363	1536	1125	916	947	1326	820	1057	1141	1125
Ranking by density	10 th	3 rd	4 th	1 st	5 th	8 th	7 th	2 nd	9 th	6th		