

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Butterfly Report 2024



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Introduction

As a complement to the BAMS online Annual Butterfly Report (ABR) for 2024, found at [Annual Butterfly Report 2024](#), we present here an informal review of the 2024 butterfly year.

It should be emphasised that this review is not a PDF version of the online summary, but an abstract of general analysis for the year, with selected highlights that presents the 'headlines' of the 2024 season. We also include several anecdotes shared by enthusiasts who have contributed postings to various online butterfly forums.

BAMS would like to encourage all butterfly observers to capture their interesting sightings and anecdotes each year, with a view to including them in a PDF report for future years. You can post your sightings here: [Submit News](#)

Online summary

Data is verified and collated by the H&IOW Butterfly Recorder through iRecord. We would like to thank everyone who sent in records in 2024, which really do make a positive difference when it comes to making informed conservation decisions. All your records are very much appreciated.

How do I contribute?

- You can enter your butterfly records in **iRecord**, contribute via the annual **BC Big Butterfly Count** or take part in the **Garden Butterfly Survey**.

When is the deadline?

- **7 January** (for all your records from the previous year)

Your help is vital and every record really does count!

Acknowledgements

County Butterfly Recorder – **Bob Annell**, for supplying the 2024 data, statistics and for generating the species distribution maps.

Data processing support – **Jacky Adams** and **Lindsay Clifton**

BAMS online 2024 Annual Butterfly Report – **Pete Eeles**

BAMS PDF 2024 Annual Butterfly Report – **Kevin Freeborn**

Front cover – Brown Hairstreak, **Pete Eeles**; design **Dan Powell**

Back cover – Purple Hairstreak, **Sheila Anne Williams**

Species summaries for Grayling, Green Hairstreak and Round-up of rarer species – **Rupert Broadway**. Summaries of Brown Hairstreak and Purple Hairstreak – **Lee Hurrell**. Summaries of Duke of Burgundy and Purple Emperor – **Ashley Whitlock**. Summaries of all other species – **Kevin Freeborn**

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2024 in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, by Lee Hurrell

It's strange thinking back to the 2024 butterfly season, as at the time of writing, we have just experienced what will likely be the hottest year on record, yet again. It's strange, as this year (2026) has accordingly been a bumper year for most species. Contrastingly, 2024 was dire. In fact, it was so poor that it led to Butterfly Conservation declaring that we are in a 'butterfly emergency'.

The 2024 butterfly season in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight mirrored the national picture, resulting in one of the poorest years on record for butterfly abundance. In fact, the JNCC (Joint Nature Conservation Committee) wrote that "2024 was the 4th worst year for butterfly abundance since the first year of the UKBMS, with 9 species showing their worst year on record." That's nearly 50 years – the UKBMS (UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme) started in 1976. We'll no doubt come to the parallels with the extreme summer of 1976 in future annual reports.

Back in 2024, wet and unseasonably poor weather depressed overall butterfly numbers and delayed flight periods across both counties. After a reasonable but by no means standout 2023, 2024 started wet, cool and cloudy. It then stubbornly remained that way for most of the summer. Even the annual Big Butterfly Count was affected: data from this annual 'citizen science' survey labelled 2024 as the worst year for abundance since recording began. Nationally, participants in the Big Butterfly Count across the UK spotted a mere 7 butterflies per 15-minute count, with thousands of surveys returning zero sightings. Compared to 2023, when the average Big Butterfly Count figure submitted was 12 butterflies per 15-minute count, this shows the magnitude of the national decline in just one year.

Across the UK, and reflected in the transects in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, 51 out of 59 native species recorded lower numbers in 2024 than they did in 2023. Nationally, only six species managed any increase at all. Against this background, the figures for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight were never going to break any records. It is perhaps telling that not a single species across Hampshire and Wight had their earliest or latest flight times – another indication of the poor season of 2024.

Personally, I will remember it as the year I very nearly didn't see a Small Copper. They were being reported, but not frequently, nor in huge numbers. I had to wait until a September transect, and then I only saw the one. All year! Small Copper records were down 58% year on year, with 1,967 individuals seen in 2024, compared to 4,686 individuals in 2023. It was also recorded in 156 fewer tetrads – a 26% reduction.

Red Admiral was another loser in 2024, although with 2023 being a record year for this species (with 41,633 individuals recorded), this was perhaps to be expected. During 2024, only 9,946 individuals were seen, a whopping 76% reduction. However, we are still very much dependent on incoming migrant butterflies to boost the numbers seen here.

Only three species showed an increase in abundance in 2024: Green Hairstreak (+18%), Purple Hairstreak (+11%), and Orange-tip (+4%). Numbers seen of every other species recorded in the county declined, with 19 species falling by more than 50% from the previous year. Two extreme examples were Holly Blue (down 82%) and Brown Hairstreak (down 89%).

If you would like to explore the data for 2024, please look at the online report [\[here\]](#) which shows trends in abundance and distribution for each species over the last 25 years. The amount of red on the trend charts for 2024 says it all.

Despite 2024's doom and gloom, a few species actually increased their distribution, even if numbers recorded fell. Five species showed an increase in the number of tetrads they were recorded in from 2023, with (interestingly, given the fall in abundance), Brown Hairstreak increasing its distribution by 64%, though two-thirds of these records were for butterfly eggs.

With our weather continuing to become more extreme, I have a feeling we can expect further ups and downs in the coming years for our beleaguered butterflies.

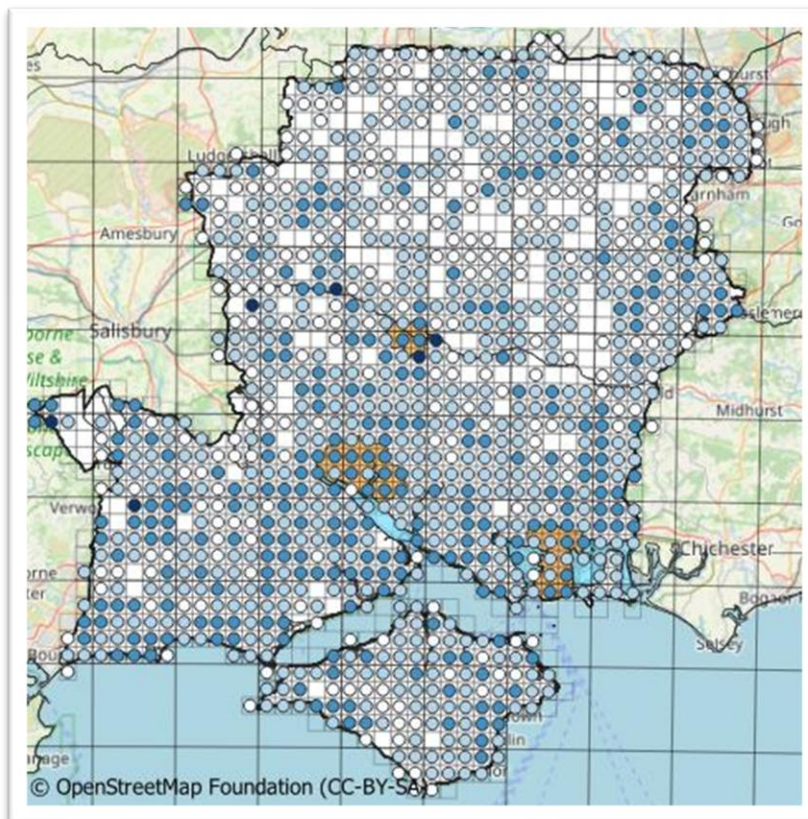


Small Copper. Kevin Freeborn

The year in numbers

Records	102,330
Individuals	340,242
Tetrads (populated)	1,033
Species	48
Recorders	3,810

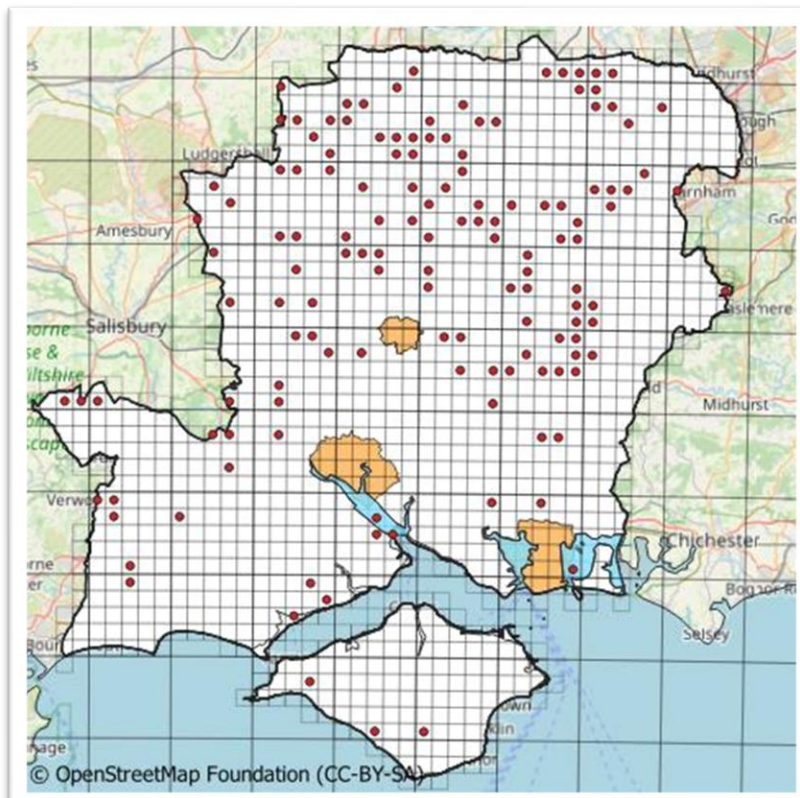
Tetrad Coverage



In the tetrad coverage chart, the darker the circle, the greater the recording effort, based on a logarithmic scale. This methodology illustrates the 'cold spots' that require more targeted effort in coming field seasons. If you would like more information regarding unrecorded tetrads then please contact the County Butterfly Recorder:

butterflyrecorder@hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk

Unrecorded Tetrads



The three urban areas depicted on the coverage maps are Winchester, Southampton and Portsmouth.

On the species maps featured later in the report, chalk grassland and heathland are marked for species that have a close association with those habitats.

Glossary of terms

Butterfly counts

Butterfly transects do not monitor population size, but because of a consistent methodology, they allow us to monitor change from one year to the next. Other counts sent in by recorders will be a function of the area of a site covered and the amount of time spent. In a quantitative way they give an idea of important sites but would only give an indication of population size.

Butterfly transect

A method of monitoring butterflies, involving walking a fixed route at a given site, once a week from the first week of April to the last week of September, counting the number of each species seen. For the purpose of comparison between other butterfly transects both locally and nationally, there are a fixed set of guidelines. These primarily relate to the time of day when and the weather conditions under which the transect is walked. For further details of transect methodology, see [Welcome to the UKBMS | UKBMS](#)

Individual

One adult individual butterfly. The number of individuals recorded is a measure of the abundance of a species.

Flight period

This is the period when the adult butterfly is on the wing.

Priority Status

Regional priority is shown as listed in the Butterfly Conservation South East England Regional Conservation Strategy 2015-2025, as adopted for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Six butterfly species have been identified as 'Top Priority'.

Record

Georeferenced location for one or more individuals (or eggs, larvae, larval webs and pupae) of a species of butterfly verified by the County Butterfly Recorder and logged in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Butterfly Database.

Recorder

A person submitting one or more butterfly records for the year.

Tetrad

A 2km-by-2km square division of the OS National Grid (the small grid shown in the maps on the previous page). Hampshire and the Isle of Wight have a total of 1,246 tetrads. The larger squares on the maps represent 10km by 10km (see previous page). Tetrad records provide an indication of butterfly distribution.

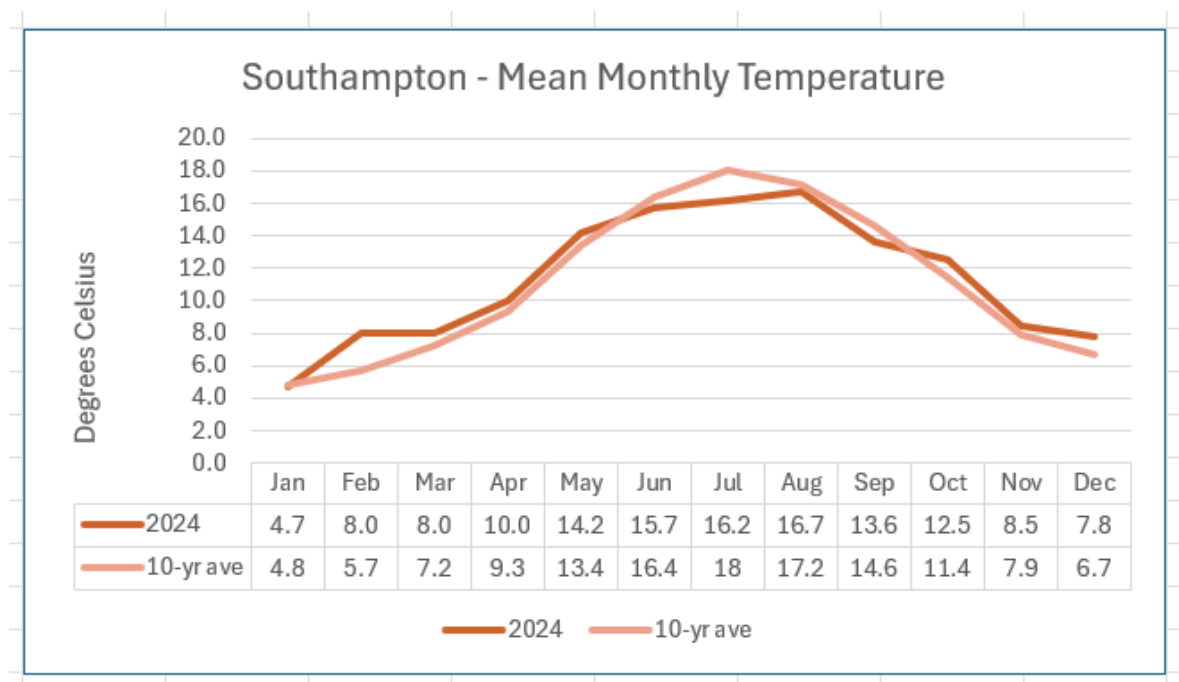
The terms **Record**, **Individual** and **Tetrad** are central to understanding the Trends tables presented on pp9 to 11.

Weather Summary 2024

The weather across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight in 2024 was notably mild, often wet and frequently dull. Overall, 2024 broadly reflected the UK's continuing trend of warmer than average and wetter than average years compared with the previous decade.

While the weather experienced across our region is locally variable, especially between inland Hampshire and the more exposed coastal areas of the Isle of Wight, for the purposes of this report, data for Southampton is used to provide a general indication of the conditions experienced in 2024.

Temperatures



Temperatures were generally above the long-term average (Southampton's mean monthly average for 2024 was 11.3°C compared to 11°C for the previous ten-year average). The Met Office recorded 2024 as the UK's fourth-warmest year in a series beginning in 1884, and every year in the UK's ten warmest has occurred since 2003.

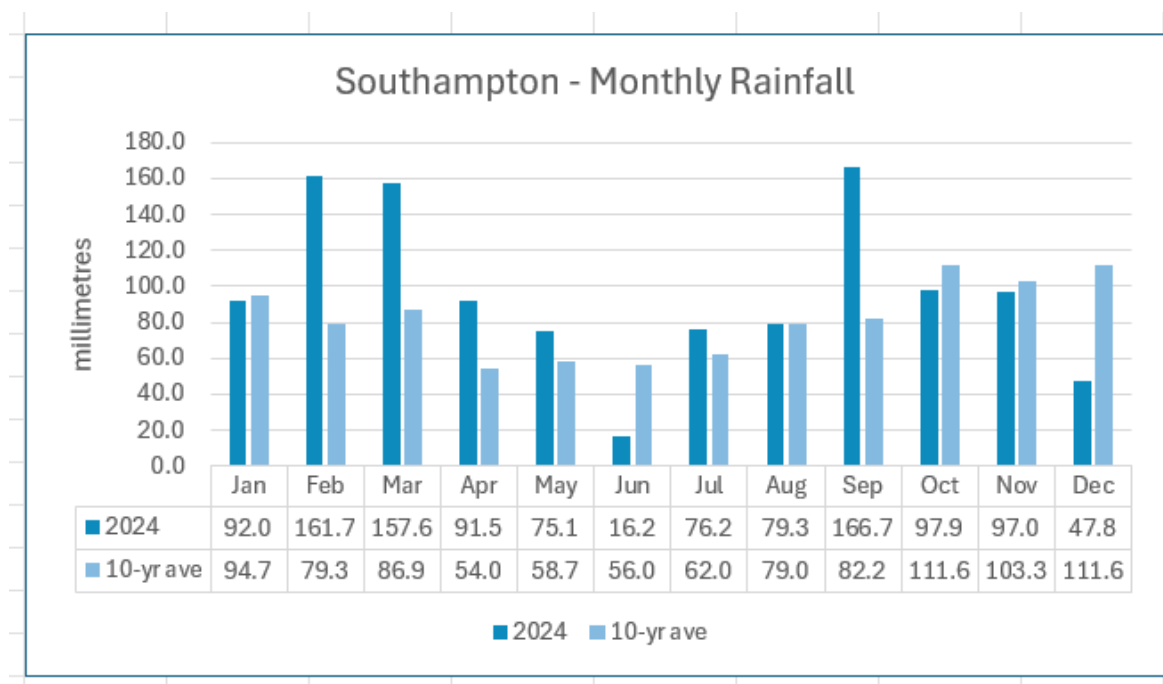
As illustrated in the graph above, winter was mild overall, with relatively few sustained cold spells. February was exceptionally mild and brought spring-like conditions, while spring itself remained changeable. More disappointing for us lepidopterists, summer temperatures were below average, with June and July distinctly on the cool side, accompanied by unsettled periods from May through to July, before warmer weather developed in August.

In Southampton, summer temperatures in excess of 27°C were recorded on seven days, with the hottest run of weather coming at the end of July and beginning of August, with a peak of 29°C – the hottest day of the year – recorded on 30 July. In December, there were no days at all where the temperature dropped to freezing or below.

Sunshine

The sun didn't have its hat on for substantial parts of the year. Cloudy and wet weather during winter and spring reduced sunshine totals and, despite occasional fine spells, the summer was disappointingly dull. The year's sunshine pattern contrasted with sunnier years in the preceding decade, particularly 2022.

Rainfall



Wet weather was one of the defining features of 2024. Saturated ground from the wet end to 2023 contributed to flooding. February, March and September were especially wet, and what seemed like an endless run of Atlantic weather systems brought cloud and rain throughout the year.

In 2024, Southampton's annual total rainfall was 1,159mm compared to 979mm for the previous ten-year average. June was actually the driest month of the year in Southampton and, along with December, the only two months to receive significantly less rain than the previous decade's average of annual totals.

Stormy weather

Several named storms affected southern England during 2024. Storm Henk brought strong winds and heavy rain in early January, followed by Storms Isha and Jocelyn later that month. Autumn and early winter brought further disruption, particularly from Storm Bert in November and Darragh in December.

Source for the Southampton data: <https://southamptonweather.co.uk/>

Trends – Records (comparison of 10-year average with 2023 and 2024)

	Average no. of records (2014-23)	2023	2024	2024 v average of 2014-2023	2023 v 2024
Adonis Blue	262	284	194	-25.87%	-31.69%
Brimstone	6,874	11,323	7,776	13.12%	-31.33%
Brown Argus	972	1,927	738	-24.05%	-61.70%
Brown Hairstreak	78	149	198	154.17%	32.89%
Chalk Hill Blue	773	1,019	695	-10.13%	-31.80%
Clouded Yellow	244	158	42	-82.82%	-73.42%
Comma	3,092	4,875	3,143	1.67%	-35.53%
Common Blue	4,138	5,189	3,097	-25.16%	-40.32%
Dark Green Fritillary	526	531	267	-49.22%	-49.72%
Dingy Skipper	397	364	319	-19.57%	-12.36%
Duke of Burgundy	133	122	130	-2.33%	6.56%
Essex Skipper	283	378	291	3.01%	-23.02%
Gatekeeper	7,676	13,112	10,760	40.17%	-17.94%
Glanville Fritillary	91	126	153	68.50%	21.43%
Grayling	415	483	430	3.56%	-10.97%
Green Hairstreak	261	233	300	15.16%	28.76%
Green-veined White	2,642	2,520	2,154	-18.46%	-14.52%
Grizzled Skipper	280	309	269	-3.86%	-12.94%
Holly Blue	2,870	7,168	1,700	-40.77%	-76.28%
Large Skipper	1,911	2,076	1,617	-15.37%	-22.11%
Large Tortoiseshell	4	11	1	-75.00%	-90.91%
Large White	7,248	11,700	7,342	1.30%	-37.25%
Long-tailed Blue	3	13	5	61.29%	-61.54%
Marbled White	3,046	3,497	3,277	7.58%	-6.29%
Marsh Fritillary	44	53	56	26.98%	5.66%
Meadow Brown	11,920	16,963	15,152	27.11%	-10.68%
Orange-tip	1,608	1,554	1,668	3.76%	7.34%
Painted Lady	1,159	1,343	721	-37.77%	-46.31%
Peacock	4,845	9,127	5,512	13.77%	-39.61%
Pearl-bordered Fritillary	199	212	108	-45.62%	-49.06%
Purple Emperor	60	59	39	-35.43%	-33.90%
Purple Hairstreak	147	183	200	36.33%	9.29%
Red Admiral	5,706	14,786	6,657	16.67%	-54.98%
Ringlet	3,424	3,199	3,379	-1.30%	5.63%
Silver-spotted Skipper	74	69	44	-40.70%	-36.23%
Silver-studded Blue	661	861	786	18.95%	-8.71%
Silver-washed Fritillary	1,662	1,716	886	-46.69%	-48.37%
Small Blue	367	465	302	-17.80%	-35.05%
Small Copper	1,492	2,807	1,234	-17.30%	-56.04%
Small Heath	2,580	3,231	3,088	19.69%	-4.43%
Small Skipper	2,028	1,715	1,109	-45.32%	-35.34%
Small Tortoiseshell	2,048	1,545	574	-71.98%	-62.85%
Small White	9,216	13,317	7,783	-15.55%	-41.56%
Speckled Wood	6,730	9,296	7,623	13.27%	-18.00%
Swallowtail	1	0	3	114.29%	n/a
Wall	142	197	122	-13.84%	-38.07%
White Admiral	411	531	334	-18.68%	-37.10%
White-letter Hairstreak	53	69	56	6.06%	-18.84%

Example: for Adonis Blue there were 90 fewer records received in 2024 compared to 2023, a drop of 31.69%

Trends – Individuals (comparison of 10-year average with 2023 and 2024)

	Average no. of individuals (2014-23)	2023	2024	2024 v average of 2014-2023	2023 v 2024
Adonis Blue	1,060	1,054	613	-42.17%	-41.84%
Brimstone	15,724	27,488	17,182	9.27%	-37.49%
Brown Argus	2,856	6,383	1,667	-41.63%	-73.88%
Brown Hairstreak	309	922	98	-68.32%	-89.37%
Chalk Hill Blue	18,560	15,155	8,746	-52.88%	-42.29%
Clouded Yellow	1,199	202	52	-95.66%	-74.26%
Comma	5,013	7,914	4,276	-14.70%	-45.97%
Common Blue	15,870	13,902	8,235	-48.11%	-40.76%
Dark Green Fritillary	2,038	1,707	607	-70.22%	-64.44%
Dingy Skipper	1,548	1,200	935	-39.61%	-22.08%
Duke of Burgundy	726	645	431	-40.62%	-33.18%
Essex Skipper	1,064	1,141	702	-34.00%	-38.48%
Gatekeeper	43,629	73,311	50,569	15.91%	-31.02%
Glanville Fritillary	1,155	724	679	-41.22%	-6.22%
Grayling	1,325	1,459	1,242	-6.24%	-14.87%
Green Hairstreak	545	431	512	-6.06%	18.79%
Green-veined White	5,248	4,342	3,313	-36.88%	-23.70%
Grizzled Skipper	821	930	609	-25.82%	-34.52%
Holly Blue	4,720	13,013	2,254	-52.24%	-82.68%
Large Skipper	6,538	7,350	4,078	-37.63%	-44.52%
Large Tortoiseshell	4	11	1	-77.27%	-90.91%
Large White	17,986	30,159	14,507	-19.34%	-51.90%
Long-tailed Blue	6	40	6	-1.64%	-85.00%
Marbled White	21,672	21,842	14,337	-33.85%	-34.36%
Marsh Fritillary	275	364	273	-0.76%	-25.00%
Meadow Brown	105,692	135,667	108,271	2.44%	-20.19%
Orange-tip	2,844	2,526	2,637	-7.26%	4.39%
Painted Lady	1,983	2,002	917	-53.75%	-54.20%
Peacock	11,634	25,435	10,830	-6.91%	-57.42%
Pearl-bordered Fritillary	864	912	324	-62.50%	-64.47%
Purple Emperor	134	170	81	-39.37%	-52.35%
Purple Hairstreak	444	445	497	11.94%	11.69%
Red Admiral	11,724	41,633	9,946	-15.16%	-76.11%
Ringlet	20,672	13,729	13,106	-36.60%	-4.54%
Silver-spotted Skipper	345	268	264	-23.50%	-1.49%
Silver-studded Blue	8,247	8,953	6,987	-15.28%	-21.96%
Silver-washed Fritillary	5,516	4,777	1,783	-67.67%	-62.68%
Small Blue	1,735	2,094	977	-43.69%	-53.34%
Small Copper	2,837	4,686	1,967	-30.67%	-58.02%
Small Heath	10,583	11,196	9,785	-7.54%	-12.60%
Small Skipper	8,948	8,110	3,882	-56.62%	-52.13%
Small Tortoiseshell	3,827	2,386	753	-80.33%	-68.44%
Small White	26,142	40,785	16,195	-38.05%	-60.29%
Speckled Wood	13,939	17,989	14,193	1.82%	-21.10%
Swallowtail	2	0	3	50.00%	n/a
Wall	263	352	199	-24.36%	-43.47%
White Admiral	866	1,191	573	-33.86%	-51.89%
White-letter Hairstreak	165	270	148	-10.30%	-45.19%

Example: for Adonis Blue, 613 individual butterflies were recorded in 2024, a drop in abundance of almost 42% compared to 2023 and 42% down on the average for the past ten years

Trends – Tetrads (populated) – a comparison of distribution

	Average no. of tetrads (2014-23)	2023	2024	2024 v average of 2014-2023	2024 v 2023
Adonis Blue	24	28	23	-5.35%	-17.86%
Brimstone	644	814	710	10.25%	-12.78%
Brown Argus	135	237	126	-6.46%	-46.84%
Brown Hairstreak	20	42	69	250.25%	64.29%
Chalk Hill Blue	50	61	43	-14.34%	-29.51%
Clouded Yellow	101	85	25	-75.17%	-70.59%
Comma	593	777	625	5.40%	-19.56%
Common Blue	508	696	455	-10.49%	-34.63%
Dark Green Fritillary	81	82	48	-40.45%	-41.46%
Dingy Skipper	61	66	59	-3.91%	-10.61%
Duke of Burgundy	21	29	16	-22.71%	-44.83%
Essex Skipper	98	135	105	6.71%	-22.22%
Gatekeeper	723	881	831	14.89%	-5.68%
Glanville Fritillary	18	18	21	18.64%	16.67%
Grayling	57	62	64	13.27%	3.23%
Green Hairstreak	83	88	95	15.15%	7.95%
Green-veined White	470	527	486	3.38%	-7.78%
Grizzled Skipper	56	58	48	-13.67%	-17.24%
Holly Blue	473	723	421	-10.92%	-41.77%
Large Skipper	270	314	280	3.78%	-10.83%
Large Tortoiseshell	4	10	1	-72.22%	-90.00%
Large White	694	881	788	13.54%	-10.56%
Long-tailed Blue	2	5	2	0.00%	-60.00%
Marbled White	424	510	465	9.70%	-8.82%
Marsh Fritillary	9	12	12	36.36%	0.00%
Meadow Brown	730	884	849	16.29%	-3.96%
Orange-tip	330	367	373	12.89%	1.63%
Painted Lady	393	482	337	-14.25%	-30.08%
Peacock	656	870	760	15.80%	-12.64%
Pearl-bordered Fritillary	13	10	9	-31.82%	-10.00%
Purple Emperor	30	27	20	-32.20%	-25.93%
Purple Hairstreak	58	77	67	14.92%	-12.99%
Red Admiral	712	953	800	12.42%	-16.05%
Ringlet	443	496	480	8.43%	-3.23%
Silver-spotted Skipper	11	15	12	8.11%	-20.00%
Silver-studded Blue	72	100	86	20.28%	-14.00%
Silver-washed Fritillary	203	227	160	-21.14%	-29.52%
Small Blue	47	67	45	-3.43%	-32.84%
Small Copper	364	586	430	18.23%	-26.62%
Small Heath	217	301	270	24.71%	-10.30%
Small Skipper	281	342	275	-1.96%	-19.59%
Small Tortoiseshell	486	506	307	-36.83%	-39.33%
Small White	745	890	791	6.22%	-11.12%
Speckled Wood	572	668	637	11.42%	-4.64%
Swallowtail	1	0	1	-16.67%	n/a
Wall	41	57	47	14.91%	-17.54%
White Admiral	97	116	104	7.66%	-10.34%
White-letter Hairstreak	30	29	24	-19.46%	-17.24%

Example: in 2024 Adonis Blue was recorded in 23 tetrads, five fewer than 2023. Compared to the 10-year Average, in 2024 the Adonis Blue distribution shrank by one tetrad, a drop of 5.35%

Commoner Species Summary

			Ranking by number of Tetrads					Rank change 2024 v 23 Up/down
	2024 Tetrads	2024 Records	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	
Meadow Brown	849	15,151	1	3	1	2	3	2
Gatekeeper	831	10,759	2	4	4	5	4	2
Red Admiral	800	6,657	3	1	6	4	5	-2
Small White	791	7,783	4	2	3	1	1	-2
Large White	788	7,342	5	5	2	3	2	0
Peacock	760	5,512	6	6	7	6	6	0
Brimstone	710	7,776	7	7	5	7	7	0
Speckled Wood	637	7,622	8	11	9	11	11	3
Comma	625	3,143	9	8	8	8	8	-1
Green-veined White	486	2,154	10	13	13	14	13	3
Ringlet	480	3,379	11	16	14	9	14	5
Marbled White	465	3,277	12	14	16	10	16	2
Common Blue	455	3,097	13	10	11	16	9	-3
Small Copper	430	1,234	14	12	17	13	15	-2
Holly Blue	421	1,700	15	9	12	17	10	-6
Orange-tip	373	1,668	16	18	18	18	17	2
Painted Lady	337	721	17	17	15	15	20	0
Small Tortoiseshell	307	574	18	15	10	12	12	-3
Large Skipper	280	1,617	19	20	20	21	18	1
Small Skipper	275	1,109	20	19	19	19	21	-1
Small Heath	270	3,088	21	21	21	20	19	0
Silver-washed Fritillary	160	886	22	23	22	22	22	1
Brown Argus	126	738	23	22	24	23	23	-1
Essex Skipper	105	291	24	24	25	25	27	0

Of 2024's 48 species recorded in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, the table above lists the 25 most common, ranked according to their tetrad coverage in descending order from the most widespread.

There are 1,246 tetrads (an area of 2km square, a division of the OS GB National Grid – see page 11).

Meadow Brown was both the most widely recorded species and had the highest number of records. In terms of its ranking by the number of tetrads in which Meadow Brown has been recorded over the past five years, the species has been consistently in the top three. Of the commoner species, Ringlet was the highest climber in 2024 compared to 2023, rising to a ranking of 11th, while Holly Blue dropped six places to 15th compared to a most successful year in 2023.

Scarcer Species Summary

			Ranking by number of Tetrads					Rank change 2024 v 23 Up/down
	2024 Tetrads	2024 Records	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	
White Admiral	104	334	25	25	27	26	28	0
Green Hairstreak	95	300	26	27	28	27	29	1
Silver-studded Blue	86	786	27	26	29	28	26	-1
Brown Hairstreak	69	198	28	37	39	38	41	9
Purple Hairstreak	67	200	29	30	32	30	30	1
Grayling	64	430	30	33	33	33	31	3
Dingy Skipper	59	319	31	32	31	29	32	1
Dark Green Fritillary	48	267	32	29	26	24	25	-3
Grizzled Skipper	48	269	33	35	35	32	34	2
Wall	47	122	34	36	34	36	35	2
Small Blue	45	302	35	31	36	35	36	-4
Chalk Hill Blue	43	695	36	34	30	34	33	-2
Clouded Yellow	25	42	37	28	23	31	24	-9
White-letter Hairstreak	24	56	38	39	41	37	37	1
Adonis Blue	23	194	39	40	38	39	38	1
Glanville Fritillary	21	153	40	42	40	40	40	2
Purple Emperor	20	39	41	41	37	41	39	0
Duke of Burgundy	16	130	42	38	42	42	42	-4
Marsh Fritillary	12	56	43	44	44	44	43	1
Silver-spotted Skipper	12	44	44	43	43	45	43	-1
Pearl-bordered Fritillary	9	108	45	45	45	43	45	0
Long-tailed Blue	2	5	46	47				1
Large Tortoiseshell	1	1	47	46				-1
Swallowtail	1	3	48					n/a

The year's 24 least common butterflies in Hampshire and Isle of Wight are shown in the Scarcer Species table above. 2024 was clearly not a 'Clouded Yellow summer', the species dropping nine ranking places but, conversely, the Brown Hairstreak has risen nine ranking positions. The recorder effort for Brown Hairstreak (the number of Records – see page 9) has increased and it has been found more widely than before, but while the number of Records submitted was up the number of individual butterflies seen was down.

Very sadly, for the second consecutive year, no Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary were recorded in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. First recorded in 2023, the Long-tailed Blue and Large Tortoiseshell were both noted again in 2024 and, after drawing a blank in 2023, Swallowtail had three records from one tetrad, showing an intermittent presence over the past decade, there now being seven years with records since 2014.

Of the resident breeding species, Marsh Fritillary, Silver-spotted Skipper and Pearl-bordered Fritillary are the most localized.

Earliest and Latest Sightings

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Earliest	Latest	Span (days)
Red Admiral													01-Jan	19-Dec	353
Brimstone													01-Jan	18-Dec	352
Peacock													13-Jan	29-Dec	351
Painted Lady													27-Jan	14-Dec	322
Comma													24-Jan	13-Nov	294
Small Tortoiseshell													01-Jan	17-Oct	290
Speckled Wood													15-Feb	26-Nov	285
Small White													03-Mar	31-Oct	243
Large White													20-Mar	11-Nov	237
Clouded Yellow													15-Feb	04-Oct	232
Holly Blue													17-Mar	24-Oct	222
Green-veined White													04-Apr	19-Oct	199
Small Copper													18-Apr	27-Oct	193
Wall													29-Apr	05-Nov	191
Common Blue													27-Apr	18-Oct	175
Brown Argus													05-May	04-Oct	153
Small Heath													05-May	04-Oct	153
Meadow Brown													21-May	17-Oct	150
Small Blue													07-May	21-Sep	138
Adonis Blue													08-May	20-Sep	136
Gatekeeper													11-Jun	28-Sep	110
Dingy Skipper													30-Apr	10-Aug	103
Silver-studded Blue													25-May	03-Sep	102
Large Skipper													20-May	27-Aug	100
Swallowtail													22-Jun	28-Sep	99
Small Skipper													12-Jun	15-Sep	96
White Admiral													16-Jun	16-Sep	93
Grayling													27-Jun	26-Sep	92
Orange-tip													25-Mar	23-Jun	91
Silver-washed Fritillary													12-Jun	04-Sep	85
Chalk Hill Blue													07-Jul	28-Sep	84
Marbled White													03-Jun	23-Aug	82
Ringlet													12-Jun	28-Aug	78
Dark Green Fritillary													17-Jun	01-Sep	77
Grizzled Skipper													17-Apr	29-Jun	74
Green Hairstreak													11-Apr	21-Jun	72
Purple Hairstreak													18-Jun	28-Aug	72
Essex Skipper													12-Jun	21-Aug	71
Duke of Burgundy													12-Apr	07-Jun	57
Brown Hairstreak													29-Jul	20-Sep	54
Glanville Fritillary													15-May	07-Jul	54
Purple Emperor													25-Jun	04-Aug	41
Marsh Fritillary													09-May	17-Jun	40
Long-tailed Blue													18-Sep	24-Oct	37
Silver-spotted Skipper													27-Jul	01-Sep	37
Pearl-bordered Fritillary													09-May	11-Jun	34
Large Tortoiseshell													12-Apr	12-Apr	1

Compared to 10 Years Ago (Earliest and Latest Sightings 2024 v 2014)

	2024			2014			Diff in Span (days)	Earliest date (-ve earlier/ +ve later)	Latest date (-ve earlier/ +ve later)
	Earliest	Latest	Span	Earliest	Latest	Span			
Adonis Blue	08-May	20-Sep	136	06-May	30-Sep	148	-12	2	-10
Brimstone	01-Jan	18-Dec	352	02-Jan	13-Dec	346	6	-1	5
Brown Argus	05-May	04-Oct	153	17-Apr	03-Oct	170	-17	18	1
Brown Hairstreak	29-Jul	20-Sep	54	26-Jul	12-Sep	49	5	3	8
Chalk Hill Blue	07-Jul	28-Sep	84	02-Jul	17-Sep	78	6	5	11
Clouded Yellow	15-Feb	04-Oct	232	29-Mar	09-Nov	226	6	-42	-36
Comma	24-Jan	13-Nov	294	26-Feb	09-Nov	257	37	-33	4
Common Blue	27-Apr	18-Oct	175	03-May	10-Oct	161	14	-6	8
Dark Green Fritillary	17-Jun	01-Sep	77	10-Jun	31-Aug	83	-6	7	1
Dingy Skipper	30-Apr	10-Aug	103	15-Apr	07-Aug	115	-12	15	3
Duke of Burgundy	12-Apr	07-Jun	57	09-Apr	13-Aug	127	-70	3	-67
Essex Skipper	12-Jun	21-Aug	71	12-Jun	02-Sep	83	-12	0	-12
Gatekeeper	11-Jun	28-Sep	110	10-Jun	25-Sep	108	2	1	3
Glanville Fritillary	15-May	07-Jul	54	29-Apr	01-Jul	64	-10	16	6
Grayling	27-Jun	26-Sep	92	02-Jul	17-Sep	78	14	-5	9
Green Hairstreak	11-Apr	21-Jun	72	09-Apr	25-Jun	78	-6	2	-4
Green-veined White	04-Apr	19-Oct	199	16-Mar	30-Sep	199	0	19	19
Grizzled Skipper	17-Apr	29-Jun	74	10-Apr	26-Jun	78	-4	7	3
Holly Blue	17-Mar	24-Oct	222	16-Mar	30-Nov	260	-38	1	-37
Large Skipper	20-May	27-Aug	100	14-May	31-Aug	110	-10	6	-4
Large Tortoiseshell	12-Apr	12-Apr	1						
Large White	20-Mar	11-Nov	237	30-Mar	31-Oct	216	21	-10	11
Long-tailed Blue	18-Sep	24-Oct	37						
Marbled White	03-Jun	23-Aug	82	09-Jun	18-Sep	102	-20	-6	-26
Marsh Fritillary	09-May	17-Jun	40	15-May	05-Jun	22	18	-6	12
Meadow Brown	21-May	17-Oct	150	21-May	10-Oct	143	7	0	7
Orange-tip	25-Mar	23-Jun	91	16-Mar	29-Jun	106	-15	9	-6
Painted Lady	27-Jan	14-Dec	322	01-Mar	10-Dec	285	37	-33	4
Peacock	13-Jan	29-Dec	351	02-Jan	29-Nov	332	19	11	30
Pearl-bordered Fritillary	09-May	11-Jun	34	27-Apr	20-Jun	55	-21	12	-9
Purple Emperor	25-Jun	04-Aug	41	21-Jun	08-Aug	49	-8	4	-4
Purple Hairstreak	18-Jun	28-Aug	72	24-Jun	19-Sep	88	-16	-6	-22
Red Admiral	01-Jan	19-Dec	353	02-Jan	30-Dec	363	-10	-1	-11
Ringlet	12-Jun	28-Aug	78	09-Jun	09-Sep	93	-15	3	-12
Silver-spotted Skipper	27-Jul	01-Sep	37	17-Jul	22-Sep	68	-31	10	-21
Silver-studded Blue	25-May	03-Sep	102	06-Jun	14-Aug	70	32	-12	20
Silver-washed Fritillary	12-Jun	04-Sep	85	12-Jun	08-Sep	89	-4	0	-4
Small Blue	07-May	21-Sep	138	24-Apr	09-Sep	139	-1	13	12
Small Copper	18-Apr	27-Oct	193	03-Apr	31-Oct	212	-19	15	-4
Small Heath	05-May	04-Oct	153	29-Apr	03-Oct	158	-5	6	1
Small Skipper	12-Jun	15-Sep	96	05-Jun	10-Sep	98	-2	7	5
Small Tortoiseshell	01-Jan	17-Oct	290	10-Jan	24-Nov	319	-29	-9	-38
Small White	03-Mar	31-Oct	243	10-Feb	05-Nov	269	-26	21	-5
Speckled Wood	15-Feb	26-Nov	285	11-Jan	01-Nov	295	-10	35	25
Swallowtail	22-Jun	28-Sep	99						
Wall	29-Apr	05-Nov	191	16-Apr	05-Oct	173	18	13	31
White Admiral	16-Jun	16-Sep	93	10-Jun	25-Sep	108	-15	6	-9

In 2014, Hampshire and Isle of Wight recorded Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary; this species was not recorded in 2024 but additional species on this year's list are Large Tortoiseshell, Long-tailed Blue and Swallowtail.

Species reports 2024



Silver-studded Blue. *Kevin Freeborn*

Dingy Skipper

Erynnis tages

Checklist Number 57.001

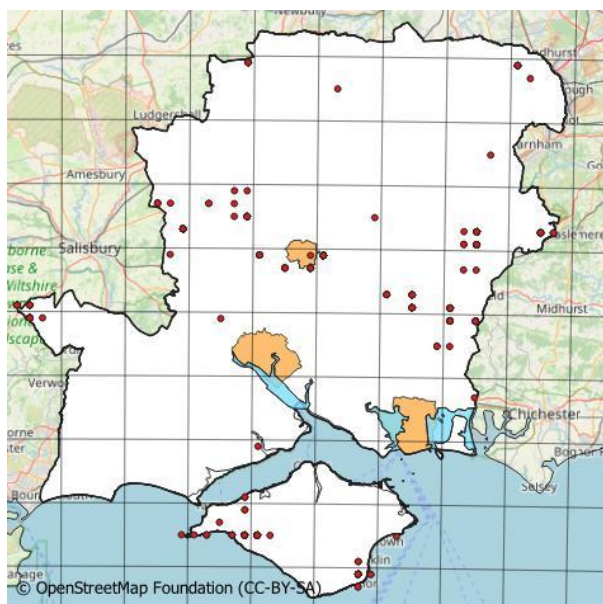
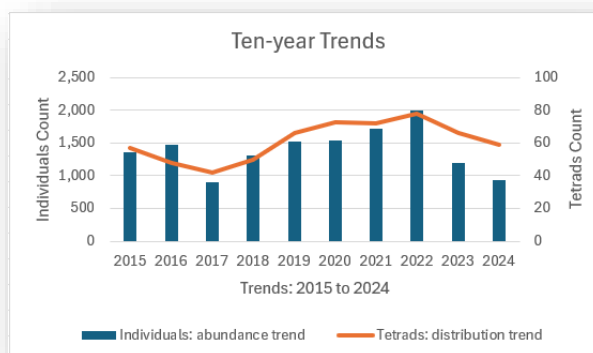
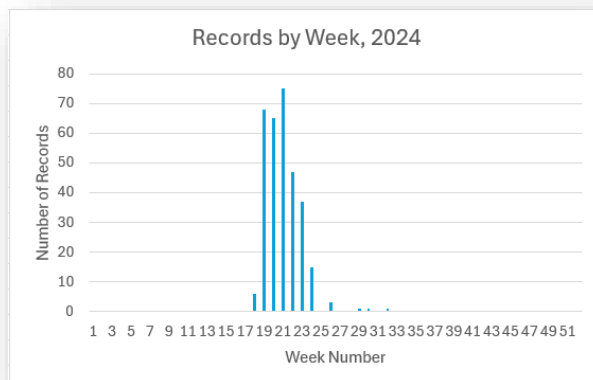
Priority status HIGH



Kevin Freeborn

The year in numbers

Records	319	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	935	
Tetrads (populated)	59	
Recorders	93	
Earliest sighting	30 Apr	12/04/2011
Ashford Hangers		
Latest sighting	10 Aug	03/09/1993
Tennyson Down		



Given the less than helpful spring conditions, it seems that Dingy Skipper didn't fair too badly in 2024 compared to last year – abundance 22% down (1,200 in 2023 v 935 in 2024) and distribution 10% down (66 populated tetrads in 2023 v 59 in 2024), but, in fact, it was the second-worst of the past ten years for the species. The first record was on 30 April, there was a peak tally of 50 individuals on 19 May at Martin Down, and evidence of a partial second brood with three singletons recorded in weeks 29, 30 and 32 (at the end of July and beginning of August), with the last of these occurring at Tennyson Down on 10 August.

Link to the Dingy Skipper online report:

[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - Erynnis tages](#)

Grizzled Skipper

Pyrgus malvae

Checklist Number 57.002

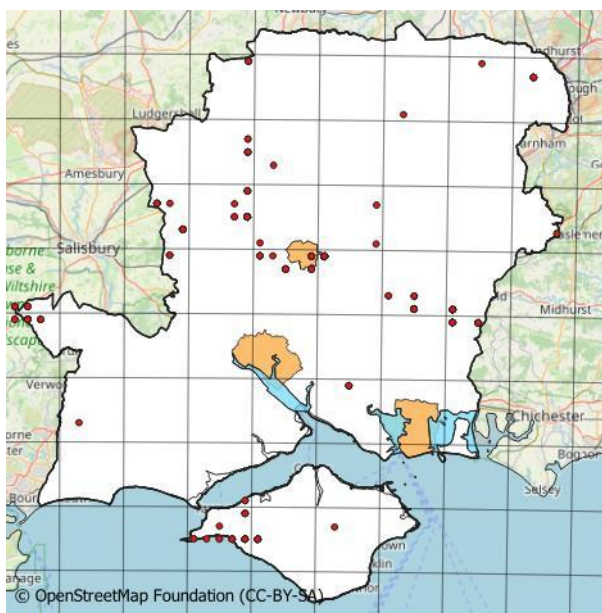
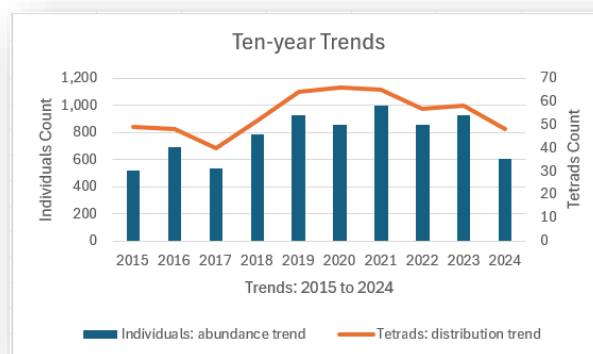
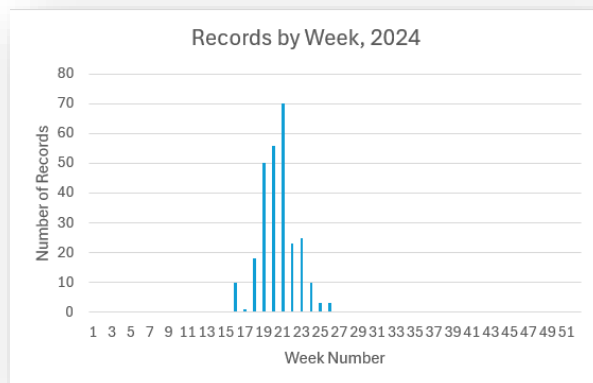
Priority status HIGH



Kevin Freeborn

The year in numbers

Records	269	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	609	
Tetrads (populated)	48	
Recorders	89	
Earliest sighting	17 Apr	02/04/2009
The Mountain		
Latest sighting	29 Jun	07/09/2004
Old Winchester Hill		



In terms of abundance and distribution, Grizzled Skipper recorded its worst year since 2017. Compared to 2023, the number of individuals was 34% down (930 v 609), while the number of populated tetrads dropped 17% from 58 in 2023 to 48 in 2024. Although it has to be said, based on the anecdotal observations posted by several recorders, the fortunes of the species were feared worse than the records have actually proven. At Butser Hill on 30 April, the poor spring weather had one observer stating “Grizzled Skippers were in short supply and the first couple I saw were whisked away on the breeze...”. On the Isle of Wight on 6 June, only the “odd Grizzled Skipper was seen”.

Link to the Grizzled Skipper online report:
[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - *Pyrgus malvae*](#)

Silver-spotted Skipper

Hesperia comma

Checklist Number 57.008

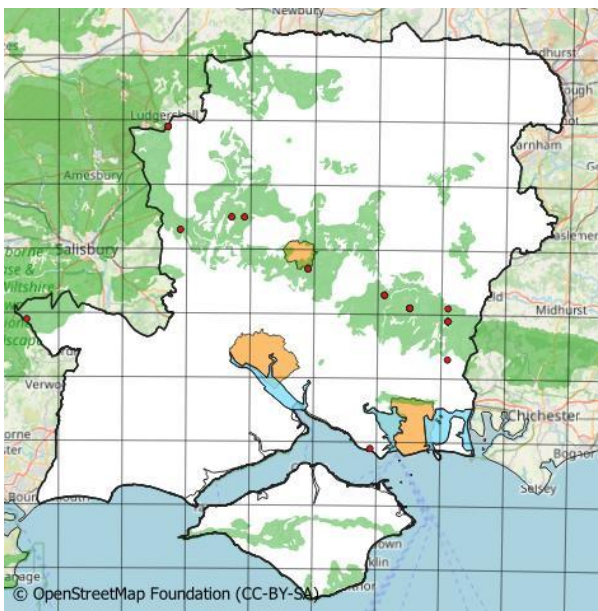
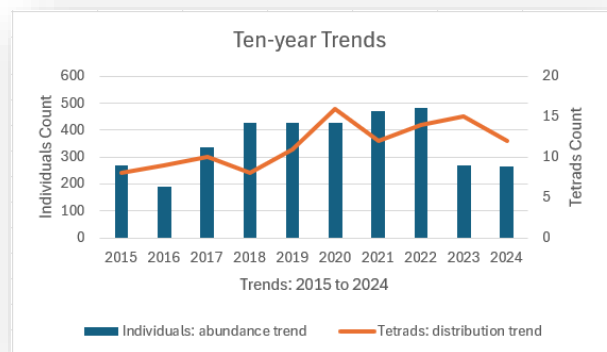
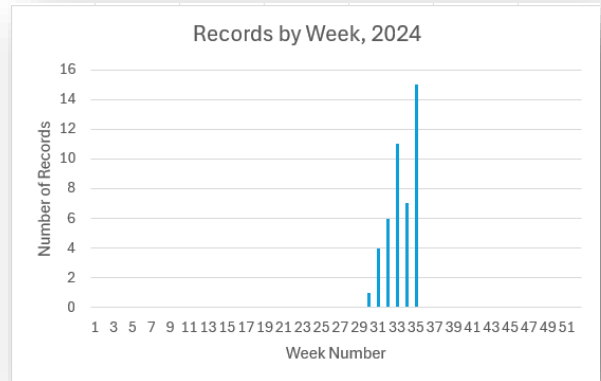
Priority status HIGH



Kevin Freeborn

The year in numbers

Records	44	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	264	
Tetrads (populated)	12	
Recorders	30	11/07/2018
Earliest sighting	27 Jul	11/07/2018
Perham Down		
Latest sighting	01 Sep	11/10/1986
Old Winchester Hill		



In 2024, the count of individuals of this rare jewel of a butterfly just about matched those of the previous year, although in terms of distribution, the number of populated tetrads shrank from 15 in 2023 to 12. This shows the emphasis on the core sites for the survival of the species across the chalk downs of Hampshire. The number of records built steadily over its short five-week flight period from the first sighting at Perham Down on 27 July but came to an abrupt, climactic halt at the end of the last week in August. At Old Winchester Hill, one recorder spent “4 hours walking up and down the slopes” and counted three individuals, one male and two females.

Link to the Silver-spotted Skipper online report:

[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - *Hesperia comma*](#)

Wall

Lasiommata megera

Checklist Number 59.002

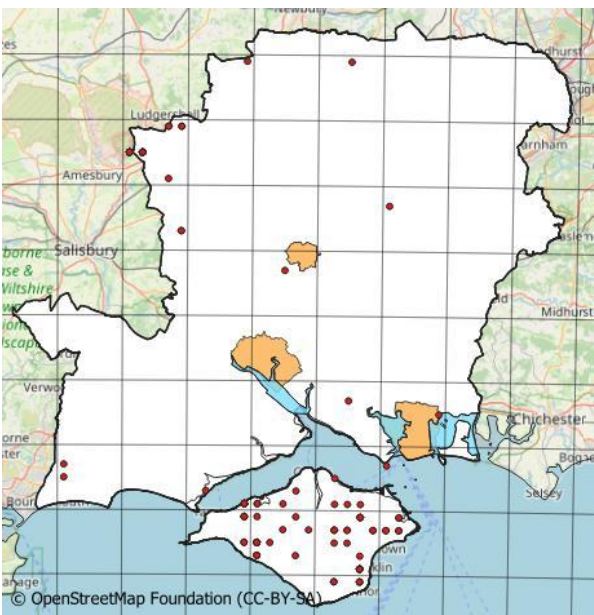
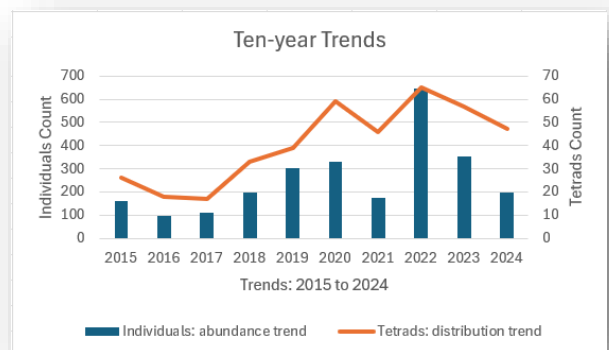
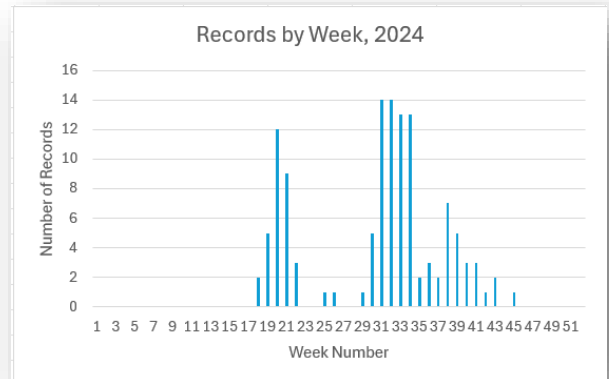
Priority status TOP



Kevin Freeborn

The year in numbers

Records	122	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	199	
Tetrads (populated)	47	
Recorders	52	
Earliest sighting	29 Apr	14/04/2002
Arreton Down		
Latest sighting	05 Nov	10/11/2020
Upper Hyde		



Link to the Wall online report:

[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - Lasiommata megera](#)

In terms of the number of individuals counted, 2024 was a poor year for Wall, the 199 total being 43% down on the 352 adults recorded in 2023, which in turn was well down on the 25-year trend peak count of 645 in 2022. As far as distribution was concerned, the 2024 populated tetrad count was 47, a drop of 17% on 2023, and a drop of 28% on the ten-year trend high point for Wall, being most widely distributed in 2022. The first record of the year was from the Isle of Wight at the end of April. The stronger numbers of the second brood began to emerge in mid-July, with a peak count of eight at Shipton Bellinger on 11 August. The season drifted on for another 12 weeks, where the last individual was recorded at Upper Hyde on 5 November.

Grayling

Hipparchia semele

Checklist Number 59.013

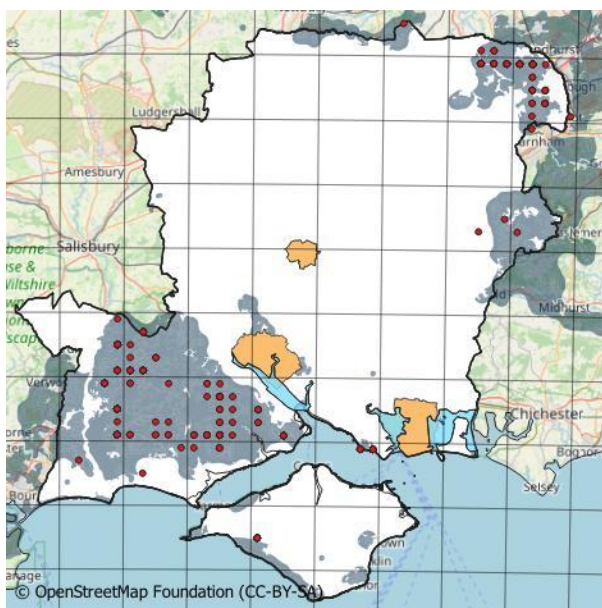
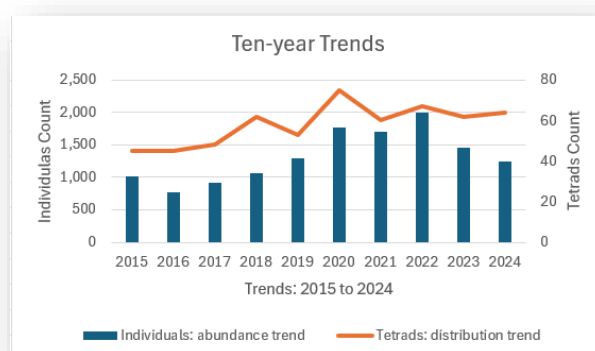
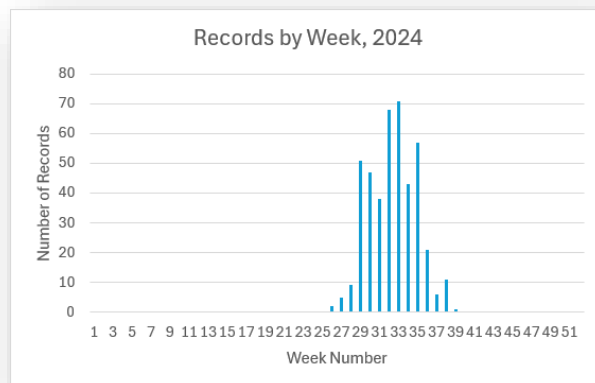
Priority status HIGH



Pete Eeles

The year in numbers

Records	430	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	1,242	
Tetrads (populated)	64	
Recorders	111	
Earliest sighting	27 Jun	03/06/2002
Mottistone Down		
Latest sighting	26 Sep	15/10/2022
Hazeley Heath		



Link to the Grayling online report:

[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - *Hipparchia semele*](#)

Against the general despondency of 2024, Grayling stands out as suffering only a modest decline of 14% in abundance and achieving a modest increase of 3% (equivalent to two tetrads) in its distribution. Number of records in 2024 totalled 430, which was the lowest number since 2017. One possible explanation for this relatively reasonable performance is that Grayling is a later emerging species, and the weather did perk up a bit later in the summer. Consequently, it may have had better flight conditions than others and it is notable that the peak of records related to the period from late July to late August. The first record was of a singleton at Mottistone Down on 27 June and the last of a single individual at Hazeley Heath on 26 September, closely mirroring its flight period in 2023.

Pearl-bordered Fritillary

Boloria euphrosyne

Checklist Number 59.014

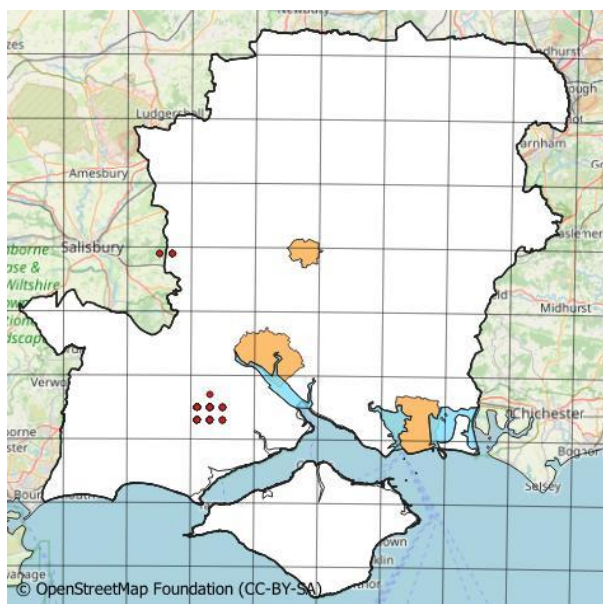
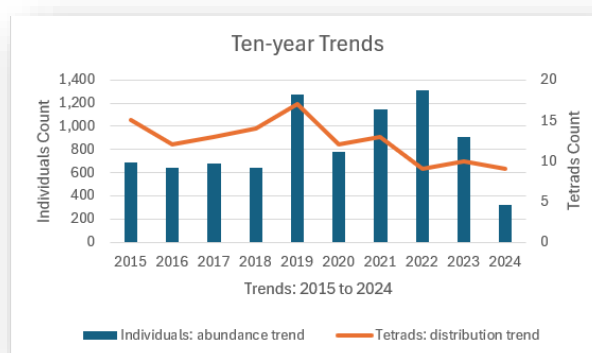
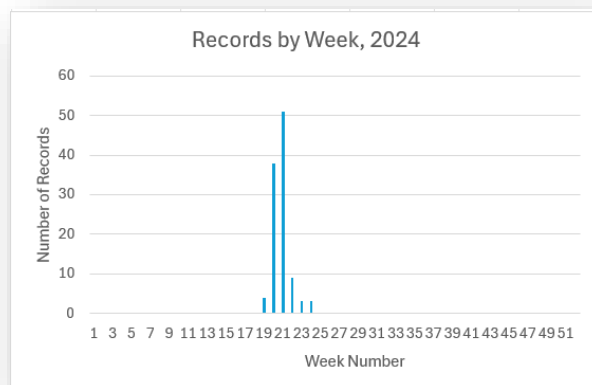
Priority status TOP



Kevin Freeborn

The year in numbers

Records	108	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	324	
Tetrads (populated)	9	
Recorders	35	
Earliest sighting	09 May	17/04/2003
Bentley Woods		
Latest sighting	11 Jun	09/07/1950
Parkhill Inclosure		



Link to the Pearl-bordered Frit. online report:

[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - Boloria euphrosyne](#)

2024 was a year that did nothing to allay the concern for this species. It was a much poorer year than 2023, down 64% in abundance, with only 324 individuals recorded against 912 in 2023. The number of populated tetrads dropped from 10 in 2023 to nine. Overall, Pearl-bordered had the worst year in the past decade and one of the worst years this century. On 15 May (a rare, good weather day in spring '24) on a New Forest field trip, Ashley Whitlock commented that “sightings of fresh Pearl-bordered Fritillary were a joy to watch as they battled for territories...over thirty were seen”. On 25 May at Standing Hat, another observer noted “[weather] today was perfect” with a count “well into double figures” and seen “in virtually all of the rides”.

Dark Green Fritillary

Speyeria aglaja

Checklist Number 59.019

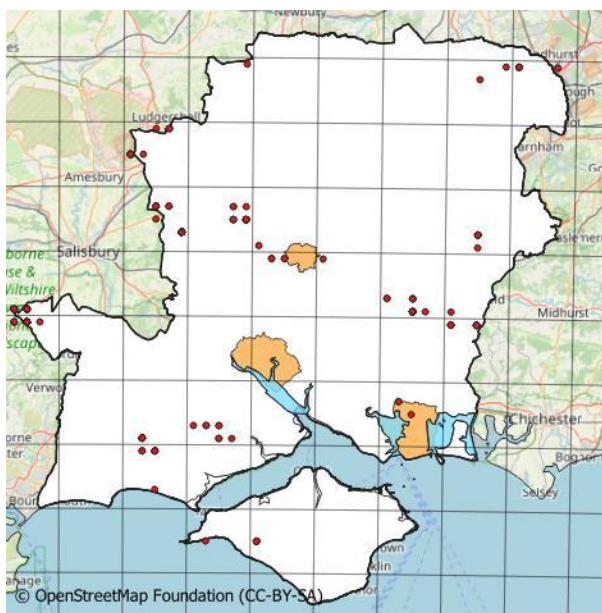
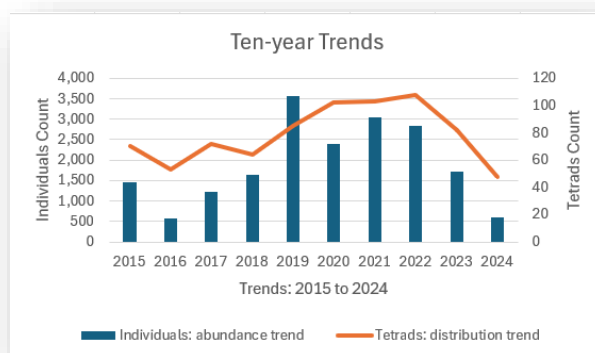
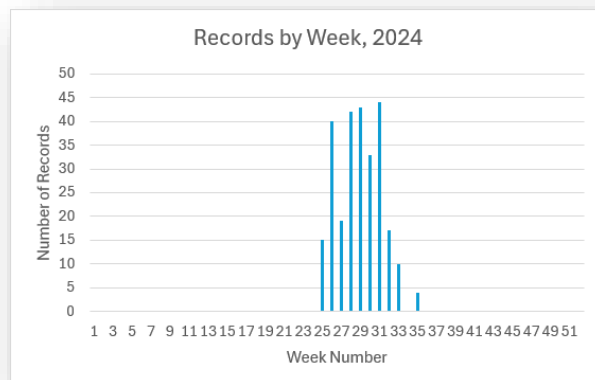
Priority status HIGH



Kevin Freeborn

The year in numbers

Records	267	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	607	
Tetrads (populated)	48	
Recorders	67	
Earliest sighting	17 Jun	28/05/2010
Barton Common		28/05/2020
Latest sighting	01 Sep	08/09/2012
Old Winchester Hill		08/09/2021



Link to the Dark Green Fritillary online report:

[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - Speyeria aglaja](#)

Generally speaking, the Dark Green Fritillary eluded recorders' attempts to track it down – as Ashley Whitlock posted on 17 July on a visit to Abbotstone Down. The first record wasn't logged until 17 June at Barton Common. The site with the biggest single tally was Broughton Down, with 17 individuals on 14 July. Overall abundance was 64% down on the previous year and it was the lowest yearly count since 2016. The number of populated tetrads declined from 82 in 2023 to 42 in 2024, which is the fewest since 2009. One observer, writing up his butterfly records on 9 July, when the weather was "relentless rain, 16°C – a typical 2024 summer's day" was pleased to note the three Dark Green Fritillaries he'd seen on 3 July at Old Winchester Hill.

White Admiral

Limenitis camilla

Checklist Number 59.021

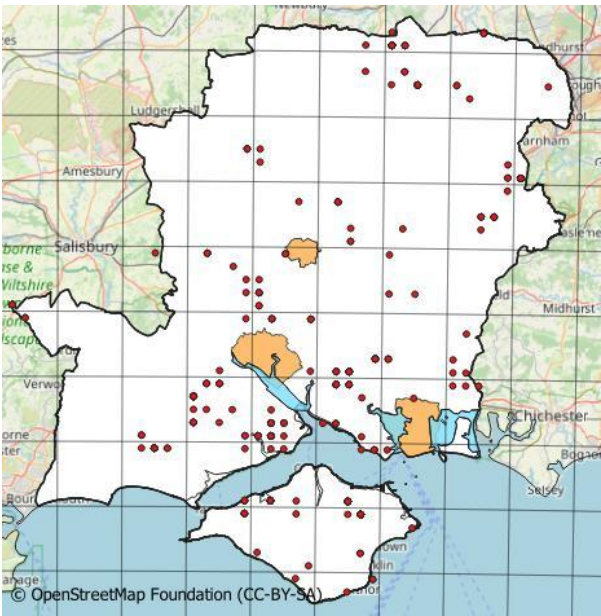
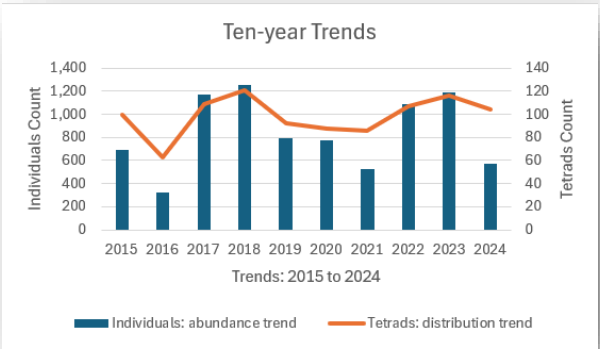
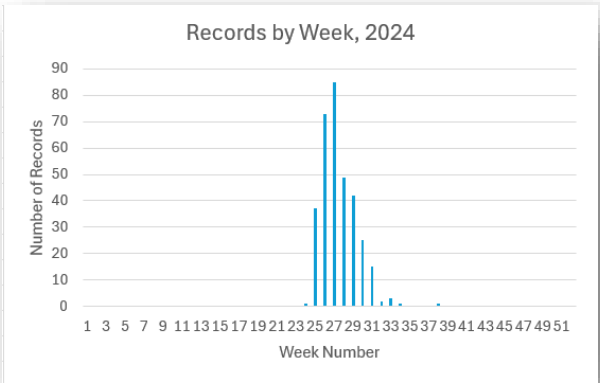
Priority status MEDIUM



Kevin Freeborn

The year in numbers

Records	334	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	573	
Tetrads (populated)	104	
Recorders	118	Late May 1893 04/10/2003
Earliest sighting	16 Jun	
Needs Ore		
Latest sighting	16 Sep	
Basing Wood		



Link to the White Admiral online report:
[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - Limenitis camilla](#)

The roller-coaster ten-year trends of this woodland specialist saw 2024 heading downwards, with only half the number of individuals recorded compared to the previous year. The distribution trend for populated tetrads was down 10% to 104, compared to 116 in 2023. Appearing first at Needs Ore Point on Hampshire's Solent shore on 16 June, the peak individuals count came ten days later in Straights Inclosure with a tally of 30, while the highest number of records was submitted in the first week of July. Unusually, the last record, in Basing Wood on 16 September (in week 38), came after a gap of three weeks without any records.

Purple Emperor

Apatura iris

Checklist Number 59.022

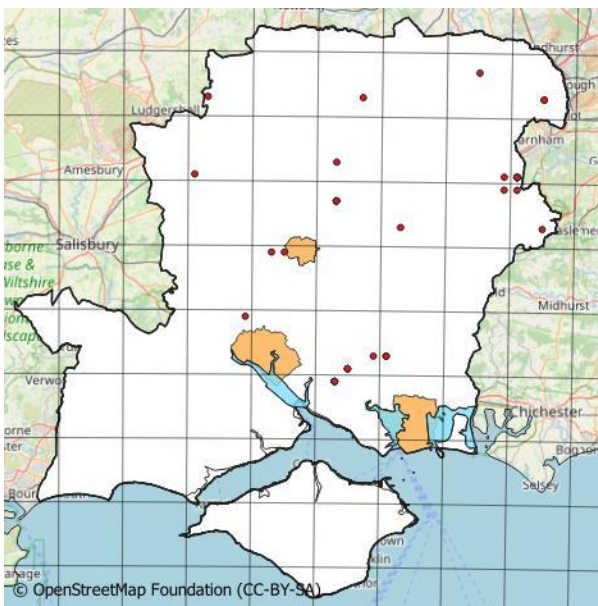
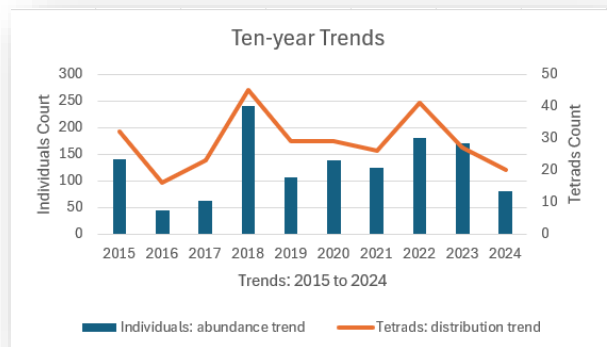
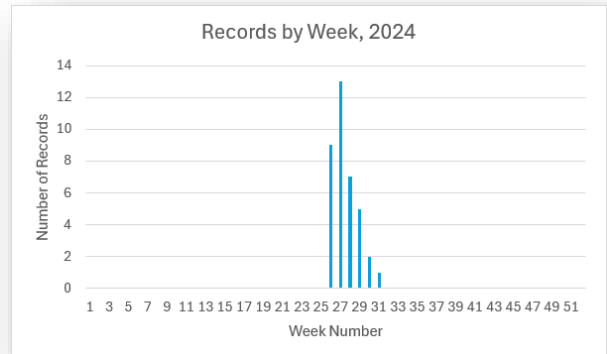
Priority status HIGH



Kevin Freeborn

The year in numbers

Records	39	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	81	
Tetrads (populated)	20	
Recorders	25	
Earliest sighting	25 Jun	17/06/2017
Abbotts Wood		
Latest sighting	04 Aug	23/08/2013
Botley Wood		



Link to the Purple Emperor online report:
[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - Apatura iris](#)

Although a poor year for Purple Emperor, in the past decade there have been two poorer seasons, just to give 2024 some context. Regarding abundance, 2024 recorded less than half the number of individuals (only 81 compared to 2023's 170), and there was a drop of 25% in the number of populated tetrads from 27 in 2023 down to 20. After several fruitless visits to Alice Holt Forest, on 25 June, Mark Tutton noted that "the woods have been bereft of most butterfly species over the last few days, but today it started to change" and his patient quest to see the Emperor was rewarded with "a couple of fleeting glimpses high over an oak" and later, "a pristine male quartered the ride at waist height, giving numerous flashes of purple".

Species summary by Ashley Whitlock

The Purple Emperor season in 2024 was very poor. The more or less continuous run of Atlantic low-pressure systems kept the weather unfavourable for the Purple Emperor.

It appeared in Hampshire on the 24th of June during a rare heatwave and it seemed to be a good season in store. However, it wasn't to be that there were very few sightings at most sites, the hard core of the sightings came from the Alice Holt Forest Complex.

Some good sightings also came from places like, Basing Wood, Micheldever Wood, Southleigh Forest, Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Martin Down and Kitts Grave, to name a few.

The main bulk of the flying season was 5–10 July. The best count at Alice Holt Forest was about nine individuals in one vista, when there was very little wind and it was quite warm. There were extensive periods of rainfall throughout its flight period which caused the most damage. The sawfly, particularly 'Caprea', the type most favoured by the females, seemed to be infested with 'Willow Rust' in 2024. The curse of St Swithun knocked out many males, and fears that there wasn't much egg-laying is a concern for the future for the species.

Emperor emergence at Alice Holt Forest, by Mark Tutton

[Mark has been searching for pupae by UV torchlight for a few years now and his dedicated nighttime forays along the sawfly-lined rides of Alice Holt finally came up trumps – one of the few 'good news' stories of 2024!]

Mark writes, "After finding two pupae by UV torchlight on 17th June, I have been checking them most days to monitor their progress. Over the past four years I have found ten or so and, to date, all have been predated, and so I wasn't very hopeful. Sure enough, one disappeared in the night after five days just leaving the cremaster [pupa anchorage point].

However, the other pupa survived and 15 days after noting its location, it was darkening significantly. Yesterday, I arrived early and checked through binoculars (it was 25ft up) and the wing spots were clearly showing, and so emergence was imminent. However, nothing happened until I was about to leave at 17:30 and, sure enough, she had emerged and was hanging off the pupal case pumping up her wings. Once the wings were inflated, I left her at 18:30 and wished her well.



Left to right: pupa with wing spots; about to burst; emergence. *Mark Tutton*

Marsh Fritillary

Euphydryas aurinia

Checklist Number 59.033

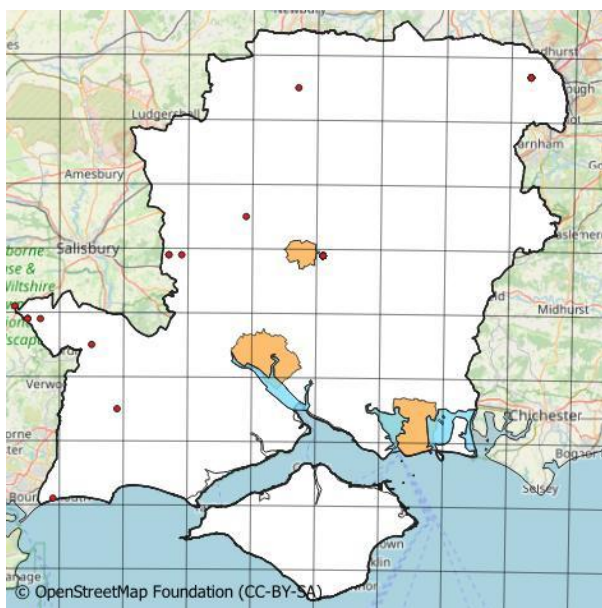
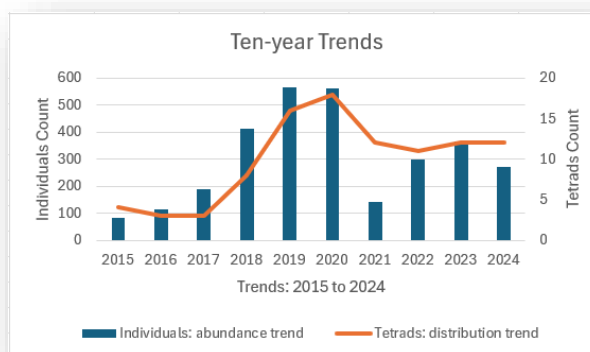
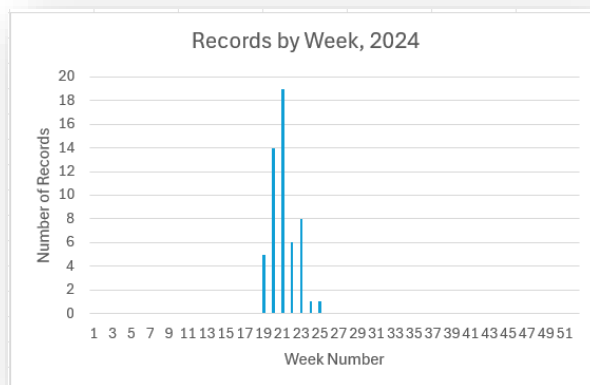
Priority status TOP



Kevin Freeborn

The year in numbers

Records	56	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	273	
Tetrads (populated)	12	
Recorders	28	
Earliest sighting	09 May	27/04/2007
Magdalen Hill Down		
Latest sighting	17 Jun	26/06/2023
Martin Down		



Link to the Marsh Fritillary online report:
[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - Euphydryas aurinia](#)

On 20 May, when the participants in the Martin Down field trip stood in the car park shivering in coats and hats, with the walk leader, Ashley Whitlock, “hoping for a miracle”, and wondering if any butterflies would be seen at all, the sun did eventually break through in late morning, so that by early afternoon butterfly activity “exploded” and “plenty” of Marsh Fritillary were seen. It was a short 5-week season (bar singletons counted in weeks 24 and 25), with a peak count of 40 at Magdalen Hill down on 12 May, only three days after emergence there on the 9th. Since the 2021 season the number of populated tetrads has remained the same, although compared to 2023 abundance was 25% down.

Glanville Fritillary

Melitaea cinxia

Checklist Number 59.034

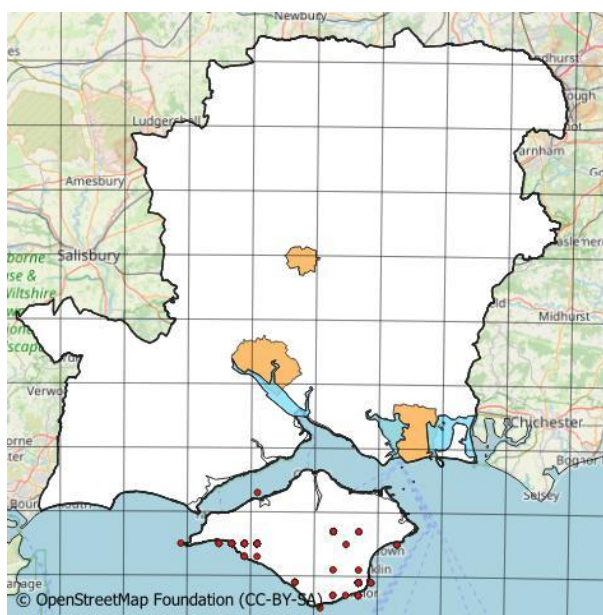
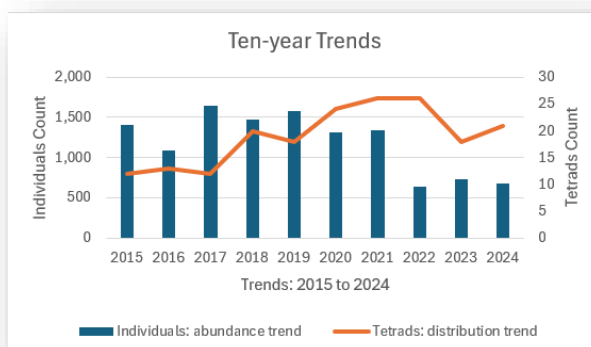
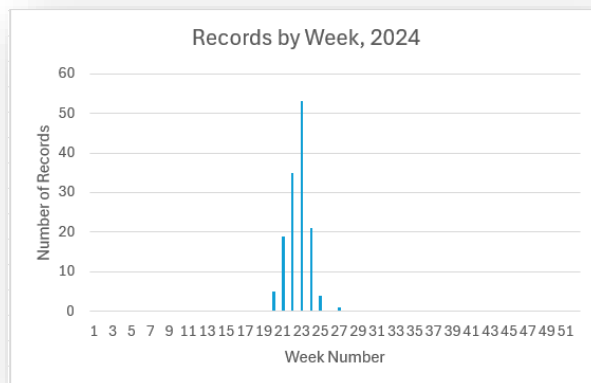
Priority status TOP



Kevin Freeborn

The year in numbers

Records	153	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	679	
Tetrads (populated)	21	
Recorders	45	
Earliest sighting	15 May	
Mottistone Down		08/04/2007
Latest sighting	07 Jul	09/07/2010
Mottistone Down		



Link to the Glanville Fritillary online report:

[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - Melitaea cinxia](#)

In the context of a pretty dismal butterfly year, the Glanville Fritillary had a comparatively stable season in 2024. It was only slightly down in terms of abundance, with just 6% fewer individuals recorded, and its number of populated tetrads rose from 18 in 2023 to 21 – all on the Isle of Wight. On a visit to The Island on 6 June, in good weather, Ashley Whitlock found the “Glanville Fritillaries were very active” and that although “most of the male Glanvilles were faded, there were a few still in good order and we found several females as well which were newly hatched”. The highest count was 50 at Compton Chine on 6 June in a season that was later to get going than in 2023 and would have only lasted six weeks had it not been for the singleton at Mottistone Down on 7 July.

Duke of Burgundy

Hamearis lucina

Checklist Number 60.001

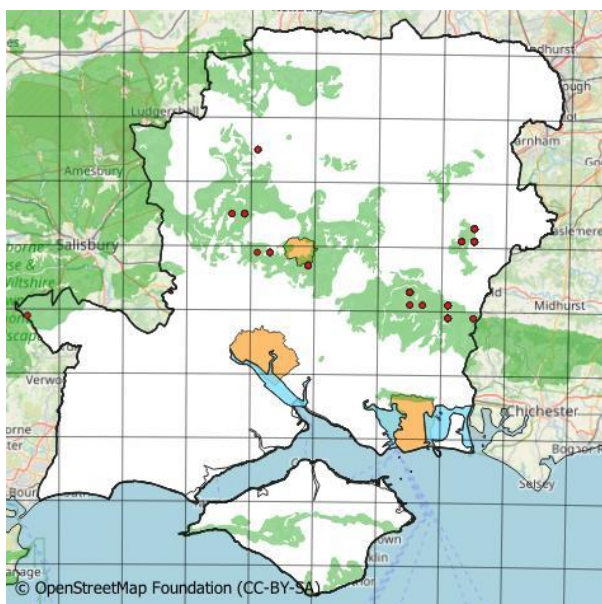
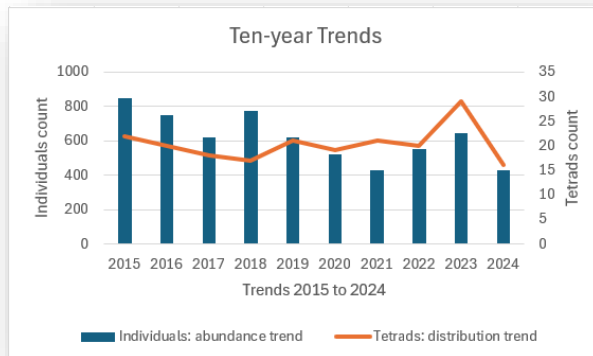
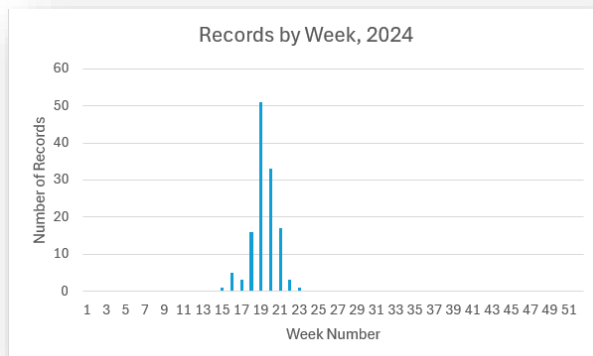
Priority status TOP



Ashley Whitlock

The year in numbers

Records	130	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	431	
Tetrads (populated)	16	
Recorders	41	
Earliest sighting	12 Apr	01/04/2019
Noar Hill		
Latest sighting	07 Jun	02/10/2011
Martin Down		



Link to the Duke of Burgundy online report:

[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - Hamearis lucina](#)

Compared to 2023, considered a poor year for the Duke of Burgundy, the total count of individuals was 33% down, while the number of recorded tetrads was 44% down. Observations reflect the thwarted sense of anticipation of Duke sightings. At Noar Hill on 20 April, for example, it was noted that “it was rather cool to start with and a very keen wind picked up...and it was 11:20, with the temperature at a lofty 11°C, when two males appeared”. At the same site on 29 April, another observer said, “At last! – a day of more spring-like conditions, with temperatures peaking at around 16°C, but often suppressed by blustery winds”, and only six individuals were noted.

Species summary by Ashley Whitlock

The Duke of Burgundy emerged in Hampshire on 12 April but, as always, the weather was the key factor throughout its flight season. While the wind was particularly cold for April, there was the first high-pressure system over the country since late January 2024.

May seemed to have a persistent cool wind blowing in and around a run of low-pressure systems giving the overall temperature a cool damp feel.

The butterfly was seen in the Meon Valley in small numbers, and it was observed in the Queen Elizabeth Country Park again after many years. Deacon Hill still produced a couple of sightings along with Westbury Park despite a construction site next to its breeding area.

Woodland specimens were observed west of Winchester and on Pitt Down and in the Stockbridge area, but observations from the northern part of the county were sparse.

The Duke of Burgundy typically reaches its peak season during the third week of May at most sites, especially in the Meon Valley. In 2024, the peak count, in excess of 50 individuals, was recorded in the second week of May.

The butterfly just about made it into June, and a fresh female was noted very late at Butser Hill on 29 May.

The Duke of Burgundy has now had consecutively two poor years.



In search of the Duke. *Ashley Whitlock*

Brown Hairstreak

Thecla betulae

Checklist Number 61.003

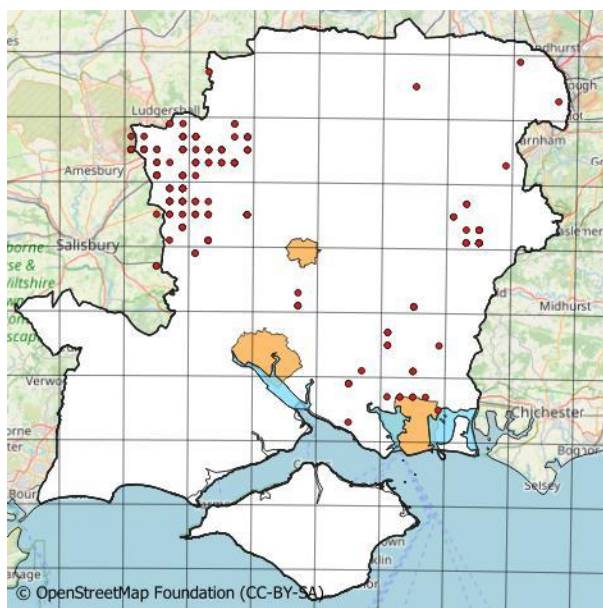
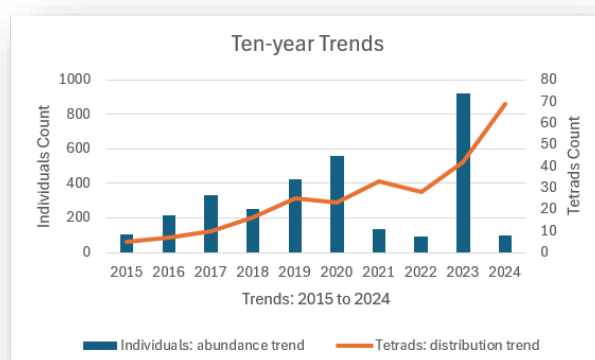
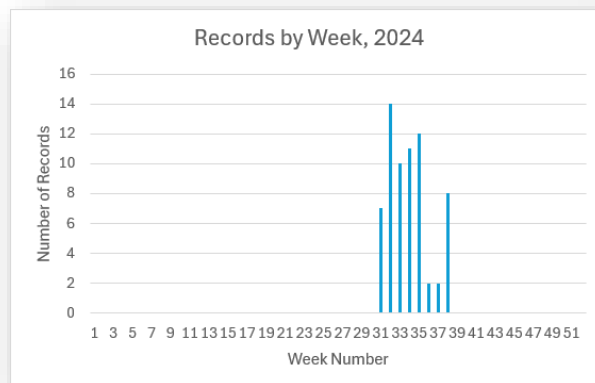
Priority status HIGH



Ashley Whitlock

The year in numbers

Records	198	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	98	
Tetrads (populated)	69	
Recorders	50	
Earliest sighting	29 Jul	18/07/2017
Portsdown Hill		18/07/2018
Latest sighting	20 Sep	16/10/1986
Noar Hill		



Link to the Brown Hairstreak online report:
[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - Thecla betulae](#)

Going against the grain of bad news for butterflies in 2024, Brown Hairstreak somehow managed to increase the number of tetrads it was recorded in from 42 in 2023 to 69 in 2024 – an increase of 64%. This was despite the number of individuals falling by 89% from 922 to only 98 – the second lowest in over 10 years. So what's going on? One big factor is the increase in egg searches. There's no doubt this butterfly is expanding its range in our area from its stronghold in the west. This is mirrored in other southern counties, and is certainly worth keeping an eye out for in any of its life stages! The highest count of 34 individuals was achieved at Noar Hill on 20 August, and observers at Portsdown Hill have noted the adults favouring Hemp Agrimony as a nectar source.

Purple Hairstreak

Favonius quercus

Checklist Number 61.004

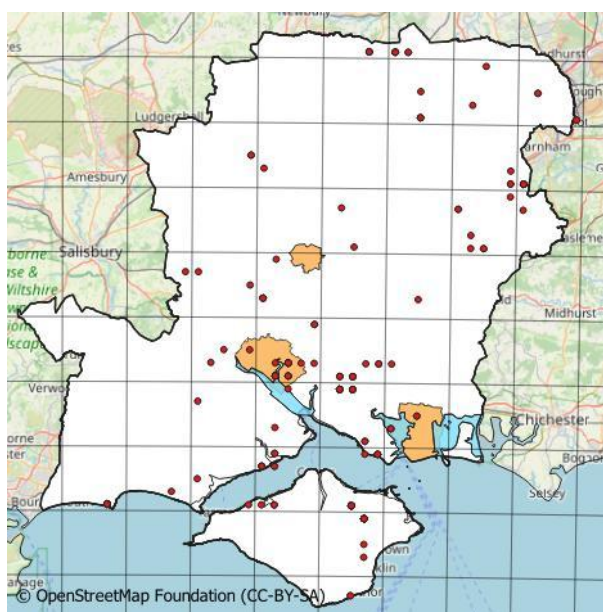
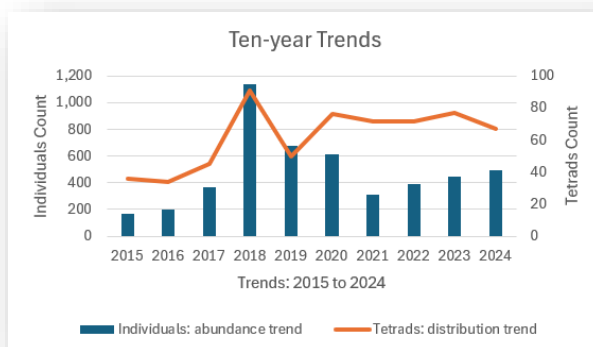
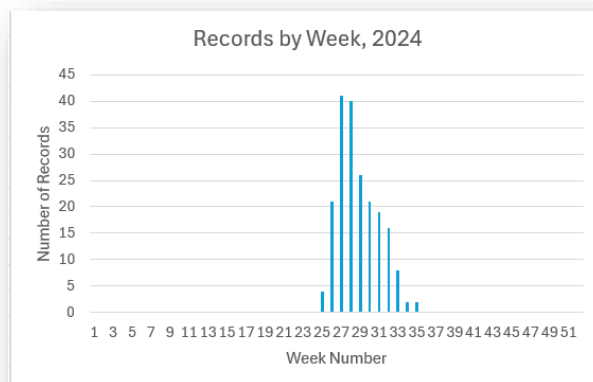
Priority status LOW



Kevin Freeborn

The year in numbers

Records	200	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	497	
Tetrads (populated)	67	
Recorders	63	
Earliest sighting	18 Jun	31/05/2010
Totton		
Latest sighting	28 Aug	25/09/2003
Hazeley Heath		



Link to the Purple Hairstreak online report:
[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - Favonius quercus](#)

Purple Hairstreak gave us a ray of sunshine in 2024, with an increase in abundance of 12%. 497 individuals were seen, beating 2023's 445. However, there was a slight decrease in the number of tetrads it was seen in, from 77 in 2023 to 67 in 2024 – a 13% drop. As an elusive treetop dweller, sightings, of course, are never guaranteed, and this species probably remains somewhat under-recorded. The distribution map shows a wide range across our counties, but with huge gaps. Any mature oaks are worth scanning in high summer to see if this species is present. The season started on 18 June at Totton, and lasted until 28 August at Hazeley Heath. This was somewhat truncated compared to 2023's earliest and latest sightings, perhaps another sign of how poor the 2024 season was.

Green Hairstreak

Callophrys rubi

Checklist Number 61.005

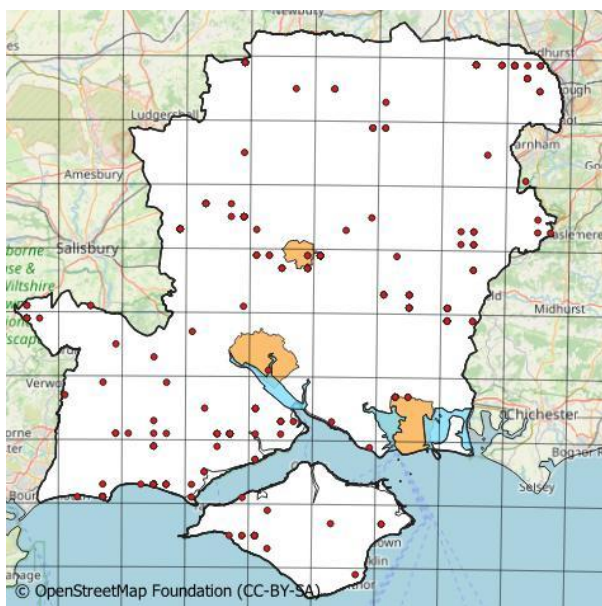
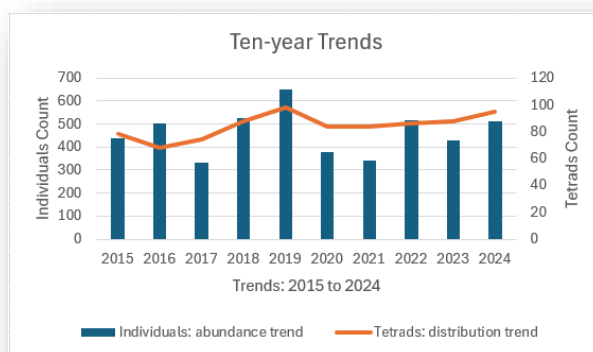
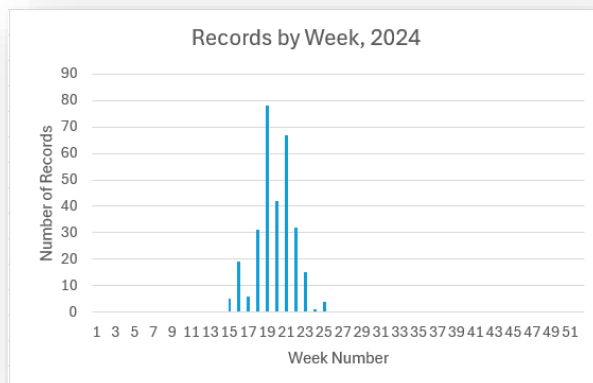
Priority status LOW



Kevin Freeborn

The year in numbers

Records	300	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	512	
Tetrads (populated)	95	
Recorders	138	
Earliest sighting	11 Apr	29/03/2012
Hengistbury Head		
Latest sighting	21 Jun	30/07/2007
Wootton Coppice		



Link to the Green Hairstreak online report:
[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - Callophrys rubi](#)

In a generally gloomy year for butterflies, the Green Hairstreak stood out as one of the success stories, registering increases of 18% in abundance and 7% in the number of tetrads in which it was recorded compared to 2023. Total records received increased by nearly 30% on 2023 and was the highest since 2019. Orange-tip, with which it more or less shares its flight period, also had a reasonable year. The Green Hairstreak was pretty well distributed throughout the two counties in 2024. The first record came from Hengistbury Head on 11 April, nine days earlier than in 2023. Numbers rose thereafter to peak in mid-May with the highest count of 17 at Oxenbourne Down on 23 May. The final record came from Wootton Coppice on 21 June, almost a week earlier than in 2023.

White-letter Hairstreak

Satyrrium w-album

Checklist Number 61.006

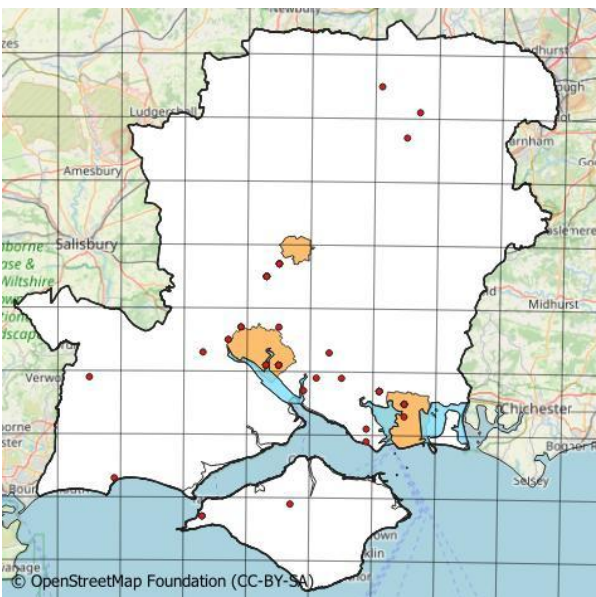
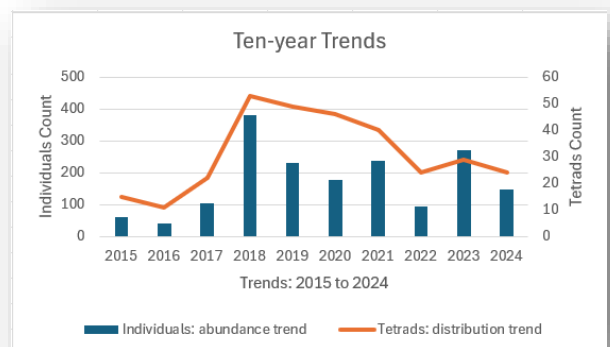
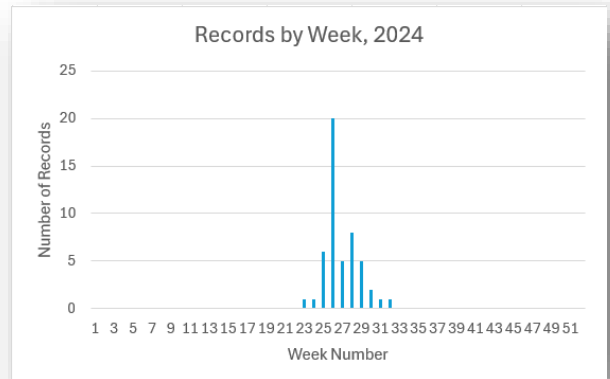
Priority status HIGH



Ashley Whitlock

The year in numbers

Records	56	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	148	
Tetrads (populated)	24	
Recorders	21	
Earliest sighting	09 Jun	25/05/2011
Cosham		
Latest sighting	09 Aug	23/08/2004
Olivers Battery		



Link to the White-letter Hairstreak online report:
[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - *Satyrrium w-album*](#)

Looking at the normalised 25-year trends in the online report, 2024 was actually an average year for White-letter Hairstreak but, compared to 2023, it had a less than average showing. The highest number of records came in the last week of June; the highest count of 14 adults came from Funtley on 20 June. Rupert Broadway led a couple of field trips to Yew Hill targeting the species: on 28 June, he said, “At the end of the walk, with warming temperatures and glimpses of blue sky, a few of the group decided to retry their luck...and a sharp-eyed member spotted a White-letter Hairstreak flying among the elms, following which a couple more were seen”; on 8 August, “a 16 year student visiting from Japan pointed out a White-letter Hairstreak on the field edge by the path up to the reserve, which the two leaders had just walked past without noticing!”.

Small Blue

Cupido minimus

Checklist Number 61.010

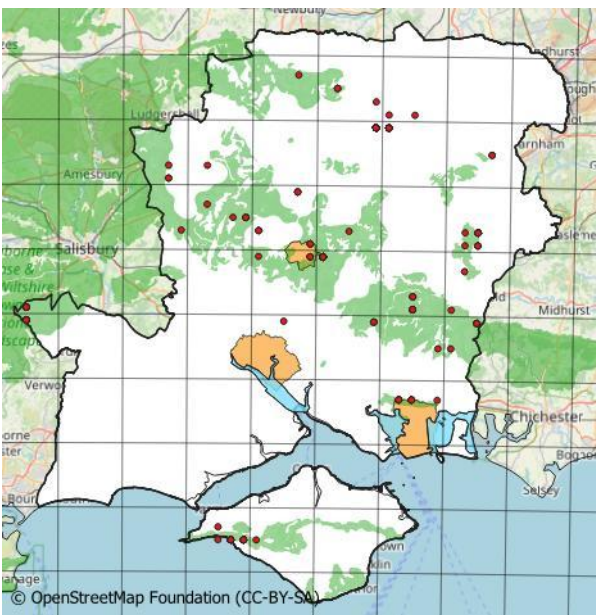
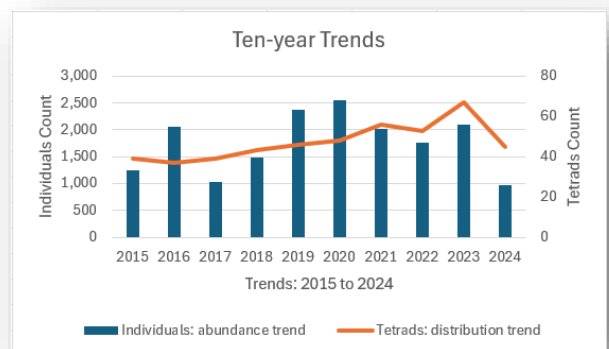
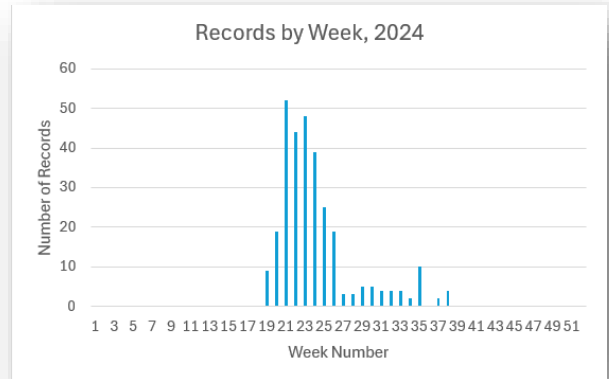
Priority status HIGH



Kevin Freeborn

The year in numbers

Records	302	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	977	
Tetrads (populated)	45	
Recorders	95	
Earliest sighting	07 May	30/03/2012
Hatchwarren		
Latest sighting	21 Sep	21/09/1991
Beggarwood Park		



Link to the Small Blue online report:
[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - Cupido minimus](#)

Hampshire and Isle of Wight's tiniest resident butterfly had a tough 2024, the worst of the past ten years. However, Small Blue did manage a second brood, albeit much reduced in abundance compared to the first, and there was possibly a third brood after a record-less week 36, with two weeks in September showing single-digit counts before the season ended on 21 September. The highest count of 44 individuals came at Old Down on 7 June. Overall, compared to the previous year, abundance fell 53% (that's 977 individuals for 2024) and distribution tumbled from 67 populated tetrads in 2023 to 45 in 2024. The generally poor weather certainly led to fewer casual observations being posted during its 20-week season.

Silver-studded Blue

Plebejus argus

Checklist Number 61.014

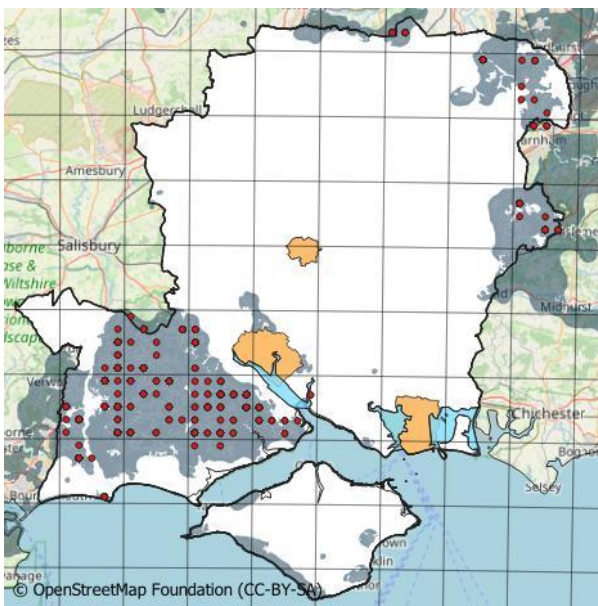
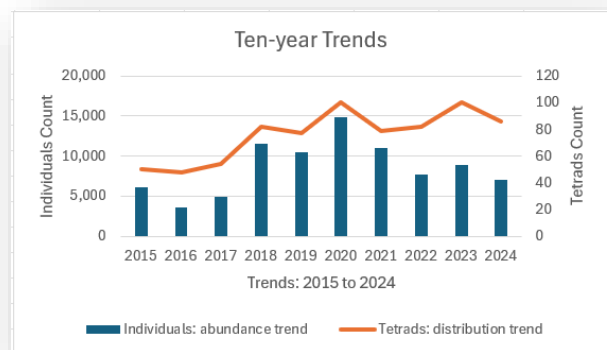
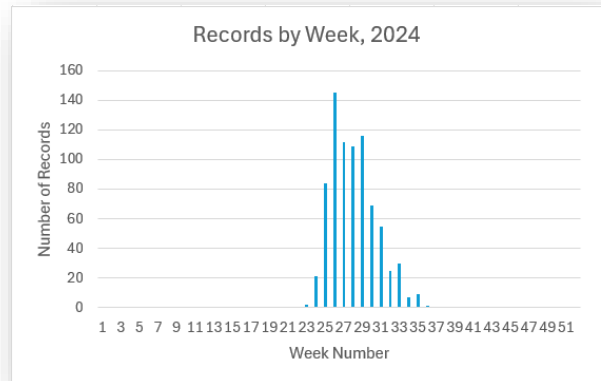
Priority status HIGH



Kevin Freeborn

The year in numbers

Records	786	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	6,988	
Tetrads (populated)	86	
Recorders	143	
Earliest sighting	25 May	09/05/2011
Broxhead Common		
Latest sighting	03 Sep	30/10/1921
St Ives		



Link to the Silver-studded Blue online report:
[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - Plebejus argus](#)

Reaching a peak count of 145 individuals during the last week of June (week 26), Silver-studded Blue was first recorded at Broxhead Common on 25 May and this dazzling heathland specialist had a 14-week season, just about making it into September with a single record from St Ives. Although figures for abundance and distribution were down when compared to 2023, in terms of the 25-year trends, it was not as good as the previous six years, 2024 ranked tenth for abundance and third for distribution. At Broxhead Common on 26 June, Ashley Whitlock observed, “The Bell Heather looked splendid...most of the area in a purple haze...and the Silver-studded Blues were out in good numbers, both sexes flying like there was no tomorrow”.

Adonis Blue

Polyommatus bellargus

Checklist Number 61.019

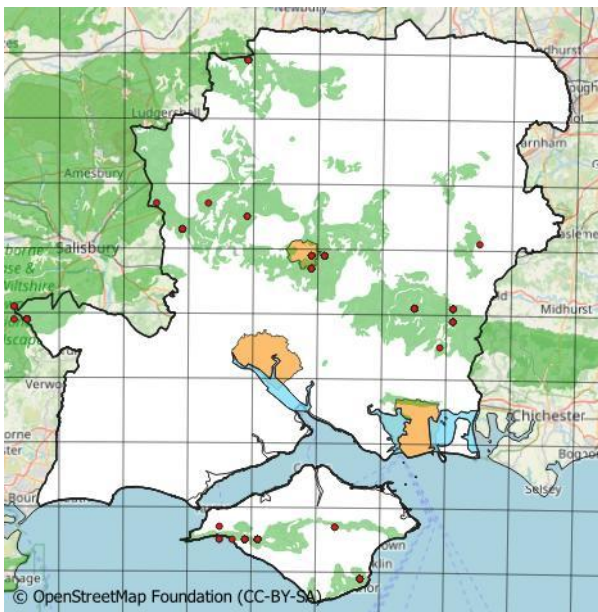
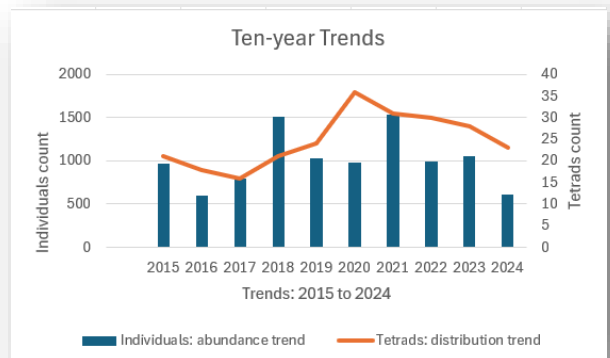
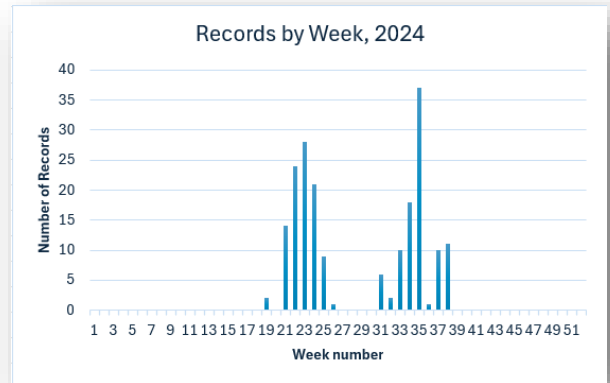
Priority status HIGH



Kevin Freeborn

The year in numbers

Records	194	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	613	
Tetrads (populated)	23	
Recorders	54	
Earliest sighting	08 May	
St Catherine's Hill		26/04/2011
Latest sighting	20 Sep	15/10/2011
Mottistone Down		



Link to the Adonis Blue online report:

[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - Polyommatus bellargus](#)

The general theme of the notes from Adonis Blue observers were that both broods were slow to emerge and that sightings were few. The season started late and finished early. On a visit to the Isle of Wight on 7 June, Ashley Whitlock noted “The Adonis Blue, like on the mainland, seems to be slow in emerging this year.” “No second brood yet” was the verdict of another Adonis hunter on his 16 August visit to Oxenbourne Down. The peak count was 35, recorded at Mottistone Down on 1 September. On 18 August at Stockbridge Down, one observer was surprised to spot “a fresh male Adonis Blue – when it settled, I discovered that the underside was completely devoid of spots (ab. krodeli)”.

Chalk Hill Blue

Polyommatus coridon

Checklist Number 61.020

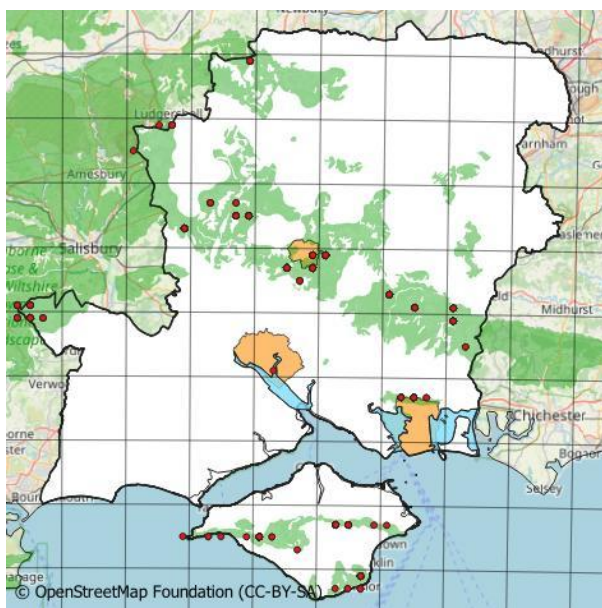
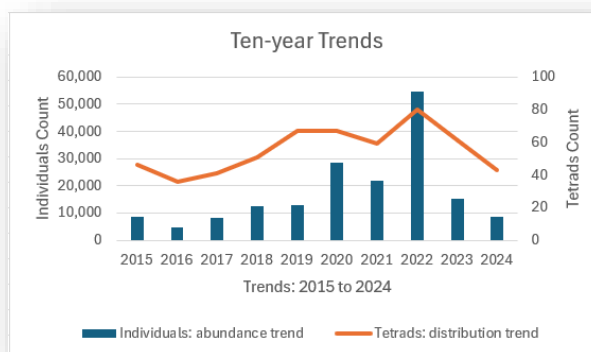
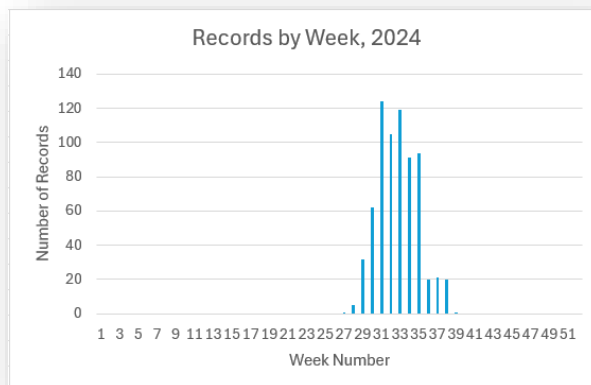
Priority status MEDIUM



Kevin Freeborn

The year in numbers

Records	695	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	8746	
Tetrads (populated)	43	
Recorders	95	
Earliest sighting	07 Jul	17/06/1990
Mottistone Down		
Latest sighting	28 Sep	31/10/2011
The Dongas		



Link to the Chalk Hill Blue online report:

[Annual Butterfly Report 2024 - Polyommatus coridon](#)

The peak count for Chalk Hill Blue – 930 individuals – came at Stockbridge Down on 17 August in a flight season that lasted 13 weeks. On a visit to the down on 26 July, typically peak-season for this butterfly, Pete Eeles remarked, “Chalk Hill Blue, normally seen in their hundreds, were in their 10s; I probably saw 50 adults in total – although the females are only just starting to emerge, with a single pairing witnessed.” Comparing his observations over the summer, one commentator had just five adults on Portsdown Hill in mid-July, only four at Old Winchester Hill on 14 August but, in better weather on a return visit to Portsdown on 16 August, he said, “it was a great surprise to record 91 today”.

Round-up of rarer species

There are three species categorised under this heading in 2024, two of which seem to be becoming increasingly regular in the area.

Large Tortoiseshell

Nymphalis polychloros

Checklist Number 59.029

Priority status LOW

The year in numbers

Records	1	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	1	
Tetrads (populated)	1	
Recorders	1	
Earliest sighting	12 Apr	10/02/2008
Ivy Wood		
Latest sighting	12 Apr	04/09/2021
Ivy Wood		

After a relative plethora of records in 2023 (11 in total) the Large Tortoiseshell was recorded only once in 2024. Interestingly this sighting, at Ivy Wood in the New Forest on 12 April, was some distance away from any of the 2023 records, all of which were on the Isle of Wight, with the single exception of one in Portsmouth.

Long-tailed Blue

Lampides boeticus

Checklist Number 61.008

Priority status LOW

The year in numbers

Records	5	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	6	
Tetrads (populated)	2	
Recorders	4	
Earliest sighting	18 Sep	10/03/2018
Boscombe		
Latest sighting	24 Oct	13/11/2022
Mount Joy		

The Long-tailed Blue has been regularly recorded in recent years, but sightings were well down from the 13 records in 2023 to just five in 2024, comprising six individuals: and a reduction in distribution from five tetrads to two. These all came between 18 September and 24 October with singles reported from Boscombe and Mount Joy respectively: the only multiple count being of two from Southbourne on 20 September.

Swallowtail

Papilio machaon

Checklist Number 56.003

Priority status LOW

The year in numbers

Records	3	Earliest and latest on record
Individuals	3	
Tetrads (populated)	1	
Recorders	3	
Earliest sighting	22 Jun	14/04/2014
Gosport		
Latest sighting	28 Sep	06/10/2013
Gosport		

Records of Swallowtail in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight are few and far between, so it is remarkable that a total of three individuals were reported in 2024, all from Gosport and from three separate recorders. Given that they were spaced out over a period of three months between 22 June and 28 September, and the very obvious nature of this butterfly, it is the opinion of BAMS that these were releases from captive-bred stock, rather than genuine immigrants from the continent.

