



Kent and Sussex B-Lines

Creating a network of wildflowers across the UK

B-Lines is an exciting initiative creating a network of wildflower-rich routes across the UK to connect our best existing wildlife sites by restoring and creating habitat across the countryside. Wildflower-rich habitats are essential for our bees, butterflies and other insect pollinators. B-Lines helps these important farm pollinators to move across the landscape and creates more attractive areas for people to live and work in.

Imagine trying to travel around the UK without our road and rail network— for much of our wildlife this is the reality as patches of habitat have become smaller and more isolated. Farmers can improve the prospects for our valuable pollinators by providing habitat stepping stones to help them move through the landscape.



Red-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus lapidarius*) © Steven Falk

Helping wild pollinators in Sussex and Kent

In 2015 Buglife worked with local organisations to identify important wildflower-rich areas across Kent and Sussex, along with opportunities to restore degraded sites and create new habitat to provide a B-Lines network.

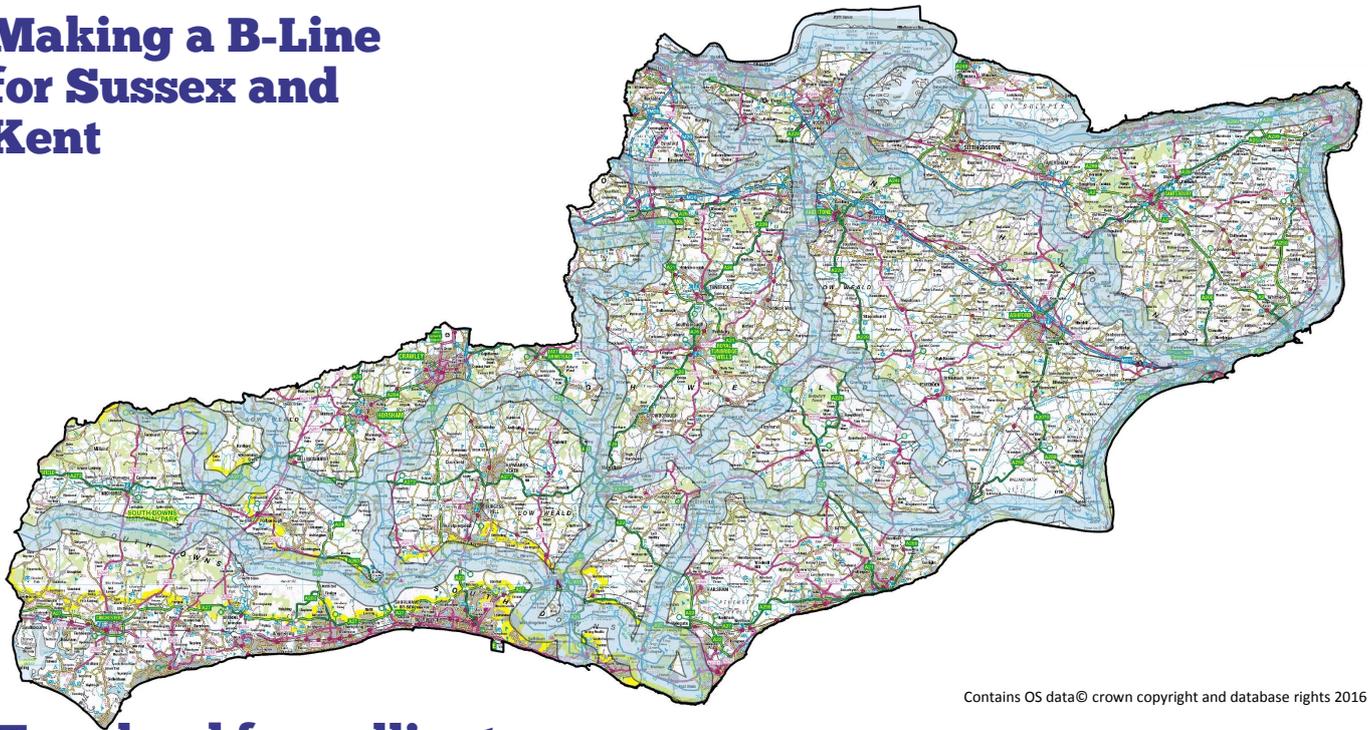
Wild pollinators are essential to agriculture in Sussex and Kent. One out of every three mouthfuls of our food depends upon pollinators, as do eight out of ten of our wildflowers. Buglife is now working alongside other organisations in the county to help encourage healthy communities of pollinators and protect the special qualities of the Kent and Sussex environment.

Thanks to support from Natural England, Farmcare and Ecotricity, Buglife is undertaking a **Landscapes for Wild Pollinators and Farm Wildlife Project** across Kent and Sussex. We are working with farmers and landowners to implement measures from field-scale to landscape-scale that will benefit pollinating insects.

We are working with a range of interested parties including conservation organisations, local authorities, community groups, and of course landowners to add new habitats to the B-Lines network. You can record the work you are doing for pollinators in Kent and Sussex and watch the network develop on our interactive B-Lines map at www.buglife.org.uk/b-lines-map



Making a B-Line for Sussex and Kent



Contains OS data © crown copyright and database rights 2016

Farmland for pollinators

There are many things that farmers can do for pollinators, voluntarily or with support through Countryside Stewardship including its Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife Package:

- Ensuring there are abundant pollen and nectar sources on farms through good grassland management, and by providing flower-rich margins and plots, and autumn-sown *bumblebird* mixes.
Floral diversity is important for pollinator diversity.
- Allowing areas of tussocky grassland and tall herbs such as umbellifers to develop alongside flower-rich patches will provide sheltering and nesting areas, as well as supplementary feeding opportunities.
Habitat diversity is needed to provide for all our pollinators' needs.
- Woody habitats including hedgerow and scrub provide a crucial food source early in the year before many other plants are flowering. They are also an important area of shelter for nesting and overwintering pollinators. **A sequence of food from spring to autumn is crucial for healthy pollinator communities.**
- Ensuring wildflower-rich areas, tall herbs and denser woody vegetation are provided across a farm will enable wild pollinators to move around the landscape and increase the benefits they supply.
Pollinators require a range of habitat features connected together.

The Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife Package provides a significant opportunity to increase the value of land for pollinators and we are working with farmers and landowners to identify where new habitat features can be provided that will act as linkages or stepping stones between existing important wildlife sites and wildflower-rich habitats.

Our Advisor is on hand to provide free, tailored advice and support to identify how to create the most suitable features for each site, and locate them where they will have the greatest positive impact for pollinators and other farm wildlife. For further information about the Wild Pollinators and Farm Wildlife Project contact Laurie Jackson - laurie.jackson buglife.org.uk or 07880 316036.

