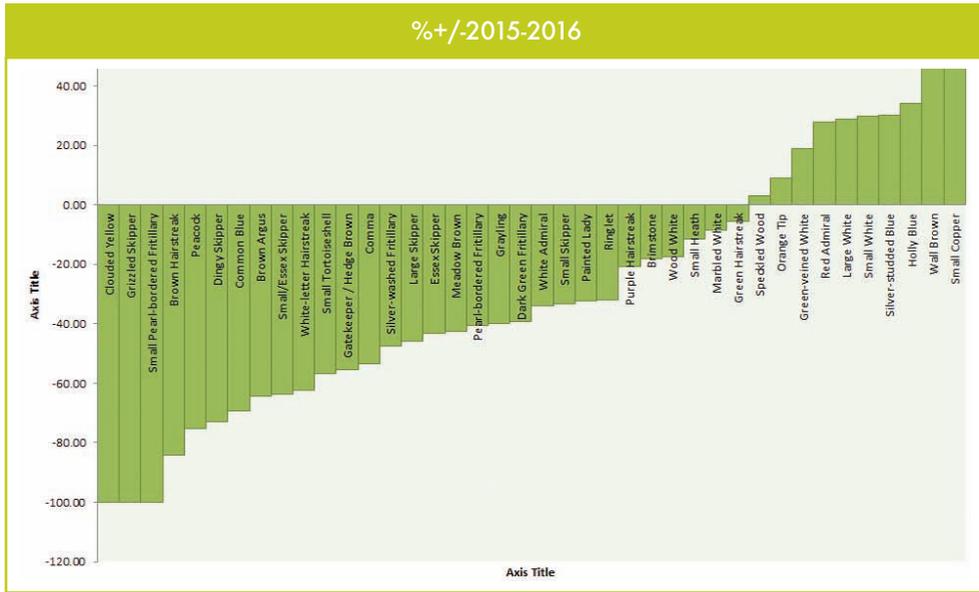


Butterfly Transects 2016

John Tilt crunches last year's numbers for the region



By the middle of January 2017 we had received 52 transect results for the West Midlands region, a total of 53,708 records. This compares with 57 transects and 87,791 records for 2015. 46 of the 2016 transects were matched pairs with 2015. Both sets of records were adjusted for missing weeks so that a direct comparison could be made.

Table One shows that 40 of the 46 transects showed a decrease in counts, with only 6 showing an increase. Using the same 46 matched pairs, the losses and gains for individual species was analysed. Of the 40 species recorded, only 10 showed an increase from 2015,

with 30 showing a decrease. There was an overall decrease of 31% in the total counts for all species. 26 of the transects have been recorded over the past 5 years. This enables species trends to be analysed, and they are shown as trend lines in the graphs below.

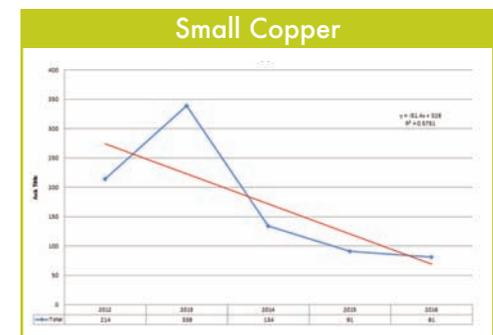
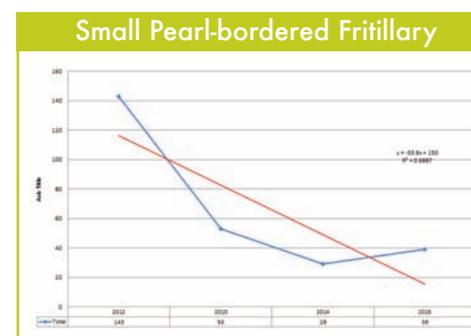
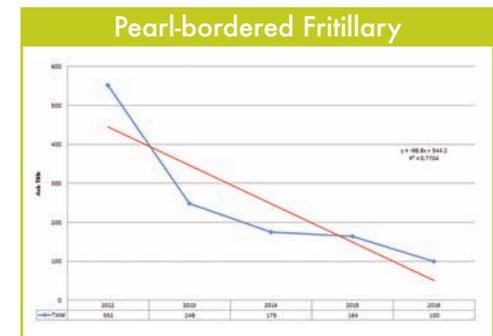
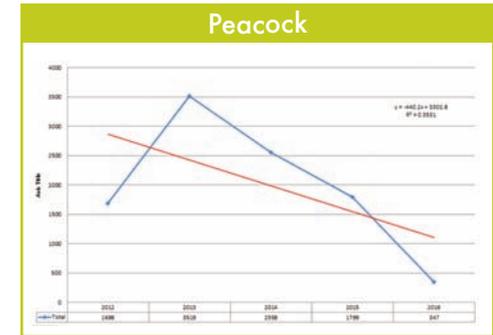
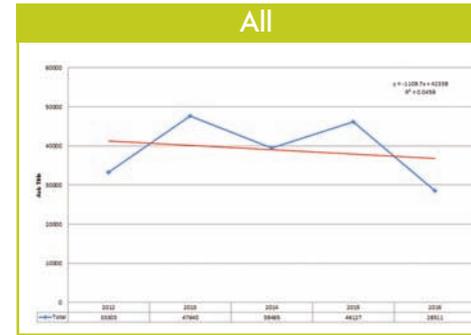
Species with the worst losses were **Pearl-bordered Fritillary**, **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary**, **Wall**, **Peacock**, **Wood White**, **Brown Hairstreak**, **Dingy Skipper** and **Small Skipper**. Those that fared better included **Dark Green Fritillary** and **Brimstone**.

Some of the rarer species have been monitored by timed counts rather

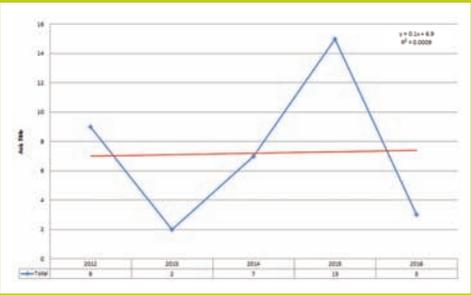
than by transects, and these have given better results for some species, for example **Grizzled Skipper** at Honeybourne and **Dingy Skipper** at Pennyhill Bank.

In summary, 2016 will go down as one of our worst ever years for butterflies in the West Midlands, despite our best efforts. We usually blame the weather, but this year was rather warm with below average rainfall. The effect of weather fluctuations compared to the norm is, however, complex, and should consider the impact on all four life stages of butterflies and not just on the adults.

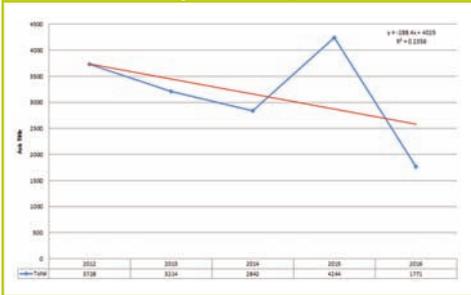
Article and tables by **John Tilt**



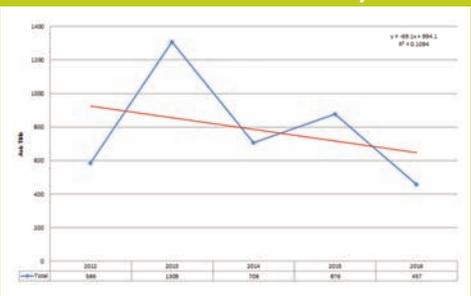
Brown Hairstreak



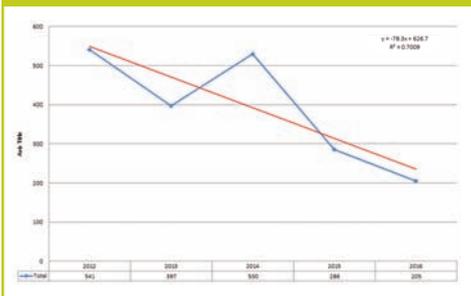
Gatekeeper/Hedge Brown



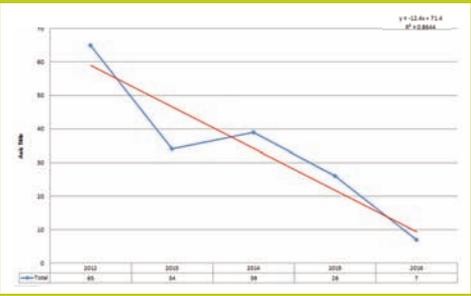
Silver-washed Fritillary



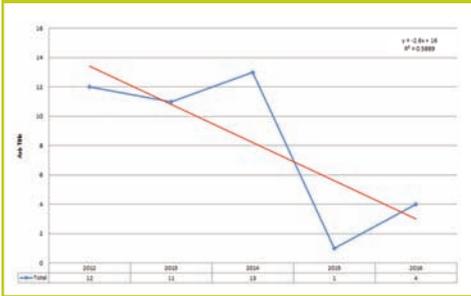
Small Heath



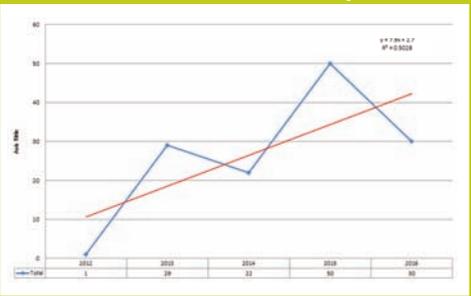
Dingy Skipper



Wall Brown



Dark Green Fritillary



If anyone is interested in helping
or even setting up a transect
please contact John Tilt at 01386 792458
or email john.tilt2@btopenworld.com