



FIELD MARGIN ASSESSMENT

Background

Butterflies can be used as scientific indicators to demonstrate how valuable a particular environment is. Field margins can be very valuable for wildlife, particularly butterflies and moths, by not only providing breeding habitat but also by acting as corridors between more permanent wildlife sites on the farm or nearby. By undertaking monitoring following a standard scientific method we can find out how valuable individual field margins are.

Monitoring Technique

1. Select a route through the field margin where you see the majority of the butterflies. This route should be as near to 100 meters (strides) in length as possible. It should be a route that can be repeated in future years. It is not necessary to monitor every field margin on the farm or the entire length of a particularly long one, but it would be useful to select 3 or 4 semi-permanent ones situated in different areas of the farm. These margins will most probably be part of an environmental stewardship scheme so the monitoring will also be useful in assessing how well particular margins or nectar and pollen mixes are working.



2. Two walks should be carried out each year. The first walk should be undertaken on a warm sunny day (above 13 degrees centigrade) in May. The second walk should be on a warm sunny day (above 13 degrees centigrade) between 14th July and 14th August. For best results, these walks should be carried out after 11am in the morning and before 4pm in the afternoon. Try to choose a day when the wind is not too strong (only a slight breeze should be felt on your face) as butterflies seek shelter in gusty winds and are more difficult to spot.

3. Count all the butterflies you see within 2 to 3 meters either side of you. At the end of the walk add up the number of species you have seen and how many of each species you have seen.

Also note the following: -

- width of the field margin (to nearest meter)
- approximate length of the field margin (to the nearest 10 meters) along the side of the field you are monitoring

Tip

Check flower heads such as knapweeds for resting or nectaring butterflies.

When you have completed your second walk send your completed form to: -

Warwickshire Butterfly Conservation
30 New Street
Baddesley Ensor
Atherstone
Warwickshire
CV9 2DW

or e-mail to: - keith.warmington@warwickshire-butterflies.org.uk

Results

As butterfly numbers vary each year a detailed analysis will be carried out to determine how valuable your field margins are for wildlife.

The following values will be calculated: -

- A comparable abundance per 100 meters
- A comparable diversity score per 100 meters
- A comparable biodiversity score based on indicator species per 100 meters

If you wish you can also undertake a quick assessment of your field margins yourself, based on your 2 walks.

	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good
No of butterflies per 100 meters	Less than 3 Score 1	3 to 9 Score 2	10 to 20 Score 3	More than 20 Score 4
No of species seen per 100 meters	Less than 3 Score 1	3 to 9 Score 2	9 to 14 Score 3	More than 15 Score 4
Number of Key species per 100 meters			1 to 2 Score 3	More than 2 Score 4

Poor field margins - overall score less than 4
Average field margin - score between 5 and 8
Good field margin - score between 9 and 11
Very good field margin - score above 11

Site Name:
 Recorder: Grid Ref:

Margin Length:
 Margin Width:

Date of May Visit:
 Date of July/August Visit:



Butterflies seen in May

Species	Number seen	Species	Number seen
Brimstone	<input type="text"/>	Brown Argus	<input type="text"/>
			
Large White	<input type="text"/>	Common Blue	<input type="text"/>
			
Small White	<input type="text"/>	Holly Blue	<input type="text"/>
			
Green-veined White	<input type="text"/>	Small Tortoiseshell	<input type="text"/>
			
Orange-tip	<input type="text"/>	Peacock	<input type="text"/>
			
Clouded Yellow	<input type="text"/>	Comma	<input type="text"/>
			
Small Copper	<input type="text"/>	Speckled Wood	<input type="text"/>
			

Butterflies seen in July/August

Species	Number seen	Species	Number seen	Species	Number seen
Small Skipper	<input type="text"/>	Clouded Yellow	<input type="text"/>	Peacock	<input type="text"/>
					
Essex Skipper	<input type="text"/>	Small Copper	<input type="text"/>	Speckled Wood	<input type="text"/>
					
Large Skipper	<input type="text"/>	Brown Argus	<input type="text"/>	Marbled White	<input type="text"/>
					
Brimstone	<input type="text"/>	Common Blue	<input type="text"/>	Gatekeeper	<input type="text"/>
					
Large White	<input type="text"/>	Red Admiral	<input type="text"/>	Meadow Brown	<input type="text"/>
					
Small White	<input type="text"/>	Painted Lady	<input type="text"/>	Ringlet	<input type="text"/>
					
Green-veined White	<input type="text"/>	Small Tortoiseshell	<input type="text"/>	Small Heath	<input type="text"/>
					