

Call for Butterfly Count

A wildlife charity has urged people in the Lothians to take part in the world's largest annual butterfly survey next month.

The Big Butterfly Count helps to assess the health of the environment by recording the number and type of butterflies and some day-flying moths spotted around the UK.

The citizen science event, organised by the charity Butterfly Conservation, will run from 12 July to 4 August.

Members of the public will spend 15 minutes in an outdoor space counting the butterflies they see.

The results are used to help map how the insects are faring and where conservation efforts should be targeted in the future. Increases or declines calculated on the average number per count.

Dr Zoe Randle, senior surveys officer at Butterfly Conservation, said: "Butterflies and moths are fundamental to a thriving ecosystem.

"They are important pollinators, a critical part of the food web, and indicate the wider health of the environment. If butterflies and moths are doing well, so is the environment.

"By taking part in the Big Butterfly Count you can play a direct part in helping us monitor their wellbeing."

Last summer, 3295 people across Scotland took part, conducting 5087 counts in gardens, parks, school grounds and the countryside, recording more than 28,000 butterflies and day-

flying moths.

The Small White was the most spotted butterfly, followed by the Large White, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell and Meadow Brown.

The Red Admiral, Green-veined White, Ringlet, Scotch Argus and Speckled Wood made up the top ten.

On average, people in Scotland spotted six individual butterflies per count.

Dr Randle added: "Our scientists have shown that data collected in the annual count really does reflect butterfly and moth population and distribution trends.

"It makes a huge contribution to our vital work to protect butterflies and moths."



Photo George Mair