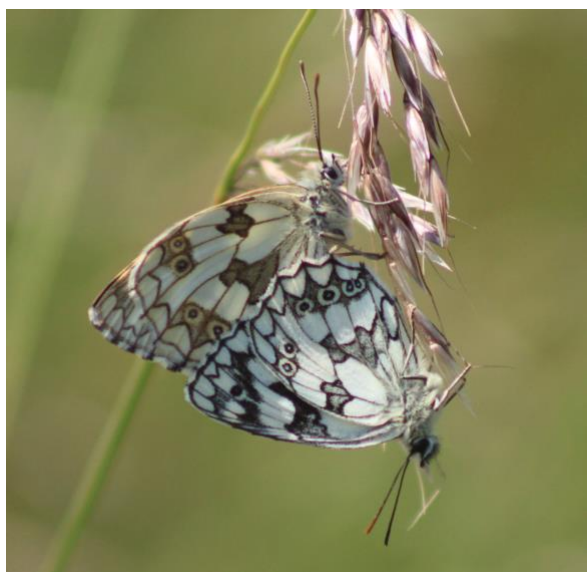


Marbled White Count 2026



Thank you to everyone that contributed their time to counting Marbled Whites this year! Together, these volunteers monitored 10 fields which cover our different management types, ranging from herbal leys, agroforestry, grassland restoration, wildflowers, and fallow. They walked the agreed upon transect once a week for 6 weeks during the height of the flight season. We were a little late getting the survey up and running in time to capture the start of the flight season – all learnings to apply next year. This is our third year of counting Marbled Whites as a community.

For reference, the week numbers coincide with the following dates, which align with UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme weeks:

Week 12: 17-23 June

Week 13: 24-30 June

Week 14: 1-7 July

Week 15: 8-14 July

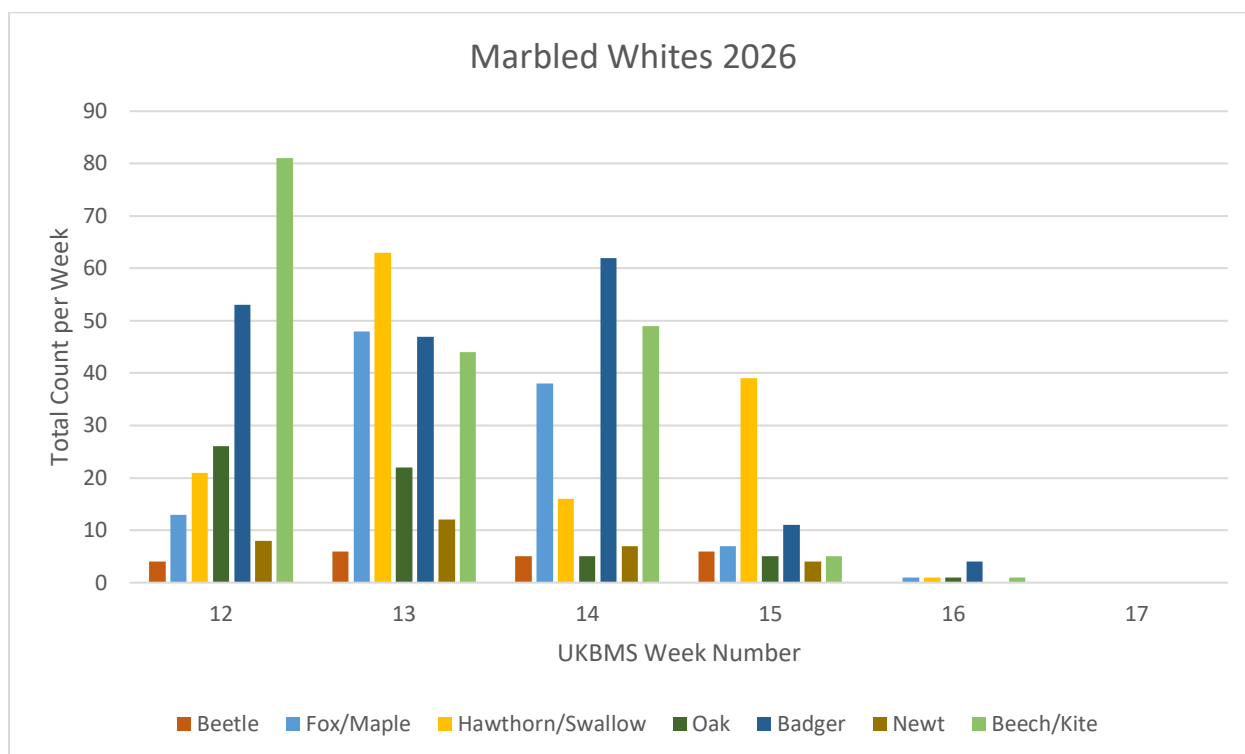
Week 16: 15-21 July

Week 17: 22-28 July

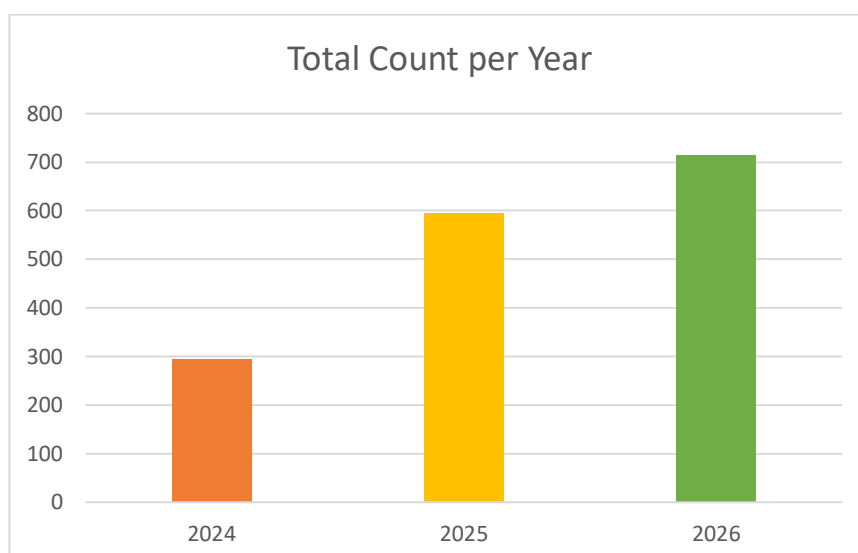
What did they find?

The single species count across the six weeks totalled 715 Marbled Whites. The graph below shows the total count per field each week.

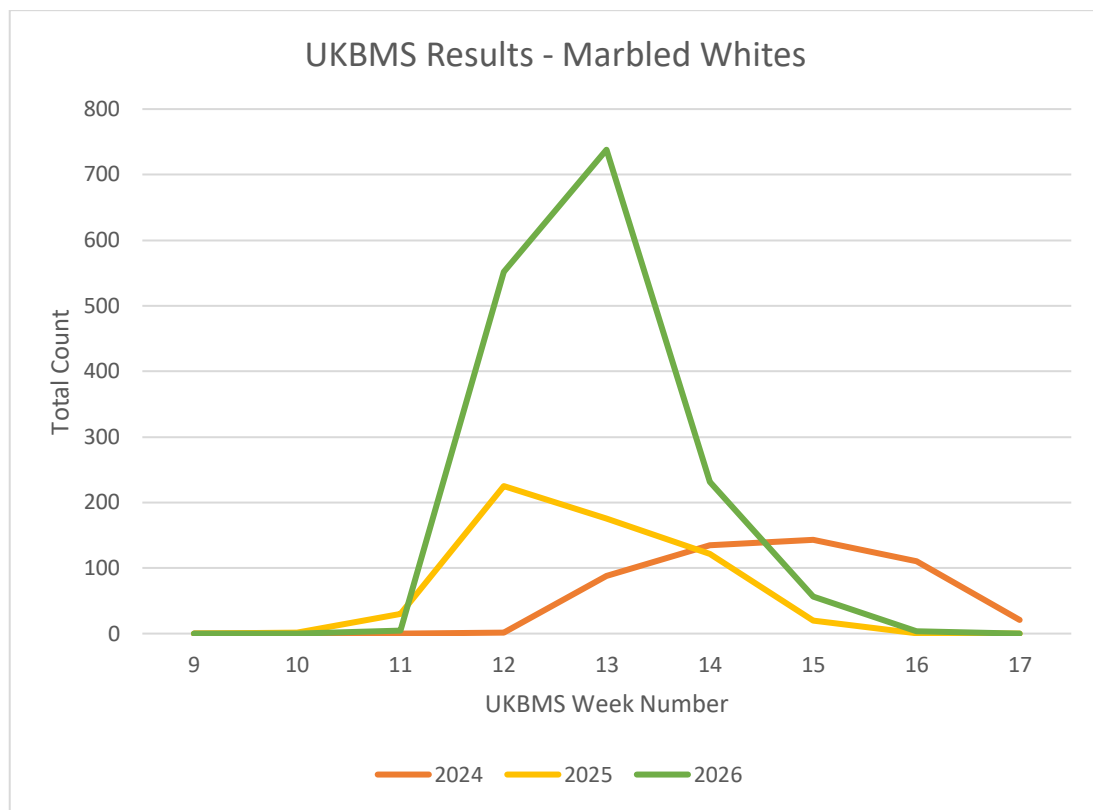




It's hard to compare years as effort has been varied across the years so do take the following yearly comparison with a grain of salt. But it gives us a loose idea and shows that numbers are increasing. Also, as each section and field are different sizes, it's quite difficult to compare field to field counts. We can't say for certain if higher numbers correlated with different management.



The single species counts mirrored the results we found in our UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme weekly surveys, seeing numbers peak during the week of 26 June (UKBMS Week 13).



This graph tells an interesting story, not only of increasing numbers of Marbled Whites, but also of earlier emergence and a shorter, faster flight season.

A total of 715 marbled whites were recorded by volunteers over 6 weeks this year, compared to 595 in 2025 and 294 in 2024. Numbers peaked in late-June, much earlier than the peak in 2024. This earlier peak was likely due to a warm and dry Spring and Summer, which saw these butterflies having a stable but very short season. These past 3 summers have been out of the ordinary, and with climate change we might not have 'ordinary' anymore. So having these datasets are extremely helpful in tracking how nature responds.

The young larvae feed on fine grasses, notably Red Fescue, but graduate to coarser grasses as they develop. Adults feed on nectar from clovers, knapweeds, thistles, Wild Marjoram, Wild Thyme and Yarrow (UK Butterflies). Our different management of grassland, wildflower margins, herbal leys with cattle grazing, and fallow fields provide a diverse sward of food plants for the different stages of this butterfly's life cycle. The maturing of these habitats,



combined with weather, can likely be the contributing factors to why we're seeing such a steady increase.

Stay tuned for our yearly results of the UKBMS survey! And do get in touch if you'd like to be involved in next year's surveys.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the fantastic volunteers who made this monitoring possible:

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Mally Findlater

Mick Peacey

