



NEWSLETTER

Issue 7
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INTRODUCTION

Symposium

I am hoping some of you will be able to attend the Butterfly Conservation International Symposium in Reading next week. EIG is hosting a reception for the delegates before the dinner on Saturday March 27th when Szabolcs Safian (Safi) will be our guest of honour. This will be an opportunity to get EIG better known by the international and academic butterfly community which will be useful to us in the future.

New Red List

You will note from the contributions to this newsletter by Martin Warren and Chris van Swaay that the new IUCN Red List for European Butterflies has been published. See <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist> You can download the Red List Report for free as a .pdf. This has helped to publicise the declines of butterflies in Europe and when I get people stopping me on the street as they did today to tell me about it the publicity must have been very effective. This has been a massive piece of work and a major milestone for Butterfly Conservation Europe. The whole project has been masterminded by Chris van Swaay of de Vlinderstichting (Dutch BC) (See Page XX) and has brought together experts and information from all over Europe. Those familiar with the original 1999 Red Data Book will note quite a few changes. For a start the criteria for assessing the threat level, either Critically Endangered (CE), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), Near

Threatened (NT) or Least Concern (LC) now conform to new IUCN guidelines applicable to all taxa. Secondly and importantly the Taxonomy has been revised. Nigel Peace called for this to happen in a previous EIG Newsletter and Rudi Verovnik should be congratulated for doing what was considered almost impossible: getting Taxonomists to agree. We now have a definitive European list and EIG will in future use this rather than Lafranchis as our standardized list of Latin names. *Maculinea* has been replaced by *Phengaris*, the subgenus *Agrodiaetus* has been dropped in favour of the large genus *Polyommatus*. Zephyr Blue is now considered three distinct species: *pylaon*, *trappi* and *hespericus*. Rudi presided over a committee of all the leading European taxonomists and this is the result we have all been waiting for. We hope to have a contribution from him in the next issue. EIG contributed to the process and I note that the Odd Spot Blue (*Turama taygetica*) on Chelmos that we mapped in 2008 is one of the few species classed as Endangered. Its 3 hectare site in Greece was very nearly quarried to provide stone for an EU funded road! Another of the Endangered category is *Colias myrmidone*, the Danube Clouded Yellow that an EIG trip failed to find in Romania last year. EIG has a role to play here surveying for Red List species and assessing their threats. The next step is Species Action Plans for the priority species and more country specific Prime Butterfly Areas. Producing the Red List for IUCN has been a massive job for Butterfly Conservation Europe and I am delighted to hear that BCE is to receive much needed EU funding (See article from Marin Warren on Page XX). A big thank you to all who submitted photographs for the project.

New Marsh Award

Those of you who were at the AGM will have noted the new Marsh Award for distinguished service in the field of Lepidoptera conservation and research in Europe which was awarded to Otakar Kudrna (See pages 8/9/10). I am looking forward to receiving nominations for the 2010 award which the EIG committee will consider in September before submitting a shortlist to Butterfly Conservation awards committee.

Natural History Museum

Nigel Peace reports that 10 EIG members visited the butterfly collection at the Natural History Museum on 2 March, now re-housed in modern facilities at the South Kensington site. Members spent the morning examining drawers of species which they had asked to see, and then after lunch and a chat in the new Museum Restaurant most went on to visit the new Cocoon exhibition. Feedback was very positive, and Nigel (who works as a volunteer at the Museum following last year's EIG visit) looks forward to organising another visit at the same time next year. BBC2 is currently running a documentary series about the Museum on Thursday evenings, called Museum of Life. Well worth watching.

EIG Trips

EIG is involved in three projects this summer. All fully booked. From 17-24 July, a group of 10 of us led by Mike Williams will be staying in accommodation at Grindelwald in Switzerland and undertaking a project on the Sudetan Ringlet. We shall be supporting the work of Pro Natura, a Swiss based NGO, and working alongside Peter Sondereger, a leading *Erebia* specialist. The second event is a fundraising tour to Slovenia visiting a range of sites in the Julian Alps and elsewhere. All the money raised will be donated to the Hungarian Natural Heritage Trust in support of their work on the conservation of key butterfly species in the Orseg National Park. Simon Spencer is taking a small party to Mount Phalakron in Greece to survey for the red list species Dil's Grayling *Pseudochazara orestes* and Higgins' Anomalous Blue *Polyommatus (=Agrodiaetus) galloi (=nephoiptamenos)*. Trips are already being organised for 2011. Neil

Thompson will take a group to Slovakia and Romania probably for the last week of July and first week of August.

We need more people to volunteer to lead these expeditions. The focus of several people's attention this year is Arctic Scandinavia so Ted Benton's article (Page XX) will be most useful. Anne and myself and a few other members of EIG are travelling there mainly by campervan though this is not an official EIG trip.

AGM

We held a short AGM after the BC AGM in Winchester in November. We greatly welcome Dudley Cheesman ex chair of BC to the EIG committee. We now have 195 Members

EIG code of practice and Certificate

I need help from a Graphic designer if we are going to issue these Certificates. Some people have questioned the ban on collecting in the EIG code of practice and Eddie John pointed out the fundamental inconsistency in the EIG trip to the Natural History Museum to look at dead butterflies and the EIG code of practice (See Letters to the editor). I have encouraged dissenting views in the EIG newsletter from Otakar Kudrna and Martin Wiemers and though I welcome having a laminated certificate in my rucksack to show policemen that I don't collect I can see why collecting material for DNA analysis is a good thing and there may be other genuine circumstances when a specimen is required. However most EIG members never ever collect but do find using nets very useful in order to get accurate identifications. Using nets in Spain and Germany is illegal without a permit and permits are difficult to obtain. It is standard practice on EIG trips to pot butterflies and pass them round for confirmation of the ID, preferably without venturing an opinion first. One of EIG's main aims is to help people become better at identifying butterflies. The idea of the certificate is primarily to make it easier to get a permit but also establish one's credentials with National Park officials etc. A qualified 'Never Collects' is too difficult especially where there is a language barrier. Most people who would use a certificate can sign up to the unambiguous 'Never Collects'. Those that occasionally send specimens to Martin Wiemers or catch Graylings for Otakar Kudrna should not apply for a certificate.

Butterfly Year

If 2009 was the year of the Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*) what will be the highlights of 2010? We will run a Butterfly Year section in the autumn newsletter and I await your contributions again by September 1st.

Simon Spencer

Letters to the Editor

From Eddie John:

Hi Simon,

You asked for views on collecting in relation to DNA sequencing. Well, maybe you should dismiss me summarily from the EIG, as I have already provided Martin with *Pontia* specimens! At the same time, however, you should consider the ethics of the proposed 2 March 2010 trip to the NHM, as support for such a visit could be viewed as being incompatible with '....the EIG code of practice, which precludes ALL collecting...' :-)

Yes, this is a somewhat tongue-in-cheek response, but I see no conflict with holding views which support the need both for conservation *and* responsible collecting - whether by the serious amateur (as most lepidopterists are) or Museums, provided the emphasis is on 'responsible' and there is a purpose to the collecting other than, for example, simply the urge to collect a lengthy series. In this regard, the JCCBI recommendations fit the requirements admirably and I cannot see why BC/EIG shouldn't lend their support.

Collecting the occasional specimen for sound scientific reasons is surely no more harmful than the frequent use of a net to confirm identification. Rare though it may be, I cannot honestly say that I have never inadvertently killed or damaged a butterfly when netting. Can you?!

I sometimes feel slightly 'fraudulent', running a recording scheme and yet not having a reference collection from the island in question! But this is largely because of time constraints rather than over-sensitivity.

No, I don't think you should be concerned about Martin's request, Simon. Or should I resign now?!!

All the best

Eddie
Butterfly Recording Scheme for Cyprus:
<http://www.grayling.dircon.co.uk/index.html>

My reply:

Dear Eddie

You are quite right. There is a fundamental inconsistency in the EIG trip to the NHM and the EIG code of practice.

Our personal positions are actually very close as I encouraged both Otakar and Martin to send in their articles.

One of the main reasons for the code of practice is that it is extremely difficult to get permits to use nets in Spain and Germany and many National Parks etc and we wanted to provide a mechanism whereby people can easily establish their credentials. I am working on a certificate. If the certificate makes the categorical statement that Simon Spencer does not collect then next time I am challenged I can show them the certificate. I was nearly arrested in Spain. It is slightly less convincing if it says 'he usually doesn't collect'. Most of the members of EIG NEVER collect and are against all forms of collecting. It is easy for them to sign up to this code of practice. We can probably also get the Butterfly Tour companies to adopt it.

I am deliberately stimulating debate as sending the odd male *Hipparchia* to Martin is in my opinion a good idea. Voucher specimens of Lepidoptera that can only be separated by examining the genitalia under a microscope (as a prepared slide) must also be OK (several moths & Leptidea) if part of a genuine scientific study. However to most of us who gave up collecting years ago and have been very anti since find this 'sensible' approach takes a bit of getting used to.

Simon Spencer

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Please email any thoughts, ideas or whatever you want included in the newsletter to:

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2010 EIG Calendar Competition

The photo competition we ran for the 2010 calendar was very successful with a lot of entries. We printed 100 Calendars and sold them all giving a profit of £305 going to EIG funds. 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 2011 calendar – so get out your cameras and send in your photos to Anne Spencer apatura.metis@yahoo.co.uk by September 1st.

Photos for the calendar should be:

** Minimum 1500 by 1000 pixels (although this is only 1.5 Mpixels, check that the camera is not set to take low resolution images, which may be smaller than this). Larger images are perfectly acceptable. *Only JPEG or raw images are acceptable.*

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

Butterfly Conservation Europe: Update

We have just learnt the wonderful news that our application for core funding from the EU has been accepted, so we should be able to increase our work and activity substantially during the later half of 2010. We have still to answer some questions and sign a formal contract, but we hope to do that and begin work during April. The 70,000 euro grant is just for one year and involves a lot of bureaucracy, but hopefully will be worth it. We can apply again each year now we know how to overcome the complex application process.

The grant will enable us to do 4 main things:

- 1) Employ a part-time Network Co-ordinator to develop the BCE network and run training course in Eastern Europe
- 2) Employ a part-time Information Officer to collate information, produce newsletters and develop the BCE website
- 3) Employ Sue Collins as Director of Policy to represent us at policy meetings in Brussels and work on developing a robust post 2010 target and input into CAP reform.
- 4) Contract Chris van Swaay of Dutch BC to develop a climate indicator and an online recording system

The other big project that we have worked on is the European Butterfly Red List. This was published online in mid March 2010, and received a lot of publicity in both the UK and European media. The research has been led by Chris van Swaay of Dutch BC and has involved the collation of updated status and trends on every species from every European country. The report found that 30% of European butterflies are declining, and almost 9% are threatened. A further 10% are classed as Near Threatened, because they were just below the strict threshold to qualify under the IUCN criteria. The results can be viewed online at

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist/>

The summary report can be downloaded from

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist/downloads/European_butterflies.pdf

Another major project has been started to build capacity of volunteers in Turkey, in order to start documenting the butterflies of this exceptionally rich and diverse country. The project is funded under the BBI Matra programme of the Dutch Government and is run with our NGO partner in Turkey, Doga Koruma Merkezi (DKM). We have also been contracted via Dutch BC to update the European Grassland Butterfly Indicator in 2010. We expect this will show the continuing rapid decline of this group of species.

BC Europe has continued to make substantial contributions to policy-making within Europe thanks to the voluntary work of Sue Collins, European Policy Advisor. She has contributed to policy development and implementation at EU level, both directly to EU officials and in collaboration with European Networks such as the European Habitats Forum. During 2009 she has focussed on lobbying for a new target to halt the loss of biodiversity post 2010 and develop a long term vision for biodiversity to 2050.

Further details can be found at www.bc-europe.eu

Dr. Martin Warren
Chief Executive of Butterfly Conservation (UK) and Vice Chair of BC Europe

European butterflies on the brink

Almost one in ten species of European butterflies (37 species) are under threat of extinction and almost one-third are declining according to a major new report from IUCN and Butterfly Conservation Europe. A further 10% are close to being threatened and one species, the Madeiran Large White, is probably extinct, not having been seen for 20 years.

Because butterflies are good indicators of biodiversity, the results indicate a serious crisis for Europe's wildlife. Around one-third of all European butterfly species are unique to Europe and the report shows that 15 of these are now globally threatened.

The main factor causing the declines has been the extensive loss of key habitats such as flower-rich grassland and wetlands, due to agricultural intensification. However, changes in habitat management and abandonment of pastures in mountain areas have taken their toll. Over half of European butterflies rely on traditional grazing to maintain their flower-rich, grassland habitats. Such systems are being abandoned on a massive scale as they cannot compete economically with modern, highly intensive agriculture. Climate change is thought to be a serious future threat to many species.

Among the most endangered species are the Danube Clouded Yellow, now thought to be confined to a few sites in Romania, and the Violet Copper, a beautiful wetland species that has undergone drastic declines in many countries. The only British species on the Endangered list is the Large Blue, which became extinct here in 1979 but has since been successfully re-introduced. It is declining rapidly in every other country where it occurs in Europe.

Two other British butterflies are in serious decline at a European level (classed as Near Threatened): the Duke of Burgundy and Lulworth Skipper. Both had their worst ever year in Britain last year, declining by 65% and 87% respectively since 2000.

Dr Martin Warren, Chief Executive of the UK based charity Butterfly Conservation and one of the report's authors said "The rapid decline of so many species is extremely worrying. They point to a major loss of wildlife and wild habitats across Europe. Far more effort is needed to support the traditional farming systems on which many species depend and protect key areas from development."

The new Red List of European butterflies were produced by a team of over 50 experts from countries across Europe, co-ordinated by Butterfly Conservation Europe and IUCN. Europe has an exceptionally rich butterfly fauna comprising 435 resident species, including spectacular species like the Apollo and Swallowtail. The Red List is available online at

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist>

Chris van Swaay

New Marsh Award for ‘Lifetime Achievement in Europe’

The Marsh Christian Trust that already sponsors several BC annual awards has offered BC funding for an additional award for ‘Lifetime Achievement in Europe’. The full title is the ‘Marsh award for distinguished service in the field of Lepidoptera conservation and research in Europe’

From 2010, nominations will be sought in the EIG newsletter which goes to EIG members and also colleagues in Europe who are not EIG members. EIG committee would consider the nominations. A brief synopsis of the individual’s contribution should be supplied with the nomination which should ideally have a proposer and a seconder and be submitted before September 1st. EIG committee would choose a shortlist of no more than three and normally at least two for the BC awards committee to make the final selection from, forwarding the original nomination and additional comments. The winner will receive a cheque for £500, a certificate and a picture.

As we did not get the go-ahead for the 2009 Marsh Award until late, and a proposal had been received for Otakar in 2008 for another Marsh Award the ‘Lifetime Achievement Award’, the BC awards committee was happy for that nomination to be carried forward for the new European award. Those of you who were at the BC AGM in Winchester will have heard the following citation from Jim Asher.

2009 Marsh Award for Distinguished Service in the Field of Lepidoptera Conservation and Research in Europe

Citation at the BC AGM by Jim Asher



Otakar Kudrna

Otakar Kudrna has dedicated his life to butterflies with extraordinary dedication and in a truly European context. Born in 1939 in Budweis (Bohemia), he escaped from communist Czechoslovakia in 1968 and came to the UK to study at the Department of Biological Sciences at Portsmouth Polytechnic.

He became one of Europe’s foremost authorities on butterfly taxonomy, an early milestone being ‘A Revision of the Genus *Hipparchia* Fabricius’ (E.W Classey, Oxon, 1977), and he has described several species new to science.

He is the founder of SEL: Societas Europaea Lepidopterologica, a pan-European society for the study of Lepidoptera. SEL publishes *Nota Lepidopterologica*, which started in 1977. He instigated Gesellschaft für Schmetterlingsschutz and edits the society’s journal *Oedippus*, which he founded in 1990. He is the author of over 80 papers and books on the systematics, biogeography, ecology and conservation of butterflies, published both in English and in German. In October this year he was honoured with the “Goldene Ehrennadel” (‘golden honour needle’) by NABU, the German Nature Conservation organisation.

Perhaps his major achievement has been as the coordinator and instigator of the Mapping European Butterflies project (MEB) which collated records and published ‘The Distribution Atlas of European Butterflies’ in 2002, based on the observations of more than 250 collaborators all over Europe. MEB carries the stamp of his inimitable style. The difficulties of European Butterfly taxonomy and identification were overcome by rigorous and meticulous validation of the data and the checking of voucher specimens. The data were collected for nearly ten thousand reference localities from Portugal to Russia, with a total of over 220,000 records and maps for 451 species. I had the privilege to meet and work with him in arranging submission of the UK record set as part of this massive project.

Most distribution maps that now appear in authoritative books on European butterflies are based on this atlas. This work is being used by researchers to investigate the effects of climate and other environmental changes, as it provides a baseline from which changes in ranges and distributions can be compared. The keystone work, 'Climatic Risk Atlas of European butterflies', by Josef Settele, Otakar Kudrna and many others was published earlier this year.

Otakar, a British citizen, has lived in Germany for some years. He is as active as ever in retirement, despite his three-score years and ten - and hopes to produce a revised atlas shortly. In so many ways, he is a very worthy and deserving recipient of this newly instituted Marsh Award.

As he is unable to be with us today, I invite one of our Trustees, and Chair of the European Interests Group of BC, Simon Spencer, to accept the award on behalf of Otakar Kudrna today.

Speech of thanks. Note there was not time for all of the following at the AGM but I include it here as it shows us UK citizens how lucky we are to pursue our hobby here and not to have been brought up the other side of the iron curtain. The last paragraph was particularly well received at the AGM.

BC AGM, Winchester University, 21.11.2009

The years which end in the figure 9 have evidently a special significance for me: in 1939 I was born „for the first time“in Budweis in South Bohemia, in the former Czechoslovakia. The WWII was about to begin, but our family survived it without serious loss. The communist takeover of 25.02.1948 proved to be much worse than the WWII.

My Father was a “class enemy” and died aged 53, scarcely three years after his release from a concentration camp for “class enemies”, which was a compulsory labour camp for anticommunists, on paper disguised as an extraordinary military training; my Father has never served in the army. Only after the death of Joseph Vissarionovich Djughashvili, alias Stalin, probably the worst criminal of all times, the “concentration camps” in Czechoslovakia, in USSR called later “gulag”, were one by one closed. So my Father was freed, but sadly already terminally ill.

I had not had an easy time under the communist rule either. I was always direct and occasionally outspoken, undiplomatic. For the most years, I had to work as und unskilled labourer, several years in a three-shifts-work in a refinery of uranium ore. Butterflies helped me time and time again to survive this hard time. Not until the middle sixties I was able to obtain a relatively better job.

On 21st August 1968 Brezhnev's tanks arrived in Prague and ended abruptly the fragile “Prague Spring”. On the very same day I decided to leave Czechoslovakia; never in my life has such an important decision been so easily made. To this end I have worked intensively for the late Autumn of 1967. Already in the early spring of that year I received a passport and in the spring of 1969 an exit permit to England, for holidays, for 30 days.

On 4th June 1969 I landed at London Heathrow, and was so to speak born for the “second” time. I was a refugee, with a suitcase and a bag, and nothing else; I was practically penniless, yet so happy. I was at last free, far away from the loathed communism. Support for refugees like there is today was not available in Britain then, merely a work permit and the right of residence after a year. In addition the so called “Nansen Passport” for displaced and stateless persons, unable to obtain their nation travel document.

I am most grateful to B.C.S. Warren – the famous “*Erebia Warren*” – whose letter of recommendation helped me to get a job as a Research Assistant at the Department of Zoology at Cambridge University. I visit B.C.S. Warren's daughter, Miss E.J.M. Warren, nearly every year; not only because she is an active member of the British Butterfly Conservation.

Thus in 1969, my scientific career could, very belatedly, at last begin. Only a few years later, still as a Cambridge Research Assistant, I received my first degree – LIBiol – corresponding to a BSc, and thus opening me the way to higher degrees. I left Czechoslovakia actually without a university degree as I was not allowed to complete my study. Like my Father, I was a “class enemy”, and the completion of my study was thus not in the interests of the Communist party and government.

Once in Britain, I have extended the “30 days holidays exit permit” authorized by the Czechoslovak communist regime in the spring of 1969, to unlimited, obviously without the permission of the communist

authorities. Only six years later, in the shortest possible time, I was proud to be naturalized and become thus a British citizen.

1989 brought the end of communism, not least thanks to Michael Gorbachev "Glaznost". In the 20 years of my freedom, much had happened. Even my conviction for fleeing the Republic (or rather for failing to return to the communist paradise), spoken by the communist court in my absence, was declared null and void in 1989, it had probably lapsed some years earlier.

In the spring of 1990 I visited Czechoslovakia for the first since 1969, already as a qualified scientist and international known professional lepidopterist. Thus were fulfilled the dreams and aims which I had made as less than 15 years old boy, and since then nurtured and never really abandoned.

Inspired by the reunification of Germany and the foundation of the Naturschutzbund Deutschland (NABU), I joined the NABU, in order to serve the butterflies in the Federal Committee for Entomology (BFA Entomologie) as one of the founding members, and later through the founding of the Federal Workgroup Lepidoptera (BAG Schmetterlinge) even better.

The zenith of this activity was the Mapping European Butterflies (MEB) project and the publication of "The distribution atlas of European butterflies" back in 2002. My NABU colleagues, especially the Vice-presidents Helmut Opitz and Christian Mittag, have greatly supported me in this. Clas Nauman, an always discriminating and critical observer, wrote in his book review that the MEB Atlas was a "milestone in the history of Lepidopterology".

This year, 2009, also ends with the figure 9 and brings me, not surprisingly, four noteworthy events, of which the first is not more than a pleasant triviality:

1. On the 1st of January I became a member of a typical good old English Gentleman's Club, the ROSL – for me a really lovely trifle.
2. In the spring, in consultations with Sepp Pennerstorfer in Vienna, the last technical obstacles preventing the completion of the 2nd edition of The distribution atlas of European butterflies was overcome. And so I hope to be able to present the 2nd edition personally either at the BBCS AGM in the autumn 2010 or at the spring meeting of the BBCS EIG.
3. In summer, the late Gerd Müller-Motzfeld, who died a few weeks later on a field trip to Central Asia, informed me about the of the conferment NABU Honorary Gold Mark (Ehrennadel in Gold) to take place in October. A great and beautiful surprise.
4. Finally, on Friday 9th October, Martin Warren informed me, that I have been awarded as first laureate on the recommendation of the BBCS EIG the new "Marsh Award for Distinguished Service in the Field of Lepidoptera Conservation and Research in Europe" in recognition of my lifelong work on Lepidoptera and the great achievement of the Mapping European Butterflies project".

Of course I am overjoyed, thankful, and – forgive my saying so – also very proud of the great honour of receiving two distinctions for my humble contribution to the research and conservation of European butterflies. It is clear to me, that without the support of numerous colleagues, MEB recorders and butterfly friends, I would not have received any distinction. For this help, in humility, I am endlessly thankful. At this point, I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to all who have supported me in what ever way.

I can hardly believe it, but this year I have reached the age of 70 years. Nonetheless, I am still very lively and active in a few international projects including the 2nd edition of the MEB Atlas; I hope to remain healthy and active for several more years. There still remains so much to be done.

The achievement of every person should always be judged in the light of his handicap; my handicap was not small. Therefore I think that I can already say that I have not lived in vain. I have thought the same, when I held the first printed copy of "The distribution atlas of European butterflies" in my hands for the first time. And whenever the final curtain falls, I shall say, "not in a shy way, I did all that and more, much more than this, I did it my way!"

Many thanks for your attention.

Otakar Kudrna

Identification by study of the genitalia on live butterflies.

Since I was a young lepidopterist in the 1980s I have been aware of the benefits of studying the genitalia of live lepidoptera as a means to non-lethal identification for difficult species groups. It was Bernard Skinner's *Moths of the British Isles* in 1984 with line drawings of the male genitalia of the Dark Dagger and Grey Dagger (*Acrionicta tridens* and *A. psi*) which clearly showed 3 and 2 large spines respectively that inspired my first foray into this method of identification. Checking the "Daggers" in the garden moth trap after learning this technique I found both species in roughly even numbers. This would not be possible without it as there is not any other robust external characteristic for separating the species. Until that point I was not able to confirm either species, not even being sure which one or if both were present. More recently the method has been published as an aid to butterflies in Tristan Lafranchis's "Butterflies of Europe" 2006. Line drawings of genitalia of several difficult groups of medium and larger sized butterflies are shown and the reader is encouraged to confirm identifications using this method.

I've tried this with great success in some of the suggested groups, less so with others. Identification of the *Melitaea* Fritillaries is a big headache in many parts of Europe and it is with these that I have had enormous success with this method. Please see the photos at the bottom of this article taken of live butterflies identified in the field, all of which were released and flew away unharmed after identification. I've had less success with the *Hipparchia* Graylings, and very little success with other groups shown in Lafranchis's book – *Carcharodus* Skippers and *Leptidea* Wood Whites.

So what does this method entail and what are the limitations and are there any risks? The abdomen of the captured male insect is gently pressurised. For butterflies this involves holding the wings folded together over its back with one hand to allow the abdomen to be positioned in the other hand between thumb and forefinger. Pressure is then gently applied. The incompressible body fluids cause the genitalia to become exposed at the tip of the abdomen. The hardened parts are clear (usually) to see and can then be compared against suitable drawings and the insect identified. A hand lens is required to confirm identification but when checking several butterflies at a time the different form of a different species will stand out even without a lens (if you have good near eyesight) and thus warrant closer review with the lens. When finished, the butterfly is simply let go and it flies off gently as if nothing has happened at all – being immobilised for a few minutes seems to calm them down, probably the inactivity cools the flight muscles a little and/or the fight/flight reflex passes with time. If captured and handled gently there is very little if any scale loss.

A variation is required for robust moths, such as the "Daggers". Impossible to fold the wings over the back of these powerful moths, a more "brutal" approach is required. The moth is turned over onto its back onto a flat surface, easier than it sounds, and held down with one hand. The abdomen is then "squashed" gently against the surface and the genitalia exposed. The moth is agitated immediately after the experience, but returns to normal after a few seconds. Scales are lost in this exercise. This is a procedure I'd hesitate to use these days, but I'd maintain that, apart from the scale loss, no damage is done to the moth. Are there any limitations? Yes.

The procedure is of no use with females where diagnostic features are either absent completely (even with dissection), are not exposed or are difficult to see in the live butterfly. Capture and handling may lead to loss of scales, but done carefully this is usually avoided completely – more difficult in humid or very hot conditions when the hands may be sticky with sweat and the butterfly is more active. Smaller species may be too small and/ or delicate and are not suited to handling and even with a hand lens diagnostic features may be too small to be reliable.

Despite apparently clear differences in line drawings, the reality is not always so obvious and identification is by no means guaranteed.

So what are the risks?

Recently in the EIG Newsletter 5 it was suggested by Kudrna that the practice of squeezing the abdomens of butterflies to view the genitalia cannot be taken seriously, amounts to maltreatment and impacts reproduction capacity. Doubt is cast on the survival of the insect and their capacity for reproduction after such identification.

I dispute this point of view. Where identification is useful for conservation matters it is definitely advantageous to leave the butterfly alive in its colony by using non lethal techniques. Killing it simply to be sure is not, in my own view, justifiable in all but the most vital cases such as to confirm a new colony of a very rare species. If everyone who visits a vulnerable colony kills one or two individuals to be sure, significant unnecessary pressure on colony survival will be applied. There are many other reasons why people may want to collect etc. but I'll not enter into that debate here!

My experience of this technique has been principally with the *Melitaea* and the *Hipparchia*. I've had great success for the former. In every single case, the butterfly has flown off with no effect on behaviour – I suggest this indicates a butterfly in good condition and not on the point of dying or carrying any fatal injury following identification.

To counter the suggestion that reproductive capacity is affected, I cite the widely documented practice of hand pairing butterflies for genetic studies and other breeding requirements. Male and female butterflies are paired by gently squeezing the male abdomen to force the male genitalia into view (exactly as for the identification method being described here). Then the male genitalia are offered up to the female's and mating ensues. Here are just a few reliable references:

EB Ford, *Butterflies* (1945) - "this method is often highly successful and abroad extensive breeding work has been done by this means"

E. Friedrich, *Breeding Butterflies and Moths. A Practical Handbook for British and European Species* (UK edition 1986)

PW Cribb, "Breeding the British Butterflies", AES 1983

It must be noted that in the third reference, a "drastic" extension of this method is introduced that I've not heard elsewhere but is said to have been used by others. If the male still doesn't play ball during the mating process, his psychological restraints (e.g. cage too small, not sunny enough...) are removed by cutting off or crushing his head before hand pairing is tried. Extreme! Just these three references serve to illustrate the point that applying pressure to the abdomen of males to expose the genitalia has been used as a reproductive technique for very many years and the fact that it remains in use today indicates that it does not cause sterility or adversely affect reproductive capacity. And, apart from the extreme practice of destroying the male's head, there is no indication that life expectancy is reduced.

A complementary anecdote is, once again, my experience with the "Daggers". As mentioned this is a rather more brutal exercise than with butterflies but I did obtain fertile eggs from females accidentally treated this way. This would indicate that the insect isn't so stressed or damaged to the point of abandoning its reproductive instincts, but it doesn't prove anything about mating or male fertility.

In any case, if there is a risk of reduced reproductive capacity, this reduction must surely be preferable to killing the insect outright and eliminating any possibility of reproduction. Personally, I think the risk is very low and worth taking – that choice is yours to make.

What is seen in the following photos is readily seen with the hand lens,



Handling the butterfly – this Nickerl's Fritillary, *Mellicta aurelia*, is in position for examination. Examples of identification of live butterflies of the *Mellicta/ Melitaea* group.



False Heath Fritillary, *Melitaea diamina*.



Heath Fritillary, *Mellicta athalia*



Nickerl's Fritillary, *Mellicta aurelia*



Assmann's Fritillary, *Mellicta britomartis*



Grison's Fritillary, *Mellicta varia*



Meadow Fritillary, *Mellicta parthenoides*

Matt Rowlings

Editors Note

EIG would like to commission some research on this subject from someone in a University who can test whether an examined group have a lower survival rate than a control and preferably also whether examination has any detrimental effects on male reproductive success. The *Mellicta* group would seem most appropriate. EIG would offer a small bursary of 500 euros. A nice undergraduate project. Contact Simon Spencer (cerisyi@btinternet.com).

Arctic Butterflies June-July 2005

Bernard Watts and I set off for northern Scandinavia early on the 24th June 2005, bound for Stockholm, and then a connecting flight to Kiruna. A cold, wet weather front arrived just as we did – so the rest of the day was spent ‘habitat prospecting’. In nearby meadows were white-faced darter dragonflies (*Leucorrhinia dubia*), and several ‘blue’ damsels, along with heath bumblebees (*Bombus jonellus*) feeding actively from the abundant flowers of alpine milk vetch. A brief sunny spell brought out some rather tattered specimens of the northern form of green-veined white (*P. napi*) in which the ground-colour of the females is yellow. In continuing poor weather Bernard drove us south-east towards Gallivare. A brief spell of brightness encouraged us to search of a small bog by the roadside a little further on. Among sparse pines were dense mosses and sedges, and low evergreen shrubs, including the remarkable white-flowered Labrador Tea (*Ledum palustre*) and the dwarf birch (*Betula nana*). The white-faced darter was common here, too, and butterflies included a fine, dark form of the pearl-bordered fritillary (*B. euphrosyne*) and the bog fritillary (*P. eunomia*), here in its smaller, more brightly coloured northern form *ossiana*. Here, too, was our first (and only!) sighting of the cryptic Lapland ringlet – *Erebia embla*. A single specimen was disturbed from the low vegetation, flew high into the pines and then settled low on a pine trunk – just permitting a few quick photos.

The following day (26th) we decided to make our way north towards our eventual destination – the rich entomological habitats around Alta, on the north coast of Norway. On the long drive north we stopped at one or two likely-looking spots, and were lucky enough to see the fine, pale blue-and-black hawker dragonfly, the azure hawker (*A. caerulea*), and, on a very extensive bog, a few specimens of the spectacular Frigga’s fritillary (*Boloria* (= *Clossiana*) *frigga*), with its lovely purple sheen on the underside hindwings.

We stayed overnight at a somewhat depressing hotel in Kautekeino, where ‘settled’ Saami people cut a very different image from those still continuing their traditional mode of life as reindeer herders. The following day Bernard drove us to Alta, and we checked in at the nearby ‘Fjellstue’ at Gargia (host to many an earlier entomologist and collector). The next few days continued overcast and cool, but we managed to ‘case’ some local habitat, and did manage to find one of our ‘target’ species – the arctic woodland ringlet (*Erebia polaris*) – clearly a very close relative of the woodland ringlet (*E. medusa*). We found *polaris* in several places, usually on sparsely grassy places at low altitude. They made the most of brief periods of watery sunshine, basking on bare ground with open wings. Common blue, small copper and the fine arctic form of the idas blue were also present, along with the moorland clouded yellow (*C. palaeno*). Bumblebees, as usual, were less deterred by the low temperatures and we saw more *B. jonellus*, *B. hypnorum* (now a familiar sight in southern Britain), *B. muscorum* f. *agricolae*, *B. lapponicus* and the large, brightly coloured relative of the white-tailed bumblebee – *Bombus magnus*.

By mid-day on the 30th June, after almost a week of overcast weather, we were reflecting on how we now understood why most of the Norwegians we had met had a somewhat melancholy cast of mind. Suddenly, through the café window I noticed a distinct, but distant brightening of the sky! It is difficult to convey the surge of excitement provoked by this, but suffice it to say we were on the hillsides to the south of Alta in very short order. That afternoon and the following days up to the 4th July we were treated with bright, sunny weather, and the butterfly highlights of the trip. On our first day we met up with a young Swedish entomologist, Paer Axelson, who provided both pleasant company and great help with our exchanges of information. In the damper, low-lying areas we found such species as the dewy ringlet (*E. pandrose*), the arctic ringlet (*E. disa*), and the cranberry blue (*Plebejus optilete*), along with the abundant Freija’s fritillary (*B. freija*), and the more elusive Frigga’s fritillary. Males of Freija’s fritillary were absorbed in fast, ‘zig-zag’ patrolling flights during the warmer parts of the day. Females were

watched laying their eggs on dead grass stems and other low vegetation, fluttering a few metres between each episode. Males of *frigga* contoured small 'islets' of cloudberry (*Rubus chamaemorus*) standing out above the surface of the bog, intercepting the occasional female (which also oviposit in these areas). Among stands of dwarf birch at lower altitudes we caught sight of just a few northern grizzled skippers (*P. centaureae*).

With higher altitudes on the hillsides, the taller birches gave way to a band dominated by dwarf birch and, still higher, to open 'tundra' with patches of bare ground, moss campion (*Silene acaulis*), alpine milk-vetch (*Astragalus alpinus*), mountain avens (*Dryas octopetala*), bog rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*), bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) and yellow wood violet (*Viola biflora*), becoming more sparsely vegetated towards the hill-tops. It was here that we hoped to locate some of the more rarely encountered arctic species, and, given our good-fortune with the weather, we hit lucky.

Close to the hill-tops flew both of the scarce fritillaries that featured high on our 'targets' list: the arctic, and the even rarer, polar fritillary (*Boloria chariclea* and *C. polaris*). In fact, *polaris* proved the easier of the two. Males patrolled low over the ground and low vegetation, stopping frequently to nectar from bog rosemary, while females could be found opening to bask in late sunshine before roosting at about 6.00pm. My first sighting of the arctic fritillary was one that settled to bask on a sprig of dwarf birch, and then turned to nectaring on patches of moss campion in the transitional zone between the birch and the open tundra. The slightly different shapes of the silver marginal markings on the underside hindwings are the best means of distinguishing these two species.

Also present on the hill-tops were numbers of the arctic grayling (*Oeneis bore*), with almost unmarked forewings, and striated underside hindwings that made them almost invisible settled on the rocky ground. They and the polar fritillaries were the characteristic species of the bleak flat hill-top habitats.

Another arctic species that had eluded the camera lens on a trip with John Kramer that I had made many years before was the northern clouded yellow (*Colias hecla*). We knew it was present in the area around Alta, but I had been warned by Peter Russell (whose published writings and personal correspondence had been indispensable to the success of our trip) that the males fly fast over the slopes and are completely unapproachable in the warmer parts of the day. This proved to be entirely true, so more subtle tactics had to be employed. We guessed and then confirmed that their favoured habitat was the transitional zone between the dwarf birch and open ground on the hill-sides, where their larval host plant, alpine milk-vetch grew most abundantly. Armed with this information and the help of Paer we were able to photograph males late in the day as they settled to roost. The females, however, proved more elusive, until, on our last day at Alta, I visited a spot on the hill-side that seemed to me most densely populated by the milk-vetch at about 11.30 am. As expected, a male *hecla* sped by, flying low and fast, investigating patches of flowers in the transitional zone, but never settling. Then, just as I was about to leave, at 12.15, a female *hecla* came into view. She was flying low, and stopping every few metres, apparently to lay eggs (apparently not directly on the milk-vetch, but other nearby vegetation, including the dwarf birch). I followed at a respectful distance until she eventually settled on a birch twig. After a few seconds she dropped her forewings down between the hindwings and became quite torpid.

We now had one more 'speciality' of the area to find. This was the arctic form of the glandon blue (*Agriades glandon aquilo*), considered by some to be a distinct species. We had been told of a locality for this at nearby Kafjord, but, innocently believing some literature references that its larval host plant was alpine milk-vetch, we had failed to find it. However, a quick phone-call and reassurance encouraged us to have another look. This time we were successful and found

the tiny 'blues' on old industrial workings, where they nectared on flowers of *Sedum* among rather desiccated plants of the saxifrage on which the larvae feed.

Just before leaving the Alta area we explored a more shady, wooded lowland area, looking for yet another fritillary – Thor's fritillary, *Boloria thore*. Both of us had encountered the striking form of this species that flies in the Alps, where the upperside is suffused with black. However, the northern form (*borealis*) is very much paler on the upper-side.

On 4th of July Bernard drove us back south to Kiruna, and on the following day we visited Abisko. Yet another arctic fritillary, the dusky winged fritillary (*Boloria improba*) was our main quarry here. I had seen the butterfly on an earlier trip on the slopes of mount Njulla, which is, conveniently, accessible by ski lift. I caught a very brief view of one *improba* before it disappeared, but, despite a repeat visit on the following day, neither of us was able to photograph this very elusive and cryptic species. However, compensation was to be had in the form of the pale arctic clouded yellow (*C. nastes*) which is common in the area around Abisko. We left Kiruna to fly back to Stockholm and then London on the 7th July, with only the very slightest sadness at not having photographed the dusky fritillary, and, in Bernard's case, not having seen the norse grayling (*Oeneis norna*), which I had found to be common in the Abisko area on my previous visit. Only some time afterwards, when Nils Ryrholm told me that our sunny week at Alta was the only break in the clouds all summer, did I realise how lucky we had been.

**Ted Benton January 2010,
with grateful thanks to Bernard Watts, Claes Eliasson, Nils Ryrholm, Peter Russell, Paer Axelson and John Kramer.**

See attached Pdf file: photos taken of some butterflies seen in Scandinavia

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The problems of attempted foreign invasive weed eradication in Europe

While we tend to worry most about the abandonment of agricultural land in some parts of Europe and intensive farming in others as the major causes of habitat loss, another pressure on the habitats of butterflies and other insects came to my attention whilst on a trip to Hungary this year. Colin Penny, our guide who has lived in the Matra Mountains for the last 5 years, said on our arrival that the national sport in Hungary is now strimming. We thought he was joking, but after a few days visiting different brilliant butterfly sites we did notice the continual sound of strimmers and mowers in the background.

Some internet research on my return showed this to be an attempt by the authorities to eradicate an American invasive plant, *Ambrosia artemisiifolia* or 'Ragweed' (not the same plant as our Ragwort) which has been found to produce allergenic pollen causing problems to the human population. However, the bylaws mean that all verges, parks, 'waste land' has to be cut, whether *Ambrosia* is growing there or not. Substantial fines are threatened if householders and landowners ignore these regulations.

I have to emphasize that I am not concerned about saving the Ragweed itself, as some of my correspondents have assumed! Of course it is understandable that invasive foreign weeds have to be controlled; but it is the method employed to do this that can be a problem.

The threat to wildlife corridors including nectar sources and larval foodplants for Lepidoptera of continual cutting throughout their breeding season will be obvious to EIG members.

What happens with repeated mowing, as has happened in Britain, is that many wildplants which are nectar and larval foodplants die out because they do not have a low growing point. The reason that grass is so successful is because it can be mown/eaten very short, but the growing tip is so low down in the plant that it can regenerate. This is also true of many rosette-forming wild plants, but it is not true of many others. That is why, for example, we have lost most of the viola species (larval foodplant for our rapidly declining fritillaries) from our lane verges – annual mowing of the verges, which could provide corridors for short-distance flying insects, has destroyed the foodplant altogether in a very few years.

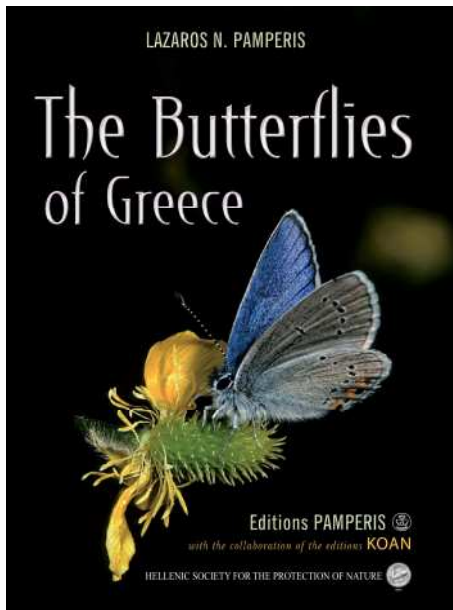
This repeated mowing is a trend which is spreading across Bulgaria, France and other countries. I wonder if other visitors noticed this in the countries they have been to this year? Other invasive plant species are also causing problems in Hungary: Solidago and False Acacia being two of the worst.. No doubt other invasive weeds will continue to present problems in other areas of Europe but is the mass cutting or weed-killing the answer? As Colin Penny says; "The irony is that this plant can never be eradicated! I've found it at the top of banks (off forest tracks) after some really steep and risky climbs. If no one goes to such places, then the plants seed and continue to spread. Also, if the top is cut off it just sprouts from the root again." Szabolcs Sáfián ["Safi", pers.comms.July 2009] told me: "according to my knowledge Ragweed is a very weak competitor anywhere, and it therefore disappears after few years of abandonment from any arable land in Hungary. We are reverting a 7 hectares plot of arable into grassland and not a single plant of Ragweed is found now in the area after 7 years of mowing. As soon as grazing begins again *Ambrosia* will disappear forever". This begs the question, why are the authorities trying to mow it out at all?

See also www.ragweed.hu

Jan Miller Jan@7wells.org

BOOK REVIEWS

The Butterflies of Greece by Lazaros Pamperis



Imagine doing a millennium atlas of a country about half the size of the United Kingdom but with more than 230 species of butterfly. Imagine doing it almost unaided, without a car and without using a butterfly net. That is the enormous achievement of Lazaros Pamperis who has recently published a second edition to his 'Butterflies of Greece'.

Lazaros has dedicated his life to butterflies having first become interested as a mountaineer and walker and for years has spent much of his free time exploring the mountains and islands of his native Greece, meticulously recording all the butterflies he has seen, carrying his tent and sleeping bag with him. The results are spectacular and add enormously to our knowledge. He was reticent in his first edition to give even approximate locations for some of the rarer species because of illegal collecting is such a problem in Greece. However the new edition gives distribution maps for all the 234 species as

well as phenological diagrams and the accumulated wisdom of many years in the field. There are species accounts and photographs of all species. Some species that cannot be separated in the field are aggregated. Amongst the most useful items included in this comprehensive study is a table of the trend assessment for many species. This information was not available for the new IUCN red data book and Lazaros's assessment of the threat status of each species in Greece is far better informed for Greece than either the original 1999 Red Data Book or the new IUCN one that has just been published. Greece has several endemic and very scarce species.

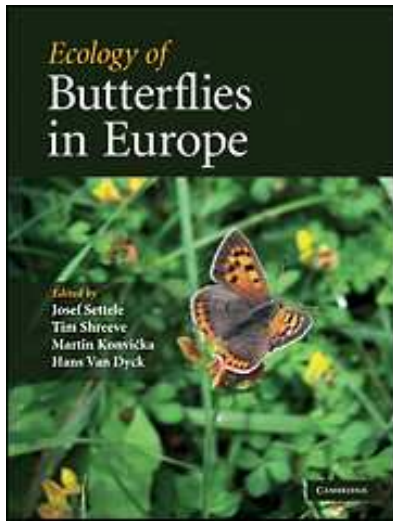
Anyone with more than a passing interest in Greek butterflies should get a copy. Hurry! Only a limited number of copies have been printed in English but rather more in Greek. Price approximately £125. Contact Lazaros Pamperis directly (pamperis@otenet.gr) and see <http://www.pamperis.gr> . It is full of wonderful photographs despite the fact that Lazaros is not able to carry into the mountains the complete range of paraphernalia that some photographers find indispensable. The book has also drawn on what published material there is for Greece and records from collections and colleagues so the book is uniquely comprehensive and distinctive.

La saison des papillons de provence by Nicholas Maurel & Yves Doux (in French) ISBN 978-2-7466-0951-8

This delightful book describes all the species of Butterfly found in Provence grouping them by season. It has photographs, distribution maps and abundance throughout the summer. It is a useful companion when visiting the 'Jardins de Proserpine' in Digne les Bains <http://www.proserpine.org/accueil.htm> , from whom it can be obtained (or by post contact Association Proserpine 9,Rue Bourg Reynaud, F-04 200 Sisteron). This remarkable garden which has recorded 131 species in a small area in the ten years since it started is strongly recommended for visitors to France. Booking is essential. Mention EIG.

Simon Spencer

'Ecology of European Butterflies' ed. Settele, Shreeve, Konvicka, van Dyck.



Cambridge University Press ISBN 978-0-521-74759-2 Price £45

This is an important book bringing together many years of research by many different specialists from all over Europe. I am not an academic and do not presume to pass judgement on the worthiness or otherwise of particular papers in this volume. However, I can tell members that this is a very interesting and on the whole very readable book for the non-specialist. Although it does sometimes seem like wading through treacle to get to a simple answer in academic papers, as a tutor of mine told me many years ago – you can get most of the information you need from the abstracts and the conclusions. And you can find the scientific support to answer many of your long standing questions (as well as some questions you never thought to ask before); from the importance of only a few plant families as nectar sources to population dispersal and the effects of climate change.

This book will be useful to those working on habitat management on UK reserves as much as in other parts of Europe. It will also reveal all kinds of fascinating facts about butterfly morphology, behaviour and population dynamics for the general interest reader.

Jan Miller BSc.

The Grasslands in Europe of high nature value by Peter Veen, Richard Jefferson, Jacques de Smidt and Jan van der Straaten. KNNV publishing. ISBN 9789050113168 70.00€

There are chapters on the origin and development of grasslands in Europe and a chapter on grasslands as habitats for butterflies in Europe. High Nature Value grasslands are incredibly important for biodiversity particularly of butterflies and are threatened by abandonment or intensification. The 24 case studies of particularly important grasslands from throughout Europe makes a strong case for their protection. The case studies range from the grasslands of Gotland and Öland (Sweden) to the Spanish Dehesa, and from the hay meadows of the British Pennine Dales to the steppes of Turkish Anatolia. Together these case studies provide a fascinating glimpse into the various European grasslands, their value for nature, culture and agriculture, and the threats they are facing today. The accessible text as well as the rich illustrations will appeal to a wide audience. *Grasslands in Europe* contains a large number of stunning full-colour photographs of grassland landscapes, species and cultural history. It also contains many maps and diagrams as well as lots of references.

Butterflies of Europe by Tristan Lafranchis, 2004.

Most of you will already be familiar with this book and it is the standard field guide that is used by EIG members in the field.

I am pleased to inform you that *Butterflies of Europe* is now available with a DVD-rom for Windows. This DVD-rom contains more than 3,000 photographs (13x20 cm) of butterflies, caterpillars, eggs, pupa, host-plants, habitats... This DVD also includes updates to the English edition, 2004: 3 new species and a list of host-plants have been added. It is a real addition to the book. Brilliant photographs.

The book has been very well reviewed and is now available in French, Polish and Dutch. In case you are interested, you can purchase this book directly from us or from some specialized booksellers (Summerfield, Meijnsnatuurboeken, Vermandel, Natuurpunt Winkel, Natura Edizioni Scientifiche, Tarantola, Atropos, Lopinga, Subbuteo, NHBS, Entomopraxis, Winkler...), or through the web at amazon.fr <http://www.amazon.fr/gp/offer-listing/295216200X> <<http://www.amazon.fr/gp/offer-listing/295216200X>>

Or order directly from Tristan Lafranchis: lafranchis@yahoo.fr

Butterflies of Europe, 2004 with DVD-rom, 2010..... 42 euros (postage included)

Butterflies of Europe, 2004 without DVD-rom..... 36 euros (postage included)

DVD-rom.... 10 euros (postage included)

Butterfly DVD

Rob de Jong of Farm Lator has published 2 great films on DVD:

1 Butterfly Behaviour

2 Vlinderpret met Dorrestijn

The first film is a popular-scientific approach to explain the most interesting and striking behaviour of butterflies. It contains stunning, often unique, footage and is very informative (in English and Dutch). The second film is a portrait of a well known Dutch cabaret performer and bird watcher between butterflies (Dutch only).

The DVD's are for sale. Please check their website for further details:

English: <http://farmlator.hu/html/home.htm>

Nederlands: <http://farmlator.hu/html/nhome.htm>

See also http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/reports_dejong.php

Simon Spencer

Interesting 2009 Trip report to Greece

Lynn Formiston and Peter Eeles have asked me to mention a butterfly holiday at Ano Poria in June 2009 the trip report is now available on

http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/reports_greece.php

Also please mention Hotel Nastou View is a brilliant place to stay

http://www.nastouview.gr/main_en.php

<http://www.nastouview.gr/main_en.php>

Also, there are other reports that might be of interest under the "Trip Reports" section at:

<http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/reports.php>

Requests for Information

Ray Sandiford is writing a book on the Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*)

He would like to hear from residents of other European countries about the life history of the Red Admiral there. Is it a permanent resident or does it migrate? How many broods does it have? What are the larval foodplants? He would also like information on phenology, abundance and distribution.

Contact raymondsandiford@yahoo.co.uk

Request for Butterfly Records from the Midi Pyrenees

The Midi Pyrenees region has 200 species of butterflies and 28 species of day flying moths recorded to date, this represents 75% of the 260 butterfly species recorded in France.

Whilst the French are aware from butterfly monitoring and particularly that undertaken in the United Kingdom that butterflies are an excellent indicator of the health of the natural habitat, the existing butterfly records date from the 19th century and the early 20th century and cover only a very partial area.

With many species in decline or under threat the importance is now understood of having a working tool to help reverse the decline and save threatened species from extinction. Several of the red list of threatened species of European Butterflies can be found in the Midi-Pyrenees.

So under a new initiative the Conservatoire Regionale des Espaces Naturels (CREN) de Midi-Pyrenees (Groupe Invertebres) in conjunction with Nature Midi-Pyrenees are now working together to produce a regional atlas of butterflies and day-flying moths of the Midi Pyrenees, this will form part of a national scheme to create a national atlas by 2013.

As a member of the Nature Midi Pyrenees CREN working group on butterflies you can contact me if you wish to share your recordings if you happen to be in the Midi-Pyrenees .

Jude Lock

Email: jude.lock@orange.fr

Our gallery of butterflies in our immediate local area (valleys of Luz St Sauveur, Bareges, Heas, Gavarnie in the Hautes Pyrenees)

www.borderline.hols.com/butter_/web/index.html

EUCAN PROGRAMME FOR 2010 ***EUROPEAN CONSERVATION ACTION NETWORK***

This exciting project was set up in 2007 by The Kingcombe Trust in association with the Dorset Branch of Butterfly Conservation and several partners in Europe. It is 100% funded until 2011 by the Leonardo de Vinci section of the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme and with a potential lifespan until 2013. So far it has enabled nearly 200 people to take part in 14 different placements with 8 host partners. If you would like to become more involved with wildlife conservation in the UK, here is a great opportunity for you to widen your experience by joining an enthusiastic team of like-minded people working with one of our European partners! Leonardo de Vinci funding is for two week placements in Poland, Hungary, France and the Czech Republic.

Feb 5 -20 Practical conservation work in La Brenne, France
Mar 2-19 Practical conservation work in Aggtelek, Hungary
July 10-29 Recording Butterflies and Moths in Hungary
Aug 2-18 Practical conservation work in eastern Poland
Aug 19-Sept 7 Practical management and recording in Ždánice in the Czech Republic
October (date to be confirmed) Orchard management in Najac, southern France
October (date to be confirmed) Conservation work in the Barycz Valley, W. Poland

For further information, contact:

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Email: nigerspring@yahoo.co.uk**

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and in Scotland (SCO39268)
Company limited by guarantee, registered in England (2206468)**

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