

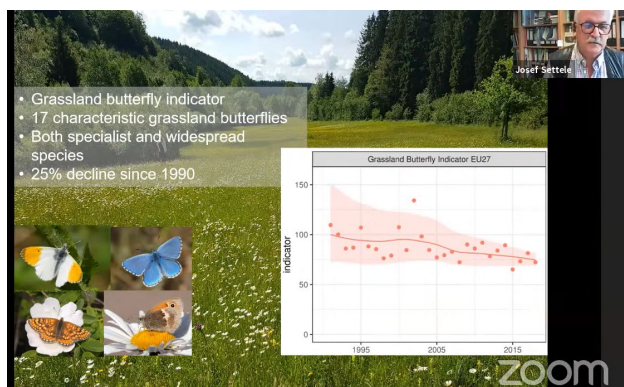
# RECENT EVENTS

## EU POLLINATOR WEEK 2021

### EU POLLINATOR INITIATIVE

On 1 June 2018, the European Commission adopted a Communication on the first-ever [EU initiative on wild pollinators](#). The Initiative sets strategic objectives and a set of actions to be taken by the EU and its Member States to address the decline of pollinators in the EU and contribute to global conservation efforts.

1. Improving knowledge of pollinator decline, its causes and consequences
2. Tackling the causes of pollinator decline
3. Raising awareness, engaging society-at-large and promoting collaboration



Josef Settele on the Opening Ceremony –  
Pollinator Week 2021

The EU Parliament hosted the EU Pollinator week, <https://www.pollinatorweek.eu/>, from Monday 27 September to Monday 4 October 2021. The Slovenian Presidency signaled that action for pollinators was a high political priority for them and they planned several joined-up actions for pollinator recovery, including through their CAP Strategic Plan. *Professor Dr Josef Settele*, co-chair of the IPBES studies on Pollinators and on Ecosystems, gave the keynote address, setting out the background, highlighting ongoing research and initiatives and calling for transformative change to achieve results. High level support for action was promised by the EU Commission, the Parliament and a number of other EU Member States.

The focus of the EU Pollinators week was on wild pollinators and their habitats (alongside some seasons focused on honey bee health) and the need for action on pesticide issues and in the agriculture sector. It is part of the preparation for the revised **EU Pollinators Initiative**, which will be the subject of 12 upcoming expert Workshops and a public consultation this Autumn. The revised Initiative is expected to be finalised in Q3 2022. All the presentations and discussions will be available in the new EU Pollinators YouTube channel together with additions to the [EU Pollinator hive](#), an online resource about pollinator conservation initiatives

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*“Action for pollinators was a high political priority” by Zuzana Čaputová, Slovak Presidency*

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*Dr David Roy*, head of the Biological Records Centre and co-leader of the SPRING project, gave a presentation on Monitoring wild pollinators populations through the new EU Parliamentary Preparatory Action, **SPRING project** (Supporting Pollinator Recovery through



*Sue Collins on the agriculture discussion (bottom right) – Pollinator Week 2021*

INDicators and monitoringG), one of the actions under the EU Pollinator Initiative to set up an EU Monitoring Scheme on wild pollinators (butterflies, solitary bees, hoverflies, bumblebees and moths).

*Sue Collins*, Policy Advisor BCE, took part in the panel **discussion on agriculture** and gave a Presentation on increasing engagement of citizens in monitoring wild pollinators and on the importance of using field data and indicators in policy design and evaluation. There were interesting presentations by **Young Pollinator Ambassadors** who have projects to increase youth engagement.

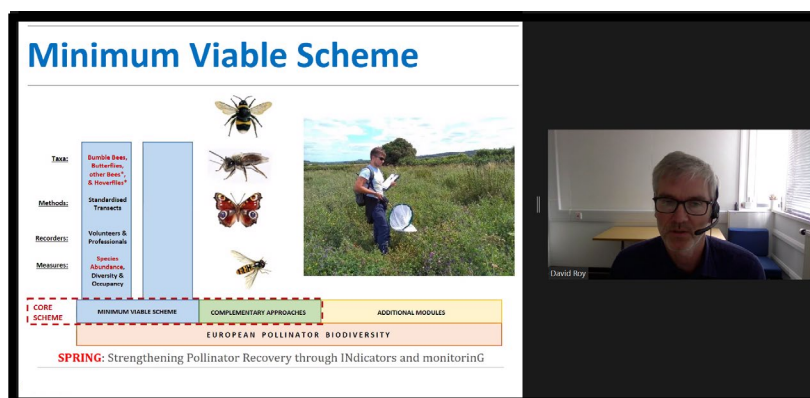
## BMS CO-ORDINATOR MEETING: 21ST OF OCTOBER

This online meeting of BMS co-ordinators was **attended by over 50 people**. As well as delegates from most established schemes, it was wonderful to welcome many new people getting involved and several new countries planning to start a BMS.

### ***Presentations***

David Roy from UKCEH started the meeting with [a review of the SPRING project and eBMS improvements](#) planned. These include 1) Building on the ABLE project to complete the EU butterfly monitoring network, focussing on countries which do not have a scheme at present; 2) Improved tools to support butterfly monitoring, particularly the rbms package, ButterflyCount app and website; 3) Updated trends and indicators for a range of habitats; 4) Help disseminate butterfly monitoring scheme results to policy makers and the public. The experience of running BMS schemes will be used to inform development of other pollinator monitoring programmes within SPRING and to share best practice of working with volunteers.

Cristina Sevilleja then [summarised updates of eBMS tools](#), including improvements to the eBMS website and the ButterflyCount app. The latter can be used to conduct 15 minute counts (recommended in remote areas or specific surveys of rare species) as well as recording existing transects in the field. She has been able to produce several new identification guides for regions with no existing field guide, as well as organise the translation of the Monitoring Manual into more languages.



*David Roy presenting during the BMS Coordinator Meeting*

The last presentation before the pause was done by Sue Collins explaining the future plans in eBMS. [A presentation](#) reflecting on how much we achieved together in this huge volunteer network and looking ahead to new plans and new scheme in the remaining countries in Europe.



Group picture of the participants - BMS coordinator meeting 2021

### Break out groups:

We then moved to break out groups to **share the experience of running a BMS** and to brainstorm the main issues and how to solve them. The issues were clearly different for new and established schemes as follows in the summary table. We organised the different issues mentioned in the different groups and arranged them by some shared topics that are recurrent and important for a BMS.

#### Established BMS

#### New and developing BMS

1) Managing data and overall scheme	Shared points	1) Managing data and overall scheme
Developing an app and website to submit data to BMS	eBMS tools	Translating the monitoring manual and eBMS website is important to establish a basic framework for a new BMS.
Managing the demand to merge eBMS data with other platforms (iNaturalist)		Find someone who has time to co-ordinate the scheme and recruit volunteers





Integrating BMS monitoring with other multi-taxa monitoring		Some countries only paid monitoring to surveyors for Habitats Directive requirements, and do not see the need for a wider volunteer led scheme.
Collect environmental variables along BMS transects (current and past) e.g. Flower coverage, habitat, management etc		
How to evaluate the real cost of running a BMS	<i>Running a BMS</i>	Several BMS have started through an existing organisation (Lepidopterist Society or Institute) which identified people to get involved
Maintaining <b>sustainable funding</b> for running schemes; most BMSs are supported by short-term funding	<i>Funding a BMS</i>	Lack of any <b>central funding</b> or support: No time to coordinate a scheme as it is not funded as part of their work. There is usually a
<b>2) Recruitment and retention of volunteers</b>		<b>2) Recruitment and retention of volunteers</b>
Create feeling 'part of a community' providing feedback and that their data is making a valuable contribution	<i>Communication to volunteers</i>	Volunteers were reluctant to share data and preferred to take photos. Important to explain <b>why the data is so valuable</b> and how it is used (to build species trends, not to identify sensitive sites)
Most BMS <b>produce annual reports</b> and many have annual meetings, or regional meetings to sustain volunteers	<i>Events</i>	Volunteers first need training events and later follow up meetings. <b>It is vital to give feedback</b> and make them feel part of a community. Online resources and ID guides are important.
Balance the competing interest between the 15 min count and transect walks (volunteers might be more attracted by the 15 min count and do not engage with transects)	<i>15-min counts</i>	Newer schemes: better to start slowly and gradually grow, rather than attract a lot of people who have a passing interest but do not stay (though the 15 min count might be an ideal way of keeping them)
Providing training for volunteers is challenging but very important. <b>Having a regional structure</b> helps provide training at local level.	<i>BMS structure</i>	Starting with National Parks to provide a core number of transects (with rangers and wardens) and then spread out to involve volunteers.
<b>3) Data quality and identification of butterfly species</b>		<b>3) Data quality and identification of butterfly species</b>
Experienced problems with new volunteers (problems lessened with time as volunteers became more experienced). Training and ID guides can be a big help.	<i>ID Guides</i>	Regional ID guides are a big help. The main issue is getting people involved in the first place.
Aggregated species: use combined categories for species that are hard to tell apart in the field (e.g. <i>T. lineola</i> and <i>T. sylvestris</i> )		
<b>Additional support needed from eBMS</b>		<b>Additional support needed from eBMS</b>
Organise events for volunteers at the European level to show volunteers the international context, they are part of something bigger		Help organising training courses
Help in managing and integrating data across platforms (e.g. with Pan-trap samples and automated ID such as AI/Machine Learning)	<i>Help</i>	Advice on when to use timed counts vs transects
		Regional ID guides

## Final Q&A

**Q.** *Can we have training in how to use the ButterflyCount app?* **A:** A YouTube video is being prepared in how to use the app and some workshops are planned

**Q.** *Is it needed to do the transect count every week? Can it be less? How strict is the methodology?* **A:** If you have many transects more gaps can be handled, if there are only a few transects it gets more difficult and weekly counts are more important. Also, in the North you miss many weeks due to bad weather, so it is best to aim for every week. The modern analysis is done by first producing a curve of the numbers over the flight period for which data from neighboring countries can be used to fill the gaps. But it is far preferable to use numbers from each country.

**Q.** *Is the BMS database shared with GBIF?* **A:** It is up to individual schemes. Some do it automatically at the end of each year. If there is a request to use eBMS data, a formal request goes to each national coordinator who can agree or not.

**Q.** *How many coordinators are doing this in their own time?* **A:** Many, but some people do it as part of their paid work. There is a full range from complete volunteer to complete work duty.

**Q.** *Is it still possible to join SPRING?* **A:** The main partners are already formed, but if you want to get involved, it is best to contact the relevant Regional Co-ordinator (there are 7 across Europe). Further information will soon come on the SPRING website.

**Q.** *Is it possible to build a dynamic map to see colonization/extinction of butterfly species in EU, like the bird portal?* **A:** It is a good idea and useful material to show. We will make note of the idea and see if an opportunity arises as it will need funding.

**Q.** *Is there any control/correction of collected data?* **A:** This has to be done by the national coordinator on the website. The facility is already available for transect counts and 15 min counts will follow.

**Q.** *Will the app be improved during the duration of SPRING?* **A:** yes.

Sue Collins ended the meeting by summarising all the many achievements of the eBMS. She stressed the massive improvements that have been made in our evidence base; the scheme is now one of the largest of its kind in Europe and is helping to develop EU policies to conserve biodiversity. The SPRING project aims to build on this by completing an EU wide eBMS by the end of 2023. It also aims to develop a method for monitoring moths as well as other key pollinator groups. The results will help inform the Farm to Fork EU strategy due in 2023 and Member State CAP strategic plans. They will also help improve delivery of the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the status of species with the Protected Area network. She thanked everyone for their huge contributions to making the eBMS happen, it is a thriving and vital network to provide robust data to improve the state of nature in Europe.

**FINALLY: A reminder to everyone that we are planning a face-to-face meeting in Laufen, provisional dates are 30 November to 3 December 2022. There will also be a possibility to join online.**

### Contact Us

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