



INDIGENOUS BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Butterflies are the early warning system of the insect world - when their numbers start to dwindle, it is a sure sign of an ecosystem under threat. With the destruction of indigenous forests and grasslands from encroaching human development, farming and mining, several species of African butterflies are diminishing.

The Indigenous Butterfly Conservation project focused on conservation, the development of eco-tourism and encouraging communities to be the guardians of biodiversity.

The project increases a community's understanding of how forest ecosystems work and why we should protect indigenous plants and fauna. It also stresses the importance of planting indigenous trees, especially those that play a key role in the ecosystem of sensitive areas.



WHAT DID WE DO?

We established four butterfly breeding centres at Tembe, Eshowe, St Lucia and Port Edward in KwaZulu-Natal. Each butterfly house has an accompanying indigenous plant nursery (open to the public) as well as an information and education centre. Community residents were trained in butterfly species identification and breeding and thereafter employed to provide guided tours to the public and conduct school education programmes.

Young children in particular find butterflies fascinating; and they provide an ideal means to teach children about the vital role of insects in healthy ecosystems.

The individual breeding houses are now managed by private conservation and community groups, visit <http://butterflying.co.za/> for more information.



WHO FUNDED THE PROJECT?

The three year project (2010 -2012) was funded by the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF), which is now known as the National Lotteries Commission.

Visit the National Lotteries [website](#) to find out about other projects supported by the NLC.

