

**Butterfly Conservation Europe
Activity report 2014**



Butterfly
CONSERVATION EUROPE

Butterfly Conservation Europe Activity Report 2014



Photo: Chris van Swaay

Butterfly Conservation Europe Activity Report 2014



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January 2015



BCE board and advisors, Laufen, December 2014. From left to right Josef Settele, Martin Wiemers, Irma Wynhoff, Miguel Munguira (chairman), Rudi Verovnik, Titia Wolterbeek (secretary), Martina Šašić, Sue Collins (European Policy Advisor), Martin Warren (vice chairman), Dirk Maes (treasurer), Chris van Swaay, Nigel Bourn.

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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.

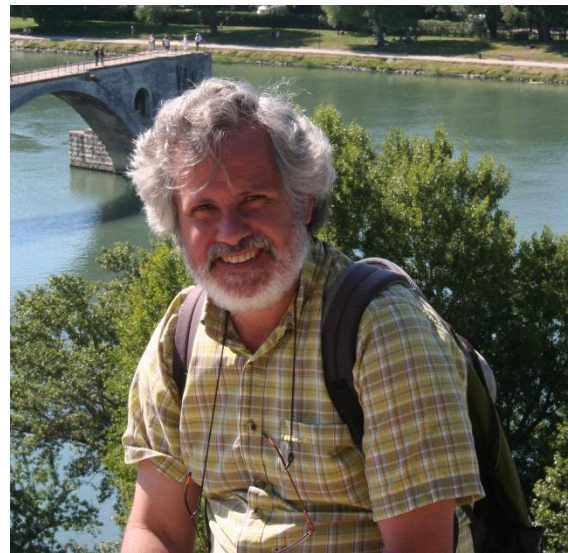
I was delighted to meet many of you at our Fourth meeting of Network Partners in Germany in early December. At the meeting we celebrated the 10th anniversary of BC Europe and the many substantial achievements we have been able to make with your help. We have come a long way in that ten years but we all know we still have a huge amount to do to save butterflies and moths across Europe. We are very positively impressed to see the huge amount of activity developed by our partners throughout Europe, ranging from quite small but valuable actions to very large and complex projects. Everywhere you look you see problems, but we have a far better chance of tackling them if we work together.

During 2014, the BC Europe Board has met twice, in Southampton (UK) in April and in Laufen (Germany) in December. 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, mainly to help expand the monitoring network to new countries and to help with research on species of conservation relevance.

I wish you all a very successful year and hope we can meet again soon.

Miguel Munguira
Chair BC Europe



Fourth meeting of Partners, Laufen 1-3 December 2014

This was a very enjoyable and successful meeting to celebrate the tenth anniversary of BC Europe. It was heart-warming to hear of the excellent progress being made by BCE Partners and to welcome delegates from new partners in Russia and Armenia, both of whom have started monitoring schemes. At the meeting, Chris van Swaay was given a thoroughly well-deserved award from the UK, The Marsh Award for Study and Conservation of European Lepidoptera, for his leading contributions on European butterflies, especially the development of indicators and the European Red List.



Laufen (Germany), as seen from Austria, December 2014.



The Fourth meeting of BC Europe was attended by 50 people from 28 countries.

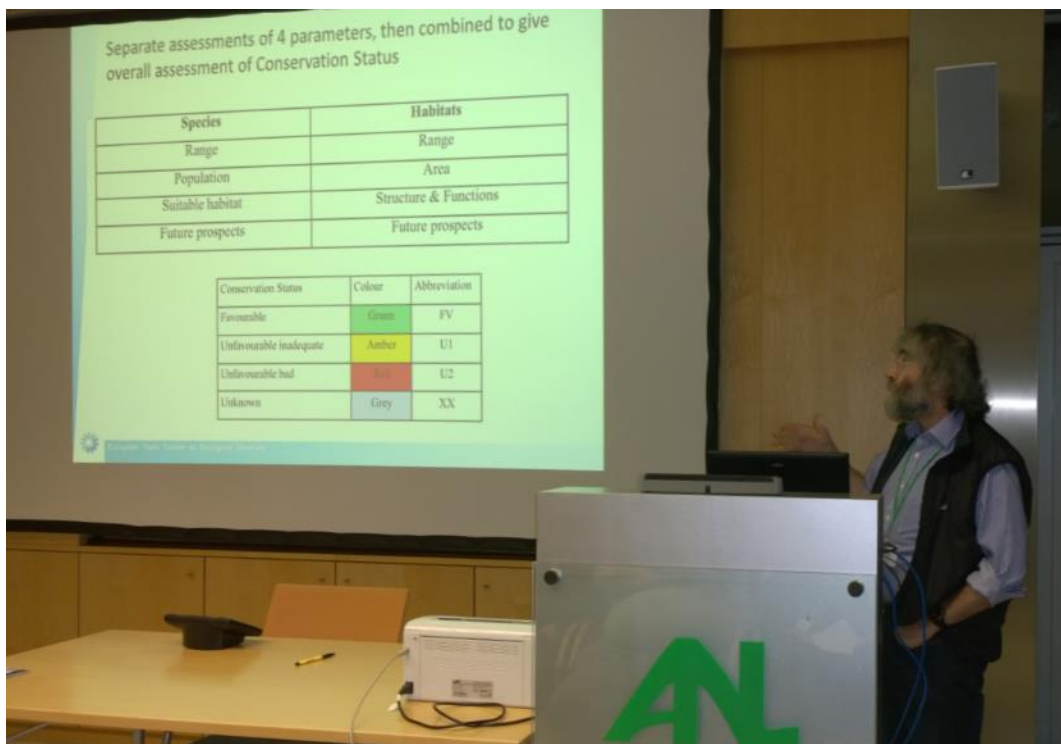
The main achievements of BC Europe were summarised by Martin Warren, the founding Chair of BC Europe:

- Established a network of 45 partners in 36 countries, many doing active conservation work, monitoring butterflies in the field, engaging with the public and increasing knowledge
- Held four Partner meetings in Laufen, all courtesy of ANL in Germany, to share experience, reflect on progress, decide priorities and foster further networking
- Produced a new Red List of European butterflies
- Contributed to the Climatic Risk Atlas of European Butterflies
- Produced Prime Butterfly Areas books of Serbia and Bulgaria
- BCE Partners have established butterfly monitoring programmes in 22 countries, which gives us an impressive method of measuring population changes
- Produced a Grassland Butterfly Indicator, which shows that numbers of 17 widespread species have declined by 50% in the last 22 years
- Developed a European Butterfly Climate Change Indicator change that shows that

butterfly communities are lagging behind climate change

- Produced a Manual for Butterfly Monitoring that has been translated into several languages and a development plan for butterfly indicators
- Raised funds to produce Red Lists of Turkey and the Mediterranean region
- Written and promoted a report on the Do's and Don'ts for Butterflies of the EU Habitats Directive
- Raised funds to conserve one of Europe's most endangered species, the Macedonian Grayling *Pseudochazara cingovskii*
- Raised funds for a project to produce action plans for four endemic species in Spain
- Advocated better policies for Lepidoptera and their habitats through the European Habitats Forum and contributed to numerous policy documents
- Produced a comprehensive Conservation Strategy aimed at halting European butterfly losses and securing some recovery by 2020





Doug Evans talked about Favourable Reference Values.

BCE partners from Armenia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine, Austria, France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Finland, Norway, Sweden, UK, Andorra, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Macedonia, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey, then summarised the impressive work they are doing in each of their countries. Several NGOs have been set up and together with Learned Societies are working to increase knowledge and improve outcomes for Lepidoptera; many volunteers are carrying out practical conservation work, monitoring butterflies in the field, recording results, mapping and contributing to indicator reporting. Several Red Data Books of endangered butterfly species have been compiled and some Species Action Plans prepared. Research on Lepidoptera ecology and links with habitat quality and management and projects to conserve threatened species and key habitats are being implemented. Engagement with the

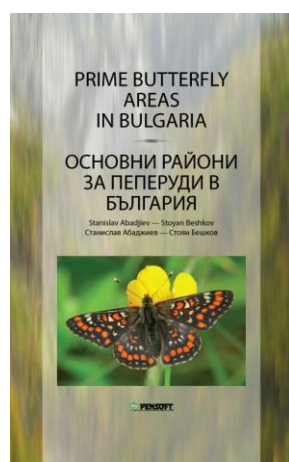
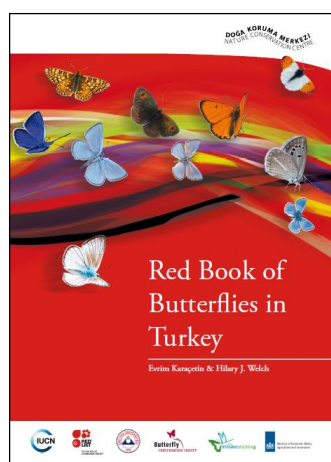
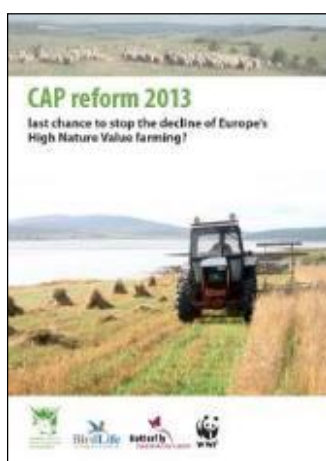
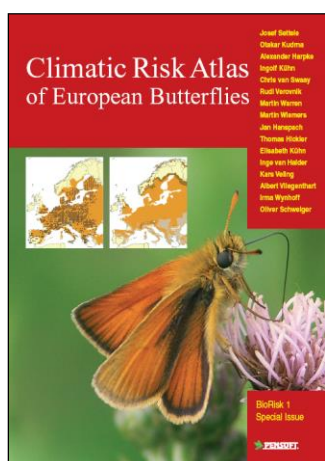
public, sectoral decision makers and citizen science is increasing. Books, ID Guides and Atlases are being produced in many countries. Social media promotion of butterfly conservation issues through websites, Facebook and Twitter is increasing, and many partners are developing projects to disseminate knowledge about moths, their distribution and conservation.

Partner presentations were followed by a summary of the Article 17 reports by Doug Evans from the EEA, which showed that many butterfly habitats were still in unfavourable condition and there had been little improvement since the last assessment. Chris van Swaay and Dirk Maes then explained how to define Favourable Reference Values for butterflies and dragonflies in the Netherlands and Belgium respectively.

Other very informative talks were given on:
 The Conservation of *Colias myrmidone* by Matthias Dolek and *Coenonympha oedippus* by Markus Bräu, both of ANL; The LIFE project to save threatened *Maculinea* species in the Netherlands, by Irma Wynhoff of Dutch BC; Conserving Spanish endemic butterflies by Miguel Munguira of University Autonoma Madrid; Results and progress in delivering BCE Conservation Strategy by Sue Collins of BC Europe; Developing a butterfly monitoring programme in Romania by Jacqueline Loos of the University Leuphana in Germany, Conserving Lepidoptera at the landscape

scale: lessons from UK by Nigel Bourn of BC-UK; and The cultivation of genetically modified crops in Europe and Lepidoptera by Andreas Lang, University of Basel. The presentations are available on the BCE website (<http://www.bc-europe.eu/index.php?id=413>).

We are very grateful to ANL, our partner in Bavaria, for hosting our meeting and for providing some crucial funds to cover the costs.

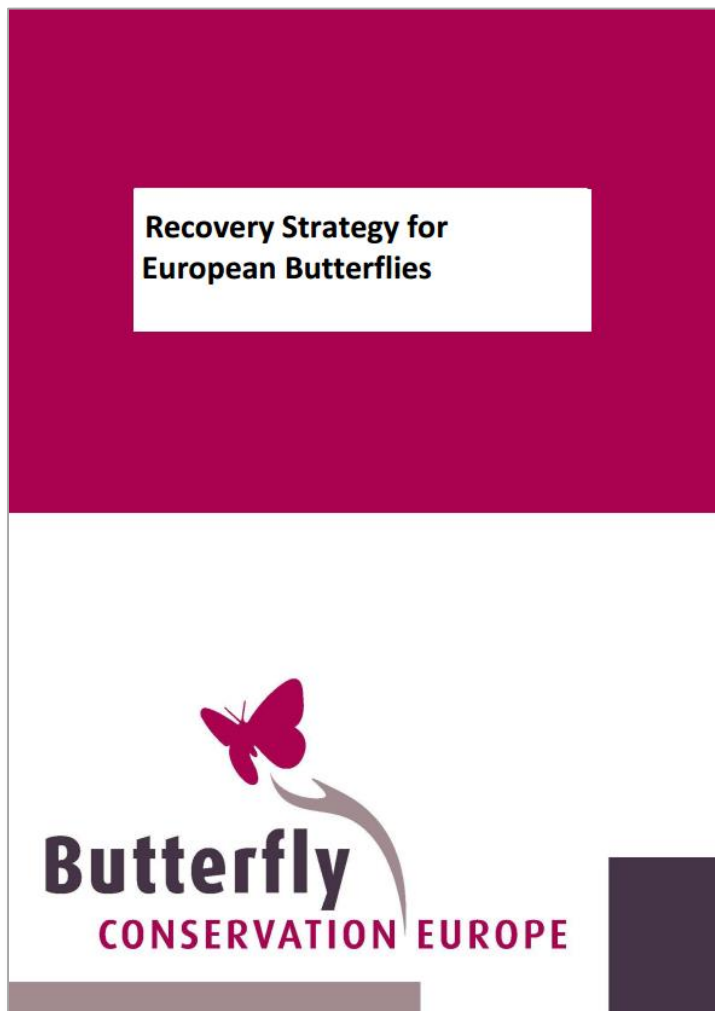


Some of the important reports produced in the first ten years of BC Europe.

BC Europe Strategy for the Conservation and Recovery of European Butterflies

BCE has published on its website its Strategy for the Conservation and Recovery of European Butterflies and this is supported by an Action Plan. The BCE Board welcomed the progress in implementing this which was the subject of a Report by Sue Collins. The Board

also approved an extension of the Strategy which reflects the context of European countries outside the EU and embraces action for butterflies there so the Strategy is relevant to all BCE partners.

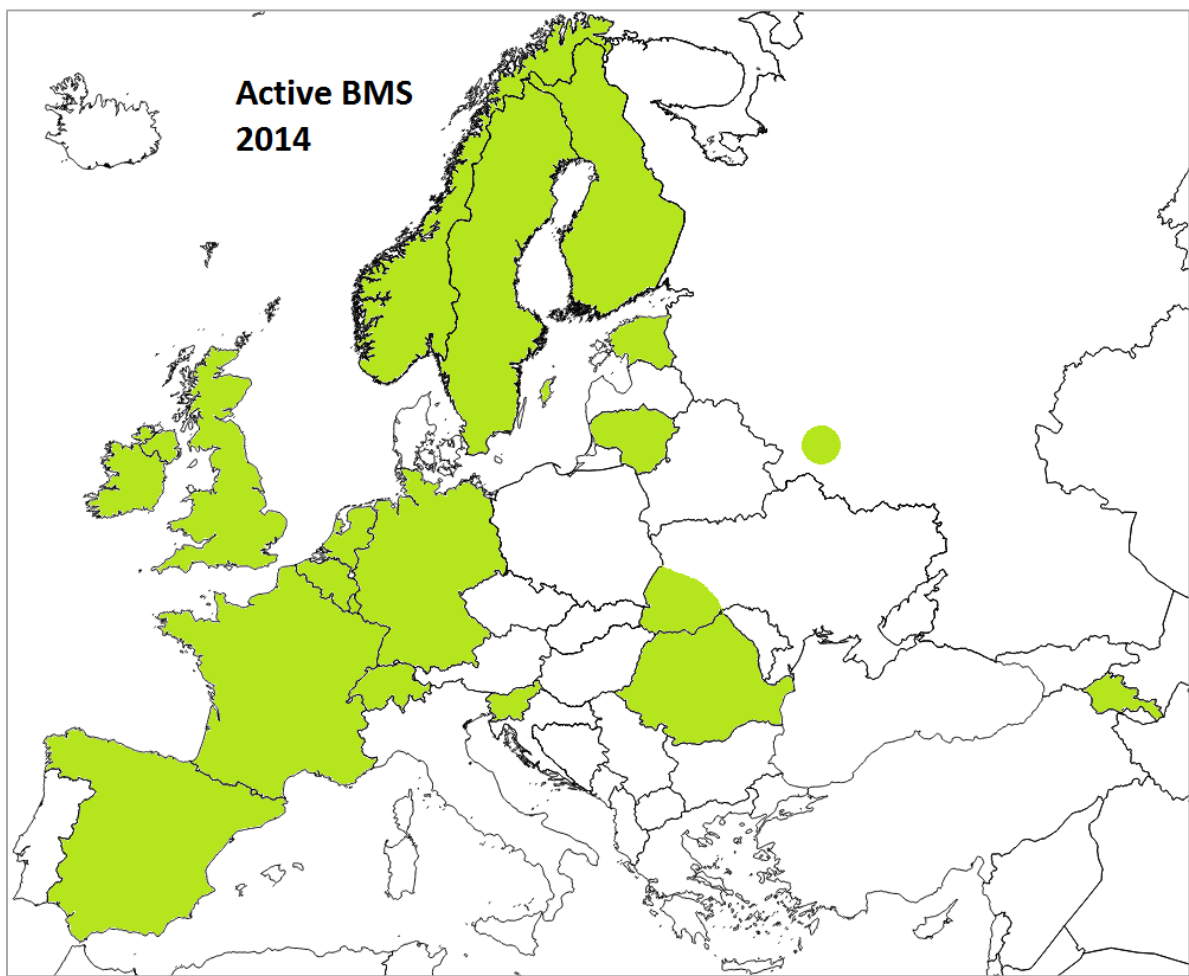


http://www.vlindernet.nl/doc/VS2014-002_Recovery_Strategy_for_European_Butterflies2.pdf

Butterflies as Indicators

A key objective of BC Europe is to develop the monitoring network across Europe. During 2014, financial support was provided to sustain the new monitoring networks in Romania and Spain. Reports can be found on the BCE website.

Thanks to BCE Partners, butterfly monitoring programmes have been established in 22 countries. We are pleased to report that the EEA have agreed to fund an update of the European Grassland Indicator in 2015 using this new network of sites.



Countries with an active Butterfly Monitoring Scheme.

Influencing European policies

Report by Sue Collins, European Policy Advisor, BC Europe

EU Coordination Group on Biodiversity (CGBN)

I attended CGBN meetings in March and September 2014, both on behalf of BCE and as Vice Chair of the European Habitats Forum.

The meetings focused on driving progress on the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy commitments. There are three key points for further action by BCE:

- 1) The EU are conducting a “Fitness Check” on the Habitats Directive. BCE and its partners should promote positive examples of the contribution of the Natura 2000 network to conservation and recovery of Lepidoptera and their habitats, and demonstrate strong support from civil society for the Directive and improved implementation.
- 2) There will be an EU Consultation, planned for April 2015, by the EEA on the State of Nature, followed by an EU Communication on a Mid-term Review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy implementation. An update of the SEBI 2010 European Grassland Butterfly Indicator will feed into these processes. We will also need to highlight the lack of progress towards Target 3A of the Strategy which envisaged increasing the contribution of Agriculture to biodiversity – the latest round of CAP reform is disappointing in this respect and improvements are needed in the years ahead.
- 3) The Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Directive has been adopted by the EU and in 2015 talks will start about the

species to be listed. The BCE Board will consider if there are any critical issues relating to Lepidoptera species that should be raised.

European Habitats Forum.

I attended two meetings of the EHF network and helped to shape its work and thinking in consultation with the EHF Chair and other Vice Chair. We had two informal meetings with DG Environment at which we discussed key issues affecting Biodiversity Strategy implementation. In November, I attended the EU Nature Directors informal meeting in Rome where we explored implementation issues and challenges with EU Member States and pressed for more positive action by them. I have led the EHF Working Group on Green Infrastructure and Restoration, stimulating and coordinating key messages from NGOs to EU discussions on intensifying implementation of the EU’s GI strategy and delivery of target 2 of the Biodiversity Strategy to restore 15% of degraded ecosystems by 2020. I attended a meeting of the EU Green Infrastructure and Restoration Working Group at which I presented ideas that I and EHF colleagues put together to promote dialogue between EU Nature and Water Directors and to stimulate more action. This initiative was welcomed by DG Environment.

*EU Natura 2000 Biogeographic Zone
Management Seminars and Council of Europe
Emerald Seminars.*

Information on these important meetings was circulated to BCE partners encouraging their participation. I am working with Matthias Dolek and ECNC to organize a follow up Workshop in Laufen on Alpine grassland management.

*MS Article 17 Reports on Habitats Directive
butterfly conservation status.*

I consulted BCE partners on the initial reports from EU Member States and fed some concerns about assessments into the EEA. I am currently analysing the changes in butterfly status reported to check for improvements or deterioration. It is clear that habitats dependent on agriculture are still in a very poor state. Further work on setting an agreed EU approach to determining Favourable Reference Values (FRV) is starting and the results of discussion on this from the Laufen partner meeting will be fed into the debate.

Agricultural policy.

I continued to work on agriculture issues, including collaborating with Guy Peer and others on a paper, published in Science in June 2014, together with an online Annex, showing how the latest CAP reforms are failing biodiversity and how MS can mitigate some of this through using flexibilities available. Mapping of Environmentally Sensitive grassland is required of MS and this should now be protected from damage as a condition

of farmers receiving Pillar 1 support payments. Sustainable management of High Nature Value (HNV) farmland and supporting the reversal of abandonment remain priorities for agriculture reform to support butterfly recovery.

Landscape Scale Conservation.

This is a key element of the EU vision for increased green infrastructure across Europe. In January 2014, Sam Ellis and Nigel Bourn of BC UK joined me at a meeting in Brussels, attended by 14 officials from DG Environment and DG Agriculture, at which they presented the results and lessons learned from 15 years' experience of UK landscape scale restoration projects, many of which have resulted in measurable improvements in targeted butterfly populations. I presented the results of my work on grassland conservation and butterflies, drawing on the earlier Article 17 Reports on conservation status and the results of BCE partners' butterfly monitoring results. These presentations were well received and gave further evidence of the importance of field monitoring to evaluate the success of linked projects and specific management practices.

*International Butterfly Symposium at
Southampton.*

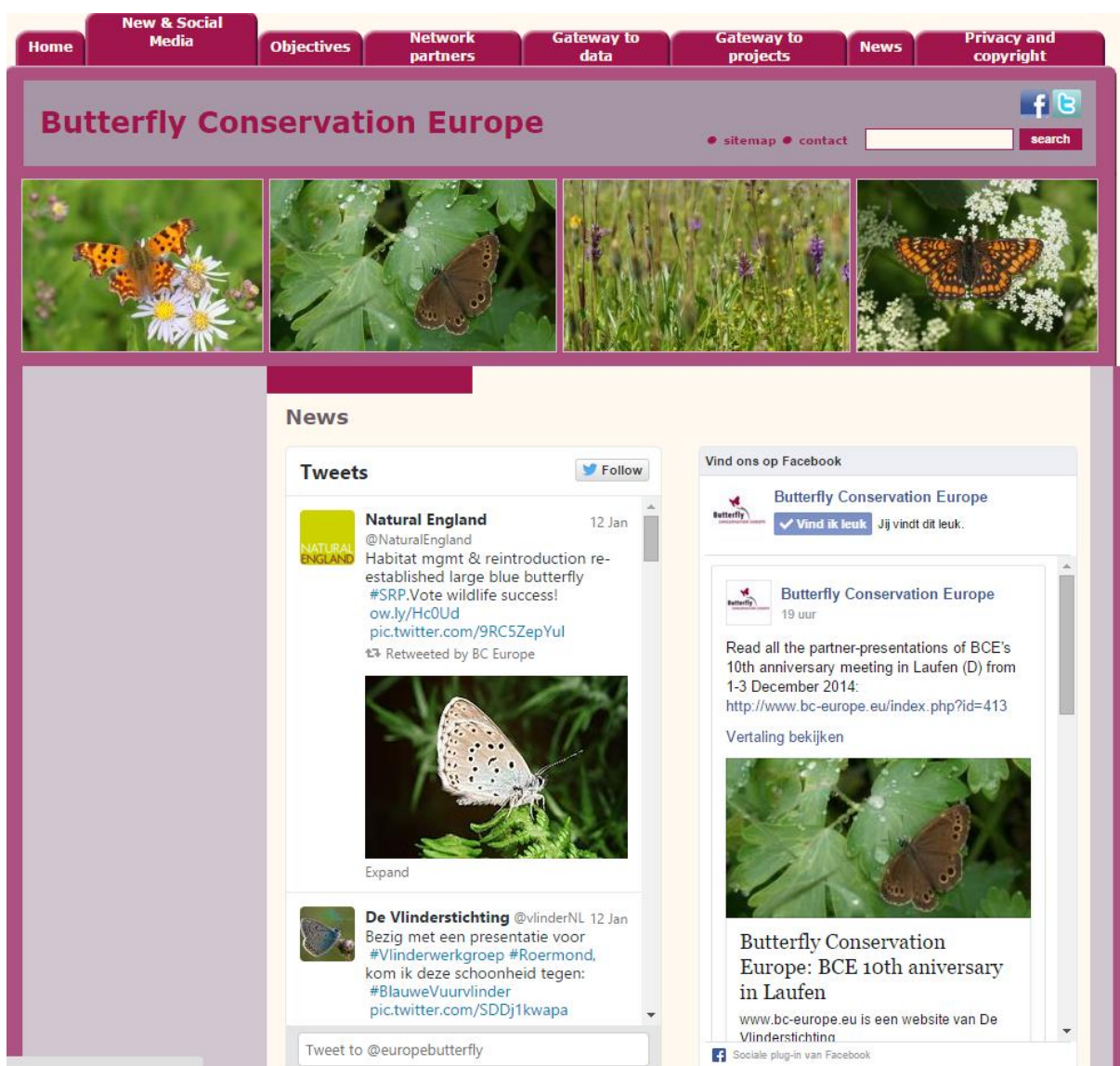
I prepared a poster on the BCE Strategy for Recovery of European butterflies which was displayed at this excellent Symposium, organized by BC UK in April 2014, and attended by many BCE members.

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 2014 the number of 'Likes' grew from 355 to 908. Our Twitter following

has also grown from 180 to 664.

Disseminating more information and further improving BCE's website is a priority for BCE in 2015 as well as continuing to grow our presence on social media.



Twitter and Facebook messages can also be found at the 'News and Social Media' tab of the website of BCE (www.bc-europe.eu), where you can read them also without an account on one of the social media.

Conserving endemic butterflies in southern Spain

This was the third year of our 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*.

During 2014, we focused our fieldwork activities on *E. bazae* and visited a new location that was reported this year for *P. golgus*. However, our main activity was attending to small workshops or meetings with regional conservation authorities and officials from National and Natural Parks where the four species are present. During these meetings we developed the actions that will be implemented in the future to favour the conservation of the four species. These actions comprise legal actions, management of habitats, public awareness campaigns, precautionary measures and research.

Based on the work of the years 2012 and 2013 a list of threats was compiled for each species. The actions that are needed to reverse these threats, together with all the relevant information gathered for the project, will be detailed in a document for each one of the species. The production of these documents started this year and will finish at the beginning of 2015, when the project will come to an end with a workshop that will present the documents to the conservation bodies that can effectively contribute to the conservation of the species. The project has been very successful in bringing together people involved with research, amateurs and conservation officials that will work to improve the status of the species.

We are very grateful to MAVA Foundation pour la Nature for funding this project.



Fieldwork in a new location that was reported for *Polyommatus golgus* in Sierra de Cazorla, Jaén Province SE Spain in July 2014.

Scarce Large Blue *Maculinea teleius* in Serbia

The Scarce Large Blue has only recently been discovered in Serbia at the border with Hungary. Most of the known populations are within the Selevenj, Subotica Sands and Ludaš protected areas. However no specific management has so far been implemented for the conservation of this threatened species in Serbia. A small grant from BC Europe has enabled Miloš Popović and his team to conduct a large scale study of biology of the species to provide best possible guidelines for the long term conservation and proper habitat management of the sites. Based on mark-release-recapture study, the population size for entire region was estimated at approximately 10,000 specimens, making it

one of the largest known populations of the species in Europe. However, the adults were extremely sedentary with only a single migration detected among separate habitat patches. Habitat fragmentation is therefore one of the major threats for the species.

In parallel with the field study, intensive cooperation with the managers of the protected areas was established and the butterflies were popularised among the local community. In addition to several lectures, a leaflet and information boards were made and will be displayed at visitor centres and along information paths in the parks. A detailed report is available on request.

Мочварни мравник насељава крајњи север Србије, где смо га открили тек 2012. године. Већина његових станишта је унутар заштићених подручја: Селевењ, Суботичка пашчара и Лудашко језеро. Наша истраживања из 2014. године показују да ово подручје насељава око 10000 јединки! Одрасли лептири живе кратко и везани су за свој дом, при чему ретко оду даље од пар стотина метара.

Scarce Large Blue lives at the very north of Serbia, where we discovered it only in 2012. Majority of its habitats are inside protected areas: Selevenj, Subotica Sands and Ludaš Lake. Our study from 2014 showed that approximately 10,000 individuals live in this region! The adults have short life span and are bind to their home, rarely straying more than a few hundred meters.




Последњих година смо посветили посебну пажњу очувању преосталих, малих фрагмената мочварних станишта. Ливаде се косе једном годишње како би се спречило зарастање у трску и сачувале ретке биљке и животиње.

In the last decades, special care was taken to preserve the remaining small fragments of marshland habitats. Meadows are here mown once a year to prevent overgrowing by common reed and preserve rare plants and animals.

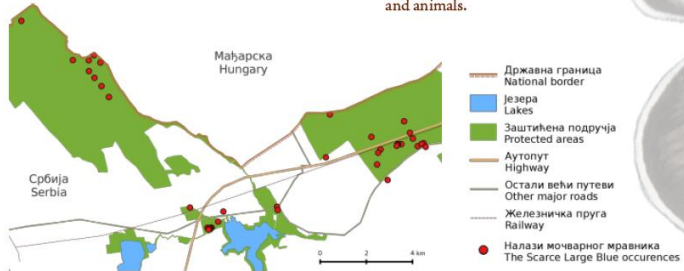
Мочварни мравник SCARCE LARGE BLUE

Phengaris teleius

 <http://www.habiprot.org.rs>

Мочварни мравник је изузетно занимљив лептир коме прети истребљење, а његово очување је у потпуности у нашим рукама!

The Scarce Large Blue is an extremely interesting butterfly facing possible extinction and its conservation is completely in our hands!



Државна граница
National border

Језера
Lakes

Заштићена подручја
Protected areas

Аутопут
Highway

Остали већи путеви
Other major roads

Железничка пруга
Railway

● Налази мочварног мравника
The Scarce Large Blue occurrences

Цртежи: Александар Поповић
Остало: Милош Поповић
Drawings: Aleksandar Popović
Other: Miloš Popović

Leaflet on the Large Scarce Blue in Serbia.

European Interests Group (EIG)

Report contributed by Simon Spencer cerisyi@btinternet.com

Butterfly Conservation's European Interests Group now has over 250 members and a network of contacts all over Europe. Our members contribute records to various local atlases and we have researched the many local butterfly recording schemes in France as it where many of our members go on holiday see www.bc-eig.org.uk. Several of our members contributed to the Mava project in Spain. EIG did a survey of the Tsoumerka and Peristeri National Park in Greece, ran a butterfly ID camp in France and are collaborating with several people to do a survey for *Colias myrmidone* in Romania. From butterfly holidays our members have

contributed over 20k euros to butterfly conservation work in Hungary. The EIG newsletter is circulated widely twice a year contact us via the website if you wish to receive a copy.

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.



Summary of main plans for 2015

- Continue to work with colleagues in the European Habitats Forum to influence EU policies, defend the Habitats Directive during the REFIT process, and promote HNV farming and the role of butterflies as indicators.
- Work with BC Europe partners to assess Member States Article 17 reports on the status of Habitats Directive species.
- Produce an update of the European Grassland Indicator.
- Seek funds to produce other butterfly indicators.
- Continue to press the EU for regular funding to produce a suite of indicators.
- Finalise the Mediterranean Red List.
- Continue to support butterfly monitoring across continent and the workshop in Romania.
- Follow up work on *Pseudochazara cingovskii*.
- Organise an Alpine Biogeographic Seminar.
- Provide support for Network Partners as requested and help them develop new projects.
- Develop the BC Europe website (suggestions welcome)

References

G. Pe'er, L. V. Dicks, P. Visconti, R. Arlettaz, A. Báldi, T. G. Benton, S. Collins, M. Dieterich, R. D. Gregory, F. Hartig, K. Henle, P. R. Hobson, D. Kleijn, R. K. Neumann, T. Robijns, J. Schmidt, A. Schwartz, W. J. Sutherland, A. Turbe, F. Wulf and A. V. Scott (2014): EU agricultural reform fails on biodiversity. *SCIENCE*, 6 June 2014, Vol. 344, Issue 6188. DOI: 10.1126/science.1253425.

For a link to an open access version of the paper see <http://www.ufz.de/index.php?en=1625>