

15th July 2016
For immediate release

Press Release

Butterflies in decline in the UK

This year's wet weather, combined with last year's colder than average temperatures has led to a decline in butterfly populations in the UK.

Poor weather during butterflies' flying period means that butterflies are less able to spread or feed, or set up territories. More importantly they are not able to mate and lay eggs.

The weather also has an effect on other wildlife such as birds who suffer when water and the ground freezes over.

So what can the public do to help?

The Tropical Butterfly House in North Anston, near Sheffield is encouraging visitors to take part in the Butterfly Count from 15 July until 7 August 2016. The count gives experts a clearer indication of how butterfly species are progressing.

Taking part is really easy, just go to the Big Butterfly Count website: <http://www.bigbutterflycount.org/>, download the butterfly chart or free app on IOS and Android, pick a spot for your count (for example a sunny spot in your garden) and identify and count the butterflies you find in 15 minutes! There is even a butterfly guide on the website to help you identify the butterflies. Submit a photo and you could even win a prize.

Members of the public can also help by planting a variety of plants in their gardens that supply nectar for the butterflies, preferably in sunny, sheltered areas. Some great examples of nectar plants are buddleia, lavender, wallflowers, bramble, marjoram (oregano), heather, and forget-me-nots. For more examples and information on what time of year to plant them, just check butterfly conservation websites.

Another good idea for gardens are butterfly houses, which can be built from bits of wood or purchased in gardening centres or online. Butterfly houses provide a shelter for butterflies throughout the year, with predators finding it difficult to access the butterflies. Ideally place your butterfly house near flower gardens, a few feet off the ground.

The Tropical Butterfly House is located just five minutes from the M1, junction 31, see www.butterflyhouse.co.uk to plan your visit. Visitors who come to the centre between 20th July and 4th September will see the Amazing Animals Superheroes event; normal admission charges apply.

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Editors notes

Images supplied:

Small White Butterfly at the Tropical Butterfly House – photograph by Louise Larcombe, Marketing Manager

The Bug Hotel in the Wilderness Walkthrough at the Tropical Butterfly House – photograph by Louise Larcombe, Marketing Manager

Wild flowers in the Wilderness Walkthrough at the Tropical Butterfly House – photograph by Louise Larcombe, Marketing Manager

High resolution photos: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/vi22qzudmmioa57/AABddL8h6ZD16g7ledMG7XXga?dl=0>

Upcoming events at the Tropical Butterfly House:

Amazing Animals Superheroes event – 20th July – 4th September, 10:00–17.30, normal admission charges apply

Bat Walk Evening – Saturday 20th August, 19:30–21:30 £15pp inc admission

Gorilla Guy – Bank Holiday Monday 29th August, 13:00–14:45, general admission charges apply, donations requested for photos for charity

For further information, or to arrange interviews, filming or photography, at the Tropical Butterfly House please contact:

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The Tropical Butterfly House, Wildlife & Falconry Centre is a member of the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA). BIAZA represents its member collections and promotes the values of good zoos and aquariums. For further information, please telephone 0207 449 6599.