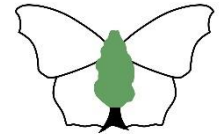


# Monitoring butterflies - Health and Safety



Butterfly  
Conservation

**This guidance note provides an outline to best practice health and safety when monitoring butterflies in the field.**

## Volunteer responsibility

Volunteers are responsible for their own health and safety and should not put themselves in a position that could place them, or others, in danger. As a volunteer, you are under no obligation to participate or continue with a survey or scheme. You should never undertake any work if you have concerns about your own or others' health and safety. If you have any such concerns, you should stop the work and raise these with Butterfly Conservation (BC) or the local contact. You are under no obligation to visit a particular site, even if the organisers have requested it (although data collected from another site may not be usable).

## General precautions

When visiting a site take care to park sensibly, preferably off-road, and do not block entrances. Take a map to new sites to avoid getting lost. Check weather reports before you go out and wear appropriate clothing. It is especially important to wear long-sleeved clothes and trousers when recording in long vegetation to help protect against ticks. Use sun protection including a wide-brimmed hat and sun screen. Make sure you drink plenty of water and take food if out for long periods of time. Take regular breaks, it is particularly important to take shade in hot weather.

## Insurance

Any volunteer who is undertaking butterfly monitoring on behalf of Butterfly Conservation and whose name and contact details are held either by Head Office or a co-ordinator/survey champion will be covered by Butterfly Conservation's Employer's Liability and Public Liability Insurances. In addition, the volunteer will have Personal Accident cover.

## Access permission

Always obtain permission from the relevant landowners or tenant to enter any private land not subject to open access legislation, before commencing fieldwork. Do not continue fieldwork if access permission is later revoked. A letter confirming your participation in fieldwork can be provided on request. It is courteous to contact the landowner and explain what you are doing and why, when it is practical to do so. Please abide by [The Countryside Code](#) or the [Scottish OAC](#), as appropriate.

## Risk assessment

Before undertaking any activities, every fieldworker should consider the particular health and safety hazards associated with their individual study sites and whether their individual circumstances and medical conditions expose them to particular hazards. Individuals should assess the level of any potential risks arising from their fieldwork activities, which should include considering the risks specific to individual sites. You should think about what practical precautions should be taken to reduce the level of any risks. If you have any concerns, please raise these with BC.

## Safeguarding

Please note that Butterfly Conservation's Safeguarding Code of Practice states that children (under the age of 18) cannot volunteer or attend BC events and activities without a parent or guardian present. An exception is made for children aged 16 and 17 if they have written consent from their parent or guardian, but they cannot volunteer alone (e.g. walk a transect by themselves). No adult, whether a member of staff or a volunteer, should ever be alone with a young volunteer under the age of 18. Volunteers who wish to take their own children, other young family members, or friends with them when monitoring do so entirely at their own risk and assume all responsibility for the child. Please direct any queries or concerns relating to Safeguarding to one of BC's Designated Safeguarding Officers. Their details can be found in the [Safeguarding Policy](#)

## Health and safety reporting

Fieldworkers should pass on health and safety information provided to them by BC to other people helping them with BC-related activities. You are encouraged to report any particular health and safety issues about the survey

methods or the survey sites to BC or your local contact. All accidents and incidents which could have led to harm must be reported to BC.

### **Mobile telephones**

It is advisable to carry a mobile phone, which may be useful in case of an emergency. Please note that mobile phones may not work in some remote areas. In the case of an emergency call 999 or 112.

### **Lone working/working in remote areas**

If you find it necessary to work alone or you are working in a remote place, always leave a note of your whereabouts with a responsible person. This should include: date and time of departure, method of travel to and around the site, proposed itinerary, expected time of leaving the site and return to base, and vehicle identification details. The person to whom these details are given should be told whom to contact if you do not return and at what time to raise the alarm. If working in mountains, moorlands or unpredictable and extreme environments, hypothermia is a significant risk. In such situations, it is appropriate to wear footwear with good ankle support and to carry warm and waterproof clothing. Carry a map and compass and know how to use them. Carry a whistle, waterproof watch and where appropriate, a survival bag with extra high-energy food supplies. Avoid or abandon outdoor activities in bad weather.

### **Livestock and agricultural machinery**

Take special care when entering areas with livestock, especially cattle, rams and horses. Do not enter fields containing bulls and be especially cautious with farm dogs. Rutting deer can also be aggressive in the autumn. Avoid undertaking fieldwork in close proximity to working agricultural machinery or forestry operations.

### **What to do if a strange dog approaches you**

Stay still – do not run away. Drop anything you are holding in case this is what has attracted the dog to you. Do not shout or wave your arms. Calmly and softly give a command such as 'sit' or 'stay', as many dogs respond to these. Avoid eye contact with the dog as they could perceive this as a threat. Instead watch their chest, shoulder or look at the tip of their nose. Ignore the dog if it jumps up – do not shout or push the dog down. Stay still and do not respond and it may eventually get bored and walk away. If you are knocked to the ground, remain motionless in the foetal position and protect your face by crossing your arms above your head. If you do move, move slowly and stay facing the dog.

### **Terrain**

Take special care when carrying out fieldwork along watercourses, cliff edges, or in areas that contain boggy ground, reed beds, loose rocks or areas with underground burrows (e.g. badger and rabbit holes) often found along field edges. Wear brightly coloured clothing when carrying out fieldwork along busy roads. Do not cross potentially hazardous sites, such as quarries, ravines and railway lines, and do not attempt to climb steep slopes, walls or fences. Please heed warning signs and do not enter private (non access) land that has been deliberately obstructed by fencing or barbed wire.

### **Human confrontation**

Consider your personal safety when conducting fieldwork within the vicinity of known or likely trouble spots. Avoid confrontation with landowners, land workers or members of the public. You may wish to carry some form of identification to confirm the activities you are undertaking (e.g. landowner letter available on request). If you have any concerns about your personal safety, cease fieldwork immediately.

### **Lyme disease**

Lyme disease is a bacterial disease transmitted by animal ticks associated with rank vegetation, which leads to severe symptoms if left untreated. A variety of animals act as hosts for the bacteria, including sheep, deer and pheasants. Remove ticks from the skin as soon as possible, wear light-coloured clothing so that ticks are visible, tuck trousers into socks so that ticks cannot attach or climb up the leg, and make regular checks of skin and hair. For more information, see: <http://www.bada-uk.org>

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

COVID-19 is a highly infectious disease caused by a coronavirus. It spreads primarily through respiratory droplets produced when coughing, sneezing or talking. Please follow the latest guidance to reduce the risk of contracting or spreading this disease according to your location: see <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>