

# Surveys

## What are surveys?

Surveys are designed to gather information on specific topics in a structured and systematic way. Surveys are a good way to increase your knowledge and awareness of a wild place, your findings can then be used to look after it. They are essential for assessing the status and needs of the natural environment and many surveys 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 often be fed back into larger organisations that rely on the public to support them in gathering data.

**Citizen science** is the name given to scientific research conducted by the general public. It encourages people to move from watching nature to recording it, regardless of their scientific knowledge or background.

The principal behind citizen science is to use the power of collaborative volunteer research to explore or collect huge data sets. These are ones that researchers simply couldn't manage by themselves. Well known citizen science projects include [Nature's Calendar](#) and [The Big Garden Birdwatch](#).

[Field Studies Council](#) has good resources to support you and in Scotland the Scottish Environment Web ([environment.gov.scot](http://environment.gov.scot)) 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.

[Scotland's environment web](#) has a list of some useful mobile apps to give you some inspiration.

## 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.

[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](#) – help track the effects of weather and climate change on wildlife near you.

[Dark Sky Light Pollution Survey](#) – discover how dark your night sky is by counting the stars you see.

## **Birds, Insects and Animals**

[Big Garden Birdwatch](#) – spend an hour watching birds in your garden and recording what you've seen. (Specific dates in January each year).

[Bumblebee Conservation Trust](#) – find out about three ways to gather data and track the UK's bumblebees.

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

[UK Ladybird Survey](#) – record your ladybird sightings and see if you can spot the invasive harlequin ladybird.

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

[Red Squirrels](#) – record sightings in [Scotland](#) and [Northern England](#)

[National Bat Monitoring Programme](#) and read about the [Bats in Churches surveys](#)

[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.

[UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme](#) – spend 10 minutes watching flowers and insects in good weather (April – September).

## **Plants / Woodlands**

[Plantlife](#) – National Plant monitoring Scheme (NPMS) is a long-term commitment to survey 5 small plots twice a year

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

[TCV Dead Good Deadwood](#) – help record the state of these important micro habitats.

## **Marine and Freshwater**

[Big Pond Dip](#) – from the Freshwater Habitats Trust

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

[Big Seaweed Search](#) – citizen science initiative from the Natural History Museum