

Near extinct butterfly species return

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Intense conservation effort has helped bring back six of Britain's butterfly from near extinction.

The recovery news comes amid disturbing studies about the dwindling populations of three-quarters of Britain's 60 odd species, reports the Independent.

The recovering six species include Britain's fastest disappearing heath fritillary, as well as the high brown fritillary, the wood white, the silver-spotted skipper, the adonis blue and most remarkably of all, the large blue, which 25 years ago was believed to be extinct.

Part of the large blue's problem is that the caterpillar spends much of its life in an ants' nest. But careful management has allowed it to flourish on 10 sites in the west of England with an adult population count of 7,000, the report said.

The new State of Butterflies in Britain and Ireland study also confirmed earlier research that 76 percent of the total species are dramatically shrinking both in numbers and range. The study said butterflies are declining much faster than either birds or wild flowers, largely because they are more sensitive to environmental change.

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