Royal Entomological Society

Insect week

DISCOVER

Small creatures, big impact

Insects do essential jobs that keep nature, and people, alive. They pollinate plants, recycle dead material, build healthy soil and feed thousands of other animals.

1. They pollinate our food

As insects move between flowers they help plants produce fruit and seeds.

2. They recycle waste

Insects break down dead plants and animals, returning nutrients to the soil.

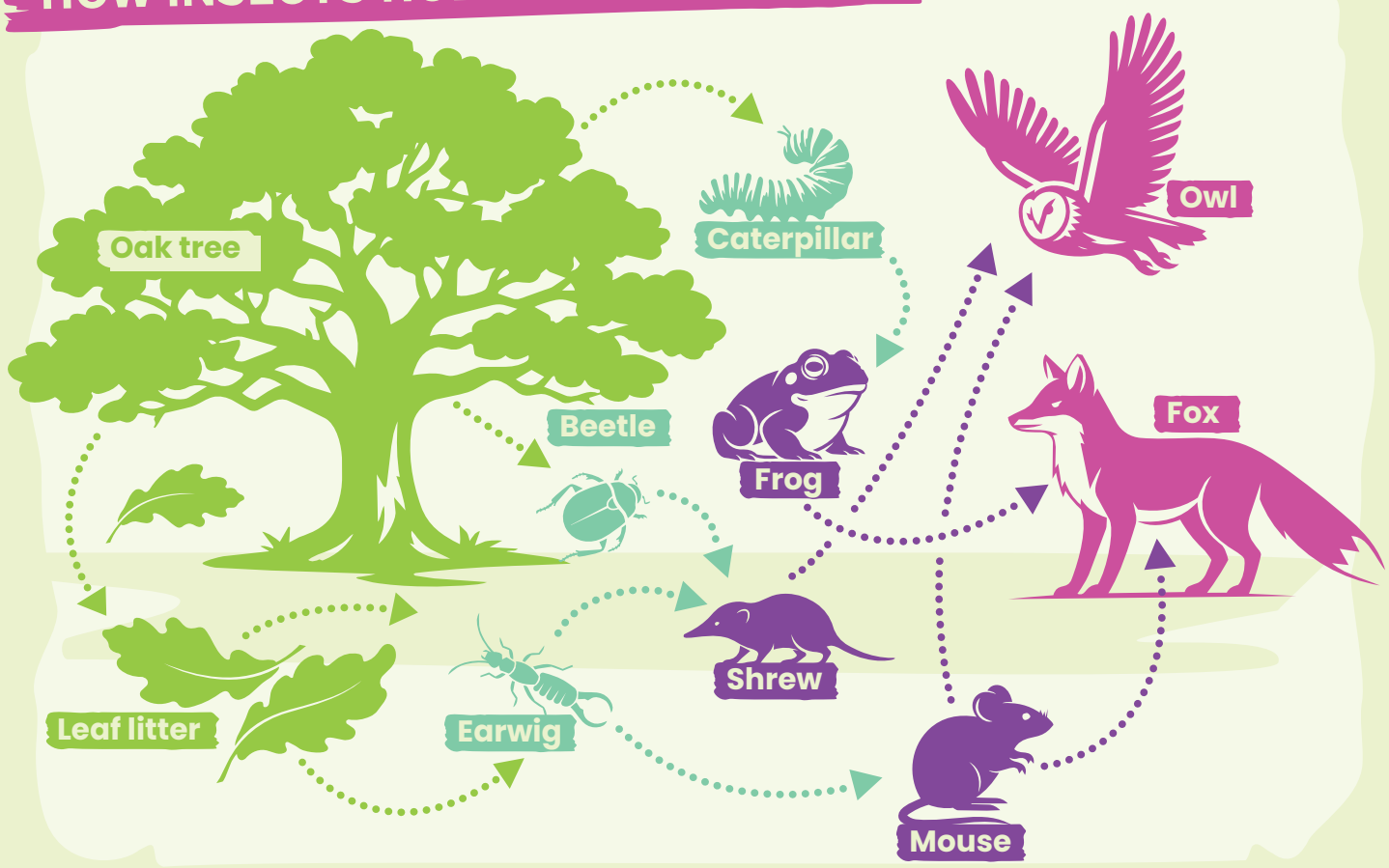
3. They feed other animals

Birds, frogs, bats and hedgehogs rely on insects as food.

4. They control pests

Some insects help farmers by naturally controlling crop pests.

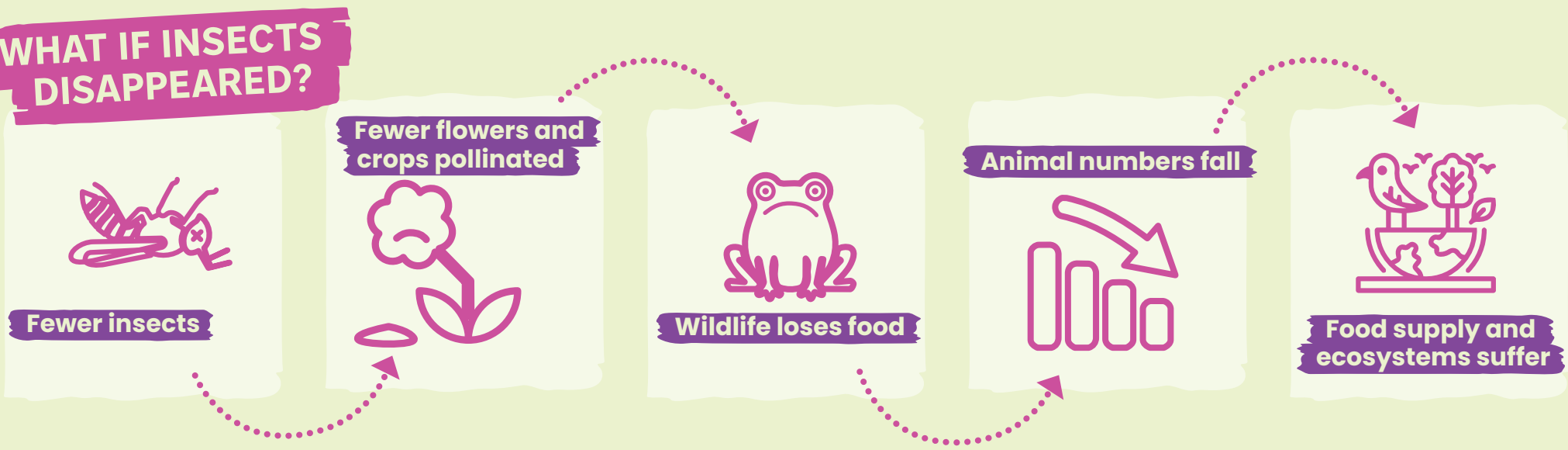
HOW INSECTS HOLD UP A FOOD WEB



1 in 3

mouthfuls of food depends on insect pollination

WHAT IF INSECTS DISAPPEARED?



OBSERVE

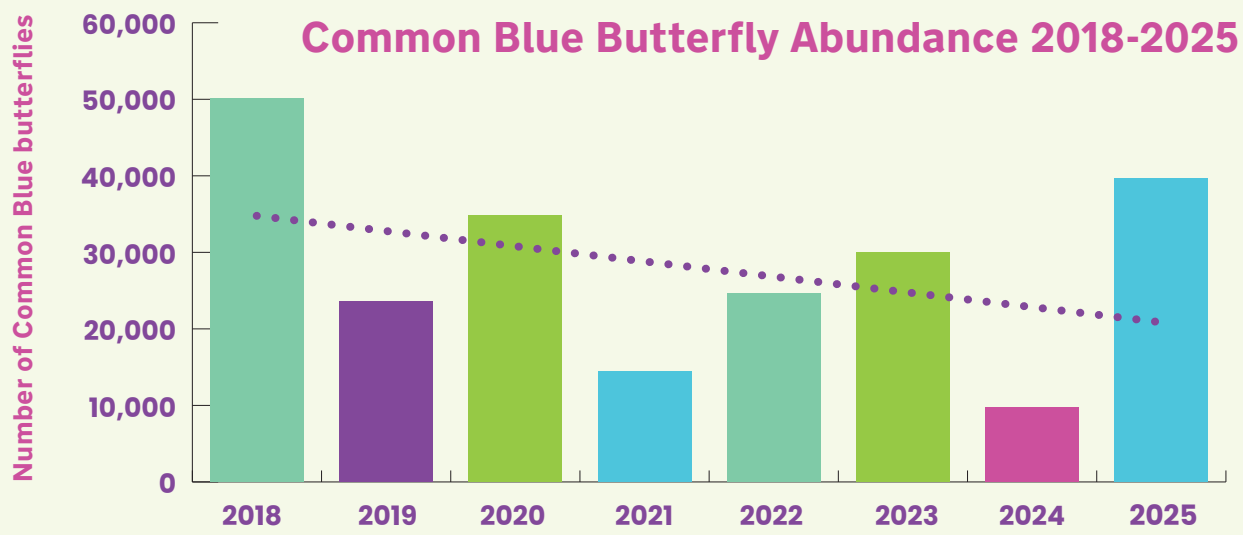
What is happening to insects?

Scientists are still working to understand how insect populations are changing. Explore this citizen science data on the Common Blue butterfly in the UK and see what conclusions you can draw.

How the data is collected

Volunteers across the UK count the butterflies they see for 15 minutes during sunny weather, from mid July to early August. This is called the Big Butterfly Count.

Photo: Adam Lawson



Source: Big Butterfly Count, Butterfly Conservation (2018–2025).

Analysis questions

Describe the overall trend in Common Blue numbers from 2018 to 2025.

Which year had the highest count, and which had the lowest?

Suggest two reasons why butterfly numbers vary so much from year to year.

We need more insect scientists

This data shows butterfly numbers are changing, but one species and one survey can't tell the whole story. To really understand insects, we need more scientists to study them. Could that be you?

Extended writing

If butterfly numbers keep falling overall, what could happen to the food web, and how might this affect our food supply?

PROTECT

Stand Tall for the Small - Take Action

Insect decline can be slowed. Small actions add up to a big difference.

Plant for pollinators

Grow flowers that bees and butterflies love, such as lavender and foxgloves.

Leave a wild corner

Let a patch of grass and weeds grow long so insects can shelter and feed.

Avoid pesticides

Ask whether chemical sprays are really needed in your garden or school grounds.

Provide water

Leave a shallow dish of water with stones so insects can drink safely.

Build an insect home

Make an insect hotel from sticks, hollow stems and dead wood.

Spread the word

Tell your family and friends why insects matter.

COULD YOU BECOME AN INSECT SCIENTIST?

Head to the Insect Week website to find out more

What will you, your class or your school do to help insects?

royensoc.co.uk/insectweek

Stand Tall for the Small

Registered charity number 213620