

# **NEWSLETTER**

**Issue 9  
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## ***Chairman's Introduction***

First an apology. This newsletter is late and should have appeared in March. The very early season in the UK has not helped. It is now 5 years since EIG was formed and this is our 9<sup>th</sup> newsletter. We have made quite a lot of progress despite only having just over 200 members but I feel we are in a position now to make a quantum change in our operation and do a bit more to further the interests of butterflies in Europe. This is all the more necessary as the core funding for BCE from the EU has now ceased despite the very good start they made in 2009-2010.

One of EIG's roles is to make contact with butterfly enthusiasts throughout Europe and to be able to put self funded EIG Survey teams in to assist them in surveys. From our very early beginnings in Hungary in 2006, you will read here of the real progress being made there in the conservation of butterflies (See Hungary Update Pages 10,11&12). One of the major points is that external interest from EIG considerably boosts the standing of our partners with National Parks and other statutory agencies and our links to BCE make it more likely that countries will observe and implement Natura 2000 directives. The Orseg adopted the Scarce Large Blue (*Phengaris telejus*) as its new logo putting the conservation of this threatened species in the forefront of its work. You will note that I have used Phengaris rather than Maculinea. One major achievement of BCE has been to get a consensus on Taxonomy that I thought might be elusive. This was fundamental to getting the European Red List published. A major BCE

project in Turkey has now produced a Red List for Turkey. This is a major achievement. To return to EIG's role within the European context, I feel we could do a lot more to fill in the gaps and do detailed surveys in places where interest in Butterflies is limited. In particular we should try to target Red List Species and where possible contribute to the next stage of the conservation process – the production of Species Action Plans. Last summer EIG surveyed for the Red List Vulnerable Dil's Grayling (*Pseudochazara orestes*) and only found one individual in a small area of northern Greece. Our report on the EIG trip to Mount Chelmos in Greece was helpful in evaluating the Red List Endangered Odd Spot Blue *Turanana taygetica* that was nearly destroyed by quarrying.

I think we are at the stage where EIG should be doing more and as for many of us financial constraints prevent us going on more trips we should start looking for funding to part pay for expenses of these surveys so we can do more. We are already being asked by European partners to do surveys. I am just back from Romania where I visited a project where we might send one or two small survey teams in the next couple of years. It is an interesting area with traditional grazing and some interesting butterflies. EIG is sending a group to the Pyrenees in July and another to Montenegro. Both of these trips are full. There are still spaces on the trip to Slovakia. We are also beginning to gel as a group with more and more people within EIG being active and welcoming the chance to get involved. It has not been easy getting to know who is active as we are all scattered round the country. I would particularly want to hear from anyone prepared to lead expeditions to areas that they know well.

In order to make a step change in our activities we have invited a few more people to join the EIG committee. Dudley Cheesman, ex Chairman of BC, has agreed to join as has Nick Greatorex-Davies whom many of you will know from his work on butterflies at CEH but also for leading tours to Bulgaria. We have also appointed a treasurer, Nigel Peace, who has been on many EIG trips and now works voluntarily at the Natural History Museum. This allows us to set up a small independent sub-committee to oversee and administer any funds that we may be able to raise for expenses incurred in doing surveys for Red List Species. If anybody knows anyone on the Sunday Times rich list then please get in touch.

I am acutely conscious of the disparity in effort in monitoring butterflies between the UK and the rest of Europe. In the UK, there are at least 930 transects walked every week of the summer. This voluntary effort for recording butterflies in the UK is calculated to be 100,000 person days per year, equivalent to £6.3 million pa. The UK Butterfly dataset is 7.5 million records and for Moths 11 million records. In most other European countries, apart from perhaps Holland, there is much less effort and much less quantitative information. The value of the European grassland indicator for influencing policy and politicians in Brussels cannot be overstated. This information is derived from information contributed by volunteers and there is now scope for many more people to get involved with national schemes such as the one for France described by Susan Walter or internationally as is described in an article by Chris van Swaay. EIG would welcome membership from ex patriots living abroad, they can have EIG as their BC local group, and, although we are not ready to be a pan European membership organisation, please feel free to forward this newsletter to colleagues abroad and try and persuade anyone living in Europe who has a passion for butterflies to submit records and participate in monitoring schemes.

Otakar Kudrna's 'Distribution Atlas of European Butterflies' is the basis of all recent butterfly distribution maps. A second revised edition will be published this summer to which EIG has contributed some money towards its publication. **See separate pdf of prepublication offer and order form.** It is going to be in colour and it will be an essential part of your library. Again, this is a major achievement by a dedicated scientist but relies on the observations of hundreds of volunteer lepidopterists. There will be a launch at the Natural History Museum on

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2011 which Otakar Kudrna will attend. If you are interested in coming then please contact Simon Spencer [cerisyi@btinternet.com](mailto:cerisyi@btinternet.com) places are limited.

We also anticipate the publication of a new book on French Butterflies by Tristan Lafranchis.

This edition of EIG Newsletter features four trip reports from Arctic Scandinavia which seemed to be the fashionable destination in 2010. Many of you will have noticed that there a number of butterfly species that are confined to Arctic Scandinavia and others that occur there as well as elsewhere in Europe. Butterfly hunting in the Arctic is not quite the same as the south of France. The weather is frequently awful and though in high summer you get 24 hours of daylight the mosquitoes are a continuous nightmare. Butterfly numbers are low and you need a mortgage to buy a bottle of wine in a Swedish restaurant. Even so, it is a memorable experience and, if you are lucky, you will find several species you have not seen before. Accurate and detailed information is a considerable help and a big thank you to Nils Ryholm and Claes Eliasson of Sweden for helping us all. If I went again I would look for a good 5 day weather forecast and book a last minute flight. Note: There is a railway between Abisko and Kiruna.

**Simon Spencer**

### ***Contact Details:***

#### **Chairman:**

**Simon Spencer** - email: [cerisyi@btinternet.com](mailto:cerisyi@btinternet.com) - Tel No: 01691 648339

#### **Vice-Chairman/Field Trip Organiser:**

**Mike Williams** - email: [mike@stagborough.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:mike@stagborough.fsnet.co.uk) - Tel No: 01299 824860

#### **Minutes Secretary:**

**Ian Duncan** - email: [duncaniz@aol.com](mailto:duncaniz@aol.com) - Tel No: 01684 574965

#### **Membership Secretary:**

**Anne Spencer** - email: [apatura.metis@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:apatura.metis@yahoo.co.uk) - Tel No: 01691 648339

#### **Website Manager:**

**Neil Thompson** - email: [webmaster@bc-eig.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@bc-eig.org.uk) - Tel No: 01386 710917

#### **Treasurer**

**Nigel Peace** email: [liz-nigel@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:liz-nigel@hotmail.co.uk) Tel No: 01420 85496

#### **Newsletter Editors:**

**Simon & Anne Spencer** - as above

#### **Other Committee Members:**

**Dudley Cheesman** – email: [Dudley.cheesman@talktalk.net](mailto:Dudley.cheesman@talktalk.net)

**Nick Grestorex-Davies** – email [nickgdlepmann@googlemail.com](mailto:nickgdlepmann@googlemail.com)

**EIG WEBSITE:** [www.bc-eig.org.uk](http://www.bc-eig.org.uk)

Please email any thoughts, ideas or whatever you want included in the newsletter to:  
[cerisyi@btinternet.com](mailto:cerisyi@btinternet.com)

## ***Dates for your Diary:***

28th September Natural History Museum, London – Launch of Mapping European Butterflies II by Otakar Kudrna

19<sup>th</sup> November Cheltenham BC AGM and EIG AGM

29th-31st March 2012 Symposium: Future of Butterflies in Europe III (Wageningen), organised by Dutch Butterfly Conservation (De Vlinderstichting)

## ***2012 EIG Calendar Competition***

The photo competition we ran for the 2011 calendar was very successful with a lot of entries. We printed 150 Calendars and sold most of them. A big thank you to all those who submitted photographs and to Anne Spencer for putting it together. We are running a competition for photos for the 2012 calendar – so get out your cameras and send in your photos to Anne Spencer [apatura.metis@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:apatura.metis@yahoo.co.uk) by September 1<sup>st</sup> 2011. ***Please do not send more than 3 photos per individual.***

### **Photos for the calendar should be:**

- \* JPEG files only
- \* Minimum 1500 pixels on the long edge. Note that many photos have been submitted previously that don't meet this requirement and they have to be rejected as they will likely not print well. Most modern cameras will produce images that meet or exceed this specification.
- \* Subjectively, the photos must also be sharp.

*We would like a bit of blurb about the butterflies – Latin & English name, where/when they were photographed and any other relevant information etc.*

## ***EIG Trips***

2011 EIG Trip to Luz St Sauveur in the Pyrenees 9-16 July to assist with a local French Butterfly Atlas with extension to the Ariege. Now fully booked. Permits to use nets in the National Park have been obtained.

EIG Trip to Montenegro June 29 2011 Full

EIG Trip to Slovakia (1-7<sup>th</sup> August 2011) and Romania (8 – 14<sup>th</sup> August) to look for Danube Clouded Yellow (*Colias myrmidone*) still has places. Contact [natours@axelero.hu](mailto:natours@axelero.hu) before 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

### **Preliminary ideas for 2012**

July - Possible trip to the mountains of Northern Greece for Campers and Campervan owners only to survey for a number of red list species including Bosnian Blue (*Plebejus dardanus*), Balkan Heath (*Coenonympha orientalis*) etc. Contact Simon Spencer [cerisyi@btinternet.com](mailto:cerisyi@btinternet.com) for expressions of interest.

## ***Butterfly Conservation's Marsh European Award***

Lazaros Pamperis, Greece's foremost authority on butterflies received the 2010 Marsh European Award for his incredible lifetime contribution to the world of butterflies and particularly for his recent book entitled "The Butterflies of Greece"; giving distribution maps for all the 234 species found in his native country as well as the accumulated wisdom of many years in the field.



Lazaros Pamperis receiving his Marsh Award from Prof. Jeremy Thomas

of his free time as a mountaineer and later exploring the mountains and islands of his native Greece to meticulously record all the butterflies he has seen, carrying his tent and sleeping bag with him. What is amazing is that not only has Lazaros almost singlehandedly produced an atlas of the butterflies of Greece, he has done it without a car and without using a butterfly net. His book is not only packed with valuable distribution maps but also full of wonderful photographs - despite the fact he was not able to carry sophisticated equipment with him to the mountains that many photographers cannot be without. The results are spectacular and add enormously to our knowledge.

Lazaros travelled to the UK to attend Butterfly Conservation's Annual General Meeting at Churchill College Cambridge in November 2010, where The 2010 Marsh European Award was presented to him by Professor Jeremy Thomas. The award is for 'lifetime service in the field of Lepidoptera research and conservation in Europe'. With the help of Sue Collins, policy office for BCE who lives in Cambridge, EIG held a small dinner for Lazaros in Cambridge.

Lazaros has dedicated his life to butterflies, coming to admire them after spending much



Lazaros Pamperis in the Greek mountains with Maurice Avent (Chm. of Butterfly Conservation) Photo: Anne Spencer

It is greatly hoped that the publication of this book will stimulate interest in butterflies amongst Greeks. The book was published in both Greek and English. There is already a steady stream of UK butterfly enthusiasts visiting Greece to see its rich butterfly fauna and Butterfly Conservation's European Interests Group has sent several expeditions there to see rare and threatened species. With the help of colleagues in Greece, EIG issued a press release in Greek that was taken up by a few publications.

For more information visit [www.pamperis.gr](http://www.pamperis.gr)

EIG Committee would like to receive nominations for the 2011 European Marsh Award by September 1<sup>st</sup>. One nomination has already been received. Nominee with brief biography etc – proposer and seconder by email to Simon Spencer: [cerisyi@btinternet.com](mailto:cerisyi@btinternet.com)

**Simon Spencer**



## **Counting Butterflies**

Monitoring butterflies is fun. It shows you how the butterfly fauna at your site is changing. Combining these counts to produce national indexes and trends is even more fun. It not only makes clear where to focus for the conservation on a national and regional level, but is also very useful to compare where your local changes are paralleled on a national level. And of course bringing all national data together on a European or even global scale offers even more possibilities, also in the light of the Convention on Biological Diversity (<http://www.cbd.int>) and its implementation at EU level.

In this paper, I want to focus on the path between the actual observation at your transect on that lovely day in spring and the moment a national coordinator starts his calculations to come to indexes and trends. What are the different possibilities, what are the pros and cons and what is the future?

### **The classical way: paper**

For many years, this was the one and only method. You write your counts in a field book (or any piece of paper), and at some point (either the same day, but in some cases in the following winter) you copy your observation onto some official form. You put all your counts in an envelope and hope the mail does what it promises. A datatypist types all your data in a large database, and that's when the coordinator starts his work. He might come back to you with questions on some strange observation.

### **The pc comes in**

In some countries (e.g. the UK) a computer programme is offered to the recorders to enter their own counts into the computer (if they use the right computer platform). This can be done whenever they want. A first quick automatized control of obvious errors (40 Purple Emperors at one section might be a typing error?). It offers the recorder the possibility to perform some first analysis themselves. At the end of the season the data is sent to the coordinator who starts his work.

### **Online recording**

In many respects, online recording is very similar to the computer programme. Only the data is collected immediately at the server from the coordinator and entered via a browser, so platform independent (so works on all windows version, but also on a Apple or Linux computer). Again, an automatic check is possible when entering the data (five Orange tips on 12 August might be a typing error!). The coordinator can give feedback directly after entering the data, so in some cases a special observation can still be checked 'live', or the recorder can try to go back to make a photo of a special species. Furthermore, the data is available for a first quick analysis with the data already entered. That way an estimate of the trend of the Orange tip can be available in June instead of next winter.

### **Apps**

New smart phones offer much more new possibilities, and they get cheaper and cheaper (certainly Android phones). Standard functionality is that they have a gps, which means they simply know where you are and what the time is. In principle, you don't have to write down anymore how many of each species you saw at what section of your transect. You just enter what you see and the app allocates that to the right section and sends it to the server of the coordinator. These phones also have a camera, which allows you to make photos of special species and upload them as proof with the observation. Maybe in some cases, even automatic species recognition will become possible (but this is still far away I think). I don't know of such an app right now, but expect a start version to be possible soon.

At present, there are fifteen countries with a butterfly monitoring scheme, and new ones come in every year (Sweden and Luxembourg started in 2010). With this great data source, we can calculate European species trends as well as produce indicators (see <http://www.bc-europe.eu/category.asp?catid=9> for some results on this). But you can also see that there are still large gaps. And where there is no national scheme, all counts are welcome. Principally, even one or two transects can add a lot of information and help us improve and understand European butterfly trends. By far the most efficient way to collect these data would be online recording: available everywhere where there is internet and directly available for analysis. BCE has plans to make such a system. We had hoped to do that as a part of EU core funding in 2011. However this was not granted, so we have to look for new ways to fund this. Such a system would be available to be used at other national Butterfly Monitoring Schemes as well, as only translation of the web-interface is necessary. Sharing ideas and knowledge via such a system is fairly easy, as it can be improved on the go, there is no need to wait for an update moment.

As you can see, I have the feeling that online recording will be the future for butterfly monitoring. Such a system can also be implemented easily outside Europe, as internet is becoming easily available everywhere. I also expect Android and iPhone apps to become available as an extension for those who own such a smart phone.

**Chris van Swaay**  
**De Vlinderstichting / Butterfly Conservation Europe**

## Butterfly Surveying In France

The national butterfly survey scheme in France was begun by the network of national nature reserves and the surveying was conducted by the reserve wardens for a number of years, based on the model provided by Butterfly Conservation. In 2005 the national museum of natural history developed a programme of their own, and discussions were held to modify the two programmes in 2006 so that they were compatible. This national scheme is called the *Suivi Temporel des Rhopalocères de France* (STERF), and is part of the *Vigie-Nature* [Nature Watch] biodiversity recording scheme run by the Ecology Department of the *Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle* [National Museum of Natural History or MNHN]. Its objective is to quantify the changes over time in the butterfly population of France. As such it is a long term project aiming for national coverage, and is designed to be versatile enough to be used by both professionals and volunteers. There is now also a separate garden butterfly monitoring scheme co-ordinated by *Vigie-Nature* and administered by *Noé Conservation*.



One of the Transect areas

Surveyors gather data from (April) May to August (September) and send it to the STERF team co-ordinated by Luc Manil (editor of *Lépidoptères*, the magazine of the *Association des Lépidoptéristes de France*) and administered by Benoît Fontaine (MNHN). They do the number crunching and produce an [annual report](#) and analysis. The data also feeds in to international projects such as the European Grassland Butterfly Indicator Report and the Red Lists of Threatened Species.

Each surveyor either chooses or is randomly allocated one or more 2km<sup>2</sup> patches within a 10km radius of their home. They then decide on 5 - 15 transects within that square. The transects can be of varying length, depending on how rich the habitat is. For the French butterfly survey, you must be able to walk it in around 10 minutes, counting and identifying all the butterflies within the transect as you go. In practice this means that the average transect length is 200m (but they can be half that in high quality habitat). The average number of

species observed per transect visit is 3.6 (although some sites in Provence get as many as 25 species). The richest habitat in terms of numbers of species is calcareous grassland and coniferous woods (often associated with chalk grassland in the Ile-de-France). The poorest habitats are urban; agricultural land; and the fringes of non-forested habitat.

The most abundant butterflies in France are (in descending order of total individuals counted): Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*, Small White *Pieris rapae* and Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui* (catapulted to second place by the mass migration witnessed in 2009), Small / Green-veined White *Pieris rapae / napi*, Gatekeeper *Pyronia tithonus*, Marbled White *Melanargia galathea*, Chalkhill Blue *Polyommatus coridon*, Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*. The most frequently observed (that is, recorded by the most surveyors in the most transects) on the other hand are: Meadow Brown, Small Heath and Small White. Chalkhill Blues and Marbled Whites drop out of this second list because they are specialists of calcareous grassland, rather than generalists.

At present, the national results are skewed because of a predominance of recorders being located in suburban and / or northern France, and because somewhat over half the survey sites are chosen by the surveyors, not randomly selected. Also, some species (e.g. Whites *Pieris* spp, 'golden' Skippers *Thymelicus* spp, some Blues (Lycaeninae), Marbled Whites *Melanargia*



spp and Gatekeepers *Pyronia* spp) are difficult to separate to species level in the field whilst surveying. Difficulties with identification weaken the data, and the problem is compounded when the species are gregarious. As a consequence, a certain amount of pre- or post-surveying is permitted to allow surveyors to catch a sample without interfering with the transect walk time limits.

Of particular concern at the moment are butterflies that inhabit grasslands. As a result, many STERF surveyors are told that 3 of their transects in a square must be through agricultural land (intensive agriculture being one of the main causes of the decline in grassland species, along with the abandonment of steep grazing land). The aim is not to concentrate on high quality nature reserves, but to get a broad and realistic picture of the situation throughout France. The clearer the problem becomes, the more chance the project has of influencing policy.

If you are interested in monitoring butterflies and can commit to about an hour a month between May and September, please contact STERF. In 2010, there were only 174 sites covered, with 3000+ transects walked. The highest concentration of surveyors is in the Ile-de-France (around Paris), but there are very few surveyors in the north-east, west and south-west. Some *départements* don't have a single surveyor yet. You don't have to live in France (or even speak fluent French) but if you have a holiday house here and visit roughly once a month during the summer you could participate. If you have any questions don't hesitate to get in touch with me or with STERF (<http://www2.mnhn.fr/vigie-nature/spip.php?rubrique4>). I have translated the STERF abridged guidelines for surveying into English to encourage Anglophones to get involved. They are available here: <http://tinyurl.com/6ej76ln>

Susan Walter

[Loire Valley Nature](#) blog

Email: [susanwalter4@gmail.com](mailto:susanwalter4@gmail.com)

EIG strongly supports this initiative. If you know of ex pat butterfly enthusiasts in France forward this to them now!

## ***EIG Update: Hungarian Natural Heritage Trust, Kercaszomor, Hungary***

### **Brown Hairstreak Egg-hunt March 2011**

On a recent visit to the Trust site in Kercaszomor in the Órseg National Park (Western Hungary) a group of volunteers undertook a survey for eggs of Brown Hairstreak (*Thecla betulae*) under the guidance of Szabolcs Sáfián (known to many as Safi) with the assistance of young Hungarian lepidopterists Márton Strausz and Bálint Horváth. The group visited many locations within the Park that supported a reasonable quantity of Blackthorn, the well known larval foodplant.

Over a four day intensive search, Brown Hairstreak eggs were located in twenty-seven new 2,5x 2,5 km<sup>2</sup> UTM grids (which are used as mapping units of the Órség National Park). Eggs were found in a variety of aspects, although south was slightly favoured and from 10 cm to over 2 metres above ground level. The finding of several eggs at over 2 metres was a suspected response to the growth of the invasive Canadian Goldenrod (*Solidago*) which can reach nearly this height effectively putting any lower Blackthorn shoots into heavy shade. In some cases, relatively isolated groves of Blackthorn (over 500 metres from other Blackthorn) were found to be well used by the butterfly. Doubles were found in favoured spots and a maximum of four eggs on a single shoot was recorded. In addition to Brown Hairstreak, there were also several Black Hairstreak (*Satyrion pruni*) eggs located. A few eggs were suspected to be those of Blue-bordered Carpet *Plemyria rubiginata* (by Tony Simpson), although this has yet to be confirmed. One ring of Lackey *Melcosoma neustria* eggs was also recorded, while egg-clusters of the IUCN red listed Orange Eggar (*Eriogaster catax*) were located at quite a few new places. Amongst commoner overwintering butterflies, Large Tortoiseshell (*Nymphalis polychloros*) and two specimens of Camberwell Beauty (*Nymphalis antiopa*) were also observed. As a consequent result of the egg-hunt, the Hungarian assistants continued finding eggs from new localities as "They were well trained during the Egg-hunt"!

### **The Hungarian Natural Heritage Trust**

The relationship between the initiators of the Trust and EIG members goes back to 2006 when the first volunteer group from BC West Midlands branch visited Hungary to undertake a two weeks monitoring program organised by Ecotours Ltd., the leading Hungarian eco-tourism company. Branch volunteers spent one week in the Órség, contributing to the research of the habitat use of Scarce Large Blue (*Maculinea teleius*) and Dusky Large Blue (*Maculinea nausithous*). The programme was led by Safi. Within three years time, the foundations of the Hungarian Natural Heritage Trust (Természeti Örökségünk Alapítvány) were laid by a collaboration of Hungarian and British lepidopterists who also contributed financially to support the first years of the newly founded NGO and take over the management of about 10 hectares of *Maculinea* land in Kercaszomor village. Since then, the Trust has received a grant from the Hungarian Ministry of Environment and Water for the introduction of sympathetic land management and has carried out biodiversity monitoring projects in two national parks. Its biggest achievement, and also a challenge, is the two years research contract by the Órség National Park, during which the Trust will map all butterfly species, which appear in the Órség Special Protection Area (Natura 2000). The Trust would also like to develop eco-tourism potential in the Órség region. In 2011, it plans to buy an old house in Kercaszomor village, which will be renovated as a butterfly conservation centre and guesthouse of the Trust by selling out shares to people, who want to contribute to butterfly conservation and have a nice butterfly rich holiday at the same time. The Four Large Blues Tour, also hosted by the Trust, is possibly the only event where all European *Maculinea* species could be seen in a single locality. The Four Large Blue Tours will be run in July every year. Just as the EIG Newsletter is

published, the 1<sup>st</sup> International Butterfly and Moth Conservation Camp for Young Scientists and Enthusiasts in Kercaszomor (21-26<sup>th</sup> May 2011) has been held. Internationally recognised lepidopterists will train the next generation of conservationists, who come from all over Europe, and even from Turkey, to ensure the future of our butterflies.,

## **EIG contribution: Fund-raising Tour Slovenia 2010**



Safi receiving cheque from Mike Williams

A special fund-raising butterfly tour was organised by Green Eye Tours and BC EIG to support the Hungarian Natural Heritage Trust in August 2010. During a very successful week in Slovenia (butterfly-wise), just over 10,000 euro was raised to help butterfly conservation activities in the Órség which was a tremendous achievement. The first purchase from this generous donation was a new Husqvarna brush-cutter, which is now being used to remove shrub and *Solidago* from overgrown meadows. The Trust was also able to acquire an additional four hectares of land in Kercaszomor, including a smaller area, which is, due to lack of management, currently a young conifer plantation. There are still relic patches of dry meadow within this plot, which is not suited to conifers and where growth has been poor. These open areas still have a good flora which should be able to recolonise the more shaded areas once felling has got underway. It is hoped that the remaining parts of this plantation will become available for purchase in due course. The remaining half of the money raised will be spent on the purchase of the old house, which will hopefully become a frequently visited butterfly conservation hub.

## **EIG Fund-raising Tour Montenegro 2**

Trying to repeat the great success of last year's trip to Slovenia, Lajos Németh, executive of Green Eye Ecotours, has offered 100% donation of profit from a fund-raising tour to Montenegro in 2011. Mike Williams of EIG advertised the tour amongst EIG members and it filled up in a world-record 5 days!!! Thank to Lajos' extensive operation in the region for over 15 years, the tour will receive the best prices for the tour, hopefully raising a similar sum to the one in 2010. The tour will take off on the 29<sup>th</sup> June.

## **Friends of Órség**

During recent discussions about fund-raising with EIG members, the Trust was recommended to establish an informal group called the "Friends of Órség". Anybody donating £1,000 to the Trust will be displayed on its internet homepage and will receive discounts from the guesthouse and tour fees operated by the Trust. Donors of over £ 5 000 will receive a special package, which includes free butterfly and moth holiday opportunities (1 week free in any chosen date each year for 5 years) in the Trusts' future guesthouse from its completion. The first "Friends of Órség" are Hugh Glennie, Tony Simpson and David Dennis. Any other EIG members interested in becoming a Friend should contact Paul Butter (paulnbutter@hotmail.com)

The Trust would like to sincerely thank all EIG Members who have participated in the Slovenia tour namely Barbara and Maurice Higginbotham, Bridget and Lawrie de Whalley, Neil Thompson, Sheila and Roger Wasley, Peter Bygate, David Dennis, Tony Simpson and Mike Williams and also all those who helped in the Brown Hairstreak recording project namely Tony Simpson, Mike Williams, David Dennis, Hugh Glennie, Jack Ward and Paul Butter and who volunteered in the butterfly mapping project: Bridget and Lawrie de Whalley.



The Trust will restore the semi-dry grassland on this overgrown meadow

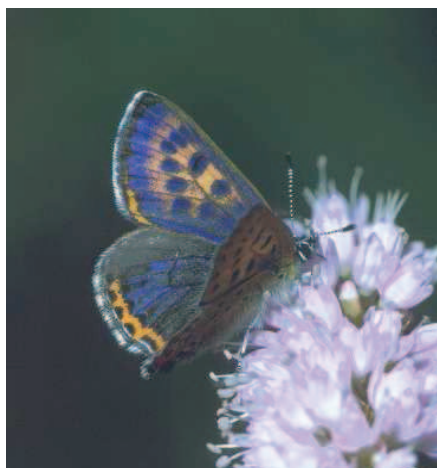
Photo: Paul Butter

**Paul Butter, Szabolcs Sáfián and Mike Williams**



## Arctic Butterflies

### Helle in Scandinavia



Violet Copper *Lycaena helle*  
from the Ardennes Photo: Bernard Watts

Anyway, I looked for likely habitat, meadows managed by traditional haymaking, or so I believed, and then for three days kept visiting sites cyclically and doing what I could in the occasional brighter periods. This all amounted to a few Green-veined Whites (*Pieris napi*), Orange Tips (*Anthocharis cardamines*) and Dingy Skippers (*Erynnis tages*), plus, by some woodland tracks which also took my fancy, some Northern Wall Browns (*Lasiommata petropolitana*).

Interspersed with all this, I had to get a replacement car because mine broke.



Torneträsk from Mt Njulla in good weather

by the time I had tumbled myself out the car and my camera into functioning mode, it was gone. However, exploring the track edge I spotted it low in the foliage, and it really was a male Violet Copper! I took two quick pictures, and it was off and never seen again, so at least I had a picture to illustrate *helle* in Scandinavian in my book. It is, in fact, a relatively drab form (see the PDF file on *L. helle* (Violet Copper)).

Although the Violet Copper (*Lycaena helle*) is one of the most striking of all European butterflies, I have not photographed it in many places. So, last summer, I decided to go to Sweden in mid-June specifically to photograph the Scandinavian race which is now becoming endangered. Nils Ryholm kindly gave me some advice, and accordingly I planned a trip to Östersund, about 500 km north of Stockholm, with an anticipated bonus of going on to Abisko to enjoy some true arctic species.

Due to plane delays, I arrived a day late in Östersund, where it was a cloudy twelve degrees, to be told there had been no summer weather at all prior to my arrival. And so it continued!



Habitat where Violet Copper was found in Sweden Photo: Bernard Watts

My endeavours were eventually rewarded at about 5 pm on the third day when I was despondently butterfly spotting old-man-style, gazing at the verge while the car idled along in first gear on the wrong side of the track in some woodland. I noticed a small, dark *Lycaenid* which I was convinced would turn out to be the target. But,

I hoped the weather would improve in the arctic, so I drove 700 km northwards to Abisko, but there it was 3 degrees and sometimes snowing. And the chair lift up Mt Njulla was broken, but in the prevailing conditions who cared! After three days of zero achievement, the five day weather forecast still showed no expected improvement so I came home.

Although the weather can be unrelentingly awful in northern Scandinavia, the countryside is magical. The good-times are so good the risk is worth it. I shall definitely go back.

EIG Newsletter 9 Part II is an extract from *European Butterflies: A portrait in Photographs* by Bernard Watts and is Chapter 5.17 *Lycaena helle*.

**Bernard Watts**

### ***Northern Scandinavia, summer 2010.***

A good number of like-minded butterfly people were travelling to N Scandinavia this summer. Most of the travel plans overlapped which allowed us to meet and share field notes during our trip.

Pete and I travelled to Lulea airport on 24<sup>th</sup> June. It was hot and sunny and we had a good feeling about the coming days. This was exactly the situation that greeted us on our 1999 trip to the same areas, the main difference being the length of the heat wave that had preceded us in 1999.

We were to stay in Lulea that evening so, with the hire car successfully collected, we searched locally for butterflies. We were rewarded at a roadside site of open birch forest and abandoned grassland. This sparsely flowery place was home to half a dozen very nice *Carterocephalus sylvicolus* (Northern Chequered Skipper), including females. They were patrolling open grassy glades in the birch woodland, stopping frequently on flowers and prominent grasses and twigs. It was so warm though that approach for photographs was difficult.

Although the sun does set at Lulea even at mid summer (it is 65.5 degrees north) it is always light with a bright sunset glow to the north even at midnight. However, the northern sun drops low which in woodland situations means sunshine ceases to reach ground level quite early and butterflies stop flying. Also, the colour tones change dramatically quite early at around 1700. Just as we were losing the sun, a large dark butterfly passed through, settling on one or two tree trunks on its way. It was difficult to approach because I couldn't see exactly where it landed amongst all the tree trunks and the terrain was covered in deep boggy patches hidden below long grasses. Fortunately it settled about 5m up a tree in the sunshine and I was able to take a photo and zoom in via the camera's digital window and identify *Erebia embla* (Lapland Ringlet). Great! It was a late date for this species at such a low altitude and it was extremely worn.

The following day was sunny, although a weather front was forecast for the evening. We spent all day in the bogs around Alvesbyn. It was hot and humid work, but mercifully there were almost no mosquitoes (in complete contrast to the nightmare swarms of the 1999 season when I was bitten relentlessly). Excellent to find a large range of special butterflies such as *Oeneis jutta* (Batlic Grayling) in very good numbers, several difficult to track *E. embla* (Lapland Ringlet), the skipper *Pyrgus centaureae* (Northern Grizzled Skipper), a few gorgeous *Boloria frigga* (Frigga's Fritillary), a single *B. eunomia* (Bog Fritillary) and plenty of the pale *Colias palaeno*.

*O. jutta* (Baltic Grayling) was very frequently settled on tree trunks where it was easy to spot if you'd seen it land, otherwise invisible. Equally frequently, it landed in grass and on moss, although as the day progressed this behaviour became uncommon. *E. embla* (Lapland Ringlet) behaved in exactly the same way, but they were rather more elusive and secretive and tended to settle much less frequently. They were quickly lost in the forest of tree trunks and boggy grasslands.

With the weather front set to close in even more quickly than expected, we headed the long way north with the hope of beating the clouds and finding some of the true Arctic specialities way above the Arctic circle.

But the next day was mostly cloudy. In bogs in the Kautokeino area, we found a few, and our only, *Euphydryas iduna* (Lapland Fritillary), a single *Boloria aquilonaris* (Cranberry Fritillary) flying amongst the rather commoner lovely *Boloria freija* (Freija's Fritillary). Half a dozen *Oeneis norna* was another excellent species in this area. We had the very distinct impression that we were very early in the season and that many butterflies were only just emerging. This was backed up by the situation with the mosquitoes and other biting bugs – there were hardly any at all.

Some way north of Kautokeino, we passed a lorry. This is an extremely rare event up here in the fabulous empty wilderness areas of Finland where other road users are very rare. From behind the lorry, a dark butterfly shape flopped to the road surface. Pulling to a halt and running back down the road, I found a stunned *Erebia polaris* (Arctic Woodland Ringlet). In the following few minutes of weak sunshine, another two crossed the road. There was no obvious habitat for them but we were close to the river which is, I believe, a prerequisite for this species.

We pressed on and several hours later we arrived at Alta to see the very last sunshine disappear behind menacing clouds that were scuttling low and fast across the hills. Alta is a small town with very expensive hotels and restaurants. At 70 degrees north it is shocking to reflect that over winter temperatures can drop to -30C and months pass without sunlight. What do people do during this time to maintain morale is anyone's guess!

The 27<sup>th</sup> was cold and wet. We meet up with a friend and swapped notes about the butterflies of the area. Nothing was yet flying on the high ground, in complete contrast to the same period in 1999 when some of the earliest Arctic species were already nearing the end of their flight period. However, lower down *Agriades aquilo* (Arctic Blue) was flying in some numbers in sunshine yesterday. So, we spent the morning searching for roosting butterflies and found one single *A. Aquilo* - my only sighting of this lovely butterfly. No chance at all of seeing its lovely icy blue upperside but we did of course take photos of the underside in the dark breezy conditions. A dozen other roosting blues were found and eagerly checked out for *A. aquilo*, but each one was *Polyommatus icarus* (Common Blue).

The 28<sup>th</sup> was, if anything, colder, windier and darker. With no prospect of improvement offered by the ten 10 day forecast, we left for slightly more optimistic conditions at Abisko in Sweden. Hours later, at Kiruna we finally left the thick clouds for mostly sunny skies. Plenty of roadside bogs to investigate around here and we were happy to see numbers of *P. centaureae* (Northern Grizzled Skipper), *B. frigga* (Frigga's Fritillary), *O. jutta* (Baltic Grayling) and, a new species for the holiday, *Erebia disa* (Arctic Ringlet). All were fresh out so we were "worried" about the advancement of the season higher up in the mountains.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> we enjoyed 4 hours of sunshine at Lappporten, walking up from Abisko through the birch scrub and onto the open bog and grasslands. It was a wonderful wilderness experience. Looking back across the lake onto vast expanses of untouched forest and hills there was a lot



more snow on the hills compared to our successful 1999 visit, although we were about a week earlier this time at this site.

*Colias nastes* (Pale Arctic Clouded Yellow) was the common butterfly of the area. It was mostly very fresh. With them were a few *P. centaureae* (Northern Grizzled Skipper) and some numbers of *C. freija* (Fria's Fritillary), but we expected more butterflies and more species for the date. So our season was a late one, although surely not exceptional in this region.

Two days of cold dark windy and occasionally damp weather followed. However, the numbers of butterfly people "hanging" about punctuated the day. Simon/ Anne and Richard/ Ilija ate with us at the Tourist station and we swapped notes and expectations about the area.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> was our final day in the mountains and we had a break in the clouds. More butterflies were flying today at Lapporten. *C. nastes* (Pale Arctic Clouded Yellow) was much commoner in open places with many hundreds flying over the turf. *P. centaureae* was also commoner amongst the open scrub. But only 3 new species for the site – a single *O. norna* (Norse Grayling) (sadly not the rare *O. bore* (Arctic Grayling) which is very occasionally recorded here) *Boloria selene* (Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary) and *Erebia pandrose* (Dewy Ringlet). We had fabulous views of Arctic Skua patrolling around us and landing just 10m away.

Our last evening and, if I remember correctly, Simon/ Anne and Richard/ Ilija had departed so we met Mike/ Martin who'd just arrived in the Arctic and were also staying at the Tourist station. We had a good meal again and swapped info, although the forecast for the following days was pretty grim and offered little hope for more butterflies in the mountains for Mike and Martin.

The following day, we drove back to Lulea. Just inland from the coast, the clouds started breaking up and we enjoyed some sunshine and lowland butterflies. *O. jutta* (Baltic Grayling) and the common *C. palaeno* (Moorland Clouded Yellow) were looking worn now. *Erebia ligea* (Arran Brown), *Vacciniina optilete* (Cranberry Blue), *Plebejus idas* (Idas Blue), *Eunomia eumedon* (Geranium Argus) and *Ochlodes sylvanus* (Large Skipper) were flying over flower rich meadows.

On 4<sup>th</sup> July, I left Peter at the airport and I had 3 hours to "kill" before my flight. I returned to our *C. silvicolus* (Northern Chequered Skipper) site and found just one worn individual still flying in the woodland glades. A big surprise was *Polyommatus amanda* (Amanda's Blue), which my old books didn't indicate as flying in the north Baltic area. A small pocket book of Scandinavian butterflies did show a spot on the map here for this species so I hadn't made the discovery of the century!

Great butterflying, standard poor Arctic weather dominating butterfly events, expensive trip but a wonderful wilderness adventure with some very special butterflies. Great to meet up with like minded people in the field too!

For a comprehensive collection of photographs of European Butterflies including many from the Arctic visit Matt's website on <http://www.eurobutterflies.com/index.htm>

**Matt Rowlings**



## Northern Lapland 1<sup>st</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> July 2010

There is a small group of butterfly species whose European distribution is confined to the far north of Scandinavia. Perhaps it is partly this relative inaccessibility for butterfly enthusiasts based in more southerly latitudes, combined with the challenge of trying to see these species in their inevitably short and unpredictable arctic flight seasons and the spectacular wilderness landscapes of Lapland, which makes them so enigmatic and tantalising.

We had only a relatively short period of days available, so we decided to forego the undoubted fascinations of driving up through southern Scandinavia and to concentrate our attention on just the far north, targeting the 14 species that have a very restricted northern distribution. We flew to Rovaneimi in northern Finland, which is virtually on the Arctic Circle, and headed north in our hire-car from there. After a worryingly cloudy first couple of hours on that first morning with nothing much seen, the sun then appeared and almost immediately we saw the first butterfly of the trip, a Moorland Clouded Yellow *Colias palaeno* quartering a road verge near Saukorri. Stopping for this, we found also Cranberry Blue *Plebejus optilete* and Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi*. Passing through abundant birch and pine forests, we crossed the scarcely noticeable "border" into Sweden and soon added a scattering of Pearl-bordered Fritillaries *Boloria euphrosyne*. A picnic lunch-stop near Hiirenkancas, by a beautiful lakeside meadow of Wood Cranesbills *Geranium sylvaticum*, produced Mazarine Blue *Cyaniris semiargus*, Green-veined White and a nice colony of Geranium Argus *Aricia eumedon*. Little did we realise how much we would miss such a relative abundance of species in the coming days!

Our destination for that first evening was Abisko but we knew that on route we would be likely to pass by some interesting areas of bog. The first few areas we searched yielded some good dragonflies, like White-faced Darter *Leucorrhinia dubia* and Northern Emerald *Somatochlora arctica* but no butterflies. We saw lakes with Goldeneyes with broods of chicks and other northern birds like Slavonian Grebe, with Siberian Tit in the nearby woods. But, it was not until we stopped at a bog near Vuonajohka, not far short of Abisko, in the early evening that we found the first of the northern butterflies, a beautiful Frigga's Fritillary *Boloria frigga*. It was flying over a quaking bog area with abundant Cloudberry on the edge of birch scrub.

We were now very much in the land of the midnight sun and though it stayed bright all night, the relative coolness meant that no butterflies were flying on into the evening. We had arranged to meet up with Matt and Pete Rowlings in the Abisko Tourist Station and over dinner (and wincingly expensive beer) we exchanged experiences of what we had found so far. It seemed the weather had been the main challenge for them in recent days and so it was to prove for us. Next morning "dawned" bright but with complete grey skies but we decided, nonetheless, to explore the slopes of the mountains to the NW, hoping that the sun might break through. Climbing up through beautiful birchwoods with singing Bluethroats, we eventually came out onto a more open plateau area. A Greenshank was clearly nesting by the shores of one of the lakes here and a female Velvet Scoter on territory was another reminder that we were now in the arctic. At just over 500 metres, we found some boggy areas and, as we did so, just briefly the sun tried to shine through the clouds. It was sufficient and very soon we were admiring our first Freija's Fritillaries *Boloria freija*, as they flitted low over the bog vegetation. Higher still (at just over 600 metres now), we were on the edge of more open moorland. Thankfully, the sun broke through the clouds again and a scattering of delicately coloured Pale Arctic Clouded Yellow *Colias tyche* took to the wing, flying fast and low. We saw a few more Freija's Fritillaries here and, on the way back down to Abisko in the early evening, we got brief views of a Northern Grizzled Skipper *Pyrgus centaureae*.

The 4<sup>th</sup> July was bright but with lots of cloud and very changeable. We wanted to go to the high summits above to look for Dusky-winged Fritillary *Boloria improba* but, with the cloud completely hiding the peaks of the mountains around us, this was not an option. We explored instead along

the valley to the NW for most of that day but the only butterfly seen was a Green-veined White of the dusky northern subspecies *Pieris napi adalwinda*.

Next day continued cool and so, with the summit of Nuolja mountain still hidden in cloud and our time slipping by, we decided to head further north and drove, via Enontekiö in Finland, up to Alta in northern Norway. The journey took most of the day through some fantastic scenery, with birds like Whooper Swan, Common Crane and stunning black Spotted Redshanks on breeding territory, but our only butterflies that day were a couple of Cranberry Blues.

Pete Russell's splendid account of his trip north in 1992 (published in several instalments in the Bulletin of the AES) had very much whet our appetites and we decided to focus on the Baeskedes area just to the south of Alta. Intending to stay just a few days, we based ourselves at Gargia Fjellstuve, a Norwegian mountain refuge, but we liked it so much we ended up staying for a week. Encouragingly, on the walls were some great photos of many of the northern butterfly specialities, taken many years ago by Hans Henrikson, author of the classic book *Butterflies of Scandinavia in Nature*. Gargia is located on the Baeskedes road itself but tucked into the valley just before it rises up onto the moorland, so proved a very convenient and comfortable base.

We had arrived in heavy rain and thunderstorms, but next morning was brighter with some sunny periods but still cool. We soon found a Cranberry Blue on the woodland edge, then we started out across the moorland areas where eventually we caught sight of some dark *Erebia* types over the valley bogs. Better views later confirmed our suspicions that these were our first Arctic Ringlet *Erebia disa*. An evening visit along the Baeskedes road gave us good views of Elk but, on the edge of the open moor, we were incredibly lucky to watch three Wolverines as they quartered the slopes opposite. These are very rare mammals these days in northern Scandinavia with only very few sightings each year.

Next morning we were back up on the plateau and, in an hour's weak and intermittent sun, we found a Freija's Fritillary, plus a Dewy Ringlet *Erebia pandrose* and an Arctic Ringlet for comparison. After that, the cloud came over and later it rained heavily so that was our butterfly tally for the day.

Nonetheless, in the afternoon, we checked out the Bossekopp area close to the shore by Alta town which we had worked out must be the Type Locality for Arctic Woodland Ringlet *Erebia polaris*. However, this site now seemed to be largely built over by the airport terminal and housing. We used the poor weather to visit the beautiful Alta museum and its astonishing prehistoric rock art on the coastal rocks.



Polar Fritillary (*Boloria polaris*)

8<sup>th</sup> July was bright and sunny so we were quickly up on the plateau again and soon had the same three species as yesterday plus Bog Fritillary *Boloria eunomia*. Indeed, Arctic Ringlet, Dewy Ringlet and Freija's Fritillary proved common around the edge of the valley bogs and we took advantage of the sunny weather to climb one of the higher peaks, Grønåsen, which rises to 485 metres. Here we had entered the zone of polygonal shapes formed by small stones and only a very sparse low vegetation of Wild Azalea,

Dwarf Birch and Crowberry. After some searching, we eventually encountered a beautifully fresh Polar Fritillary *Boloria polaris*, nectaring on the flowers of Bog Rosemary. Triumphant we returned to Gargia for a splendid meal of Elk stew.

On 9<sup>th</sup> July it was clear the weather had changed and the sun shone from early in the morning to the evening (and indeed most of the following night!) but with loads of white clouds scudding over. It was to prove an amazing day. We started by checking out a site near Alta, by the Alta River Camping, where Pete Russell had seen Arctic Woodland Ringlet many years ago. We drew a blank in the campsite itself, but to our amazement, along a small track just opposite the entrance, there they were! Two excellent, delicate Arctic Woodland Ringlets were joined by several Idas Blues (of the northern subspecies *Plebejus idas lapponica*) and quite a few Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*). Small Tortoiseshell caterpillars were found munching the nettles and later we saw an adult. In the



Arctic Woodland Ringlet (*Erebia polaris*)

afternoon, we were back on a now favourite area on the plateau above the north end of the Baeskedes road. Though only a few hundred metres in altitude, we were here at 69°40' North and we had an extraordinary few hours amongst the arctic butterflies – Dewy Ringlet, Arctic Ringlet, Freija's, Frigga's and Bog Fritillaries abounded and we added a Norse Grayling *Oeneis norna*; on the edge of the birch woodland, a Moorland Clouded Yellow and an Alpine Grizzled Skipper *Pyrgus andromedae*. On another summit area with stone polygons further north, we found two more Polar Fritillaries, giving us 13 butterfly species for the day. What a difference some sun makes!



Arctic Blue (*Plebejus aquilo*)

Next day was bright and cloudy with some sunny patches and we headed over to Kåfjord to visit the old copper mines above the Tirpitz Museum. We had been given this as a good locality for Arctic Blue *Plebejus aquilo* and so it proved. We easily saw some 25 of these little gems but it was hard-going trying to photograph them on the loose scree below the mine. A Small Copper appeared briefly and a Silver-spotted Skipper *Hesperia comma* nectared on the Biting Stonecrop flowers and we also found another Arctic Woodland Ringlet.

Our time in the north was running out but there were still a few of the arctic butterflies that we wanted to find so we stubbornly returned to the high plateaus above Baeskedes. In short sunny spells, the usual cast of fritillaries and ringlets appeared and we also glimpsed a Pale Arctic Clouded Yellow but, on the summits, the clouds were scudding over in a brisk breeze. For a couple of hours it seemed that our chosen hill was the only one around that was not in the sun! We were just about to give up and descend when we spotted a small sun patch possibly heading our way. As the clouds raced over, the sun shone on our mountain summit for only about three minutes but it was enough! A fleeting movement from a remarkably pale brown, almost yellowish butterfly led us to great views of Arctic Grayling *Oeneis bore*, watching it as it went to ground again the moment the sun disappeared!

Next morning, we reluctantly departed from Baeskedes, and took two days to wend our way south to Rovaneimi. On our way, we added Arran Brown *Erebia ligea*, Large Heath *Coenonympha tullia* and Cranberry Fritillary *Boloria aquilonaris* to our list for the trip, giving a total of 29 butterfly species seen in 8 days. Certainly, some of them had been hard work to find but overall the trip was hugely satisfying. We also managed to leave a few of the northern



specialities to go back for on another occasion, like Arctic Fritillary *Boloria chariclea*, Dusky-winged Fritillary *Boloria improba*, Northern Clouded Yellow *Colias hecla* and Lapland Fritillary *Euphydryas iduna*!

Our thanks to Simon Spencer, Bernard Watts, Ilja Vukomanovic, Richard Smith and Nils Rhyholm for all the help and advice on localities and logistics that they kindly shared with us in planning this trip.

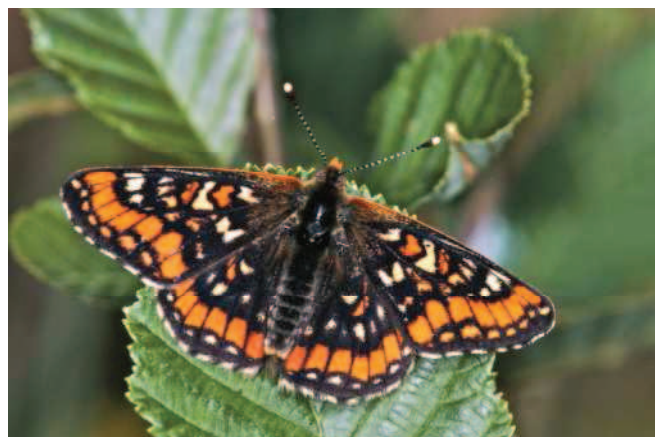
**Martin Davies and Mike Prentice**

## ***Butterflies of the Arctic Circle***

For some years now, and with a group of like-minded friends, I have spent a week or two abroad each summer photographing the butterflies of Europe. There are a handful of species that can only be found inside the Arctic Circle and last summer we set off to find them. Although many of the species are circumpolar in distribution, our destination was Northern Scandinavia taking in a few sites in Southern Sweden along the way.

For anyone thinking of a similar trip it is a journey that requires careful planning and a number of points have to be considered. The main flight periods are from mid June to mid July, although this can vary by a few days or a week or more each year. The weather inside the Arctic Circle can be extremely variable; you can expect two days rain out of every three and temperatures can struggle to rise above freezing, then rise to the mid twenties centigrade in only a day or two. Mosquitoes occasionally reach plague proportions, and can bite through a single layer of clothing so gauze hoods/gloves and repellent are essential.

Our solution was to travel in camper vans (one owned, one hired) as this provided the flexibility to monitor the forecast and vary our route to take advantage of good weather in a way not possible with fixed accommodation. We set off from North Wales on 11<sup>th</sup> June, crossed the Channel and spent the night on a campsite just outside Dunkerque. The next day we drove through Belgium, Holland and Germany and, after a short ferry crossing, found a site to park the vans in Denmark. We crossed by bridge to Malmo in Sweden the next day and drove north to a campsite near the small town of Lindesberg, approximately 100km west of Stockholm.



**Scarce Fritillary** (*Euphydryas maturna*)

We had two sites to visit in this area and hoped to find the Scarce Fritillary and the Scarce Heath. Neither of these butterflies are found inside the Arctic Circle, but both have disappeared from much of Western Europe. There are a small number of sites in Scandinavia, with stronger populations in Eastern Europe. On 15<sup>th</sup> June we set off to a wooded site with Ash, Pine and Birch and, in a clearing near a stream, had our first sighting of a Scarce Fritillary! During the afternoon we found several more specimens, mostly very fresh, skiing in the sunshine. Patient searching

revealed a pupa of this species attached to a rock and we were later rewarded with a fully-grown yellow and black larva. The latter was unexpected and was most likely a specimen that had been parasitized by an Ichneumon that prevents pupation. We also found Heath Fritillary larva and Northern Grizzled Skipper on the same site.



After this excellent start, we visited a site the following day to search for the Scarce Heath. This site was much wetter, although we eventually found our target species on a dry ridge in open clearings that were being grazed by a hardy breed of local cattle to improve habitat quality for this rarity. The Scarce Heath proved to be much more challenging to photograph than Scarce Fritillary: only occasionally would they stop to rest on a blade of grass or a flower head and were very easily disturbed. This species was sparsely distributed and we saw no more than half a dozen specimens during the day. During our stay near Lindesberg, we had hoped to find the Poplar Admiral: a species widely distributed throughout Europe but one that had always managed to elude us in our earlier travels. Unfortunately, this occasion was to prove no different as we had arrived before the butterflies had emerged. We were however, lucky enough to find the Moorland Clouded Yellow, another species I had not seen before.

On 17<sup>th</sup> June we moved north to the area around Floda. Here the habitat was pine forest with some birch. The only natural clearings in the forest were bogs, typically with standing water in the middle, Cotton Grass growing around the water's edge and surrounded by an area of wet vegetation with many tussocks until it became dry enough for the forest to take hold. Staying close to the forest edge, it was possible to traverse these areas (but not without the risk of sinking knee deep into the bog). Mosquitoes were especially virulent in these conditions. However we had occasional sightings of large, dark coloured butterflies flying strongly up one pine trunk and down the next probably searching for females. This was our quarry, the Baltic Grayling. Again, sparsely distributed, these butterflies only occasionally settled, were brilliantly camouflaged and took flight at the slightest disturbance. They did, however, afford rare opportunities for photography, both on the pine trunks and when they occasionally settled on vegetation in the bog.

We next drove north to Nordmaling on the Baltic coast. The next two days were cold and wet but on 20<sup>th</sup> June the weather improved and we surveyed a bog near Ångersjö. This proved fruitful and we found a single specimen of Frigga's Fritillary. That night we camped at Langstrask and moved north to Fagenhaden, about forty kilometres west of Pitea. The bogs in this area produced a good range of species including Pearl Bordered Fritillary, Baltic Grayling, Northern Grizzled Skipper, Cranberry Blue and Bog fritillary. The last two of these were new species for me. All of the species were present in low to moderate numbers and most were very fresh indicating that this season may have been "late" compared to previous years.

Continuing our journey north on the E4 which follows the Baltic coast, we arrived in the vicinity of Pitea. This was the general area in which we hoped to find the Northern Chequered Skipper.



Freija's Fritillary (*Boloria freija*)

Although we had no site information, the habitat requirements for this butterfly are wet grassland adjacent to the forest edge, so we toured some minor roads that took us round a small peninsular. Eventually, between Trundaven and Langviken, we found what seemed a suitable spot. After half an hour surveying, we had our first sighting and eventually found in the region of ten to twenty specimens, a few of which allowed us to photograph them. In the adjacent forest, we also found some worn specimens of the Northern Wall Brown and Moorland Clouded Yellow.

This drive off the main road also provided our first distant sightings of reindeer.

The next day's weather was poor so we drove north to Kiruna, crossing the Arctic Circle en route. Reindeer now became as troublesome on the roads as sheep are in North Wales! Kiruna boasts an airport and Europe's largest open cast mine. Huge trains loaded with iron ore leave every hour for the port of Narvik in Norway. In spite of the industrial setting, however, on

24<sup>th</sup> June a bog within sight of the airport provided our first sightings of Freija's Fritillary and the Arctic Ringlet. We also found Northern Grizzled Skipper on the same site.

With the weather deteriorating we moved north to Abisko and camped on a large campsite just outside the town. Here, we were able to climb above the tree line and explore a habitat comprised of low growing tundra rather than the forest that had dominated the earlier part of our journey. A brief break in the weather on 25<sup>th</sup> June allowed us to find and photograph the Pale Arctic Clouded Yellow and more Freija's Fritillaries. The temperature now fell well below freezing and, although we had some epic walking with stunning wild flowers around Laktatjakka, there were no butterflies on the wing.

The inclement weather now proved to be something of a dilemma: our plan had been to drive north to Alta in the northern tip of Norway but the forecast for this area was very poor. There were also reports of significant accumulations of snow on the road, which could be tricky with our camper vans. However, conditions locally were not much better! In the end, we decided to remain in Abisko as we could not risk being delayed on our two and a half thousand mile return journey as our hired van had to be returned on time. On 29<sup>th</sup> June the weather



Norse Grayling (*Oenis norna*)

improved and we climbed through the last of the birch to the foot of the mountains well above the tree line. We were rewarded with a single sighting (but no photographs!) of the Lapland Fritillary, more Freija's Fritillary, Pale Arctic Clouded Yellow and Northern Grizzled Skipper, and finally several sightings (and photographs!) of the attractive Norse Grayling.

This proved to be the last of our Arctic species and, as the forecast was less than promising, we reluctantly decided to head south. On 2<sup>nd</sup> July the weather improved and we had time to investigate

an interesting, but very wet site near Pitea. This brief stop yielded a colony of Large Heath, all without any eyespots, unlike the types we have in

Wales. A second stop, just south of Umea provided the opportunity to explore a promising looking bog with access from the main road. In a very short time we had seen and photographed several specimens of Cranberry Fritillary, another new species for me.

Our final stop was on 4<sup>th</sup> July near Nykopping. We were well ahead of schedule on the return journey, and the warm weather provided a final opportunity to search for the Poplar Admiral. Having no specific site information for this area, we looked for Aspen (the larval food plant in this part of the world) close to a sunny track; the conditions under which adults might descend from the trees and bask. A short drive inland provided the right conditions and we eventually had a couple of glimpses of large butterflies soaring and gliding around the trees. Eventually, one landed on a sunny, dusty section of path and we were able to snatch a few photographs of a rather worn but nonetheless impressive specimen of this large and elusive Nymphalid. This was a great way to conclude the Lepidoptera side of our expedition.

The remainder of our return journey passed without incident and we were able to return our camper van on time and on the appointed date having had a very satisfactory tour of this remarkable wilderness.

**Ilija Vukomanovic**

## Trip report – France 2010

Having done very little butterflying in France, for July 2010 we decided to spend about 3 weeks in the mountains of the south-east. The first week was spent with a mostly botanically-minded Naturetrek tour staying in Lans en Vercors. After that, the two of us transferred to Briançon in the south east of L' Ecrins near the Italian border. Interestingly, neither area seems particularly well documented for butterflies or so it seemed from internet research. Our inevitable routine was to photograph everything we could, then if necessary sort it out either at the hotel on the laptop or once we were back in UK

### Part 1 The Vercors 21<sup>st</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> July

We met the group at Lyon airport then transferred to Lans en Vercors, arriving late afternoon but picking up mating Mallow Skippers en route. Our first full day in the field, saw us stopping at a meadow at Les Merciers with a fine selection including Chalkhill Blue (*Polyommatus coridon*), Spotted Fritillary (*Melitaea didyma*), Arran Brown (*Erebia ligea*), Great Sooty Satyr (*Satyrus ferula*) and a presumed Rock Grayling (*Hipparchia alcyone*). Happily, Apollos (*Parnassus Apollo*) were around in good numbers and one posed beautifully, an event that was to become regular. On then to the Foret du Bouchet then Les Buryeres, when we were rained off at 4.00pm, but still managed Titania's Fritillary (*Boloria titania*) in a woodland clearing.

Rain early the next day (23<sup>rd</sup>) soon broke to a fine, warm day with sun and scattered cloud. After some early botanising, we drove to St Julien en Vercors before climbing to Font d'Urles. Although breezy, some butterflies were about including Western Brassy Ringlet (*Erebia arvernensis*), Scotch Argus (*Erebia aethiops*) and Niobe Fritillary (*Argynnis niobe*), but it was hard work. July 24<sup>th</sup> was better, a fine, sunny if chilly day, much of it spent botanising the Route Forestale de Moliere. However one meadow held a good selection of butterflies, including Chapman's Blue (*Polyommatus thersites*), Scarce Copper (*Lycaena vigaurae*) and Large Grizzled Skipper (*Pyrgus alveus*). We then moved on to Meaudres before stopping for a final break at the Gorges de Bornes at les Jarrards where streamside vegetation held Marbled Fritillary (*Brenthis daphne*).



Pearly Heath (*Coenonympha arcania*),

The next day was again fine, warm and sunny, so we drove through the Gorges de Bornes stopping for mosses, frogs and more Scotch Argus at the Tunnel d'Arbois then up to the long, south facing rock face above Presles where there were stacks of butterflies including Pearly Heath (*Coenonympha arcania*), Lulworth Skipper (*Thymelicus action*), Large Blue (*Phenagris arion*) and Great Banded (*Brintesia circe*) and (probable) Rock Graylings (*Hipparchia alcyone*). We had lunch at the recently mown meadow at

Fontane de Petouze – the adjacent meadow was as yet untouched and not covered in French campers so produced Silver-washed Fritillary (*Argynnis adippe*) and White Admiral (*Ladoga Camilla*). Last stop, was the ice cream bar at Pont en Royane followed by the nearby buddleia bushes along the river for, amongst other stuff, lots of Humming-bird Hawkmoths, a confused Dryad apparently trying to mate with a Great Banded Grayling (*Brintesia circe*), Scarce Swallowtail (*Iphiclides podalirius*) and Southern White Admiral (*Limenitis reducta*).

On 26<sup>th</sup> we drove to Moliere then walked a way along the ridge seeing Common Brassy and Almond-eyed Ringlets, False Heath and Titania's Fritillary (*Boloria titania*) and our first Damon Blues (*Polyommatus damon*), while the walk back in the grazed meadow was notable for two species of Grizzled Skipper (*Pyrgus* sp.). We returned early to the hotel in threatening weather,



because that evening we were scheduled to visit some distant fishing lakes in the Isere valley south of Grenoble for European Beaver. We went south on our final full day to Gresse, stopping at an area of meadows below the town where we saw stacks of Marbled Whites (*Melanargia galathea*), Silver-washed Fritillaries (*Argynnis adippe*), Mazarine Blues (*Cyaniris semiargus*) and a couple of Wood Whites (*Leptidea* sp.) etc, before working our way along a road to a car park above the town where a break in the weather brought more butterflies including Marbled Skipper (*Carcharodus levatherae*) and Mountain Argus (*Aricia artaxerxes*).

## Part 2 Briancon 28<sup>th</sup> July – 8<sup>th</sup> August

We said our farewells to the group then transferred to Briancon via Avis at Lyon airport. The road south-east goes through more open country than the Vercors with lots of open mountain grassland, grazed or otherwise either side of the valley. Stopping four times along D1091 at major lay-bys, enabled us to pick up new butterflies in the shape of Knapweed and Glanville Fritillaries (*Melitea cinxia*), as well as Silver-studded Blue (*Plebejus argus*) by the small lakes at Deux Glaciers.

On 29<sup>th</sup> July, our first full day in the area, we drove towards Vallouise, stopping first at the marked parking area on the back road from Briancon. Abundant Lavender along the tracks were full of insects, new butterflies including Meleagers Blue (*Meleageria dahnis*), Safflower Skipper (*Pyrgus carthami*) and Sooty Copper (*Lycaena tityrus*). A further stop by the river got us Carline Skipper (*Pyrgus carlinae*) at lunch. We then drove up through Vallouise and stopped at Allefroide, a very busy ski-ing/walking centre. An hour along one track through woods and small open areas, revealed Mountain Green-veined White (*Pieris napi*), Carline Skipper (*Pyrgus carlinae*) and Provencal Fritillary (*Mellicta dejone*) with a number of Heaths.



Apollos (*Parnassius Apollo*)

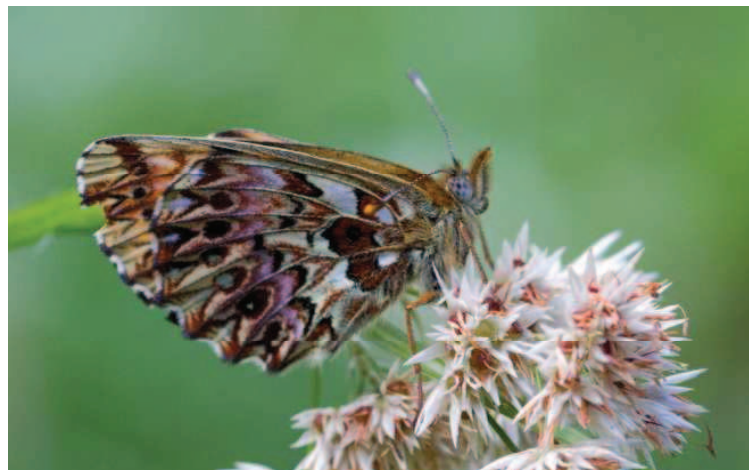
The next day, in warm sunny weather we drove up to the Italian border along the Montgenevre valley, checking the meadows between the town and the border. Large Ringlets (*Erebia euryale*) were everywhere, as were Silver-studded Blues (*Plebejus argus*) and a few frits. After lunch, we drove up to Nevache, stopping at various places en route, highlights being lots of Apollos (*Parnassius Apollo*) and a late hatch of Eschers Blues (*Polyommatus escheri*).

Another hot, sunny day on 31<sup>st</sup> with temperatures reaching 35C in the valley. Spent the day in the Vallouise/ Puy St Vincent area, firstly near the park offices, then up in the meadows around the 1600m station. Lots of big frits around with Dark Green (*Argynnis aglaja*), Niobe (*Argynnis niobe*), Silver-washed (*Argynnis paphia*) and Queen of Spain (*Issoria lathonia*). A blue in the meadows by the 1600m station was interesting and proved on detailed investigation to be Silvery Argus (*Pseudarica nicias*). The park offices had a lot of interesting stuff including a detailed book on the insects of the region, but in French, which promised hours of fun ahead. At least we can i/d the grasshoppers and bugs!

1<sup>st</sup> August was another hot one but storms were en route. We stayed round the Briancon area but even a non-butterflying walk behind the Champ de Mars car park on the edge of the old Cite de Vaubun produced The Hermit (*Chazara briseus*), as well as the ubiquitous Chalk-hill Blues (*P. coridon*).



The next day after rain overnight, a fine start soon turned cloudy and there were a number of showers. We visited the Alpine Garden at Col de Lauturet, a nice place with plenty of potential but it was cold and cloudy so insect life was absent. Turning back the weather towards Vallouise was better and a walk along the track by the car park was fruitful to say the least with five new butterflies: Autumn Ringlet (*Erebia neorida*), False Grayling (*Arethusa arethusana*), Red-underwing Skippers (*Spialia sertorius*), Dusky Heath (*Coenonympha dorus*) and a stray Mountain Clouded Yellow (*Colias phicomone*). Add to this Sooty Copper (*I. tityrus*), Great Sooty Satyr (*Satyrus ferula*), Great Banded Grayling (*B. circe*), Marbled White (*M. galathea*), Meadow Brown, Small and Large Skippers (*Ochlodes sylvanus*), Apollo (*P. Apollo*), Small (*P. rapae*) and Large Whites (*P. brassicae*), Meleagers (*P. daphnis*), Chalk-hill (*P. coridon*), Common (*P. icarus*) and Eschers Blues (*P. escheri*), Brown Argus (*Aricia agestis*), Silver-washed (*A. paphia*) and Marbled Frits (*B. daphnis*) and it seems the local lavender and *echinops* patches are a very strong draw.



Titania's Fritillary (*Boloria titania*)

3<sup>rd</sup> August dawned cool and overcast so we drove along the Vallouise valley to the Station Blanche, walking up from the meadows but with limited success except a worn Dusky Meadow Brown. By lunchtime, the weather had cleared and we drove to the 1800m station at Puy St Vincent. Scarce Coppers (*L. vigaurae*) were common, as were Silvery Argus (*Pseudarica nicias*) but there were too many tourists. A quieter walk past the maintenance depot (!) produced Purple-edged Copper (*L. hippothoe*) plus Titanias frit (*B. titania*), Mountain Clouded Yellow (*C. phicomone*) and

two small wood white (*Leptidea* sp), probably Eastern.

In clear, warm, sunny weather the next day we drove up to the alpine meadows by the Refuge Napoleon at the Col d' Izoard. What a site! Special (for us at least) butterflies were everywhere with Alpine Heath, Grisons (*Mellicta varia*), Shepherds (*Boloria pales*) and Mountain Fritillaries (*Boloria napea*), Silver-spotted Skipper (*Hesperia comma*), False Mnestr (sic) (*Erebia aethiopella*) and Marbled Ringlets (*Erebia montana*) and Eros (*P. eros*) and Glandon Blues (*Agriades glandon*) amongst stacks more, with lots of moths etc for good measure. After lunch, we drove down to the extended camp-site at Le Laus, full of tourists, truckers and hundreds of butterflies, with puddling blues including Turquoise (*P. dorylas*), lots of fritillaries and ringlets and the odd Apollo for good measure. A superb day!

Rain overnight and cool conditions meant we checked out the shops and cafes towards Col de Lauteret. Even the lavender bushes were quiet with just the odd Meleagers and Sooty Copper, while the track nearby had Baton Blue. The next day, 6<sup>th</sup> August the weather again turned hot and sunny, so we planned a change of scene and drove south to the low-level Lac de Serre-Poncon past Embrun. A good place for families but almost devoid of nature, highlights were several Western Bath Whites and a Tree Grayling (*Hipparchia statilinus*). Back into the mountains, and the small lake and picnic site south of Argentiere la Bessee, was very much better with several butterflies including a tatty Lesser Purple Emperor (*Apatura ilia*) and another Tree Grayling (*Hipparchia statilinus*). Again, it was full of revellers but would repay more attention. We then ventured a little way up the Val de Fournel but the road is very busy and very narrow so we turned round and headed for Briancon. Our last stop was a track off the road to Montgenevre which was alive with butterflies if you could get past the loo paper!

We had a low key last day in the Briancon area, driving up to Neveche in cold, clear conditions (4C in the shade) but it warmed up rapidly later. Highlight in the flower meadows on GR-57 above the village was a fresh Southern White Admiral (*L. reducta*), while working our way back down the road produced little else of note except good numbers of puddling blues in a large picnic site by the river.

8<sup>th</sup> August

Back to Lyon and the tender mercies of Easyjet, but we arrived back at Stansted on time

### ***Reflections***

A good near-three weeks in mixed weather with a number of highlights in superb country. With little or no background information we recorded excess of 90 species of butterfly. Our Briancon hotel was on the main road to Italy so, if we were returning, we would possibly stay outside Briancon in the Villeneuve/Chantmerle area where there are several hotels. We would also look at flying into Turin, which may be closer than Lyon.

### ***Photos***

Available as usual on my website

<http://overstrandnature.fotopic.net/>

### ***Maps***

We used the IGN Vercors and Ecrins maps (numbers 10 and 5 in the Parc Naturel series) bought in UK, but we found maps are generally easy to come by in the area and IGN ([www.ign.fr](http://www.ign.fr)) publish excellent detailed local maps for the general area.

**Greg Bond**

## Notices

Peter Eales of UK Butterflies has published another trip report on UK Butterflies that would be of interest to EIG members on a visit to North East Spain. The link is:

[http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/reports\\_spain.php](http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/reports_spain.php)

## Free Downloads

### Oedippus

Readers are advised that they can download a series of papers free from the Journal Oedippus of a special edition (Issue 26) devoted to *Coenonympha oedippus* one of Europe's most endangered butterflies. Oedippus, which is devoted to European Butterflies is becoming an open access journal.

<http://www.pensoft.net/book/10399/oedippus>

### The Red Book of Butterflies in Turkey

Following the successful launch of The Red Book of Butterflies in Turkey on 7 February, I am pleased to announce that high resolution pdfs of the book are now available from DKM's web site, in English and Turkish.

To access the files please use one of the links below, or type one of the addresses into your browser:

English version:

[http://www.dkm.org.tr/eng/red\\_list\\_eng.html](http://www.dkm.org.tr/eng/red_list_eng.html)

Turkish version:

[http://www.dkm.org.tr/tr/kirmizi\\_liste\\_tr.html](http://www.dkm.org.tr/tr/kirmizi_liste_tr.html)

### The European Butterfly Indicator for Grassland species 1990-2009

Full report available on [www.bc-europe.eu](http://www.bc-europe.eu)

This report presents the third version of the European Grassland Butterfly Indicator, one of the indicators for biodiversity in the SEBI2010 (Streamlining European 2010 Biodiversity Indicators), a pan-European initiative led by the European Environment Agency. The indicator is based on national Butterfly Monitoring Schemes in fifteen countries from all over Europe, most of them active in the European Union. The indicator shows that, since 1990, butterfly populations have declined by almost 70%, indicating a dramatic loss of grassland biodiversity. This also means the situation has not improved since the previous version of the indicator. Of the seventeen species, ten have declined in Europe and two have remained stable. For five species, the trend is uncertain. Main driver behind the decline of grassland butterflies is the change in rural land use: agricultural intensification where the land is relatively flat and easy to cultivate, abandonment in mountains and wet areas, mainly in Eastern and Southern Europe. Agricultural intensification leads to uniform, almost sterile grasslands, where the management is so intensive that grassland butterflies can only survive in traditional farmed low input systems (High Nature Value Farmland) as well as nature reserves, and marginal land such as road verges and amenity areas. Abandonment is caused by socio-economic factors. When farming of low productivity land brings low incomes, young farmers leave their villages and the land is left unmanaged. The grassland quickly becomes tall and rank and is soon replaced by scrub and woodland. The implementation of the Natura 2000 areas will be most beneficial in the intensified parts of Europe, especially North-west Europe, whereas the support of High Nature Value farmland is vital to stop abandonment, especially in Eastern and Southern Europe. Butterflies belong to the few species groups for which European wide monitoring is possible. Therefore, butterfly monitoring and the building of indicators on a regular basis should be

endorsed by the EU and its member states. Butterflies offer the possibility to be used as a structural headline indicator, not only for grasslands, but also for other habitats and pressures such as climate change.

The European Grassland Butterfly Indicator shows a dramatic decline of almost 70% since 1990.

## Request for Photographs

Tristan Lafranchis, author of the Butterflies of Europe a New Field Guide and Key, is about to publish a major work on the butterflies of France focussing particularly on the biology and life cycle as well as the ecology of all French butterflies. He has asked if any EIG members can supply photos of the following: Email: [lafranch@otenet.gr](mailto:lafranch@otenet.gr)

*Spialia therapne*: egg, larva, pupa, imago *Pyrgus warrenensis*: egg, larva, pupa *Pyrgus foulquieri*: egg, larva, pupa *Pyrgus carlinae*: larva, pupa *Pyrgus andromedae*: egg, larva, pupa, imago *Pyrgus cacaliae*: egg, larva, pupa *Zerynthia rumina*: egg *Papilio hospiton*: egg *Leptidea reali*: egg, larva, pupa, imago *Tomares ballus*: egg *Satyrrium esculi*: egg, larva, pupa *Callophrys avis*: egg, larva, pupa *Glaucopsyche melanops*: egg, larva, pupa *Phengaris = Maculinea arion*: pupa *Aricia morronensis*: egg, larva, pupa, imago (the latter from the Pyrenees) *Agriades pyrenaicus*: egg, larva, pupa, imago (all from the Pyrenees) *Polyommatus = Agrodiaetus dolus*: egg *Polyommatus nivescens*: egg, larva, pupa, imago *Lysandra hispana*: egg, larva *Libythea celtis*: egg *Vanessa virginiensis*: egg, larva, pupa, imago *Aglais (urticae) ichtusa*: eggs *Euphydryas desfontainii*: eggs *Melanargia russiae*: egg *Erebia gorgone*: egg, imago *Erebia rondoui*: egg, larva, pupa, imago *Erebia lefebvrei*: pupa, imago *Erebia sthenno*: pupa, imago.

More details of the book in due course

## Symposium: Future of Butterflies in Europe III (Wageningen 29-31 March 2012), organised by Dutch Butterfly Conservation (De Vlinderstichting).

Future of Butterflies in Europe III is the third symposium on this theme. The first one was held in 1989, marking the start of a period of fruitful research, new insights on butterfly ecology and distribution, and the rise of a broad awareness of butterflies as indicators and tools in nature conservation.

The second congress, in 2008, witnessed the emergence of butterfly conservation in a European perspective, with butterflies as one of the leading groups of species targeted in conservation as well as in EU policy - and with increasing attention for the role of moths.

Today, with a full-grown community of scientists, conservation practitioners and volunteers working on Lepidoptera, it is increasingly important to exchange ideas about ongoing studies and future plans. And with continued threats from both climate and land use change, the sense of urgency remains high! We therefore feel it is time to take a fresh look again at the scientific challenges we face to provide a future for butterflies and moths in Europe.

Leading scientists, such as Chris Tomas, Jeremy Thomas, Teja Tscharntke and Marcel Dicke, will introduce various symposium themes.

You are invited to participate in the symposium and offer a contribution as an oral presentation or as poster. Please visit the symposium website

[www.futureofbutterflies.nl](http://www.futureofbutterflies.nl) <<http://www.futureofbutterflies.nl>> for more information.



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**Registered office:  
Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset. BH20 5QP.  
Tel: 01929 400209  
Email: [info@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:info@butterfly-conservation.org)  
[www.butterfly-conservation.org](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org)**