



Turkey – fabulously  
rich in *butterflies*



The Kaçkar Mountains, Artvin, in July ©Hilary & Geoff Welch

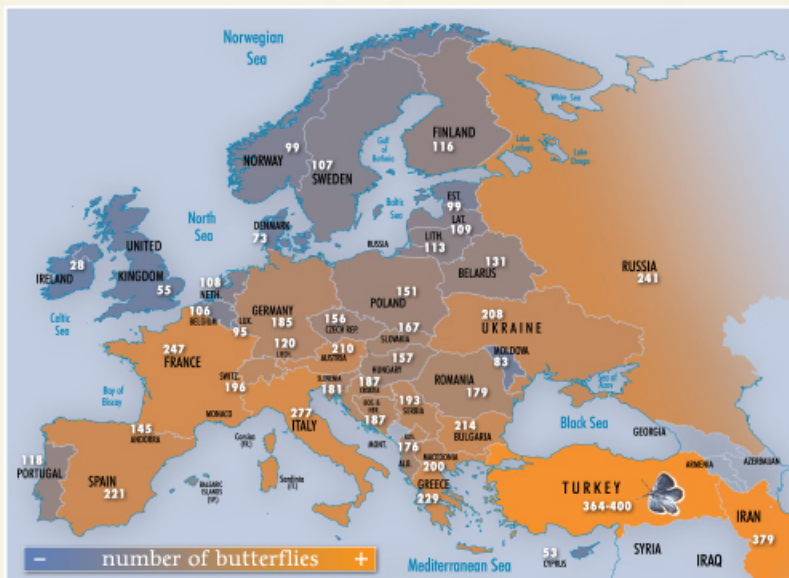


For watching butterflies, Turkey is hard to beat. Its famously rich flora provides a huge range of foodplants and nectar sources for butterflies, and its mix of temperate and dry, cold and hot climates are perfect for a wealth of species – from Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa. On top of all this, there are also many species which are unique to Turkey.

Turkey has a special responsibility to look after this rich natural heritage.



### Turkey's butterfly diversity compared with surrounding countries



## How long does a butterfly live?



It varies. Assuming it's not eaten or killed by bad weather a life-span of 1-2 weeks would be reasonable. Some live much longer. A long-lived species in Turkey is the Camberwell Beauty – as an adult it can live up to 10 months. If we include the caterpillar and chrysalis stages of the butterfly's life it's even longer. A tiny South American yucca moth holds the known record: as a caterpillar it can live for up to 30 years!



Camberwell Beauty (*Nymphalis antiopa*) ©Bram Verlaan



## Where do the first spring butterflies come from?

The first butterflies we see in spring, and sometimes even in winter, have been over-wintering in a safe, dark and dry place. As temperatures rise, they emerge to bask in the sun in sunny sheltered places and to drink nectar from deep inside the first flowers.



The Kaçkar Mountains, Artvin, in July ©Hilary & Geoff Welch

## Create a butterfly garden

Would you like to have lots of butterflies visiting your garden or balcony? By planting flowers which are popular with butterflies you can encourage them. Plants which are well-watered will provide more nectar for hungry butterflies;



©Stephen Jeffcoate

some good choices are Primroses, Honeysuckle, Mint and Thistles. Remember, if you want to attract butterflies you also need to avoid using pesticides.

## Do you have a passion for butterflies?

Ahmet Baytaş's 'Field Guide to the Butterflies of Turkey', published 2007 by NTV, will help you to identify almost every butterfly you see, it's indispensable.

Ahmet Baytaş and Evrim Karaçetin's 'Türkiye'nin Kelebek Rehberi' (only available in Turkish), published 2008 by Doğa Derneği is an introduction to Turkey's common butterflies and gives information on how to start butterfly watching.



Turkish butterfly watchers ©Dirk Maes

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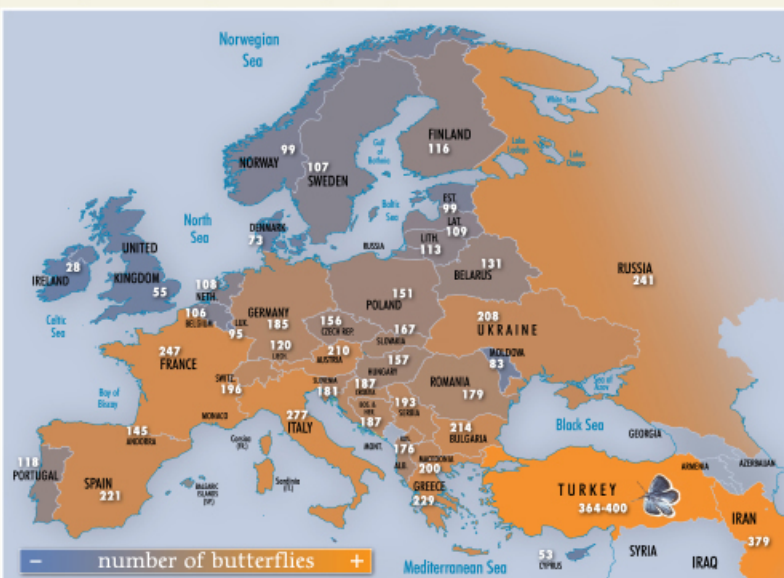
## Where can I see butterflies?

Everywhere, from your window-box to remote mountain meadows. Especially good places for lots of different butterflies are flower-rich stream-sides, hay meadows, forest glades and high mountain pastures. Damp muddy patches in these habitats can be particularly good. Here the males gather to drink the mineral-rich water; the extra nutrients improve their breeding success. If you are lucky you may see hundreds of butterflies together, drinking and sunning themselves.



Mountain Small White, Damon Blue, Ripart's Anomalous Blue, False Chalkhill Blue (*Pieris ergane*, *Polyommatus damon*, *P. ripartii*, *P. corydonius*) ©Ahmet Baytaş

## Turkey's butterfly diversity compared with surrounding countries



## How do butterflies eat?

Butterflies drink using a 'proboscis'. This looks like a rolled up tongue but actually it's a tube with a sharp tip which works like a drinking-straw. Usually the proboscis is about the same length as the butterfly's body, but in some species it can be up to three times longer.

Another bizarre thing about butterflies is that they taste with several parts of their body, including their feet, and smell with their antennae, very very sensitively.

Two-tailed Pasha (*Charaxes jaspis*) nectaring on fruit ©Olcaç Yeğin



A group of Anatolian Skippers (*Muschampia proteoides*) ©Özgür Koçak





Lesser Fiery Copper (*Lycaena thersaman*) likes flower-rich meadows ©Özgür Koçak



Yaylalar, Artvin, a traditionally farmed area rich in butterflies ©Hilary & Geoff Welch



Women cutting hay, Yüncüler, Artvin ©Hilary & Geoff Welch



Mule transporting hay, Yaylalar, Artvin ©Hilary & Geoff Welch

## Why butterflies?

Butterflies are an important part of our lives. They are the inspiration for books, poetry, music and paintings. They pollinate flowers and, because they are very sensitive to small changes in the environment, they are among the first indicators to tell us when things are going wrong. We know that climate change is already affecting butterflies.



Orange-tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*) watercolour ©Darren Woodhead

## Butterflies and people



Human activities have been influencing the Turkish landscape since settled farming started more than 10,000 years ago. In evolutionary terms that's a good amount of time for butterflies, long enough for them to adapt to living alongside us.

Thus grasslands in an agricultural mosaic of cultivation and pasture, or openings and margins in forests managed following traditional systems of livestock grazing and hay-cutting are rich in butterflies. For butterflies, Man's sympathetic management has become part of the natural system and they depend on it.

So, when there is a change in traditional grassland and forestry management systems – be it abandonment or intensification – a decline in butterfly numbers and diversity follows and we risk the extinction of many characteristic meadow species.

## Modern agriculture and butterflies



Today butterflies are disappearing from many areas. As grassland and steppe are ploughed for growing crops, the total area of rangeland available for livestock diminishes. Too often the result is serious over-grazing, loss of natural vegetation cover and soil erosion. At the same time, modern intensive crop production with huge fields and large inputs of chemicals is not butterfly-friendly. Butterflies prefer:

- no chemicals;
- small land-parcels with lots of variety;
- grazing, especially using local traditional breeds of cattle;
- cutting for hay.

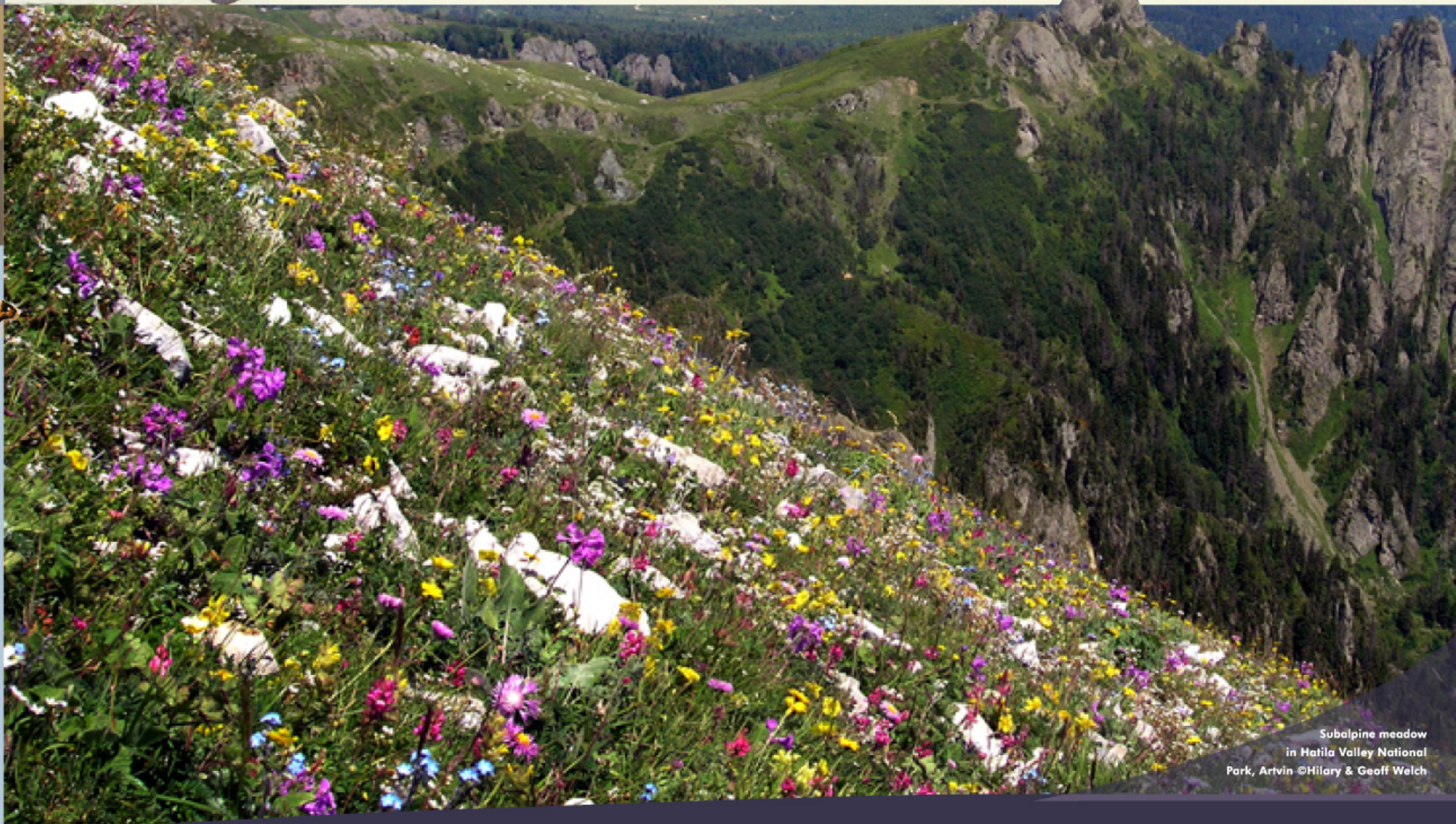
These combined result in a mosaic of flower-rich patches supporting a wide variety of insects, including many butterflies, other plant pollinators and controllers of pest species.



Bavus Blues (*Pseudophilotes bavus*) ©Olçay Yeğin

## Threats to butterflies

Changes in farming and intensive building developments are destroying and fragmenting butterfly habitats. The remaining habitat patches suitable for butterflies are becoming isolated yet many species depend on the continued existence of a larger network, not just single small sites. This complicates butterfly conservation as it means that we need to consider the whole landscape, not just the small patches where butterflies occur.



Subalpine meadow in Matila Valley National Park, Artvin ©Hilary & Geoff Welch

## Project activities

## 2009-11 Butterfly Project

DKM is determined to ensure that butterflies remain part of Turkey's heritage and become truly treasured. As a first step we are running a two and a half year project to develop a technical basis for active butterfly conservation, working together with Turkish and international experts and enthusiasts.

- To encourage the development of a nucleus of trained butterfly watchers who can collect data for conservation.
- To make digitised distribution data on Turkey's butterflies widely available to all those working for butterfly conservation;  
*Do you have butterfly records which you would like to share? Contact us at [dkm@dkm.org.tr](mailto:dkm@dkm.org.tr)*
- To use internationally accepted criteria to draw up and publish a draft Turkish Red List of butterflies, agreed with scientists, government and nature conservationists.

- To start work on identifying the very best and most important areas for butterflies in Turkey.  
*Do you know any sites which you consider to be particularly important or rich in butterflies? Contact [dkm@dkm.org.tr](mailto:dkm@dkm.org.tr)*
- To work together with landowners and land managers to develop practical and achievable ways to support and implement land-use practices which benefit butterflies.
- To work with scientists, government and nature conservationists to draw up a long-term Conservation Strategy for butterflies in Turkey.



Silver-studded Blue on ice (*Plebeius argus*) ©Hilary & Geoff Welch



Alcon Blue (*Glaucopsyche alcon*) eggs on gentian ©Szabolcs Sáfán



Spotted Fritillary (*Melitaea didyma*) caterpillar ©Özgür Koçak



Would you like to make contact with other butterfly watchers in Turkey? Do you need help to identify the butterflies you have photographed? Visit <http://www.leptr.org> for support and for links to other sites in the Turkish butterfly network.

### **What is the Nature Conservation Centre (DKM)?**

DKM works in partnership with government and other institutions to develop national capacity for effective nature conservation. We encourage and facilitate the systematic collection of data on butterflies and other biodiversity. The data are used to identify priority areas for conservation and to develop practical conservation management actions which will benefit biodiversity and people.

<http://www.dkm.org.tr>

DKM is the Turkish representative of Butterfly Conservation Europe. BCE and Dutch Butterfly Conservation are partnering DKM in the 2009-11 Butterfly Project (see centre pages of this brochure for information about the project).

<http://www.bc-europe.org>



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**agriculture, nature  
and food quality**