

British butterfly population is decreasing

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Britain is losing a large portion of its butterfly population, with 7 of 10 species declining during the past 25 years, the Independent reported Monday.

The fact that most Britons are unaware of the problem has prompted the chief executive of the charity Butterfly Conservation to begin a sponsored walk along the coast of southern England, distributing leaflets headlined, "Don't let butterflies become dinosaurs of the future."

The figures came to light during an in-depth statistical scientific comparison of two atlases of British butterflies, birds and wild flowers published in 1984 and 2001, the newspaper said. The conservation scientists found 28 percent of England's native plant species had decreased, as had 54 percent of bird species and 71 percent of butterfly species.

Scientists said the decreases are largely due to a loss to intensive farming and urban development of the specific habitat each species needs to breed.

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