

Supporting butterfly monitoring & conservation in Romania

Report for 2015

Society of Lepidopterology Romania, Cluj, 25 April

The Butterfly Action Group was again invited to take part in the annual meeting of the Society of Lepidopterology Romania (SLR) in Babes-Boyai University, Cluj. Paul outlined the progress to date and encouraged more participation from SLR members, and this was well received

Monitoring workshop and training in Cluj, 26 April

The following day we held a workshop at the University. Around 10 people were there, a mix of Action Group members and some new faces, so the workshop covered the origins of butterfly monitoring and methods, with detailed presentations from Csaba Visauer on his work on transects in Harghita and in and around Cluj. We also discussed improving communications and future meetings. It was decided to create a new Facebook page where anyone can post photos and stories, called “Butterfly Action Group”. Within a short time, many people have joined and used this group, including a good number from other countries. In the afternoon, with the guidance of Csaba Visauer, several of us visited the Fântălele Clujului Natura site to practice using butterfly nets and identification skills.

Transects

We now have 17 transects established throughout Romania, with at least three new ones being set up this year, in Fântălele Clujului, near Targu Mures and in the peat bogs of Szenete. However, not all of these transects have been visited in this year, so we now need to emphasise the need for repeated activity in the established transects.

Data

With the help of the German UFZ and the German Society for the Conservation of Butterflies, we made progress in developing a Romanian on-line transect data entry, which still requires more input. The platform programmer “Science4you” promised to finalize the platform by mid of March 2016 – with the help of Romanian volunteers, who will translate from German and English into Romanian. We are very happy about the opportunity to adapt an existing tool for the Romanian scheme.

Communications

Facebook

Our Facebook page (Butterfly Conservation in Romania) is fairly active and now has around 740 followers (up from 400 a year ago). A second Facebook page (Butterfly Action Group) was created after the last volunteers’ meeting and now has 175 followers. Almost daily, new posts arrive on this platform with interesting observations, questions and exchanges around butterflies – including peers from other European countries.

Website

We created a temporary website (<http://fluturomania.wordpress.com/>) that will allow more interaction and discussion, although we do need to consider creating one with more functionality. We are adding photos to help with identification and are very grateful to Dr Jim Asher for supplying many images. The preliminary project website (sites.google.com/monitorizareafuturilor) will soon be taken down.

Butterfly Camp

There was no butterfly camp this year because the SLR, who offered in November 2014 to organise it, were unable to do so due to work and other pressures. The funding we obtained for this will be held over to 2016.

Conferences & meetings

Monitoring workshop, Bucharest, 12 & 13 December

A two day workshop was organised by Crisanta Lungu and Andu Riza, two Bucharest-based volunteers who were new members in 2015. It took place in the University Geology Department. Selected members were invited, and 12 attended, with four new people, including the Geology Professor and his research student, and two people from Buzau.

The workshop proved to be very effective in identifying objectives, tasks and then allocating tasks to individuals with a draft timescale for completion. Further work will take place (led by Crisanta and Andu) to finalise a plan for 2016 which will then be disseminated and publicised.

A number of new developments have been proposed, including a new website and logo, changes to the Facebook pages and publicity through posters and fliers. A training programme will be put together. Most importantly, we will aim to establish an organisation that can apply for funds and co-ordinate activity. Currently, we are investigating the most effective and simple way to do this.

Other projects

Apollo mission

Istvan Moldovan continued his surveys for *Parnassius apollo* in 2015, with the help of several volunteers. No colonies were discovered, but useful information was gained and many other species were recorded. It seems possible that the butterfly is flying earlier than expected, so surveys in 2016 will take place in late June and July.

Conservation of *Colias myrmidone*

Some of our volunteers helped with surveys. Paul met Jörg Steiner and Matthias Dolek in Munich to discuss the surveys done in 2015 and future surveys. Matthias had suggested some old sites near Turda, but Jörg had been unsuccessful. Matthias was disappointed but not surprised as this reflects the current rapid demise of this species in Europe.

Further discussions took place later at the BC Europe meeting in Laufen, and the BC UK European Interests Group is writing a detailed report on all the work carried out by them in 2015.

Funding

We are very grateful for the support of Butterfly Conservation Europe (BCE) and the Gesellschaft für Schmetterlingsschutz for our activities in 2015.

Publications & Presentations

Loos J, Horcea-Milcu A, Kirkland P, Hartel T, Osváth-Ferencz M, Fischer J (2015) Challenges for biodiversity monitoring using citizen science in transitioning social-ecological systems. *Journal for Nature Conservation* **26**:45-48.

Kirkland P (oral presentation, April 2015). Annual Meeting of the Lepidopterological Society of Romania, Cluj.

Loos J, Kirkland P (oral presentation, February 2015) Aufbau eines Tagfalter-Monitoring in Rumänien. Annual Meeting of the Society for Conservation of Butterflies Germany, Leipzig.

Jacqueline Loos (jloos@gwdg.de)

Paul Kirkland (paulkirkland007@gmail.com)

25 January 2016