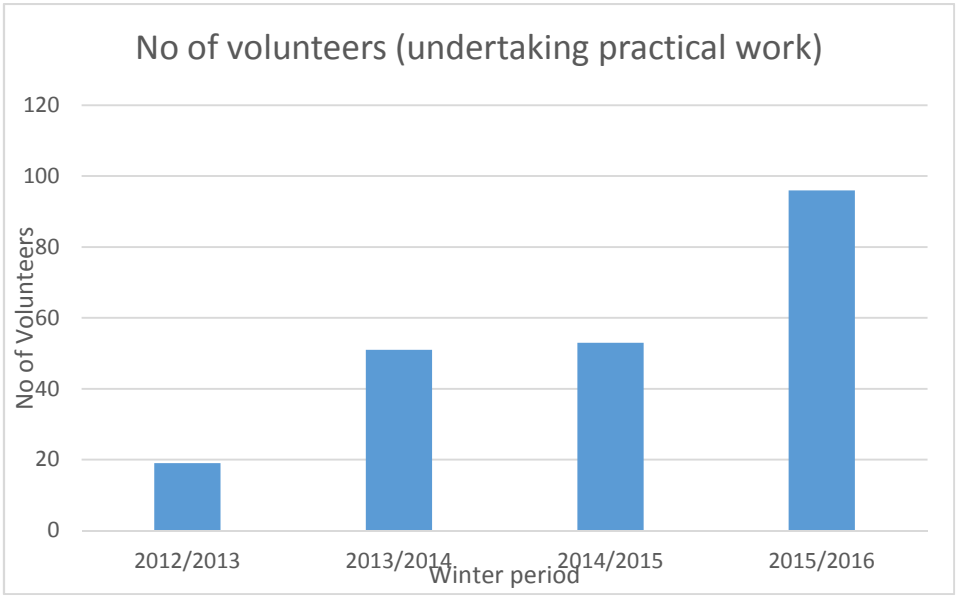
The Skippers Project

The Grizzled Skipper in Nottinghamshire.

In November 2011, Nottinghamshire County Council, on behalf of Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group partnership was successful in securing £66,000, from SITA Trust to undertake works at a number of sites across southern Nottinghamshire to benefit the Grizzled Skipper. The money was spent over the following two years with additional funding obtained from the East Midlands Branch of BC, Rushcliffe Borough Council and Nottinghamshire County Council's Local improvement Scheme. For the last three years, the project has continued due to funding from the membership of the East Midlands Branch of BC and officer support from the County Council's Biodiversity Officer.

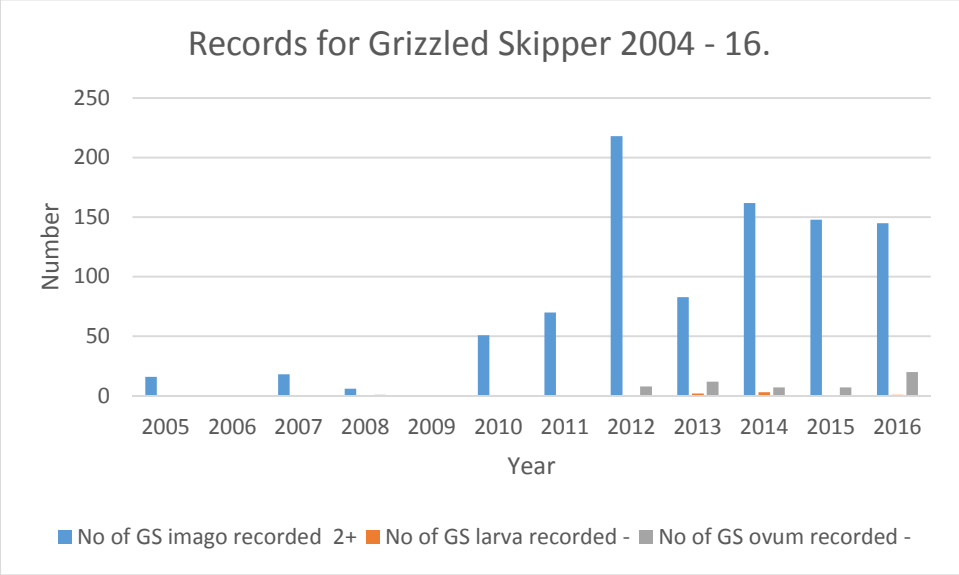
The funding has helped to pay for site management operations at sites that are either known to support Grizzled Skipper (or have had Grizzled Skipper reported from them in recent years), or areas of potentially suitable habitat near known sites. The project aims to strengthen existing populations at sites where the butterfly currently occurs by enhancing or expanding the habitat present, and to increase the linkages between these sites, to encourage the interchange of individuals between sites, and to allow the colonisation of new sites. Since 2011 work has taken place at seventeen sites. The initial work focused on scrub management undertaken by contractors, and consisted mainly of removing scrub that was invading the open habitat favoured by Grizzled Skippers. In recent years this work has continued with volunteer work parties maintaining the areas that have been opened up. In addition work has been undertaken at some sites to create enhanced egg-laying habitat.



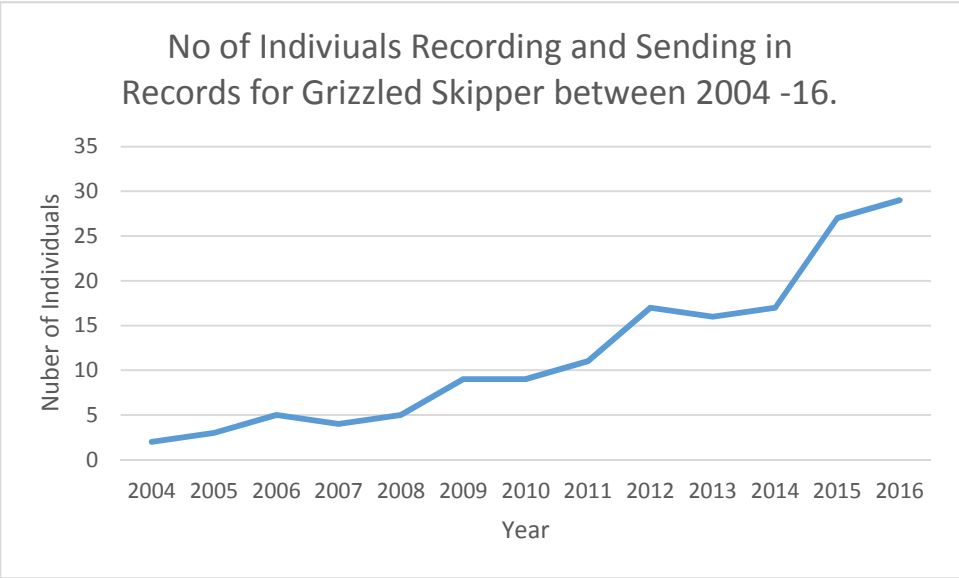
In 2014, the East Midlands Branch of BC was successful in securing more funding for the conservation of Grizzled Skipper in neighbouring sites in northern Leicestershire. Once again work focused on opening up and maintaining areas of suitable habitat.

As well as practical works on the ground, the project has also sought to encourage and better co-ordinate surveys for Grizzled Skippers at known and potential sites in the project area, and to raise awareness locally of the species and its conservation.

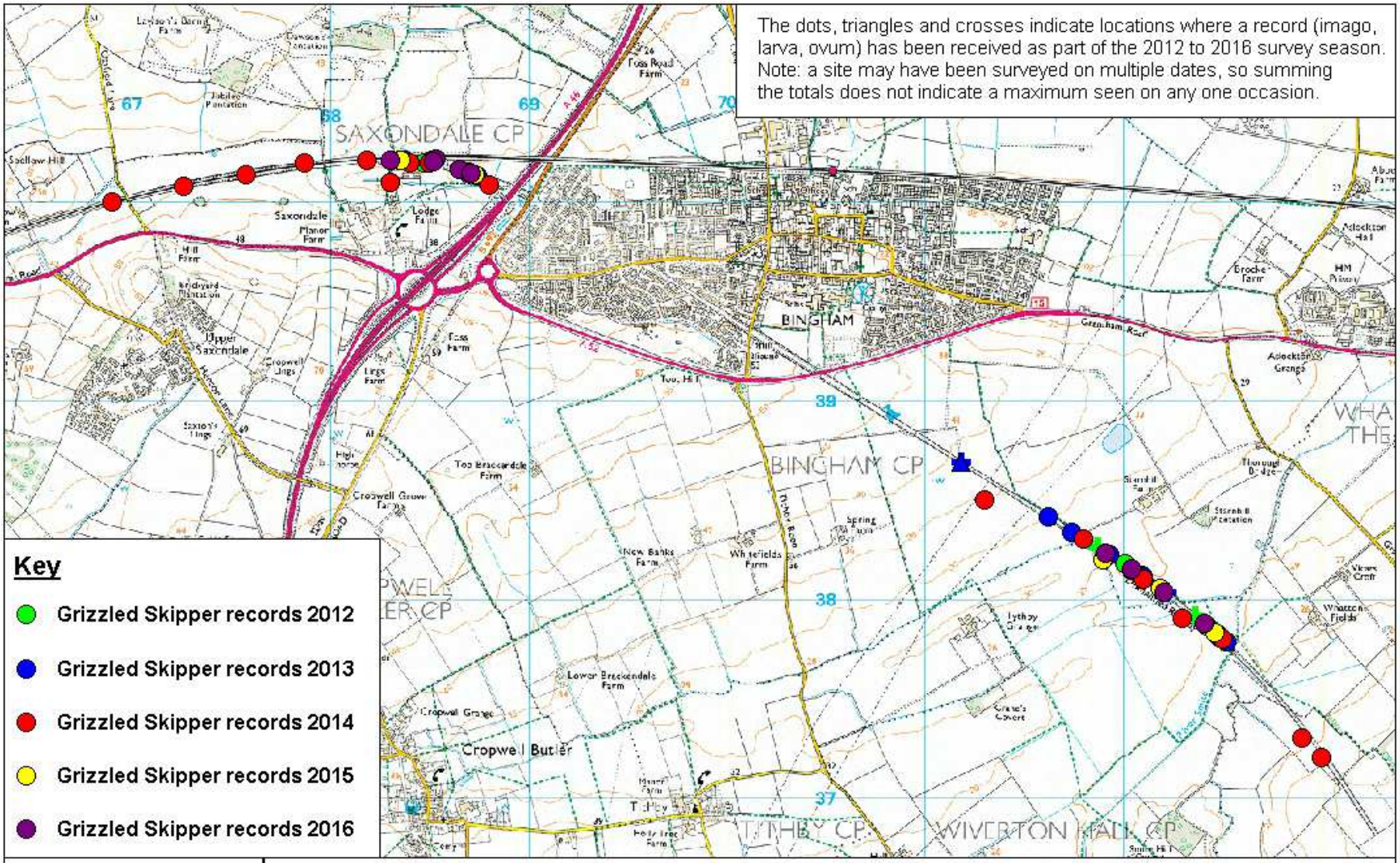
To this end, an informal recording group was set up via email, which was very successful, alerting people as to when the skippers first emerged. Since the group was set up in 2012, it has generated a total of 471 records at 25 sites (including several new ones). These records have included some new sites and improved our knowledge of the Grizzled Skipper distribution in Nottinghamshire. Since 2012 we have discovered that the species is present at locations further north than previously known, with populations discovered on the urban fringes of Newark. In addition a population has also been found at the southern end of the Great Central Railway near to Stanford-on-Soar. So perhaps there may be Grizzled Skipper populations just north of Loughborough in Leicestershire too? Maps showing the locations of all Grizzled Skipper records received since 2012 are shown at the end of this update.



Five training days have also been organised by Nottinghamshire County Council, aimed at local people. These consisted of an indoor session run by Bill Bacon, Butterfly Conservation, providing some background about the Grizzled Skipper (ecology, conservation and identification), and an afternoon field trip, attempting to see them in the flesh. The majority of training courses have proved very successful and as a result we have been able to increase the number of records received annually by some way. In addition we have increased the number of individuals going into the field and reporting their sightings (see chart below)



In the future it is hoped that with the help of our members and through our partnership work with the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group and working with private landowners we will be able to continue our work to maintain and enhance suitable areas of habitat for the Grizzled Skipper. The results and success of this work will be seen through the enhanced monitoring system that we have helped to set up in recent years.



Nottinghamshire County Council

Grizzled Skipper Records - Bingham (2012 to 2016).

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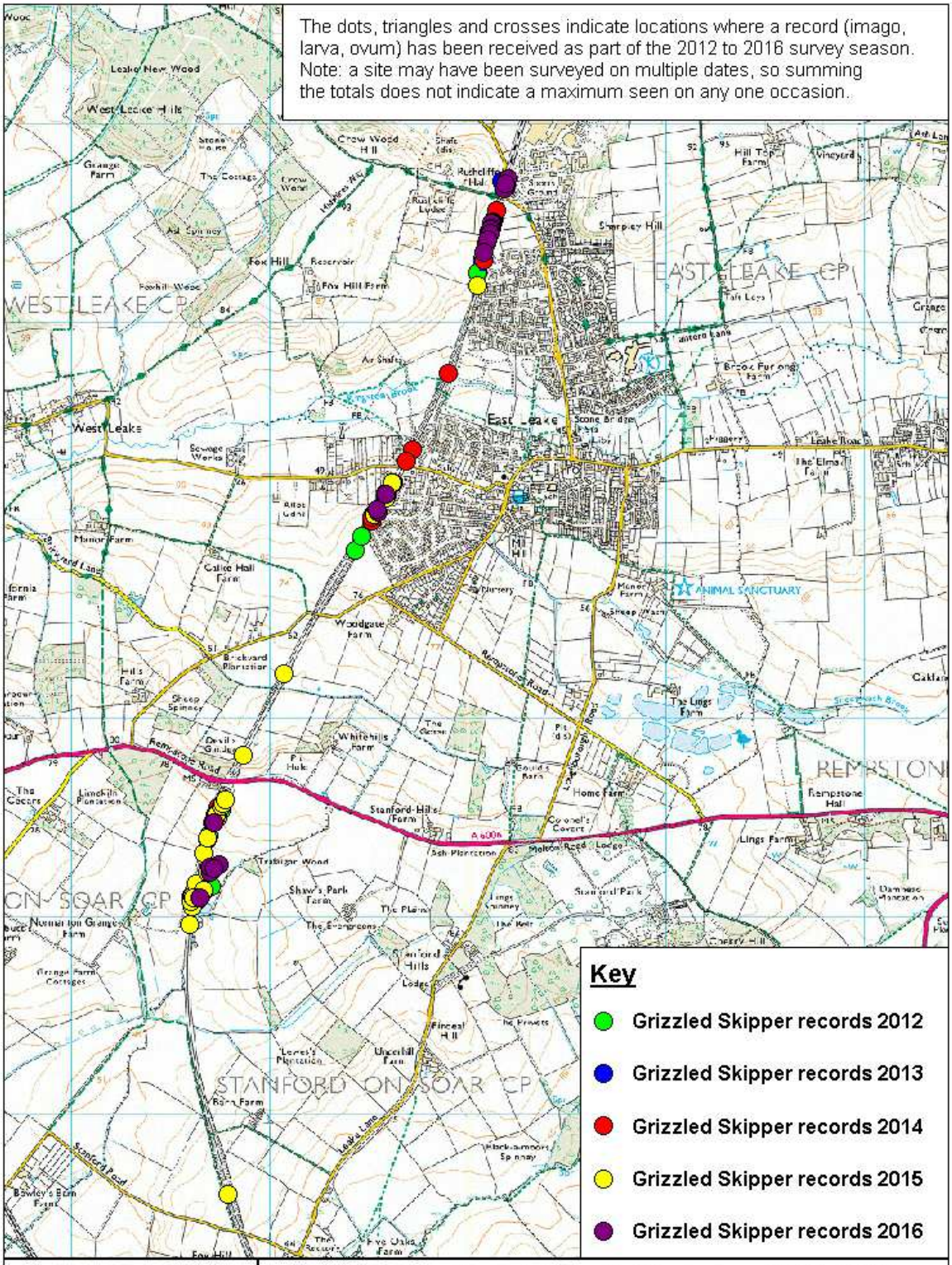

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Grizzled Skipper Records in the East Leake Area (2012 to 2016).

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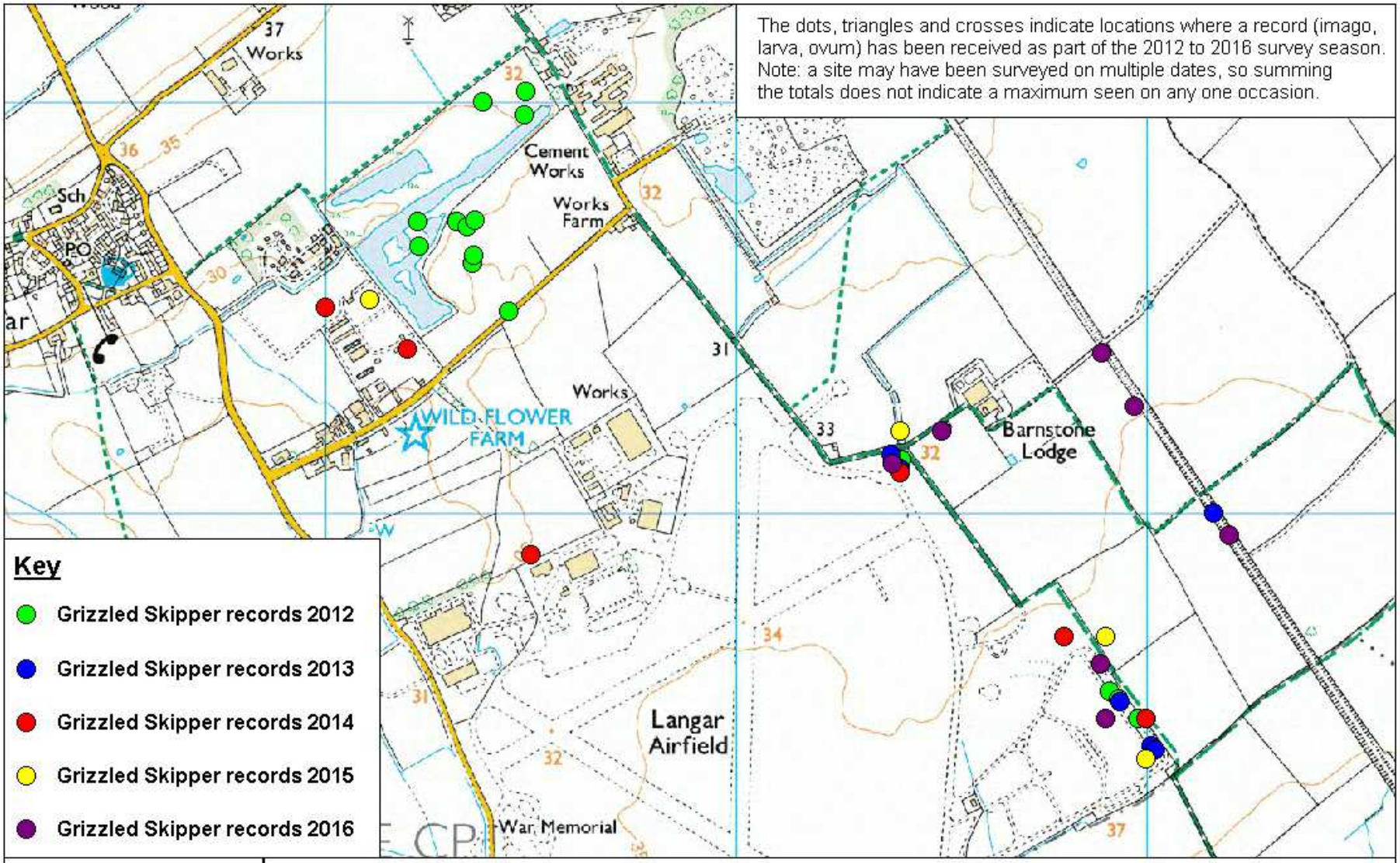

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Grizzled Skipper Records - Langar & Barnstone (2012 to 2016).

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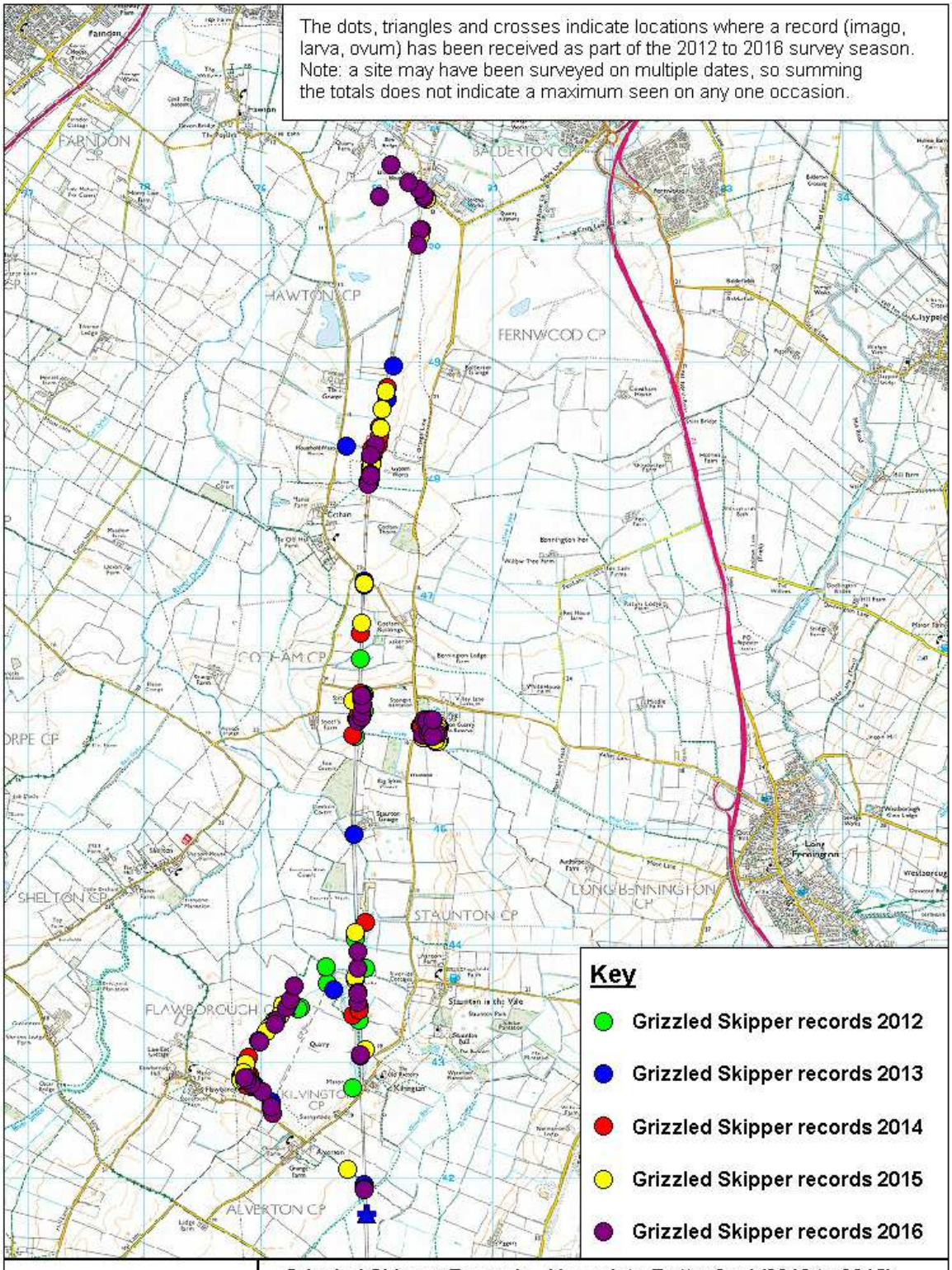

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Grizzled Skipper Records - Newark to Bottesford (2012 to 2016).

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