

**Butterfly Conservation Europe
Activity report 2011 and 2012**



Butterfly
CONSERVATION EUROPE

Butterfly Conservation Europe Activity Report 2011 and 2012



Photo: Chris van Swaay

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Introduction

Butterfly Conservation Europe was started in November 2004 in a collaboration between Butterfly Conservation (UK), Dutch Butterfly Conservation and several other countries. BC Europe acts as an umbrella organisation both to stimulate and co-ordinate conservation action for butterflies, moths and their habitats across Europe.

Welcome to this report covering two years of BC Europe activity. During 2011, BC Europe tried again to obtain a core funding grant from the EU, building on the successful work that was grant-aided in 2010. Unfortunately, the criteria had been made far stricter and our application failed. So it has regrettably not been possible to fund all the many activities we had planned and we could no longer employ staff to develop our network and website. The Board wrote in strong terms to the EU explaining how damaging it was to fund NGOs on such a short-term and non strategic basis.

The Board decided to commit all the available funds for that year (from BC-UK and Dutch BC) to contract Sue Collins to continue her vital work as Policy Director (see report below). This work has been identified as a priority for BC Europe since our first partner meeting held in 2006. Many other activities have also been developed through other routes as explained in this report.

During 2012, we decided not to apply to the EU again on our own but to team up with the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP) on a joint application. We had already been working closely with them on High Nature Value Farming and CAP reform, so this seemed a logical collaboration (see www.efncp.org). We were delighted that this was successful and they have employed Sue Collins as a joint Policy Officer, working closely with Guy Beaufoy. Throughout this time Sue has played a major role as Vice Chair with the European Habitats Forum (EHF) working with a wide range of NGOs to influence EU policies. The partnership with EFNCP has been highly successful and we intend to continue it during 2013 which will be a crucial year for CAP reform.

The main downside of the funding situation is that we have been unable to arrange a meeting of Network Partners, though we have met many of you at the Dutch BC conference in Wageningen in March 2012. We are actively seeking funds to arrange such a meeting in the near future.

Board changes

In March 2011, Josef Settele stood down as Chair due to a potential conflict of interest with his extra commitments for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The Board are very grateful to Josef for his hard work as Chair and that he has agreed to remain as an advisor. The new chair is Miguel Munguira who works at the University Autonoma in Madrid. Titia Wolterbeek replaced Theo Verstrael as director of De Vlinderstichting/Dutch Butterfly Conservation and joined the BCE board as secretary. Martin Wiemers from UFZ in Leipzig/Halle entered the board on behalf of Germany. We are very fortunate to have such eminent people prepared to give their time to steering the work of BC Europe.



Miguel López Munguira (Chairman of Butterfly Conservation Europe).

New Network Partners

We are pleased to welcome the following new partners:

Peresvet, Bryansk, Russia

Romanian Lepidopterological Society (RLS)

HabiProt, Serbia

Associazione di Promozione Sociale "Polyxena" Associazione Polyxena, Italy

Macedonian Entomological Society (ENTOMAK) (replacing Butterfly Study Group)

American University of Armenia Foundation (AUA): Acopian Center for the Environment (ACE)

Cyprus Butterfly Study Group

Natura, Croatia



Partner meeting in Laufen (Germany) in November 2011.

Third BCE Network Partner Meeting

From 2 to 4 November 2011, we had a most inspiring meeting with many of our BCE Network Partners in Laufen, Germany. All partners have shown their results and achievements from the last two years. Some of us have made huge steps forward, while others made small but not insignificant steps to improve the conservation of butterflies.

As a network organization aiming to protect nature as part of butterfly and moth habitat, BCE is working on a Butterfly Conservation Strategy that builds on the EU's Biodiversity Strategy for 2020. BCE's strategy shows what has to be done by the EU for butterflies and moths of the Habitats Directive to fulfill the EU's own strategy. The Article 17 reports of 2013 and 2019 as well as BCE's indicators will be important milestones to follow the developments of the EU towards its own targets. BCE wants to help the EU wherever possible to achieve their goals.

To help the EU fulfill their conservation targets, knowing about the negative trend of the Butterfly Grassland Indicator, we will concentrate on improving the situation for the Habitat Directive grassland butterfly species. It means to try to stem and reverse

abandonment of land and support sustainable grazing or mowing of semi natural grassland. This could be stimulated by reforms of the CAP, although the extent to which this will be achieved is still a matter for negotiation. In addition specific actions have to be undertaken by the Member States since the EU Biodiversity Strategy has a measurable biodiversity baseline and conservation targets. A first step to be made will be the specification of the Management Do's and Don't's Report to the various Bio-geographical Regions, presented and discussed by BCE Partners at the Seminars on Management of Natura2000 for the bio-geographical regions.

These are the proposed actions for partner organizations:

1. Get involved in monitoring of Habitat Directive Species and Article 17 Reporting in your country.
2. Join one of the groups on formulation of Management Do's and Don't's for the Bio-geographical Regions.
3. Participate in the Seminar on Management of Natura 2000 for your bio-geographical zone.



Developing Butterflies as Indicators

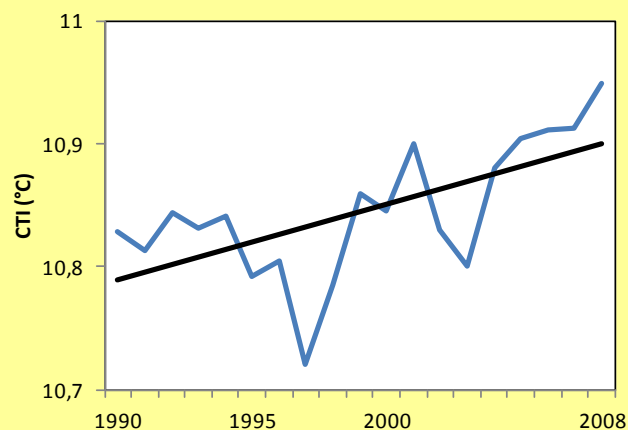
One of our other long standing priorities has been to develop and promote the value of butterflies as indicators of biodiversity and land use change, both at a country and European level. This work has been a central part of our work with EFNCP during 2012 and we have produced 2 reports to develop the topic. Firstly we have produced a Butterfly Monitoring Manual which explains the methods used for butterfly monitoring and how schemes can be developed at a country level (van Swaay et al., 2012a, b, c). Secondly, we have written a report Developing Butterflies as Indicators which explains the current situation with butterfly monitoring across Europe and makes recommendations about how this should be developed and supported (van Swaay et al., 2012d). Both reports are available on the BC Europe website and will be used to lobby the EU to develop butterflies as indicators, not only of



biodiversity but also of High Nature Value farmland and other key habitats identified in the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

The Butterfly Climate Change Indicator 1990-2008.

The indicator is based on Butterfly Monitoring Schemes in four European countries. The indicator shows a significant and rapid increase in European butterfly communities becoming more and more composed of species associated with warmer temperatures (Devictor et al., 2012).



Butterfly Monitoring workshops in Spain and Romania

As part of the EU/EFNCP work plan we arranged two workshops to develop butterfly monitoring in two countries that are a focus of activity for EFNCP and HNV farming. A workshop was held in Extremadura in April 2012 with the help of Miguel Munguira and Juan Hernández-Roldán (Autónoma University, Madrid) and Guy Beaufoy (EFNCP). This has helped establish and train a small group of volunteers who hope to start systematic butterfly transects in 2013. Two transects started this year as a pilot experience with very good results and a total of 58 species recorded. Action is also being taken to coordinate the existing transects that have started recently in the Andalusian

National Parks of Doñana and Sierra Nevada as well as transects in Western Andalusia conducted by the NGO Plebejus.

Another workshop was held in November at Sighisoara in Romania, organised by Paul Kirkland (BC-UK) and Jacqueline Loos (Leuphana University Lueneburg). The aim was to raise awareness of butterflies and monitoring techniques to help monitor changes in the extensive semi-natural grasslands and woodlands in this country. Over 20 people attended from a wide range of organisations. In 2013 transect counts will be started and in November 2013 a follow-up meeting will be organised.



Participants to the Butterfly Monitoring meeting in Sighisoara (Romania) in November 2012.

European Grassland Butterfly Indicator

Under a separate contract to Dutch BC, we have produced a report updating this key indicator up to and including 2011 (van Swaay et al., 2012e). This is the third update of this indicator and the results remain the same. Grassland butterflies have declined rapidly since 1990, by 50-70%. The main driver behind the decline of grassland butterflies is the change in rural land use: agricultural intensification where the land is relatively flat and easy to cultivate, and abandonment in mountains and wet areas, mainly in Eastern and Southern Europe. The report highlights the value of butterflies as a structural headline indicator of grasslands and pressures such as climate change.

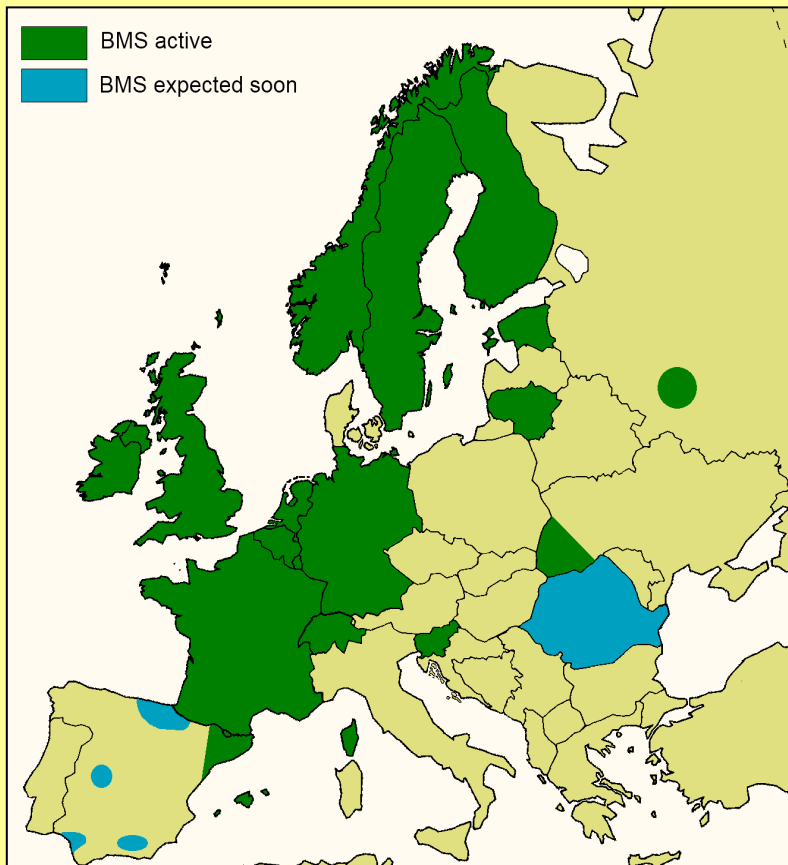


Euphydryas aurinia is a characteristic species of semi-natural grassland. It is also listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive.

Countries contributing their data to the European Grassland Butterfly Indicator:

Andorra (part of the Catalan scheme): since 2004
Belgium (Flanders): since 1991
Estonia: since 2004
Finland: since 1999
France: since 2005 (Doubs area 2001-2004)
*Germany: since 2005 (Nordrhein-Westfalen since 2001, Pfalz-region for *P. nausithous* since 1989)*
Ireland: since 2007
Jersey: 2004-2009
Lithuania: since 2009
Luxembourg: since 2010
Norway: since 2009 (not used in indicator)
Portugal: 1998-2006
Romania: starting up
Russia - Bryansk area: since 2009
Slovenia: since 2007
Spain (Catalonia: since 1994, Andalusia, Extremadura and Basque country starting up)
Sweden: since 2010
Switzerland: since 2003 (Aargau since 1998)
The Netherlands: since 1990
Ukraine (Transcarpathia): since 1990
United Kingdom: since 1976

In 2011 approximately 3500 transects were counted.



Influencing European policies

Progress Report by Sue Collins, European Policy Advisor for BCE and EFNCP

Sue has worked closely with colleagues in EFNCP, especially Guy Beaufoy, and in the European Habitats Forum (EHF) where she was re-elected as Vice Chair. The following is a selection of her work.



European Forum on
Nature Conservation
and Pastoralism

Policy input

- Implementation of EU Biodiversity Strategy, especially halting the loss and supporting recovery of biodiversity and the planned EU Green Infrastructure initiative: discussions held with EU Topic Centre on Biodiversity (Paris) and EU officials, including on possible criteria for restoration prioritisation:
- EU Biogeographic Zone Seminars on N2K management: Helped BCE network partners prepare for seminars covering Atlantic, Boreal and Mediterranean Zones.
- EU Member State Nature Directors Meeting (May): Implementation of EU Biodiversity Strategy – gave presentation - main drive was to encourage N Directors to engage with their Agriculture and Budget colleagues to advocate for ecological reform of the CAP and more support for HNV farming and biodiversity recovery. The case was made for more support for butterfly monitoring.
- EU Nature Directors (September): gave presentation and urged N Directors to improve funding of Biodiversity, through the overall EU budget, CAP reform, Fisheries Fund, Regional and Cohesion funding and LIFE. NGOs advocated LIFE spending at the level of 1% of the EU Budget.
- EU Biodiversity Coordination Group meetings (March and September): the urgency of grassland recovery was stressed along with CAP reform to prevent abandonment;
- European Parliament seminar on CAP reform and Biodiversity: On Panel - advocated CAP reform for biodiversity, including better support for HNV farming, more effective protection and positive management of semi natural meadows and pastures (including the change of definition of permanent pasture, earlier cut off date and premium payment needed in CAP 2013 reform). The dramatic loss of grassland butterfly was highlighted together with the poor conservation status of grassland habitats dependent on agriculture (according to MS Art 17 reports). A ban was urged on potentially damaging neonicotinoid pesticides, which may be adversely affecting bees and other invertebrate pollinators.



Semi-natural grasslands of High Nature Value are extremely important for the future of our grassland butterflies.

- EU Biodiversity Proofing Workshop: Focus was on developing effective proofing for CAP overall spend as well as Rural Development Programme and new CAP Partnership Contracts. The importance of strategic environmental assessment was stressed, using biodiversity data to check on implementation and incorporating semi natural pasture reporting systems.

European Habitats Forum discussions

During the year these have focussed on CAP reform; definitions of permanent pasture; Invasive Alien Species; Monitoring and Reporting; PAFs; EU Biodiversity Strategy implementation, monitoring and reporting; financing Natura 2000; Natura 2000 management; and Emerald Network development, biodiversity monitoring; EU policy thinking on 'No Net Loss'. Green infrastructure and prioritising restoration activities.

Conserving EU grasslands; for biodiversity and ecosystem services.

A major report has been drafted jointly by BCE/EFNCP to highlight the very poor state of EU grasslands and their characteristic species, including butterflies and to advocate for improved recording and monitoring systems.. A series of case studies from around Europe details the problems. The chief cause of deterioration is the decline of low-intensity pastoral farming and the abandonment of sustainable management of semi natural grassland. The report calls for an urgent need for CAP Reform 2013 to recognise explicitly the importance of semi natural grassland and put in place measures and funding streams to protect remaining semi natural grassland. It also calls for improved recording of semi natural grassland in agriculture reporting systems and monitoring of grassland extent and condition and the use of the Grassland Butterfly Indicator. More support is needed for farmers to continue low intensity grazing or mowing of semi natural grassland plus an expansion of targeted agri environment schemes and action at a landscape scale. The report will be published early in 2013.

Conference input

- Oxford Real Farming Conference (UK): Highlighted plight of pollinators, butterflies and the need for ecological CAP reform.
- International Conference on Pollination (Paris). Lobbied for more support for HNV farming through ecological CAP reform and for funding of butterfly monitoring.
- EFNCP Meadows and Pastures Seminar in Brussels: Presentation on the state of EU grasslands and their importance for butterflies and insects.
- IDDRI/EFNCP Seminar on CAP Reform: Focus on the longer possibilities for reform.

Contributions to other papers and reports

- WWF Paper on funding Natura 2000 and importance of planned EU Member State Prioritised Action Frameworks (PAFs).
- BC Europe response to EU Consultation on Invasive Species.
- Outline plan produced for implementation of BC Europe Habitats Directive Butterfly Recovery Strategy.

Mediterranean Red List

We have been awarded a contract with IUCN to produce a Red List of Mediterranean butterflies. This will be done using the same method as the European Red List, by using data provided by country compilers. Experts have been found in almost every country surrounding the Mediterranean sea, with the exception of Tunisia, Libya and Lebanon. Each of them has completed a form with all information on the status of all butterflies in

the Mediterranean zone of their country. In 2011 and 2012 drafts of all maps and species accounts were produced and adapted to the situation in the Mediterranean area.

All this material will be used to produce a first draft of the Red List in the beginning of 2013. In February a workshop is planned in Malaga to discuss this draft list with all experts. The Red List will then be finalised.



Two-tailed Pasha (Charaxes jasius) is a typical Mediterranean butterfly, occurring in many countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. The species will be assessed in the upcoming Red List of butterflies of the Mediterranean area.

Conserving endemic butterflies in southern Spain

We successfully applied for a MAVA grant to produce species recovery plans for 4 species that are endangered and endemic to Spain: *Euchloe bazae*, *Agriades zullichi*, *Polyommatus violetae* and *P. golgus*. A start up workshop was held in Granada the 29th of June 2012 to coordinate the project and the first fieldwork season. Fieldwork started in July 2012 with the objective of starting to gather data on population, habitat and threats for three of the four species. People collaborating in the workshop and fieldwork involved staff of the Sierra Nevada National Park, Zerynthia and Plebejus (NGOs working on the conservation of butterflies in Spain), professors and students from the Autónoma University of Madrid, amateur lepidopterists from Granada and volunteers from the European Interest Group (EIG) of BC-UK.



Male *Polyommatus golgus* on the summit of the Sierra de la Sagra (Southern Spain).



Mating pair of *Polyommatus violetae* from the Sierra de la Sagra (Granada, Southern Spain).

The first year of the project yielded the important collaboration of stakeholders such as the Sierra Nevada National Park, where three of the four species of the project live. Results from the fieldwork season revealed quite poor population numbers for the species living at high altitudes in Sierra Nevada, probably as a consequence of low spring rainfall. On the other hand, the species *Polyommatus violetae* has been recorded in quite a few new locations as a result of our own work and the records from other specialists.

Conservation of the Macedonian Grayling *Pseudochazara cingovskii*

P.cingovskii was identified as one of two Critically Endangered species in the recent European Red List of butterflies. The species is known from one site where it is threatened by marble quarrying, so it was an obvious priority for action. We successfully applied for a small grant from the Mohammed Bin Zayed (MBZ) fund to conduct a survey of the species and take initial action to ensure its conservation.

A small team conducted surveys in July, led by Branko Micevski (from the Macedonian Entomological Society) and Rudi Verovnik (University of Ljubljana, Slovenia). The team also included several volunteers from Serbia and Dutch BC. They produced a leaflet on the species and erected a display board about the species near to its locality. On the main site

the population size was estimated to be 3000 individuals. The team also made the exciting discovery of several new localities in the vicinity, giving the species a less precarious distribution (though it is still an extremely localised species).

Almost all sites are quarried at the moment, which might impose a threat on the long term. At the moment, the quarries are only active in a relatively small part of the habitat. As part of the project, talks were given to quarry managers and leaflets were distributed to them and their staff to raise awareness of the species. BCE and its Macedonian partner will continue to monitor this species as it remains one of Europe's most endangered butterflies.



The information board was set at the entrance to the Pletvar village just below the habitat of the Macedonian Grayling.

European Interest Group (EIG)

Report contributed by Simon Spencer (cerisyi@btinternet.com)

Butterfly Conservation's European Interest Group (EIG) was formed in 2006 mainly to bring all the BC members who are interested in European butterflies together. With 60 odd species in the UK and often very poor weather many UK butterfly enthusiasts prefer to go elsewhere in Europe for their holidays where butterflies are more diverse and more numerous. It was always our intention to do something useful rather than just photograph butterflies and our original inspiration was a trip to two national parks in Hungary during which we not only surveyed for butterflies but also submitted reports on our findings to two of the two national parks. Since then this relationship has blossomed and has recently resulted in an atlas of Butterflies for the Orseg National Park. EIG members not only contributed data from several trips to this atlas but several EIG fund raising trips have now contributed more € 20000 to projects in Hungary. The inspiration behind these initiatives and our inspiration for starting EIG was Szabolcs Safian.



EIG has built up many partnerships in other parts of Europe and now gets many requests to provide self funded volunteers to other butterfly projects in Europe. This year (2012) we have done surveys for *Euphydryas maturna* in Italy and considerably extended the flight area of the single known population, as well as help survey a population of *Coenonympha oedippus*. Other EIG expeditions surveyed for *Plebejus dardanus* in Bulgaria and Greece, assisted with the MAVA project in Spain and helped with monitoring projects for *Lycaena helle* in France and Romania. Visits by several members this year have contributed considerably to our knowledge of *Pieris cheiranthi* in Tenerife. All these are written up in the EIG newsletter. We have recently obtained a small amount of funding from the Thriplow Charitable Trust to assist members engaged in surveys of Red List species with their expenses. Applications forms can be downloaded from our website www.bc-eig.org.uk where you can find an archive of EIG newsletters and information on where to find butterflies in several countries Europe. Our aim is always to work with local butterfly experts wherever possible and to concentrate on the least surveyed parts of Europe. Though we don't aim to be a European wide membership organisation we now have Butterfly Conservation members in several counties of Europe. Our main activity for 2013 is a joint conference (June 28-30) in French with the Organisation Proserpine that run a marvellous Jardins de Papillons in Digne les Bains in Provence. Speakers will include Tristan Lafranchis.

Future plans

- Continue to work with EFNCP on influencing EU policies and promoting HNV farming and the role of butterflies as indicators.
- Develop an online system for entering butterfly monitoring data (through Dutch BC).
- Continue to press the EU for regular funding to produce a suite of indicators.
- Finalise the Mediterranean Red List.
- Follow up workshops held in Spain and Romania.
- Follow up work on the Macedonian Grayling.
- Continue with the project on the conserving of endemic butterflies in southern Spain.
- Seek funds for a fourth partner meeting.
- Explore possibilities of closer partnerships with other organisations.
- Upgrade the BC Europe website.
- Organize a workshop on monitoring of butterflies in Coto Donana, Spain.
- Promote the BC (UK) International Symposium, Southampton 29-31 March 2014.

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