Butterfly
CONSERVATION EUROPE

21 years of saving butterflies, moths and their habitats

First thoughts 2002

Meeting between BC (UK) and Dutch BC in Wageningen

‘A new umbrella organisation aimed at conserving butterflies, moths and their habitats across Europe’

Founded in Nov 2004 Wageningen NL

- Non-profit making organisation
- Registered in The Netherlands (a Stichting)
- Small Board of c.9 members

  + Expert Advisors

Patron:
Sir David Attenborough

"I whole-heartedly support the formation of Butterfly Conservation Europe at this critical time and wish them every success in conserving these beautiful creatures for future generations to enjoy"

Board and advisors (2024)

Butterfly CONSERVATION EUROPE

BC Europe Priorities

Butterfly CONSERVATION EUROPE

1. Sustain network of partners across Europe
2. Influence European policies to improve Lepidoptera conservation
3. Collate data on distribution and trends of European species, and produce butterfly indicators
4. Take action for Europe's most threatened species
5. Raise awareness of the value of butterflies and moths
6. Collaborate with other relevant projects
7. Raise funds for above

Building a partnership

- 52 Partners in 39 countries
- Top Lepidoptera experts in Europe
- Our Partners are our real strength

First meeting

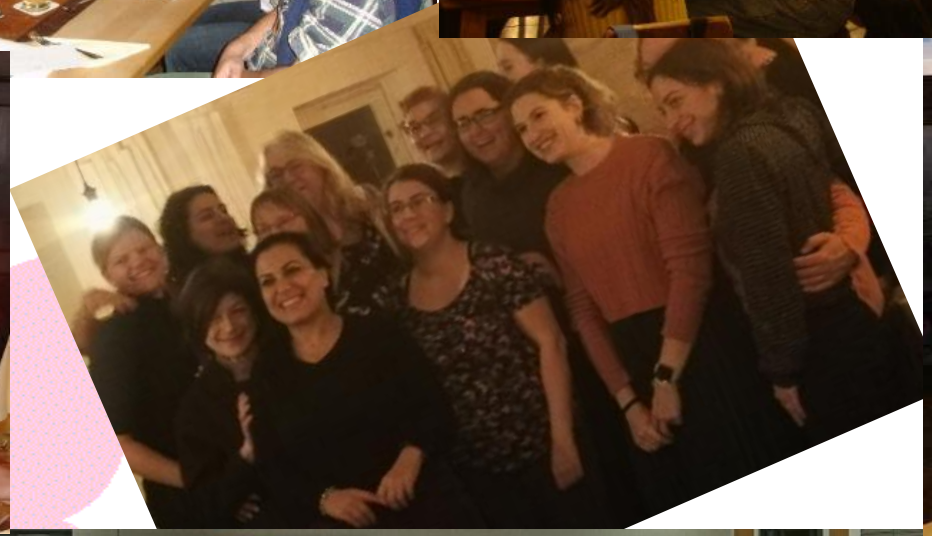
9 Partner meetings in Laufen

2007 2014
2009 2017
2010 2019 (ABLE)
2011 2022 (SPRING)

+ 2025









Butterfly
CONSERVATION EUROPE

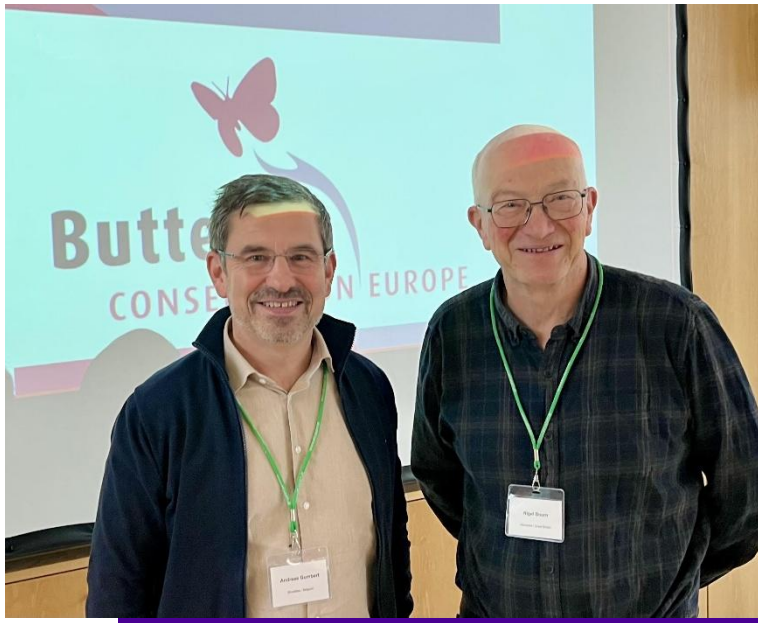
Special guests at Laufen

Ladislav Miko (Director of DG Env) receives new book on Prime Butterfly Areas of Bulgaria from Stoyan Beshkov, 2007

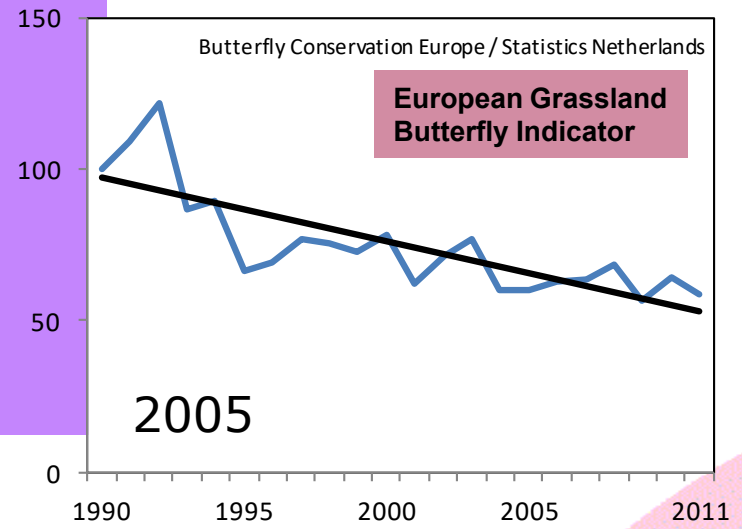
Martin Hojsik, MEP Slovakia, joins virtually in 2022

Vujadin Kovacevic, DG Environment, explains EU Pollinator Initiative, 2019

Andreas Gumbert, DG Env, and Nigel Bourn, BC Chair, 2025

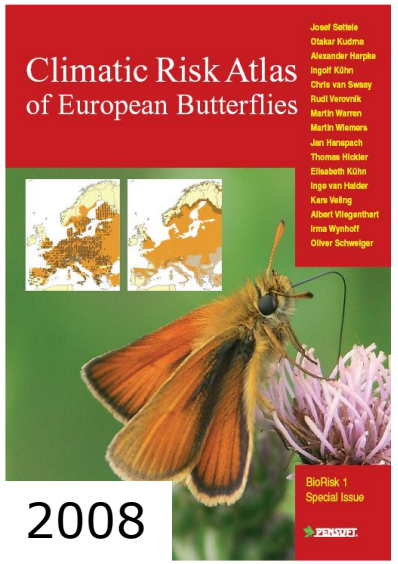


BCE early publications



2007

2008



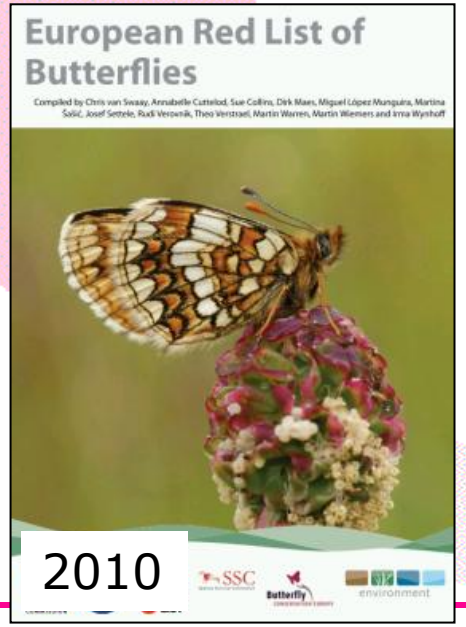
2008

Do's and Don't's for butterflies on the EU Habitats Directive

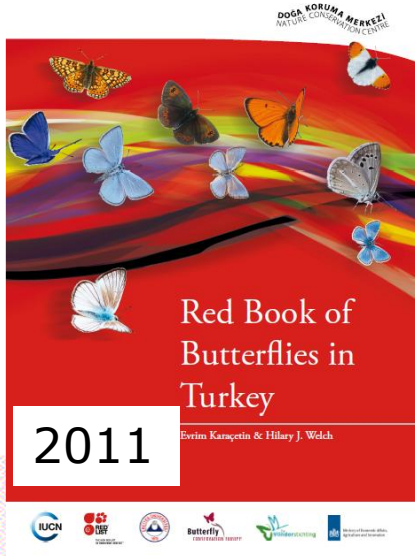
Vlinderstichting

Butterfly CONSERVATION EU

2010



2010



2011

Manual for Butterfly Monitoring

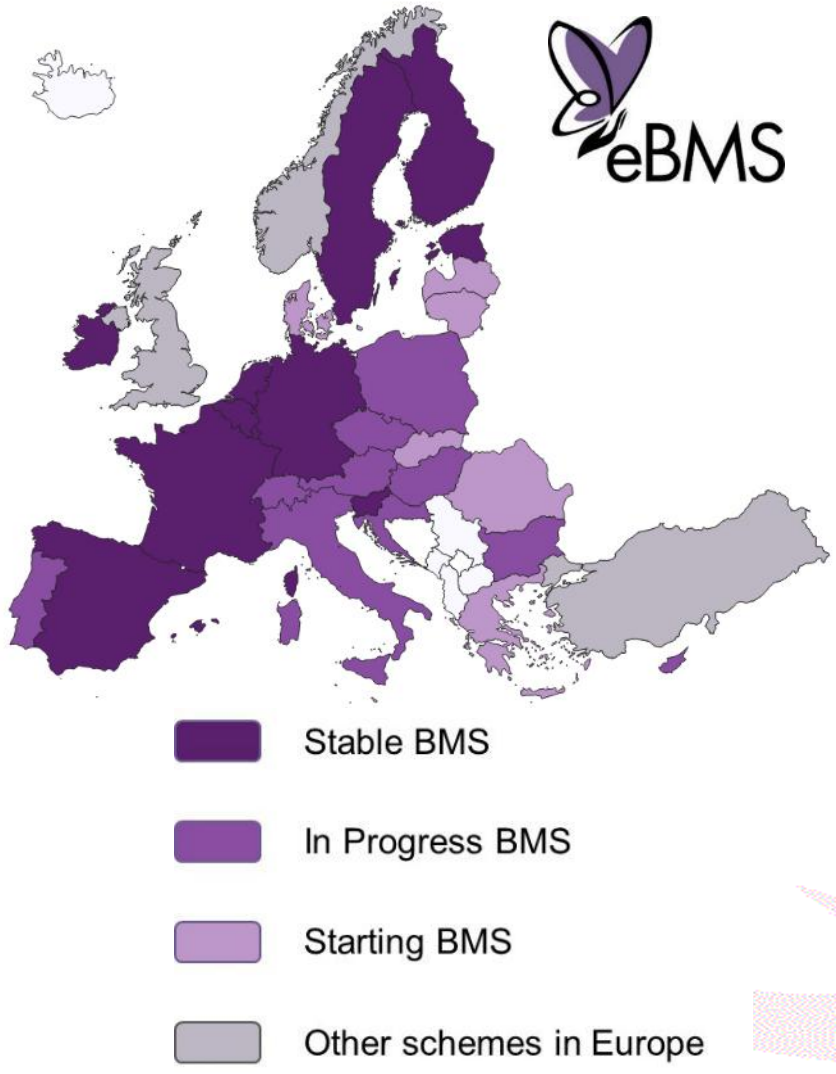
Vlinderstichting

Butterfly CONSERVATION EUROPE

2012

Building the European Butterfly Monitoring Scheme

Butterfly CONSERVATION EUROPE

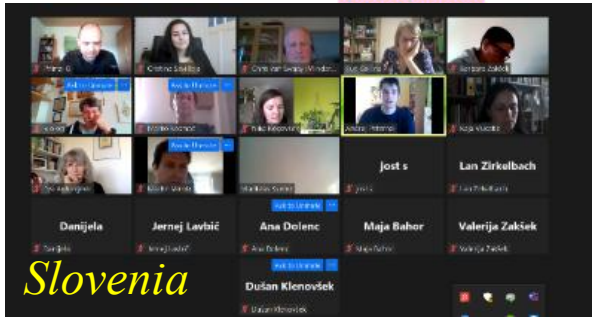


- ~10,000 volunteers
- 19.1 million counts
- 35 BMS in 30 countries
- 1,4 million visits
- 16,152 transects
- 51,340 km monitored
- 368 registered butterfly species

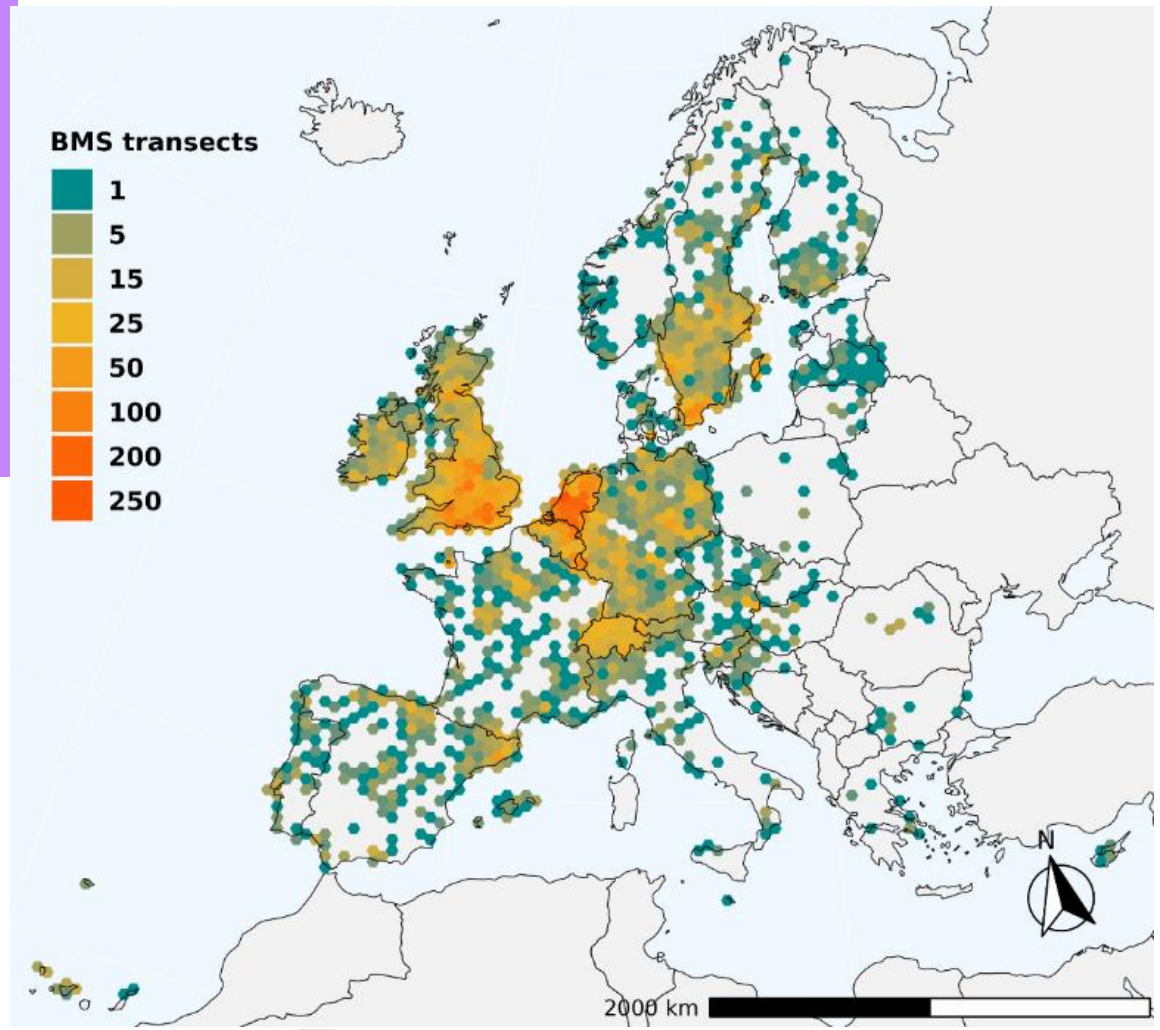
UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

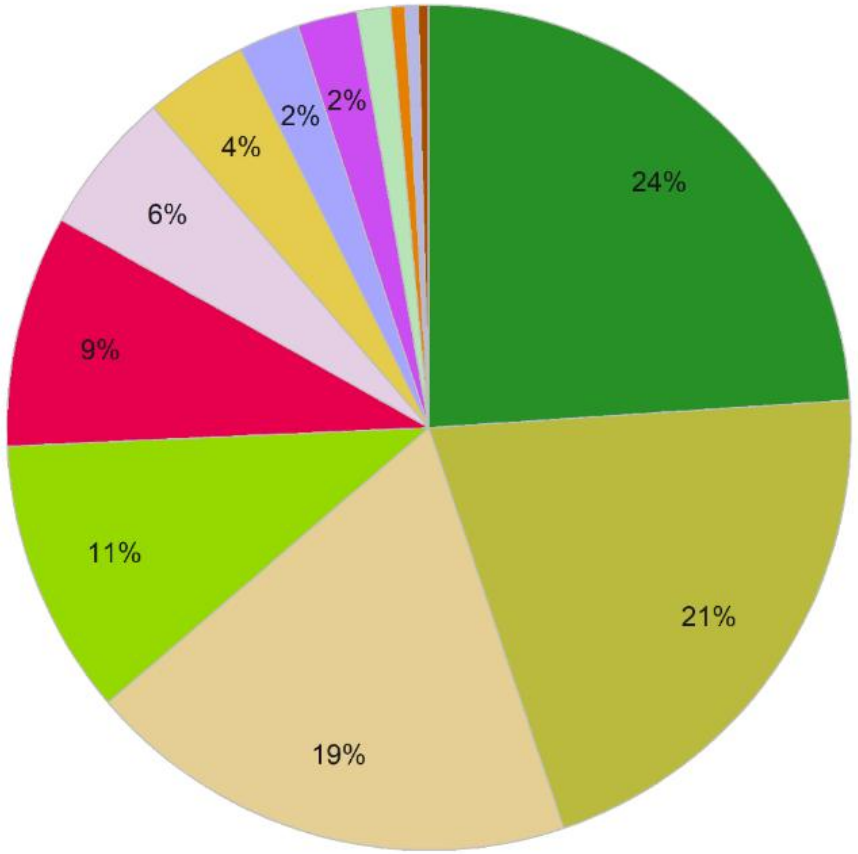
eBMS is a people network

Butterfly CONSERVATION EUROPE



Wide coverage across European landscapes



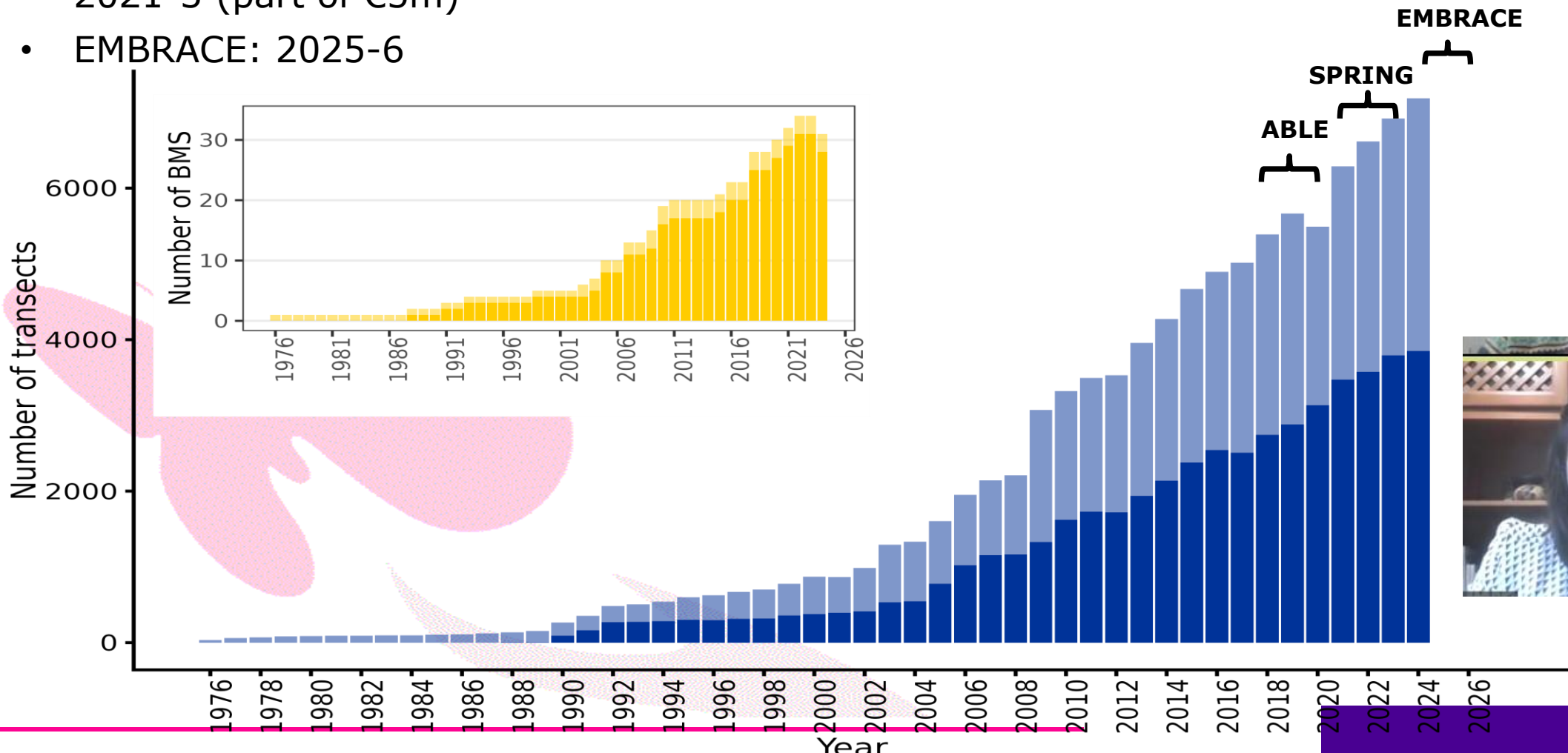


Forests
Pastures
Arable land
Scrub and/or herbaceous vegetation associations
Urban fabric
Artificial, non-agricultural vegetated areas
Heterogeneous agricultural areas
Inland wetlands
Industrial, commercial and transpc
Open spaces with little or no vegetation
Permanent crops
Maritime wetlands
Mine, dump and construction sites

Growing eBMS

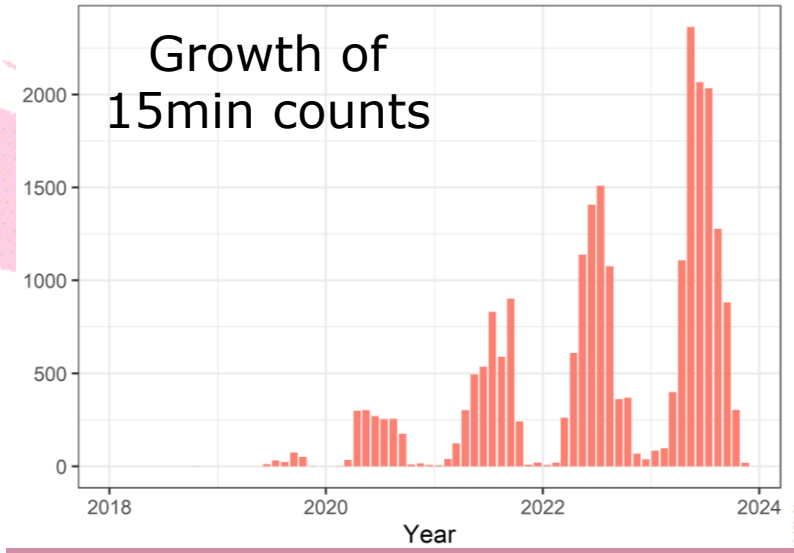
Three major EU funded projects

- Assessing ButterfLies in Europe (ABLE): 2018-20 (€800K)
- Strengthening Pollinator Recovery through INdicators and monitorinG (SPRING): 2021-3 (part of €5m)
- EMBRACE: 2025-6

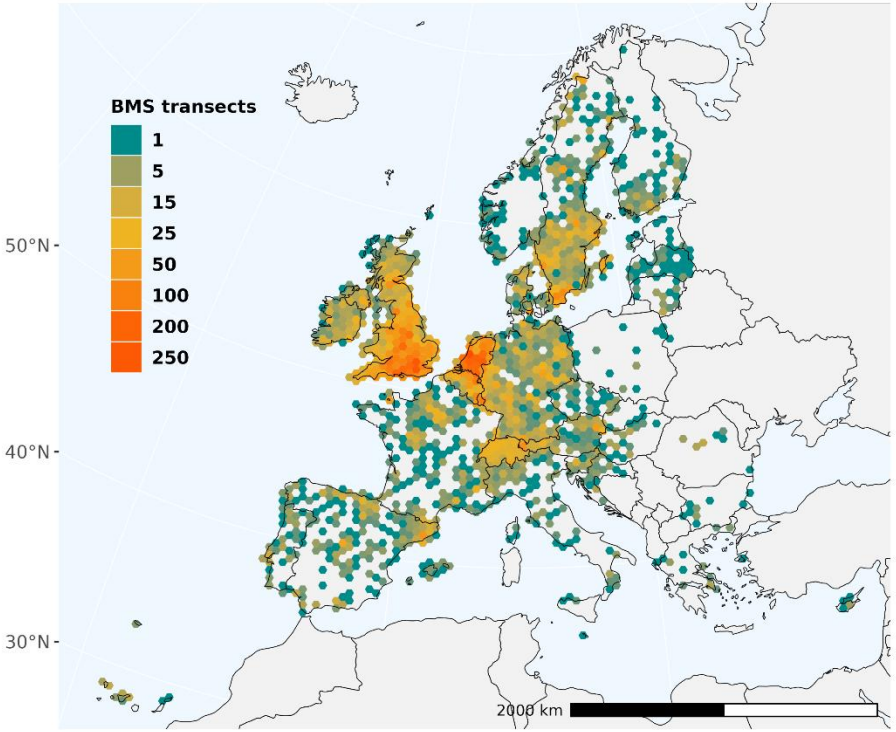


ButterflyCount app

- 15 minute counts
- Target: rare sp/remote areas
- 27 languages
- Moth survey option with Image recognition
- Results direct to eBMS database

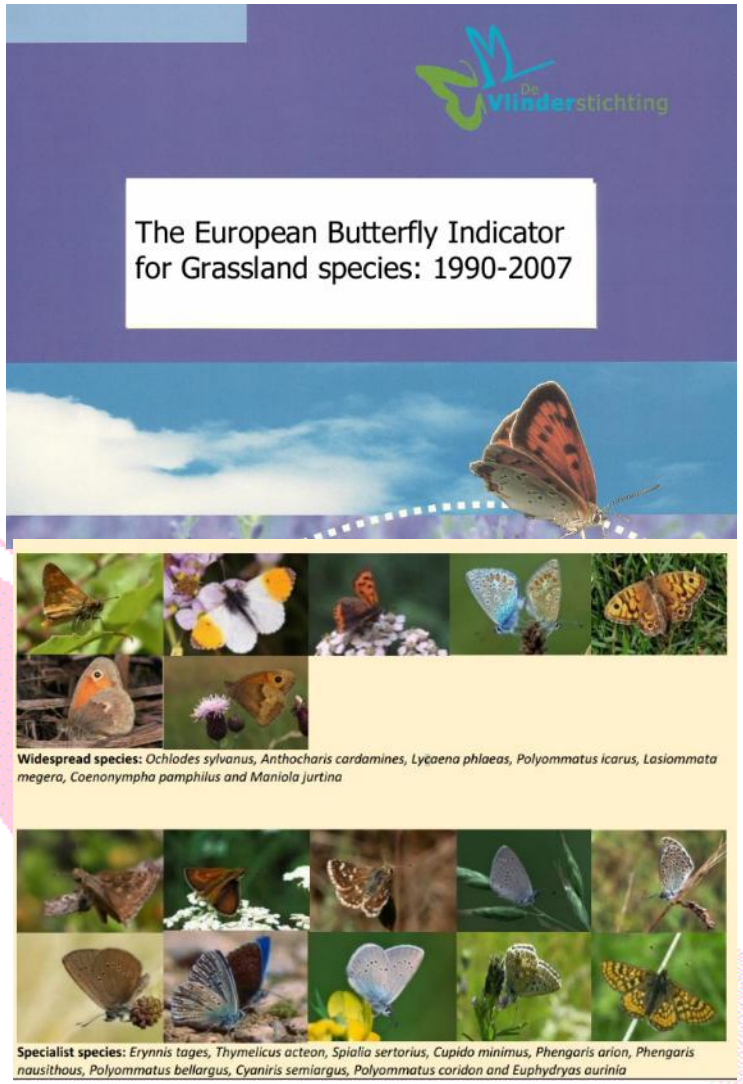


Number of 15-min count registered per month in the last years.

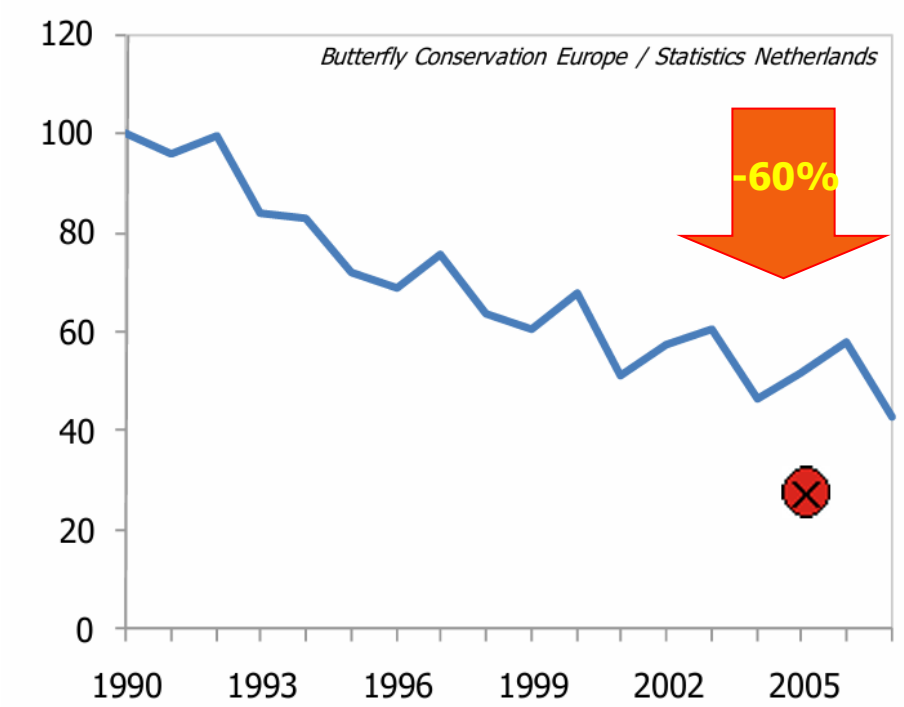


https://butterfly-monitoring.net

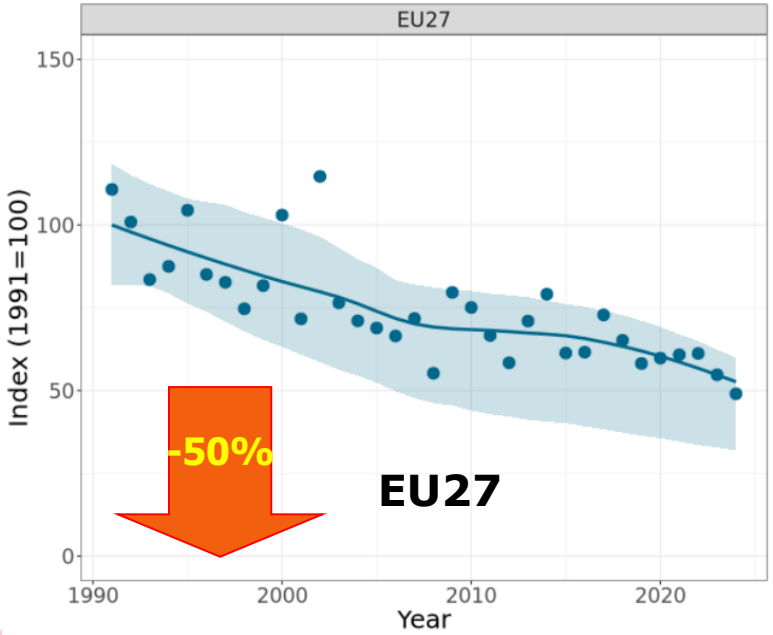
European Grassland Butterfly Indicator

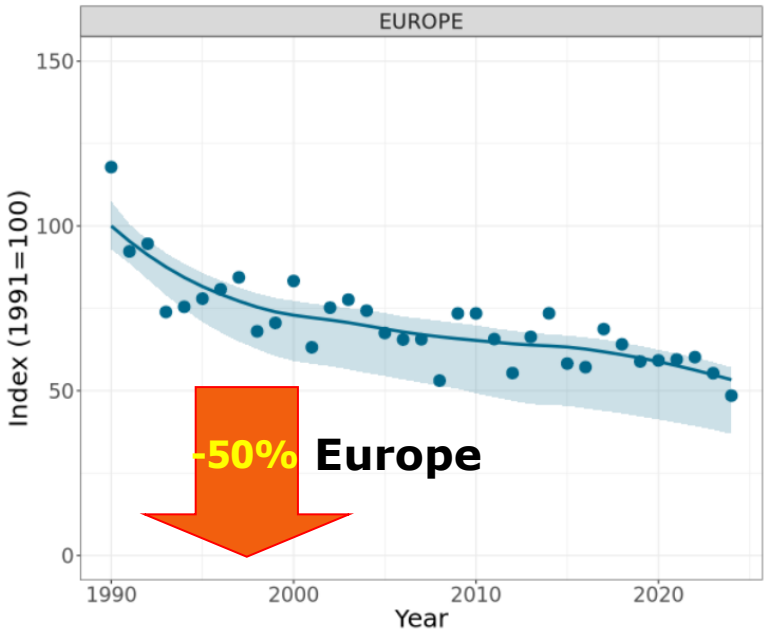


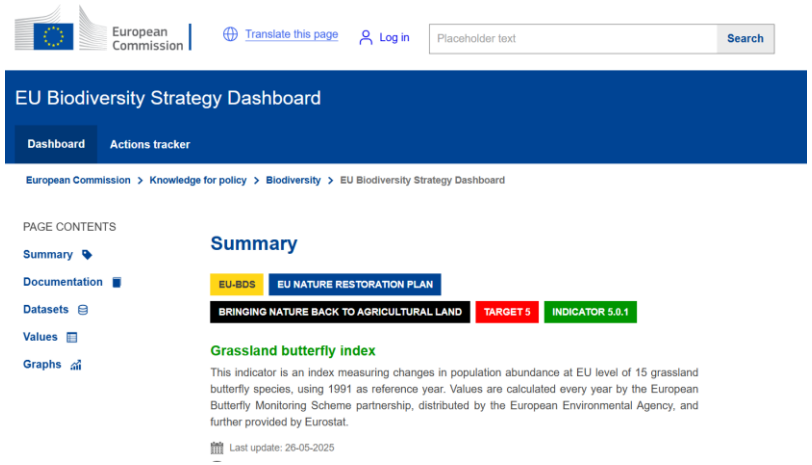
- 17 characteristic species



Grassland Butterfly Indicator

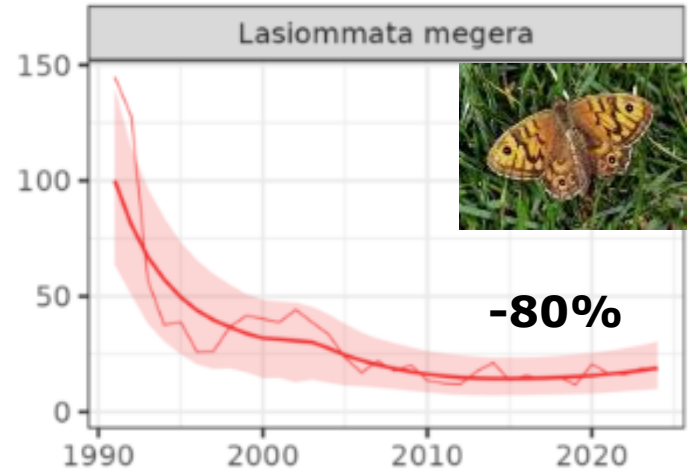


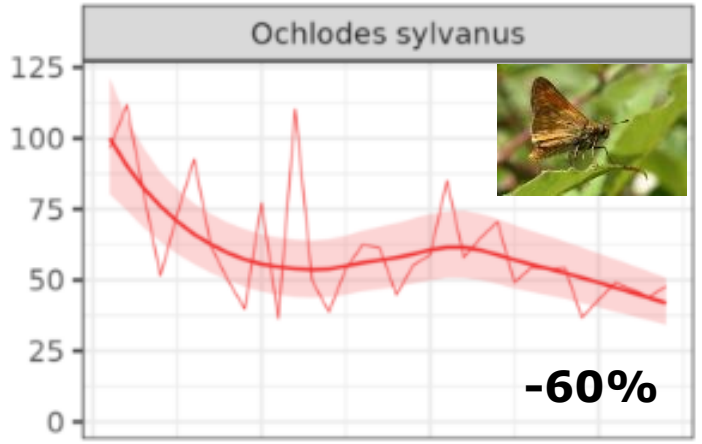


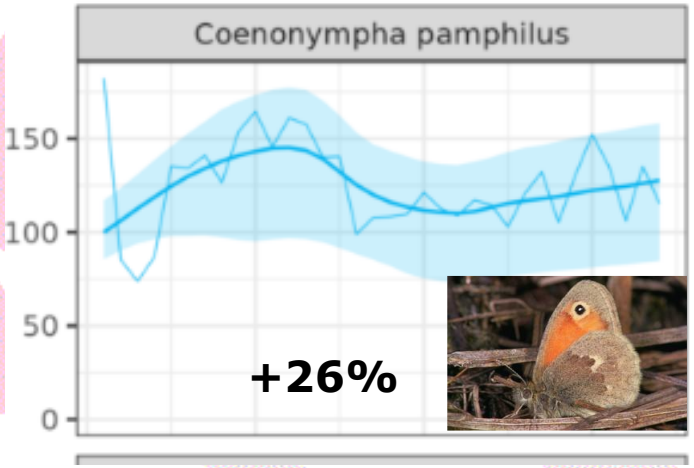


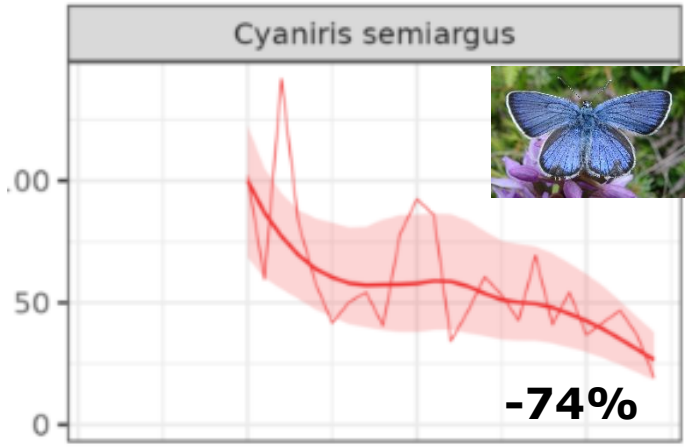
- 17 characteristic species
- Key Indicator on EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 Dashboard
- Measure of target: ‘Reverse decline in Pollinators’

Data on species

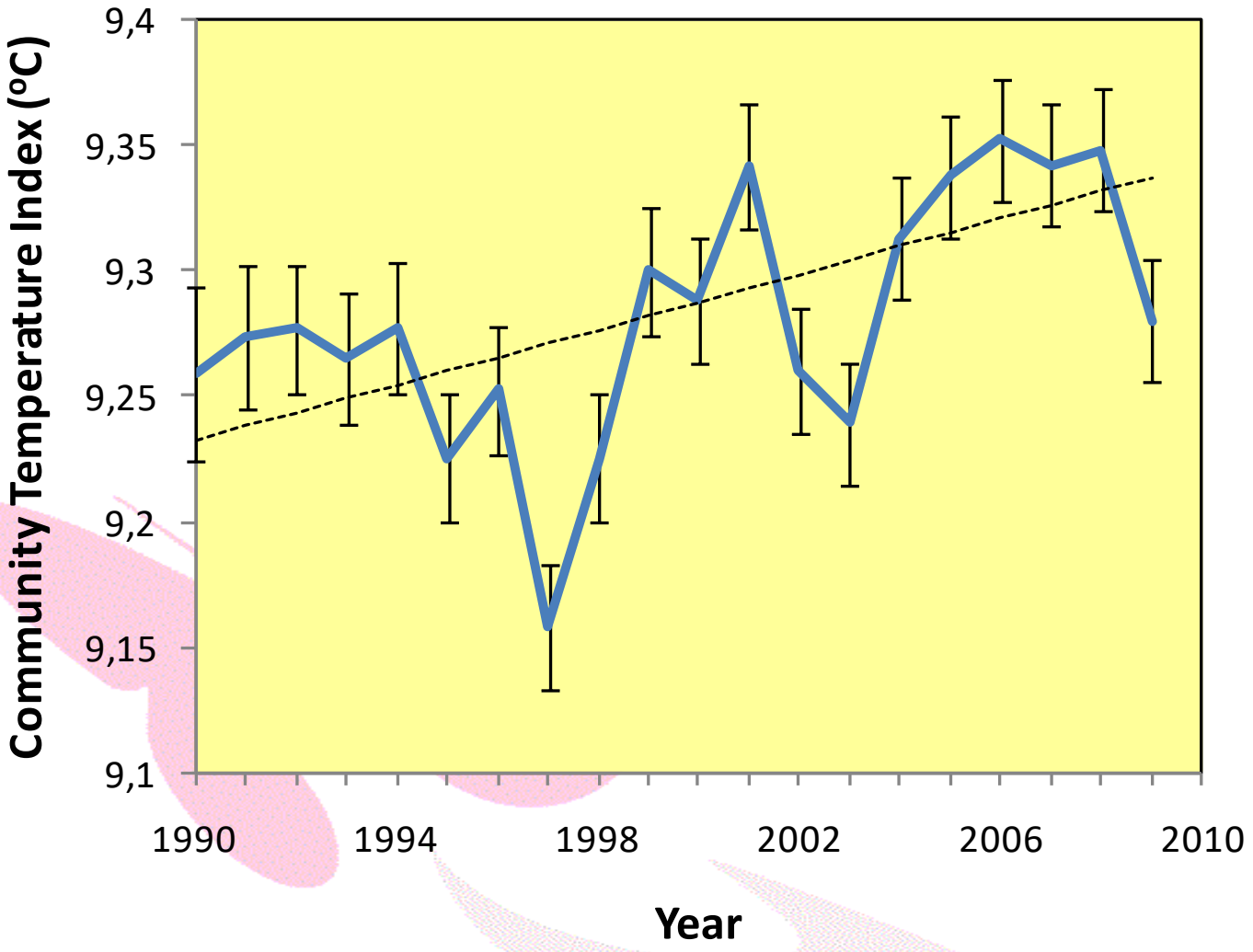








Climate Change Indicator



Mean shift of butterfly communities northward

= 75 km in 20 yrs

Mean shift in temp northwards

= 249 km in 20 yrs

Policy activities

- Sue Collins Vice-chair of the European Habitats Forum 2007-2024
- Aidan Whitfield now leading work
- Input to key EU policies:
  - Nature Restoration Regulation
  - EU Biodiversity Strategy
  - EU Pollinators Initiative
  - CAP reform
- Recovery Strategy for European butterflies

Sue Collins

Aidan Whitfield

Social Media response

Bluesky

1,000 likes:
shows a strong interest in our work from across the world

Action for threatened species

with European Butterfly Group

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Macedonian Grayling

Pseudochazara cingovskii

- Mohamed-bin-Zayed fund
- Only known site threatened by quarrying

Spanish endemics

Polyommatus golgus, P. violetae, Agriades zulichi, Euchloe bazae

- Funded by MAVA
- Threatened by climate change + ski development on S. Nevada

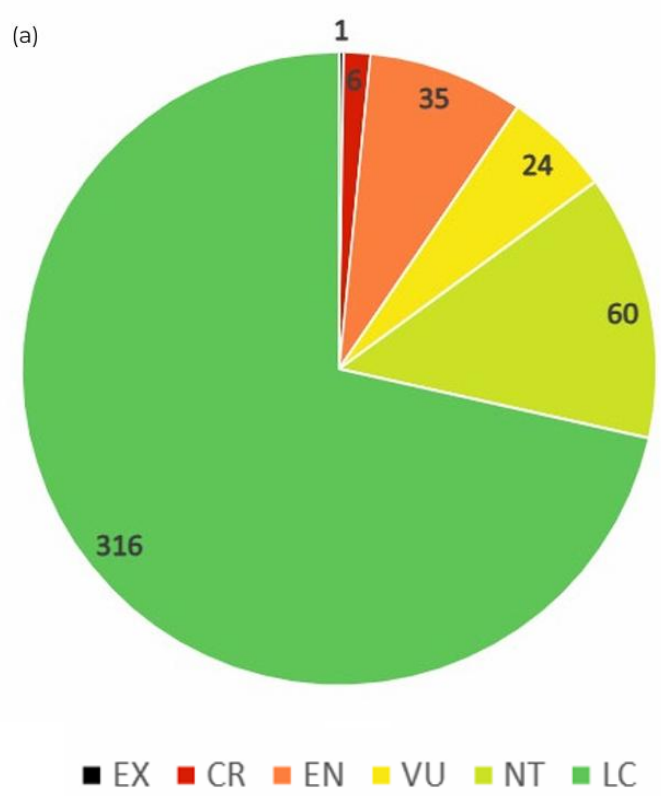
Danube Clouded Yellow *(Colias myrmidone)*

Madeiran Speckled Wood *(Pararge xiphia)*

Nevada Grayling *(Pseudochazara williamsi)*

New Red Lists

- 28.3% (125 species) threatened or Near Threatened
- 40% of Europe's endemic butterflies threatened or NT
- Over half of threatened species are threatened by climate change



New Red Lists

European Red List of
Moths

due 2026

We hope it is a springboard to develop a moth network within BCE

EPIC Butterfly 2025-6

European Pollinator Identification Courses

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POLL HAB 2025-6

Pollinators typical of habitats listed in Habitats Directive

Butterfly Conservation Europe

Poll Hab

UNIPD – University of Padova, Italy

UMONS – University of Mons, Belgium

UNSPMF – University of Novi Sad, Serbia

ATECMA – Asesores Técnicos de Medio Ambiente S.L., Spain

BCE – Butterfly Conservation Europe, The Netherlands

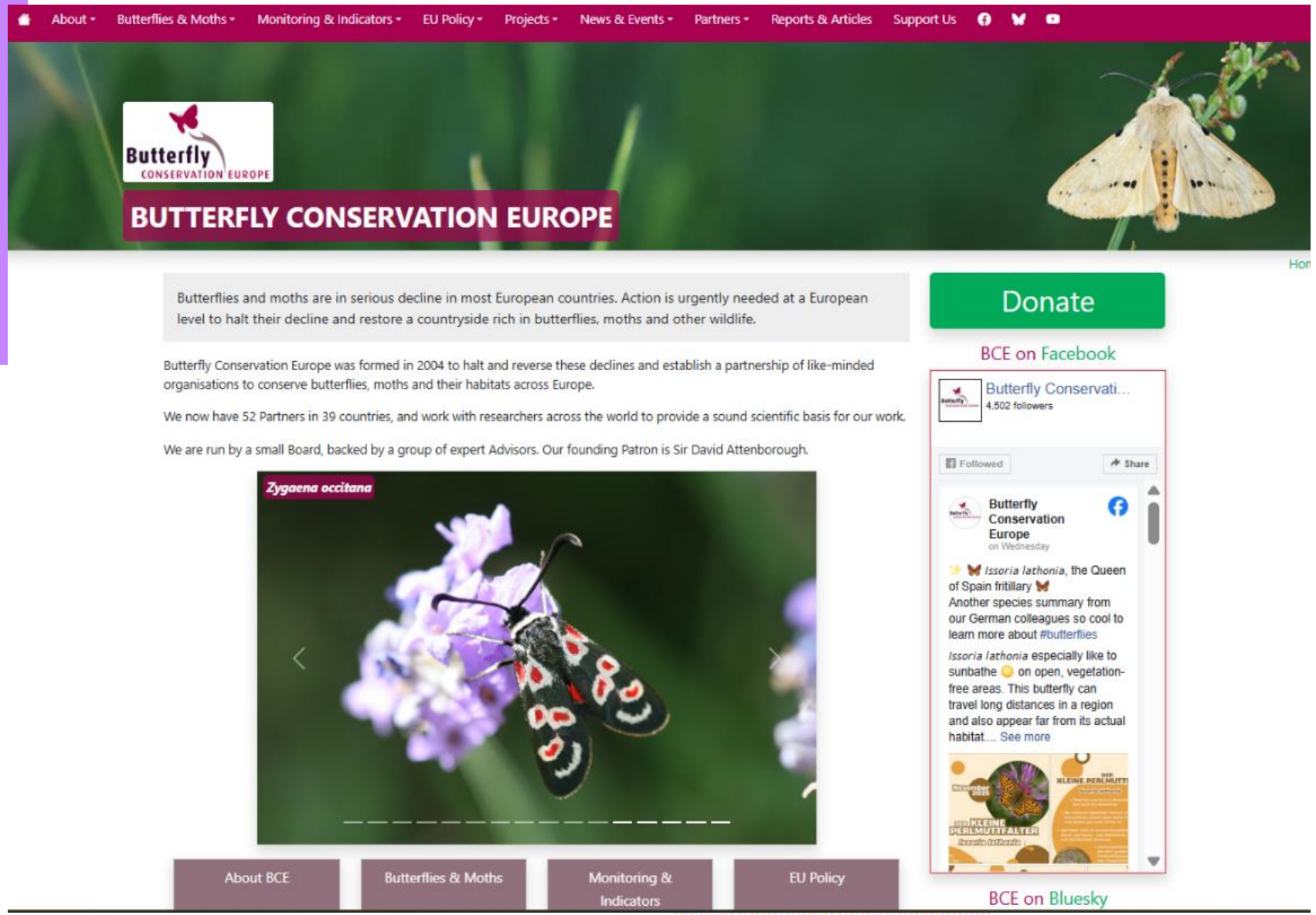
DVS – De Vlinderstichting, The Netherlands

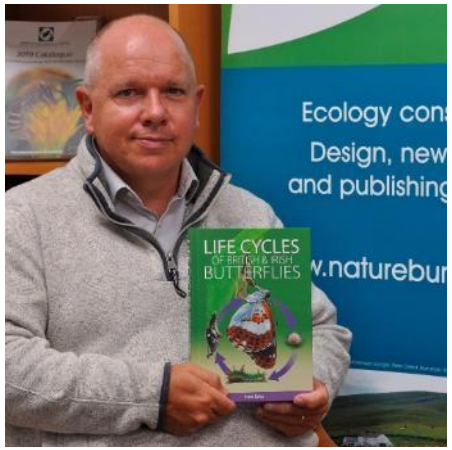
INBO – Instituut Natuur-En Bosonderzoek, Belgium

UREAD – University of Reading, United Kingdom

IEEP – Institute for European Environmental Policy, Belgium

New website 2025





Pete Eeles

Website features

Home / Butterflies & Moths / Bu

Butterfly Species Listing

There are around 501 species of butterfly found in Europe, including the regions of European Russia and European Turkey. Butterflies select a variety of habitats in which to feed and reproduce, including meadows, grassland, forests and green urban areas. The greatest diversity is found in the three mountain regions of the southern peninsulas, as well as in the islands and boreal areas, which have a high number of endemic species.

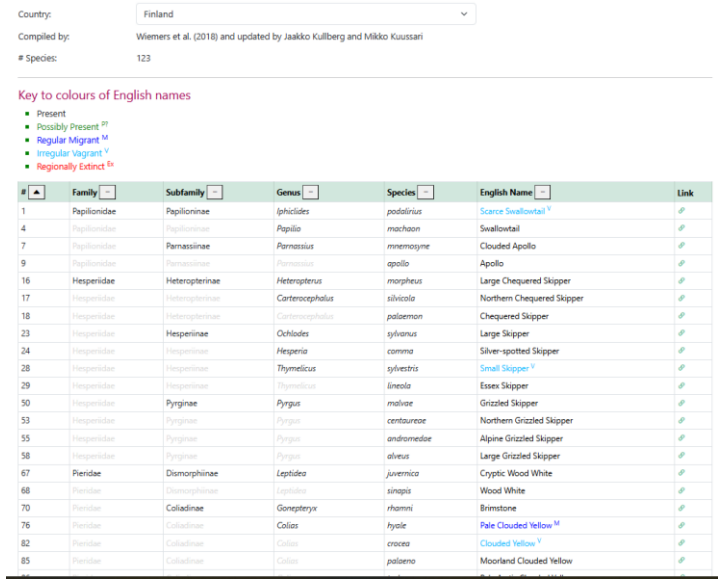
The table below lists all the butterfly species found in Europe:

- The listing is based on the most recent update: Wiemers, M. et al. (2018). An updated checklist of the European Butterflies (Lepidoptera, Papilionoidea). *ZooKeys, 811: 9-45.* https://doi.org/10.3897/zookeys.811.28712.
- The larval foodplant listing shown on the individual species pages comes from: Clarke, H. E. (2024). A checklist of European butterfly larval foodplants. *Ecology and Evolution, 14,* e10834. https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.10834. Note that this work does not show preferred foodplants, which can vary from region to region.
- The English names of plants are taken from: Stace, C. (2019). *New Flora of the British Isles,* 4th edition.
- Species accounts are taken from: Settele et al. (2008). Climatic Risk Atlas of European Butterflies. *BioRisk 1: 1-712.* https://doi.org/10.3897/biorisk.1. Note that some range restricted species are not covered.

Country: All Countries

Species: 501

#	Family	Subfamily	Genus	Species	English Name	Link
1	Papilionidae	Papilioninae	*Iphiclides*	*podalirius*	Scarce Swallowtail	
2	Papilionidae	Papilioninae	*Iphiclides*	*feisthamelii*	Iberian Scarce Swallowtail	
3	Papilionidae	Papilioninae	*Papilio*	*alexanor*	Southern Swallowtail	
4	Papilionidae	Papilioninae	*Papilio*	*machaon*	Swallowtail	
5	Papilionidae	Papilioninae	*Papilio*	*hospiton*	Corsican Swallowtail	
6	Papilionidae	Papilioninae	*Papilio*	*demoleus*	Lime Swallowtail	
7	Papilionidae	Parnassiinae	*Parnassius*	*mnemosyne*	Clouded Apollo	
8	Papilionidae	Parnassiinae	*Parnassius*	*phoebus*	Small Apollo	
9	Papilionidae	Parnassiinae	*Parnassius*	*apollo*	Apollo	
10	Papilionidae	Parnassiinae	*Archon*	*apollinus*	False Apollo	
11	Papilionidae	Parnassiinae	*Zerynthia*	*cerisy*	Eastern Festoon	
12	Papilionidae	Parnassiinae	*Zerynthia*	*cretica*	Cretan Festoon	
13	Papilionidae	Parnassiinae	*Zerynthia*	*rumina*	Spanish Festoon	
14	Papilionidae	Parnassiinae	*Zerynthia*	*polyxena*	Southern Festoon	
15	Papilionidae	Parnassiinae	*Zerynthia*	*cassandra*	Italian Festoon	
16	Hesperiidae	Heteropterinae	*Heteropterus*	*morpheus*	Large Chequered Skipper	
17	Hesperiidae	Heteropterinae	*Carterocephalus*	*silvicola*	Northern Chequered Skipper	
18	Hesperiidae	Heteropterinae	*Carterocephalus*	*palaemon*	Chequered Skipper	
19	Hesperiidae	Hesperiinae	*Pelopidas*	*thrax*	Millet Skipper	
20	Hesperiidae	Hesperiinae	*Borbo*	*borbonica*	Zeller's Skipper	
21	Hesperiidae	Hesperiinae	*Gegenes*	*pumilio*	Pygmy Skipper	
22	Hesperiidae	Hesperiinae	*Gegenes*	*nostrodamus*	Mediterranean Skipper	
23	Hesperiidae	Hesperiinae	*Ochlodes*	*sylvanus*	Large Skipper	
24	Hesperiidae	Hesperiinae	*Hesperia*	*comma*	Silver-spotted Skipper	
25	Hesperiidae	Hesperiinae	*Thymelicus*	*christi*	Canarian Skipper	
26	Hesperiidae	Hesperiinae	*Thymelicus*	*acteon*	Lulworth Skipper	
27	Hesperiidae	Hesperiinae	*Thymelicus*	*hyrax*	Levantine Skipper	
28	Hesperiidae	Hesperiinae	*Thymelicus*	*sylvestris*	Small Skipper	



Country: Finland

Compiled by: Wiemers et al. (2018) and updated by Jaakko Kullberg and Mikko Kuussari

Species: 123

Key to colours of English names

- Present
- Possibly Present [PP]
- Regular Migrant [M]
- Irregular Vagrant [V]
- Regionally Extinct [Ex]

#	Family	Subfamily	Genus	Species	English Name	Link
1	Papilionidae	Papilioninae	*Iphiclides*	*podalirius*	Scarce Swallowtail [V]	
4	Papilionidae	Papilioninae	*Papilio*	*machaon*	Swallowtail	
7	Papilionidae	Parnassiinae	*Parnassius*	*mnemosyne*	Clouded Apollo	
9	Papilionidae	Parnassiinae	*Parnassius*	*apollo*	Apollo	
16	Hesperiidae	Heteropterinae	*Heteropterus*	*morpheus*	Large Chequered Skipper	
17	Hesperiidae	Heteropterinae	*Carterocephalus*	*silvicola*	Northern Chequered Skipper	
18	Hesperiidae	Heteropterinae	*Carterocephalus*	*palaemon*	Chequered Skipper	
23	Hesperiidae	Hesperiinae	*Ochlodes*	*sylvanus*	Large Skipper	
24	Hesperiidae	Hesperiinae	*Hesperia*	*comma*	Silver-spotted Skipper	
28	Hesperiidae	Hesperiinae	*Thymelicus*	*sylvestris*	Small Skipper [V]	
29	Hesperiidae	Hesperiinae	*Thymelicus*	*lineola*	Essex Skipper	
50	Hesperiidae	Pyrginae	*Pyrgus*	*malvae*	Grizzled Skipper	
53	Hesperiidae	Pyrginae	*Pyrgus*	*centaureae*	Northern Grizzled Skipper	
55	Hesperiidae	Pyrginae	*Pyrgus*	*andromedae*	Alpine Grizzled Skipper	
58	Hesperiidae	Pyrginae	*Pyrgus*	*alveus*	Large Grizzled Skipper	
67	Pieridae	Dismorphiinae	*Leptidea*	*juvernica*	Cryptic Wood White	
68	Pieridae	Dismorphiinae	*Leptidea*	*sinapis*	Wood White	
70	Pieridae	Coliadinae	*Gonepteryx*	*rhamni*	Brimstone	
76	Pieridae	Coliadinae	*Colias*	*hyale*	Pale Clouded Yellow [M]	
82	Pieridae	Coliadinae	*Colias*	*crocea*	Clouded Yellow [V]	
85	Pieridae	Coliadinae	*Colias*	*palaeno*	Moorland Clouded Yellow	

Country lists

Species accounts + food-plants (after Harry Clarke)

Managing Habitats for Butterflies and Biodiversity: Basic principles for managers

Butterflies are declining rapidly across Europe and over one quarter (28%) of the 442 resident species are threatened with extinction or close to being so. Most butterflies breed in habitats that have been managed by humans for hundreds of not thousands of years and the way these habitats are managed in the future is crucial for butterfly survival. Butterflies are sensitive indicators of environmental health and are representative of insects and other pollinators which are essential for the functioning of ecosystems. Managing for butterflies will therefore help a whole suite of species and help achieve the international and European goals of halting and reversing the decline of biodiversity.

Important butterfly habitats

The most important habitats for European butterflies are (in descending order): dry calcareous grasslands and steppes, alpine and subalpine grasslands, mesophile grasslands, dry siliceous grasslands, sclerophyllous scrub and heath, mixed and deciduous woodlands, coniferous woodland, humid grasslands and tall herb communities.

Principles of managing for butterflies (and other pollinators)

1. Manage for variety

Each butterfly species has its own specific habitat requirements, so management should aim to provide a range of conditions, often based around traditional land use patterns. Some species require short vegetation, while others require longer vegetation. Others still require mosaics of vegetation types. Managing for habitat variety across a landscape is thus essential to conserve the full range of typical species.

2. Consider all stages of the life cycle

Butterflies develop from an egg that transforms into a caterpillar, then a chrysalis and into the adult butterfly. Each stage has its own requirements, for example: the specific foodplants used by the caterpillar, a safe place in which to pupate and overwinter, or a variety of nectar sources used by the adults.

3. Habitat mosaics, edges and ecotones are crucial

Many butterflies use resources found in a range of habitat types and require mosaics of different habitats in the landscape. For example, some species breed along scrub or wood edges and need a mixture of scrub and grassland. Other species may lay eggs in one type of habitat and use nectar resources in another. The spatial scale of the mosaic will vary from region to region and will often depend on the traditional land use pattern. Sometimes it will be small fields with small blocks of scrub or woodland, while in more extensive landscapes the mosaic may be very large scale.

4. Maintain active pastoral systems

Grassland is the single most important habitat for butterflies and abandonment is the biggest single threat. Abandonment can temporarily lead to good conditions for many species, but will soon lead to scrub encroachment and eventual loss of suitable breeding conditions as open grassland turns to woodland. The maintenance of open grassland is thus essential, usually by the maintenance of active traditional pastoral systems, including livestock grazing and hay cutting. Socio-economic conditions will need to be considered to ensure such pastoral systems survive.

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5. Avoid uniform management (especially in hay meadows)

Butterfly populations can be badly damaged, or can even become extinct, following intensive and uniform management, notably hay cutting. Cutting dates should be varied as much as possible so that not all areas are cut within a narrow time window. Ideally a mosaic of small-scale cutting should be implemented, replicating traditional management before mechanisation. Leaving some areas uncut during the winter will also help butterflies and other insects that require long grass during hibernation.

6. Active woodland management is often essential

Many woodland butterflies require some form of active management and this is essential for the survival of several threatened species. Management can either be regular thinning, rotational coppicing or planting. Some species also require the maintenance of open habitats within woodland, such as sunny clearings or paths/tracks. Traditional management is often a useful guide to suitable management, but may need to be adapted to suit modern timber markets. In parts of Europe, open or sparse woodland is also important either to provide breeding habitats or shelter during periods of harsh weather.

7. Manage at a landscape scale

Butterflies usually exist as a network of local populations between which there is some interchange of adults to form a metapopulation. Management should aim to maintain this population network across the landscape, accepting that not every locality may be suitable at any one time (though some core sites will be). Progressive loss of habitat suitability across a landscape, or new barriers to dispersal, can lead to loss of local populations and eventually regional extinction of a species through the breakdown of metapopulations. Effective landscape-scale management maintains a mosaic of suitable habitats and ensures connectivity between them. This includes safeguarding stepping-stone habitats, corridors, and open landscape features that allow butterflies to disperse and re-establish where populations have been lost.

8. Monitoring is essential

Some form of biological monitoring is essential to assess the impact of monitoring, both at the local, regional and national scale. On protected areas, monitoring is essential to assess the viability of designated features, which may include butterflies and other pollinators. Butterflies are a sensitive indicator group that can be used to assess change (both positive and negative) and inform decision making. Many butterflies are easy to identify and there are often local volunteer groups or Societies who can help provide data. There are several standard, tried and tested techniques for monitoring butterflies, including recording regular butterfly transects or by conducting 15-minute counts. These can be used to produce species trends at site and landscape levels, as well as national and international levels.

9. Use the ButterflyCount app to assess progress

Butterfly Conservation Europe has produced an easy-to-use app called ButterflyCount that can be used anywhere in Europe, with results going straight to a central database as well as being made available to national partners. The European Butterfly Monitoring Scheme collates national and regional data into a central database to produce a range of species and composite indicators, including the Grassland Butterfly Indicator. This is used on the EU dashboard for measuring progress with the EU Biodiversity Strategy and as a way of measuring the health of agroecosystems under the EU Nature Restoration Regulation.

Further information

- Species status and requirements.
- Monitoring techniques.
- Do's and Don'ts of species on the Habitats Directives.

Corporate Sponsors

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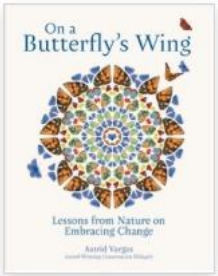
Corporate Support for Butterfly Conservation Europe

Butterfly Conservation Europe welcomes the support of companies that share our aims of conserving butterflies, moths and their habitats. By supporting us, companies can demonstrate that they care for the natural environment, both to their customers, staff and shareholders. As a small non-profit organisation, every donation makes a big difference to our work saving butterflies, moths and their environment in Europe*.

To find out more and discuss the options for your company, please contact us at info@bc-europe.eu.

Corporate supporters



Astrid Vargas, the author of the book **On a Butterfly's Wing - Lessons From Nature on Embracing Change** is donating the royalties from her book because she wants to support our vital work saving these beautiful creatures. The book is a celebration of life and a tribute to our constant process of transformation. It is also a call for action for the protection of butterflies, offering positive suggestions on how we can team up with pollinators to help each other create a better world for both. More information and orders of the book can be made here.

Greenwings Wildlife Tours specialise in butterfly and botanical holidays throughout Europe, and worldwide. The company was established by conservationists in 2010, and rapidly became the leading Lepidoptera-focused tour operator, with many clients having enjoyed a dozen or more of their tours to date. Greenwings leaders are highly talented, extremely knowledgeable and welcoming, with years of experience of both tour leading and conservation activities. The tours they offer are original, crafted from years of research and unrivalled local site knowledge, ensuring the best experience for their guests. Tour groups are kept small to provide the highest quality experience. All of their butterfly tours generate a donation to Butterfly Conservation Europe. They are proud to fund and support BCE in promoting all activities and initiatives which have at their core the aim to conserve butterflies and their habitats. You can find out more about their tours and sponsorship here.

Mariposa Nature Tours specialise in butterfly and botany holidays throughout Europe and beyond. Their tour leaders have intimate site knowledge, having spent years in the field exploring and refining their knowledge of the regions they visit, and the wildlife to be found in them. All of their butterfly holidays generate donations to Butterfly Conservation Europe, specifically to be used for supporting research and education. They are proud that their tours will help to fund the training of the conservationists who will make a difference to the world of tomorrow. You can find out more about their tours and sponsorship here.

Priority Action Plan 2024-30

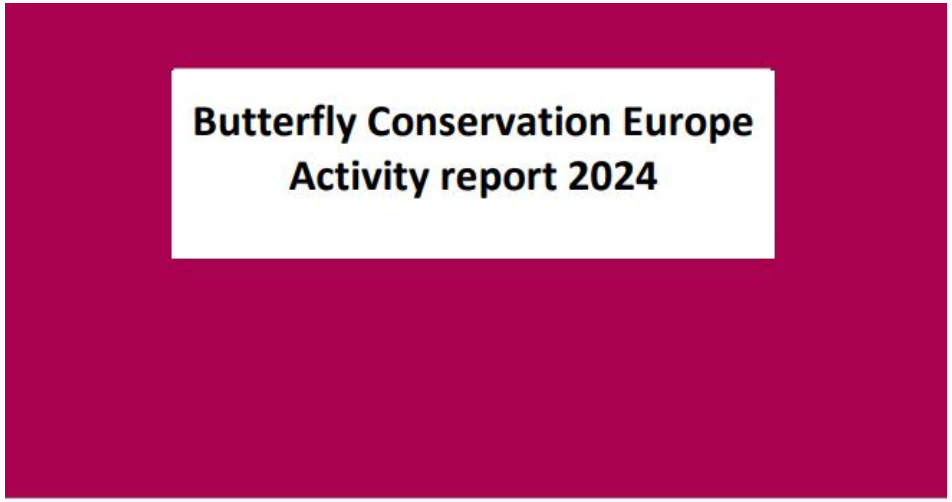
Butterfly CONSERVATION EUROPE

1. Maintain our highly valued network of Partners
2. Advocate better European policies for Lepidoptera
3. Create an eBMS covering the whole of Europe and an effective database on Lepidoptera distributions
4. Take practical action to conserve threatened and widespread species
5. Raise awareness of Lepidoptera and their role in creating a healthy ecosystem
6. Increase our capacity to raise funds and run projects.

Conclusions

- We are a unique organisation in Europe: the only pan European network aimed at conserving an insect group across the continent
- We are deeply grateful to everyone who has become involved and contributed their time and expertise.
- Our strength is our Partner Network which spans the whole of Europe. People working together is extremely powerful and amplifies our individual efforts
- The European Butterfly Monitoring Scheme is also unique as it provides the only annual pan European assessment of insect populations (the only comparable group is birds)
- The Grassland Butterfly Index is a powerful tool to assess agro-ecosystems and make improvements
- We have achieved a lot in the first 21 years, but we want to do much more. We need to put more effort into restoring habitats for butterflies and moths ('bending the curve'), and develop a moth network to galvanise work on this important group

Further information



- Annual Activity Reports
- Newsletters
- Websites
- *https://bc-europe.eu/*
- *https://butterfly-monitoring.net/*
- Social media

Butterfly Conservation Europe

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Special thanks to

- **BCE Partners** and their colleagues
- **Board Members** and Advisors – past and present
- **Funders:** Governmental Foundations Corporate