

## Thank you for your interest in joining the BeeWalk team!

Set up by the [Bumblebee Conservation Trust](#) (the Trust) in 2008, BeeWalk is a long-term national recording scheme to monitor the abundance of bumblebees on fixed routes (transects) across Great Britain. These transects would be impossible without BeeWalk volunteers, who identify and count the bumblebees on their chosen route each month, from March to October.

Anyone with basic identification skills can become a BeeWalker – all you need is a few spare hours every month between March and October, to walk the same fixed route of about 1-2 kilometres (you choose where it goes) and submit the sightings to the [BeeWalk website](#).

The information collected through BeeWalk is integral to monitoring how bumblebee populations change through time and allows us to detect early warning signs of declines and direct our conservation activities. The Trust use the dataset to carry out research in-house; such as population trend analysis (the results of which are published in our [BeeWalk Annual Reports](#)), we also share data and collaborate widely with other researchers to examine various aspects of bumblebee ecology. BeeWalk's growing profile means that the reach of the dataset is ever increasing, which is vital for our policy and advocacy work.

Once validated and verified, the dataset is added to the online data-sharing platform [Figshare](#), where it is available for anyone to use as long as the scheme is credited as the source. The dataset is also added to the [National Biodiversity Network \(NBN\) Atlas](#) and the [Global Biodiversity Information Facility \(GBIF\)](#).

### Very quick start up guide (see full details below):

**Step 1:** After reading this guidance document [register as a BeeWalker on the BeeWalk website here](#)

**Step 2:** Decide on your fixed route of around 1-2km and split into at least 3 different sections. Use our [Habitat and Land Use Site form](#), to note down the habitat type and land use for each section.

**Step 3:** Register your transect on the BeeWalk website, [www.beewalk.org.uk](http://www.beewalk.org.uk). We will email you once the transect is approved and ready for data submissions.

**Step 4:** Read the [BeeWalk Health and Safety guide](#), download and print the [Monthly recording form](#), then walk the same fixed route every survey month (March to October inclusive), year on year, recording the bumblebees you see. Note down unknown for any species or caste (queen, worker, male) you are unsure of, please don't guess a species.

**Step 5:** Enter your records on the website [www.beewalk.org.uk](http://www.beewalk.org.uk). Any bumblebees you aren't sure of the species, can be submitted as *Bumblebee/Bombus* on the data entry page.

With your help we can provide the science to lead the way in British bumblebee conservation!

Best Wishes, The BeeWalk team

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[See the BeeWalk website for a full set of FAQ's](#)

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## Step-by-step guide to setting up a BeeWalk transect – [click here for video guidance](#)

1. Before starting, consider if you are able to commit to doing a monthly BeeWalk between March and October inclusive. You will need a couple of hours or so each month, to walk your transect and submit the data.
2. [Register on the BeeWalk website.](#)
3. To improve your identification and survey skills, see our ID and survey training videos available on the [Trust YouTube channel](#) and keep an eye out for a live online or in person [ID and survey training event](#). See the ID resources listed on the website [beewalk.org.uk/resources](http://beewalk.org.uk/resources) for details of ID books.
4. Find a suitable location for a transect, somewhere you can easily access monthly, which has a range of bee-friendly habitats, these can be anything from formal gardens and parks to coastal dunes and heathland.
5. Using the [Habitat and Land Use site form](#), walk your proposed transect and split into at least 3 different sections (based on habitat, or if it's all one habitat, split by land mark/topography). Note what habitat each section falls under and the land use. This will also give you an idea of how long it will take to survey your transect.  
**Remember it will take longer in summer months when bumblebees are at their peak.**
6. Set up your transect on the [website](#). Click on 'My sites' tab, then click 'Add site' and enter the name of your transect. Use the map to zoom in to the site of your route, click to set a central grid reference, select the county, enter the number of sections and the year you are setting it up in. Click save. The total length will be automatically calculated once you have drawn your route.
7. Draw the route of each section on the map. Click the section number and single-click on the map where the section starts. Then, join-the-dots style, click on the map where the route goes, double-clicking to save it. Repeat this process for each section.
8. Now click 'Section details' to enter the habitat and land use types for each section. **Once the transect has been approved, you will receive a confirmation email.**
9. It's now time to survey! Read the [BeeWalk Health and Safety guide](#) then download the [monthly recording form](#). Ideally, walk your transect between 11am-5pm, around the same date each month. It's best if the weather is dry with no more than a light breeze. Record all the bumblebees (and honeybees) you see, **record unknown for any species you aren't sure of**. Don't forget to record the date, start and finish time and weather conditions.
10. **Submit your data to the website, even if you didn't see anything.** Click on the 'My walks' tab, select the date of your survey. Select your transect from the location drop down and complete the basic details of the survey. Please use 24hr format for times. Click 'Next step' at the bottom right corner.
11. On the Your observations page, in the species column type in the name of the bee you saw and carefully select the correct species. Next choose the transect section number from the Section ID drop-down, then fill in the number of each caste (queen, worker, male or unknown) and what flower it was feeding on (if you selected BeeWalk pro on registration). **You can record an unidentified bumblebee by entering Bumblebee/Bombus in the species column. For White and Buff tailed workers, select the White/Buff-tailed bumblebee worker option in the species list, as the workers of these species can be very difficult to tell apart in the field.** Click 'Next step' at the bottom right corner.
12. There is a final page where you can note any changes to the transect, such as flooding, before finally clicking 'Save'. Congratulations, you have completed your first BeeWalk survey!

## Things to think about

### Identification training

There is a wide range of bumblebee identification guides available, see the [BeeWalk resources page](#) for details. We also have a range of online training videos on the [Trust YouTube channel](#) including full basic and intermediate ID. We run online and in person training events each year, keep an eye on the events calendar on the Bumblebee Conservation Trust website or email us at [beewalk@bumblebeeconservation.org](mailto:beewalk@bumblebeeconservation.org) for more information on training opportunities.

You will need some basic ID skills to get involved, such as those gained from attending our training or watching our training videos, but even if you can only confidently identify a few species and record the remainder as unknown (we would always rather records were submitted as unknown than guessing a species), you are making a valuable contribution to bumblebee conservation. There's only a handful of species that you're likely to see regularly and with regular surveying you'll likely quickly learn these and spot anything that looks a bit different. Check out these bees in more detail and get photographs where possible, see our [bumblebee photography for ID guide](#) to get pictures that will maximise the chances of having them identified. The [UK Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Society](#) have a Facebook page which can be used to confirm ID if a picture is posted. You can also email [beewalk@bumblebeeconservation.org](mailto:beewalk@bumblebeeconservation.org) for assistance.

### Picking a transect route

- **Most transect routes are about 1-2km (around 1 mile) and take about 45-60 minutes to walk.** Bear in mind that walks will take longer in summer, with many more bees, than in spring/autumn when numbers will be much lower.
- **Identify a route that takes in some flower-rich habitat.** It should be convenient and accessible, this same route will be walked monthly from year to year to enable sightings to be compared.
- **Divide your transect into at least 3 sections.** These should ideally be at natural breaks in habitat or landscape type (see the [Habitat and Land Use site form](#)), but can also be at waypoints to split what would otherwise be very long sections.
- **Identify the main habitat and land use in each of your sections** (see the [Habitat and Land Use site form](#)).
- **The grid reference and section lengths will be filled in automatically** on the website.

### Surveying your transect

- **Read the [BeeWalk Health and Safety guide](#)** to ensure you are safe whilst surveying.
- **Download and print the [monthly recording form](#).** A separate form should be used for each month.
- **Fill in the environmental and transect details first.** Before you begin surveying fill in your name, site, date, weather conditions and start time in the spaces provided on the form.
- **Walk your transect route at a steady pace.** You can stop to get a closer look at a bumblebee for identification purposes, but don't linger in hotspots to improve your count, as this will bias results.
- **Record all the bumblebees you see within your 'recording box'.** This is the space that extends 2m either side of you, 2m up from the ground, and 4m ahead. Do not look behind, and do not count bees seen outside this box. **It's always ok to record unknown bumblebee if you are unsure of**

**the species, we would rather this than taking a guess.** Honeybees should be noted if possible.

You do not need to record solitary bees, but you can if you are very confident of their identification.

- **Where possible record the caste (queen, worker, male) of each individual** as well as species, and make a note of any interesting behaviour, such as mating. Record unknown bumblebee or caste for any bumblebees you are unsure of.
- **Nets and pots can be used** to capture bumblebees for closer examination when necessary. For details on suppliers see the [BeeWalk resources page](#) and the [Trust YouTube channel](#) for a guide on netting a potting a bumblebee for identification purposes.
- **Ensure that all recording is completed on the form at the end of each walk.** Double-check for errors and omissions, such as section number.
- **Where estimates must be made** (e.g. when numbers are too large to count accurately) make sure an actual figure is recorded (e.g. 45 rather than 40+).
- **If a bee appears unusual, such as a potential rare species, please take a photograph and note this on your recording sheet.** Unusual data will be followed up via email.
- **Don't forget to fill in the finish time at the end of your walk.**

### Submitting your data

- **Use the 24hr format** when entering start and finish times.
- **White and Buff-tailed bumblebee workers can be very difficult to tell apart in the field,** use the White/Buff-tailed worker option in the species list.
- **Select Bumblebee/*Bombus* for any bumblebees you could not confidently identify.**
- **Ensure all rows have a section ID (number) selected.** Missing this out is a common cause for data not saving.
- **Leave the Your Observations page blank if you didn't see any bees,** note no bees seen on the comments page.

### Verification of records

Each year data is downloaded and prepared for analysis, requiring an intensive period of data cleaning, validation and verification. This is essential to meet the high standards required for monitoring scheme data to be viewed as scientifically robust and reliable. Records of rare/difficult to identify species and species which appear outside known ranges are significant, if you're lucky enough to see a rare/unusual bumblebee, please try and photograph it. Please don't be offended if we contact you via email to double check any records. Bees can be tricky to identify from photos, but it can help rule species in or out. See our [bumblebee photography for ID guide](#) for more details.

### Accessing your data

Data is available once it has undergone cleaning, validation and verification processes in January each year. You can email [beewalk@bumblebeeconservation.org](mailto:beewalk@bumblebeeconservation.org) specifying the transect and we will send you your records in early spring. Due to this process of verification and validation happening outside of the website, verified records are not currently available for download from the website.

[See the BeeWalk website for a full set of FAQs](#)

## Website use and data policy

### BeeWalk Online Recording Tool Terms and Conditions of Use

By using the BeeWalk website, you agree to these Terms and Conditions of Use. If you do not agree, please do not use the site.

1. When you use this website, you create and upload content - for instance, bee observations. By putting this information on the site, you are saying that:
  1. (a) the content is yours, or you have the permission of the owner to agree to this usage, and
  2. (b) you agree that the content can be used on this site, and
  3. (c) you agree that your wildlife observations can be made publicly available for wider use.
2. Wildlife observations collected through this site will be stored securely at the Biological Records Centre and at the Bumblebee Conservation Trust and made available to experts for verification.
3. Verified BeeWalk records will be made available via the [NBN Atlas](#), [Figshare](#) (online data sharing platform) and the [Global Biodiversity Information Facility \(GBIF\)](#) by the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, and to other relevant organisations and individuals as appropriate (for example national recording schemes, Local Records Centres, researchers). Recorder names will not be shared unless they are an essential part of the data. If you do not want your observations to be made available in this way, please do not submit them.
4. Verified records will be made available under the terms of the Creative Commons CC-BY-NC licence by default (for non-commercial use), with exceptions only permitted with written permission from the Bumblebee Conservation Trust.
5. Please do not submit records to this site that have already been submitted to a Vice County Recorder, Local Records Centre, National Recording Scheme or another online wildlife recording system, owing to the potential for duplication.
6. Having submitted a record to this site, please do not submit it to other organisations or other recording schemes. It will be made available where appropriate, to other relevant organisations and individuals with a legitimate interest in the data (see point 3).
7. You may view wildlife records submitted to this website by other users, but you may not store, republish, exploit them for commercial or academic research purposes, or pass them on to any third party. If you would like to use the data, please contact the Trust and/or use the published verified dataset (available via [Figshare](#) and [GBIF](#)).
8. Your contact details will be held in a database at the Biological Records Centre and by the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. They will only be used to contact you regarding the BeeWalk recording scheme via email. Full details on the Bumblebee Conservation Trust Privacy policy can be found [here](#).
9. Your contact details will not be passed on to any third parties without your permission.
10. Your name will be stored as part of the record and may be made publicly available along with the species name, date and location of the record.
11. If you submit a record of a species that could be vulnerable to disturbance or persecution if the record is made publicly available, the record will be flagged as 'sensitive' and will not be made publicly available.

We may revise these Terms and Conditions at any time by amending this page, we will always inform you of any changes via notice on the website and via email. Following notification of changes, by continuing to use the website you are agreeing to the current terms and conditions. Updated January 2024.

## Health and Safety

### Volunteer responsibility

Whilst carrying out survey activities for the Trust, each BeeWalk volunteer has the responsibility of ensuring they are aware of their own health and safety and that of others around them and act accordingly. **As a BeeWalk volunteer you are not under any obligation to continue with the survey scheme, as such, if you feel your health and safety is compromised you should not continue your activities or place yourself or others in danger.** Any concerns should be raised with staff via [beewalk@bumblebeeconservation.org](mailto:beewalk@bumblebeeconservation.org)

### Risks

**BeeWalk surveys are undertaken at your own risk.** Before undertaking survey activities, please consider the particular health and safety hazards associated with each survey site (such as terrain, livestock, proximity to roads or waterways etc.) and whether you will be exposed to particular hazards. If you do not feel that you can reduce the risks associated with surveying a site (such as by wearing suitable footwear, avoiding fields with livestock etc.) please do not put yourself in danger.

### Access permission

To enter private land, or land not subject to open access legislation, please ensure you have permission from the relevant landowners or tenant. A letter confirming your involvement in survey monitoring work can be provided, email [beewalk@bumblebeeconservation.org](mailto:beewalk@bumblebeeconservation.org) for a copy. If it is possible and practical to do so, it is courteous to advise the landowner of what you are doing and why.

Abide by The Countryside Code [www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code/the-countryside-code](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code/the-countryside-code) and Scottish Outdoor Access Code [www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/practical-guide-all](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/practical-guide-all).

### Parking

When visiting a site take care to park cars sensibly, preferably off-road, and do not block entrances, passing places and gates.

### Public Health

Ensure your transect route and journey to and from your site, allow you to maintain any current government public health guidance at all times. Always follow any locally imposed restrictions.

### General precautions

Check weather reports before undertaking outdoor activities and wear appropriate clothing. Long-sleeved clothes and trousers will help prevent scratches, nettle stings and tick bites. In hot conditions wear sun protection. Ensure you take adequate water and food supplies suitable to the length of your survey. Avoid or abandon outdoor activities in bad weather. Avoid surveying alone wherever possible. If you do survey alone ensure you make someone aware of your activities, location and route and time expected back. Advise them of who to contact in case of emergency. Carry a mobile phone with you for emergency use, note that mobile phones may not work in some remote areas. In case of an emergency you can use either the European Emergency Number (112) or 999 (see [www.eena.org](http://www.eena.org) for more information). 112 can be dialled even if the keypad is locked.

### Difficult or dangerous terrain

Plan routes to avoid difficult and dangerous terrain, such as close to cliff edges, watercourses and busy road verges. Take extra care in boggy areas and areas with unstable ground, such as areas with loose rock and collapsed underground burrows. Wear high visibility clothing when surveying areas close to roads, do

not survey close to busy roads. Avoid crossing potentially hazardous sites, such as quarries and railway lines, and take notice of warning signs, do not enter private land that has been deliberately obstructed.

### **Livestock and agricultural machinery**

It is best to avoid areas containing livestock. If you choose to, take special care when entering areas with livestock, especially cattle, rams and horses. Do not enter fields containing bulls or cows with calves and be especially cautious with farm/guard dogs. Rutting deer can also be aggressive in the autumn. Avoid undertaking surveys in close proximity to working agricultural machinery or forestry operations.

### **Human confrontation**

Avoid confrontation with landowners, land workers or members of the public. You may wish to carry confirmation of the activities you are undertaking, a letter confirming your involvement in survey monitoring work can be provided, email [beewalk@bumblebeeconservation.org](mailto:beewalk@bumblebeeconservation.org) for a copy. If you have any concerns about your personal safety, stop activities immediately.

### **Lyme disease**

Lyme disease is a bacterial disease transmitted by animal ticks associated with rank vegetation, which can lead to severe symptoms if left untreated. A variety of animals act as hosts for the bacteria, including sheep, deer and pheasants. Make regular checks of skin and hair following survey work. Remove ticks from the skin as soon as possible. Wear light-coloured clothing so that ticks are visible, tuck trousers into socks so that ticks cannot attach or climb up the inside of clothing without being seen.

If you are unsure of anything regarding keeping yourself safe whilst surveying, please contact us at [beewalk@bumblebeeconservation.org](mailto:beewalk@bumblebeeconservation.org).

**[See the BeeWalk website for a full set of FAQ's](#)**





**Habitat and Land Use site details (see Habitat and Land Use classification guide below)**

<b>Site name</b>	
<b>County</b>	
<b>Year transect established</b>	

Section number	Habitat description	Habitat code(s)	Land use description	Land use code(s)
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

## Habitat and land-use classification

Code	Habitat Type	Code	Land Use Type
H1	Marine saltmarshes/estuaries/saline reedbeds	L1	Agriculture
H2	Coastal dune grassland	L2	Fisheries
H3	Coastal dune and sand heath	L3	Managed forest
H4	Coastal dune and sand scrub	L4	Un-managed forest
H5	Coastal dune and sand woods	L5	Mineral workings and quarries
H6	Coastal dune slacks	L6	Outdoor amenity and open spaces
H7	Coastal machair	L7	Amusement and show places
H8	Coastal shingle	L8	Libraries, museums and galleries
H9	Coastal cliffs/undercliffs	L9	Sports facilities and grounds
H10	Fen/swamp/marsh vegetation of inland freshwater edges	L10	Holiday parks and camps
H11	Bare ground/sparse vegetation of inland freshwater edges	L11	Allotments and city farms
H12	Acid bog/mire habitats	L12	Transport tracks and ways
H13	Flushes	L13	Transport terminals
H14	Inland swamp/fen stands without open water (e.g. reedbeds)	L14	Car parks
H15	Dry semi/unimproved (flower-rich) chalk/limestone grassland	L15	Vehicle storage
H16	Dry semi/unimproved acid grassland	L16	Goods and freight terminals
H17	Dry semi/unimproved (flower-rich) neutral grassland	L17	Waterways
H18	Agriculturally improved/re-seeded/ heavily fertilised grassland	L18	Energy production and distribution
H19	Seasonally wet and wet marshy grasslands	L19	Water storage and treatment
H20	Bracken dominated glades or hillsides	L20	Refuse disposal
H21	Stands of tall herbs (e.g. nettle and willow-herb beds)	L21	Cemeteries and crematoria
H22	Dry scrub/shrub thickets	L22	Post and telecommunications
H23	Wet and dry heathland/ dry heather moorland	L23	Dwellings
H24	Wet Willow scrub of fen, river and lake-side	L24	Hotels
H25	Hedgerows	L25	Residential Institutions
H26	Mature broadleaved woodland	L26	Medical and healthcare services
H27	Mature coniferous woodland	L27	Places of worship
H28	Mature mixed broadleaved and coniferous woodland	L28	Education
H29	Lines of trees or scattered trees of parkland	L29	Community services
H30	Small man-made woodlands	L30	Shops
H31	Recently felled areas/early-stage woodland and coppice	L31	Financial and professional services
H32	Bare ground/herb/grass mosaics of wood rides, hedgebanks and green lanes	L32	Restaurants and cafes
H33	Orchards, hop gardens and vineyards	L33	Public houses and bars
H34	Inland screes/cliffs/ rock pavements, and outcrops	L34	Manufacturing
H35	Intensive arable crops	L35	Offices
H36	Horticultural crops	L36	Storage
H37	Organic arable crops	L37	Wholesale distribution
H38	Bare ground/weeds of arable field margins or fallow/recently abandoned arable crops (e.g. set-aside)	L38	Vacant
H39	Ornamental shrubs/trees/lawns of parks/domestic gardens, etc.	L39	Derelict
H40	Bare ground/weed communities of post-industrial sites	L40	Defence

## Monthly recording form

Recorder: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Site: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Finish Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Average wind speed (0-6): \_\_\_\_\_ Weather: Sunny Sunny/Cloudy Cloudy

**0** smoke rises vertically; **1** slight smoke drift; **2** wind felt on face; **3** leaves in slight motion; **4** dust raised & small branches move; **5** small trees in leaf sway; **6** large branches move & trees sway

Species	Section	Queen	Worker	Male	Unknown	Flower/comment

Species	Section	Queen	Worker	Male	Unknown	Flower/comment