

Alan Stapleton. Credit: Beth Harper

It’s time for the Big Butterfly Count! Alan Stapleton, a volunteer helping some of our most endangered butterfly species, explains why it's so important to get involved.

“Butterflies are all around us if you look. Spend just 15 minutes in your garden and you could see around 12 butterflies fly past. If you don’t, that is still very important information to share.”

Alan Stapleton is a volunteer involved in Butterfly Conservation’s All the Moor Butterflies project.

Supported by The National Lottery, the project is working to save some of our most threatened butterfly and moth species across Dartmoor, Exmoor and Bodmin Moor.

Alan explains: “We’re working with partner organisations, landowners and the public to conserve, in particular, the Marsh Fritillary, the Pearl-bordered Fritillary and the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary. As volunteers we help to improve habitats and search for and monitor species – we always have our notebooks and eyes open!”

Inspiration for the future

“Two years ago I joined a volunteer butterfly survey day, I was so impressed by the enthusiasm and dedication of the project volunteers, many of whom travel from all over Cornwall, that my diary has been full of butterfly events ever

since.”



Inspiring others to share that enthusiasm is crucial. Credit: Beth Harper

“It is vital that we keep track of the butterflies and moths we have left and their location. Then we can work out ways of managing the landscape to enable their habitats to improve and their numbers to increase.

> “The Big Butterfly Count is so important for gathering information about the bigger picture. I hope by taking part, people of all ages will want to do more for the future of our butterflies and the wider environment.”

On the doorstep

The impact of The National Lottery-funded project felt very close to home for Alan.

“I discovered that there used to be a colony of Marsh Fritillary butterflies just behind my home on Bodmin Moor. After conservation work, the butterfly returned. Living so close by, it was a privilege to be able to monitor it through much of its life cycle.



A Marsh Fritillary butterfly. Credit: Alan Stapleton

“I’ve now been made Cornwall Butterfly Conservation’s Species Champion for the Marsh Fritillary.”

Join the Big Butterfly Count

Inspired by Alan’s story? There are three easy steps to take part in the Big Butterfly Count:

1. Download an ID chart or free smartphone app on iOS or Android.
2. Spend 15 minutes outside counting and recording butterflies and moths.
3. Record your sightings.

Visit Butterfly Conservation’s website to complete each step and to find out more about the Big Butterfly Count.