

2026 Butterfly Monitoring Arrangements

The monitoring will take place weekly with each seven-day window starting on Saturdays.

You will need to check the seven-day forecast and pick the first appropriate day. This will give you a chance to move the day if the forecast changes.

Check what butterflies are flying in your week. It helps narrow IDs. This link will let you know what to possibly expect: https://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/flighttimes_this_week.php

Appropriate days will have as many of the following attributes as possible.

Dry

Light wind

If overcast, at least 17 degrees Celsius.

If sunny, at least 13 degrees Celsius

The Survey Techniques

1. Be in at least a pair so that at least one person is observing, and one person is recording (although the recorder may well observe as well).
2. You can swap the roles during each monitoring day if you wish.
3. Aim to keep walking at a gentle amble observing as you walk.
4. The planned route starts at Opposite Hell Wath cottage and is divided into habitat zones. If you don't start at Hell Wath Cottage, ensure you start at the beginning of a designated zone and ensure butterflies are recorded against the correct zone. ***This is critical.***
5. Only record butterflies that you see within a zone of 5 metres (15 feet) ahead and above you and 2.5 metres (7-8 feet) on each side. You can note any butterflies seen outside this area in the notes section.
6. All butterflies seen in the designated area around you are recorded using a tally method.
7. No butterflies seen is as important a result as butterflies seen as this in itself might be an indicator of a biodiversity threat or weakness.
8. Only record butterflies that you can be pretty certain of the identification (best guess for the common ones is okay). Your knowledge of habitats, flight styles and colours will improve overtime but don't forget the notes on the back of the ID cards to help guide you.
9. Pass on all record sheets to Jem who will add them to the central database and a FOHW database. If anyone wants to get involved in this it would be good to have at least a couple of people involved, spreads knowledge base.

You will all have a route map (plus habitat zones), identification card, record sheets and a rain proof 'chart case'. If you are short of anything (need new hard copies) please let Jem know and he will arrange copies for you.

The Rota

Volunteers have been allocated set weeks to complete the survey. You will have everyone's contact email address so if you need to swap you can and agree the day you are going out in your 7 day window. If you are unavailable that week let your group know and then an email can go out to everyone to see if anyone is free to fill numbers if needed. The survey will take place through to the end of September.