

TRANSECT RECORDING

Butterfly transects are a way of measuring the number and variety of butterflies present at a site from year to year, and require a commitment to carry out weekly recording, throughout the main six-month period in which butterflies fly in the UK.

WHAT TO RECORD ON

Transect counts should be made on **JBMS Weekly Recording forms** available from: Denise McGowan, Environment Dept., Howard Davis Farm, Trinity JE3 5JP Tel: 01534 441606, email: d.mcgowan@gov.je

WHEN TO MAKE TRANSECT COUNTS

Time of year:

Transect counts take place once a week for 26 weeks from *April through to the end of September*.

Count weeks do not run from Sunday to Monday, but start from April 1st. Week one runs from 1st to 7th April, week two 8th-14th April and so on, until week twenty-six which runs from 23rd to 29th September. In early springs and Indian summers you may also want to record in either late March or early October, for species such as Brimstone, Speckled Wood and Small Copper. In such cases 25th to 31st March becomes week -1, 30th Sept—6th October is week 27 and so on.

Time of week:

You can record on any day of the week, and should aim to pick the day that has the most favourable weather. Only record more than once a week if the weather on your first visit was unsatisfactory - there is no need to send in data from the unsatisfactory visit.

Time of day:

Transect walks should only be made between 10:00 and 17:00 hours, and preferably (as recommended by ITE) between 10:45 and 15:45.

Weather conditions:

Transect walks should only be carried out in warm and at least bright weather, with no more than moderate winds. The minimum criteria are either 13-17°C with at least 60% sunshine, or 17+°C with at least 40% sunshine, and windspeed (Beaufort scale) no more than 5. Do not record if the temperature is below 13°C.

HOW TO RECORD (in eight easy steps)

1 - Use a separate form for each weekly visit.

2 - Always follow exactly the same route each time you make a transect walk (be clear that you know exactly where each section starts and finishes).

3 - Before you start recording complete the top of the form up to the start time.

4 - Record each section once only.

5 - For long sections where species are present in large numbers, it may be advisable to tally numbers on a separate sheet or notebook before entering the final total onto the standard recording form (or customise the form beforehand - see previous section above). Record actual numbers seen – an estimate will do if it is not possible to be accurate.

6 - If rare species are present, resist stopping and waiting at favoured hotspots to improve your count, as this will bias results.

7 - Record butterfly numbers and % sunshine in each section as you go along (see below).

8 - At the end of your transect record the time, make notes of any management activity or other points of interest and check that you have filled in all the relevant boxes on the recording form.

RECORDING BUTTERFLIES:

Walk at a slow, steady pace counting all butterflies seen within a fixed distance - 2.5m either side of the transect line and 5m ahead. In some habitats e.g. along sea cliffs or woodland rides, it is acceptable to record at a width of 5m along one side only of the transect line. Always stick to the limits that you identified when the transect was established.

Try to identify and separate all species you encounter, including where possible 'difficult' species. You may want to net a sample.

RECORDING THE WEATHER:

THE BEAUFORT SCALE:			
Code	MPH	Description	Specifications on land
0	0-1	Calm	Smoke rises vertically
1	1-3	Light air	Slight smoke drift
2	4-7	Light Breeze	Wind felt on face & leaves rustle
3	8-12	Gentle Breeze	Leaves & twigs in constant motion
4	13-18	Moderate Breeze	Raises dust and small branches move
5	19-24	Fresh Breeze	Small trees in leaf begin to sway
6	25-31	Strong Breeze	Large branches move & trees sway

Sunshine should be estimated for each section to the nearest 10%. If a shadow is cast (bright cloud) then conditions may be classed as sunny. At the end of the transect record shade temperature (with a portable thermometer), estimate average sunshine (based on section data), and average windspeed, using the following Beaufort scale:

At the end of your transect record the time, make notes of any management activity or other points of interest and check that you have filled in all the relevant boxes on the recording form.

BUMBLEBEES AND PHEASANTS:

Please record bumblebee and pheasants in the same way as butterflies, i.e. count individuals that are seen within a fixed distance 2.5m either side of the transect line and 5m ahead. It is not necessary to record bumbles to species level. Thank you.