



Pesticides and wildlife

The Wildlife Trusts' Position



Protecting Wildlife for the future

Public Statement

The Wildlife Trusts believe that we are part of nature and that we depend on the natural world for our wellbeing and prosperity. Everything we value comes from nature and everything we do has an impact on it. We believe that nature should be a normal part of childhood and that wildlife should thrive across our landscape.

Insects and other invertebrates such as spiders and worms are the bedrock of this relationship with nature – they are the bulk of all animal life and critical for the functioning of ecosystems. Insects are food for numerous larger animals including birds, bats, reptiles, amphibians and fish, and they perform vital roles such as pollination of crops and wildflowers, pest control and nutrient recycling.

And yet over recent decades the decline of insects has grown to become a looming catastrophe, primarily caused by both habitat loss and the overuse of damaging pesticides.

The Wildlife Trusts believe we need to see a significant reduction in the use of pesticides, particularly the insecticides that are destroying the very creatures we depend on for the health of our natural world.

Pesticides marketed as a quick-fix are creating a long-term ecological disaster affecting our vital wild places – on land and at sea. This damage severely hampers The Wildlife Trusts ambitions to create a Nature Recovery Network, which puts space for nature at the heart of our farming and planning systems, to bring nature into the places where people live their daily lives. To achieve this, wildlife and wild places need not only to be protected, but also restored and connected up.

It's time to help nature recover.

Our gardens, parks, urban areas and farmed countryside need to be managed in a more insect-friendly way. This includes a major reduction in the amount, type, and frequency of pesticides used in the way we all manage and look after these places. And we are working with like-minded organisations to do this.

We recognise that it will not be easy to make the transition from routine use, to routine avoidance of these harmful chemicals – whether at home in our gardens and allotments; in parks and other public green spaces including road verges; or on farms and woodland.

This is why, we urgently need the Government to establish stronger incentives for change and to set and enforce ambitious, national reduction targets for damaging pesticides. We need a systematic change in how we manage the wild places that our insects and invertebrates survival depends upon.