

**Butterfly Conservation Europe  
Activity report 2013**



**Butterfly**  
**CONSERVATION EUROPE**

# Butterfly Conservation Europe Activity Report 2013



Photo: Chris van Swaay

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**BCE board and advisors, Sierra Nevada, November 2013. From left to right Miguel Munguira (chairman), Martin Wiemers, Irma Wynhoff, Chris van Swaay, Titia Wolterbeek (secretary), Sue Collins (European Policy Advisor), Martin Warren (vice chairman), Simon Spencer, Rudi Verovnik, Dirk Maes (treasurer), Svetlana Miteva, Martina Šašić.**

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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.**

Welcome to this Activity Report for 2013. All contacts should now have received notification of the Fourth meeting of BC Europe Network Partners in Laufen (Germany) from 1-3 December 2014. The meeting will mark the 10th anniversary of BC Europe and will give us opportunity to take stock of our achievements and discuss our priorities for the next ten years. The meeting will be co-funded by BC Europe and from funds generously provided by the Bavarian Academy for Nature and Landscape Conservation (ANL).

During 2013, the BC Europe Board has met twice, in Malaga in February and in Granada in November. Once again we decided to commit most of our limited funds (donated by BC-UK and Dutch BC) to contract Sue Collins to continue her important work as European Policy Advisor (see report below). It has been a critical year for reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and although the results have been very disappointing, we still feel it has been important to make the case for

reform that will help biodiversity and especially threatened Lepidoptera. Sue has continued to act Vice Chair of the European Habitats Forum (EHF) where she works with a wide range of NGOs to influence EU policies. We are very grateful to her for her dedicated and professional work on our behalf.



I have personally been heavily involved in a BC Europe project aimed at conserving four endemic Spanish butterflies, for which we successfully raised funding from the MAVA Foundation.

I hope to meet many of you in Laufen next December.

Miguel Munguira  
Chair BC Europe

## Developing Butterflies as Indicators

### Developing Butterfly Monitoring in Romania and Spain

BC Europe was pleased to provide some financial support to help start a monitoring network in Romania by contributing to their highly successful workshop in Cluj in April. This was followed by monitoring discussions at the annual meeting of the Lepidopterological Society of Romania (LSR) and another training event in Harghita county in May. Transects were established in 7 different localities and 14 walks were conducted by a combination of students, volunteers and researchers.

A very successful butterfly camp was also held in Piatra Craiului, organised by Ionut Bordea and the National Park Piatra Craiului. We are very grateful to Jacqueline Loos (Leuphana University) and Paul Kirkland (BC-UK) for their help organising these events with several partners in Romania. A further monitoring workshop is planned for Sighisoara on the 12th and 13th of April 2014. You can sign up for this workshop by sending an email to Jacqueline Loos ([loos@leuphana.de](mailto:loos@leuphana.de)).



*Over 40 people attended the first Butterfly Camp in Romania, held in Piatra Craiului (Romania).*

We have continued to promote butterfly monitoring in Spain, together with our partners ZERYNTHIA and the Andalusian butterfly conservation NGO Plebejus. Thanks to financial support from the EU ExpeEr Transnational Access Program and the Spanish Council for Scientific Research (CSIC) a workshop was held in Doñana Biological Station. We discussed the current monitoring scheme in Doñana National Park and advised improvements for a better fit into the European BMS. Together with the Spanish

experts, we started to organise actions to be taken for the coordination and development of a network of transects in Spain excluding Catalonia that already has a well developed scheme.

A paper was published in December in the popular journal *Quercus* to inform about monitoring projects in Spain and call for new volunteers. As a result of the paper and the contacts of people involved we are already considerably increasing the initial network of 75 transects.



***Attendants to the workshop in Doñana National Park to coordinate BMS in Spain.***

## European Grassland Butterfly Indicator

Our report updating the European Grassland Butterfly Indicator up to 2011 was officially published by the European Environment Agency during 2013 (van Swaay et al., 2013) and was widely covered in the media. There

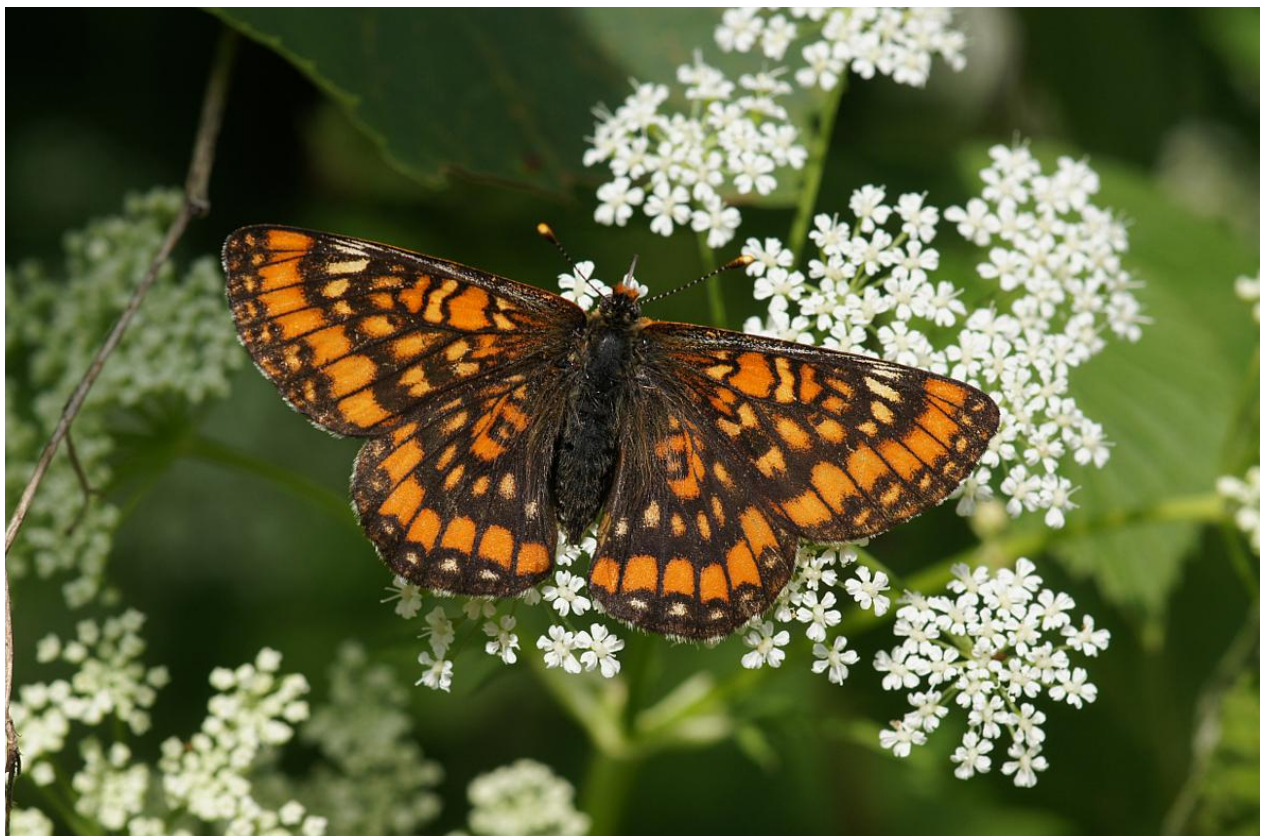
were reports in over 500 papers and websites. The report can be downloaded here <http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/the-european-grassland-butterfly-indicator-19902011>



## Conservation Strategy for European butterflies

BC Europe has produced a new strategy to guide our efforts in coming years and show how we can make a serious contribution towards achieving the EU Biodiversity 2020 strategy and [Aichi Targets of the Conservation on Biological Diversity](#). The report lists the official assessments of EU Member States on Habitats Directive species made in 2006 (mostly unfavourable-bad!) as well as their habitats (also mostly bad!).

The overall target for BC Europe is Halt the loss of European butterflies and restore them and their habitats in so far as feasible by 2020. Priorities for action are ranked High, Medium and Low for all species listed on the EU Habitats and Species Directive as well as the new Red List of European Butterflies. We will discuss these priorities at the next Network Partner meeting and identify key actions that can be taken forward by each Network Partner.



***Euphydryas maturna* is a species considered threatened in the European Red List of Butterflies, and also mentioned on the Annexes II and IV of the Habitats Directive of the European Union.**



## Influencing European policies

Report by Sue Collins, European Policy Advisor, BC Europe

BCE has been active in seeking to influence key policy developments relevant to the conservation of butterflies, moths and their habitats during 2014. Most critical has been reform of the EU Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). In February, Sue delivered a lecture at the University of Lund entitled, "[The eleventh hour for biodiversity – the need for an ecological reform of the CAP](#)".

Sue also worked with colleagues in the European Habitats Forum (EHF) to encourage EU Nature Directors to engage with the CAP reform process and to highlight in particular the need for better protection and funding of sustainable management of semi natural grassland, where abandonment and intensification are both diminishing the resource and driving invertebrate declines.

Despite the evidence pointing to the need for a radical redirection of CAP spending, towards rewarding the delivery of public goods, the greening of the CAP, as agreed by EU Heads of Government, is weak. Opportunities remain at MS level to secure good agri environment programmes under the Pillar 2 Rural Development Programmes (RDPs). BCE

worked with Friends of the Earth and Birdlife to encourage member states to set a good level of ambition for biodiversity recovery through their RDP Programmes. Action is also needed to reduce threats to Pillar 2 budgets and to secure useful protection for semi natural grasslands under Pillar 1 rules.

BCE's Report on European grassland conservation, prepared with the European Forum for Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP) and thanks to brilliant help from BCE partners and others who provided Case Studies, was submitted to the European Commission. This advocated several measures to incorporate in agriculture policy and practice to benefit biodiversity. These were targeted at supporting the sustainable management and monitoring of semi natural grassland for butterflies and other invertebrates. This paper is available on the [EFNCP website](#), together with several country case studies covering [Ireland, Germany, Sweden and Romania](#), and [Turkey, Italy, Greece and Hungary](#). This report is being updated and will be discussed with the Commission early in 2014.

Advocacy by BCE for effective implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy continued, in cooperation with European Habitats Forum (EHF) colleagues. Sue gave a presentation to EU Nature Directors on the implications of the EU Financial settlement for implementation of targets 1, 2 and 3 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. Advocacy for strong implementation of the EU Nature Directives continues. BCE Partners have made active contributions to the EU Biogeographic Zone Natura 2000 Management Seminars, which have covered the Boreal, Atlantic and Alpine zones. BCE has pressed for increased investment, both financial and administrative, to improve follow up.

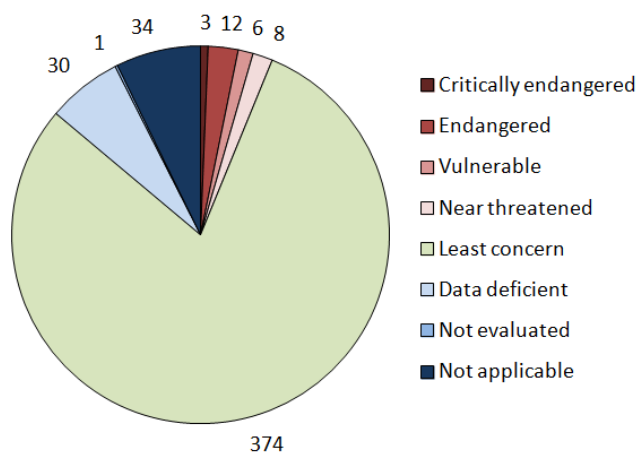
The importance of green infrastructure investment and restoration of ecosystems has been emphasised. The need for care in developing a “No Net Loss” initiative was highlighted, to ensure it does not have unintended consequences, eg encouraging development that damages irreplaceable biodiversity assets or allows spurious or ineffective offsetting schemes.

BCE continues to promote the extension of butterfly monitoring and the use of data and indicators to highlight what more needs to be done.

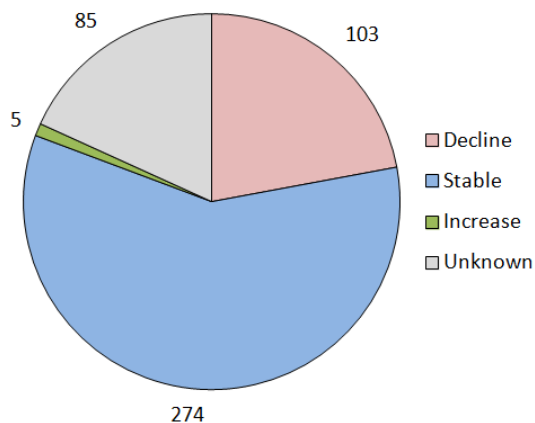
## Mediterranean Red List

After a year of gathering data, a workshop was held in Malaga during February to decide the Red List. Over 20 experts from countries surrounding the Mediterranean and staff from IUCN came together for the first time to

evaluate the data and make an expert opinion on the Red List status of each species. The Red List is now with IUCN to be finalised and published.



**Overview of the status of the Mediterranean butterflies. The number of threatened or near threatened species (in red) is still relatively low. The numbers in the pie-diagram indicate the number of species.**



**In spite of the low number of threatened species, almost a quarter of the butterfly species are declining in the Mediterranean area, with only five species increasing. The numbers in the pie-diagram indicate the number of species.**

**During the Red List Workshop from 25-28 February 2014 in Malaga (Spain) the status of all threatened butterflies in the Mediterranean region was discussed. Photo: Chris van Swaay.**





## Conserving endemic butterflies in southern Spain

This was the second 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*.

Fieldwork was conducted by 25 people including staff of the Sierra Nevada National Park, ZERYNTHIA and Plebejus (NGOs working on the conservation of butterflies in Spain), professors and students from the Autónoma University of Madrid, amateur lepidopterists and volunteers from the European Interest Group (EIG) of BC-UK. A total of 95 locations of southwestern and eastern Spain were visited registering the exact location, habitat features, threats and population numbers of the four species. For *A. zullichi* and *P. golgus* a majority of sites showed no human induced impacts. However, the main threats detected during fieldwork were trampling for *A. zullichi*, overgrazing for *A. golgus* and abandonment of grazing practices for *P. violetae* and *P. bazae*. The conservation of these four species needs



*Euchloe bazae* resting on the flowers of its larval foodplant in Hoya de Baza, Andalusia.  
Photo: Chris van Swaay.

correcting the trampling effects of cattle and humans for *A. zullichi*, preventing overgrazing in *P. golgus* habitats, and enhancing extensive grazing for *E. bazae* and *P. violetae*. The recovery plans will also need to include legal actions, research proposals and public awareness campaigns with information leaflets and information boards in protected areas. A workshop was held in Granada in November 2013, attended by 31 experts who discussed about threats and the first ideas for the species recovery plans. We are very grateful to MAVA Foundation for funding this project.



**Larval survey of  
*Agriades zullichi* in  
Sierra Nevada at  
altitudes above 3000 m.  
Photo: Roberto Travesí.**

## Conservation of the Macedonian Grayling *Pseudochazara cingovskii*

*P.cingovskii* was identified as one of two Critically Endangered species in the recent European Red List of butterflies and was known from only one site in Macedonia where it is threatened by marble quarrying. As reported in last year's Activity Report, we successfully applied for a small grant from the Mohammed Bin Zayed (MBZ) fund to conduct a survey of the species and take initial action to ensure its conservation.

A paper on the findings of the survey was published in Journal of Insect Conservation (Verovnik et al., 2013). The survey found the butterfly at six additional sites, the furthest being over 15km from the original site. The

population size at the original site was estimated at over 3000 adults. These discoveries greatly reduce the extinction risk of the species, although five of the seven habitats are still threatened by marble quarrying. The report recommends that the Red List status of the species is downgraded from Critically Endangered to Endangered. BC Europe will continue to work with our Network Partner in Macedonia (the Macedonian Butterfly Study Group) to raise awareness of the species and cooperate with quarry owners to secure the long term successful conservation. A full report is available on the [BC Europe website](#).



***P.cingovskii* marked as part of the population study at the original known population.  
Photo: Irma Wynchhoff.**

## European Interests Group (EIG)

Report contributed by Simon Spencer [cerisyi@btinternet.com](mailto:cerisyi@btinternet.com)

EIG is a group of experienced members of Butterfly Conservation (UK) who are interested in helping to study and conserve butterflies across Europe. There are over 250 members many of whom regularly visit Europe to see butterflies and some members are close to seeing every European butterfly species. EIG aims to promote this through its website [www.bc-eig.org.uk](http://www.bc-eig.org.uk) which has Country guides to the butterflies of several countries. It publishes a twice yearly newsletter which contains trip reports and articles on butterflies in Europe. Back numbers are available to download on the website.

EIG aims to provide self-funded volunteers to joint projects with BCE partners in Europe and in 2013 assisted with the MAVA project in Spain. Previous EIG projects in Greece,

Hungary, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Romania etc have surveyed for Red list butterfly species such as *E. maturna*, *P. dardanus*, *P. telejus*, *P. nausithous*, *T. taygetica*, *L. helle* and *P. orestes*. EIG in collaboration with the Association Proserpine organised a Butterfly Conference in France at Digne les Bains in 2013 that attracted over 100 delegates. The conference was in French and many French butterfly enthusiasts met for the first time.

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.





## Social media

Social media are becoming more and more important to communicate with our fellow Europeans. BCE has been active on Facebook for a few years already, and in 2013 the number of 'Likes' grew from 109 to 355. In

2013 we started using Twitter and in six week gathered over 180 followers.

All facebook and twitter messages can also be viewed under the tab News & Social Media on our webpage:

The screenshot displays the Butterfly Conservation Europe website. At the top, a navigation bar includes links for Home, Objectives, Network partners, Gateway to data, Gateway to projects, New & Social Media (which is highlighted), and Privacy and copyright. Below this is a header section with the organization's name, 'Butterfly Conservation Europe', and a search bar. A row of four images shows various butterflies. The main content area is titled 'News' and contains two sections: 'Tweets' and 'Vind ons op Facebook'. The 'Tweets' section shows two tweets, one from BC Europe and one from Craig Pittman. The 'Vind ons op Facebook' section shows the Facebook page for Butterfly Conservation Europe, including a post about butterflies needing minerals and a photo of a butterfly on a rock.

## Summary of plans for 2014

- Hold the Fourth meeting of BC Europe Network Partners in December
- Continue to work with colleagues in the European Habitats Forum to influence EU policies 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.
- Continue to press the EU for regular funding to produce a suite of indicators
- Finalise the Mediterranean Red List
- Continue to support butterfly monitoring in Romania and Spain
- Finish the fieldwork and produce Species Recovery Plans for the four endangered endemic species in Spain
- Explore possibilities of closer partnerships with other organizations
- Upgrade the BC Europe website
- Promote the BC (UK) International Symposium, Southampton 29-31 March 2014
- Participate in the 7<sup>th</sup> international conference on the biology of butterflies in Turku (Finland, 11-14 August 2014)

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