



Urban Nature Plans +

# Counting butterflies in cities

## Why count butterflies?

Butterflies are good indicators of the quality of urban green spaces. Counting them can help cities and urban planners evaluate the state of biodiversity and ecosystem health in your area, and make plans to improve it.

That's why we're asking everyone—city dwellers, nature lovers, anyone else who wishes—to take **15 minutes** to observe butterflies in their favourite urban areas!

Find out more at [www.urbannatureplans.eu](http://www.urbannatureplans.eu)

## Undertaking the survey



### WHERE?

#### Choose an urban green space

It can be your garden, a park, a cemetery, a patch of urban grassland or an overgrown empty lot—any vegetated area you like.

#### Select the survey area

The survey area should ideally be 20x25 m. It can be adjusted to 10x50 m or 5x100 m if the green area is narrow.



### WHEN?

**Between April and September:** the main 'flight season' for butterflies

**At least three times** in the season, though more is better in this case (some people do it weekly!).

**On a warm, sunny and windless day.** Above 13°C on sunny days, 17°C on cloudy days.

**Between 10:00 and 17:00**, when butterflies are most active.



### HOW?

Get the Butterfly Count app

Find out more at <https://butterfly-monitoring.net>

Android



Apple





## Instructions

### Before you start

1. **Turn on** the Butterfly Count app
2. **Start a 15-min count** by clicking on “+”. The timer can be paused at any time.
3. **Assign a project.** Click on *Additional details>project* and select your local UNP+ project. **The first time, register to one of the open projects** in the “all projects” tab.
4. **Select a location.** Click on “Area” and choose an existing location from the project, or add a new one (see “Register a new location”)
5. **Check the weather** data under ‘Additional Details’.
6. **Add a photo** of the location.



### Register a new location

1. **Click on “Area”** in an observation, after assigning it to a project.
2. **Outline the sampling area on the map.** Turn off the GPS, click on the pencil icon to edit, and then erase the GPS location point (red bin icon). Draw the sampling area with the “polygon” tool. Save by clicking on the green check mark.
3. **Click on “Add”** in the project locations tab. Give your site a unique and meaningful name.
4. **Provide additional information.** You will be able to describe the habitat type, size of the vegetation area, etc. in the app or the website.

### Start counting!

- **Walk slowly around the site for 15 minutes** (also back and forth).
- **Record all butterflies** that you see in the area.
  - Identify them to the species level if possible.
  - If you cannot identify a butterfly, note the colour and size
  - If you hesitate between species, you can record a “species complex” (e.g. *Pieris rapae/napi*).
- **Record the number of individuals** of each species by clicking on the number next to the species name. Try not to count the same individuals twice. If unsure, note the maximum number of individuals that you can see at the same time.
- **Take pictures!** Especially if you need help with identification.
- After the 15 min are over, you can still edit your observation and check with a book, an app, or ask experts if uncertain.
- **Upload your survey when finished.**



**Remember to upload the observation—even if you didn’t see any butterfly! That’s important information too.**

### What will be done with your observations?

Butterfly abundance data will be analysed for nature conservation and green space management purposes. This project is carried out with volunteers in Europe as part of the European project *Urban Nature Plans + (UNP+)*.

Contact:  
Guy Pe’er [guy.peer@idiv.de](mailto:guy.peer@idiv.de)  
Aletta Bonn [aletta.bonn@idiv.de](mailto:aletta.bonn@idiv.de)

