

Chequered Skipper Survey 2013 – The Results

Due to the success and interest in this survey in 2012 we decided to repeat it again last year. The aim remained the same to target recording at the top 100 1km squares that were predicted, through computer modelling, to be the most suitable for the butterfly in Scotland, but where it had not previously been recorded. As last year details of the survey including forms, methodology and maps showing the location of each of the one hundred 1km squares, were promoted online at www.butterfly-conservation.org/chequeredskipper The top 100 squares remained the same to encourage repeat visits to squares visited last year to help determine the detectability of the species and see if Chequered Skipper is easily missed through single visits.

In 2012 over 50 volunteers signed up to take part, resulting in visits to 49 squares, which included repeat visits by different surveyors to some squares, with Chequered Skipper recorded in just over 40% of all visits. 36 different squares, out of the 100 targeted, were surveyed with the butterfly being found in 15 of these, but not in 21. Chequered Skipper was also recorded in an additional 15 new 1km squares, where it had not previously been recorded, although these squares were not part of the targeted 100 squares.

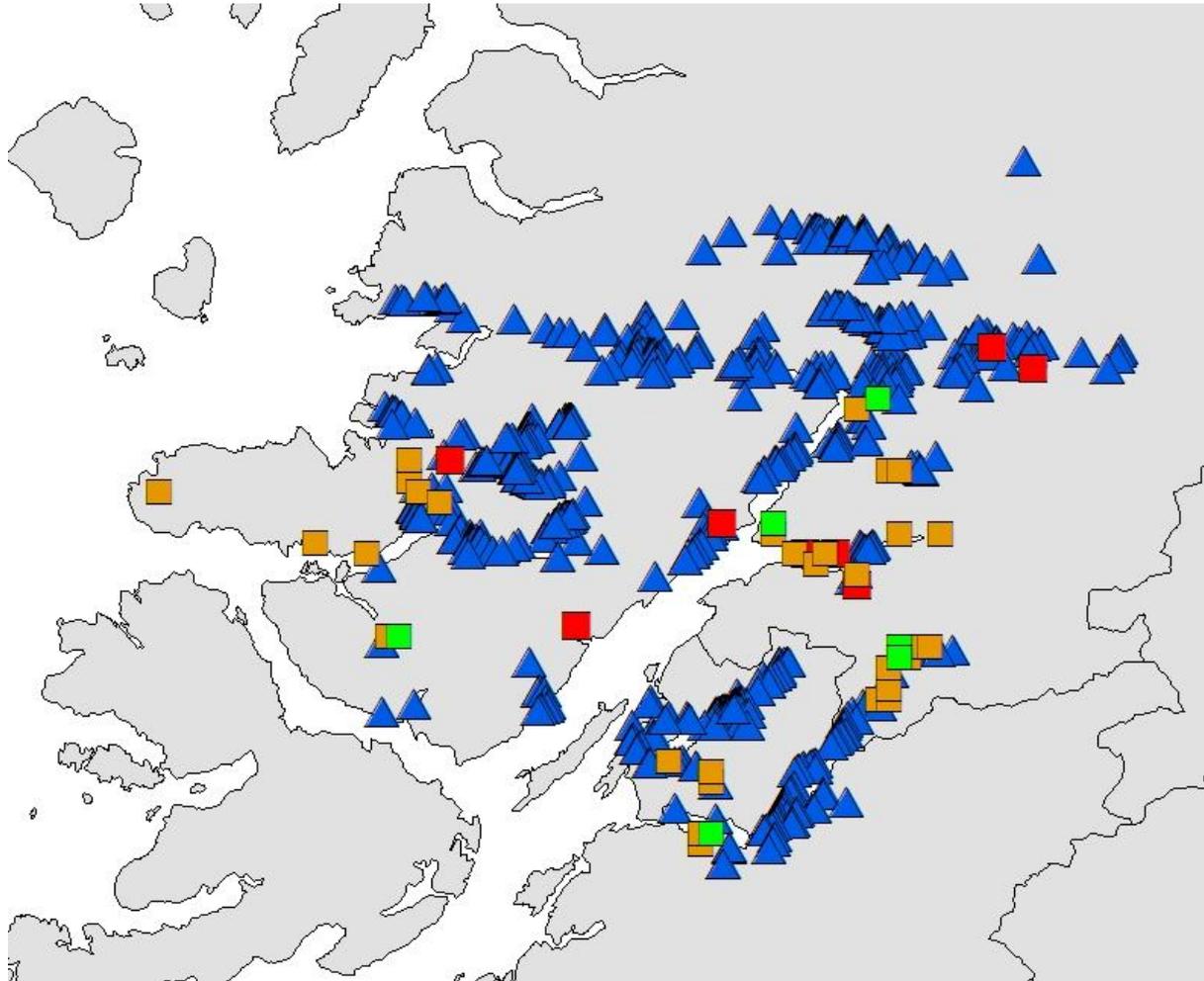
In 2013, interest was very similar, if not slightly greater, however, visits were made to only 18 squares but the hit rate was slightly higher at 44%. Excluding repeat visits to the same squares Chequered Skipper was found in just six squares, although it had previously been seen in one of these in 2012. Of the remaining five, four were visited in 2012 and Chequered Skipper not found, with the fifth being a square that was not visited in 2012. Most excitingly the butterfly was also found in an additional 33 new squares that were not part of the top 100.

The very cold and late spring in 2013 resulted in the first Chequered Skipper survey records being a week later than those in 2012. Also the last survey record in 2013 was ten days earlier than in 2012 meaning the total survey recording period in 2013 was only just over a fortnight and thus probably responsible for fewer target squares being surveyed.

The results from 2013 are plotted in Map 1 below. This shows that efforts in 2013 on the whole were more focussed on one or two areas eg Glen Etive and Loch Leven, many of these records were by just a handful of recorders over a few days of good weather. The map also clearly shows the westward extension of the Chequered Skipper's range along the Ardnamurchan peninsula, although this may be due to previous under-recording.

Another interesting factor is that the butterfly was seen for the first time in 2013 on three different nature reserves managed by conservation charities:

- Glenborrodale - RSPB
- Glencoe – NTS
- Rahoy Hills - SWT



Map1: 2013 Chequered Skipper Survey Results

Key

Blue Triangles = CS records 1980-2011.

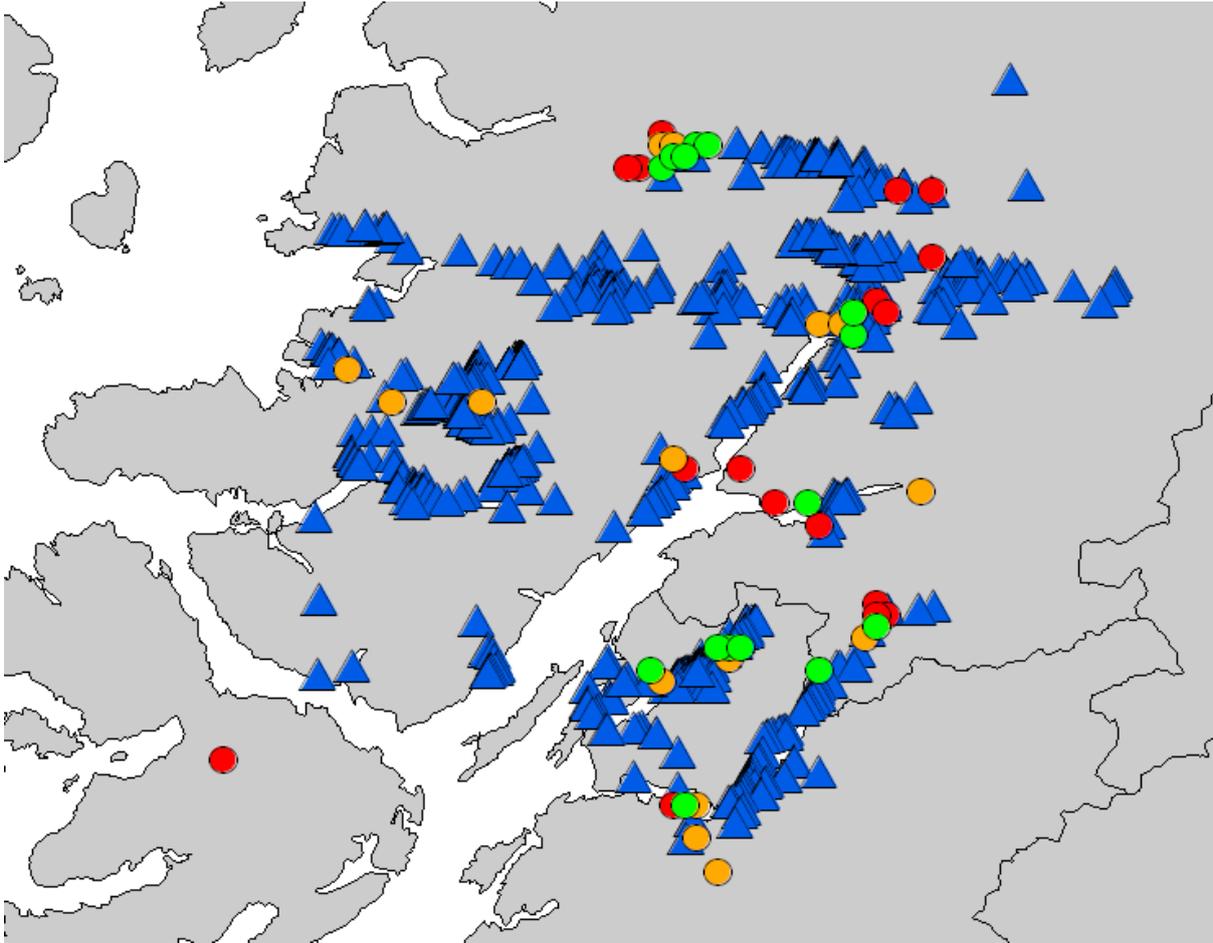
Green Squares = Targeted 1km squares where CS was found.

Red Squares = Targeted 1km squares surveyed but CS was not found.

Orange Squares = Other new 1km squares where CS was recorded.

NB: One Red Square in North-west Sutherland is not shown on the map.

For comparison results from 2012 are plotted below on Map 2, and those for both years combined in Map 3.



Map2: 2012 Chequered Skipper Survey Results

Key

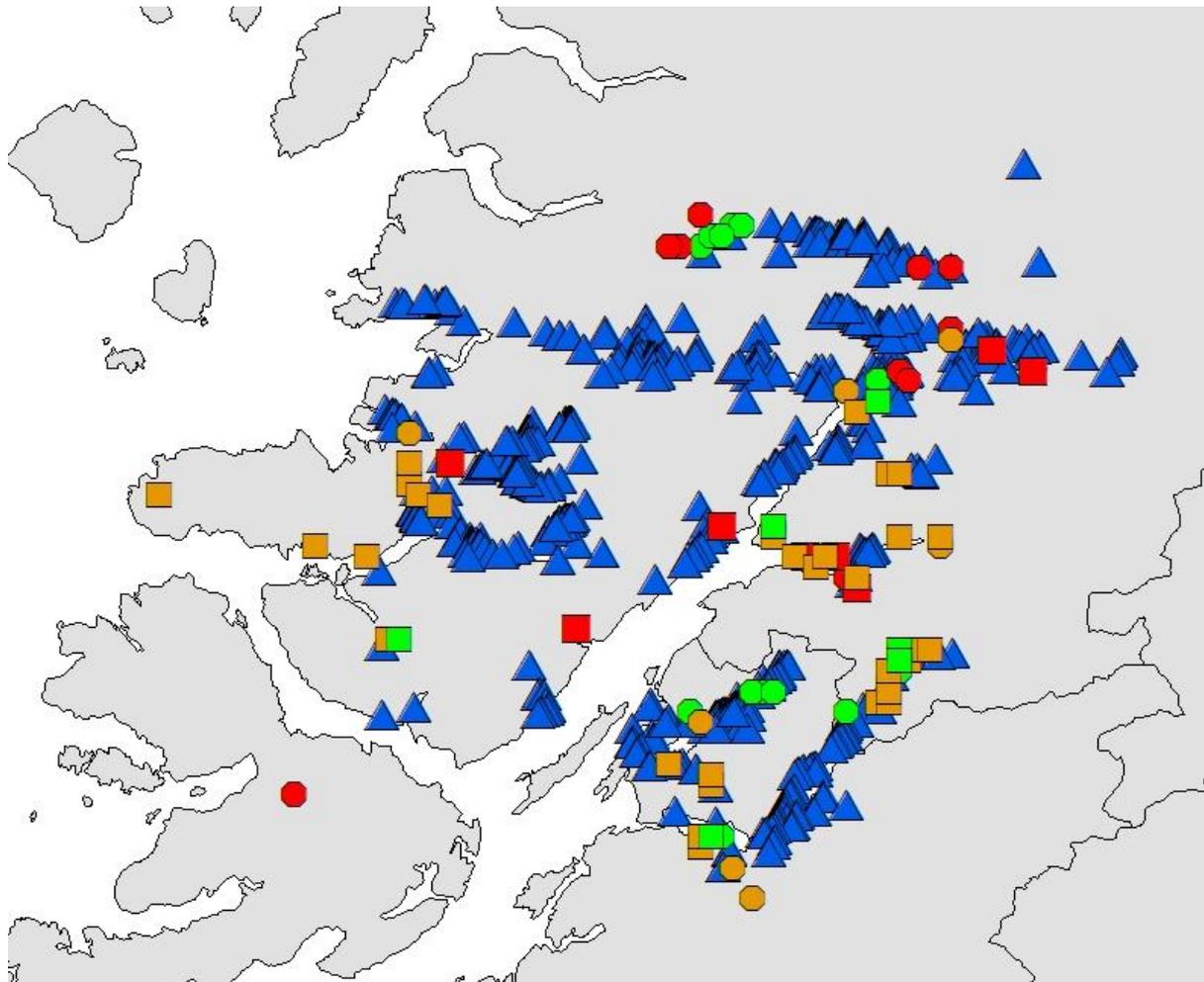
Blue Triangles = CS records 1980-2011.

Green Dots = Targeted 1km squares where CS was found.

Red Dots = Targeted 1km squares surveyed but CS was not found.

Orange Dots = Other new 1km squares where CS was recorded.

NB: Three 1km squares in Cowal, all red dots, which lie c30km to the south of the map are not shown.



Map3: 2012 + 2013 Chequered Skipper Survey Results combined

Key as for Maps 1 and 2

Over the two seasons the butterfly was recorded in 68 different new 1km squares! This has increased the occurrence of the butterfly by around 27% at a 1km resolution, a fantastic result.

A more detailed study of the results is still to be performed and will be posted on our website www.butterfly-conservation.org/chequeredskipper. It will also determine whether the model will be adjusted and if the survey runs for a third year.

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the survey in both 2012 and 2013. For more information about the survey please contact Tom Prescott; Email: tprescott@butterfly-conservation.org. Tel 01540 661469.