

Updated statement for UKBMS recorders relating to Coronavirus Covid-19 – 14/05/2020

(NB. This guidance has now been superceded – please refer to www.ukbms.org for the latest version)

Butterfly monitoring to resume in England from 14th May 2020

1. The UKBMS partners (Butterfly Conservation, UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, British Trust for Ornithology and Joint Nature Conservation Committee) consider the welfare of staff, volunteers and partners of utmost importance and are taking the threat of Coronavirus (COVID-19) very seriously. We are working closely with other organisations involved in biodiversity monitoring in the UK, and are constantly reviewing how government guidance in relation to COVID-19 impacts on our schemes.
2. Following the Prime Minister's address on 10th May, there has been a significant divergence between nations on restrictions relating to outdoor activities. In England, these measures now include encouraging people to take more (unlimited) exercise outdoors and allowing travel to visit parks and open spaces, whilst still following rules for social distancing.
3. As a result of this shift in policy, the UKBMS has decided that **transect walking and WCBS recording can resume in ENGLAND ONLY from Thurs 14th May**, for those recorders who are not 'shielding' or 'self-isolating'. You may only record individually or with members of your own household, and you must stay 2 metres from others at all times. Further advice from the government on staying safe outdoors can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-safe-outside-your-home/staying-safe-outside-your-home>
4. Additional Notes:
 - Some public sites will be maintaining local restrictions or keeping car parks closed to ensure social distancing measures are not compromised. Before you resume monitoring, you must check that the landowners/site managers are happy for you to do so where appropriate.
 - If your site or transect route are set up in such a way that would make it difficult to maintain social distancing throughout your walk (including the journey to/from the site) then you should not resume butterfly monitoring on that site.
 - If you carry out your survey alone, don't forget to refer to the lone working advice in the general [UKBMS Health & Safety guidance](#).
 - No-one should feel any pressure to resume monitoring if they are not entirely comfortable doing so. In particular, if you are considered a clinically vulnerable individual, and therefore at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus, then you must be extra vigilant in maintaining social distancing.
5. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland more stringent restrictions on outdoor activities are still in place. Under these conditions we do not feel that we can allow monitoring to resume there for the time being. We will continue to review all the advice from the UK

Government and the devolved administrations, and will update our guidance as and when appropriate.

6. In these difficult times there are much more important considerations than butterfly monitoring, and nobody should worry that their transect is not being covered. We already understand that coverage will be greatly reduced this year (as it was during the Foot & Mouth outbreak in 2001), but monitoring is very much a long-term project which will not suffer unduly from the occasional short-term crisis. The health of yourselves and your families is of much more immediate concern.

Thank you for your continued co-operation.

Please continue to follow the latest advice and guidance from your appropriate country administration:

England: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Scotland: <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19>

Wales: <https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

Northern Ireland: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

Please check for any updates at www.ukbms.org and if you have any doubts or queries regarding this advice, contact the UKBMS team at transect@butterfly-conservation.org