



2nd International Butterfly and Moth Conservation Camp for Students, Young Scientists, and Enthusiasts

Place: Kercaszomor, Őrség National Park (Western Hungary)

Date: 26th July - 1st August 2012

Main target species: THE FOUR EUROPEAN LARGE BLUES (*Maculinea* spp.)

Organizer: Hungarian Natural Heritage Trust, Kercaszomor, Hungary

Introduction: In May 2011 the first butterfly and moth conservation camp was organized by the Hungarian Natural Heritage Trust in Western Hungary with great success. Over 30 participants from all over Europe attended the camp with keen interest on the unique Lepidoptera fauna of the area. Last year two butterfly species of community importance were in the focus of interest of the practical methods, viz. **Clouded Apollo** (*Parnassius mnemosyne*) and **Marsh Fritillary** (*Euphydryas aurinia*). Mark-release-recaptures were performed by camp-participants to evaluate e.g. size and behaviour of the local populations. Besides, participants were directly involved in a butterfly mapping project in the Őrség National Park, where the intention was to improve determination skills and to visit different habitats and collect important distribution data of all butterfly species at the same time. Conservation management often is hard work but essential for supporting Lepidoptera, and everybody did a great job in this category, indeed. After a hard day's work local, traditional Hungarian dishes were served followed by relaxing and attraction of moths to light in the evening. For further information and impressions of last year's camp please visit the following link: http://www.eucan.org.uk/docs/news/Butterfly_Camp_Jess_article_lores.pdf. In 2012 we decided to organize this semi-formal symposium-training-holiday again, offering a great opportunity for people interested in Lepidoptera and their conservation, to gain insight into butterfly ecology, to practice methods of survey, and to help with conservation management of land managed by the trust. We even extended the length of the camp.

Butterfly ecology: In July 2012 the practical, ecological survey methods will be carried out on Large Blues (*Maculinea* spp.). In the area all four European Large Blues are known to be present and they are on the wing simultaneously. **Dusky Large Blue** (*Maculinea nausithous*) and the **Scarce Large Blue** (*Maculinea teleius*) are the most abundant representatives of the Large Blues in the region with one of the largest existing populations within Europe. We plan to carry out mark-release-recapture studies on these two species of high conservation relevance (NATURA 2000 species) to have a good estimation of the population size in Kercaszomor. The third species occurring in the area is **Alcon Blue** (*Maculinea alcon*). Its foodplant (*Gentiana pneumonanthe*) grows on the land of the trust and the Alcon Blues use these plant individuals regularly for egg deposition. The white eggs are easy to locate on the flowering plants and even after hatching the empty egg-cases remain for several weeks on the hosts. Thus we want to perform egg counts and measure plant characteristics other environmental parameters) to elucidate hostplant selection by ovipositing females.

Butterfly diversity: The occurrence of **104 butterfly species** in the National Park area is known, of which several are of high conservation priority. Supplementary to the studies on Large Blue butterflies we want to give all participants the possibility to see other rarities and to improve identification skills. Therefore we are planning one day for the visit of different habitat types in the area. Some examples of species we expect to see in late July: **Large Copper** – *Lycaena dispar*, **Large Chequered Skipper** – *Heteropterus morpheus*, **Purple Emperor** – *Apatura iris*, **Lesser Purple Emperor** – *A. ilia*, **Common Glider** – *Neptis sappho*.

Moth fauna: The National Park is home of a highly diverse moth fauna, which we will make accessible to you by setting up light sources for their attraction. The moth diversity in general is more than ten times higher than that of butterflies, accordingly they play a very important role in functioning ecosystems. During the evenings you will have the opportunity to experience how fascinating and manifold moths are and practice determination on species level.

Implementation of conservation management work: In 2011 the Hungarian Natural Heritage Trust cleared naturally forested areas, which were previously managed as hay meadows. With the clearance of wood and shrubland we expand suitable habitats of endangered grassland butterflies and link up formerly isolated grassland fragments to form a healthy mosaic-type habitat structure in the Kerca Valley. It is obvious, that without management these newly created open habitats will turn back into scrub, so during the camp, we decided to use the participants' help in cutting and removing tall turf weed and coppices of shrubs from the "new meadows". Besides the work, the camp participants can look into practical management of high nature value areas and learn about dynamism of vegetation and butterfly fauna.

Lectures: We plan to invite internationally recognized butterfly and moth conservation experts and landscape ecologists. A representative from the Órség National Park will give an introductory lecture about the Park.

Accommodation: There are three different types of accommodation available to Camp participants:

1. Local guesthouse apartments. Two or three people would normally share the rooms and bathrooms of the guesthouse. A maximum of thirty individuals can be hosted in this way.
2. The youth guesthouse. This facility can host eight persons in four-bedded rooms (bathroom in each room). A maximum of eight individuals can be accommodated.
3. The cheapest accommodation is camping where only a basic fee will apply. The participants who wish to camp are required to bring their own equipment. Indoor toilets and shower baths are available for free at the camp site.

Fees: Two types of fee apply to the Camp; one is for guesthouse accommodation, the other is for campers. Registration and food fee will be applied for both. The fee also includes equipment for the survey activities and transportation during your stay (**Important:** Free pickups are only feasible from close stations; i.e. max. 20-30 km from Kercaszomor).

With accommodation

Registration	30 €
Accommodation	150 €
Meals and transport	150 €
Total	330 €

Campers

Registration	30 €
Accommodation	60 €
Meals and transport	150 €
Total	240 €

Meals include breakfast and dinner; for lunch you might prepare sandwiches (also included in the price). After registration a deposit of 50 € via bank transfer will arise (**not refundable in any case of cancellation**). The remaining sum has to be paid in cash during the camp or before with bank transfer.

Volunteer opportunity: The Hungarian Natural Heritage Trust is also looking for one or more of young people, who would like to spend more time in Kercaszomor village helping our activities. We need someone, who can work hard with habitat management (including brush-cutter, fork etc.) but will be able to help us organising the camp and/or work on mark-release-recapture of *Maculinea*. Volunteers can join us from May to the end of August at least for two weeks. Volunteers are expected to cover their costs, accommodation will be provided at a low cost (approx 100 euro/month).

The Hungarian Natural Heritage Trust welcomes any additional support from donors or sending organisations as this camp would be feasible only if we would increase the price seriously.

If you are interested in participating, please, do not hesitate to contact us:

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Further information will also be published on the Facebook page of the event:

<http://www.facebook.com/events/238580402823874/>

