The Butterflies of Arnside & Silverdale National Landscape

Population and Distribution Changes 2000 to 2024

The Arnside and Silverdale National Landscape is probably the most important site for butterflies in the North West and one of the most important sites in the northern half of the UK. Only one species, the Large Heath *Coenonympha tullia* occurs in Lancashire but not within the National Landscape and yet there are a number of Lancashire species that only occur within the National Landscape. A comparison with nearby Cumbria produces a similar result with only a few species found in that county that are not found in Arnside and Silverdale.

There are a number of reasons why the area is so rich in butterflies and also in other wildlife. These include the coastal climate, the quantity of limestone pavement and grasslands and the differing types of woodlands. The area is also lucky to have the active management of a number of organisations and volunteers who are dedicated to preserving and enhancing the environment.

This report will analyse how the populations of different butterfly species have changed over the last 25 years. This is only possible because of the efforts of very many volunteers who have spent countless hours recording butterflies. This has resulted in more than 170,000 records from which this analysis has been drawn. Where abundance is compared with UK figures, the comparison is with the UKBMS Summary of changes Table 2024 unless otherwise stated.

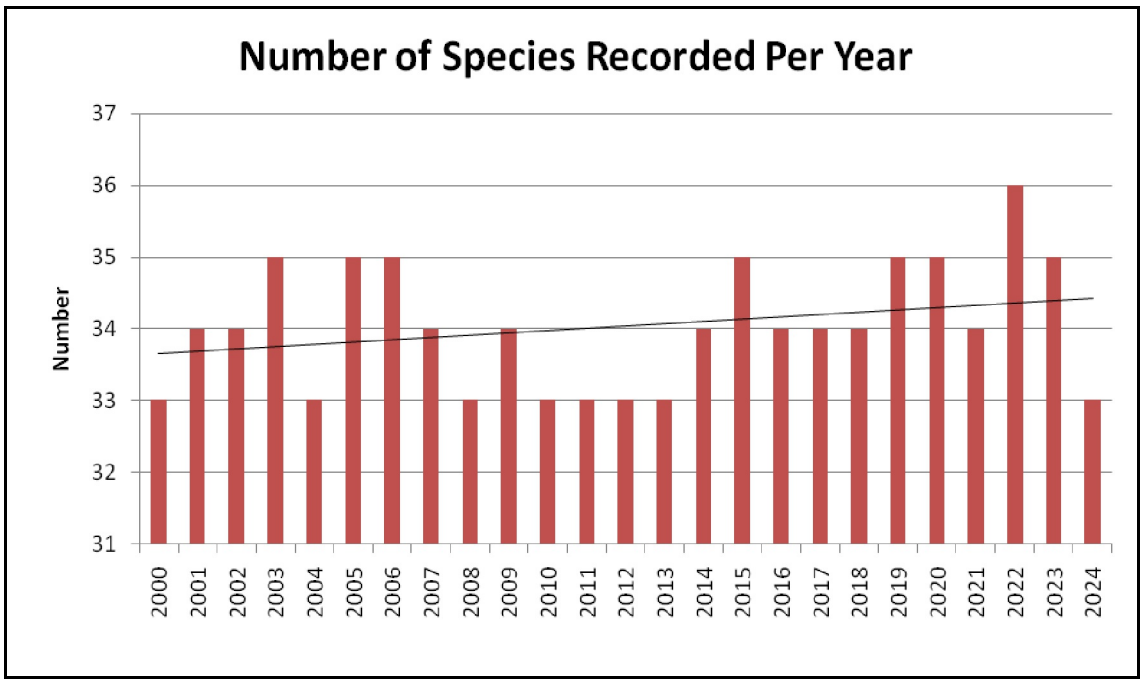
Interestingly, the vast majority of these are transect records. During the same period, across the whole of Lancashire there are 536,000 records of which 155,000 are transect records - this is just less than 30%. However, there are 144,000 transect records out of the 170,000 Arnside and Silverdale records - which is nearly 85%. This is important as the transect records are those that are derived from the many butterfly transects that have been set up across the area. Transect surveyors walk the same route every week for 26 weeks of the summer and record using a formalised methodology. This results in a very reliable and robust set of data and means that more accurate year on year comparisons can be made.

Other records are the casual field observations made by people as they visit different parts of the region at different times of the day and year. These are also very important records and give a good indication of butterfly populations and distributions across the National Landscape but, in contrast to the transect records, because they are made on a less formalised basis are not so robust.

The high proportion of transect records in this data set (2000 to 2024) for the National Landscape mean that we can draw far stronger conclusions from the data than we would otherwise be able to do. Unfortunately, however, I do not have access to statistical software and so can only demonstrate broad trends for each species in the analysis below.

Some broad observations to begin. There have been 38 species recorded in Arnside and Silverdale over the last twenty-five years, with an average of 34 species per year. The trend line on the chart below suggests that the number of species is rising slightly, yet this apparent good piece of news hides a much more worrying truth. In fact what has happened is that several species, such as the Ringlet (*Aphantopus hyperantus*), have colonised the area over the last twenty-five years whereas other species, notably the fritillaries have declined and some have become locally extinct. This will be discussed in more detail below.

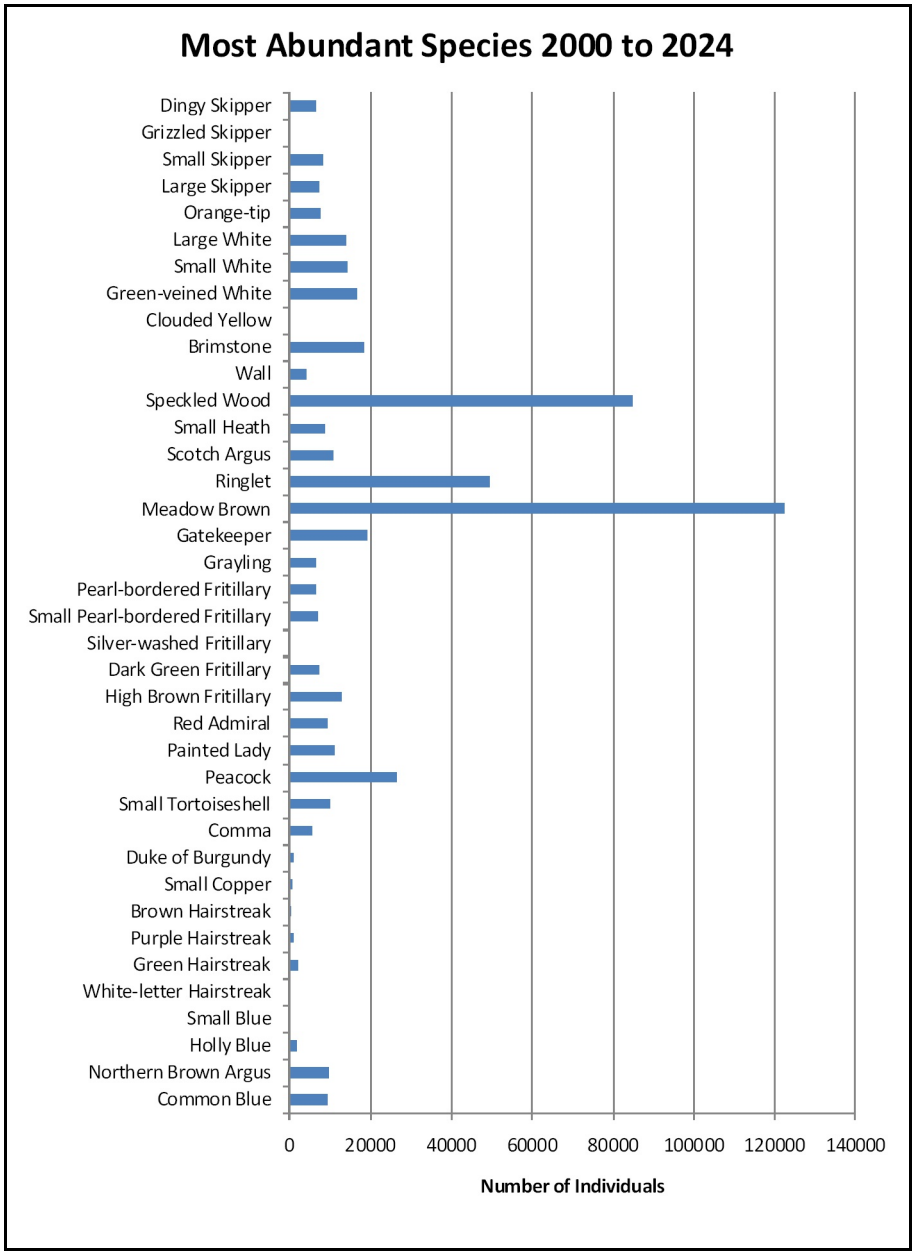
Chart 1



The abundance of all the species recorded between 2000 and 2024 is shown in chart 2. Unsurprisingly, the Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*) is by far the most common butterfly recorded throughout this period. Almost one record in every four is of this species, a pattern that is replicated across much of the UK. The four most abundant species, the Meadow Brown, the Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*), the Ringlet and the Peacock (*Aglais io*) account for over half of the recorded individuals. Most of the remaining species are recorded at levels far lower than these four but with individual variations as discussed later. There is also a small number of species that are recorded at very low levels, because they are either rare visitors, difficult

to survey or are recent colonisers, or although consistently recorded year to year are, only present in very low numbers.

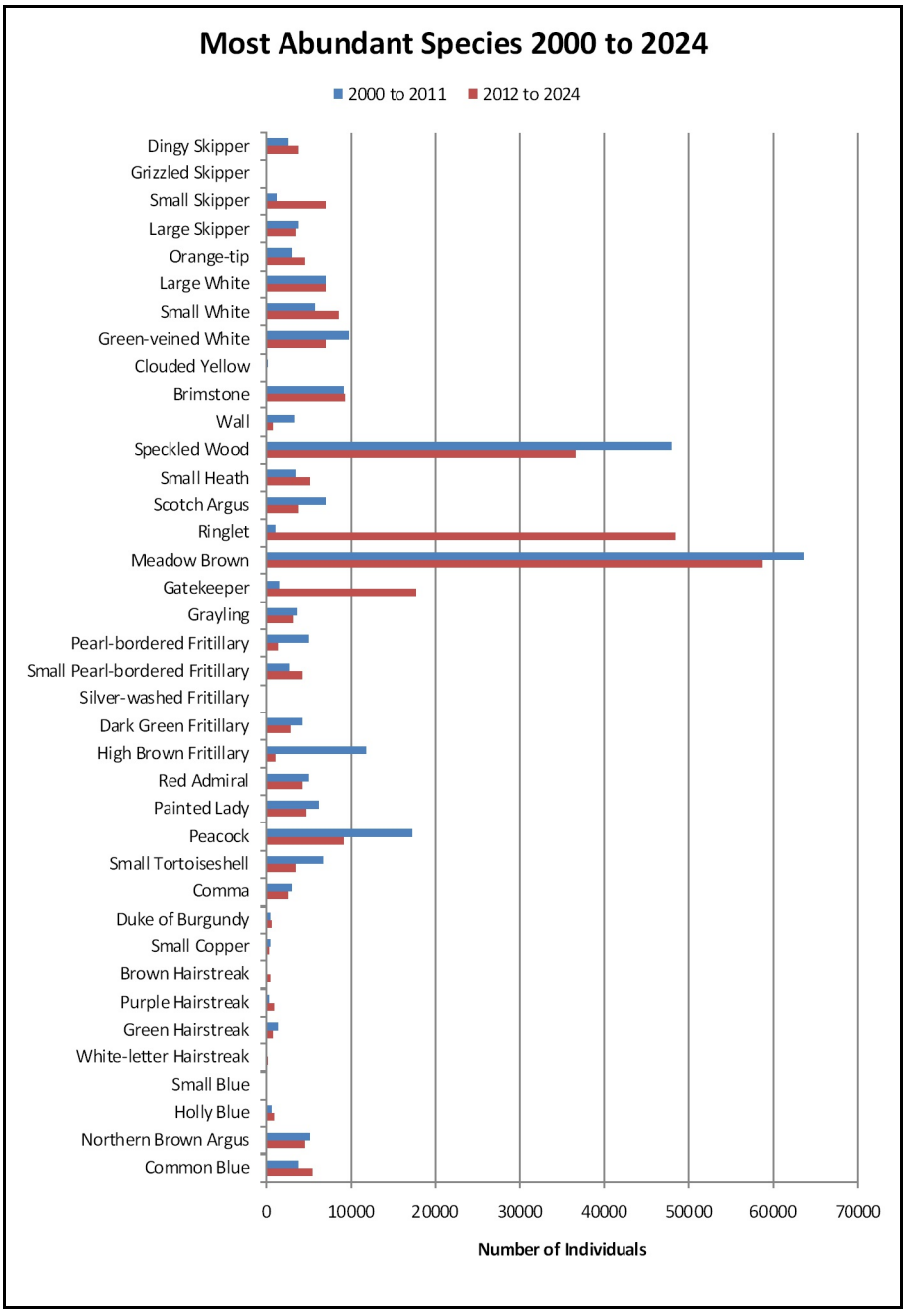
Chart 2



There have been several significant changes in the abundance of different species over the last twenty-five years as can be seen by chart 3. The Gatekeeper (*Pyronia tithonus*) and the Ringlet are recent colonists and were virtually absent in the first few years of the century; the expansion of the range of these two species into Arnside and Silverdale is clearly shown in the comparison between the numbers of recorded individuals in 2000 to 2011 and in 2012 to 2024. The Small Skipper (*Thymelicus sylvestris*) has made a similar, although less spectacular, colonisation. Most local butterfly enthusiasts will not be surprised by the drop in numbers of most of the

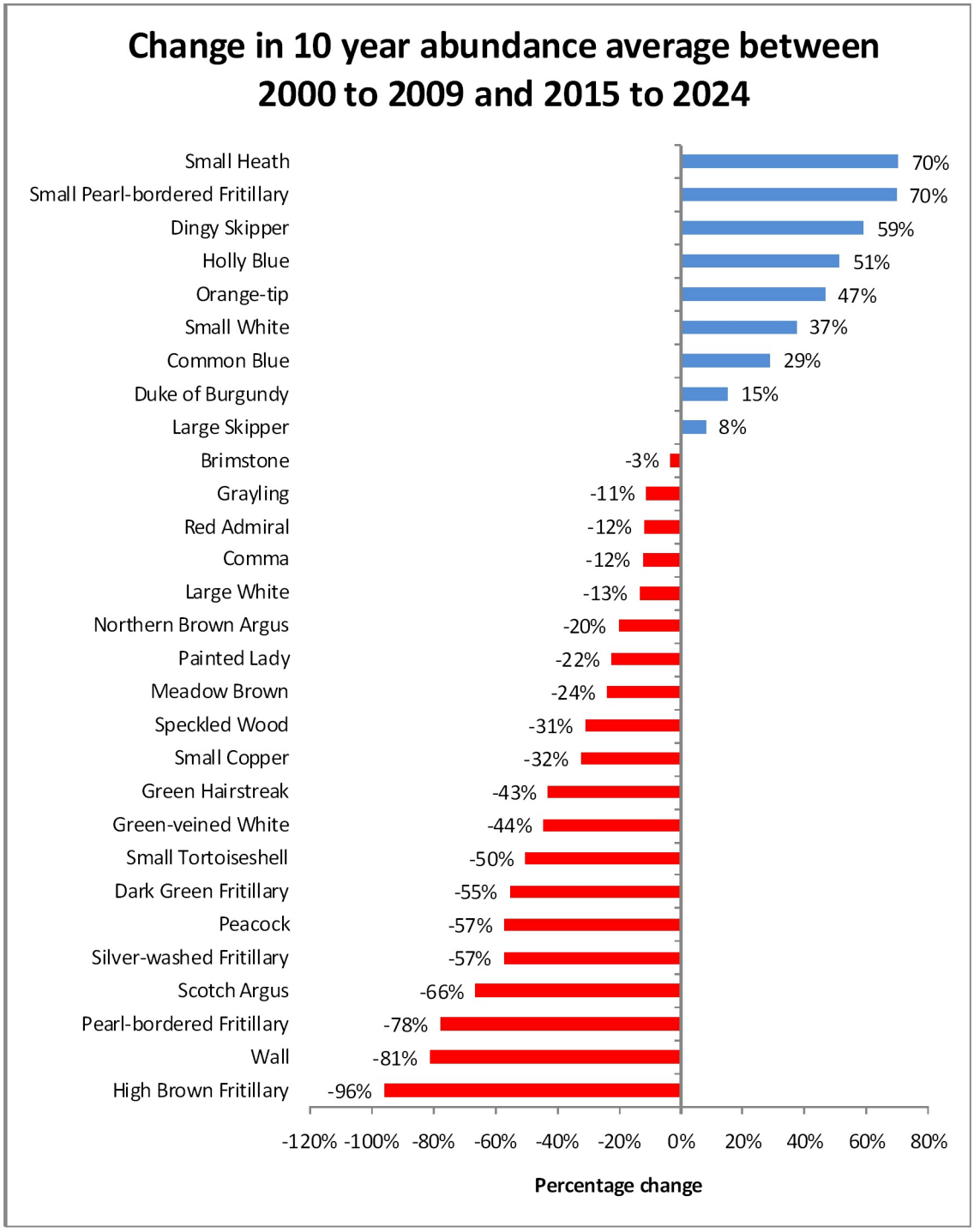
fritillaries between the two time periods but the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary's (*Boloria selene*) apparent increases in the latter ten year period do raise an eyebrow (see the species account below for a possible explanation). Other notable changes are the recent appearance of the Brown Hairstreak (*Thecla betulae*), the decline of the Wall (*Lasiommata megera*), the Scotch Argus (*Erebia aethiops*), the Peacock and the Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*) and the small increase in the Dingy Skipper (*Erynnis tages*).

Chart 3



A comparison between the average recorded numbers of individuals in the two ten-year periods 2000 to 2009 and 2015 to 2024 reveals some very concerning declines in several species, many of which are also classified nationally on the GB Red List as threatened (Endangered or Vulnerable) or Near Threatened. Arnside and Silverdale is an important stronghold for many of these species and losses here are of critical national importance. However, in most cases a more detailed examination of these

Chart 4



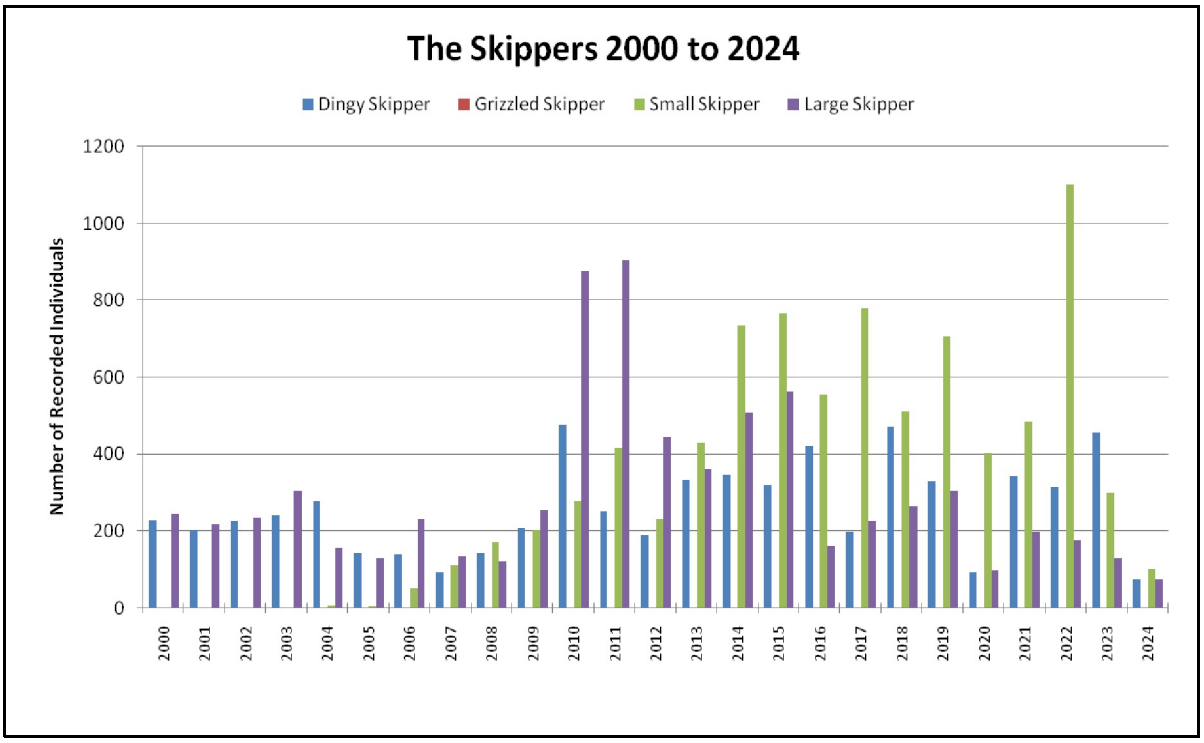
population changes, at group and at species level shows that the raw figures do not always tell the whole story.

The Skippers

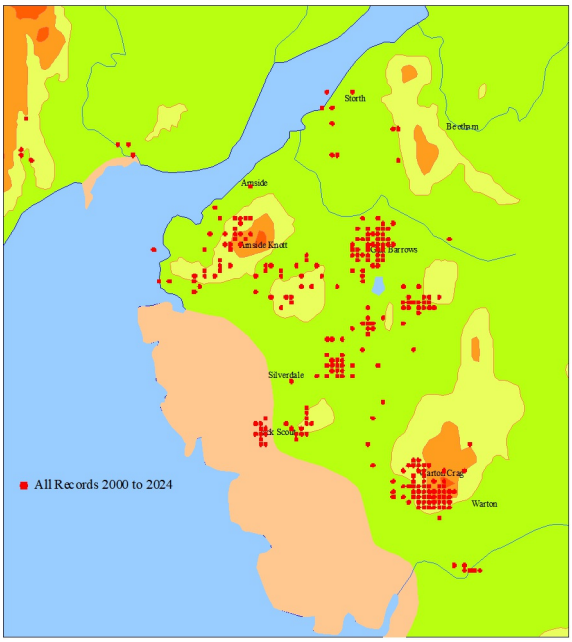
There are three species of skipper regularly recorded in the region (see chart 5). The fourth for which we have records, the Grizzled Skipper (*Pyrgus malvae*) has only been recorded twice. Both these records of a single individual were recorded at Gait Barrows in 2002 since when no further sightings have been reported, although there were a few prior records up to the 1990s.

The Dingy Skipper is very widely distributed nationally but due to its particular habitat requirements is scarce and was declining nationally over the first part of this century. However, it has shown signs of a recovery over the last few years and this pattern can be seen in the populations across Arnside and Silverdale. Whilst populations were seriously declining, particularly between 2005 and 2009, over the last fifteen years the trend has definitely been an upwards one with an increase of 70% when the last ten years are compared with the first ten years of the century. These have been interspersed with a couple of very poor years; 2017 and 2024. Numbers did recover very well after 2017 and indications for 2025 show that again the species has recovered well from the low of 2024. The distribution map shows the species' preference for rough limestone grassland rich in Common bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) typical of places such as Warton Crag and Gait Barrows.

Chart 5

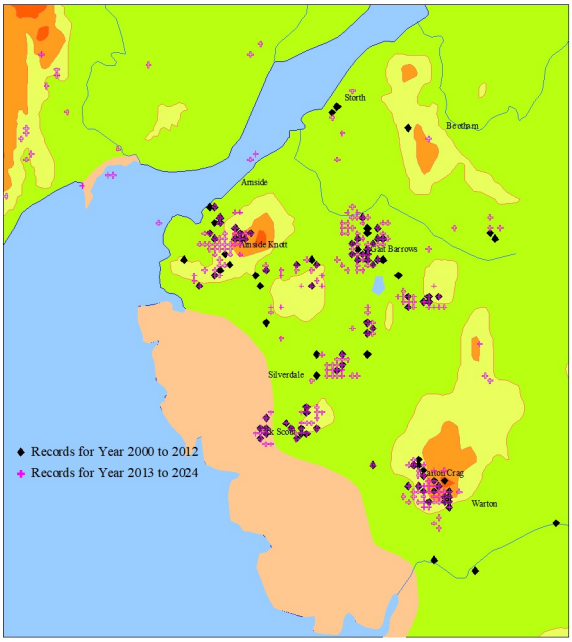


Dingy Skipper (Erynnis tages)



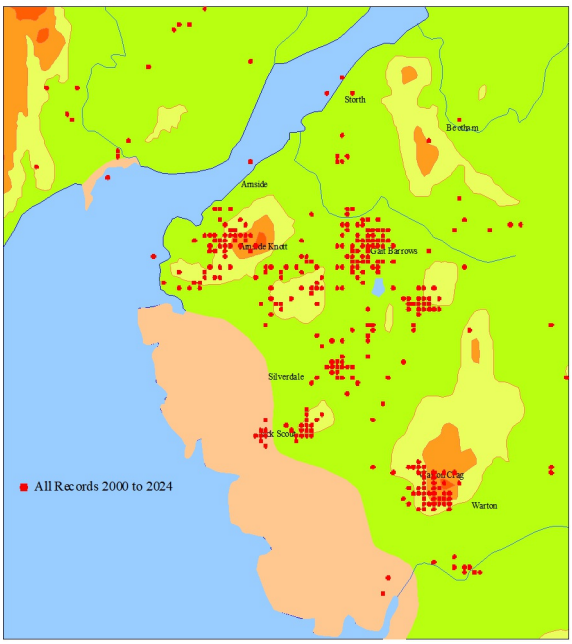
The recent colonisation of the region by the Small Skipper can clearly be seen both on the chart above and on the distribution map. Like its close relative, the Large Skipper (*Ochlodes sylvanus*) it can be found on a range of rough grasslands and is now comfortably the most common of the skippers in Arnside and Silverdale. There are some significant variations from year to year, though. When taken as an average, numbers over the last five years have been good but these have been boosted by the exceptionally good number of records in 2022 which has perhaps masked the drop in numbers in 2020, 2021, 2023 and 2024.

Small Skipper (Thymelicus sylvestris)



Usually appearing a few weeks before the Small Skipper, the Large Skipper has been resident in the area for many, many years, and looking across the last twenty-five years it has maintained a generally stable population within which, however, there have been some major fluctuations, with a significant drop in populations between 2004 and 2009. Since then, a pattern has emerged whereby the species has had a couple of good years followed by a poorer year; sadly though numbers over the last four years have declined noticeably, year on year. Both the Small Skipper and the Large Skipper have declined nationally by 36% and 37% in the last ten years and whilst the Small Skipper seems to be doing better in this region than nationally, the decline of the Large Skipper is a concern.

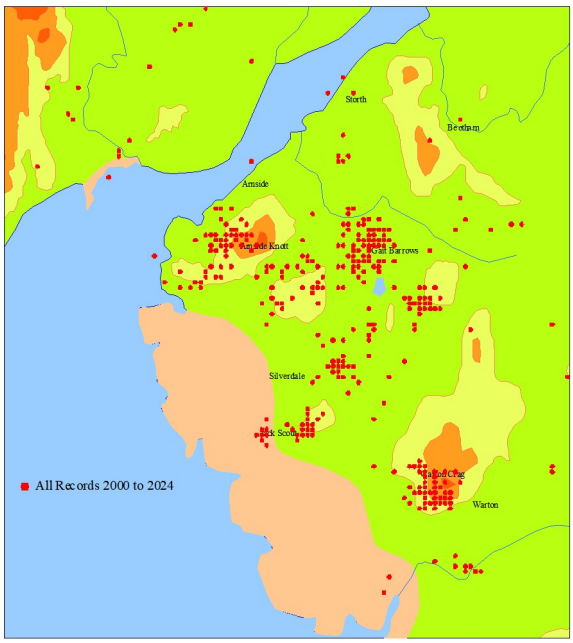
Large Skipper (Ochlodes sylvanus)



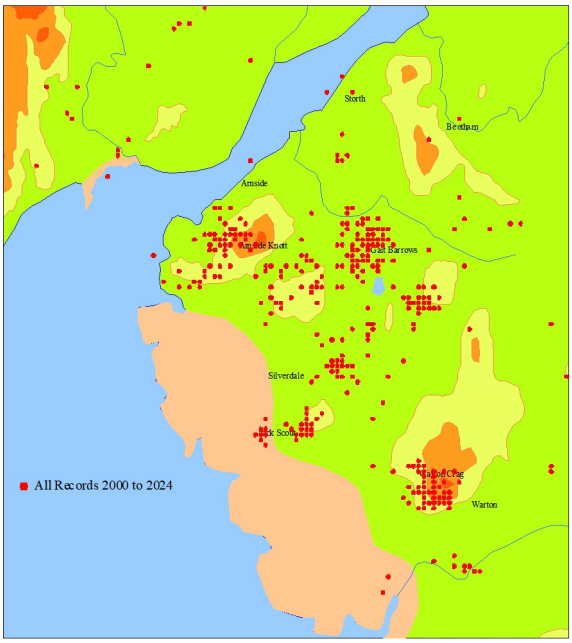
The Whites & Yellows

One of the first butterflies to emerge in the year is the Orange-tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*); males with their bright orange wing-tips can be seen from early-April onwards. They are widely distributed across the region being particularly common in damp hedgerows and meadows. Their numbers have shown a steady and gradual increase over the last twenty-five years which accounts for the 47% increase presented in Chart 4. Possibly, the wetter conditions over recent years have been favourable for this species.

Orange-tip (Anthocharis cardamines)

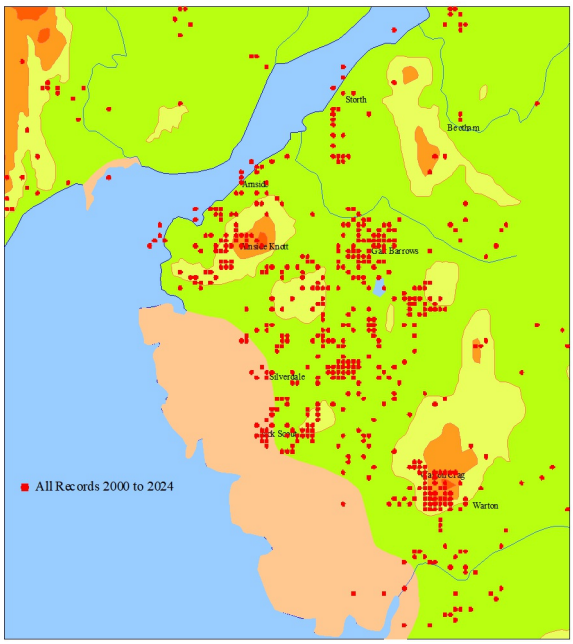


Large White (Pieris brassicae)



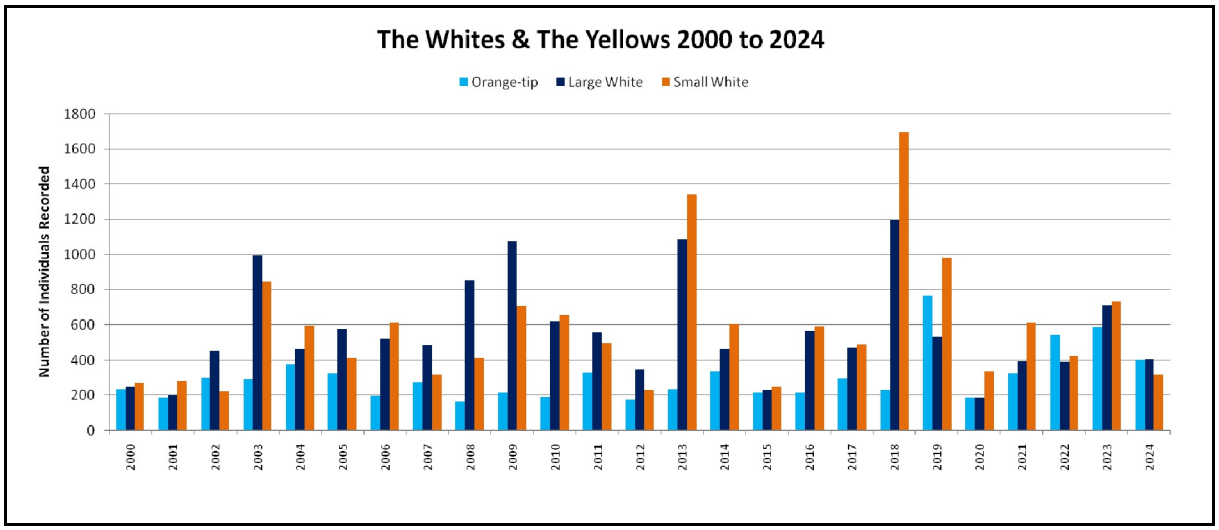
The Large White (*Pieris brassicae*) has shown a small decrease of 13% this century but still has a healthy population. It is widely distributed across the National Landscape. Although out of the date range for this report, 2025 was an exceptionally good year for the Large White across the whole of Lancashire including Arnside and Silverdale.

Small White (Pieris rapae)

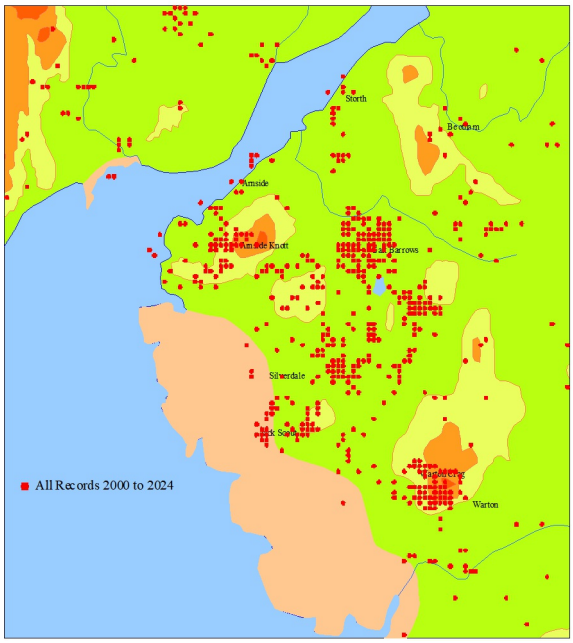


The Small White (*Pieris rapae*) has increased in abundance across Arnside and Silverdale during this century, the recorded numbers growing by 37%. It is a widespread species and can be found in a range of urban and rural habitats. There is a clear fluctuating pattern shown in Chart 6 which seems to suggest that this species does particularly well every three to four years.

Chart 6

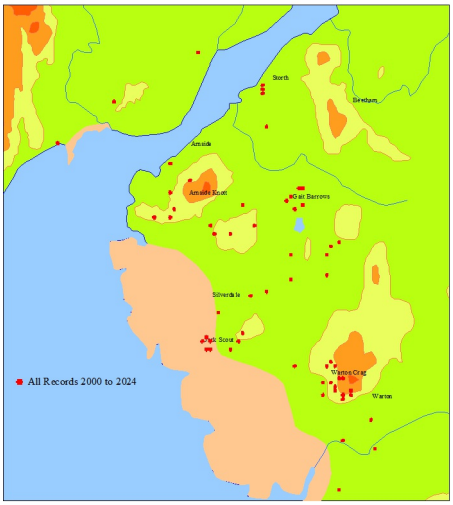


Green-veined White (Pieris napi)



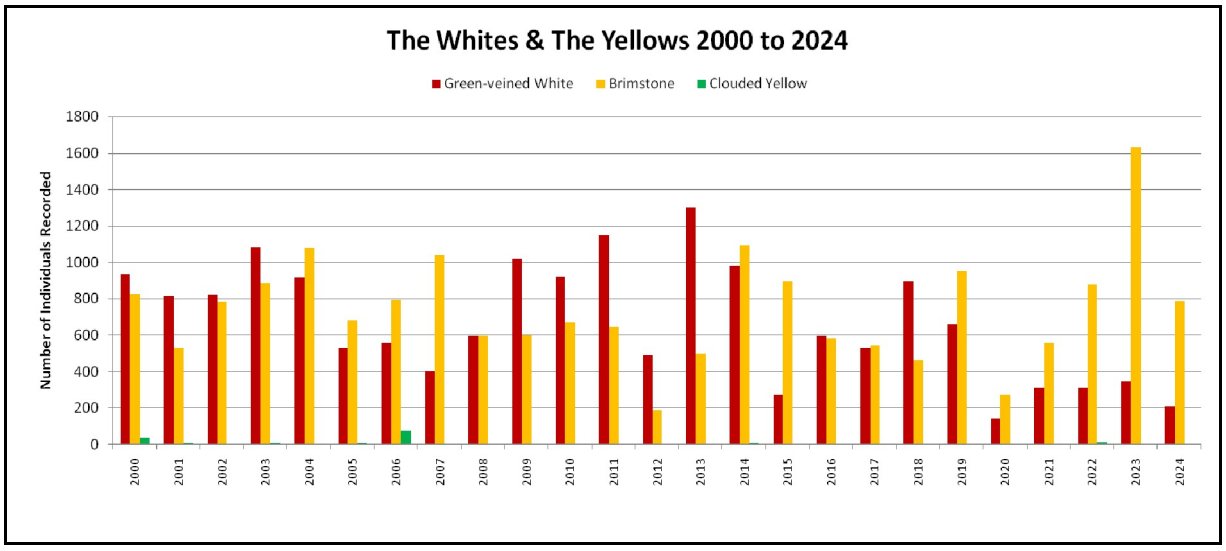
Nationally, the Green-veined White (*Pieris napi)* has declined by 28% since 1976 and by 37% over the last decade (UKBMS Summary of changes Table 2024). This decline has also been evident across Arnside and Silverdale where this species has declined by 44% since 2000 and as with national populations this has been worse over the last decade. From 2000 to 2010 average recorded individuals per year were 767; between 2015 and 2024 this dropped to 428. The Green-veined White is widely distributed across the National Landscape preferring damp areas of meadows, hedgerows and field margins as well as along brooks and ditches. As with the Large White, 2025, though not covered by this report, was a good year for this species.

Clouded Yellow (Colias croceus)

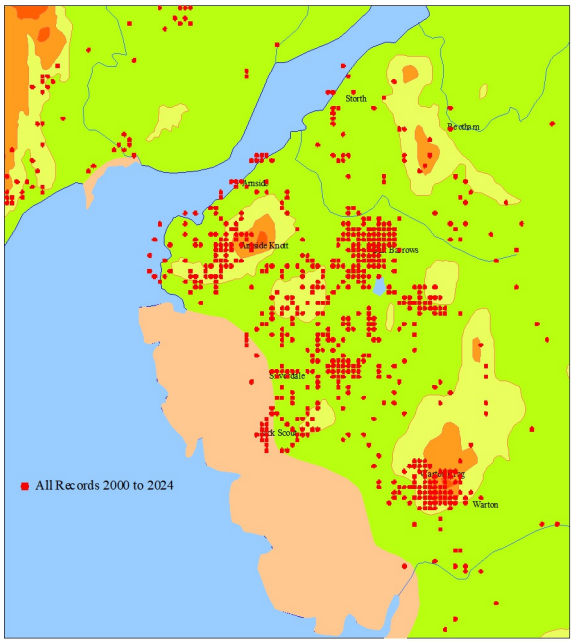


The Clouded Yellow (*Colias croceus*) is a rare migrant to Arnside & Silverdale migrating to the UK from North Africa and Europe and does not occur most years. However, in years when the weather is exceptionally favourable this species can reach us in reasonably good numbers; 36 individuals were recorded in 2000 and 73 in 2006. One year late for this report, 2025 was another good year when many observers were lucky enough to see this butterfly in the National Landscape again.

Chart 7



Brimstone (Gonepteryx rhamni)

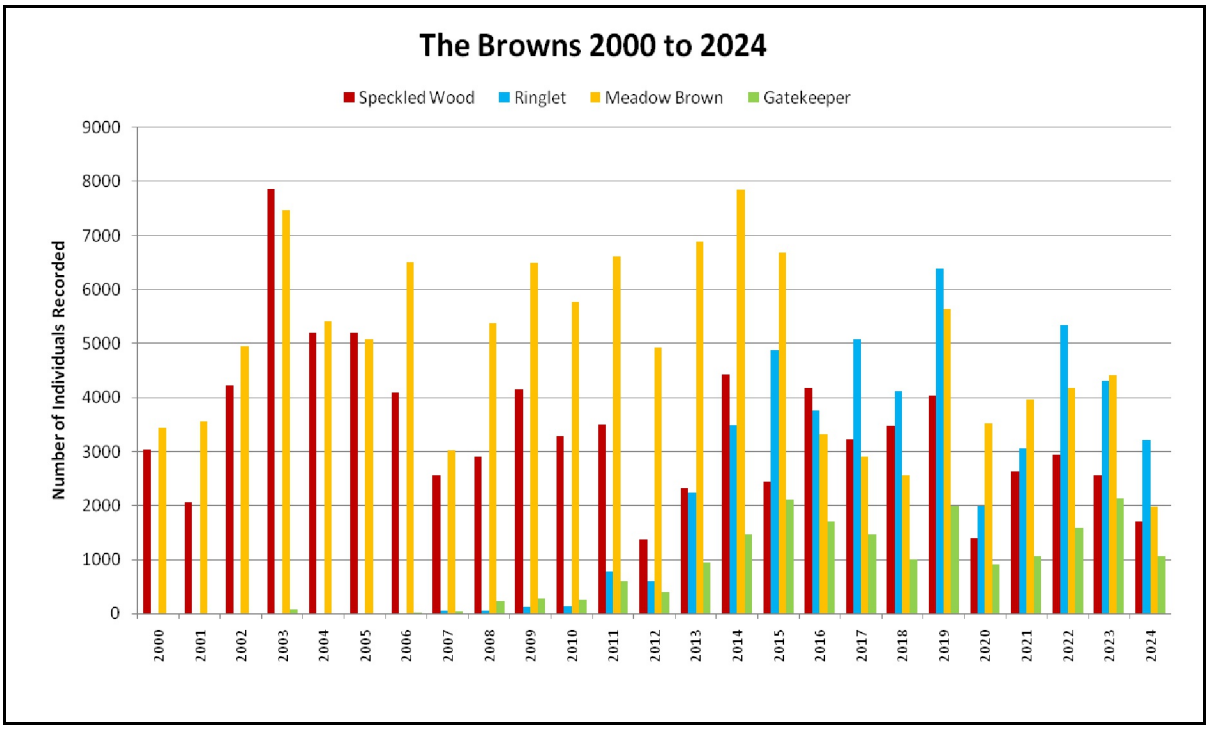


The last of the Whites & Yellows seen in this region is the Brimstone (*Gonepteryx rhamni*). Although by no means the most common species of this group, the Green-veined White and the Small White are certainly far more common, because its habitat so closely coincides with many of the transects and also with many of the areas from which the majority of our records are derived, the Brimstone is the most recorded species in this group. It is highly mobile and is commonly seen across a wide range of habitats. It overwinters as an adult and may often be tempted out by spells of warmth as early as late February and can be seen well into the latter part of Autumn. There are some quite considerable fluctuations in numbers from year to year, ranging from as low as 190 recorded individuals in 2012 to as many as 1663 in 2023. Within these variations, though, the population has remained stable over the last twenty-five years, fluctuating around an average of about 750 recorded individuals each year.

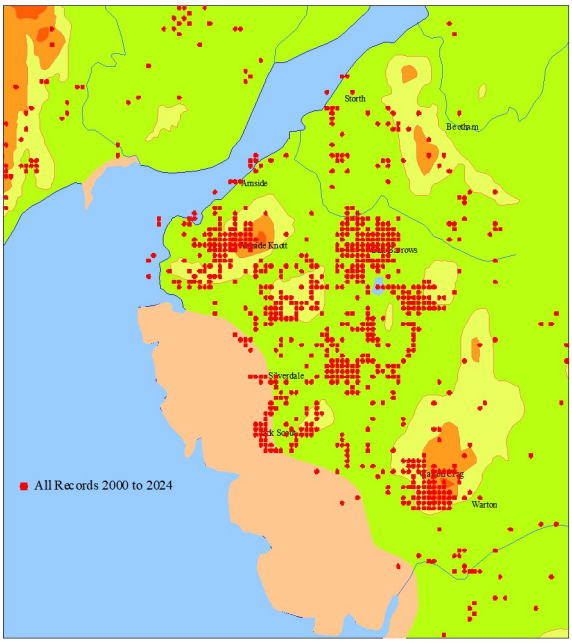
The Browns

Of the eight species of so-called 'browns' that can be found in Arnside and Silverdale, four species are now considerably more common than the other four and for this reason, rather than following the normal taxonomic listing, these species have been split into two groups with the more abundant in the first group and the less abundant in the second.

Chart 8

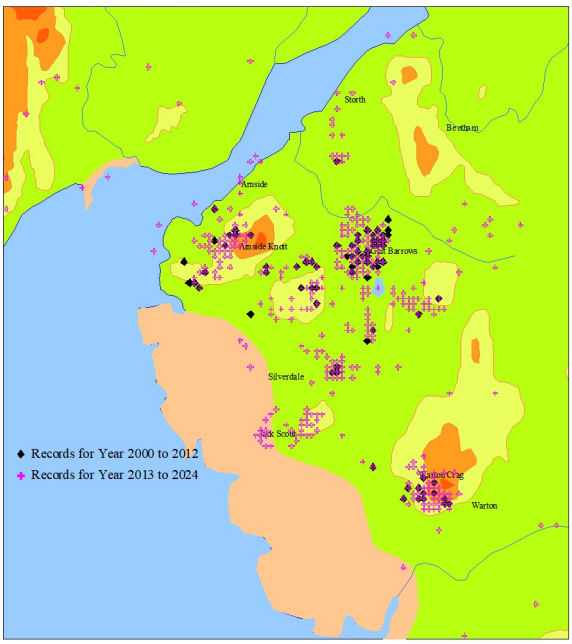


Speckled Wood (Pararge aegeria)



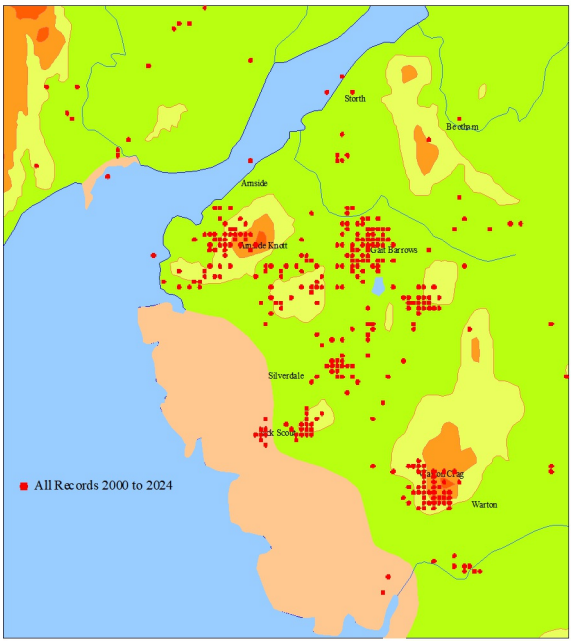
One of the most common sights in and around the woodland is the Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*) but surprisingly this species has undergone a decline of 31% in the National Landscape since 2000. Between 2000 and 2009, average recorded numbers year on year were above four thousand, with some annual totals well in excess of five thousand. Conversely, in the last ten years average numbers have been below three thousand annually and only in 2014 and 2019 have actual numbers exceeded four thousand. This is a far larger decline than has been recorded nationally. However, the species remains relatively common and has a wide distribution across the region.

Ringlet (Aphantopus hyperantus)



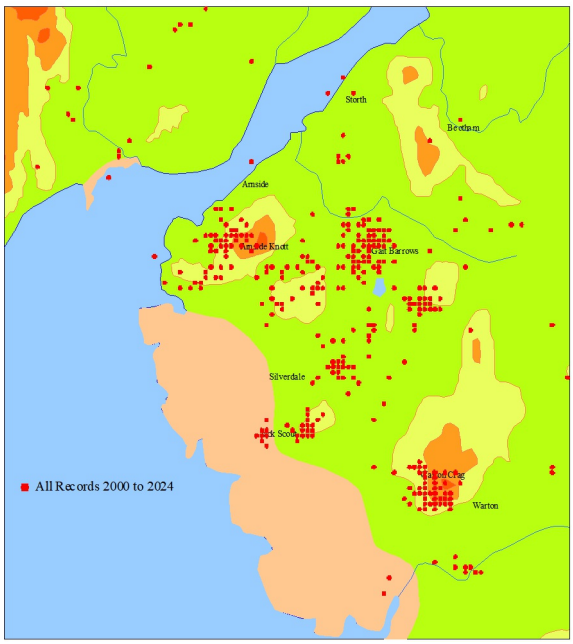
A relatively new colonist, the Ringlet (*Aphantopus hyperantus*) has spread dramatically throughout the National Landscape since its first appearance at the turn of the century. This is the reason why it does not appear on chart 4; there is very little with which to compare the ten years 2015 to 2024. Chart 8 shows however, that over the recent years the Ringlet has been as abundant as the Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*) and in some years the most recorded butterfly in the area. It is widely distributed across Arnside and Silverdale in its preferred habitat of grasslands, woodland margins and hedgerows.

Meadow Brown (Maniola jurtina)



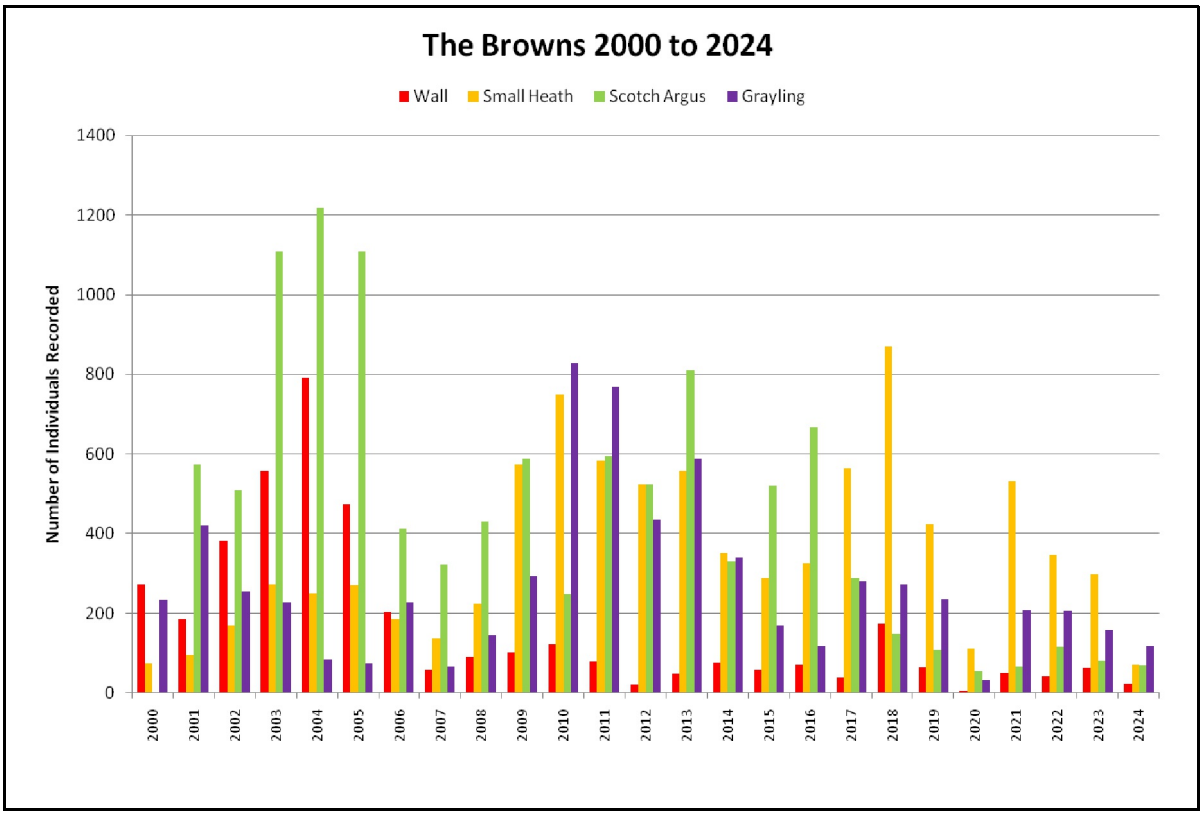
The Meadow Brown is still slightly more widespread than the Ringlet, being more likely than that species to be found in open fields and grassland. For a species that is so readily seen, it comes as a surprise that the data shows that it has actually declined by 24% here since 2000. This is in contrast to the population trend nationally, where numbers have remained very stable over the last fifty years. Nevertheless, the Meadow Brown remains very common.

Gatekeeper (Pyronia tithonus)



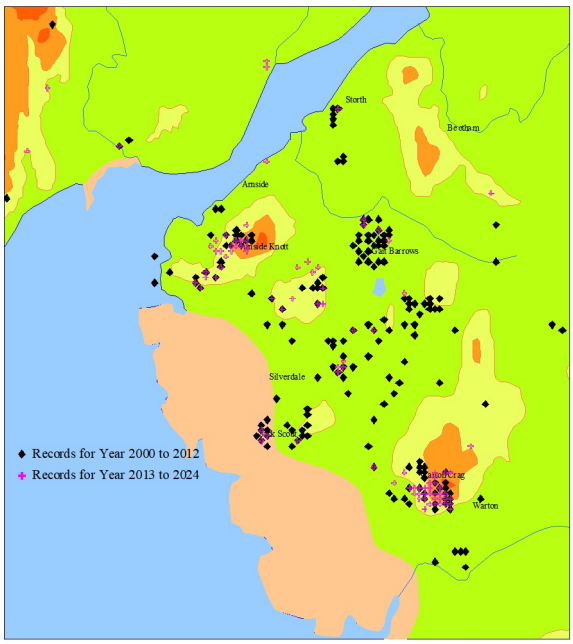
The Gatekeeper (*Pyronia tithonus*) has undergone a similar colonisation to the Ringlet, moving steadily northwards into Arnside and Silverdale. Nationally, the Gatekeeper has increased by more than 40% since the 1970s, much of which is due to this expansion of its range northwards. The species is now fairly widely distributed across the region, although the map opposite does show a concentration of records from the Arnside Knott area.

Chart 9

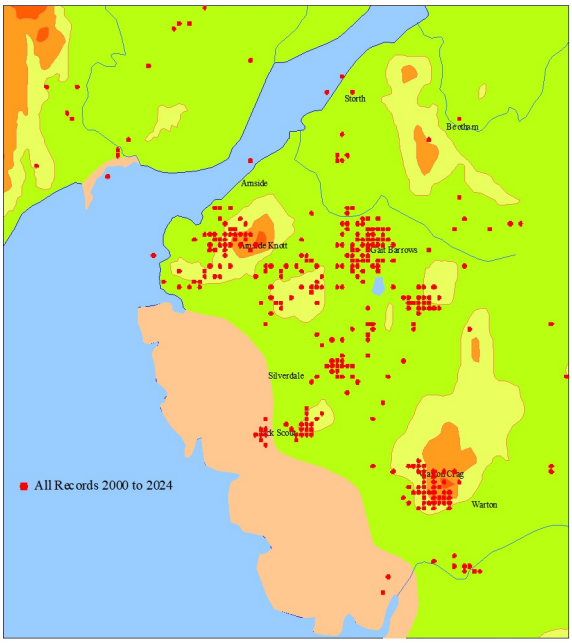


The Wall has suffered a catastrophic population decline of 86% nationally since 1976 and unfortunately this has been noticeable in Arnside and Silverdale, where there has been an 81% decline in recorded individuals (see chart 4) putting this species in the sad position of having suffered the second greatest decline of all species in the area. Although never one of the more abundant species, it was nevertheless a fairly common sight on the rough, sparse grasslands characteristic of much of Arnside and Silverdale. It is in these areas, such as on Warton Crag, that the species is now most commonly found.

Wall (Lasiommata megera)

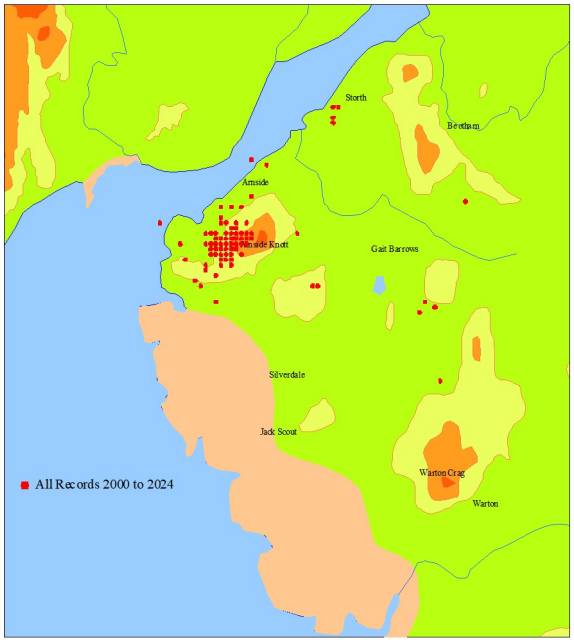


Small Heath (Coenonympha pamphilus)



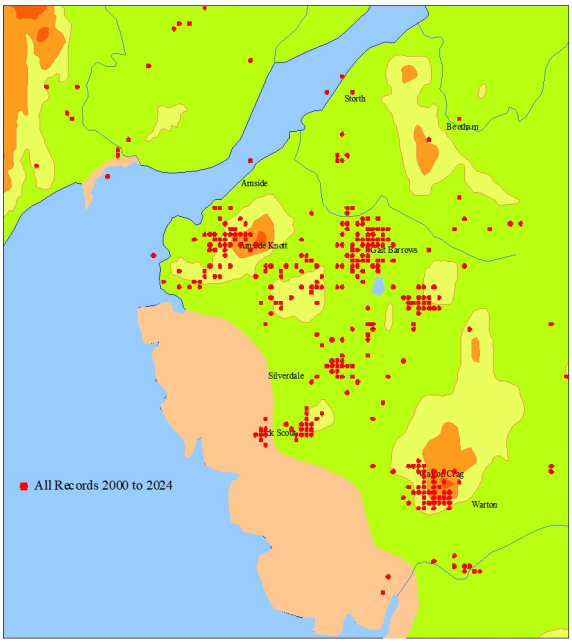
The Small Heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*) has done exceptionally well in this region since 2000 increasing by 70%. This, at first glance, appears to be in contrast to the rest of the UK where it has decreased by 48% since 1976. However, UK populations have risen by 36% in the last ten-year period which perhaps suggests that this species is recovering both in the National Landscape and in the UK. It is found on the upland grasslands of the National Landscape, particularly on Arnside Knott and Warton Crag. Populations fluctuate quite dramatically; numbers in good years can be two or three times higher than in poorer years.

Scotch Argus (Erebia aethiops)



Predominantly found in Scotland, one of only two populations of the Scotch Argus south of the border is situated at Arnside Knott. There have been other occasional records from other areas, such as on Yealand Allotment and Dick Fell, but almost all of these occurred before 2010. The population at Arnside has declined by 66% over this century and whilst the species is doing well in Scotland here at the very southern edge of its range it may sadly be one of the next two or three species lost to the region despite the efforts of conservation bodies to maintain and enhance local populations.

Grayling (Hipparchia semele)

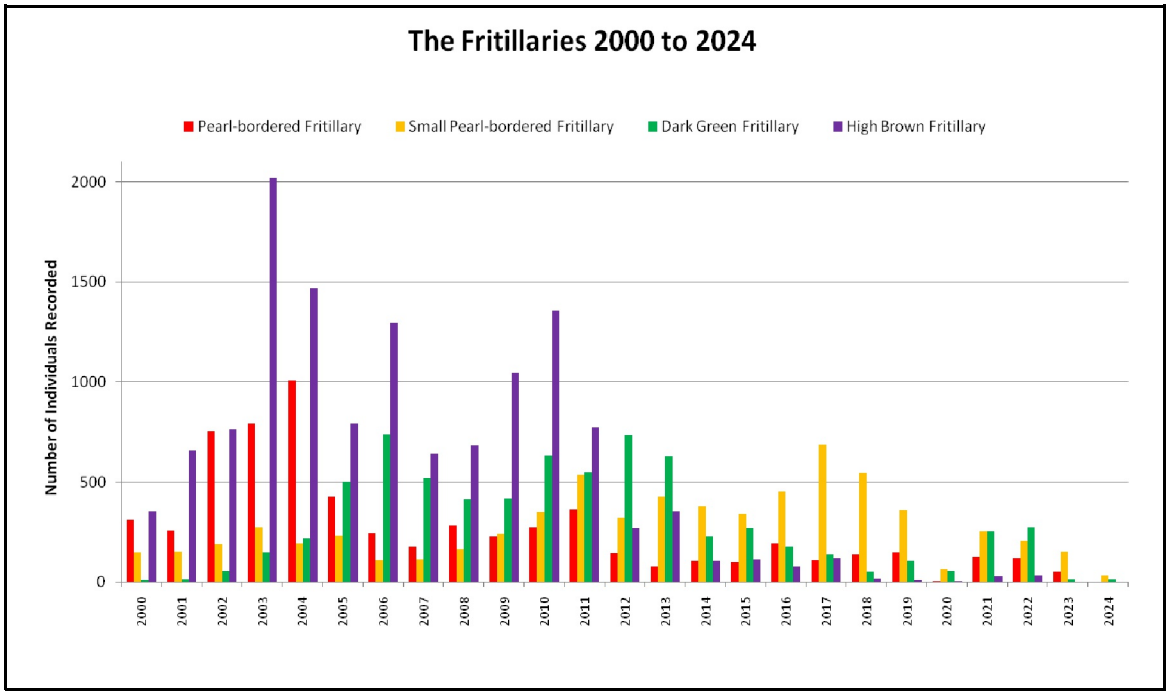


The Grayling (*Hipparchia semele*) is found on many of the sparsely vegetated limestone grasslands in the National Landscape and in these areas it can be quite a common sight. Its population has remained fairly stable throughout the 21st century, albeit with a small decline more recently.

The Fritillaries

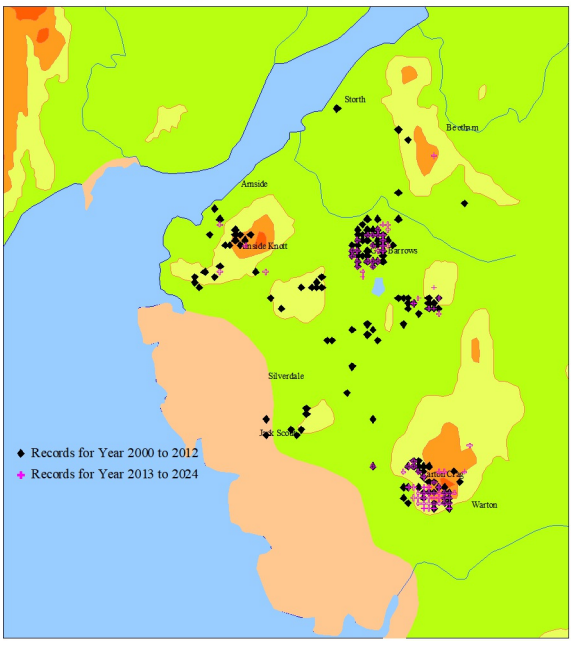
There have been five species of fritillary recorded in Arnside and Silverdale over the last twenty-five years. The Silver-washed Fritillary (*Argynnis paphia*) is primarily found in the south of the country but has been expanding its range northwards into Lancashire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire where an increasing number of individuals have been recorded. In the last twenty-five years there have been seventeen records. Interestingly, these records have come mainly at the beginning and at the end of the period 2000 to 2024 but hopefully we may be lucky enough to see more individuals of this species in the area as it continues to expand its range. Of the remaining four species sadly two of these have probably now been lost.

Chart 10

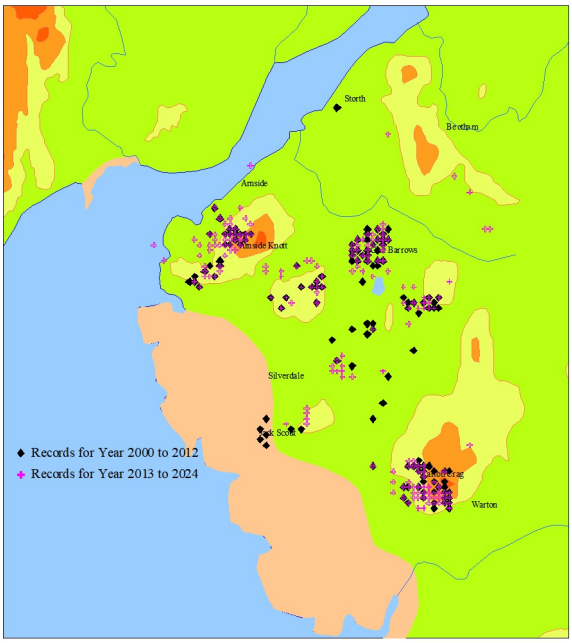


The Pearl-bordered Fritillary (*Boloria euphrosyne*) has not been recorded in the last two years (2024 & 2025) and so seems to have been lost. The species had been doing fairly well up to 2004 but after that year numbers declined dramatically and never really recovered. It did hang on up to 2023 at its strongholds on Warton Crag and Gait Barrows but the very poor, wet 2024 seems to have finished it off. Nationally, the Pearl-bordered Fritillary is one of our most threatened species and its return seems unlikely, over the short term at least.

Pearl-bordered Fritillary (Boloria euphrosyne)

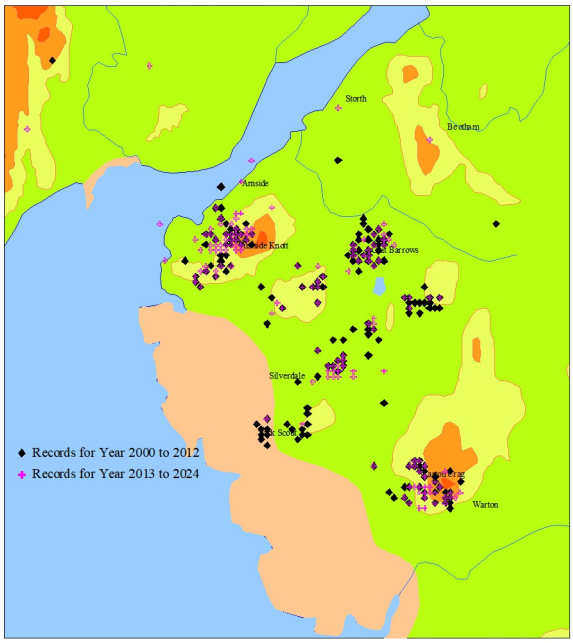


Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary (Boloria selene)



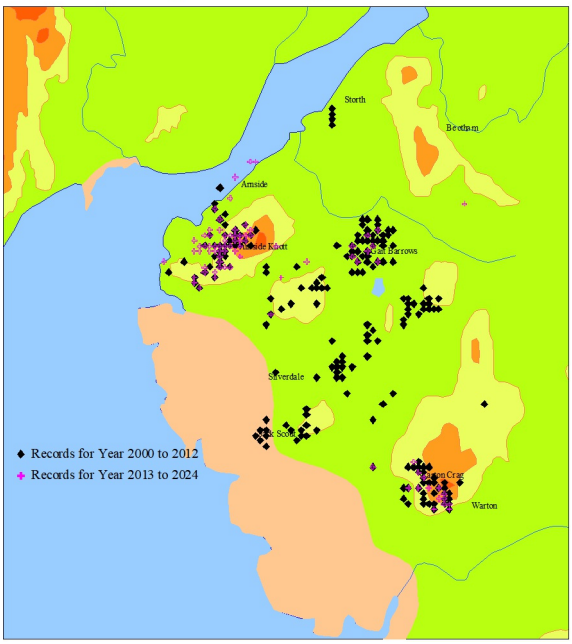
The Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary would appear to be doing very well with a 70% increase since 2000. However, this figure relies on two exceptionally good consecutive years (2017 and 2018). Nevertheless, even taking out these good years, the species is probably increasing by 25% or so in Arnside and Silverdale. This is in contrast to the rest of the UK where it has declined quite significantly. It is found on the areas of limestone grassland and woodland in the region including Eaves Wood, Warton Crag and Arnside Knott and in smaller numbers on Myers Allotment and Yealand Hall Allotment.

Dark Green Fritillary (Speyeria aglaja)



The Dark Green Fritillary (*Speyeria aglaja*) has declined particularly noticeably in the last decade, which explains the 55% decline since 2000. However, again the figures do not point to a consistent trend; numbers in the first three or four years of the century are very similar to numbers over the last ten years but there was a period between 2009 and 2014 when the species appeared to be increasing.

High Brown Fritillary (Fabriciana adippe)

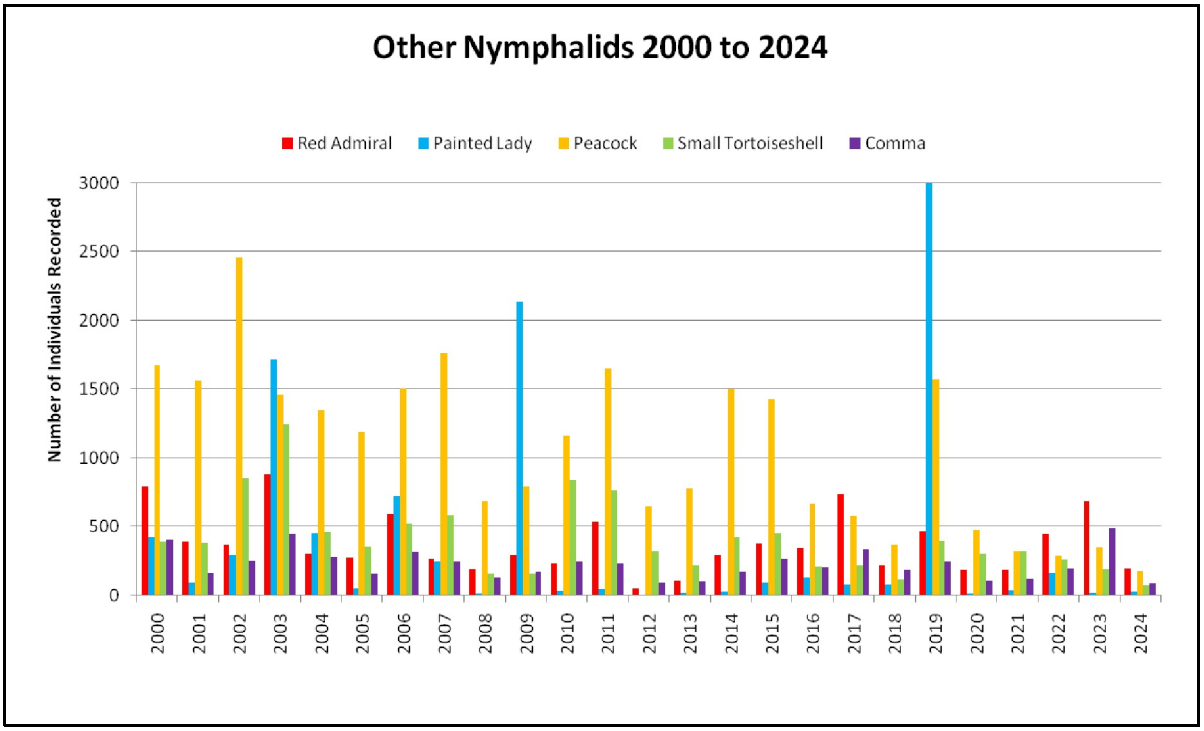


Sadly, the High Brown Fritillary (*Fabriciana adippe*), like the Pearl-bordered is now probably lost to the National Landscape. This was by far the most common fritillary in the first ten years of the century with numbers consistently twice as high as any of the other fritillaries and in some years more than two thousand recorded individuals. In the last three years there have only been one verified record of High Brown Fritillary in the region.

The Other Nymphalids

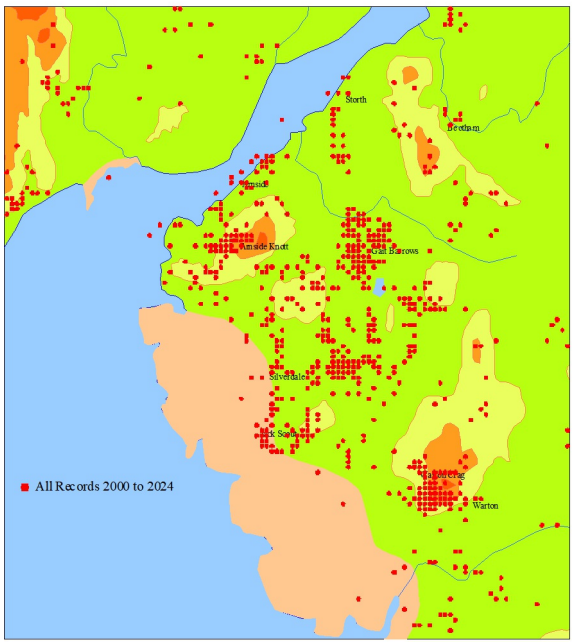
The five other Nymphalids recorded in the area include four of the most commonly seen and easily recognised of all our butterfly species. All occur in good numbers and yet all have experienced at least some degree of decline during the last twenty-five years.

Chart 11

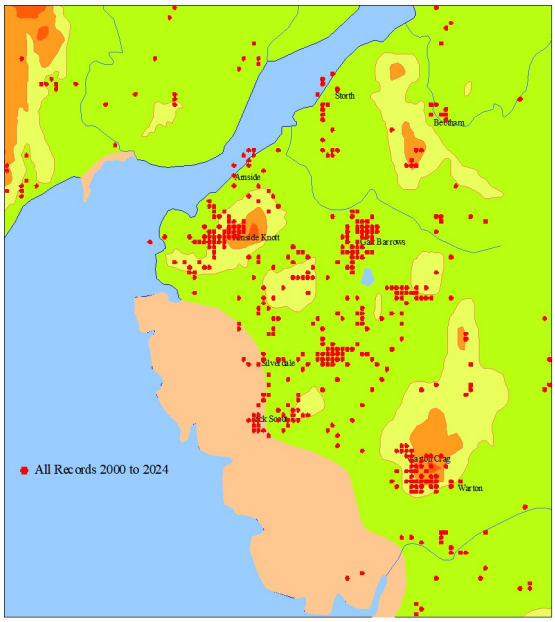


The Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) populations fluctuate from year to year depending on the amount of inward migration from Europe and North Africa, which is itself dependent on weather conditions. In good years, recorded individuals are well in excess of 500 whereas in a poor year they can struggle to get into double figures. The species can be found in almost any habitat and is widely distributed across the whole of Arnside and Silverdale.

Red Admiral (Vanessa atalanta)

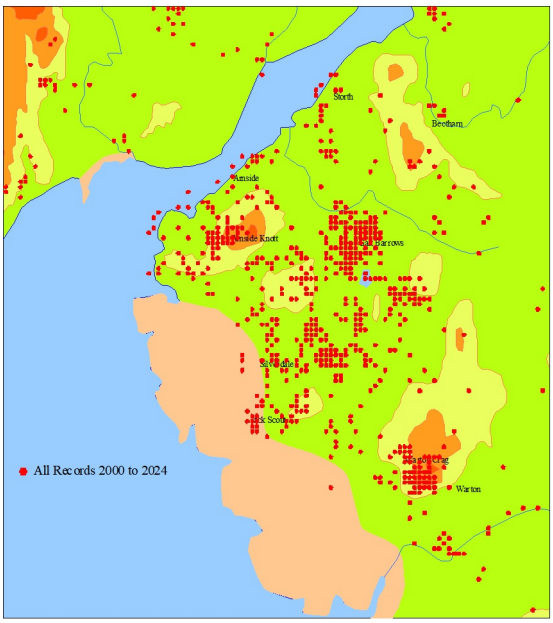


Painted Lady (Vanessa cardui)



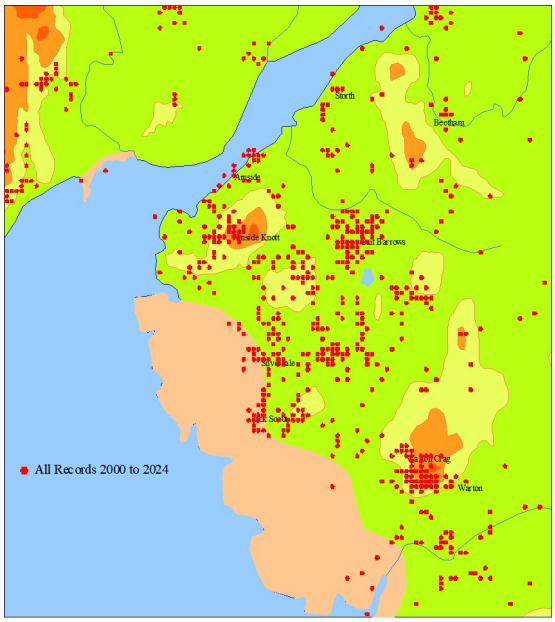
In the way that Red Admiral numbers depend from year to year on migration patterns this is doubly or triply true for the Painted Lady (Vanessa cardui). When conditions are favourable, enormous numbers of this species arrive in the UK from as far afield as sub-Saharan Africa. The chart above illustrates this, with the years 2009 and 2019 so-called *cardui* years when numbers were exceptionally high (to prevent distorting the chart the y-axis has been set to three thousand but the actual number is annotated on to the chart). In other years, numbers can be very low; indeed in 2012 only six individuals were recorded. When they do arrive, they can be found in almost any habitat.

Peacock (Aglais io)



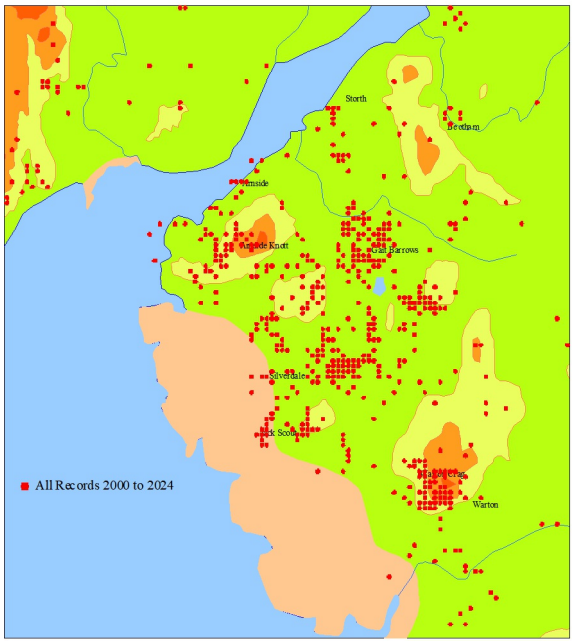
The Peacock is the most commonly recorded species of this group and up until very recently it was frequently recorded in numbers in excess of 1,000. However, as with the other members of this group the last five-year period especially, has seen a quite large decline; all these years have seen the lowest numbers recorded this century. It is these last few years that explain the 57% decline shown on chart 4. Across the UK, Peacock populations are considered to be stable and it is to be hoped the populations in this region will recover. As a non-habitat specialist, this species occurs widely across the National Landscape.

Small Tortoiseshell (Aglais urticae)



The Small Tortoiseshell has declined by 50% over this century but, unlike with the Peacock, this decline has been a constant feature for the last fifteen years - a trend that has, to some extent, been evident on a national scale. The reasons for this species's decline are various but are linked to climate change and its effect on growing periods of its main food plant, the nettle (*Urtica dioica*). It however still has a wide distribution and can be found in a range of habitats.

Comma (Polygonia c-album)

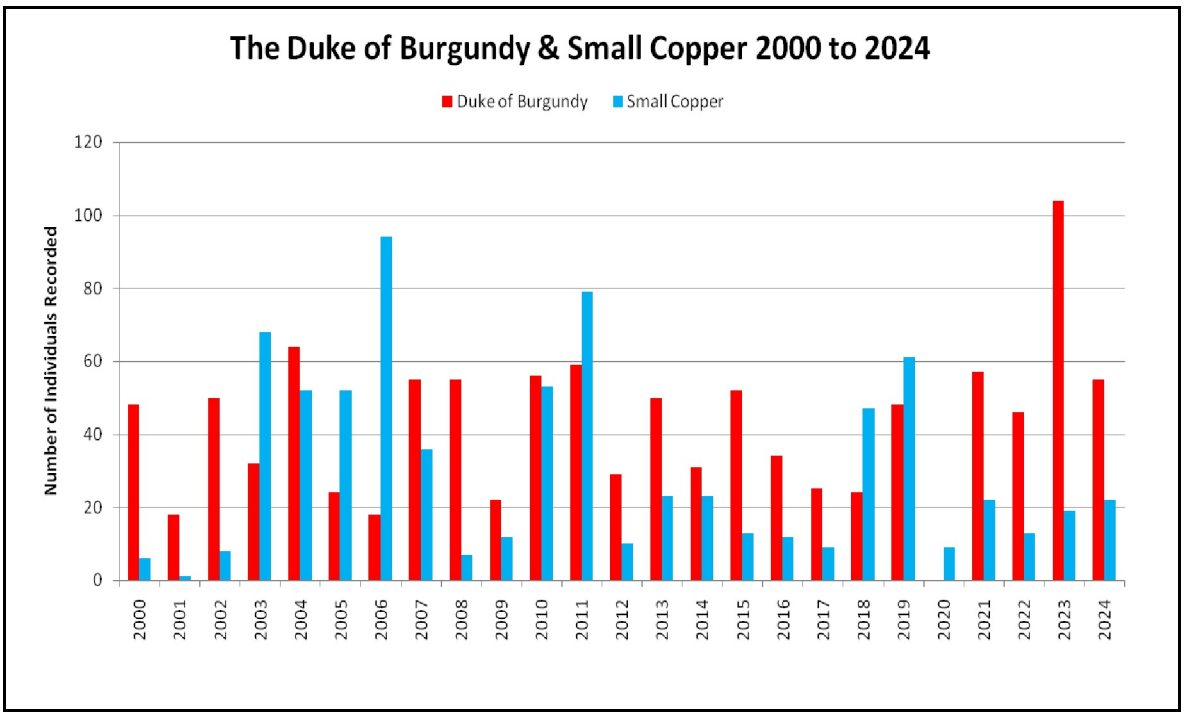


Whilst not as numerous as some of the other species in this group, the Comma (Polygonia c-album) is still a common sight across much of Arnside and Silverdale, where it can be seen at woodland edges and glades and along hedgerows in the first half of the year. In the later part of the year, it is mainly these adults that move into parks and gardens to feed on flowers such as Buddleia (*Buddleja davidii*) to build up fat reserves for the winter hibernation. There is a second form, the paler *hutchinsoni* form, which go on to produce a second brood of the year, but the *hutchinsoni* adults usually only survive for a few weeks. Its population has remained fairly stable for the whole of this century.

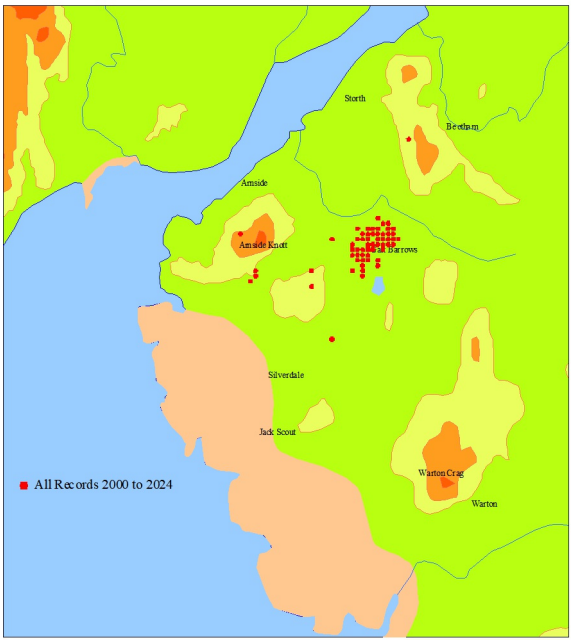
The Duke of Burgundy & Small Copper

These two species have been artificially placed together to enable easier grouping of the final two groups. The first of these is the only UK representative of the Metalmarks (Riodinidae) family of butterfly species and the second is a member of the Lycaenidae (as are the hairstreaks and blues), but the only member of the coppers found here.

Chart 12

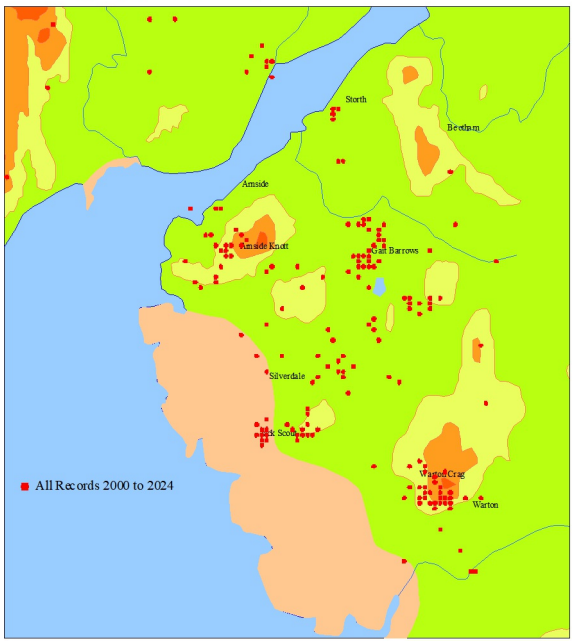


Duke of Burgundy (Hamearis lucina)



Almost all of the records of the Duke of Burgundy (*Hamearis lucina*) are from the last remaining colony in the National Landscape, which is itself one of the few remaining colonies north of the M4. This is another of our species which is in a critical position and is classified as vulnerable on the GB Red List (2022). It is therefore very pleasing that this small colony at Gait Barrows has persisted so well over the last twenty-five years. Although the iconic nature of the species undoubtedly attracts more than its fair share of visitors and therefore possibly leads to relatively more records than for other species, it should hopefully remain part of our butterfly assemblage for many years.

Small Copper (Lycaena phlaeas)



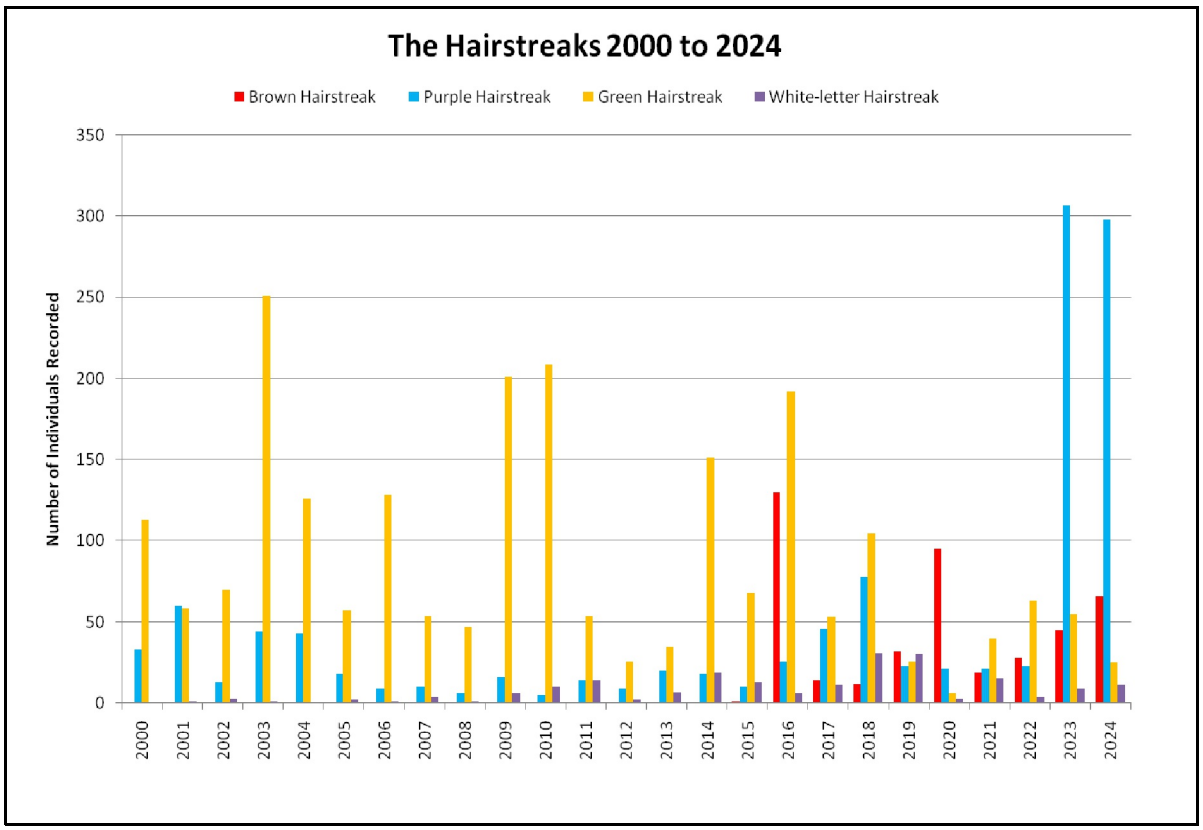
The Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*) is one of the few butterfly species that is less common here than in many other parts of Lancashire. This is quite surprising as this is a species that prefers open, warm and relatively dry sites of rough grassland, coastal areas and woodland clearings which would lead one to expect it to occur more frequently than it does. The number of recorded individuals rarely exceeds 50 in any given year, although there have been a few good years when numbers have been higher. However, these good years are often followed by a series of poorer years, possibly caused by a sequence of cool, wet breeding seasons. Overall, the Small Copper has suffered a 32% decline this century. On a more positive note, it can be found quite widely across the National Landscape and odd individuals of this butterfly can turn up almost anywhere.

The Hairstreaks

There were only three species of hairstreak present in Arnside and Silverdale until a fourth species miraculously turned up about a decade ago. Population trends of all four species are difficult to analyse as there are

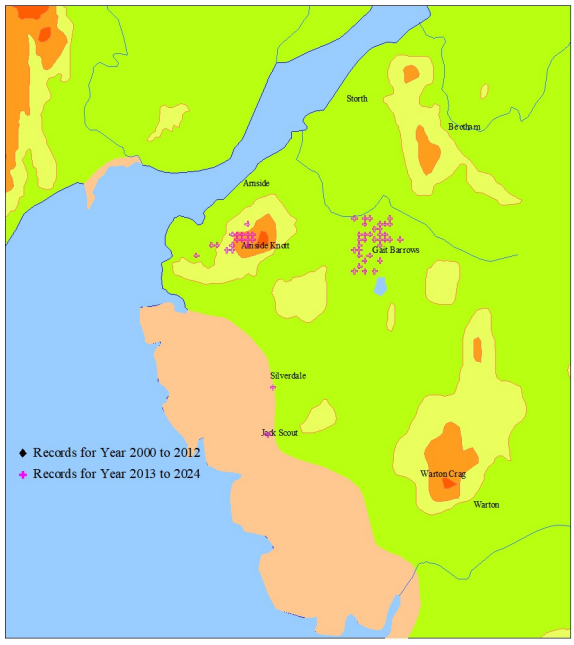
particular circumstances for each species that make any global comparison difficult - this is why most don't appear on Chart 4.

Chart 13

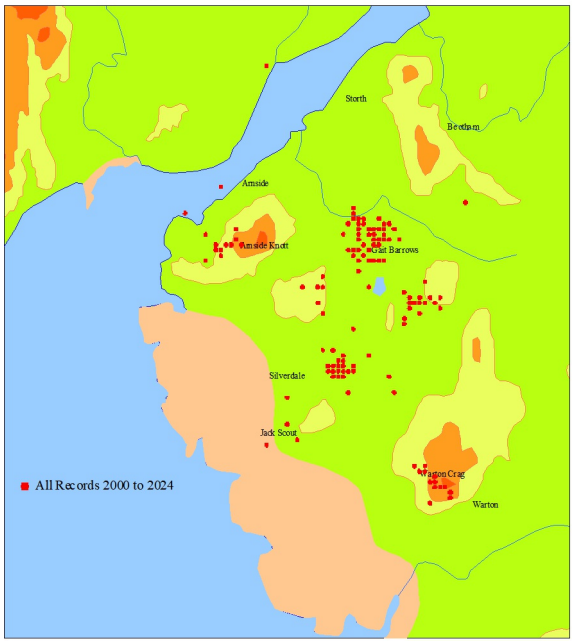


The Brown Hairstreak was first recorded in the National Landscape in 2015 when a single individual was recorded at Gait Barrows (although there are other anecdotal records from a few years earlier). The following year there were 130 recorded individuals, again at Gait Barrows and nearby Coldwell Parrock; 123 of these were of eggs. It is believed that these populations stemmed from an unofficial release but the species has prospered and is now actively encouraged by local conservation organisations. Its range is still largely confined to Gait Barrows and Coldwell Parrock, but individuals have been recorded further afield; in the last few years at Arnside Knott and in 2025 there were two separate records of individuals from Warton Crag.

Brown Hairstreak (Thecla betulae)

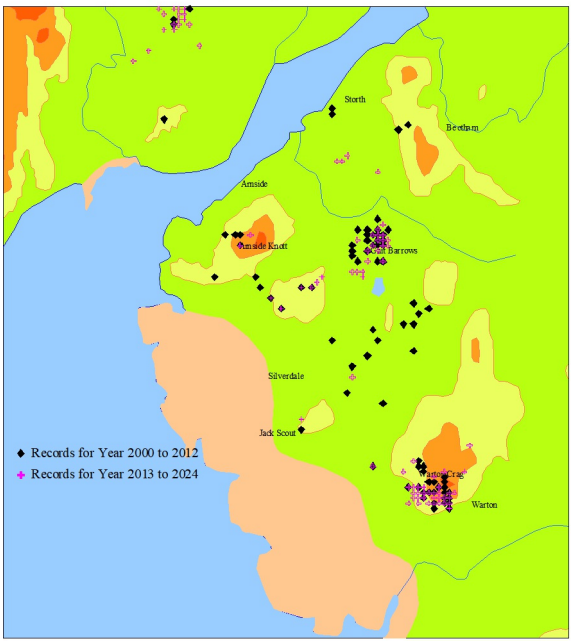


Purple Hairstreak (Favonius quercus)



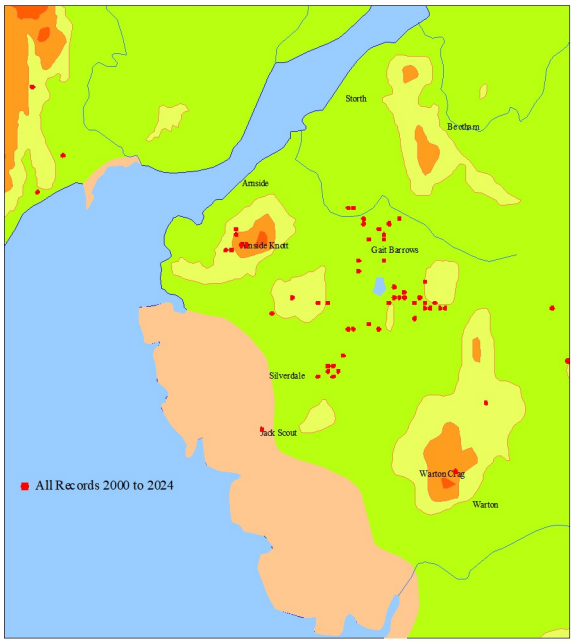
At first glance, the Purple Hairstreak (*Favonius quercus*) would appear to have undergone a quite spectacular population explosion in the last two years; however things are not that straightforward. The Purple Hairstreak has historically been greatly under recorded, despite being considered by many to be the most common of the UK hairstreaks. This is because it spends most of its time high in the canopy of oak trees (*Quercus spp*), often in small colonies centred on just one or two large trees and is therefore often missed. Certainly, normal transect routes (from which the majority of butterfly records in Arnside and Silverdale are derived) tend to miss this species. It was to try to remedy this problem that specialist Purple Hairstreak transects were established. There are two such transects here, one at Myers Allotment and one at Coldwell Parrock, and it is these two transects that account for the massive increase in recorded individuals. Doubtless they were already there before the recording effort began (and probably are also in very many other locations across the region) but this concerted effort has quantified their existence.

Green Hairstreak (Callophrys rubi)



Another species that is probably under recorded, but to a lesser extent, is the Green Hairstreak (*Callophrys rubi*) but in this case its being so well camouflaged, its early appearance as an adult and its preference in the north of England for moorland habitat, are all factors which likely lead to it being overlooked. The Green Hairstreak has declined by 43% over the last twenty-five years in the National Landscape; this is a far greater decline than across the UK as a whole where it has declined by about 10% over the same period. In our region, it is now most commonly recorded at Warton Crag and around Gait Barrows. This is quite a contraction from its range pre-2010 as can be seen from the distribution map.

White-letter Hairstreak (Satyrium w-album)

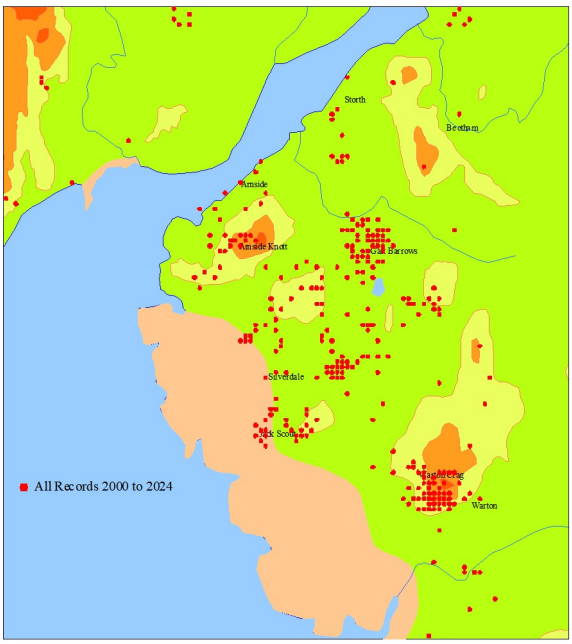


The fourth of the hairstreaks is the White-letter Hairstreak (*Satyrium w-album*). It is difficult to assess the population trend of this species, firstly because numbers of recorded individuals are quite low, especially in the early part of the century, but also because awareness of the species has increased over the last ten to fifteen years. It is now one those 'must-see' species that people make a dedicated effort to find. This may explain some of the dramatic increase in records over the last ten years or so. However, numbers did crash in the twentieth century due to the demise of so many of the Elm trees which are the larval food plant of this species. Nationally, populations have stabilised and may even have increased slightly which seems to be reflected in the National Landscape but nevertheless its distribution is very patchy.

The Blues

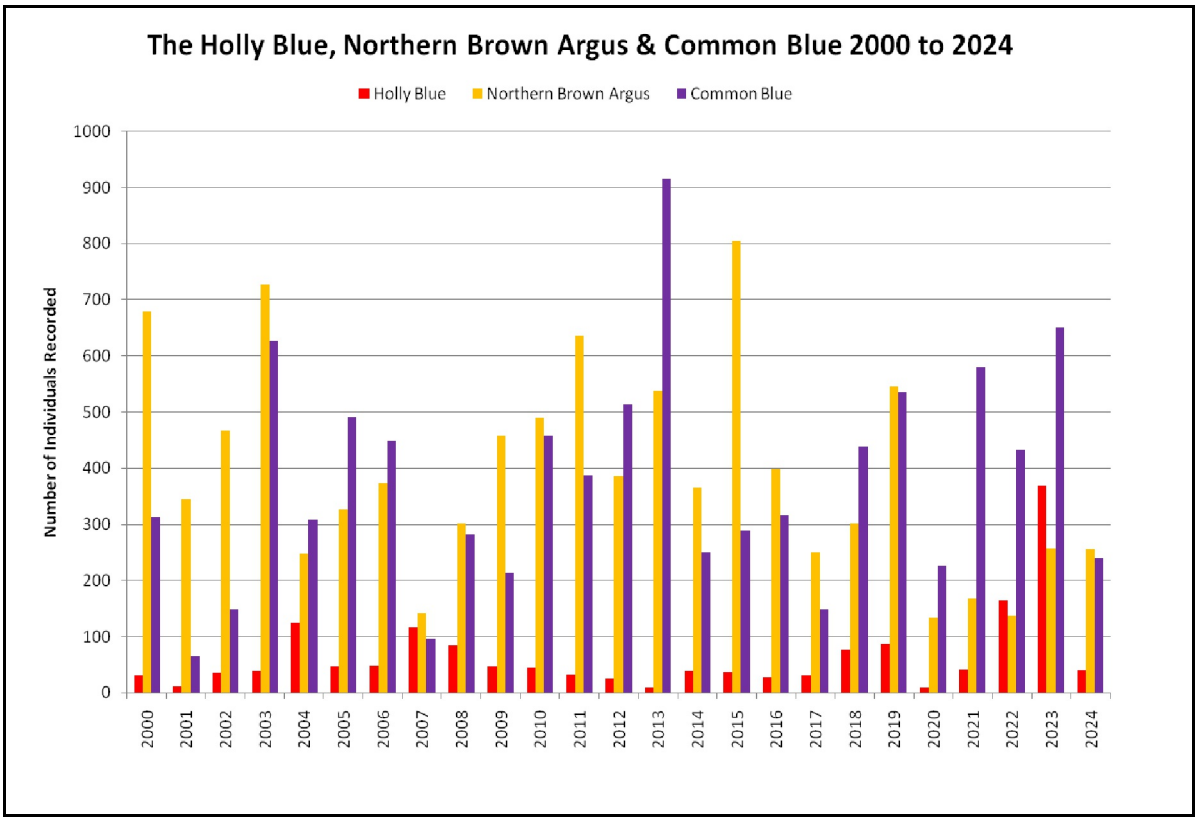
There are three blues regularly recorded in the National Landscape, two of which are a common sight, the third less so. Two of the three are increasing in numbers, the third decreasing.

Holly Blue (Celastrina argiolus)



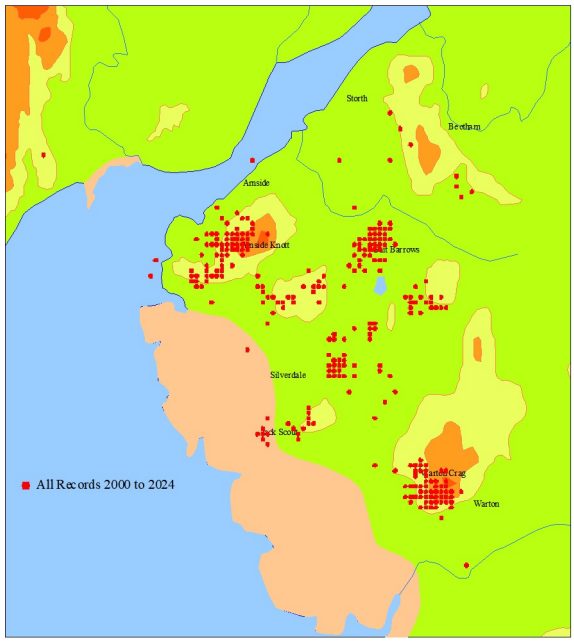
The Holly Blue (*Celastrina argiolus*) has increased by 51% this century, one of the few species that is increasing in numbers. Populations are known to fluctuate quite dramatically, thought to be due to the levels of parasitism from the ichneumon wasp (*Listrodomus nycthemerus*) which is clearly demonstrated on chart 13. Until 2021, these fluctuations seemed to swing from between numbers of recorded individuals in the low teens to numbers reaching around one hundred; 2023 and 2024 bucked this trend with numbers reaching 169 and then 369 respectively, the latter being by far the best year for this species this century. The Holly Blue can be found anywhere its main larval food plants of Holly and Ivy occur and so has a widespread distribution across the region.

Chart 14

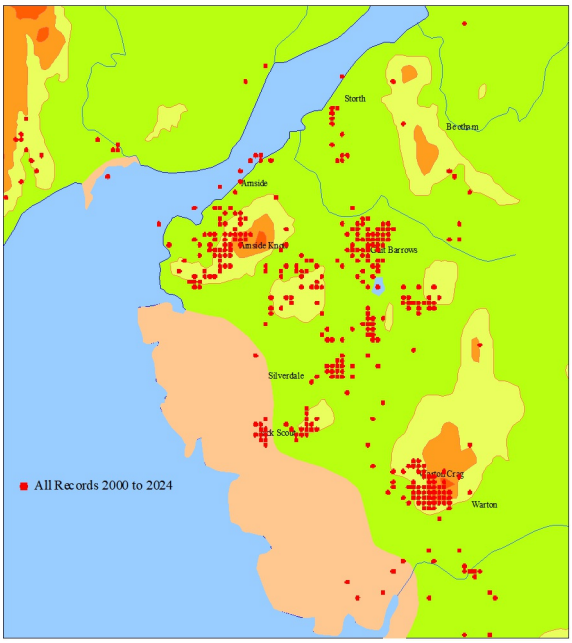


The Northern Brown Argus (*Aricia artaxerxes*) is at the very southern edge of its range in the National Landscape, being primarily a Scottish species. It has declined by 20% over the last twenty-five years and where it was once more common than the Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*) the latter is now the more common of the two species. Nevertheless, the Northern Brown Argus is still fairly easy to see at Warton Crag, Arnside Knott and Gait Barrows where there is plenty of the limestone grassland which it prefers. Unlike its cousin, the Common Blue, it is single-brooded and most likely to be seen in the high summer months of June and July.

Northern Brown Argus (Aricia artaxerxes)



Common Blue (Polyommatus icarus)



The Common Blue is also found on the limestone grasslands of Warton Crag, Arnside Knott and Gait Barrows, as well as in the meadows and woodlands and along the coastal grasslands of the region, almost anywhere in fact in which the main larval food plant of Common bird's-foot-trefoil is found. It has increased in numbers steadily since 2000 which is contrary to the national trend. This is undoubtedly due, at least in part, to the efforts of conservation bodies to maintain and enhance grassland habitats across Arnside and Silverdale and with continued effort the Common Blue should continue to be a common sight across the area.