

Wildflowers Count newsletter

Plantlife

January 2012

Happy New Year to all surveyors!

Thank-you to all 745 of you who took part in the survey last year, you surveyed 803 squares between you and I have included a map below. This is an increase of only 15 people and 25 squares, we need more, so please spread the word!

It is only 2 months to go before this year's survey season starts, and if you are receiving this newsletter then we will be contacting you during March to remind you, or if you have registered since August last year to send you your survey pack, there is no need to register again.



As this is an annual survey with the aim of looking for long term trends in plant populations it is very helpful if you can repeat your survey in exactly the same place for us each year. It takes quite a while to build up enough data to analyse meaningfully.

We experienced some problems with online registrations in November and December into early January so if you know of anyone who has registered but not heard from me, please could you ask them to either register again or contact me directly.

I was asked to date the newsletters, an oversight on my part which I have now put right. The next issue will be in April.

Best wishes,



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News round up

Maps and Habitats

Just a reminder that only those newly registered will automatically be sent a map each year. Also that if you have already done the survey and are redoing in the same place there is no need to re-enter the habitat data as I have it on file.

Survey forms

If any of you still have completed survey forms from 2011 that you haven't sent in, if you are quick then there is just about time.

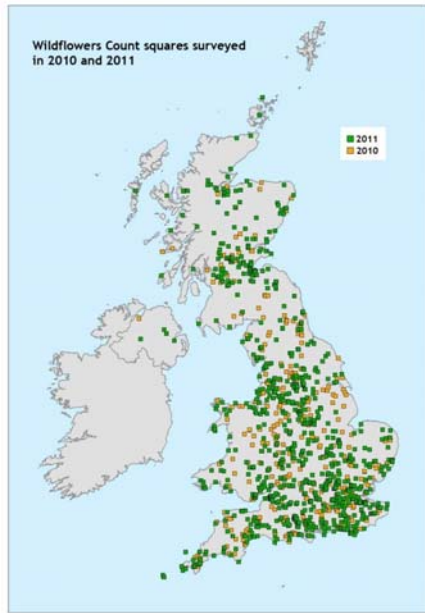
Online data entry

We know from your feedback that there have been some problems with the online data entry system and we are addressing these for this survey season. Improvements will include a login so that you can save your data mid-entry and come back to it, and you won't have to type all your personal details every time.

Exciting new project for Plantlife

Plantlife are part of a two year DEFRA funded project with the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and the BSBI that aims to field test potential improvements to the methods used to survey flowering plants. There are also other partners within the project who will be looking at methods for surveying lichens and bryophytes and pollinating insects. **As part of the testing programme we will be asking some Wildflowers Count surveyors to lend us a hand, there will be full training before site visits in the summer. We will be approaching some of you who live in the areas selected before Easter, and hope that those of you who are approached will be able to help us with this important work.**

Where are you surveying, and what are you finding?



As you can see the spread of squares is very good across the country, however having looked at the types of habitat that have been surveyed there is a definite lack of coastal (0.7%) and heathland (2.4%) habitat, so if you are in a position to adopt a square with either of these habitats present that would be very helpful.

Conifer woods are also under represented, possibly because many are fairly inaccessible, the same applies to bogs and marshy areas. Arable and horticulture is the same, and we accept that access to this is often out of the question, which cannot be helped.

The most surveyed habits are grassland, broad-leaved woodland and scrub, and hedgerows at 14% each, and road verges at 11%.

As 2011 data has still to be checked, we can just take a brief look at the 2010 species found from the 99 core species. The super-surveyor lists are still being collated.

Top 10

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Common nettle | <i>Urtica dioica</i> |
| 2. Bramble | <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> |
| 3. Hawthorn | <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> |
| 4. Ribwort plantain | <i>Plantago lanceolata</i> |
| 5. Cleavers | <i>Gallium aparine</i> |
| 6. Creeping buttercup | <i>Ranunculus ficaria</i> |
| 7. Cow parsley | <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i> |
| 8. Ivy | <i>Hedera helix</i> |
| 9. Ash | <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> |

Bottom 10

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 90. Common butterwort | <i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i> |
| 91. Branched bur-reed | <i>Sparganium erectum</i> |
| 92. Bog asphodel | <i>Narthecium ossifragum</i> |
| 93. Stinking iris | <i>Iris foetidissima</i> |
| 94. Marsh Lousewort | <i>Pedicularis palustris</i> |
| 95. Marsh cinquefoil | <i>Potentilla palustris</i> |
| 96. Crowberry | <i>Empetrum nigrum</i> |
| 97. Cowberry | <i>Vaccinium vitis-idaea</i> |
| 98. Bogbean | <i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i> |
| 99. Alpine Lady's mantle | <i>Alchimilla alpina</i> |

These lists tally well with the data from the previous annual Common Plant Survey (2000-2009). It is very noticeable that those in the top ten are plants known to be generalists, happily surviving in several habitats. The species in the bottom ten are definitely more selective on their choice of habitat, and they are also habitats are more likely to be sensitive to climate change and pollution, marshes for example, and they are often less accessible, such as upland lakes, moorlands and other upland areas and so they may be simply be under represented in our survey.

Christmas card competition

Fancy having your photo or painting appear on a Plantlife Christmas card? If so, why not enter our competition?

We want you to help us to celebrate our love of native wild plants by asking you to design our 2012 charity Christmas cards. There are three adult categories to enter and two for children.

Find out how to enter and more on our website at:
www.plantlife.org.uk/things_to_do/xmascomp/



A robin perched in guelder rose.
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We do hope you appreciate being kept informed of survey developments. However if you do not want to receive this e-bulletin in future, just let us know and we will remove your email from the list, simply send an email to wfc@plantlife.org.uk with the word unsubscribe in the subject bar.