Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey Annual Newsletter 2022 Season

Chalk Hill Blue by Emma Smart

Compiled by the WCBS team – Rachael Conway, Ian Middlebrook (BC), James Heywood, David Noble (BTO), Marc Botham, David Roy (UKCEH), and Kirsi Peck (JNCC).

Welcome to the WCBS

The Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) forms part of the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS) which generates high quality data on the population status of butterflies. The WCBS comprises a network of randomly selected 1km squares sampled at least twice a year. Recorders count butterflies using conventional transect criteria along two 1km long survey lines, which run parallel within the square. This newsletter presents initial results from WCBS squares in 2022, based on changes in species occurrence from the previous year. The full population trend results, from all component surveys of the UKBMS will be published as Official Statistics, and made available via the UKBMS website, in late March. The WCBS is jointly run by Butterfly Conservation (BC), the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH), the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).

Coverage in 2022

Coverage continued to increase in 2022 with 843 squares surveyed*, +6.7% (56 squares) on 2021 levels and the 2nd best year in terms of coverage across all years of the scheme. Survey effort by Butterfly Conservation (BC) and BTO Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) recorders increased by 31 and 25 squares respectively, resulting in a total of 534 BC squares and 309 BBS squares surveyed.

At the country level 745 squares were surveyed in England (+58 compared to 2021), 50 in Scotland (same as 2021), 31 in Wales (-2), 15 in Northern Ireland (-1) and two on the Isle of Man (+1).

**records submitted to the Scheme before 01/01/2023*

Regional Coverage

The three BC branch areas with the greatest number of squares covered during 2022 were Dorset with 75 (67 BC and 8 BBS), Gloucestershire with 48 (42 BC and 6 BBS), and Beds & Northants with 45 (31 BC and 14 BBS). These areas continue to be popular with BC volunteers, while survey coverage by BBS volunteers remains greatest in Sussex for the 5th year in a row with 31 squares. The BC branch area that saw the greatest overall increase in coverage was Beds & Northants (+9 squares). As with 2021, 75% of all branch areas either increased or maintained the same levels of coverage in 2022.

Branch areas that had their best year to date were Cumbria (+7), Suffolk (+6), Wiltshire (+6) and Herts and Middlesex (+2). Well done and thank you to the Champions and walkers who made 2022 such a successful year for WCBS in these areas. The Somerset & Bristol branch enjoyed the highest increase in BC squares (+7), you can read about champion Andy Danford's recruitment drive on page 6. Beds & Northants saw the highest increase in BBS coverage (+6). Of the 32 BC branch areas, 16 areas achieved good coverage (more than 30 squares sampled), this is an impressive increase of 25% on 2021. Encouragingly, the number of branches experiencing their worst year dropped from four in 2021 to just two in 2022. Last years' priority areas, Cheshire & Peak, Devon, North East England, Isle of Man, Lincolnshire and Warwickshire have all welcomed an upturn this year. Cornwall, Highland, and Glasgow & South West Scotland remain classed as 'high priority' for the 2023 season.

Common Blue by Emma Smart.

2022 SURVEY

Overview of Survey Results 2022

In total 2,015 WCBS surveys were carried by 658 recorders, counting 104,352 butterflies of 47 species, one species fewer than in 2021. The species count comprised of 18 habitat specialists, 25 wider countryside species, and four migratory species. This year provided no sightings of Silver-spotted Skipper, which had been seen in 2021, however a Dorset square returned a record of the rare migrant; Pale Clouded Yellow.

There were 161 spring visits which returned data from 126 squares (134 BC and 27 BBS) with Orange-tip recorded in 68 squares and Green Hairstreak in five squares. An additional 36 visits were made to 36 squares in September.

The overall busiest day for recording was 29th July when 62 visits were made, recording 3,499 butterflies of 32 species. The most visits made to a BBS square were nine to a square near Hilton, County Durham. The most visits to a BC square were 14 to a square near Benhall Green, East Suffolk.

Ringlet by Donna Rainey.

Core Period Results

Throughout the core July and August recording period, 689 squares (82 % of the total) received the required two visits (+3 % percentage point compared to 2021). A further 128 squares (15%) received one visit during the core period.

78,394 butterflies of 45 species were recorded during these 1,452 core visits (two more species than 2021). An average of 54 butterflies were recorded per core period visit, six less than 2021.

During the core recording period, 21 species (one fewer than 2021) achieved target 'good' coverage (detected in 100 or more squares), whilst a further six species had 'adequate' coverage (found in 30–99 squares)

Although Meadow Brown continued to maintain the top spot as the most widespread butterfly in 2022, it occupied just 74.1% of WCBS squares during the core recording period, down by 18.1%. Green-veined White suffered its worst survey year with a further decrease of 3.5%, reducing occupancy to just 48.4% of core visit squares. All the 25 wider countryside species were less widespread than in 2021 (Fig 1). Small Tortoiseshell saw a decrease in occupancy of 18.5%, Peacock 21.2%, and the migrant Red Admiral ranked worst for decrease in occupancy – down 25.2%.

The migrant Clouded Yellow was the only species with an increase in occupancy over 1%, at 1.7%. None of the habitat specialist species recorded in the WCBS during July and August saw an increase in occupancy. Despite a decrease in occupancy of 4.4%, Silver -washed Fritillary remained the most widespread of the habitat specialists, being detected in 7.7% of squares.

Country Level Results

Looking at national patterns, Meadow Brown was the most widespread butterfly in both England and Wales occupying 75.6% and 74.1% of squares respectively. Ringlet maintained the top spot in Scotland for the second year in a row being counted in 62% of squares, 10% higher than the national occupancy, but -16% on 2021. In Northern Ireland, both Green-veined White and Ringlet shared joint place with 80% occupancy, 32% and 38% higher respectively, than the national occupancy.

50% of all squares in Scotland recorded Small Tortoiseshell, a decrease of 6% on 2021 (but still approximately 10% more than the other countries in 2022) and Red Admiral increased occupancy by 17.6%. In Northern Ireland, Small Tortoiseshell saw its worst year for 5 years with a 38.6% decrease in occupancy, whereas Red Admiral increased by 4.7%. In Wales, Peacock saw the largest increase in occupancy of 12% compared with 2021, and welcomed the return of Dark Green Fritillary after two years absence from WCBS surveys. Wales also held top spot for the number of species which increased % occupancy above 0.5% with a total of seven, compared with five in Scotland, three in Northern Ireland and just one in England, provided by a single sighting of the rare migrant; Pale Clouded Yellow.

Top Counts

The largest butterfly count overall in 2022, was 552 Meadow Brown on the

Pale Clouded Yellow by Peter Eeles.

10th July near Shaftenhoe End, Barley, North Hertfordshire. This same square same square submitted the highest total count over the core period. In Scotland, the top butterfly count was 121 Ringlet on 19th July, near Eaglesham, East Renfrewshire. Green-veined White topped the chart in Northern Ireland with a count of 84 on 12th August, on the same square as last year near Douglas Road, County Antrim. In Wales it was 58 Meadow Brown near Llangeler, Carmarthenshire on 14th July, almost half that of the top count of 108 Meadow Brown in 2021.

Habitat Specialists

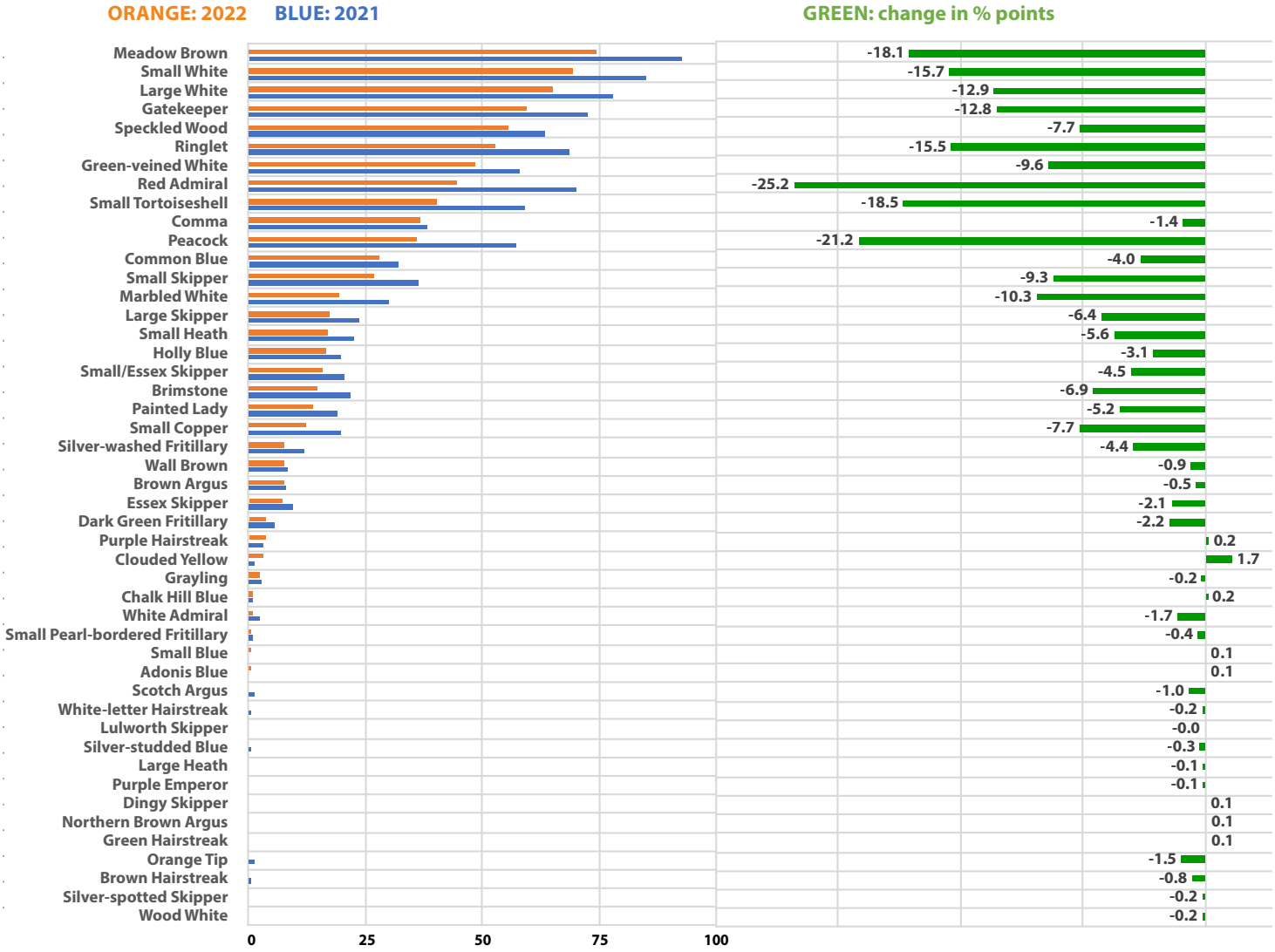
The maximum habitat specialist count was 206 Lulworth Skipper on the 16th July near Langton Matravers, Dorset. Other notable counts included 110 Grayling on the 6th August, near Wantisden, East Suffolk, 81 Silver-studded Blue on 26th June in the New Forest, Hampshire, and 32 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary on the 7th of July near Drumfork, Perth and Kinross, Scotland.

Zero Heroes

Zero Heroes are those walkers who still submit their walk data even if no butterflies were seen. Zero or low counts are just as valuable as higher ones. They enable us to identify patterns and explore why butterflies may not be doing so well in certain areas or habitats. We are extremely grateful to all recorders who continue to persist with their surveys despite low numbers of butterflies being seen and provide crucial data which will helps inform policy, research and conservation.

This year 38 visits to 34 squares resulted in no butterfly sightings. Usually the majority of these 'no shows' are in the spring months when you would expect fewer butterflies to be on the wing, however this year 23 visits were in summer, possibly due to flight periods ending earlier this year due to the extreme temperatures experienced in many parts of the country.

Table 1: Comparison of occupancy in 2021 and 2022 based on squares sampled twice during July and August.



Moths

1,355 moths were recorded in 167 squares (116 BC and 51 BBS), which comprises 20% of all squares surveyed (-1% points compared to 2021). In total moths of 83 species were recorded (six more than in 2021). The most numerous moth was the micromoth Common Grass-veneer (Agriphila tristella), accounting for 26% of all moths seen. However, the Silver Y remained the most widespread moth, being recorded in 17 % of squares (-21% percentage points compared to 2021). Other moth species that were commonly encountered include Six-spot Burnet (the second most widely distributed) Cinnabar, Yellow Shell and Common Carpet.

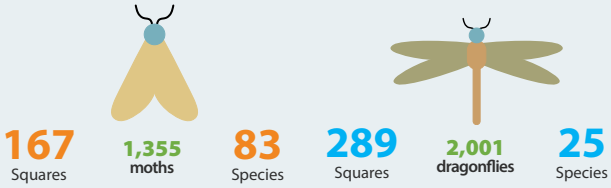
Agriphila tristella by Bennyboymothman CC BY 2.0.

Dragonflies

Dragonflies were recorded in 289 squares (199 BC and 90 BBS), which equates to 34% of all squares surveyed (+9% on 2021). A total of 2,001 dragonflies of 25 species (one fewer species than in 2021) were counted. Common Blue Damselfly was the most numerous of the Odonata species, accounting for 21% of all dragonflies seen. Common Darter continued to hold the top spot for most widespread dragonfly for the seventh year in a row, being seen in 33% of squares that recorded dragonflies (-8 percentage points compared to 2021).

Other Species

Other wildlife species recorded through the WCBS surveys in 2022, include 51 birds, 13 mammals, 17 hoverflies, 10 bees, 2 reptiles, and 11 other insect or arachnid species, 16 species of plant were also recorded. These data go into the iRecord database for verification and are made available to the relevant national recording schemes.

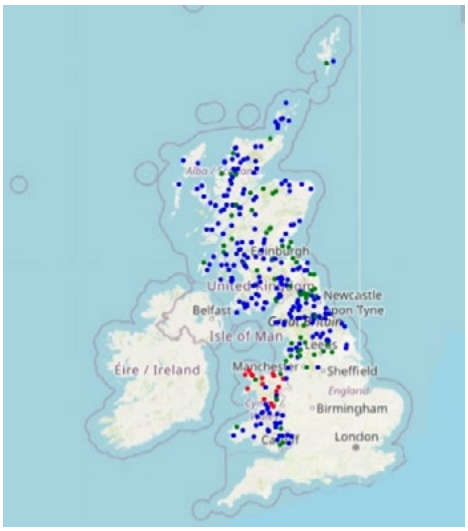


HOLIDAY SQUARES

Spot your holiday destination

All the blue dots on our 'holiday squares map' are WCBS squares awaiting data. If you spot a dot near your planned holiday destination or day out, you can help us increase coverage by surveying when you visit. Holiday squares are often never or infrequently surveyed due to their remote location.

The 'Holiday Squares' element of WCBS aims to increase coverage by making it easier for potential recorders to sign up to a square in an area of countryside they would like to visit. These squares are a great excuse to explore new areas whilst contributing valuable information.



The map above shows squares currently available in the Lake District National Park, North Pennines AONB and the Solway Coast AONB. Access our dedicated 'Holiday Squares' page of the website to find a square in your holiday area and to sign up.

In 2022, a total of 37 holiday squares were surveyed (3 more than in 2021). Fifteen of these squares had never been surveyed previously as part of the WCBS and is an incredible uptake of the holiday squares option. Thank you to the recorder who surveyed four new squares in North East England.

There are also opportunities to complete one-off surveys on the BBS 'Upland Rovers' contact David White (see 'Getting Involved' page 10) to be allocated a square for one season only.

Comma by Emma Smart.

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NEWS

We'd love to hear your thoughts on habitat recording!

JNCC are interested to understand perceptions about recording habitat information. Habitat information is important for conservation, so we would like to explore the feasibility of increasing the amount of it collected by you, as volunteer citizen scientists. We plan to circulate two surveys at the end of March or in April with the help of our recording scheme partners, so keep an eye out for a WCBS/UKBMS email coming soon explaining how you can take part and how to complete the surveys. You will also see the surveys publicised on wider social media to reach the general public. We would very much appreciate if you are happy to contribute your thoughts on habitat recording through these surveys to help us to design interesting and useful solutions for recording habitat.

Getting involved in the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (PoMS)

Spring brings with it not only the chance to enjoy butterfly discoveries in your WCBS or UKBMS square, but a chance to appreciate other pollinating insects such as wild bees and hoverflies. From 1st April, the 2023 season for UK PoMS begins with Flower-Insect Timed Counts (FIT Counts). The FIT Count is a simple 10-minute survey to collect data on pollinator numbers across the UK, recording all flower visitors to group level on a patch of target flowers. FIT Counts work equally well in rural or urban locations, and can be done in warm, dry weather any time from April to September. All the FIT Count materials and video guides are available on the PoMS website. Counts can be done using a printed recording form and entered online, or why not download the Fit Count app?

Butterfly Conservation are partners in UK PoMS, which is entering its seventh year. Last year, 3,777 FIT Counts were submitted, taking the total number of flower-insect interactions recorded on PoMS to 133,471! As the scheme builds momentum, these data are being used to explore patterns of insect visitation to different flowers over space and time. PoMS is also running a systematic survey of bees, hoverflies and other insects across a network of 1 km squares in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. They are looking for volunteers to adopt remaining squares, as shown on the map here. You would receive individual training from a PoMS team mentor and all the equipment needed to carry out four survey visits a year. Contact poms@ceh.ac.uk for more information.

Garden Butterfly Survey

The Garden Butterfly Survey is an excellent stepping stone from casual recording to formal surveying and monitoring schemes. Participants are asked to look for butterflies in their garden, at least once a month, all year round. The survey is really flexible and can be undertaken more frequently if time allows. Surveying in gardens provides an insight into the time commitment involved in monitoring schemes and helps cement identification skills with common species. All types of gardens are included, from pots and patios to community gardens and allotments, enabling more people to get involved in surveying without the restrictions of time, travel and accessibility. It's a great way to introduce new volunteers to the recording network.

In 2022 Garden Butterfly Survey participants recorded 78,653 butterflies from 1,360 gardens, an increase of over 200 gardens on 2021. You can join in the scheme here.

This work is part of 'Supporting Science', a project that is improving data flow and digital access to natural heritage. The project received DCMS and National Lottery funding, distributed by The Heritage Fund as part of their Digital Skills for Heritage initiative.

Update on the Chilterns Project

Last years' newsletter introduced you to the great work being achieved through the Tracking the Impact' in the Chilterns. The project provides training on bird, butterfly and plant identification and survey methodology to volunteers, developing their knowledge and enthusiasm to improve scientific understanding of the area. The project uses the WCBS, BBS and National Plant Monitoring Scheme methodology and has recently developed an interactive map showing species coverage across the survey squares.

If you live locally to the Chilterns and want to get involved please get in touch with Nick Marriner who oversees the project.

Butterfly Events and Workshops

There are a number of BC events coming up this spring and summer that WCBS recorders may find interesting; many of which are online, please check the Event pages on the BC website.

FIT Count survey on a PoMS square in the Scottish Highlands by Katty Baird.

Small Skipper by Emma Smart.

YOUR WCBS

The impact of the drought

The Met Office confirmed that 2022 was the hottest year on record and WCBS walkers braving the heat of July and August will testify to that. One very dismayed surveyor travelled hours to reach his upland site at Roundhill Moss, High Peak only to find it damaged by fire. Although ignited by non-natural causes, the hot summer played it's part in leaving the parched vegetation susceptible to fire. Throughout the 2022 season surveyors reported low numbers in core survey period and this was supported by significant reduction in occupancy, possibly brought about by a premature end to the flight season. However, the effect of the drought on butterfly numbers won't be evident until later this year when we see the full impact on 2022 breeding success.

Running a Recruitment Drive

Andy Danford, WCBS champion for Somerset and Bristol had great success with a virtual recruitment drive in 2022. In February, the branch arranged a Zoom event of various presentations and Andy delivered a 20-minute slot promoting the benefits of WCBS for butterflies and walkers. Over 50 people attended and in addition to a recruitment article circulated with the branch newsletter, this effort was successful in filling all the vacant squares in the area surrounding Bristol. Seven new walkers commenced in 2022 and a further four are poised to start in the 2023 season. If you would like to run a similar recruitment drive, please do get in touch for support with content and resources.

Andy Danford by Eileen Danford

Roundhill Moss, High Peak © Tom Aspinall

YOUR TWEETS

Tweet us @WCBSLive

From butterflies to gentle giants: Supporting the Ancient Tree Inventory during your WCBS survey

Tom Reid, Citizen Science officer , Woodland Trust

One of the joys of spending time outdoors surveying for butterflies is the chance to appreciate other elements of nature that you discover along the way. But whilst your eyes are so focussed on spotting the smaller members of the natural world, it can be easy to miss those giant, elderly, woody residents standing saliently in our woods and hedgerows.

Can you help record our oldest and most valuable trees?

For nearly 20 years, the Woodland Trust, in partnership with the Tree Register and the Ancient Tree Forum, has been running the Ancient Tree Inventory, a citizen science project that aims to map special ancient, veteran and notable trees across the UK. To date, the project has recorded over 195,000 trees, with new records being submitted every day. Often centuries old, these trees are priceless. They're crucial wildlife homes, carbon-eating machines and have vast heritage value, but we can only protect the trees we know about and thousands more are out there.

Ancient and veteran trees provide vital habitat for pollinators and other invertebrates, particularly within the old land boundaries and hedgerows which margin agricultural fields. As the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey squares occupy predominantly agricultural, arable or hedgerow habitats, WCBS surveyors are ideally placed to support the Ancient Tree Directory

How can I find or record an ancient tree?

The ATI website hosts a map identifying special trees that have already been recorded. If you've found a tree that isn't on the map, it takes just a couple of minutes to register and record your tree. You'll need to enter some essential data about the tree including:

- Location
- Species

The Pen y Maes Oak © Rob McBride

- Girth (m) of the trunk
- Access status
- Photos
- Decay features: is the tree hollowing? does it show the features of an ancient tree?
- Wildlife: does the tree have any large fungi? is it covered in lichen or moss?

The more detail you can provide the better. Our network of volunteer verifiers visit each tree to confirm their ancient, veteran or notable status and once a tree has been verified, it will then be visible on the map.

What happens once I've added a tree?

New tree entries are added as unverified records. Our network of volunteer verifiers visit each tree to confirm their ancient, veteran or notable status and the more detail you can provide, the better. Once a tree has been verified, it will then be visible on the map.

Visit the Ancient Tree Inventory website to find out more about the importance of ancient trees and how to identify and record them.

https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Veteran Hawthorn © Tom Reid

Ancient oak © Rob McBride

Habitat happiness for all!

It's not just about the butterflies – it's also about where they live and recording that information. Here we take a look at habitats in a WCBS context.

Habitat Classification – its importance

One of the significant elements of the WCBS is the description of each habitat a transect covers. The importance of having a habitat description is more than knowing where butterflies are seen; it is also useful for monitoring any changes over time – from the gradual succession of grassland into woodland, or a sudden change in land use such as woodland being coppiced or a new adjacent housing development. Monitoring these changes provides data for both conservation monitoring, land management and research, for example, having data on butterfly occupancy in coniferous plantation allows us to publish findings as to the usefulness of these habitats for biodiversity.

Habitat Classification – the challenges

There are some challenges in habitat classification; not least because habitats are a 'continuum mosaic'. Within this some habitats transition across a variable distance and others form extensive patches with clear boundaries. Furthermore, some of these transition zones are habitats in themselves (e.g. scrub found between woodland and grassland/heathland) and can also contain other transient habitats. But, despite these challenges, it is better to have some classification data than none at all.

UKBMS habitats

The habitat classification for butterfly transects is designed to enable both a broad habitat description of a transect as well as a detailed description of individual sections. It is straightforward to distinguish habitats in broad terms, such as woodland, grassland, heathland, wetland and coast that most people are familiar with, but the complexity increases as one drills down into the detail, such as the types of woodland; and within that, for example, the types of oak woodland. The brilliance of the WCBS categories is that it is simple, but allows for detail. There are 10 main categories, most of which are subdivided, giving a total of 40 categories. The full set can be found here – **UKBMS categories**.

*A woodland ride, covering two habitats. Categorising this as **Bare ground/woodland herb/grass mosaics of woodland rides** (**32**) as the principal habitat and **Mature broadleaved woodland** (**26**) as the 2nd Transect habitat would be an intrepretation that would be just fine.*

Assigning a habitat – be bold

It may seem daunting, and appear to need specialist knowledge but that is not the case. The important thing is to have a go at

*HABITAT INTERPRETATION: Transitional **Dry scrub/shrub thickets** (**22**) encroaching into **Dry semi/unimproved (flower-rich) chalk/limestone grassland** (**15**) – one can tell the grassland is calcareous (rather than neutral or acid) from the look of the soil and the plant assemblage, including Cowslips.*

identifying the habitat – you won't be far out – and an informed guess is better than no data at all. In these days of online zoomable maps it is also relatively straightforward for the survey team to check if something looks amiss. The main challenge in deciding upon a habitat type for your square is when two or more habitats are adjacent. For example the butterflies found along a hedgerow will be influenced by an adjacent arable field or woodland. Another good example are woodland rides which are regarded as grassland, rather than woodland, but as ride edges are effectively swards with grasses, sedges, rushes and herbaceous flowering plants; they will have a more significant influence on the butterflies found there than the adjacent woodland. Thankfully, it is possible to select two habitat types for your square overall, a Principal Transect Habitat and 2nd Transect Habitat, just look around and apply your best guess.

A habitat plea

Only 30% of WCBS squares have habitat data submitted online, unsurprisingly these data represent habitats common throughout the wider countryside, such as agriculturally improved grassland, arable crops and hedgerows. We are very grateful to those walkers who have submitted this invaluable information, however we need more help. We are particularly keen to gather further data on forestry conifer plantations and urban areas, in UKBMS terms the codes and classification are::

- **27 Mature Coniferous Woodland**
- **39 Ornamental shrubs/trees/lawns of churches/parks/ domestic gardens etc**
- **40 Bare ground/weed communities of post-industrial sites e.g. quarries/pits/road/rail/landfill sites**

Data from locations such as these will prove invaluable as we are able to learn so much more about how butterflies are faring in the wider countryside .

Post-industrial sites (40) can be a haven for rare plants as well as butterflies and other invertebrates.

Churches, parks and gardens (39) are surprisingly under recorded.

So, don't be shy, get online at UKBMS and maybe even choose a new urban transect to do. The main thing is to record your transect habitat, even if it is only your best guess, as this will give everyone involved in the survey a large dose of Habitat Happiness.

Photos courtesy of **WILD***Guides Britain's Habitats (2nd Edition)*

2023 GOALS

Squares with long data runs

Squares with continuous sets of data are highly valuable, enabling us to produce population trends and better understand what is happening to butterflies across the countryside. Last year we reported on the 109 squares which have long data runs but haven't been walked in the last 2-3 years.

19 of these squares (16 BC and 3 BBS) were re-established this year, with 89% of them surveyed twice during the core period. Thank you to the 18 walkers and champions who got these squares up and running again. Please see below for more priority squares requiring re-establishment or contact Rachael Conway to check priority squares in your area.

Andy Darnford

Ken Orpe

Table 1. Examples of priority Squares for 2023 (12-14 years data run not walked in 2022)

Square	Survey	Location	Contact
SS9944	BC	Dunster, Somerset West and taunton	Andy Danford, Somerset and Bristol
ST0140	BC	Withycombe, Somerset West and Taunton	Andy Danford, Somerset and Bristol
SK1978	BC	Silence Mine Heritage Site, Bretton, Derbyshire Bretton, Derbyshire	Ken Orpe, East Midlands

GETTING INVOLVED

Getting involved in the WCBS

Overall co-ordination of the WCBS is led by Butterfly Conservation's Butterfly Monitoring Officer; Rachael Conway, with squares allocated to recorders through a network of voluntary local Champions (see 'Meet the Team'). Rachael can be contacted via survey@butterfly-conservation.org If you would like to take part in the WCBS on your BBS square, please contact James Heywood at the BTO via bbs@bto.org

WCBS Champions

WCBS Branch Champions have a pivotal role in promoting and co-ordinating the scheme in their local areas. Throughout the season they also provide support and encouragement to recorders as and when required. Since the last Annual Newsletter, Peter Philp has taken on the role of WCBS Champion for Upper Thames from Nick Bowles. A huge thank you to Nick for his work in promoting and growing the scheme for almost 2 years. To find out who your WCBS Champion is please see page 11 of this newsletter.

Champion Vacancies

We have a number of opportunities for new Champions to get involved with the Scheme this year. Vacancies are currently available in BC Branch areas Lincolnshire, Northern Ireland, and Cheshire & The Wirral. The role would suit an organised person who enjoys engaging with recorders and volunteers. There is no requirement to be a butterfly 'expert', as training and support will be provided by both the WCBS Officer and the local BC Branch. If you are interested in finding out more please contact Butterfly Monitoring Officer Rachael Conway at survey@butterfly-conservaton.org

We now have online training for champions, which helps outline the roles and responsibilities. We invite both existing champions and those considering one of our vacant roles to access the training. We would be very keen to receive you feedback and ideas for improvements or development. You can access the training via our Volunteer Training and Resources page.

BTO Regional Organisers

The WCBS on BBS squares is nationally coordinated by James Heywood at the BTO with volunteer support provided by David White. We are hugely grateful to the efforts of the BTO's Regional Organisers for the BBS who help promote the WCBS to their BBS volunteers.

Staffing updates

Megan Lowe served as WCBS Officer for two years and did an excellent job of supporting volunteers and Champions. Megan also carried out a great deal of behind the scenes work keeping the survey and its systems shipshape and developing new efficient ways of running the survey. Thankfully Megan has stayed with Butterfly Conservation in her new Engagement Officer role. Megan has offered a great deal of support and direction during the handover period to new Butterfly Monitoring officer Rachael Conway.

Megan Lowe

Butterfly Monitoring Officer Rachael Conway is responsible for the administration and support of both UKBMS standard transects and the WCBS. Rachael has been with Butterfly Conservation for seven years, mostly delivering volunteering and engagement projects in Northern Ireland. In 2021 Rachael moved to BC's Monitoring and Recording team to work on the Supporting Science project alongside UKBMS support duties, before taking up the joint UKBMS and WCBS role in November 2022.

Many thanks to Sarah Harris our previous BTO WCBS colleague of eight years, who did so much to promote the and develop the scheme. We wish Sarah all the best in her new role as coordinator of the Seabird Monitoring Programme . In 2022 we welcomed Sarah's replacement James Heywood who joined the BTO as Breeding Bird Survey National Organiser.

Small Copper by Donna Rainey.

MEET THE TEAM

WCBS co-ordination and support

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