

Guidance for UKBMS recorders relating to Covid-19 – 2021 Season

The UKBMS partners (Butterfly Conservation, UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, British Trust for Ornithology and Joint Nature Conservation Committee) consider the welfare of staff, volunteers and partners of utmost importance and have taken the threat of Coronavirus (COVID-19) very seriously since its outset. We are working closely with other organisations involved in biodiversity monitoring in the UK and are constantly reviewing government guidance in relation to how COVID-19 impacts on our schemes.

It is our intention that the UKBMS will be operational throughout the 2021 season, and butterfly monitoring is permitted provided the following conditions are met at all times:

- **Recorders ensure they have permission to access the sites that they monitor.**
- **Recorders adhere to all Covid-19 restrictions issued by the government for the area where they live.**
- **Recorders take all sensible precautions to reduce the spread of Covid-19.**

Please see below for a summary of the current situation in each UK country with regards to travel and outdoor activity. We will endeavour to follow developments throughout the season, and keep our guidance updated, so please check our website at regular intervals <https://ukbms.org/health-safety>.

England

The requirement to 'Stay at Home' ended on 29th March. There are no longer any defined limits on how far you can travel for exercise or recreation. However, you are still expected to minimise the number of journeys you make where possible, and avoid travel at the busiest times and routes.

Scotland

The requirement to 'Stay at Home' will end on 2nd April. This will be replaced by a 'Stay Local' message, with local authority-based travel restrictions.

We are aware that, in both **England and Scotland**, structured biological monitoring is considered to qualify under 'voluntary and charitable services' that cannot be done from home. However, you are still expected to assess and minimise the risks of disease transmission. We would only encourage recorders to take advantage of this exemption to travel further afield if you are monitoring priority species on key sites. If you need further advice on this issue, please contact the UKBMS team at transect@butterfly-conservation.org.

Wales

The requirement to 'Stay Local' ended in Wales on 27th March. You can now visit any outdoor site that is open to the public for recreation. The only remaining travel restrictions concern those who need to cross the English border for their monitoring, as there is still a bar non-essential travel to or from other UK nations.

Northern Ireland

Currently in Northern Ireland, you must not leave your home without a reasonable excuse. Whilst you can leave your home to exercise in a public outdoor place, you should not travel more than 10 miles to do so. If you are thinking of incorporating a butterfly transect into your permitted exercise, please consider carefully whether you are increasing the risk of spreading Covid-19 by doing so.

General advice from the government on staying safe outdoors and restricting the spread of coronavirus can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus-covid-19/how-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus-covid-19>

Additional Notes:

- Some public sites will be maintaining local restrictions to ensure social distancing measures are not compromised. Before you start monitoring, you must check that the landowners/site managers are happy for you to do so where appropriate.
- If your site or transect route are set up in such a way that would make it difficult to maintain social distancing throughout your walk (including the journey to/from the site) then you should not undertake butterfly monitoring on that site.
- If you carry out your survey alone, don't forget to refer to the lone working advice in the general [UKBMS Health & Safety guidance](#).
- If you carry out your survey with someone from outside your household, you must adhere to social distancing and follow relevant government guidelines as to the number of people allowed to gather.
- No-one should feel any pressure to undertake monitoring if they are not entirely comfortable doing so. The health of yourselves and your families is much more important.

We will continue to review all the advice from the UK Government and the devolved administrations and will update our guidance as and when appropriate.

Thank you for your continued co-operation.

Please continue to follow the latest advice and guidance from your appropriate country administration:

England: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Scotland: <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19>

Wales: <https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

Northern Ireland: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations>

Please check for any updates at <https://ukbms.org/> and if you have any doubts or queries regarding this advice, contact the UKBMS team at transect@butterfly-conservation.org