Why should we care about butterflies?

Butterflies are insects. Like bees, bumblebees and flies, they are important pollinators and crucial to the diversity of plants on which both people and nature depend.

But like other insects, butterflies are in danger. Studies report declines reaching 35%, or even 75%, in just a few decades.

They are threatened by habitat loss, intensive land uses, climate change and other drivers.

What are the solutions?

One solution is to change how we manage the land and produce our food. Agroecology is a way of farming that tries, among other things, to use fewer chemicals and to find nature-based solutions, whilst offering farmers a resilient way to make a living.

This is one of the ways to help butterflies in rural areas – but which measures are most effective? And which species benefit the most from improved management?

To answer these questions, we need your help!

Photo: Guy Pe'er

About us and our project

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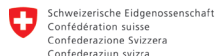### Email us
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Project organised by

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**Find out more
www.agroecology-transect.net/
news/butterfly-survey**

Join us in Counting Farmland Butterflies

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Why is it important to count butterflies?

To learn about farming practices that help protect nature so we can find out what works best for all.

To develop a deeper understanding of how climate change and land use affect both nature and food production.

To help farm businesses find ways of working that benefit people, animals and the environment.

So that both farmers and policy-makers can base their work protecting biodiversity on robust data and evidence

Photo: Guy Pe'er

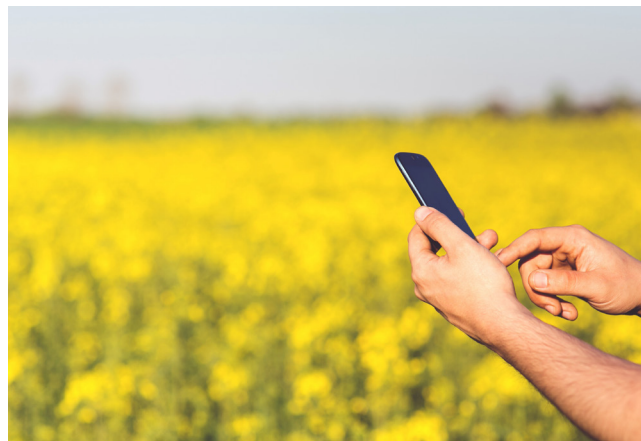# What do butterflies tell us about the countryside?

Indicator species
Butterflies are so-called 'bio-indicators'. Like birds or wildflowers, butterflies tell us a lot about the quality of habitats. Where they're found in abundance, they may indicate a healthy ecosystem. But where the numbers are low or just a few species can be found, it indicates that there is room for improvement or action.

Grassland Butterfly Index
Many butterfly species occur in grassland or farm-land within or next to arable land. They benefit from landscape features like hedges, fallow fields, trees or forest edges. As they often depend on specific plants and habitats, they are sensitive to changes in landscape structure or management. This makes grassland butterflies good indicators of the state of the farmland environment. This is why the EU included the 'Grassland Butterfly Index' as one of three indicators for farmland biodiversity within the Nature Restoration Regulation.

To explore the state of farmland butterflies, and learn what farm activities help them thrive, we need more data, from as many locations as possible. For this we need you!

Getting involved is easy!

Counting butterflies is fun, easy, relaxing and only takes a bit of your time.

1 Install the Butterfly Count app on your phone by scanning the QR code below.

2 Select an agricultural area (such as wheat, rye, rape-seed or corn field, a grassland or a fallow area). Select one or, ideally, two sites within this area (i.e. field centre versus edge; a grassland area compared to arable; or two field edges with or without hedges).

3 Register your chosen areas using the App directly from the field, then spend 15 minutes on your chosen area, in a range of about 500m² (see example map on website), looking for butterflies and re-cording all the species you recognise on the app or you can download our Reporting Sheet from the website and transfer the data to the app later.

www.agroecology-transect.net/news/butterfly-survey

Install the App

Android

Apple