

The 2024 NFBTG Season

After a record year in 2023, butterfly numbers came down with a bump in 2024, our 54 transects only recorded 44,262 butterflies. Even with two additional transects it was more than a third down on 2023, and the lowest in terms of density since 2016. The table below shows the overall comparison back to 2016.

	Annual Totals										
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Mean	Median
Number of Transects walked	30	32	37	44	47	48	51	52	54		
Total Abundance recorded	25159	44656	50445	67567	52871	43955	48294	68948	44262	50237	48294
Density (butterflies per kilometer walked)	12.08	20.48	20.32	22.96	18.17	13.70	15.41	21.17	13.10	18.04	18.17
Average abundance per Transect	839	1396	1363	1536	1125	916	947	1326	820	1160	1125
Ranking by density	9 th	3 rd	4 th	1 st	5 th	7 th	6 th	2 nd	8 th		

The 2024 survey season was a difficult one, with cool, wet and windy conditions affecting all invertebrates not just butterflies and also making it challenging to find gaps to get out and survey. In spite of the weather we managed over 95% coverage of our transects.

Only five transects improved on 2023, of which one was due to limited access in 2023, with the remainder down including three under 50% of their 2023 total. Ten improved on their long-term average, generally by a small percentage, although Hightown Common was 85% up on average and also recorded an unexpected Marsh Fritillary. Overall our transects recorded 78% of their average count.

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%. Comparisons against an average are difficult because of the differing number of transects walked each year but the early season butterflies fared better in general. The exception was the record number (15) of Purple Hairstreak at Warren Farm in July. 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 compared to 2023.