Butterfly Conservation Europe
Activity report 2024

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BCE on 1 January 2025

Board: Nigel Bourn (chair), Chris van Swaay (secretary), Anu Tiitsar (treasurer), Simona Bonelli, Sam Ellis, Evrim Karaçetin, Constanti Stefanescu, and Lars Pettersson.
European Policy Advisors: Sue Collins and Aidan Whitfield
Advisors to the board: Irma Wynhoff, Miguel Munguira, Josef Settele, Dirk Maes, Rudi Verovnik, Martina Šašić, Cristina G. Sevilleja, Mike Prentice, Holly Mynott, Martin Warren and Martin Wiemers.

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March 2025

Figure 1. BCE board and advisors in Fraga - Spain, April 2024. From left to right: Irma Wynhoff, Chris van Swaay, Martina Sasic, Sue Collins, Dirk Maes, Mike Prentice, Simona Bonelli, Cristina Sevilleja, Sam Ellis, Lars Pettersson, Constanti Stefanescu, Aidan Whitfield, Nigel Bourn, Evrim Karacetin, David Roy, Martin Wiemers, Martin Warren, Anu Tiitsaar, Holly Mynott.

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Introduction

By Nigel Bourn, Chair, BC Europe

Welcome to this Butterfly Conservation Europe Activity Report for 2024. I was very pleased to be appointed as Chair of BCE in 2024 and wish firstly to thank my predecessor, Sam Ellis. As chair, Sam oversaw significant growth in the work of BCE thanks to the projects that have enabled the growth of the eBMS network across Europe. Sam is not lost to us as he has remained on the board and has been a considerable help to me in the last year as I tried to fill his not inconsiderable boots. Sadly, we are also losing Martin Wiemers who finished his 12-year term on the board, but I am delighted that he has agreed to stay involved as an Advisor. I would also like to thank Martin for taking on the role of Treasurer of BCE for the last 8 years and to welcome Anu Tiitsaar who has kindly agreed to be Treasurer. A vital role going forward as we look to capitalise on the successful fundraising and project development undertaken in 2024.

2024 was a difficult year after project funding from SPRING ceased. We were able to use most of our financial reserves, contracting Cristina Sevilleja to continue her work supporting the development of the eBMS across Europe and Sue Collins and Aidan Whitfield for their vital Policy work. The latter yielded a major result with the passing of the Nature Restoration Law. Hopefully this marks a step change in the conservation of biodiversity within the EU. A major part of the NRL is to halt the decline of pollinators by 2030, so we have been working with NGO partners and the EU to plan how this is best achieved. There have been a plethora of consultations which have been co-ordinated by our Policy Advisors and involved many Board members and Advisors. Details can be found in the policy section.

At the end of the year, we had the amazing news that three of the four applications that were submitted in 2024 to develop our work were successful. These three projects are described below: EPIC, to develop training programmes to build capacity in Members States for butterfly monitoring; EMBRACE which will ensure the central support we need to maintain and support the network of national BMS co-ordinators; and POLLHAB, a project working on pollinators typical of habitats protected under the EU Habitats Directive were successful. Unfortunately, a fourth project, SAFEGROUND, led by the University of Würzburg on insects below ground was unsuccessful.

2025 is the 21st anniversary of BCE and plans are taking shape for a get together at the end of the year in our usual venue at Laufen in Germany. We plan to celebrate our successes as well as plan the future at a critical time for biodiversity. We hope to see many of you at this meeting.

BCE relies on the expertise of its Board Members, Advisors and Network Partners. Everyone has contributed this year to a whole series of consultations and projects. We are very grateful for all those who gave up their time to ensure we made the case for conserving butterflies and moths.

BC Europe Priority Action Plan 2024-29

The Board has discussed and approved a Priority Action Plan for the next 5 years. The main elements are to:

1. Maintain our highly valued network of Partners
2. Advocate better European policies for Lepidoptera
3. Create an eBMS covering the whole of Europe and an effective database on Lepidoptera distributions
4. Take practical action to conserve threatened and widespread species
5. Raise awareness of Lepidoptera and their role in creating a healthy ecosystem
6. Increase our capacity to raise funds and run projects.

EMBRACE Project and eBMS update

By Cristina Sevilleja and Chris van Swaay

This year had reduced activity in the eBMS after the end of the SPRING project in January 2024. However, we maintained contact with national eBMS co-ordinators and many schemes continued to grow and develop. At the end of the year, De Vlinderstichting was invited by the EU to apply for a contract to develop the eBMS and update the Grassland Butterfly Indicators. We are pleased to report that this bid, known as EMBRACE (Expanding Monitoring of Butterflies for Restoration And Conservation across Europe 2021-2026) was successful.

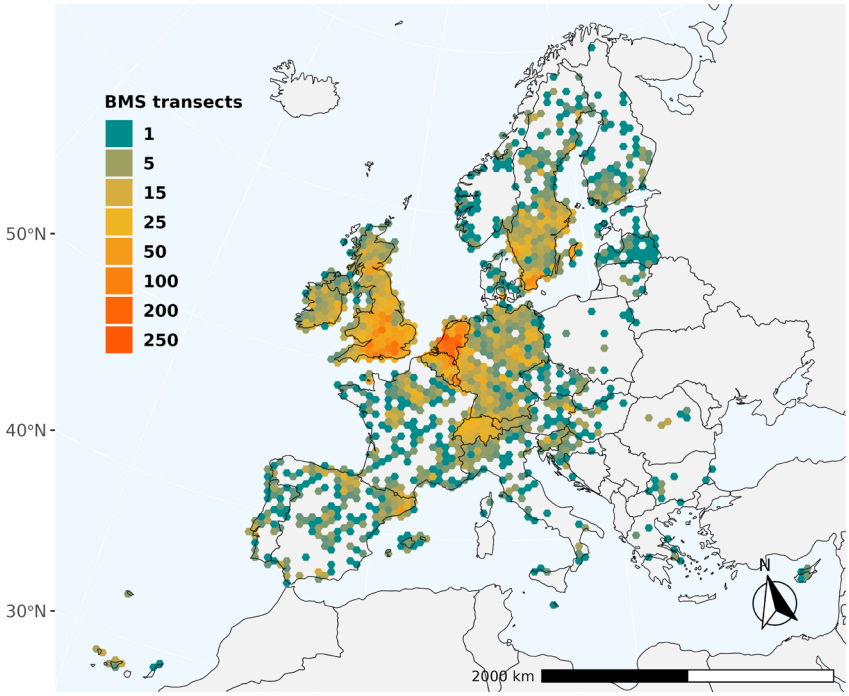


Figure 2. One of the first results of EMBRACE, the update of the eBMS central database making the version 6 of the EBMS transect network up to 2023.

As in previous years it will be led by experts from De Vlinderstichting, UK-CEH, BC Europe and BC-UK, but will involve the whole eBMS partnership which now spreads across Europe. The project started in December 2024 and will run for 2 years. Overall objectives are to update the European Grassland Butterfly Index for the period 2021-2025 and build capacity to help achieve a more sustainable network of national citizen science-based butterfly monitoring schemes in all EU MS to underpin the calculation of butterfly abundance indicators.

The eBMS continues growing, as we can see on the Figure 2 with more transects on several Eastern countries (Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece) and increasing in the remaining ones filling many gaps with new transects.

Also, the second and most flexible methodology, the 15min-counts had experienced an incredible growth recording butterflies in different habitats where transects are not found (Figure 3). This methodology is being used to monitor rare and threatened species for the facility on reporting on short flight periods or remote areas.

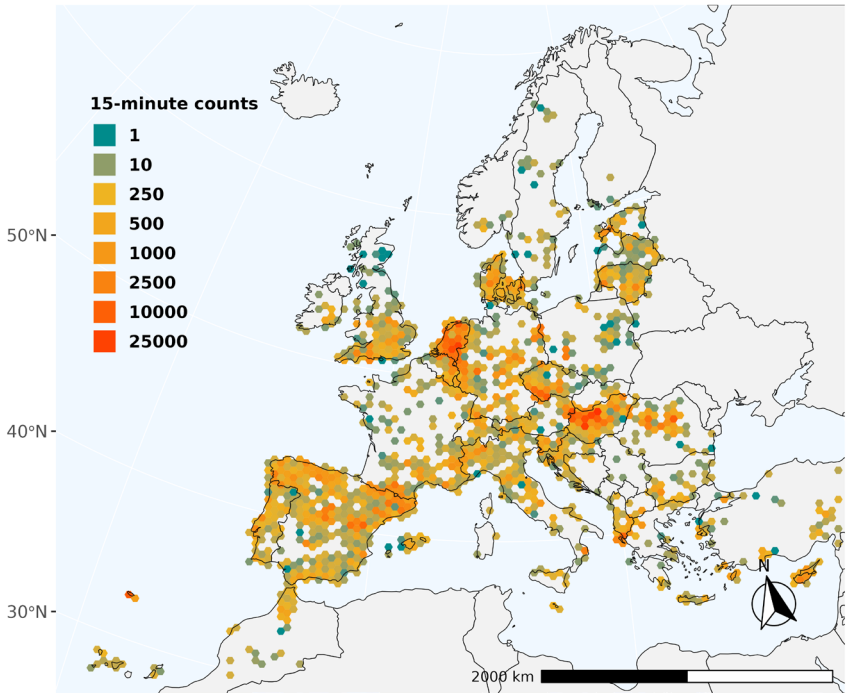


Figure 3. Version 6 of the EBMS now contains data on 1.4 m recording events and the number of 15 minute counts continues to grow rapidly.

EPIC – Butterfly Project

By Cristina Sevilleja and Martin Warren

We are delighted to report that our bid to run the Butterfly training course element of this EU funded project known as EPIC (European Pollinator Identification Courses) (Lot 3 – EPIC Butterfly) was successful. The project is led by the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and involves two major partners: BC Europe and the Office Pour les Insectes et leur Environnement (OPIE) in France. Throughout the project we will work closely with two other major elements of the EPIC project: Lot 1 training in wild bees (EPIC-Bee) and Lot 2 training in hoverflies (EPIC-Fly). These will be led by the University of Mons and the University of Alicante respectively. The projects started at the beginning of December 2024 and will run for 2 years.

The main objective of the EPIC-projects is to strengthen the para-taxonomic capacity of butterflies, bees and hoverflies in EU Member States, and support preparation for the implementation of the EU Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (EUPoMS, Potts et al. 2024). The project will thus make a major contribution to the EU initiative to address the decline in pollinating insects and help implement the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

The project involves the development of training materials and resources to identify and monitor butterflies according to standard EU-PoMS protocols. For butterflies, these involve walking standard 500m transects twice per visit, eight times a year. Bees and hoverflies will also be counted on the same transects as well as other environmental variables. The number and location of the randomised transects will be determined during 2025 by a separate group appointed by the EU.

Figure 4. Logo of the three EPIC projects.

Training resources and courses will be available online in all Member States to raise capacity across the EU. We will also run a series of face-to-face training courses focussing resources on 11 target countries where we know from previous experience in developing the eBMS that para-taxonomic capacity is relatively low.

We hope that all our BCE partners in the EU will get involved with the project and will report further details as soon as possible.

Reference

Potts S.G., Ignasi Bartomeus, Koos Biesmeijer, Tom Breeze, Ana Casino, Jens Dauber, Petra Dieker, Axel Hochkirch, Toke Thomas Hoye, Nick Isaac, David Kleijn, Linda Laikre, Yael Mandelik, Matteo Montagna, Erik Ockinger, Bas Oteman, Andrea Povellato, Marino Quaranta, David Roy, Oliver Schweiger, Josef Settele, Gunilla Stahls-Makela, Gerard Troost, René van der Wal, Ante Vujic, and Jie Zhang (2024) Options for an EU Pollinator Monitoring Scheme.

PollHab project

By Aidan Whitfield

In July 2024, DG-ENV published an open call for tenders "Pollinators typical of Habitats Protected under the Habitats Directive" for €1M over 2 years. BC Europe was pleased to join a consortium to submit a bid comprising: University of Padova (Italy) as the lead contractor; Subcontractors: University of Mons (Belgium, covering wild bees), University of Novi Sad (Serbia, covering hoverflies), de Vlinderstchting (Netherlands, covering moths), INBO (Belgium, covering butterflies), BCE, ATECMA (Spain, covering Habitats) and IEEP (Belgium and UK, covering relations with EU MSs). We are delighted to report that the bid, known as PollHab, was successful and started in December 2024.

The main tasks are to

1) Develop a set of general criteria to characterise typical pollinator species (including characteristic species, indicators of good habitat quality, species that can be monitored easily)
2) Identify the typical pollinator species (including clustering of habitats based on co-occurrence, floristic and microhabitat similarity; distribution of pollinators and their indicator value)
3) Develop management and monitoring recommendations for the typical pollinator species
4) Coordinate with Member States authorities and other stakeholders

Next Partner meeting in Laufen 3-5 December 2025

All our Network Partners should have received an email alerting them to hold the date for his meeting, which will focus on the EBMS and PollHAb Project, as well as celebrating our 21st Birthday. It will be held at our usual venue at ANL in Laufen, Germany. As before, numbers are limited so we only have room for one delegate per partner. A booking form will be sent later in the year.

Butterfly Red List update

By Martin Warren and Sam Ellis

The draft Red List was submitted at the end of 2023 and this year has undergone two rigorous checks by IUCN, which has entailed further consultation with experts. The checks were finished in November and the new Red List should be published early in 2025. We will send an announcement as soon as it is available.

Moth Red List update

By Jurriën van Deijk, Dutch BC

The project team of Jurriën van Deijk, Mark Parsons, Phil Sterling and the IUCN with the indispensable help of many moth experts across Europe are about to finish the first European Red List of all 3177 larger moth species plus the only Habitats Directive micro-moth *Glyphipterix loricatella*. The final report will be published the beginning of April. In this European Red List, we combined all information from 69 experts from the Macaronesian islands to Russia and Iceland to European Türkiye.

This information is combined with published papers and available data, such as national and personal databases, and global databases like GBIF, to identify which species are threatened based on the IUCN criteria. All 3,178 larger moth species were assessed, and an estimate has been made of the probability that the species will become extinct in Europe in the short term. During the presentation, we will discuss the occurrence of endangered species and the threats that exist for endangered species.

Influencing European policies

By Sue Collins and Aidan Whitfield

BC Europe continues to be an active member of the European Habitats Forum, a group of environmental NGOs which scrutinizes and advises on the development of EU Biodiversity Policies. A major development during the year was the passing of the **EU Nature Restoration Law (NRL).** This was adopted by the Council in June 2024. The vote was delayed by 2 months until after the European Parliament elections and because there were not enough Member States willing to support it. The final text was not changed from the version approved by the European Parliament in February. It requires Member States to reverse the decline of pollinator populations by 2030 and includes the Grassland Butterfly Index as one of the measures they can use to demonstrate the restoration of biodiversity in agricultural ecosystems. The regulation came into force on 18 August 2024.

The EU Working Group on Pollinators has been very active and has created six Task Forces. BC Europe has appointed a representative to attend each group to ensure that Lepidoptera are properly represented:

- TF1: Integrated pollinator monitoring and indicators (Chris van Swaay, Sue Collins).
- TF2: Key Pollinator Areas (KPAs) and Buzz Lines. (Simona Bonelli, Aidan Whitfield).
- TF3: Typical pollinator species of protected habitats (HD) (Dirk Maes).
- TF4: Pollinator conservation in agriculture (Lars Pettersson).
- TF5: Pollinator protection from pesticides (Maj Rundlof).
- TF6: National strategies, regional and local plans for pollinators. (Eva Monteiro).

The BC Europe Policy Team has been active in promoting the need for funding for Lepidoptera monitoring and conservation, including the need to develop a European Moth Monitoring Scheme (eBMS) similar to the successful eBMS. We have helped develop the three bids that were successful during 2024 and look forward to helping implement the EMBRACE, EPIC- Butterfly and PollHab projects.

The Catalan Butterfly Monitoring Scheme celebrates thirty years

By Constanti Stefanescu

On November 18, 2023, the Catalan Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (CBMS) celebrated its thirtieth anniversary. This network, coordinated by the Natural Sciences Museum of Granollers and based on volunteer work, has created over three decades one of the most important biodiversity databases in the Mediterranean, with the counting of more than three million butterflies of 190 species.

With thirty years of experience, the Catalan Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (CBMS; www.catalanbms.org) is the oldest volunteer-based biodiversity monitoring project in the Mediterranean. This program is coordinated by the Natural Sciences Museum of Granollers, with the support of the Catalan government and the network of natural parks of the Barcelona Provincial Council. Over three decades, three hundred volunteers have obtained observations of more than 3 million butterflies, which have allowed the construction of one of the most valuable databases on biodiversity in Catalonia. Over the course of these thirty years, 3,265,197 butterflies corresponding to 190 species have been counted and a total of 57,215 hours and 79,992 km of fieldwork have been dedicated to butterfly monitoring.

The Biodiversity Research Group using Bioindicators (BiBio), of the Natural Sciences Museum of Granollers, has used this database to document the trends of the country's butterflies and to highlight worrying declines. The results of these studies have been translated into dozens of scientific articles and have positioned the CBMS as a model project in the world of science, naturalism and citizen science.

On the project website (www.catalanbms.org) you can consult the main results in detail: the species that appear in each of the more than 250 transects, the trends and phenological curves of more than 190 species detected, and other diverse information. Likewise, you can download the magazine *Cynthia* (https://www.catalanbms.org/en/cynthia/), that is published biannually (with an English translation). The magazine includes sections such as the biology and identification of the butterfly species, synthetic reviews of the most remarkable articles produced with this dataset, as well as the main monitoring statistics.

Figure 5. The Catalonian BMS team (L to R): Cristina de Gracia, Clàudia Pla-Narbona, Andreu Ubach, Constanti Stefanescu

Butterfly Monitoring in Flanders (N. Belgium) 1991-2024: More Losers than Winners

By Dirk Maes

Butterfly monitoring in Flanders is done on a modest scale: of the total 55 observed species, we have sufficient data for trend analysis for only 21 common species. Six of these show a declining trend, four an increasing trend, five are stable, and the trend for the remaining six is uncertain.
Since 1991, butterfly monitoring has been conducted in Flanders, with volunteers walking a fixed transect weekly from early April to late September, counting all butterflies they encounter along the way. The number of butterfly transects in Flanders has always remained between 20-40 and never reached the numbers seen in the UK or the Netherlands, where several hundred butterfly transects are walked annually. From 1991 to 2024:

- Six species show a declining trend: large skipper, small tortoiseshell, ringlet, map butterfly, gatekeeper, and small skipper.
- Four species are increasing: red admiral, speckled wood, brimstone, and peacock.
- The remaining species show a stable (5 species: meadow brown, comma, large white, green-veined white, and small white) or uncertain trend (6 species: holly blue, painted lady, small heath, common blue, small copper, and orange-tip).

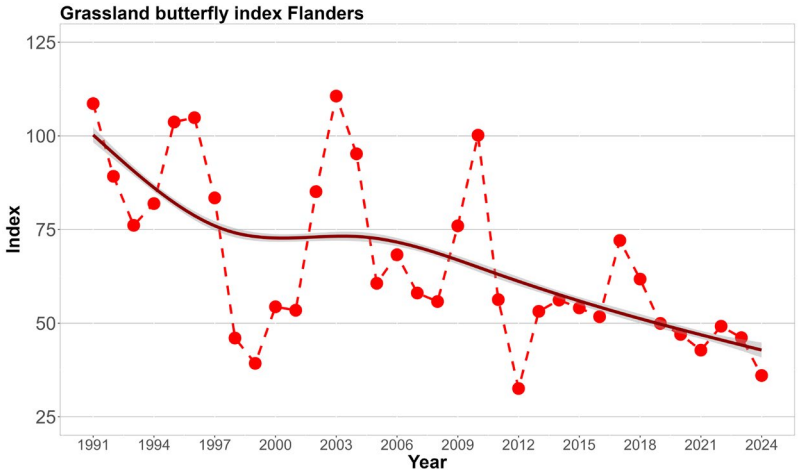


Figure 6. Grassland Butterfly Index of Flanders (Belgium).

Grassland species have declined by an average of 58% compared to the starting year 1991, possibly due to the disappearance and quality of nutrient-poor, flower-rich grasslands caused by nitrogen deposition and climate change. Forest-related species initially increased significantly from 2001 to 2017 but have since shown a fairly strong decline (with greater year-to-year differences than grassland butterflies). Additional ecological research is needed to determine the cause of this recent decline in 'forest species.'

Since 2016, a dozen Red List butterflies have been monitored in a separate monitoring network (meetnetten.be), and there too we see many more losers (8) than winners (1). A targeted expansion of the number of butterfly transects in Flanders is needed to reliably calculate trends for the remaining (Red List) species. This would enable us to keep track of butterflies better and allow us to adjust nature policy and management in Flanders more quickly.

Link to report (in Dutch): https://doi.org/10.21436/inbor.118417768

SPRING Project – Executive Summary

The SPRING project (Strengthening Pollinator Recovery through Indicators and monitoring) ended in December 2024. It has helped develop the European Butterfly Monitoring Scheme as well as piloting methods of sampling other pollinator groups, including bees, hoverflies and moths. The project was led and coordinated by UFZ and included 18 partners as sub-contractors (including BC Europe) as well as a wider group of experts across the EU. The overall budget was €5m. The following is an edited copy of the Executive Summary by Josef Settele et al.

The **SPRING project** supports the development of an **EU Pollinator Monitoring Scheme**. It comprises tasks on evaluating the potential of pollinator Citizen Science, development of butterfly monitoring schemes, piloting pan traps and transects methods for sampling pollinating insects in the field, evaluating the potential of malaise traps and light traps for sampling wider insect biodiversity and moths respectively.

A provisional network of **Butterfly Monitoring Schemes** across the EU was completed during this project. This includes support for schemes in Lithuania, Greece, Romania, Latvia, Denmark and Slovakia - mainly on the basis of trained volunteer observers, provision of identification guides and support for coordinators in each Member State. An update to the European Grassland Butterfly indicator was completed and shows a linear decline of 32% in the EU-27 and 36% in Europe from 1990-2020. All Butterfly Monitoring Schemes in Europe were supported by this project through provision of guidance and promotional material, including workshops to share experience and best practices between schemes. Technical tools to support butterfly monitoring communities (website and the ButterflyCount mobile application) were enhanced in response to user feedback, e.g. updates to species lists, improved reports and data downloads and translations. The tools support 36 Butterfly Monitoring Schemes in 30 countries - including 27 EU Member States - and has resulted in 9122 active butterfly transects (i.e. walked in the last two years) for the European continent. In total, around 10,000 volunteers have participated in the eBMS network, providing valuable butterfly monitoring data during all the monitoring years. We updated the Grassland Butterfly Index which was published by as an EEA SEBI 027 indicator, as well as in the EU Biodiversity Strategy Dashboard on the Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity website and Eurostat's 2024 SDG report.

We undertook an audit of methods for pollinator monitoring with **Citizen Science**. Overall, 75% of pollinator Citizen Science projects focussed on recording pollinators (e.g. butterfly monitoring), 20% focussed on interactions (e.g. focal flower counts like FIT Counts) and 5% focussed on pollination (e.g. level of seed set for insect pollinated plants). We developed a public survey gaining 321 responses from experts in pollinators and/or Citizen Science in 35 European countries about factors and barriers supporting Citizen Science. We found that the support for Citizen Science (based on assessment of the overall rating of pollinator Citizen Science, factors supporting Citizen Science, and barriers) was strongly related to affluence (as measured by Gross National Income). Based on our analysis and experience during the SPRING project we recommend regionally specific ways to support pollinator Citizen Science in different countries.

We developed **training materials** in support of capacity building for pollinator species identification and field sampling. We ran 27 courses during 2022 and 2023, covering all regions of the EU, aimed at participants with a basic or intermediate level of expertise. Over 250 participants attended, and the courses received high marks (>90%) through formal evaluation. In collaboration with leading taxonomic experts in bee and hoverfly identification, and in collaboration with the ORBIT and TAXOFLY projects, we ran 17 courses in advanced identification skills for pollinating insects. Over 120 people attended the courses. We developed a large body of material to support capacity building for an EU

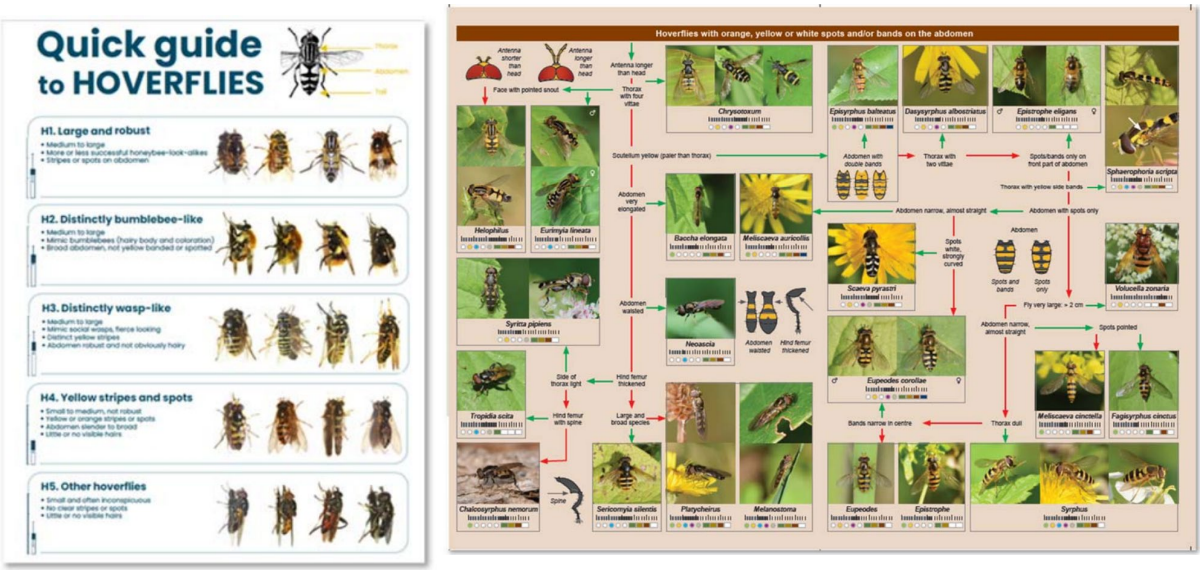


Figure 7. Training materials of hoverflies.

Pollinator Monitoring Scheme and designed an approach to the development of knowledge and capacity towards a pollinator monitoring scheme for the EU. A Pollinator Academy website was developed to consolidate all training and capacity building material developed during this project.

We piloted **pollinator monitoring methods** to inform the design of an EU Pollinator Monitoring Scheme. Based on recommendations of the STING expert group (Potts et al. 2021) we tested pan trap and transect sampling across the EU, surveying 231 sites in 15 countries and over 1100 separate days in the field. Over all surveys we collected data on 527 bee, 224 butterfly and 197 hoverfly taxa. At the level of individual field sampling occasion, there was considerable variability in the diversity and abundance of pollinating insects. This represents variability between sites, differences over time (across the season and between years) and differences between bioclimatic regions of the EU. For bees and hoverflies from pan traps, the overall average diversity was 7 to 10 species and 2 to 3 species respectively. The average number of individual insects was 30 bees and 8 hoverflies. Guidance was made available to support surveys and included specifications for building and spraying pan traps, survey protocols for all methods (pan traps, transects, flower and habitat assessments), field recording forms and guidance of entering data via an online data entry system. Data from field surveys was made available to the STING project and experts.

To evaluate the potential of **pan traps for pollinator monitoring**, we reviewed the impact of floral resources on sampling efficiency. After filtering we analysed 11 datasets for pan traps (covering Spain, Greece, UK and The Netherlands) and 4 for transects (covering Romania, The Netherlands, Serbia and the UK). For both pan traps and transects, wild bee abundance initially increased with increasing flower density, peaked and then decreased. The relationship between flower density and abundance of wild bees from transects peaked at high flower densities (e.g. for mass flowing crops), whereas for pan traps the peak was at markedly lower flower densities. This suggests a strong dilution effect for pan traps due to competition between pan traps and flowers. We therefore recommend that the EU Pollinator Monitoring Scheme should focus on transects as the primary sampling method.

We piloted additional sampling methods for pollinating insects: **light trapping for moths** and **malaise trapping** for wider insect biodiversity. Moth sampling was tested at 253 locations in five countries (Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden) using a cost-effective and portable light trap. A manual and field protocol were produced to support the wider adoption of this sampling method. The ButterflyCount mobile application was extended to capture data from moth traps, including the use of

AI image classifiers to support species identification by non-experts. Results from the pilot were encouraging for the abundance and diversity of moths sampled and the practical feasibility of applying the sampling approach across EU Member States.

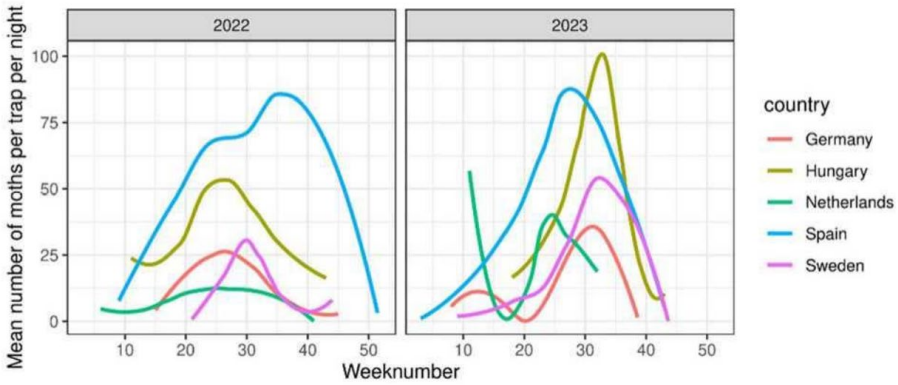
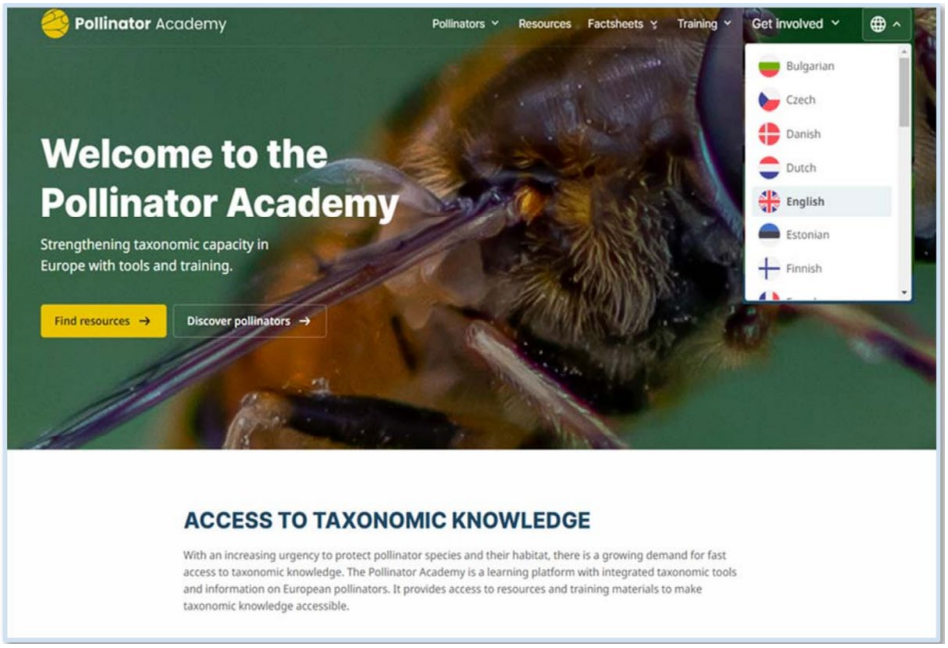


Figure 8. Mean number of moths per night per country in 2022 and 2023.

We developed **standardised guidance for the use of Malaise traps** and metabarcoding to support pollinator monitoring, and tested Malaise traps in 20 locations (13, 5 and 2 sites in Germany, Hungary and Greece respectively) alongside pan traps. Total insect richness was an order of magnitude lower in pan traps compared to Malaise traps, with ~10-20 taxa and ~400-600 average richness respectively. However, for pollinator richness the two methods were similar, although some species were unique to one or other sampling method. Malaise traps have potential to widen the taxonomic scope of insect sampling within a monitoring scheme and are recommended as a method to complement but not replace pan traps or transects.

The Nature Restoration Regulation requires capacity building and methodological piloting to enable Member States to implement effective monitoring schemes for pollinating insects. The results of the SPRING project have been communicated widely to Member State stakeholders and have contributed directly to the work of the STING expert group reports.



European Butterflies Group

By Mike Prentice

The European Butterflies Group is a balance of Butterfly Conservation UK for those members with a particular interest in European species. The Group works closely with Butterfly Conservation Europe and the Network Partners to provide a skilled volunteer resource with a particular emphasis on surveying for threatened species in Europe. In the period from 2007 to the beginning of 2024 EBG has worked in more than 19 countries as shown on the map below

In 2024 we once again carried out surveys in Romania and Spain. In Romania we organised 2 survey trips to Transylvania to map the distribution of Danube Clouded Yellow *Colias myrmidone.* These trips were organised for the end of May and August to coincide with the normal timing of the two broods of *C. myrmidone*. However, the second brood emerged earlier than normal so our August trip saw fewer numbers than we had hoped or anticipated.

Nevertheless, as well as recording on some known sites we found *myrmidone* on one new site together with other Habitat Directive species Large Copper *Lycaena dispar,* Alcon Blue *Phengaris alcon*, Scarce Large Blue *Phengaris telejus* and Marsh Fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia.* We spent a day on this site with **Professor Laszlo Rakosy** Romania's foremost lepidopterist who will propose the area for a Natura 2000 designation. We propose to visit Romania again in 2025 to continue our work.

In Spain we again sent volunteers to survey in the Sierra Nevada and surrounding area for Nevada Grayling *Pseudochazara williamsi* . Once again the butterfly was found in reasonable numbers in its main stronghold but the surveys that were done in the hope of finding new colonies were unsuccessful. It is proposed to write a Species Action Plan and whilst we are not proposing member surveys in 2025 we will help by financing local volunteers to carry out surveys.

In the Canary Islands concerns had been expressed over the status of La Palma Grayling *Hipparchia tilosi* and whether it had been adversely affected by a large forest fire. An EBG member visited the island and found the species without too much difficulty in various localities. We propose to follow this up with further surveys by a local lepidopterist.

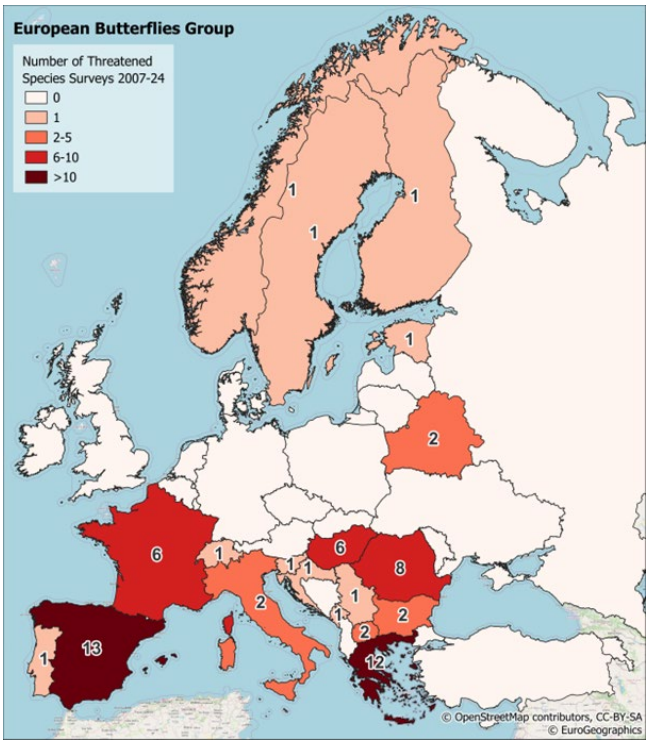


Figure 9. Number of threatened species surveys between 2007-2024.

Our members had witnessed a worrying decline in numbers of Southern Hermit *Chazara prieuri* seen over recent years and rather than rely upon EBG members we decided to fund surveys to be undertaken by a Spanish MSc student. The student visited a total of seventy 10km squares and undertook 143 separate 15minute timed counts. Adults of *C. prieuri* were found in only 10 of the 143 timed counts. The species was only seen in its core area and not in any of its former sites outside the core. The surveys seem to confirm the decline in this species and we have engaged the student to repeat the surveys (with some small changes to methodology and timing) in 2025.

With the imminent publication of the new European Red List with increased numbers of threatened species we anticipate that the need for survey work will increase over the coming years. We have already decided to visit Sardinia in 2025 to survey for Sardinian Blue *Pseudochazara barbagiae*..

Figure 10. Lazlo Rakosy and Mike Prentice in Romania and *Phengaris alcon* eggs on Gentian (right)

Global Butterfly Monitoring

By Holly Mynott (Butterfly Conservation, UK)

Global Butterfly Index

Datasets have been gathered from 23 countries around the world, including those in the European Butterfly Monitoring Scheme and seven others outside of Europe (Australia, Canada, India, Japan, South Korea, St Eustatius, and the USA). Data have been analysed, and a manuscript has been drafted, which will be submitted to academic journals to publish a preliminary Global Butterfly Index describing the state of the world's butterflies.

Butterfly Conservation International

Discussions are underway with experts around the world to begin an organisation currently named Butterfly Conservation International (BCI). BCI intends to become a global body to foster butterfly protection and monitoring. Key elements of its aims are to:

- Expand monitoring efforts, especially where they are most urgently needed;
- Boost capacity building and mutual learning between those areas of the world where knowledge is well established, and those who can gain from existing experience;
- Use the love of butterflies to empower experts and citizens with the potential to communicate the needs of butterflies, nature and people; and,
- through butterflies, to promote nature protection and restoration, and to fight for the expansion of sustainable land use.

Several meetings have been held to discuss the governance structure and principles and recruit members. Experts from Asia, Europe and South America are currently on board. The next steps are to recruit more members before the organisation can launch, particularly from Africa (and other underrepresented areas).

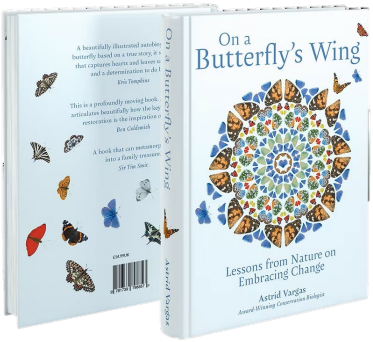
Social media

Our social media following continues to grow steadily and our Facebook page now has nearly 3,300 followers (www.facebook.com/ButterflyConservationEurope). As many of our scientific colleagues are leaving Twitter as it has become more commercial and is losing functionality, we have opened a new account on Bluesky: @europebutterfly.bsky.social. This has grown rapidly and has over 1,000 followers. We are very grateful to Cristina Sevilleja and Martin Warren for running these accounts.

Corporate Sponsorship

We are delighted to report that we have two new Corporate Sponsors: Greenwings and Mariposa Nature Tours who have kindly offered to provide a donation for every butterfly tour they run. You can visit their websites to discover the different tours for 2025.

We are also grateful for a contribution from **Astrid Vargas**, the author of the book On a Butterfly's Wing - Lessons From Nature on Embracing Change, who will donate the royalties from this book to BCE for one year to support butterfly conservation.



If anyone else would like to support the work of BC Europe, or has ideas for fundraising, please can they contact Martin Warren martin.warren@bc-europe.eu

Acknowledgements

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Report Editor: Martin Warren (Advisor to the BC Europe Board)