

Butterfly Conservation Research on Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) and Biodiversity, UK

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- **Scale of activity:** local
- **Actor/s:** Private estate, Consultant foresters
- **State of the activity:** started in 2017, ongoing
- **Keywords.** Continuous Cover Forestry, Butterflies and Moths (Lepidoptera), Biodiversity



Summary

Butterfly Conservation, is a UK based charity dedicated to butterfly and moth conservation. We are conducting research on a private estate in Southern England to investigate how Lepidoptera respond to management under continuous cover principles in conifer dominated stands. CCF is rising in popularity as a management technique in the UK. This should provide much needed research on the topic and help inform foresters and landowners about forest management.

Description of activities

We started the project in 2017 and have largely focused on moth trapping to determine the moth species richness and abundance in stands at various stages of transition towards CCF. Moths were selected as there are many different species in the woodland guild with a wide variety of different foodplants and habitat requirements from open glades to mature trees. As they cover a wide range of requirements the species present alongside their relative abundance can tell us a lot about the management on the site and whether it delivers for biodiversity. In 2018 we collected data on 13,000 individuals moths, using light traps, on the estate across 30 samples which started to give us some data and a baseline to work with going forwards.

Outlook

Challenges. Learning from the data collected in 2017 and 2018 to get the experimental design of the project correct in order to determine how biodiversity relates to the structures in the stand. The site is very complex with a lot of topographical changes and variation within the stands. Making sure this is correct from the outset is very important for the potential research outputs.

Next steps. We would like to secure more funding to study other aspects of biodiversity beyond Lepidoptera such as vegetation, birds and bats in order to know how continuous cover forestry delivers for different taxonomic groups and at the ecosystem level.

Source and contact

Information gathered at: the 3rd workshop on Sustainable Forest Management (18-21 October 2018)

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