

KENT'S PLAN BEE



September 2023 Summary Newsletter

State of Nature Report shows worrying results for pollinators

At the end of September, the State of Nature report was published and there were some worrying results for pollinators and flowers.

Invertebrates in general have been found, on average, in 13% fewer places now than in 1970. But the news is far worse for pollinators, including bees, hoverflies and moths, which have decreased by 18% on average. 54% of flowering plants and 59% of bryophytes (mosses and their relatives: liverworts and hornworts) across Great Britain have also decreased in where they are found. Read the full report on the [State of Nature website](#) for more information on the state of the UK's current biodiversity.

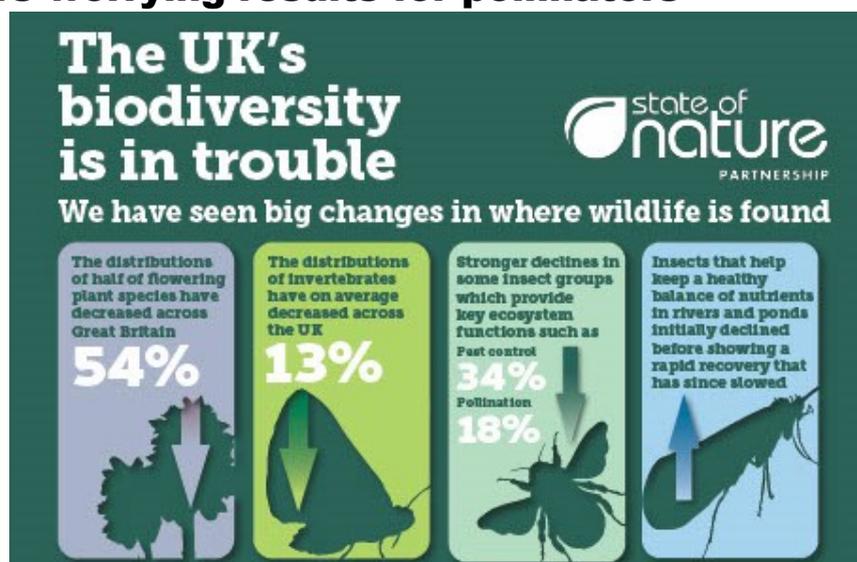


Image credit: State of Nature Partnership

Results of Butterfly Conservation's Big Butterfly Count 2023 published



Red Admiral (top), Ringlet (bottom)

The Big Butterfly Count 2023 results were published last month. Despite the wet summer weather, almost 95,000 participants got out recording, with an average of 12 butterflies and day-flying moths per count. This is much higher than last year, at 9 per count, and the highest in four years!

The most recorded species this year was the Red Admiral, then Gatekeepers, with the Whites coming in third and fourth place. Sadly, Ringlets, Common Blues and Speckled Woods all saw a decline in numbers compared to records from last year.

Although the numbers were the best in four years, a 13-year trend from all the years of data collected by the Big Butterfly Count show a worrying long-term decline for all species. Weather does have a yearly impact on butterfly numbers, but more likely it is the loss of habitat that is having the largest long-term effect on populations.

Read the full article on the [Butterfly Conservation website](#).

Good news for some of Kent's rare moths

Some of Kent's rarest moths have had bumper years thanks to all the amazing habitat restoration works happening across Kent.

In the Wye National Nature Reserve, Natural England have been working with farmers to restore fields back to suitable habitat for the Black-veined moth.

Thanks to this work, a peak of 255 moths were recorded during surveys this summer, the highest number recorded since the project began. Given that in 1995 they were close to extinction, this is fantastic news. Read more on the [BBC News website](#).

Over at Tankerton Slopes, the Kent's Magnificent Moth team have been busy planting Hog's Fennel for the Fisher's Estuarine Moth. On the wing in September, surveys for these moths have only just finished, but it is hoped that the numbers recorded will be the best yet, with [28 individuals counted](#) on one survey alone.

Without the important habitat works these rare moths may disappear altogether, so it is great to hear that numbers are increasing thanks to everyone's hard work.



Fisher's Estuarine Moth

How to help pollinators and your mental health

World Mental Health Day takes place on 10 October every year. To celebrate it, we have put together a little list of gardening and other activities that can benefit pollinators and positively impact your mental health.

It is increasingly acknowledged that there are multiple benefits for our health from being outside, gardening and generally connecting to nature. The physical activity and being outside not only improves our physical health but also our mental health. Looking after our mental health is as important as our physical health and the two are often intrinsically linked. Good mental health helps us manage the difficult times as well as appreciate the better times, so we shouldn't wait until it is too late to start looking after it.

There are lots of ways to look after and improve your mental health. By completing activities that enhance wellbeing, you can build a resilience to stress, anxiety, and feeling low, as well as gaining the instant benefit. The 5 ways to wellbeing as promoted by the NHS are:

Give

Learn

Be active

Take notice

Connect

Did you know that there are lots of activities that benefit your mental health and your local pollinators? Here are 5 activities based on the wellbeing values that help pollinators whilst helping you and your mental health:

Give - Give a little bit of your garden over to nature and leave it untidy

How it helps pollinators. Whatever you've got, a part of a garden, a balcony, a window box, or a plant pot by the front door, could you help pollinators by letting that space go wild? By leaving somewhere to grow wild and unmanaged, it will provide more shelter and flowers for pollinators.

How it helps your mental health. Helping others has been shown to make you feel happier too. Giving a piece of your garden, balcony, or window box over to nature will not only take tidying up off your to-do list but will give you that happy feeling that you are doing your part to help.



Learn - Start a Nature Journal & record the pollinators you see every day

How it helps pollinators. Making a note about the pollinators you see every day makes you aware of which pollinators you are seeing. This then helps with monitoring which pollinators are about and you can then provide appropriate flowers for them.

How it helps your mental health. Humans are constantly learning and curious about the world around us. By learning the name and a fact about pollinators every day, you are improving your knowledge & boosting your self-esteem, especially by meeting a daily goal to learn a new fact each day.

Be Active - Sow Wildflower Seeds or make a Pollinator Planter

How it helps pollinators. Adding more flowers to your garden, outside your home or in your local green space provides more food sources for pollinators. Autumn is a great time to do this as the seeds/bulbs can settle over the winter before germinating next spring. Be sure to plant a variety of flowers to cover all pollinator types. Check out [last month's newsletter](#) for tips on preparing your lawn for sowing seeds. Our [Pollinator Planter instructions](#) are on our Facebook page.

How it helps your mental health. As well as benefiting your physical health, being active helps to improve sleep and your mood, whilst reducing stress, anxiety and helps to calm your thoughts. Preparing your lawn or pot, then planting seeds or bulbs, is the perfect activity; your hands are doing something and you're on your feet, getting you active.



Take Notice - Draw a Pollinator, taking time to notice the details

How it helps pollinators. Observing and noticing certain features on pollinators can help with identification, especially with some of the trickier groups to tell apart, such as bees and hoverflies. Take the time to notice the colours, the patterns on the wings, or how hairy your pollinator is. All these features are great for identification purposes. Once you know which pollinators are in your area, you can help by providing for them.

How it helps your mental health. Being present in the moment and taking notice of details has been shown to help you feel more positive about life. The world of pollinators can be small, other worldly, and one we often overlook. Whether your drawing takes 5 minutes or an hour, solely focusing on this task will help distract from other thoughts and provide you with a different perspective on pollinators and life.

Connect - Join a conservation task day or survey day

How it helps pollinators. You will be positively contributing to the long-term survival of pollinators. Whether managing or creating habitat for pollinators on a task day, or monitoring populations as part of a survey, pollinators and other local wildlife will benefit from the work you do.

How it helps your mental health. Connecting with others is important for our mental wellbeing. Joining a task or survey day will see you getting to know like-minded people, helping you make those social connections. It's not just your mental health that will benefit, spending time talking to others helps their mental health too.



Further information: [Gardening for a Wilder Kent](#) [Butterfly Conservation – Wellbeing](#) [Mind - 5 Ways to Wellbeing](#) [RHS - Why gardening makes us feel better](#) [Mental Health Foundation – World Mental Health Day 2023](#)

Pollinators to see in October

October really is the last chance to see many pollinators before they hibernate, ready to appear again next spring.

Bees: most of the bumblebee species (especially queens looking for overwintering site), Ivy Mining bee, & Sea Aster bee.

Moths: Plenty still to see! A couple of immigrant hawkmoths may make an appearance, but lots of autumn specialists, along with those having a second brood, including Silver Y, Merveille du Jour and Frosted Orange.

Butterflies: Butterflies are mostly going to be those that had a late second brood, or overwinter as adults, such as Clouded Yellow, Painted Lady, Commas, Peacocks, and Red Admirals.

Wasps: Hornet, German and Common wasp

Flies/ hoverfly: Many of the hoverflies may still be seen on warmer days but this is a last hurrah, look for Batman, Hornet mimic, Sunfly, and Drone fly. Several blowflies can still be seen.

Wildflowers to spot this month include Bristly Oxtongue, Ivy, Gorse, Corn Marigold, Dandelion, Daisy, Greater Plantain, Red Deadnettle, White Campion, and White Deadnettle.

POLLINATORS TO SEE IN OCTOBER



Red-tailed bumblebee
Bombus lapidarius



Clouded Yellow
Colias croceus



Silver Y
Autographa gamma



European Hornet
Vespa crabro



Common Drone Fly
Eristalis tenax



Others to See

Ivy Mining bee - *Colletes hederæ*
Painted Lady - *Vanessa cardui*
Batman hoverfly - *Myathropa florea*
Merveille du Jour - *Dichonia aprilina*
Frosted Orange - *Gortyna flavago*

Spotted any of these? Why not share them on our Facebook page @KentsPlanBee



Spotted any of these or any other pollinators and wildflowers? Post them on our [Facebook page](#), tag us in your photos @KentsPlanBee or [email us](#) your photos.

Upcoming Events and Resources

Half Term Boredom Busters

Use the activities from our [Kent Children's University Pollinator Challenge](#) pack to beat the boredom this October half term. There are plenty of autumn activities, including looking for autumn pollinators, building a bug hotel, sowing seeds, and planting bulbs ready for next spring.

Check out our [30 Days Wild packs](#) as well for more ideas.

Finally, Christmas is coming, so why not start early by making some pollinator themed decorations using our [12 Days of Pollinators](#) instructions. Make them spooky for Halloween by using black, green, and orange colours.



Wild About Garden Online Workshops

The online workshops are back! There are two events happening in November. You can book onto these events through the [Kent Wildlife Trust website](#).

14 November 730pm - Managing garden pests and disease in a nature-friendly way

18 November 3pm - Building and maintaining a garden wildlife pond

Beewalks with Milton Creek Wildlife Group

Fantastic news that the Milton Creek Country Park has been named as a Bumblebee Conservation Trust champion site for the Shril Carder Bee. This bumblebee and at least 9 others have been recorded in good numbers across the site.

To help add to the records and monitor the bee populations, a new ecology survey group has been formed, tasked with undertaking a beewalk every 3rd Sunday of the month. The last beewalk of the year will be at **10am on Sunday 15 October**. In addition to the beewalks, other types of surveys will also be taking place. Please [email the Milton Creek group](#) if you are interested in attending the beewalk and any other wildlife surveys.



 Keep up to date with the latest news via our [Kent's Plan Bee Facebook page](#) 

If you received this email indirectly and would like to subscribe to our mailing list, please email us on the address below with the subject line "Sign Up". If you wish to unsubscribe from this mailing list, please email us on the address below with the subject line "Unsubscribe".

Do you have a Kent pollinator news story or event that you would like featured in our newsletter? Have you created a pollinator friendly community space? Got your neighbours together to create a row of pollinator friendly gardens? Or do you have an event about Kent's pollinators you would like advertised? Email it to the address below and we will be in contact about a potential space in the Newsletter.

planbee@kent.gov.uk

All the previous editions of the Newsletter have now been added to our webpage. You can download them as PDFs or share the website address on your social media. Find all the Newsletters on the [Pollinators section of Kent County Council's website](#).

Edited by Hannah Simmons, Graduate Biodiversity Officer, Kent County Council.

For a Pollinator Friendly Garden of England

