

Chequered Skipper Survey Results Tom Prescott

Originally the Chequered Skipper survey was scheduled to run for a single year in 2012. However, due to the great interest and exciting results it continued in 2013 and then again last year, 2014, its third and final year. Fortunately, this was justified as interest in the survey did not diminish in 2014 despite being the third year of the survey.

Throughout the three years the aim of the survey remained the same, to test predictions based on computer modelling that the iconic, rare and beautiful Chequered Skipper was under-recorded by as much as 80% at a 1km resolution. This was to be achieved by encouraging recorders to look for the butterfly in the top 100 1km squares that were predicted, by the modelling, to be the most suitable for the butterfly in Scotland, but where it had not previously been recorded.

Over the three years 57 of the top 100 1km squares were visited with the butterfly being recorded in just over half of them, 32 (56%) but not in 25 and thus leaving 43 squares unsurveyed. Furthermore, the butterfly was also recorded over the three years in 72 additional new 1km squares where it had never previously been recorded, giving a total of 104 new 1km squares. This has increased the known range of the butterfly at a 1km resolution by almost 42%, a remarkable result for what was formally thought to be a very scarce and localised species.

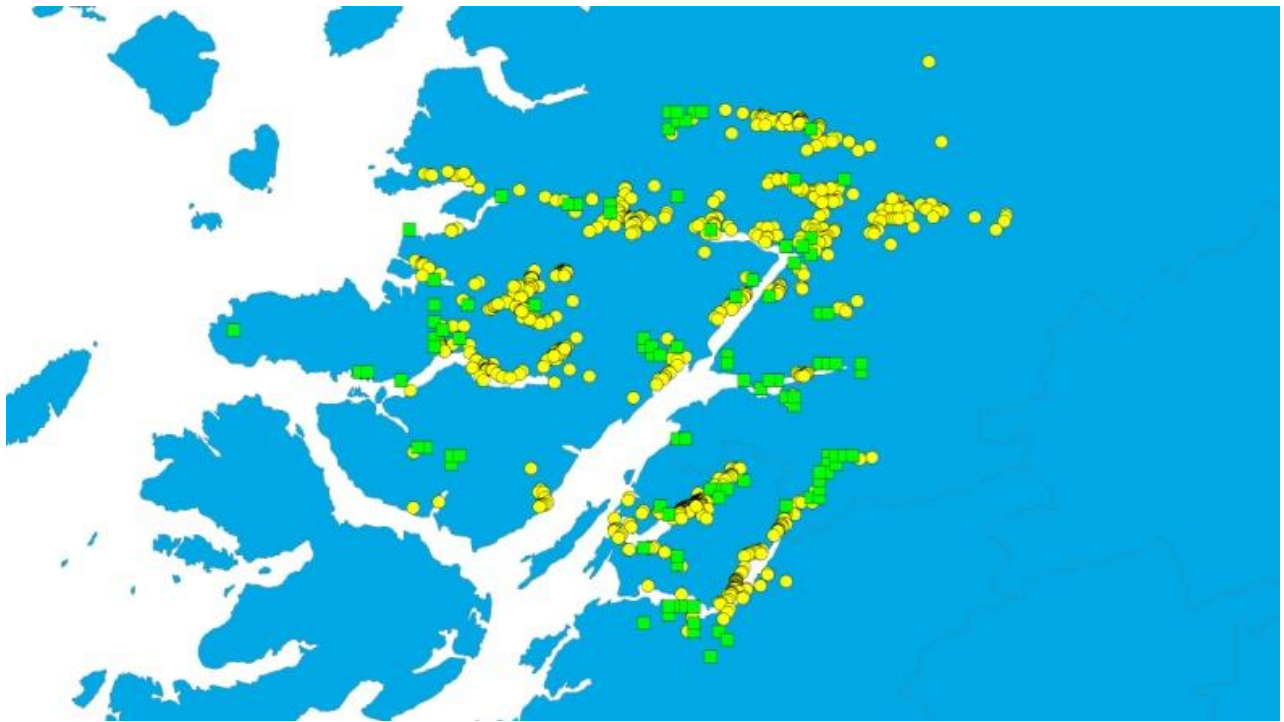
Table 1 below summarises the annual totals, whilst Map 1 shows the distribution of the new 1km squares (green squares) against the former distribution of the butterfly prior to the survey in 2011 (yellow dots).

The map clearly shows that the majority of new 1km squares are infilling within the butterfly's known range, whilst clusters of records indicate successful targeted recording in these locations usually by individual recorders. However, there are a few minor range extensions particularly at the very south of the butterfly's range and the far north-west corner, but the most obvious is along the Ardnamurchan peninsula with Chequered Skipper being recorded for the first time to the west of Salen, in three new 1km squares near Glenborrodale and a single sighting much further to the west, near Sonachan.

Year	No. of 1km target squares where CS was recorded	No. of 1km target squares surveyed but CS was not recorded	Other new 1km squares where CS was recorded	Total no. of new squares
2012	15	21	15	30
2013	5	6	33	38
2014	12	5	24	36
Total	32	25*	72	104

Table 1: Summary totals over the three years of the survey

*This column does not add up due to repeat visits to the same squares.



Map 1: Distribution of the new 1km squares where Chequered Skipper was found (green squares) against former distribution of the butterfly prior to the start of the survey in 2011 (yellow dots).

More detailed results from the survey, including a list of the new targeted and other 1km squares where Chequered Skipper was recorded, as well as the unsurveyed squares, will soon be available on the branch website in case anyone wants to search for Chequered Skipper in 2015 and beyond. Finally a big thank you to everyone who has taken part in the survey and help put Chequered Skipper on the map.