

The Big Butterfly Appeal

A leading butterfly charity has launched an “urgent appeal” for donations after financial pressures threatened its work to save the colourful insects.

Butterfly Conservation, the charity dedicated to conserving butterflies and moths, said it currently faced “huge challenges”.

This year’s annual Big Butterfly Count revealed the lowest numbers on record, leading the charity to declare a UK-wide “Butterfly Emergency”.

Chief executive Julie Williams has now warned that, due to a downfall in income, it cannot afford to carry out all of the work it has planned next year.

She appealed to members to pledge at least £10 to help in the “difficult months ahead”.

She said: “An unstable external economic environment is leading to rising costs, a reduction in income, strong signals about difficult funding decisions at government level, including fierce competition for grants and trusts, and the recent Employers National Insurance Contributions increase.

“Since the Butterfly Emergency was declared I am devastated to be looking to make tough decisions on which areas of our work may need to stop to ease the financial pressure.”

Many species of butterflies and moths have seen huge declines in the last 40 years, with losses attributed to changes in

land use, a warming climate and the increased use of pesticides.

This year's Big Butterfly Count revealed there were 50% fewer butterflies spotted per count than in 2023, while 81% of species showed declines. Thousands of 15 minute counts saw no butterflies at all.

In Scotland, species including the Small Tortoiseshell, Painted Lady, Red Admiral and Scotch Argus all had their worst year in the history of the count.



Photo George Mair