

Resource Guide: Surveys



WHAT ARE SURVEYS?

A survey helps gather information. Surveys are a good way to increase your knowledge and awareness of a wild place and what you find can be used to look after it. They are essential for assessing the status and needs of the natural environment, and can be done by anyone - no matter what you are interested in or your level of experience. You can take part wherever you live, throughout the country and whenever you have time. You can take part in a survey as an individual or as part of a group. The information can be fed back into many larger organisations that rely on the public to support them in gathering data.

Citizen science is the name given to scientific research conducted by crowdsourcing. It encourages people to move from watching nature to recording it. OPAL (Open Air Laboratories Network opalexplorenature.org) offers a good starting point for a range of surveys from earthworms to air quality. Field Studies Council has good resources to support you (field-studies-council.org) and in Scotland the Scottish Environment Web (environment.scotland.gov.uk) provides a list of useful organisations, and tool-kits including identification charts. Many free handy Apps can help record and submit valuable data through existing technology.



2011-2020 has been declared the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity which serves to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and promote its overall vision of living in harmony with nature. Its goal is to mainstream biodiversity at different levels. Each day counts. The actions taken by individuals, stakeholders and governments are important steps, one building on the other, towards protecting the life support systems that not only ensure human well-being, but support the rich variety of life on this planet. There are many ways to get involved, not just through surveys. Visit United Nations Decade on Biodiversity for more details or chat to your Regional Manager to discuss linking biodiversity to your John Muir Award.

USEFUL WEBSITES:

This resource is by no means an exhaustive list but a starting point to give you an idea of the many and varied surveys available. If you want to be sure of what you have seen before you include it on your survey, then you can post your sighting for help identifying it on [Ispot](#) (and record on [iRecord](#)) or for bird identification see the [RSPB](#).

[OPAL](#) (Open Air Laboratories Network) – A variety of surveys covering tree health, climate, air, bugs and more.

[Scotland's Environment](#) – help out with one of the many **citizen science** projects that are running in Scotland.

[The Natural History Museum](#) has its own list of surveys, nationally and for specific regions.

[Bioblitz](#) – fast, intensive surveys of all forms of life in a natural space. Join an event or get resources to run your own.

[Nature's Calendar Survey](#) – spot the signs of seasonal change.

[Dark Sky Inspiration's Light Pollution Survey](#) – discover how dark your night sky is.

Birds, Insects and Animals

[Bumblebee Conservation Trust](#) – take part in Bee Watch or go for a monthly walk and record what you see.

[People's Trust for Endangered Species](#) – contribute to our knowledge of the wildlife and habitats under threat.

[The Great Snail Hunt](#) – snails can be found anywhere in the UK. Join the hunt. Get extra involved in [Wales](#) too.

[UK Ladybird Survey](#) – record your ladybird sightings, and see if you can spot 'the most invasive ladybird on earth'!

[Big Butterfly Count](#) – help take nature's pulse with accessible resources from Butterfly Conservation.

Report [Red Squirrel](#) sightings in [Scotland](#) and [Northern England](#) to help monitor the health of the red squirrel.

[National Bat Monitoring Programme](#) – great value to bat conservation and it's fun and rewarding too.

[Bug Life](#) – Take part in a variety of insect surveys including pollinator hoverflies and glow worms.

[Froglife](#) – Report frog and snake sightings and where they were seen. Also has a handy [App](#)

[BirdTrack](#) and [Big Garden Bird Watch](#) – run by the BTO and the RSPB to build up a picture of birds in the UK.

Plants / Woodlands

[Plant Tracker](#) – help combat the spread of problematic invasive, non-native plants by finding and recording them.

[Wildflower Count](#) – help keep track of some of the UKs most common wildflowers. Also has helpful [ID guides](#).

[The Woodland Trust](#) – identification charts for all woodland related topics. You can also hunt for [ancient trees](#).

[Ashtag](#) – help record the spread of Ash dieback with this simple App.

Marine and Freshwater

[Canal & River Trust Great Nature Watch](#) – tell them about the wildlife you can see on and around the water.

[Big Spawn Count](#) and [Big Pond Dip](#) – from Pond Conservation,

[Beach Watch](#) – take part in beach cleans and surveys throughout the year.

Help map [non-native and indicator](#) marine species with this App. Other [marine life](#) can be recorded too.

Resource Guides available: John Muir, Campaigning, Biodiversity, Wildlife Gardening, Surveys, National Parks, Outdoor Access, Outdoor Learning. Go to www.johnmuiraward.org then click on Resources & Links