

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION'S WORK IN SCOTLAND

Species Action Project

Butterfly Conservation Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) have teamed up to help some of Scotland's rarest butterflies and moths. This new project focuses on four species (three butterflies and a moth); Marsh Fritillary, Chequered Skipper, Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Slender Scotch Burnet moth, and builds on previous work.

In many cases the focus will be on landscapes rather than individual isolated sites as the project aims to link existing colonies to create networks of sites, allowing adults to move more readily between colonies making these populations more robust and sustainable. The project will focus on Scotland's ten Butterfly Survival Zones which have been designated as being some of the most important landscapes for butterflies and moths in Scotland.

It will also help the Scottish Government deliver its commitment to biodiversity as three of the species (Marsh Fritillary, Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Slender Scotch Burnet) are included on Species Action Framework (SAF, led by SNH), launched last year to provide targeted action for 32 priority species in Scotland. Whilst the two woodland butterflies, (Chequered Skipper and Pearl-bordered Fritillary), are priorities in the Scottish Forestry Strategy (led by FCS) that aims to help protect and enhance biodiversity.

These key species face a number of issues. The fate of Marsh Fritillary is linked to the future of farming and crofting in the remote and marginal areas that the species occurs. Many Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Chequered Skipper sites have deteriorated as regenerating trees and rank vegetation have developed. Whilst for Slender Scotch Burnet bracken and scrub encroachment has severely reduced the area of suitable habitat.

To date work has focused on working with landowners and their advisors to access funding through Scotland's new Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) to enhance their land for these key species. This has resulted in the production of site specific grazing or woodland plans.

Butterfly Conservation Scotland would like to thank SNH and FCS for part funding this exciting new project. We are also indebted to the co-operation and enthusiasm of all landowners and the many volunteers who survey and monitor these important colonies.

Other activities

Our core grant from SNH helps us carry out a range of other activities such as:

- co-ordinating monitoring and surveys for other UKBAP butterflies and moths,
- organising meetings for BC members and volunteers,
- working on policy and media issues,
- and raising the profile of Lepidoptera and of BCS.

Thus each autumn we now put on a Members' Day to celebrate what we have achieved during the year, and as a chance for members across Scotland to meet up. In the spring

we have a Recorders Gathering to provide feedback for those helping with surveys and monitoring, and look at priorities for the year ahead.

Much time is spent with other NGOs working on policy issues for agriculture, forestry and planning, in helping implement the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, and influencing debates on energy and transport.

In recent years we have run an annual postcard survey to encourage the public to record a common and (hopefully!) unmistakeable butterfly and raise our profile. Following on with very successful surveys of Orange-tips and Peacocks in the north and west, in 2009 we are running a Scotland-wide survey for the Small Tortoiseshell.

We also attend Scotland's biggest Garden Show (just outside Edinburgh) each year, and are now also working with Edinburgh Butterfly and Insect World to develop a butterfly garden.

Shona Greig, Tom Prescott & Paul Kirkland (and a cast of hundreds of volunteers)