

Iowa Butterfly Survey Network

The IBSN is a citizen scientist program with the ultimate goal of educating Iowans about butterflies, while at the same time encourage people to take an active role in conservation. To that end, IBSN conducts research using citizen scientists of all skill levels to collect data for yearly population surveys of butterfly species in Iowa. Volunteers are trained in survey techniques specifically developed for butterflies.

Of the 122 species of butterflies believed to live in Iowa, more than one fourth are listed as endangered, threatened or of special concern” making their long-term survival questionable in the state.

The IBSN uses both citizen scientists and conservation professionals to monitor and survey habitat areas for butterfly populations. IBSN data gives a baseline data for researchers on existing populations and their range, identify potential threats, identify beneficial or potentially harmful land management practices, show effectiveness of habitat restoration efforts, and give an annual snapshot of the health of butterfly populations in Iowa.

The Iowa Butterfly Survey Network was established in 2007 but due to limited data management tools was not able to handle large number of participants. IBSN is now a part of the North American Butterfly Monitoring Network (NAB-NET) which is a multistate partnership of citizen scientist butterfly survey programs. NAB-NET has developed an online data entry and management portal for these different state programs including IBSN. Between the online data management tools and a new mobile app developed at Reiman Gardens for surveying butterfly, IBSN is ready to grow its participant base significantly.

Service Responsibilities:

- Survey assigned route a minimum of 6 times between June 1 and August 8 (4 times before July 20), recording data on supplied sheets or using the UBR app. Monitoring protocols must be followed and data must be recorded accurately and completely.
- Be familiar with the beginner’s list of species: These 25 species are the most commonly encountered and/or the easiest to identify. Experienced monitors are expected to learn the intermediate and advanced butterflies.
- Fill out site and route run data sheets and map route, if needed. Work with the regional hub leader or IBSN Coordinator for this.

- Report any problems to the coordinators of IBSN or the regional hub leader.
- Represent IBSN or regional hub to others encountered during monitoring. Be prepared to answer questions about butterflies and monitoring practices.
- Enter butterfly survey data in the on-line database and record volunteer hours after each survey run.

Qualifications:

- No previous experience is required. Monitors must attend training session(s) and complete the IBSN volunteer packet or packet of regional hub
- Able to **hike** on designated route during **spring** and **summer** weather for up to 2 hours
- Competent in oral and written communication
- Able to take initiative
- Work individually and as a team member
- Commitment to the IBSN program
- Provide own transportation to survey site

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IBSN uses both citizen scientists and conservation professionals to monitor and survey habitat areas for butterfly population numbers. IBSN data gives a baseline data for researchers on existing populations and their range, identifies potential threats, identifies beneficial or potentially harmful land management practices, shows effectiveness of habitat restoration efforts, and gives an annual snapshot of the health of all butterfly populations in Iowa.