

**Butterfly Conservation Europe
Activity report 2015**



Butterfly
CONSERVATION EUROPE

Butterfly Conservation Europe Activity Report 2015



Photo: Chris van Swaay

Butterfly Conservation Europe Activity Report 2015



Authors

BCE board on 31 December 2015: Miguel López Munguira (chairman), Martin Warren (vice chairman), Titia Wolterbeek (secretary), Dirk Maes (treasurer), Rudi Verovnik, Martina Šašić, Martin Wiemers

Policy Director: Sue Collins

Advisors to the board: Irma Wynhoff, Josef Settele and Chris van Swaay

Production

Butterfly Conservation Europe, www.bc-europe.eu

P.O. Box 506, NL-6700 AM Wageningen, Netherlands

Preferred citation

Munguira, M., Warren, M.S., Wolterbeek, T., Maes, D., Verovnik, R., Šašić, M., Wiemers, M., Collins, S., Wynhoff, I., Settele, J. & Van Swaay, C.A.M. (2015). Butterfly Conservation Europe. Activity Report 2015. Report VS2016.014, Butterfly Conservation Europe & De Vlinderstichting/Dutch Butterfly Conservation, Wageningen.

April 2016



Some of the BCE board and advisors, Spain, May 2015. From left to right Pilar de Blas, Irma Wynhoff (advisor), Martin Warren (vice-chairman), Miguel Munguira (chairman), Constanti Stefanescu, Martin Wiemers (board member), Sue Collins (policy director) and Chris van Swaay (advisor).

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Alpine Zone Biogeographic Seminar	5
Influencing European policies	7
Conserving endemic butterflies in southern Spain	9
Scarce Fritillary <i>Euphydryas materna</i> in Macedonia.....	11
Social media	12
Partner changes.....	12
European Interests Group (EIG)	13
Summary of main plans for 2016	14

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.

During 2014, the BC Europe Board has met twice, in Granollers (Spain) in May courtesy of Constantí Stefanescu and the Granollers Natural History Museum, and in Laufen (Germany) in December courtesy of ANL, our partner in Bavaria. As in previous years we have committed most of our limited funds (donated by BC-UK and Dutch BC) to contract Sue Collins to continue her important work as European Environmental Policy Advisor (see report below). However, we have also contributed small amounts to support other strategically important work, expanding the monitoring network to new countries and to help the study and conservation of threatened species.

As a network, several of our partners have been able to contribute to the Biogeographic Zone seminars run by the EU. These are crucial opportunities to share ideas about how these regions should be managed to conserve their butterflies and other fauna and flora. BC Europe was pleased to co-ordinate the Alpine seminar held in Laufen in December to help produce guidelines on how to manage the critical grassland habitats found in the Alpine Zone. I would like to thank all those who have

contributed their expertise to these events, which is exactly the type of work our network was established to do.

Back at home in Spain, I have used the beginning of my sabbatical course to help develop the growing butterfly monitoring network in Spain as well as finish the MAVA project on endangered endemic Spanish butterflies.

One of the important future developments would be expanding the network of countries that run a butterfly monitoring scheme. This year has been crucial because some important new countries have started or are planning new schemes: Austria, Denmark, Hungary, Italy and southern Belgium. We look forward to more new countries joining in with monitoring during 2016 and this is certainly a reason for hope as monitoring is crucially related to BCE's objectives and very important for butterfly conservation.

I wish you all a very successful year.

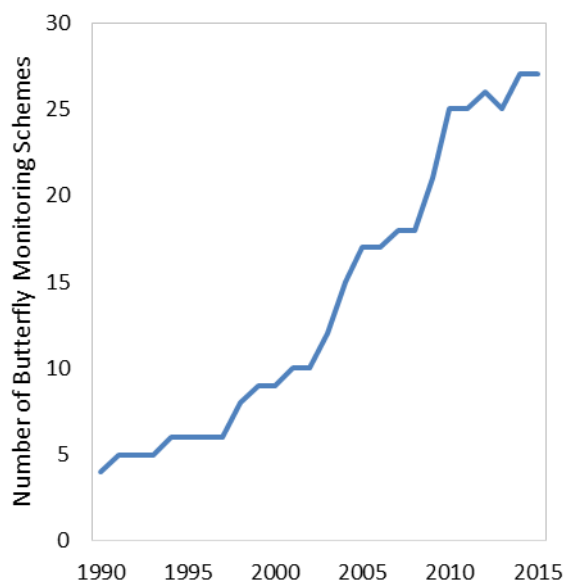
Miguel Munguira
Chair BC Europe

Developing Butterflies as Indicators

Contributed by Martin Warren

A key objective of BC Europe is to develop the monitoring network across Europe. During the year, we have provided advice and small amounts of funds to help develop monitoring in Spain and Romania. We have also worked with the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) in the UK to develop a pan European Monitoring Scheme abbreviated to eBMS. We submitted a major funding bid to MAVA and await the result. Our plans have three elements:

- 1) Construct a pan European database of monitoring data and online data entry capability, with the aim of producing representative European trends of butterflies;
- 2) Work with BCE partners to develop monitoring in countries with no current schemes; and
- 3) Produce indicator reports on woodland and other habitats reports and use these



Number of Butterfly Monitoring Schemes in Europe.

was turned down so we are pursuing other possibilities to get the work done.

In the meantime, we will carry on this work at a slower pace using our own limited resources. During the year, several countries without schemes have approached us to start one and we are providing what help we can. We are very keen to have discussions with any other country wishing to develop a scheme, or even start one or two transects. CEH have found funds to develop the UK Transect Walker online system to cover other countries starting in April. Of course we only want this to be used by new schemes who do not have their own national systems.

Another key building block to create a pan-European database is to have a formal agreement with countries contributing data. This explains the terms and conditions on which data are held and shared to protect the intellectual property of each individual scheme. BCE set up a small working party including co-ordinators of the larger European schemes to consider the topic. Thanks to David Roy at CEH we have worked up a draft agreement that will enable partners to share data. The principal is that contributing schemes retain all ownership rights to their collected data and are consulted each time the data is requested for use by one of the other contributing partners. The topic will be discussed further at a special day meeting ahead of the Future of Butterflies conference to be held in Wageningen during March 2016. Further details from Chris van Swaay chris.vanswaay@vlinderstichting.nl

Alpine Zone Biogeographic Seminar

Report by Sue Collins and Matthias Dolek

At the first Alpine Biogeographic Seminar held in Graz during 2013, one of the priorities of those attending was to develop guidelines for managing Alpine grassland for butterflies and other insects. BC Europe offered to organise the event and thanks to the support of Mark Snethlage of the European Commission for Nature Conservation (ECNC) it was held in Laufen (Germany) during December 2015.

Fifty-eight experts and practitioners from 16 European countries gathered in Laufen to exchange knowledge and experience of challenges, issues and solutions to the management and conservation of grasslands and their characteristic invertebrates in the Alpine Biogeographical region across Europe. The meeting was hosted by ANL and chaired by BCE.

Participants noted with concern the unfavourable Conservation Status of most Alpine grasslands and the butterflies dependent on them. They made several

recommendations on how to halt the losses in biodiversity and achieve some recovery. They emphasised it is essential to prevent further intensification and abandonment and invest in recovery.

Recommendations included increasing the amount of money available to farmers to manage Alpine meadows extensively; a strengthening of monitoring and of implementation of the EU Habitats Directive, together with an increase in its funding; and fuller recognition of the importance of semi-natural grasslands for their biodiversity, cultural and historical significance and ecosystem services of carbon sequestration, pollination and medicinal plants they provide.

Full details and copies of all the presentations can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/platform/events/events-upcoming/242_alpine_grasslands_workshop_142_results_en.htm



Participants to the Alpine Zone Biogeographic Seminar.

Mediterranean Red List

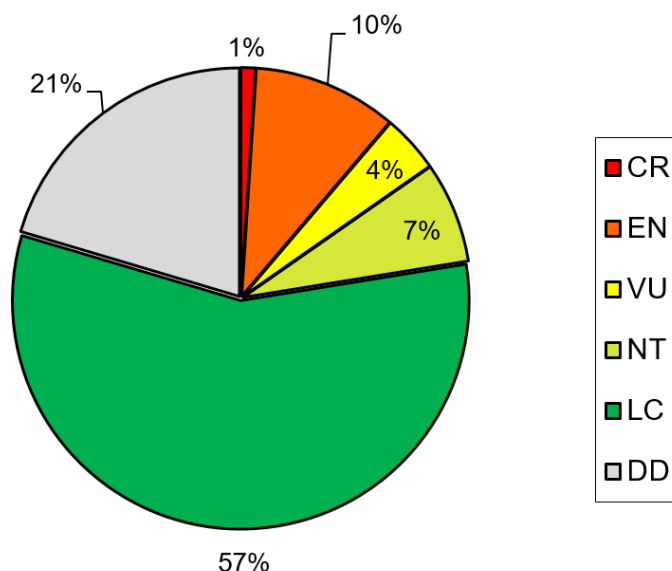
Report by Chris van Swaay

BC Europe has played an active role in the Red List of Mediterranean Butterflies. Although the report is not finished yet, all species assessments are now available on the IUCN Red List website <http://www.iucnredlist.org/initiatives/mediterranean>.

Around 4.5% of the 426 applicable species were found to be threatened with extinction (Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable) in the region. Of these, 0.5 % (2 species) are listed as Critically Endangered (CR), which is the highest category of threat. A total of 3% (13 species) are listed as Endangered (EN), 0.9% (4 species) are listed as Vulnerable (VU). From the Mediterranean

endemic butterflies (which occur nowhere else in the world), 22% are threatened or near threatened. Of a further 21% there is not enough knowledge for an assessment (Data Deficient).

The status of these species must be monitored particularly closely and, crucially, management and recovery plans should be implemented without delay. Further research and monitoring should also be conducted to better understand species' biology, threats and conservation needs. A further 1.9 % (8 species) of these species, are listed as Near Threatened (NT), suggesting that these species need to be monitored in case their conservation status becomes more serious.



Red List status of butterflies endemic to the Mediterranean region.

Influencing European policies

Report by Sue Collins, European Policy Advisor, BC Europe

Butterfly Monitoring and Indicators

I developed an outline of a project to stimulate transect butterfly monitoring schemes in an additional 13 EU Member States (MS), by 2020; create a database of records and support regular compilation and reporting of the European Grassland and other butterfly indicators. I explored the possibility of EU funding for this; researched the priorities of the MAVA Foundation; and worked with Martin Warren to develop a bid.

Increasing the contribution of agriculture to Lepidoptera recovery

I continued to highlight the importance of extensive management of semi-natural grassland, to butterflies, in meetings with DG Agriculture, DG Environment and EU MS Nature policy representatives. My analysis of genuine changes in Conservation Status of Habitats Directive listed grassland butterflies, and the habitats they depend on, show they are almost all in 'Unfavourable – Bad' or 'Unfavourable – Inadequate' status and some have deteriorated since the last reporting round. It is clear from the EEA's analysis of reports from MS that agriculture continues to pose the most significant threat to sustaining nature and changes in practice are needed to secure some recovery.

The EU State of Nature Report and the Mid Term Review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy reported no progress towards target 3, which calls for an increase in the contribution of agriculture to biodiversity. The EU Environment Council in December 2015 therefore called upon the "Commission to fully evaluate the effects of the

implementation of the CAP and its subsidies on biodiversity in the future agricultural policy reviews and to identify, together with the Member States, concrete solutions to ensuring adequate integration of biodiversity in the further development of the CAP and its financial instruments."

Sustaining the EU Habitats Directive

I submitted a response for BCE, to the Stakeholder Consultation on the EU "Fitness Check" and supported the NGO consortium raising awareness of the importance of the Directive and the NGO conclusion that now is not the right time to consider amendments to the Annexes. The priority now is better implementation, enforcement, sectoral integration and financing. The EU Parliament recently voted by an overwhelming majority not to amend the Directives. Commission conclusions on the Directive's "Fitness" are expected in 2016.

Protected Areas and Lepidoptera

I liaised with BCE partners to ensure the requirements of Lepidoptera were considered in both EU Biogeographic zone Natura 2000 management Seminars and those Emerald Seminars being set up for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and for Russia and Ukraine.

Policy Influencing with the European Habitats Forum (EHF)

I continued as Vice Chair of EHF and led the Working Group developing thinking on Green Infrastructure (GI), especially developing a strategic network of better connected habitat mosaics across Europe (TEN-G). I helped finalise a Brief for EU MS Water Directors

highlighting good practice on integrating GI in water management and increasing investment in such approaches. I contributed to debates with DG Environment and in the Coordination Group on Biodiversity and Nature (CGBN) with EU MS, on improving implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy and making more progress to deliver its targets.

Complaints to the EU

I supported BCE's partner to submit a complaint to the EU about failure to protect the highly threatened *Coenonympha oedippus* in Natura 2000 sites in Slovenia; and liaised with Baltic colleagues to brief DG Environment about the status of *Capricornia boisduvalian* and threats to its last Finnish population.



Butterfly Conservation Europe supported BCE's partner to submit a complaint to the EU about failure to protect the highly threatened *Coenonympha oedippus* in Natura 2000 sites in Slovenia. Photo: Kars Veling

Conserving endemic butterflies in southern Spain

Report by Miguel Munguira

We have now concluded this important project to produce species recovery plans for four species that are endangered and endemic to Spain: *Euchloe bazae*, *Agriades zullichi*, *Polyommatus violetae* and *P. golgus*. The four recovery plans were presented during a Workshop in Granada (24 June 2015) in which collaborators with the project met the main stakeholders who will help to implement the conservation measures. In December 2015 the revised pdfs of the plans were sent in Spanish and English versions to collaborators and stakeholders. The documents of the four plans can be downloaded from the BCE website. During the workshop we also presented the leaflets that will be delivered to the visitors' centres of Natural and National Parks as part of a public awareness campaign.

The project has been highly successful in completing the knowledge we have of the

four species. Fieldwork took place between 2012 and 2014 and involved 112 visits to locations covering the whole range of the four species. Distribution data improved for two of the species and for *E. bazae* its known range increased by 36%. Habitat models were worked out for three of the four species resulting in wider areas than the current distributions, but geographically close to them. A compilation of biological and ecological data was also made and some new data (i.e. a new foodplant for *P. violetae*) was added to previous knowledge. The threats that were detected for the habitat of the four species were mainly the following: abandonment for *E. bazae* and *P. violetae* (28% and 31% of the sites respectively), trampling for *A. zullichi* (27%) and overgrazing for *P. golgus* (19% of the populations).



Extreme lepidopterology: fieldwork in Sierra Nevada above 3,000 m to survey *Agriades zullichi* larvae.

Based on the information obtained during fieldwork we suggested recovery measures for the four species, that were discussed with park officers and conservation experts of the areas involved. These included legislation (species protection for *E. bazae* and protected areas for *P. golgus* and *P. violetae*), specific actions, research and public awareness. Specific actions are mainly oriented towards the habitat and include: precautionary measures (limit new developments, pine plantations and crops), enhance extensive grazing and prevent overgrazing, reduce the effect of trampling by visitors to mountain areas, captive breeding, and woodland and scrub clearing of abandoned areas and pine plantations.

Climate change will have an important negative effect upon the populations of *A. zullichi* and *P. golgus* and mitigation actions have been planned, although the global aspects of this threatening factor need to be taken into account.

We are very grateful to MAVA Foundation pour la Nature for funding this project that has generated important work for the conservation of the four species and synergies between participants from different institutions interested in preserving the Spanish butterfly fauna.



Participants of the project Workshop that took place in Granada in June 2015 to present the Species Recovery Plans to stakeholders and project collaborators.

Scarce Fritillary *Euphydryas maturna* in Macedonia

Report by Rudi Verovnik

The Scarce Fritillary *Euphydryas maturna* reaches its southern limit of distribution in the north-western part of Macedonia and has been always considered rare and threatened in the country. Based on previous records from the region and presence of potentially suitable habitat, additional sites have been surveyed for the species in Stogovo Mts. region by ENTOMAK members acting upon a BCE small grant for this project.

Despite a late start *E. maturna* was discovered at two new sites in the Garska River valley. The habitat of the species is however under threat due to dam construction for a small hydroelectric power plant 'Boskov Most'. Leaflets presenting the butterfly diversity and in particularly the species of conservation

concern of the Stogovo Mts. were disseminated among the villagers to raise public awareness.

In addition, faunistic studies showed that the butterfly fauna of Stogovo Mts is extremely diverse with a total of 120 species observed. Among these several species are of conservation concern (e.g. *Phengaris arion*, *Parnassius apollo*, *Parnassius mnemosyne*, *Euphydryas aurinia*) providing ample evidence of the conservation value of this region. Based on these results the Stogovo Mts. should be considered for inclusion to the list of Prime Butterfly areas of Macedonia and all the necessary information is provided in the final report.



The Scarce Fritillary (Euphydryas maturna) is a threatened butterfly in Europe, and also mentioned on the annexes of the Habitats Directive.

Social media

Social media are becoming more and more important to communicate with our fellow Europeans. BCE continues to be active on Facebook and in 2015 the number of 'Likes' almost doubled from 908 to 1,750. Our

Twitter following has also grown from 664 to 1,050. We are very grateful to Chris van Swaay, Dirk Maes, Sophie Lake and Sue Collins for running these accounts.



The number of 'Likes' on Facebook for BCE almost doubled in 2015.

Partner changes

We are pleased to welcome a new Network Partner for Luxembourg, the Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology (LIST) at the Environment Research and Innovation Dept (ERIN), who have replaced the Natural History Museum by mutual agreement. Xavier Mesdagh is their representative who

runs the Luxembourg Butterfly Monitoring Scheme. Our partner in Armenia has also changed to Towards Sustainable Ecosystems (TSE) which runs a website Butterfly Conservation Armenia. This replaces the American University of Armenia, though Karen Aghababayan remains the main contact.

European Interests Group (EIG)

Report contributed by Simon Spencer cerisyi@btinternet.com

Butterfly Conservation's European Interests Group now has over 400 members and a network of contacts all over Europe. Our members contribute records to local recorders and various local atlases. We specialize in self-funded surveys of rare species throughout Europe but particularly in countries without a network of local butterfly enthusiasts. In 2015 we had a successful project in Romania surveying for *Colias myrmidone* and our results contributed to the notification of some of these sites as SCI. In 2016 we are surveying for *P. hespericus* in the Montes Universales in Spain and are returning to the Tsoumerka National Park in Greece. For 2017 we are planning a big project in Greece in conjunction with local butterfly experts to promote butterfly recording and monitoring particularly in National Parks.

The EIG newsletter is circulated widely twice a year (contact us via the website www.bc-

eig.org.uk if you wish to receive a copy). Our website has links to a comprehensive list of butterfly sites in Europe and elsewhere and information on where to go to see butterflies in many countries in Europe. We also provide an ID service for photographs. From 2016 we will be offering small travel bursaries to survey for rare butterflies – details on the EIG website. This is partly funded by sales of an EIG calendar which is made using photos from a photographic competition.

EIG welcomes enquiries from BCE partners requiring assistance with butterfly surveys in Europe and usually manages to find members who can fly out and assist. This is most useful in those parts of Europe with rare and endangered species as well as a long list of species but without a network of local butterfly enthusiasts.



In 2015 EIG had a successful project in Romania surveying for *Colias myrmidone*. Photo: Martin Davies.

Summary of main plans for 2016

Continue to work with colleagues in the European Habitats Forum to help implement the EU Biodiversity Strategy, influence EU policies, and promote HNV farming and the role of butterflies as indicators.

Continue to press the EU for regular funding to produce a suite of butterfly indicators

Develop a pan European Monitoring Database with CEH

Continue to support butterfly monitoring in countries with no schemes, or fledgling schemes

Continue to input into the EU Biogeographical Zone process, especially those covering the Alps and Mediterranean.