



Activity report for 2009

Introduction

It is my pleasure to take over writing the introduction of this Activity Report, having taken over as Chairman since December 2008. I am grateful to my predecessor, Martin Warren, for his hard work as first Chairman and am delighted that he has agreed to stay on the Board as Vice Chairman. I am also pleased to welcome a new member to the Board, Dr Miguel Munguira, an expert in Mediterranean species based at the Autonoma University of Madrid.

Our main focus during the year has been on the production of a new Red List of European butterflies. The project is run with IUCN and makes good use of our network of 37 organisations from 34 countries. This type of project was exactly why we formed the network back in 2004. We held our second meeting of Network Partners in Laufen in southern Germany during January, once again generously hosted by ANL.

A full list of partners and links to their websites is given on the BC Europe website: website www.bc-europe.org

Dr Josef Settele

Chairman, Butterfly Conservation Europe

Governance

BC Europe continues to be run by a small governing board comprising: Dr Josef Settele (chairman), Dr Martin Warren (Vice Chairman), Dr Theo Verstrael (Secretary), Dr Dirk Maes (Treasurer), Martina Sasic, Dr Rudi Verovnik, Dr Miguel Munguira. The Board appointed a new advisor during the year, Dr Martin Wiemers, an expert in Lepidoptera taxonomy. He joins our three existing advisers: Chris van Swaay (General adviser) Irma Wynhoff (General adviser) and Sue Collins (European Policy Adviser). The Board has met twice during the year and has corresponded regularly between meetings by email and telephone.

Second meeting of partners

The second meeting of BC Europe partners was held at Laufen in January 2009. The meeting was split into two parts: the first dealing with the new draft Red List of European butterflies; the second dealing with BC Europe plans and activities. We are extremely grateful to IUCN for providing funds for part of the meeting and to ANL, the Bayerische Akademie für Naturschutz und Landschaftspflege, for hosting the meeting and providing funds to help cover the costs of delegates.

Projects

Numerous projects have been started under the BC Europe umbrella or involve the organisation in an advisory capacity:

Red List of European butterflies.

This project is run under a contract with IUCN, who are funded as part of a bigger project to update red lists on key taxa, funded by the EU. The project makes full use of the amazing

expertise amongst BC Partners who between them kindly provided new trend data on butterflies in almost every European country. A new taxonomic group was formed to develop a definitive list of European species, making use of the latest genetic data. The data submitted were analysed by Chris van Swaay at Dutch BC and the results discussed at a meeting of Partners in Laufen in January 2009. Working groups examined results on a regional basis and determined what best to do with borderline species or species where good data were not available. The Red List was revised in light of these findings in discussion with experts at IUCN who have worked on other taxa.

Although there are some shortcomings of the Red List criteria when applied to invertebrates, we believe we have come up with a very sensible Red List that identifies Europe's most threatened species. We have also identified a list of Near Threatened species that are high priorities for conservation action and research. The results will be published online on the IUCN website early in 2010, along with beautiful photographs and accounts of every species. This will be an extremely valuable resource for the conservation of European butterflies in coming years.

We would like to thank all the partners who contributed to this important project.

Update of the European Butterfly Indicators

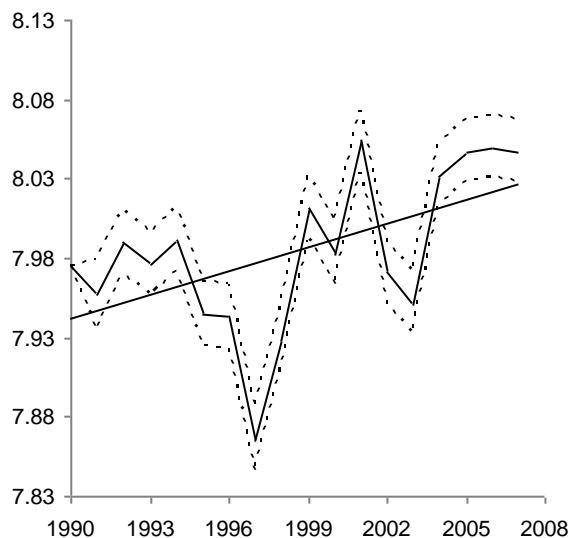
Chris van Swaay continued to represent BC Europe on the Streamlining European Biodiversity Indicators (SEBI 2010) group run by the EU Topic Centre on Nature Conservation. The aim is to develop a suite of indicators that will assess progress towards the EU target of halting biodiversity loss by 2010. We now have an extensive network of butterfly monitoring schemes across Europe that is capable of generating annual trends on butterflies in different habitats. These have been ranked equal with birds as being immediately available to produce pan European trends to assess trends and the impact of EU policies. Last year we successfully updated the Grasslands Indicator and developed a Climate Change Indicator. Our main concern is thus how to fund the collation and production of annual trends. We have raised our concerns with DG Environment in Brussels and remain hopeful that funds will be made available in future years.



Butterfly Monitoring Schemes (BMS) in Europe

Climate Change Indicator

In association with Dutch BC, we produced a report, financed by the European Environment Agency, to investigate the possibility of building a European Butterfly Climate Change Indicator. It uses the annual change of the Community Temperature Index (CTI). An increase in CTI would reflect butterfly communities becoming increasingly composed of species associated with warmer temperatures. The speed of increase shows how fast butterfly communities adapt. The results show a clear upward trend over the 18 years from 1990 to 2007, with an annual change in the CTI of 0.0079 C, equivalent to a 97.3 ±8.4 km northward shift in the composition of butterfly communities.



Climate Change Indicator

The community temperature index (CTI) suggest that the composition of butterfly communities has shifted 97 km north in 18 years

Climatic Risk Atlas of European Butterflies

We have continued to promote the worrying findings of last years Climatic Risk Atlas and to work with our partners to try to mitigate the damaging impacts of climate change. We produced a short summary report on the main findings and distributed this widely to interested parties.

Capacity building in Turkey

The project started this year, funded under the Dutch BBI Matra programme. One of the first initiatives was the production of a Red List of Butterflies in Turkey, where BCE was closely involved. It is led by the BCE partner in Turkey, Doga Koruma Merkezi.

Butterfly Conservation (UK) volunteers

The European Interest Group of Butterfly Conservation (UK) was established in 2006 to co-ordinate the activities of BC Members in Europe and support the work of BC Europe. During 2009, two highly successful study trips were run to Mount Chelmos in the Greek Peloponnese and Aggtelek and Bukk National Parks in Hungary.

Reports of the trips are given on: www.bc-eig.org.uk. Further trips are planned for 2009 and details can be obtained from Simon Spencer cerisyi@btinternet.com.

Outreach and citizen science projects

Several Network Partners ran such projects during 2009 to raise awareness of butterflies and moths, to help educate the public, and broaden public participation in biological recording. Many Partners supported European Moth Night, which ran from 21-25 May 2009. Events were held at 713 locations and gathered over 24,000 species records from 28 countries. See www.lepidoptera.fw.hu. Other examples are given below.

In the UK, Butterfly Conservation runs a major Moths Count project with funding from the national Lottery and other agencies. It includes a series of over 30 public events and a popular recording scheme known as Garden Moths Count. Over 7 million moth records have already been gathered from thousands of moth recorders and the database is expected soon to contain over 15 million records. A Garden Moths Count aimed at public participation was run from 20-28 June. Full details are available on www.mothscount.org



Garden Moths Count in the UK focussed on the Peppered Moth *Biston betularia*. The moth has been dubbed Darwin's moth because it demonstrated rapid evolution of a dark melanic form during the industrial revolution that was well camouflaged on soot-covered bark. The survey found that the percentage of this form has now dropped to 8%. Red dots show sites where present, blue dots unrecorded.

Butterfly Conservation (UK) also runs a popular recording scheme called Butterflies for the New Millennium that gathers c. 340,000 records p.a. from over 10,000 recorders. Details are made public through the National Biodiversity Network Gateway www.searchnbn.net. It also co-ordinates the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme which gathers data from over 800 sites using 1,000 recorders. Full details are on www.ukbms.org.uk

In the Netherlands, Dutch Butterfly Conservation (De Vlinderstichting) collected more than 250,000 records of butterflies and moths, and held a Dutch Butterfly Day on 14 February 2009, attended by over 500 people. They also run the Dutch Butterfly Monitoring Scheme at more than 700 locations, involving 800 recorders and gathering 200,000 records pa. They also ran a National Moth Night on 7 September 2007 at more than 100 sites open to the public.

EU Action Plan on Danube Clouded Yellow

The Danube Clouded Yellow *Colias myrmidone* is one of the most endangered butterflies in Europe, having become extinct in many countries over the last 2 decades and now probably confined to a few small regions in Romania. We are working with the EU on a voluntary basis to help produce a Species Action Plan that will help guide urgent conservation action.

Bioscore

This project runs from 2006-9. Its aim is to develop a tool for monitoring progress in achieving the EU target to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010 and for linking pressures from policy sectors to the (change in the) state of biodiversity as measured by the presence and abundance of individual species. The tool will be made freely accessible on the Internet. BC Europe is an associate partner in the project. The main contact is Dirk Maes dirk.maes@inbo.be. Website: www.ecnc.nl/StateOfEuropeanNatur/Bioscore

Alarm

This project lasted from 2004-9. Its aims were to develop an integrated large-scale risk assessment for biodiversity as well as terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems as a part of environmental risk assessment, linking these with factors such as climate change and socio-

economic risk indicators to derive outcome-oriented policy measures in the field of biodiversity preservation. BC Europe is an associate partner in the project and in charge of the butterfly elements of the projects Focal Site Network, where standard butterfly transects are conducted. The main BCE contact and overall project coordinator is Josef Settele Josef.Settele@ufz.de website: www.alarmproject.net/alarm

CLIMIT (CLimate change impacts on Insects and their MITigation)

This new project will investigate the impact of climate change on insects across Europe and is funded under the EU Sixth Framework programme. It is led by Oxford University, UK, and UFZ, Germany with BC Europe as a partner. The main BCE contact and overall project coordinator is Josef Settele Josef.Settele@ufz.de. See also: www.eurobiodiversa.org

STEP: Status and Trends of European Pollinators

This is another new research project to study the role of European pollinators and assess their status and trends. It is led by Dr Simon Potts of Reading University, again with BC Europe as a partner.

Policy work

BC Europe has continued to make substantial contributions to policy-making within Europe thanks to the voluntary work of Sue Collins, European Policy Advisor: IColl49@aol.com. We have contributed knowledge and advice about butterflies and moths to inform policy development and implementation at EU level, both directly to EU officials and in collaboration with European Networks such as the European Habitats Forum.

We have worked with EHF to lobby for the setting of a new target to halt the loss of biodiversity and develop a long term vision for biodiversity to 2050. We attended the EU Nature Directors meeting in Sweden in October to urge for the adoption of a strong post 2010 target. Biodiversity conservation is a test of sustainable development and losses of biodiversity are an indicator of the wider stresses on the planet. We believe that healthy ecosystems underpin economic and social welfare.

We led on a statement from EHF partners to lobby the EU delegation at the Copenhagen climate change talks to emphasise that we cannot solve the climate crisis without supporting the recovery of biodiversity and ensuring resilient ecosystems at the same time. We believe that this needs to go hand in hand with significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

We are continuing to work with RSPB and Birdlife International to improve the protection and recovery of butterflies and moths as well as other elements of biodiversity through reform of the Common Agriculture. Three priorities for reform are:

- 1) To increase the funding, extent and effectiveness of agri-environment schemes.
- 2) To make use of CAP "envelope" monies to support farming systems which deliver benefits for biodiversity.
- 3) To re-direct Less Favoured Area support to High Nature Value (HNV) farming (e.g. extensive livestock systems which are important for biodiversity).

Another key area of work has been to promote the importance of butterflies as indicators. We are delighted that the Grassland Butterfly Indicator has been accepted as one of the indicators for the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Communication. The results of butterfly monitoring and the publication of the grassland indicator demonstrate the pressing need for better implementation of existing commitments to integrate environmental protection into agriculture policy as well as further agricultural reform. We strongly advocate better protection of permanent pasture (especially semi-natural grassland) through proper enforcement of cross compliance and Environmental Impact Regulations.

We are discussing a new collaboration with the European Forum for Nature Conservation and Pastoralism and have held meetings with Guy Beaufort and Gwynne Jones focusing

most of their effort on HNV grasslands. We are considering a joint conference on the subject and a major campaign to conserve HNV grasslands, which are a key habitat for Lepidoptera.

Our priorities for the coming year are:

- i) to lobby for an ambitious post 2010 target and policy for biodiversity
- ii) to press DG Environment on funding for butterfly indicator updating and development
- iii) to encourage DG Agriculture to use the Grassland Butterfly Indicator as a measure of effectiveness of agriculture policy and reform
- iv) to continue to support the Countdown 2010 process to promote intensified action to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010 and to put in place an effective follow on campaign.

Funding

We still have limited funding to run the organisation and most costs have so far been borne by the Board member organisations. However, we urgently need to expand our activities and it is critical that we secure funds. Unfortunately, our application for core funding from the EU failed due to a technicality but we applied again for 2009. We are also exploring some other funding possibilities.

We have raised funds through our Dutch partner (Dutch Butterfly Conservation) to update the European Grassland Butterfly Indicator and applied for funds under the BBI-Matra programme of the Dutch Ministry for the Environment for capacity building project in Serbia.

References and selected publications by Butterfly Conservation Europe and its partners.

Settele, J., Shreeve, T. G., Konvicka, M. & Van Dyck, H. (Eds). *Ecology of butterflies in Europe*. pp 322-338. Cambridge University Press.

Van Swaay, C.A.M., Van Strien, A.J., Julliard, R., Schweiger, O., Brereton, T., Heliölä, J., Kuussaari, M., Roy, D., Stefanescu, C., Warren, M.S. & Settele, J. (2008). *Developing a methodology for a European Butterfly Climate Change Indicator*. Report VS2008.040, De Vlinderstichting, Wageningen.

Van Swaay, C. A. M., Maes, D. & Warren, M. S. (2009). Conservation status of European butterflies. In: Settele, J., Shreeve, T. G., Konvicka, M. & Van Dyck, H. (Eds). *Ecology of butterflies in Europe*. pp 322-338. Cambridge University Press.

Report compiled by
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www.bc-europe.org