



Butterfly Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Butterfly Conservation

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President Sir David Attenborough CH, FRS

The Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
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Dear Secretary of State

We would like to extend our warmest congratulations to you on your appointment as Secretary of State for the Environment. We welcome the inclusion of nature recovery as one of your Department's key priorities and your subsequent announcement of a review of the Environmental Improvement Plan. We agree that "Nature is dying" and that we are in dire need of a delivery plan that maps out how we can achieve our shared objectives to restore nature.

Butterfly Conservation and its supporters have been collecting data on butterflies and moths for over 50 years. Our data is an integral part of the Government's biodiversity indicators and will play an important role in monitoring delivery of the Environment Act species abundance target.

The picture is not pretty. In the UK, long-term trends show that 80% of butterfly species have decreased in abundance or distribution, or both since the 1970s. The total abundance of larger moths in Britain decreased by 33% over 50 years (1968–2017).

But it is not all doom and gloom; given the resources we have demonstrated across multiple species and at a landscape-scale that we can reverse those trends. For example the [Wood White project in Chiddingfold Forest](#) showed the value of a collaborative project between Butterfly Conservation, government agencies, land owners and local people to deliver lasting benefits for a variety of species and the broader environment.

If this Government is genuinely going to tackle the nature crisis it must put species at the heart of nature recovery by:

commit significant money, time and resources to nature's recovery by:

- doubling the budget for species recovery programmes.

be accountable for nature's recovery by:

- supporting landscape scale action to improve the most important landscapes for butterflies and moths.

take science and nature seriously by:

- recognising the wellbeing benefits of nature and reducing current inequalities in access by ensuring everyone has a wild space within a 15-minute walk.
- recognising light pollution, a huge threat to moths and other nocturnal insects, as an environmental pollutant and setting legally binding targets for its reduction.
- banning use of all neonicotinoid pesticides, which are known pollinator-killing and environmentally-damaging chemicals, completely and immediately, with no exception.

We strongly support the proposal for a review of how we meet the Environment Act targets and would welcome the opportunity to be part of the rebuilding process.

Yours sincerely



Julie Williams
Chief Executive