

Meadows

Wildflower meadows were once a common sight around Britain. Their colourful flowers and tall grasses provided essential habitats for lots of the country's wildlife. Unfortunately, intensive farming has removed most of these wonderful patches from the landscape. Since the 1930s, it is estimated that Britain has lost 97% of its meadows. Not only does this make the countryside less beautiful, but it has also had a devastating impact on the wildlife that relied on them.

INSECT DECLINE

It is estimated that butterfly populations have dropped by over 75% in the last 40 years. One of the biggest reasons for this is the loss of their habitats. Each meadow might have thousands of individual plants, of hundreds of different varieties. This provides food on a massive scale for many of the pollinating species. These pollinators are essential in many ways. Without them, food crops such as vegetables won't grow, and fruit such as apples won't produce a harvest. There isn't enough food for these pollinators with food crops alone: they rely on areas like meadows to sustain them.



PRODUCTIVE CROPS

Some flowers in a meadow are extremely important to certain species. Bird's-foot trefoil provides food for over 130 species and is the main food plant for the common blue butterfly. The grasses growing in meadows are the only food plant for many other types of butterfly, including: Skippers, Marbled White, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Ringlet, Speckled Wood.

Meadows are also useful for providing food for grazing animals such as horses and sheep.

AS OLD AS THE LAND

Many meadows have been there for a long time. Some were first planted during the medieval period. These form a part of Britain's ancient heritage, yet many of them aren't protected by law. This means that they could be removed at any time.

CONSERVATION

The charity PlantLife are working hard to try to restore some of Britain's lost meadows. His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales, is an important patron of the charity and helps them to protect endangered plants around the world. They work alongside a group called Plant Europa, which is a group of over 60 European organisations all focused on preserving wild plants.

People can help out at home, as well. There are lots of wildflowers that will grow well in gardens and provide much-needed help to the insect population. Local charities and organisations around the country are working to persuade local councils to turn roadside verges into mini-meadows.





1

How much of Britain's meadows have been lost since the 1930s?

1 mark

2

Look at the sections **Insect Decline** and **Productive Crops**.

Find two impacts of the loss of meadows, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

Impression	Evidence
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3 marks

3

Look at the section headed: ***Insect Decline***.

Find and copy a phrase that shows why the number of butterflies is declining.

1 mark



4

Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

	True	False
Butterfly numbers are increasing.		
The plant bird's-foot trefoil isn't important.		
PlantLife are working to restore meadows.		
You can grow wildflowers in a garden.		

_____ 2 marks

5

Look at the section headed: **Conservation**.

Which two words best describe the aims of the PlantLife charity?

Tick **two**.

Work

Protect

Organisation

Restore

_____ 2 marks

6

Which section describes how old some meadows are?

_____ 1 mark

SATs Practice - Answers

1. 97%
2. **Give one mark for two correct impacts. Give one additional mark for each piece of supporting evidence.**
 - **Loss of habitat for insects.**

Some flowers in a meadow are extremely to certain species.
Bird's-foot trefoil provides food for over 130 species and is the main food plant for the common blue butterfly.
The grasses growing in meadows are the only food plant for many other types of butterfly, including: Skippers, Marbled White, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Ringlet, Speckled Wood.
Meadows are also useful for providing food for grazing animals such as horses and sheep.
 - **Pollinators are important for food crops**

Without pollinators, foods such as apples and vegetables won't be pollinated and won't produce a crop.
3. One of the biggest reasons for this is the loss of their habitats.
4. **Give 1 mark for two correct answers. Give 2 marks for three or more correct answers.**
 - False
 - False
 - True
 - True
5. **Give 1 mark for each correct answer** from Protect and Restore.
6. As old as the land.