

GUIDELINES ON SPECIES RECORDING

1 Introduction

These *Guidelines on Species Recording* are intended to familiarise anyone involved with recording butterflies and moths in Cornwall with the system adopted by Cornwall Butterfly Conservation (CBC) for recording species in the county and how to submit those records. Pooling records in this way provides an indispensable means of tracking population fluctuations and trends across the county over time. We rely on this information to identify the most threatened species, which decides our priorities for future site conservation and survey work.

CBC uses a database management system (DBMS) called ERICA and this is the DBMS we encourage you to use. Submitting records is relatively straightforward, and can be accessed through the CBC website at <http://www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk/recording.html>

There are various DBMS for wildlife recording and these are described briefly in the Annex at the end of these *Guidelines*.

2 CBC recommended practice

2.1 Butterfly field trips

Field trips, open to the public, are organised and promoted by CBC on a weekly basis from May to September. They are advertised in the branch newsletter, *Cornwall Butterfly Observer* and on the CBC website. They are free for members and for the public. They are mostly led by Committee members or associated CBC members, and occasionally involve partnerships with Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Natural England and the National Trust.

Recording protocols on public field trips

- Once the group has assembled at the beginning of the field trip, after health and safety matters have been addressed, the leader will recruit a volunteer from the group who has the relevant knowledge and skills to note the number and species of butterflies and day-flying moths that have been identified.
- The leader will explain that these records will be entered into the ERICA DBMS and, where appropriate, will be copied to the land-owner.
- In addition, weather conditions will be noted and relevant species of particular interest such as larval food plants, nectar plants, other BAP species, parasitic wasps, etc. will also be recorded.
- These records will be passed to the leader at the end of the trip or sent by email as soon as possible to the CBC County Butterfly Recorder.
- The leader will invite anyone who has specialist knowledge of a particular taxon to make themselves known.

2.2 Habitat conservation and site survey days

These are different from field trips since they involve volunteers registered with CBC/Butterfly Conservation (BC) and are organised by the Volunteer Coordinator (VC) who has been contracted by BC to undertake primarily conservation and survey work. All the records of butterflies and related species from the sites visited will be entered into ERICA.

Recording protocols for habitat conservation and site survey days

- The VC will recruit a volunteer with the relevant knowledge and skills to note down and collate from other volunteers all the Lepidoptera and, where appropriate, their larvae or webs (particularly relevant for Marsh Fritillary).
- The VC will explain that these records will be entered into the ERICA DBMS and, where appropriate, will be copied to the land-owner.
- In addition, weather conditions will be noted and relevant species such as larval food plants, nectar plants, other BAP species, ants (particularly relevant for Silver-studded Blue butterfly), parasitic wasps, etc. will also be recorded.
- These records will be passed to the VC at the end of the event or sent by email as soon as possible to the CBC County Butterfly Recorder.
- The VC will invite anyone who has specialist knowledge of a particular taxon to make themselves known.

Cornwall Butterfly Conservation Committee, August 2018

Annex: database management systems for butterfly records

There are various database management systems (DBMS) available to collect, manage, analyse and make available wildlife species records relevant to butterflies and moths in Cornwall.

ERICA (Environmental Recording in Cornwall Automated) is the DBMS used by Cornwall Butterfly Conservation. ERICA was set up in 1987 by Dr Colin French, under the aegis of the then Cornish Biological Records Unit within Exeter University. It is supported by Butterfly Conservation and is the DBMS into which all CBC's butterfly records have been entered and this continues to be the case. ERICA holds 3.85 million records and is actively managed within the Cornish Biodiversity Network to provide the leading online resource accessible to anyone studying the distribution of plant and animal species across time and space in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Currently around 20,000 butterfly records are added to the ERICA DBMS every year and are accessible free of charge to members of the public at 1Km resolution. All the butterfly records received are verified by the CBC County Recorder including national schemes such as the Big Butterfly Count. Transect results and Own a Square records are also added to ERICA. These records are sent by ERICA exclusively to Butterfly Conservation and are used

for research purposes and the important “State of Butterflies” report, which is used by the Government to assess the health and biodiversity of the environment.

<http://www.cornishbiodiversitynetwork.org/Erica.htm>

CBC is a branch of **Butterfly Conservation** (BC), which manages several recording schemes nationally:

- *Big Butterfly Count* <https://www.bigbutterflycount.org/>
- *Garden Butterfly Survey* <https://www.gardenbutterflysurvey.org/>
- *i-Record Butterflies* operates using an app that is free to download for anyone who wishes to submit UK butterfly records direct to BC <https://butterfly-conservation.org/our-work/recording-and-monitoring/irecord-butterflies>

All records relevant to Cornwall that are submitted and/or uploaded to Butterfly Conservation are passed on to CBC’s County Butterfly Recorder, who enters them on the ERICA DBMS.

ERCCIS (Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly) is a DBMS hosted by Cornwall Wildlife Trust (CWT) as a records centre for biological and geological information for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. ERCCIS works with the National Biodiversity Network Gateway and provides a user interface via the ORKS (Online Recording Kernow and Scilly) website. Butterfly records submitted through ORKS do not go to the CBC County Butterfly Recorder.



Brown Argus *Aricia agestis* basking on Ribwort Plantain, a new record for Porthcothan Bay, Cornwall, SW 862722, seen 22 July 2018 and submitted to the CBC County Butterfly Recorder for the ERICA database