

Good news! Some butterfly populations bounced back in 2019

By How Stuff Works, adapted by Newsela staff on 04.01.20

Word Count **418**

Level **450L**



Image 1. The marbled white butterfly (*Melanargia galathea*) population rose by up to 66 percent in 2019 in England. Photo: Ian Kirk/Wikimedia Commons. Licensed under CC BY 2.0

The number of butterflies in the world has been going down. However, there is some happy news for butterflies.

Butterfly populations have been growing. Many of these butterflies are in the United Kingdom. It is called the U.K. for short. The United Kingdom includes several countries. This includes England and Ireland. Other butterflies are in parts of North America. Last year was a good year for many butterflies. Their populations grew more in 2019 than in any of the last 20 years. The Butterfly Conservation shared the results. It is a wildlife group. It is trying to save butterflies.

Perfect Weather

The weather was unusually warm and wet in these places. This perfect weather helped the butterflies grow. There were more caterpillars. The caterpillars were able to make cocoons. Eventually, they became healthy butterflies.

Monarchs are a type of butterfly. They are orange and black. They travel from Canada to Mexico every year. Monarch numbers doubled from 2018 to 2019. Something similar happened in the U.K. The marbled white butterfly lives there. It is white and black. Its population grew by more than half.

Some butterflies live in only one place. Their numbers have gone up, too. This could help save these butterflies from extinction. The Lulworth skipper is one of these butterflies. It is green and copper-colored. It lives on the coast of England. The number of Lulworth skippers has dropped lately. However, its numbers more than doubled in 2019.

Experts say good weather was helpful. More butterflies were able to grow. Conservation groups have helped, too. Conservation groups protect butterflies and their habitats. Before, butterfly numbers were going down. Conservation groups have helped the numbers go up.

More Work To Do

This is great news for butterflies. It is great news for butterfly fans, too. Still, scientists say there is more work to do. Not all butterflies are safe. Take the monarch butterflies of California. Their cousins in Mexico had many babies. However, nearly nine out of every 10 California monarchs was lost in 2019.

Tom Brereton is a scientist. He works at Butterfly Conservation. He is excited that many butterfly populations are growing. However, Mr. Brereton is still worried. Most butterfly populations have been getting smaller.



Quiz

- 1 Where do Lulworth skipper butterflies live?
 - (A) Mexico
 - (B) Ireland
 - (C) Canada
 - (D) England

- 2 What is a reason why butterfly numbers have gone up?
 - (A) Many monarch butterfly populations are growing.
 - (B) Conservation groups protect the monarch butterfly habitats.
 - (C) Some types of butterflies live in the United Kingdom.
 - (D) Scientists have been studying many butterflies.

- 3 How are monarch butterflies in Mexico different from monarchs in California?
 - (A) Monarchs in Mexico need more habitats.
 - (B) Monarchs in Mexico had many babies.
 - (C) Monarchs in Mexico are black and white.
 - (D) Monarchs in Mexico grew in cocoons.

- 4 What happened because of warm and wet weather?
 - (A) There were more caterpillars making cocoons.
 - (B) Butterflies traveled from Canada to Mexico.
 - (C) The marbled white butterfly went to the U.K.
 - (D) Tom Brereton worked for Butterfly Conservation.