# Decline of butterfly populations raises alarm in the UK



The Oxford Times has reported on an alarming situation concerning the decline of butterfly populations in the United Kingdom, as experts from the Butterfly Conservation highlighted an ongoing crisis. According to Richard Fox, an advocate from the charity, the current state of British butterflies is indeed concerning, with over half of the 59 butterfly species in the UK showing long-term decline. In fact, 2024 marked the fifth-worst year for these insects, recording significant downturns in several species. Notably, it became the worst year on record for certain species, including the small tortoiseshell, the chalk hill blue, and small copper.

Fox attributed this troubling trend to a combination of factors predominantly linked to human activity. He expressed his devastation over the situation, stating, "I am devastated by the decline of our beloved British butterflies, and I’m sorry to say it has been brought about by human actions: We have destroyed wildlife habitats, polluted the environment, used pesticides on an industrial scale and we are changing the climate." He elaborated that adverse weather conditions, including a wet spring and a relatively cool summer, have created suboptimal environments for butterflies, rendering them more vulnerable than before.

In the light of these declines, Fox noted that Butterfly Conservation has received a growing number of inquiries from the public, expressing concern over the dwindling butterfly numbers and seeking ways to assist. He suggested that creating more habitats could significantly help, advocating for a specific initiative: "By far the best thing we can do to help butterflies is to create more habitat. That is why we are calling on people and councils across the UK to pledge to not cut their grass this year from April to September: This simple act can make a real, immediate difference to butterflies, moths and other wildlife."

Additionally, Dr Marc Botham, a butterfly ecologist at the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, emphasised the importance of monitoring and recording wildlife. He noted, “These deeply concerning results from the UKBMS emphasise just how important it is to monitor and record our wildlife so we can target conservation efforts and protect our beloved species.” He pointed out the significance of butterflies as indicator species, which can reflect the overall health of the environment, making data from monitoring vital for assessing the status of the UK’s countryside and natural ecosystems.

This crisis surrounding butterfly populations not only highlights significant environmental issues but also underscores the need for communal initiatives and sustained conservation efforts across the nation.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://butterfly-conservation.org/news-and-blog/uk-butterfly-emergency-declared> - This URL supports the claim of a significant decline in butterfly populations in the UK, with the Big Butterfly Count revealing the lowest numbers on record for some species in 2024. It also highlights the call for action by Butterfly Conservation.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/butterflies-uk-climate-change-monitoring-b2725515.html> - This article corroborates the worsening state of butterfly populations in the UK, attributing the declines to habitat destruction, pollution, pesticide use, and climate change. It also mentions the poor weather conditions exacerbating the decline.
* <https://heartofenglandforest.org/news/butterfly-numbers-hit-all-time-low-across-uk> - This source confirms the alarming drop in butterfly numbers across the UK, aligning with the broader narrative of an urgent need for conservation efforts due to the significant decline.
* <https://www.butterfly-conservation.org/> - The Butterfly Conservation website provides general information about their efforts to protect butterflies and highlights their advocacy for habitat creation and measures against pesticides.
* <https://www.ceh.ac.uk/> - This is the website of the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, an organization involved in the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS) and emphasizing the importance of monitoring for conservation efforts.