



WHY ARE BUTTERFLIES IMPORTANT?

Ecological indicators: Butterflies can be useful for monitoring ecosystem health and restoration success. Areas with many butterflies are generally rich in other invertebrates. A healthy invertebrate community provides a wide range of environmental benefits including pollination and natural pest control.

Pollinators: Bees might do the bulk of the pollination work in nature, but some flowers have evolved to be pollinated best by butterflies. Plants with bright, tubular flowers like swamp milkweed and columbines are known as 'butterfly flowers'.

Food sources: Butterflies are an important food source for many species, including other insects, birds, mammals and fish.

Model organisms: Butterflies have been used by ecologists as model organisms to study the impacts of habitat loss, fragmentation and climate change.

Symbols of insect decline: Butterflies populations and other insects face numerous threats and are declining worldwide. But we still don't know enough about most of them to assess the extent of the decline. We need more data!