



# Butterfly Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Butterfly Conservation has several major concerns about the growing interest in releasing butterflies at weddings and other functions:

## **Interference with recording**

Releases affect butterfly recording and the efforts of thousands of people who submit records, by making it unclear if any future record of the species is truly wild or has been seen as a consequence of such a release.

This has the potential to divert limited conservation resources as it makes accurate mapping and h conservation work for that species difficult, as we don't then know where it occurs naturally.

This concern has been largely addressed by 'confetti' releases by the use of widespread and migratory species, however any research on the fascinating phenomenon of migration is now far more difficult.

## **Genetic concerns**

The released specimens have been bred in captivity and therefore each generation of butterfly is more genetically suited to breeding in captivity and not in the wild. Therefore when released specimens breed with wild individuals they have the potential to affect the genetic makeup of the species in the wild. This is probably a small threat, particularly in northern Europe where the species released don't survive the winter, although with global warming this threat is likely to increase.

## **Spread of disease**

There is a major concern over the potential for natural diseases to be more prevalent in the high butterfly densities present in rearing cages, diseases that are then spread to wild populations.

## **Sending the wrong message**

Butterflies are declining drastically through loss of habitat and intensification of farming and forestry. Releases deflect attention from this and large scale releases may risk changing public attitudes to the conservation of 'wild' populations. This is a major concern of Butterfly Conservation and we feel that using butterflies as confetti may encourage a dangerous attitude to wild creatures that are boxed, transported and released into areas whatever the suitability.