



Collecting Invertebrates; Position Statement

Background

Buglife supports the following concepts and principles, which are laid down in two documents produced by Invertebrate Link (JCCBI) namely: ['A Code of Conduct for Collecting Insects and other Invertebrates'](#) (2000) (British Journal of Entomology and Natural History 15, 1-6) and the Invertebrate Link ['Statement on the appropriate role of legislation in controlling activities likely to harm specified taxa of terrestrial and freshwater invertebrates, with particular reference to taking and killing'](#) (2007) (British Journal of Entomology and Natural History 21(3), 202-204).

Concepts and principles

- Collecting is essential for the study of most invertebrate taxa, including the acquisition of records of crucial value for conservation.
- Collecting invertebrates does not generally harm their populations but may have some potential to do so in the case of certain species with severely restricted distributions.
- For species whose populations, according to criteria laid down in the above documents, could be seriously harmed by collecting and are likely to be targeted by unscrupulous collectors, legal control is justified as a precautionary measure.
- Collectors should not only obey the law, but should always exercise appropriate restraint, so as to minimise any risk of harming wildlife and its habitats.
- The main threat to invertebrate populations is the loss, degradation and fragmentation of habitats and should therefore be the main focus of conservation activity, including legislation.

Statement of intent

1. In recognition of the above concepts and principles, Buglife will:

- Seek to ensure that any effort that it devotes to collecting as a conservation issue is proportionate to the relative importance of this issue
- Expect its staff and contractors to abide by the law and by the above code of conduct
- Reserve the right to dissociate itself from any individual who knowingly breaks the law or who shows a flagrant disregard for the above code of conduct.

2. Buglife will give advice and express opinions on new legislation and on the implementation of existing law, subject to the need to devote its resources proportionately to all invertebrate conservation issues and within its remit as a registered charity. As far as these constraints allow, it will:

- Try to ensure that any draft legislation will not impose any new controls on collecting invertebrates, other than in respect of species demonstrably threatened with extinction or decline due to collecting
- Propose the listing of species for legal protection from collecting or trading where there is reasonable concern that, without such protection, those species will suffer population decline or become extinct (and also to propose de-listing where the converse applies)
- Be available to give common sense and conservation advice in police or court proceedings, but not to seek an active role in the pursuit of suspected offenders.

Membership of Partnership Against Wildlife Crime (PAW)

[PAW](#) is a partnership of statutory and non-statutory organisations formed to work together at a strategic level to combat national and international wildlife crime.

Buglife has joined PAW because the Trust:

- Is concerned about continuing gross infringements of wildlife law, especially illegal damage to habitats (e.g. on SSSIs) and illicit trade in protected species
- Seeks to ensure that the need for collection of invertebrates for purposes of research, recording, conservation, education and personal interest (providing this does not endanger populations) is fully appreciated by policy makers and conservationists in all disciplines
- Wishes to exert influence on policy makers to take into account these concerns when framing and amending wildlife law and policies.

Membership of PAW is, in the opinion of Buglife, the most effective way to address these concerns. In all activities connected with this membership, Buglife's representatives will abide by the concepts, principles and intents laid down in this document.

Status

Approved by the Board of Buglife - The Invertebrate Conservation Trust on 8th July 2003.