

Nature's Sure Connected



Farmland Wildlife Surveys – volunteers needed

Role: We are looking for enthusiastic volunteers to walk a set route across participating local farms, which are part of the Upper Beult Farmer Cluster, on a weekly basis. Each survey will take 1-2 hours and will vary with the size of the farm and can be done at your own leisure during suitable weather periods.

You will monitor and record the different species of farmland wildlife observed while walking a set route. Species you will be looking for will include birds, butterflies, mammals and plants that are indicative of the farmland landscape. We are asking volunteers to record presence of species such as turtle dove, yellowhammer, common poppy, ragged robin and water vole.

Training is provided to learn how to conduct the survey as well as identification skills for the indicator species. This will be a half a day session on the 2nd April and attendance will be required to fully understand the survey method. The data collected also contributes to various conservation schemes that are assessing how species groups are faring across the whole of the UK.

Why we need your help

There is an increasing recognition that collaborative working in a geographic area can achieve more than working in isolation, i.e. the sum of the group is greater than its parts. This approach has led to the formation of Farmer Clusters. By working together, helped by a Conservation Advisor, farmers and land managers can work more cohesively together in their locality, enabling them to collectively deliver greater benefits for soil, water and wildlife at a landscape scale.

With the growth of the farmer cluster approach, the [Nature's Sure Connected](#) (NSC) project saw an opportunity to develop an approach to landscape-scale monitoring in this context. We are currently working with Kent Wildlife Trust's Farmer Cluster Officers and the Upper Beult Farming Cluster to develop a survey led by farmers, landowners and volunteers. We are working in collaboration with farmers to develop a survey approach that works for them, and answers one of the key landscape-scale questions prioritised by conservation professionals are part of the NSC project.

Establishing the numbers of individuals of a species in a population is typically very resource and labour intensive, meaning it is frequently unachievable in landscape-scale projects. Our approach uses the principle that species distribution can act as an alternative (or proxy) for abundance. When populations grow or contract, the area they occupy also grows or contracts. By measuring the area occupied by a population, we can detect changes in its size, without needing to count every individual, and within the scope of limited resources.

To try and determine species distribution at a landscape scale, we are asking volunteers to conduct farmland wildlife surveys on various sites in the Upper Beult Farmer Cluster. Take part in this survey to help us understand how our farmland wildlife is coping across a large landscape and importantly work towards a Wilder Kent.

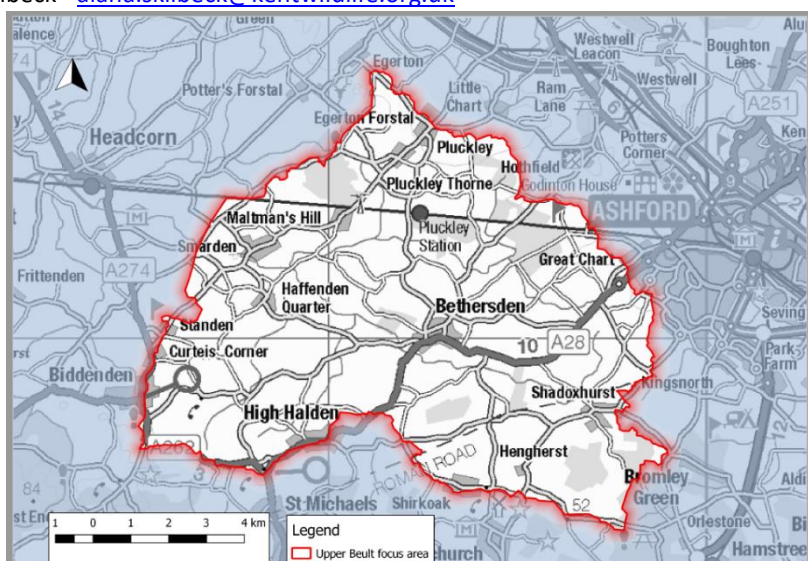
Contact: Nature's Sure Connected Project Team - Alana Skilbeck - alana.skilbeck@kentwildlife.org.uk

Area: Upper Beult Farmer Cluster – Pluckley, Egerton, Great Chart, Bethersden, Shadowhurst, High Halden, Biddenden, Smarden.

Commitment: 1-2 hours per survey, dependent on the size of the farm. Between 1 and 4 surveys per month through the survey season (April-August).

Required skills, qualities and experience:

- Friendly and approachable,
- An interest in wildlife in general,
- Bird, plant or mammal identification knowledge desirable but not essential as training is provided,
- Be able to follow clear instructions, health and safety guidelines and work methodically.



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Other requirements: Due to location own transport is essential. Access will be coordinated with the farmer and will vary depending on harvest/other activities taking place.