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Acknowledgements

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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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Section 1 – Introduction and Transect background

This report summarises the findings of the weekly butterfly transects undertaken at Barton Common in 2025, 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.

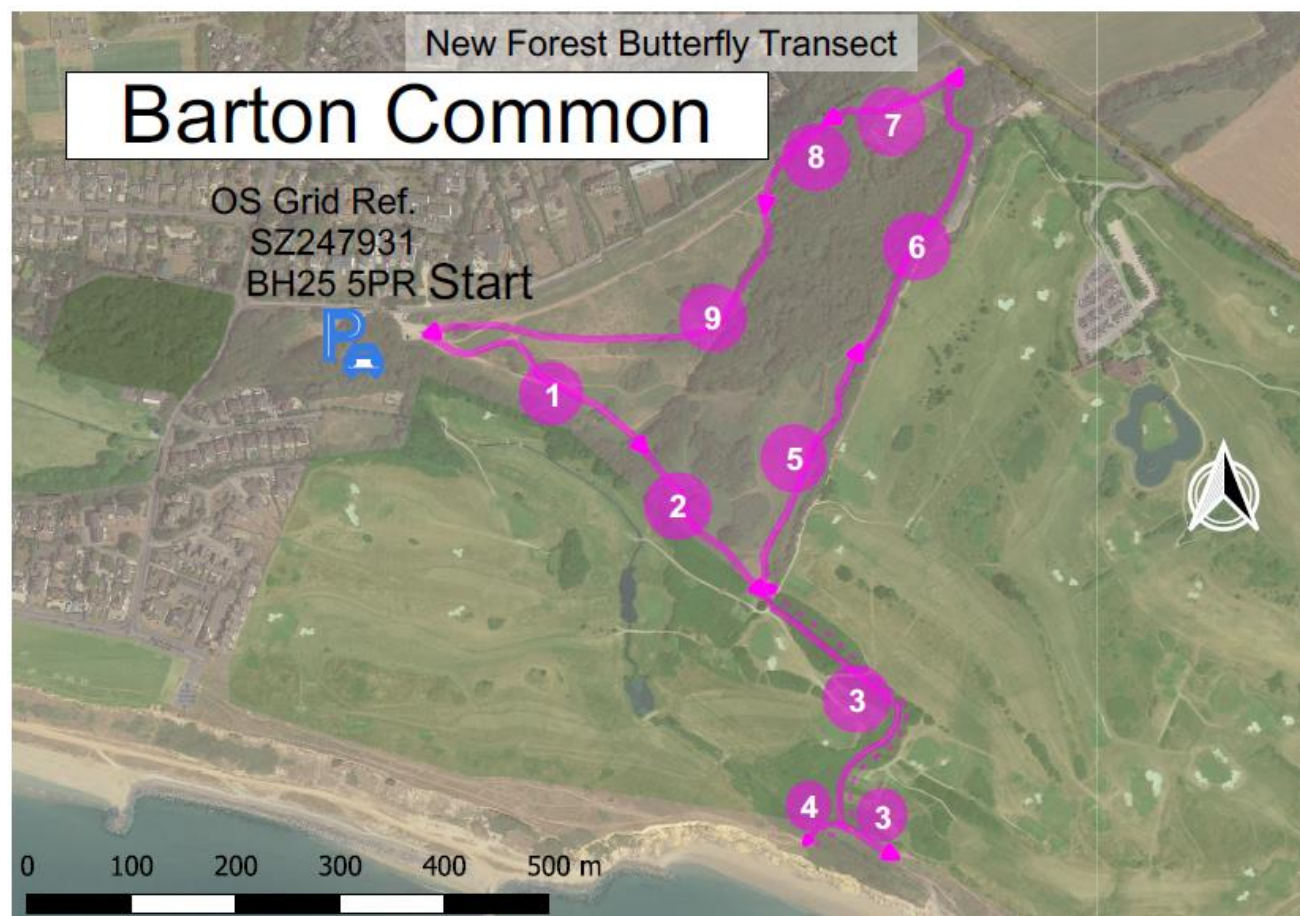
Monitoring walks have been carried out using the Fixed-route (Pollard Walk) transect methodology as promoted through the United Kingdom Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS). This involves walking a fixed route each week during the recording season which runs for 26 weeks from 1st April to 30th September, 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. That habitat ratio is maintained by grazing ponies and 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 was milder than average with below average rainfall, although we did experience some storms which brought high winds and gales. Spring (March, April and May) was mainly dry and settled with temperatures and sunshine above average and provisionally the sunniest spring on record. Summer (June, July and August) was the warmest UK summer on record with a mean temperature 1.5C above the 30-year average. Sunshine hours were above average in contrast to rainfall which was below average. September brought an end to the period of warmer and drier than average months with some periods of heavy rain and winds. There were some reports of funnel clouds around Bournemouth and the Isle of Wight.

Further detail can be found at: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/climate/maps-and-data/summaries/index>

The NFBTG Season

A much better season than 2024 with a strong early season but a prolonged dry spell significantly curtailed numbers from the end of July. The total number of butterflies recorded across 54 transects was 57,066 at a density (butterflies per kilometre walked) of 16.88. The density was slightly below average, but building on from the very poor 2024 it was a successful season. Exactly half our transects improved on their average total. Generally, heathland transects performed above average, boosted by Grayling and Silver-studded Blue but inclosures underperformed compared to the average taking the bottom eight places. Like the transects roughly half the species performed above average (2021-2025 comparison only) but the grassland species suffered from the dry summer; with Meadow Brown, Large Skipper, Small Copper and Brown Argus all down on 2024 as was the Orange-tip more surprisingly. There were a lot of Whites around later in the season, and all three species had a record season as did Clouded Yellow and Purple Hairstreak. Both Silver-washed and Dark-green Fritillary recovered somewhat but neither to their long-term average. Of the three focus species both Grayling and Silver-studded Blue were around 30% above average but Pearl-bordered Fritillary failed to recover from its very poor 2024. Finally, we had a confirmed sighting of a Purple Emperor after probable sightings in 2023.

Transect Summary



Green Hairstreak



Meadow Brown



Gatekeeper and Meadow Brown

In general, 2025 was a better season than 2024, however the total abundance on BC was 5% down on the long-term average.

20 species were recorded, with all the Whites showing a significant increase, also Gatekeeper, Red Admiral and Peacock had a higher abundance than 2024. A single Small Tortoiseshell was also recorded. Brimstone, Small Heath, Meadow Brown, Small Copper and Green Hairstreak showed a decrease in abundance.

The highest abundance occurred in week 15, 3 weeks earlier than 2024.

Cinnabar and Brown Silver-line were the only moths recorded on transect.

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

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

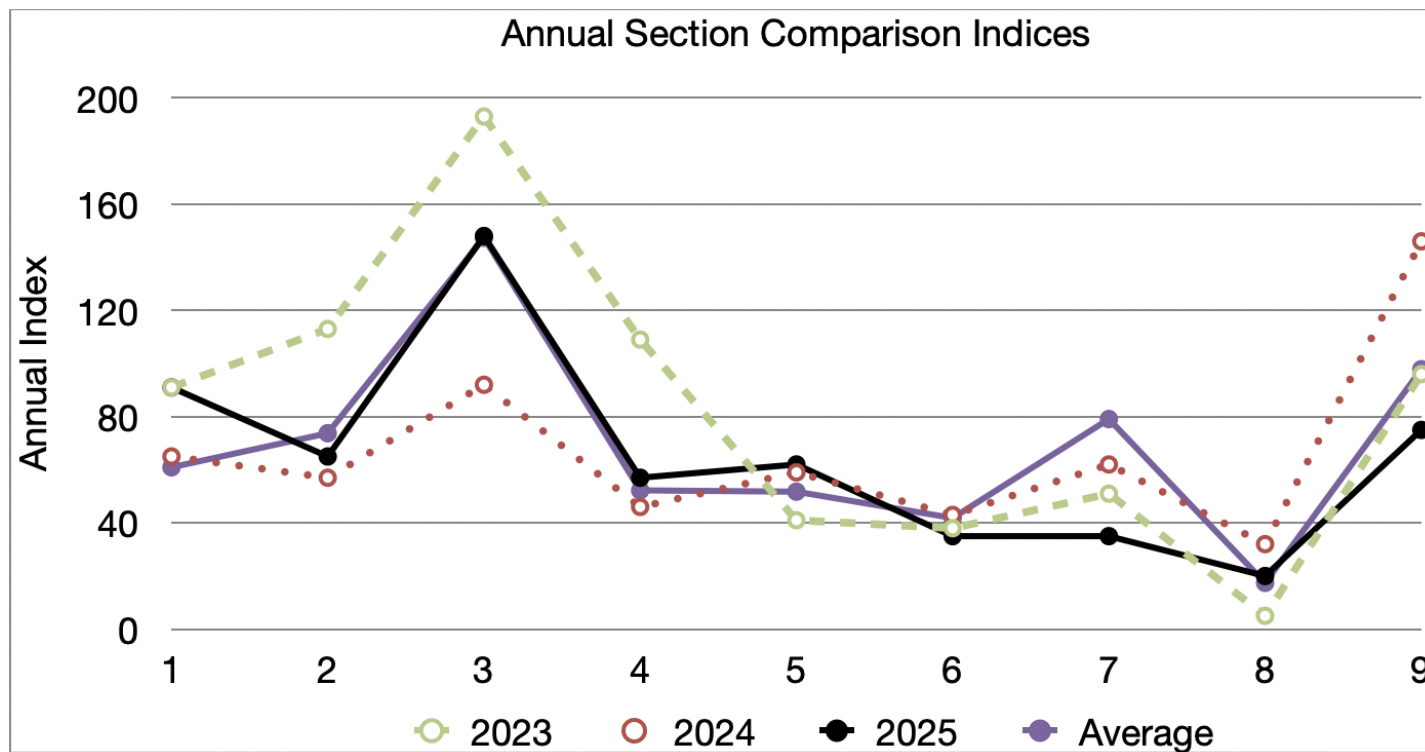
Weekly Indices

Week Number	2023	2024	2025	Average
1	5	10	10	10
2	0	10	10	10
3	5	10	10	10
4	0	10	10	10
5	10	20	15	15
6	10	30	5	15
7	15	10	10	15
8	20	30	10	15
9	15	5	5	15
10	5	5	5	10
11	10	10	10	10
12	30	20	5	20
13	50	40	90	35
14	130	20	65	45
15	35	65	130	65
16	135	65	90	95
17	35	55	40	70
18	90	85	20	55
19	35	40	35	40
20	35	30	20	30
21	20	15	10	20
22	5	25	5	20
23	15	10	10	20
24	25	20	5	20
25	10	25	10	15
26	15	5	10	10

Summary of Transect Indices by Week																									Highest Index				
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	Totals		
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		
2025	9	9	8	6	16	4	8	10	3	1	8	4	90	58	129	93	28	16	34	19	10	1	5	2	8	9	588		
Average	2	5	8	9	9	13	12	9	10	7	8	18	38	44	60	97	69	54	35	28	16	23	17	19	14	7	622		

Section 4 – Section Species and Comparison Indices

Species↓	Section→	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	Total	No. Sections
Small/Essex Skipper				2	2					2	6	3
Large Skipper					1						1	1
Large White		14	6	6	1	6	6	3	2	7	51	9
Small White		12	10	11	5	7	3	4	2	12	66	9
Green-veined White		8		11	4	4	3			5	35	6
Brimstone			1			2				5	8	3
Speckled Wood		1	9	34		2	5	2	4	1	58	8
Small Heath					1					1	2	2
Meadow Brown		5	4	15	3	4	3	3	1	2	40	9
Gatekeeper		31	28	46	30	28	7	19	7	35	231	9
Marbled White				1	1						2	2
Red Admiral		7		3	2	2	3	1		1	19	7
Painted Lady		1		2				1			4	3
Peacock		8		7	4	3	2	1	3	4	32	8
Small Tortoiseshell			1								1	1
Comma		3	2	2	1						8	4
Small Copper				1	1						2	2
Green Hairstreak			4	3		4					11	3
Holly Blue		1		3			3		1		8	4
Common Blue				1	1			1			3	3
Total		91	65	148	57	62	35	35	20	75	588	
No. Species		11	9	16	14	10	9	9	7	11	20	

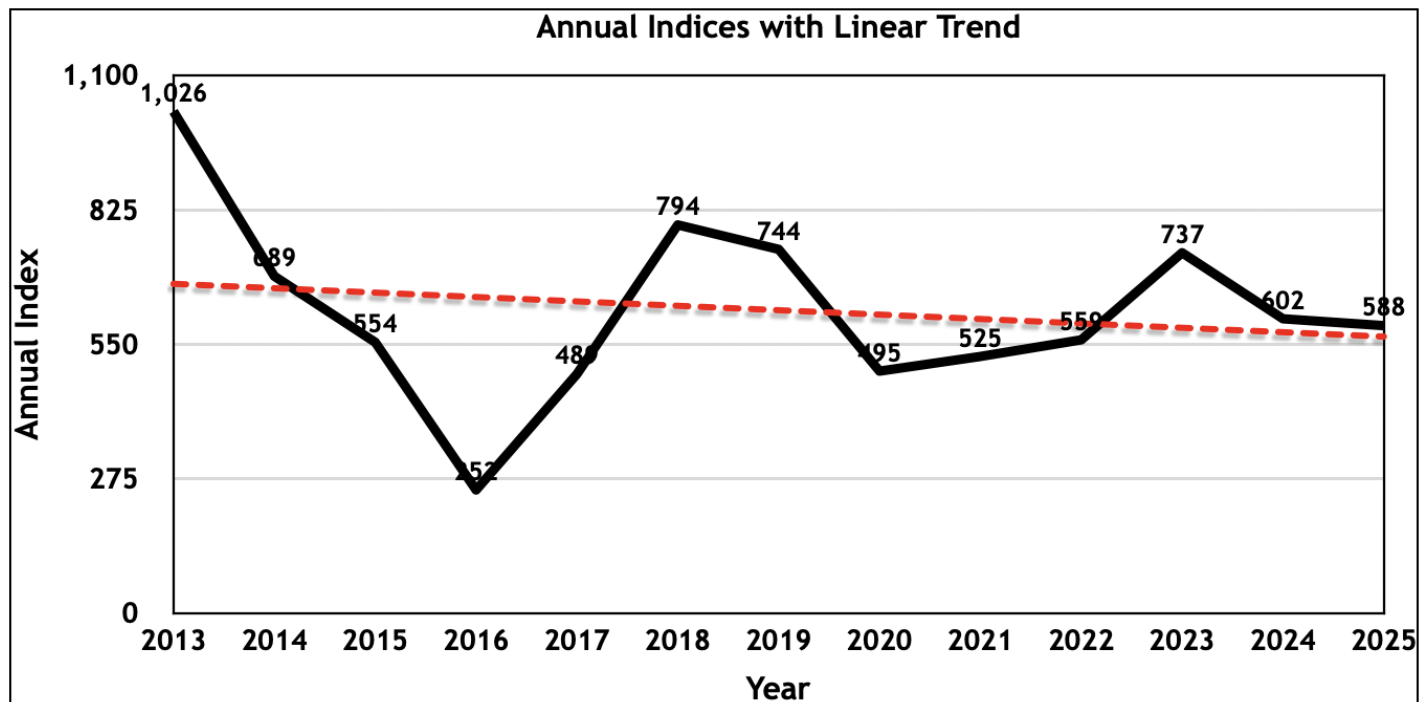


Annual Section Indices															Average Excl Current Year	Change 2025 v Average	Change 2024 v 2025
Section↓	Year→	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025			
1		127	66	38	17	35	56	54	77	58	47	91	65	91	61	30	↑
2		87	73	36	21	67	118	102	50	67	94	113	57	65	74	-9	↑
3		155	209	191	75	122	192	202	88	107	142	193	92	148	147	1	↑
4		60	55	36	36	36	53	52	47	41	56	109	46	57	52	5	↑
5		86	66	67	26	31	44	93	41	38	29	41	59	62	52	10	↑
6		89	48	45	21	29	41	49	37	31	31	38	43	35	42	-7	↓
7		195	75	62	15	79	128	71	63	78	70	51	62	35	79	-44	↓
8		8	10	12	6	27	38	24	15	19	13	5	32	20	17	3	↓
9		219	87	67	35	63	124	97	77	86	77	96	146	75	98	-23	↓
Annual Index		1,026	689	554	252	489	794	744	495	525	559	737	602	588	622	-34	↓

Section 5 – Annual Species Variation

Annual Indices															Average Excl Current	Change 2025 v Average	Change 2024 v 2025
Species↓	Year→	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025			
Essex Skipper												1					
Small Skipper																	
Small/Essex Skipper		66	63	20	6	12	37	4	7	9	11	45	8	6			
Small & Essex Skipper Total		66	63	20	6	12	37	4	7	9	11	46	8	6	24	-18	↓
Large Skipper		52	13	15	5	1	14	2	3			6	1	1	9	-8	↔
Orange-tip			1					2		3	2		3		<1	-1	↓
Large White		120	14	33	20	31	72	85	75	31	41	44	25	51	49	2	↑
Small White		68	14	10	19	10	46	57	55	98	29	83	48	66	45	21	↑
Green-veined White		5	3	6	2	24	20	8	13	1	1		2	35	7	28	↑
Clouded Yellow		3	2	2	1		1		1			2			1	-1	↔
Brimstone		15	27	44	18	6	9	24	2	4	23	9	33	8	18	-10	↓
Speckled Wood		80	101	45	12	92	96	64	13	42	60	29	48	58	57	1	↑
Small Heath		120	35	22	4	18	36	28	36	27	17	2	31	2	31	-29	↓
Ringlet		7		2		7	4	1	1	1		1			2	-2	↔
Meadow Brown		126	75	54	30	113	150	90	74	92	83	81	114	40	90	-50	↓
Gatekeeper		208	237	198	64	84	188	248	139	142	205	301	198	231	184	47	↑
Marbled White		103	31	28	7	12	29	26	22	17	12	11	5	2	25	-23	↓
Silver-washed Fritillary		1	1	1		7	1	2	4	1	4		2		2	-2	↓
Dark Green Fritillary									4			2	1		<1	-1	↓
Red Admiral		3	10	5	14	16	3	12	10	20	15	41	10	19	13	6	↑
Painted Lady						2		6		2	1	1	1	4	1	3	↑
Peacock		20	22	21	7	23	21	15	2	14	10	16	14	32	15	17	↑
Small Tortoiseshell		1	6	3	2	4					1			1	1	-0	↑
Comma		3		8	4	5	8	1		2	4	5	5	8	4	4	↑
Small Copper		2	7	6	9	10	25	14	13	8	1	13	14	2	10	-8	↓
Purple Hairstreak							1								<1	-0	↔
Green Hairstreak		7	17	13	8	5	12	28	4	4	11	5	24	11	12	-1	↓
Holly Blue		11	1	14	20	5	15	26	16	1	21	38	7	8	15	-7	↑
Common Blue		5	9	4		2	6	1	1	6	7	1	8	3	4	-1	↓
Total		1,026	689	554	252	489	794	744	495	525	559	737	602	588	622	-34	↓
Different Species		22	21	22	19	22	22	22	21	21	21	21	22	20	21	-1	↓
Max. Weekly Species		9	10	10	11	11	12	11	11	13	10	15	10	12	11	1	↑

FAMILIES														
Hesperiidae		118	76	35	11	13	51	6	10	9	11	52	9	7
Pieridae		211	61	95	60	71	148	176	146	137	96	138	111	160
Nymphalidae 'Browns'		644	479	349	117	326	503	457	285	321	377	425	396	333
Nymphalidae 'Aristocrats'		28	39	38	27	57	33	36	20	39	35	65	33	64
Lycaenidae		25	34	37	37	22	59	69	34	19	40	57	53	24



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.

Barton Common - Species seen

Species	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
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	1
Brimstone Moth							1	
Yellow Shell				1				
Cream-spot Tiger				1				
Jersey Tiger		1						
Cinnabar	2		2					1
Dingy Footman							1	
Silver Y	1						1	
Total	10	4	4	5	0	5	4	2
Larval								
Brown-tail		1						
Cinnabar								4
Number of Species	4	5	2	4	0	2	4	2
Total Species (2018-2025)								13