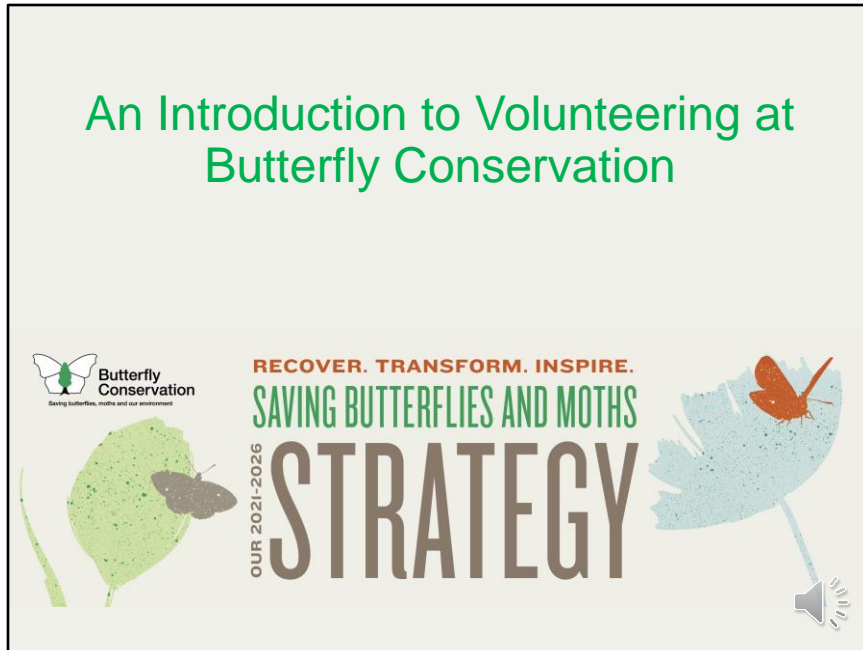


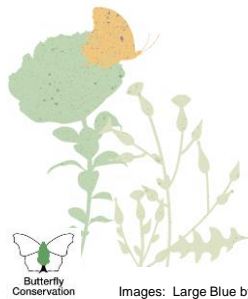
# An Introduction to Volunteering at Butterfly Conservation



Hello, and welcome to this training session which will give you an introduction to volunteering at Butterfly Conservation.

# Welcome

Thank you very much for helping to save butterflies, moths and the environment. We appreciate every hour that is given to us by our fantastic volunteers.



Thank you very much for helping to save butterflies, moths and the environment. We appreciate every hour that is given to us by our fantastic volunteers. In 2021, almost 3,000 volunteers gave 158,000 hours of their time to help save species like the Large Blue pictured here. That's the equivalent of 92 full time members of staff. For comparison, we employ the equivalent of around 65 people full time, so volunteers really do have a huge influence over what we can achieve.

And this doesn't even include the huge number of people who regularly record butterflies and moths or take part in our citizen science programmes, giving us vital data about how species are responding to habitat management work or climate change. If we include all of our surveyors and citizen scientists, we have around 147,000 people taking action to help butterflies and moth in the UK, which is phenomenal!

We hope that the following presentation will help you to get to know Butterfly Conservation a little more, understand how your volunteering contributes to our work and where to go for help.

It is available as a recorded presentation and the slides (with links) will also be

available to access separately with the other volunteer training resources.

## Who are Butterfly Conservation?

Butterfly Conservation is a charity which works across the UK to create a world where butterflies and moths thrive and can be enjoyed by everyone, forever.

The charity was formed in 1968 and is now one of the largest insect conservation organisations in the world.



Emperor Moth – Iain H Leach






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## About Us

Over 40,000 members, thousands of volunteers, one great President!

- Head Office is in Lulworth, Dorset
- We have [32 local branches](#)
- We are governed by [Trustees](#)
- Our CEO is Julie Williams



We are incredibly lucky to have Sir David Attenborough as our president.

Our Head Office is in Lulworth, Dorset and we have around 80 members of staff based around the UK.

They work with our 32 local branches, which are run entirely by volunteers and deliver much of our conservation work on the ground.

We are governed by [Trustees](#), who are all volunteers themselves. They work closely with Julie Williams, our CEO, to set strategic direction and lead the work of the charity.

## Our Branches

We're incredibly proud of our branches, which cover the whole of the UK.

Volunteers work with their local branch or member of staff



There are lots of opportunities to volunteer in your area. Many of the opportunities near you will be co-ordinated by your local branch. Each branch is run by a committee, who work with staff to direct our work in the local area. They often have a branch newsletter which highlights what's happening in the local area, run practical conservation tasks, attend shows and run events and they may also run educational activities too.

If you're a member of Butterfly Conservation you will automatically join your local branch and receive their newsletter, but you don't have to be a member to volunteer with us.

## Challenges

*"The State of the UKs Butterflies Report 2015"* found that three quarters of UK species had declined (in range or abundance) in the past 40 years.



Small Tortoiseshell – Iain Leach

2015

2021

*"The State of Britain's Larger Moths 2021"* also found that 41% of species had decreased in abundance and 32% of species decreased in distribution.



You may already be aware that the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, but you may not know that butterflies and moths are recognised by the Government as key indicators of the health of our environment, as their fragility makes them quick to respond to change; both good and bad.

Unfortunately "The State of the UKs Butterflies Report 2015" found that **three quarters** of UK species had declined (in range or abundance) in the past 40 years, and "The State of Britain's Larger Moths 2021" found that 41% of species had decreased in abundance and 32% of species decreased in distribution.

This means that there are fewer butterflies and moths in the country than there were - and also that they are found in fewer places.

For example, the Small Tortoiseshell has decreased by 76% in abundance; this means that there are 76% fewer Small Tortoiseshells flying around the country than there were in 1976.

## Why is this happening?

We farm more intensively

We've changed the way we manage woodlands

Habitat loss:

- 40% decline in broad-leaved woodland
- 200,000 miles of hedgerow lost
- 20 million Elm trees from disease
- 98% of flower rich meadows have been lost

Climate change

Light pollution



There are many factors which contribute to these trends.

For example, we farm more intensively than we used to. The use of chemical pesticides to increase crop yields means that many insects are suffering, even those who are not farm pests. Intensification also led to the removal of 200,000 miles of hedgerow, which provides vital habitat for many species.

We've changed the way we manage woodlands, too. For example, many butterflies and moths rely on practices such as coppicing to complete their lifecycle. This form of management has fallen out of practice, which impacts butterflies and moths too.

Habitat loss impacts many species. Butterflies and moths can be very particular, with some species only feeding on one or two specific plants as caterpillars. Because we have lost the wonderful mixture of plants that we used to have, many species have also lost their source of food and declined as well.

Climate change has impacted many species – some positively and some negatively. Species have always evolved to adapt to changing conditions and will continue to do so. The problem with man-made climate change is that



**it is happening so quickly that our wildlife may not be able to evolve and adapt fast enough.** So far there have already been some winners and some losers as a result of climate change.

One moth which has suffered is the beautiful [Garden Tiger](#) as we see here. This moth used to be a familiar sight in British gardens. Its brown furry caterpillars - known as woolly bears - were often seen wandering across open ground while looking for a suitable place to pupate. Between 1968 and 2002 numbers of the Garden Tiger fell by an alarming 89%. This seems to be because the caterpillars are adapted to survive long frosty winters, so they don't do well in the mild wet winters and warmer springs of recent years. Sadly, this species is predicted to decline even further.

Many other species are also spreading north, probably seeking cooler areas as southern areas become warmer through climate change. For example, the [Cinnabar](#) (in the second picture down) is spreading further into Scotland. Moths which already live in cool areas in northern Britain, or on mountains may face problems, as they will have nowhere further north or higher up to find the cooler conditions they need.

On the plus side, as temperatures in southern England start to mirror those found on the continent years ago, we're also seeing more species start to migrate to the UK, which could eventually lead to new species breeding in the UK.

Finally, recent research by Douglas Boyes found that streetlights in roadside verges reduced the number of moth caterpillars by 33%. This could be because adults are disturbed by the lights, laying fewer eggs – or it could be because caterpillars usually feed at night and the lights could be disrupting them.

But it doesn't have to be this way...



But it doesn't have to be this way...

## Our Vision



A world where butterflies and moths thrive and can be enjoyed by everyone, forever.



Our vision is A world where butterflies and moths thrive and can be enjoyed by everyone, forever. In 2021 we launched a new five year strategy to help us achieve this vision.

## Our Goals & Initiatives

[Our strategy](#) has three Strategic Goals:

1. Halve the number of the UK's threatened species of butterflies and moths
2. Improve the condition of 100 of the most important landscapes for butterflies and moths
3. Transform 100,000 wild spaces in the UK for people, butterflies and moths

We will deliver these Strategic Goals through a programme of Initiatives:

- Recover butterflies and moths
- Connect people to nature
- Unite for wildlife
- Tackle threats to species
- Manage land sustainably



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We will deliver these Strategic Goals through a programme of Initiatives which will bring focus and co-ordination to often complex conservation efforts, and inspire many more people to get involved. These Initiatives are intended to address the key areas of concern within the conservation sector as a whole:

### **Our initiatives are to:**

Recover butterflies and moths

Connect people to nature

Unite for wildlife

Tackle threats to species

Manage land sustainably



## **Our Values**

Our values underpin our culture, the way we do things and what we believe in:

**Deliver Excellence** – We use our wealth of scientific evidence and practical experience to deliver positive change for butterflies, moths and nature. We are the experts you can trust to give you the information you need.

**Passionate** – Nature is at the heart of all we do. We are dedicated to delivering positive change to conserve butterflies, moths, and our environment. We are relentless in the pursuit of our vision, seeking new ways to make a difference.

**Inspiring** – We take action and speak up for what we believe in, we enable people to understand, enjoy and care butterflies and moths.

Collaborative – We will achieve our vision by building networks, communities and partnerships, to deliver success for nature. Our culture champions and promotes inclusion, equality and diversity.

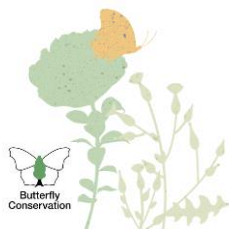
And if you take the first letter of each of those, starting with Excellence, you'll see that together we are EPIC.

## The role of volunteers

We can't make a difference without you!

2,900 volunteers – 21,300 days

Our volunteers get involved in a wide range of activities.



We can't make a difference without you. We have around 80 members of staff who deliver 14,560 days a year, but we have almost 3,000 branch and project volunteers who, in 2021 delivered 21,300 days. This was despite covid-19 still presenting several difficulties and preventing us from carrying out our usual programme of work.

Our volunteers get involved in a wide range of activities, for example, many are involved in creating spaces for butterflies and moths.

This is a vital activity which helps us to create a patchwork of places for butterflies and moths to feed, breed and shelter across the UK. For example, after attending a training session run by us in Northern Ireland, one of our volunteers - Damian - helps manage public green spaces in his area for pollinators by seeding wildflowers.

We have over 30 nature reserves, where volunteers help to check livestock, monitor species and carry out practical conservation work to restore meadows, create new habitat or open up woodland rides.



## As well as....

- Recording and monitoring
- Running school visits and events
- Spreading the word
- Co-ordinating our local work



Our volunteers get involved in many other activities too.

A key activity is recording butterflies and moths. This provides us with vital data which tells us how butterflies and moths are faring across the UK. The data is collected entirely by volunteers and has a huge impact. We're always looking for new people to get involved. For example, volunteers trained through Helping Hands for Butterflies submitted over 3,000 records of butterflies last year alone to iRecord – almost 20% of the total number of butterfly records submitted this way in Scotland last year.

Many volunteers get involved in running school visits or events, helping us to spread the word about butterflies and moths and giving children hands-on experiences to connect them to nature. Their work is vital in increasing our reach, getting even more people involved in our work. They are supported by many more who create newsletters, manage social media channels or write content for websites.

Finally, we are very proud of our branches where much of this work is co-ordinated and the majority of our work on the ground happens. There, volunteers plan events programmes, schedule practical conservation work or help co-ordinate our many

recording and monitoring volunteers. There are many ways to get involved!

## Getting Involved

There are plenty of opportunities to get more involved in our work:

- [Look for local volunteer opportunities](#)
- Take part in some training
- Help us spread the word
- Become a member or donor
- Create a Wild Space



We assume that you're here because you're already interested in volunteering with us and perhaps you already have a role in mind. If you're keen to get involved in other ways, you can look for volunteer opportunities using our volunteer search. We have a fantastic free training programme for our volunteers which you can access on our website. If you fancy trying something new but aren't sure what would be involved, this is a great way of finding out. We are also developing a library of training resources which are available to all volunteers, regardless of their role, to help increase their knowledge of butterflies, moths and the environment.

We rely on our social media to get the word out about our work. You can help us achieve this by following us on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter and sharing our posts to your networks, joining in with online discussions and talking to others about what we do.

We really appreciate your help as a volunteer and I hope this session has helped you to understand what a significant contribution that makes to our work. If you'd like to support us in other ways then becoming a member can also help us achieve our goals. Or you can keep an eye out for our fundraising campaigns and consider donating to those.

Finally, you may remember that one of our goals for 2026 is to create 100,000 Wild Spaces across the UK. Every space helps build vital habitat for butterflies and moths – visit our website to find out how you can help contribute to our goal.

## Help and Support

Volunteering web pages

Your Key Contact

Volunteer Q&A sessions

General enquiries: [info@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:info@butterfly-conservation.org)



We want to make sure our volunteers have the support they need to help us save butterflies, moths and the environment. There are a few places you can go for help:

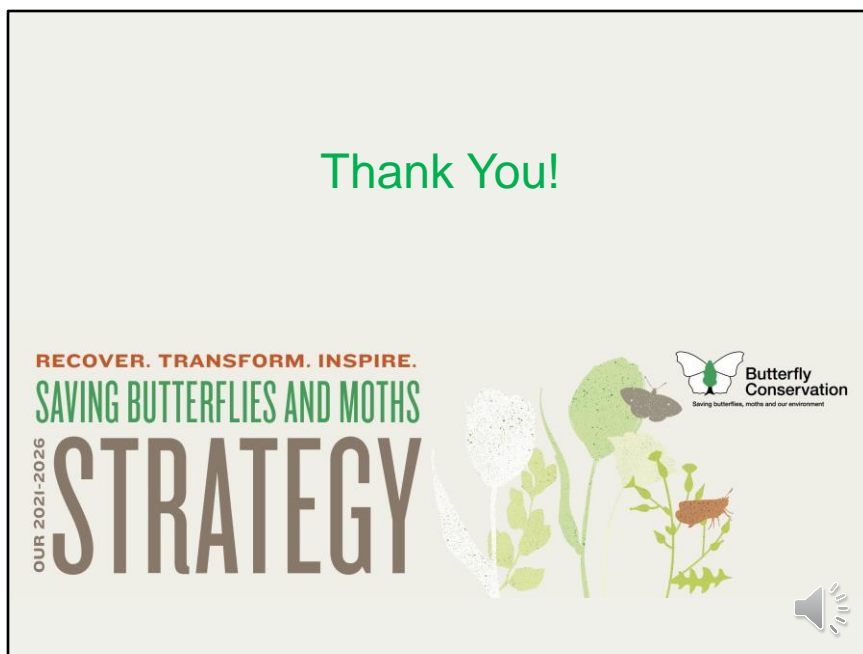
All the key information you need to volunteer with us can be found on the volunteering pages on the Butterfly Conservation website. This is a good place to start if you need help; there's a good chance that the answer to any questions you have. If you want to know more about your local area, then you could try checking the In Your Area pages on the BC website, or check if your local branch has a website too.

If not then you can try your Key Contact. All of our volunteer roles have a Key Contact identified in their role profile. This person should be the first port of call for any questions you have which aren't answered on the website.

We also host live Q&A sessions over zoom or at events, which give all volunteers the opportunity to ask staff questions relating to their volunteer role. These will be advertised to those who have completed training for a role and who are already registered with us as a volunteer.

Finally, if you have any other general questions about butterflies, moths or our work, please email [info@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:info@butterfly-conservation.org) and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

Thank You!



Thank you so much for your time completing this training and for supporting our work. We hope you enjoy volunteering with us and helping us to save butterflies and moths and make the environment better.