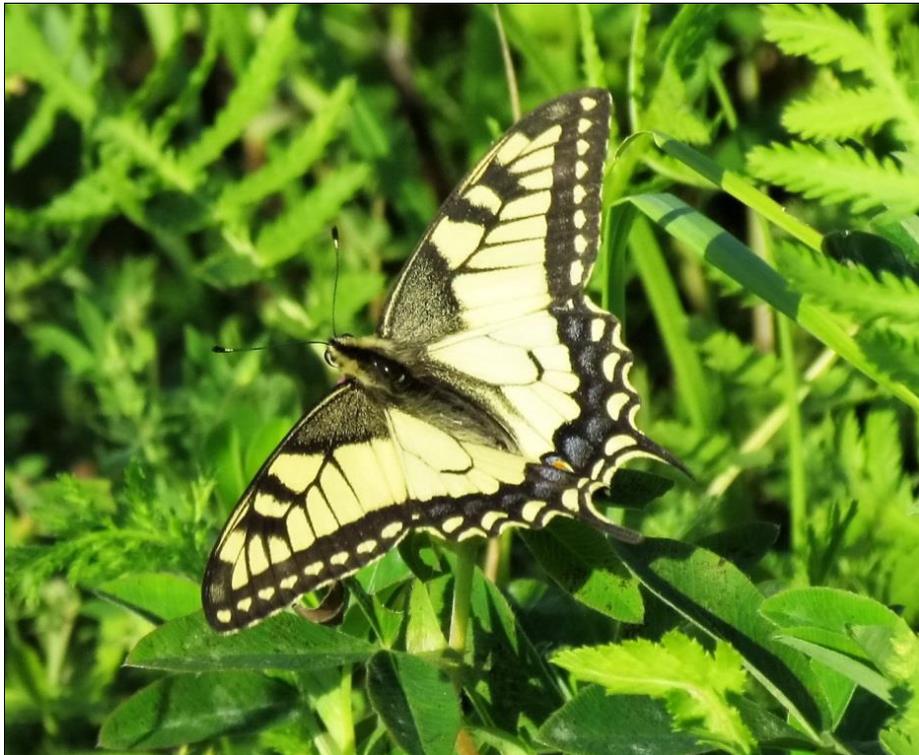


Svetlana Goloshchapova

**Initiation of volunteer butterfly conservation
movement in Western Russia**

Intermediate Report



Our project was started in the middle of April 2012. The first part of our project is coming to the end. And this report is about this phase and it includes description on our activities in this period.

The main aims of our project at the first phase were developing a network of skilled volunteers to become involved in long-term recording butterfly, and initiation public awareness campaign about butterfly conservation.

For achievement of aims we organized:

1. Talks with future volunteers.

We held several meetings with volunteers (school and university teaches, scientists, students, schoolchildren and people like their nature and want to save it) during which we told about butterflies, different aspects of their biology and ecology. We discussed roles of this group of insects in ecosystems, their important meaning as bioindicators, and how butterflies used to measure environmental impact of local and regional environmental policies. One of the important points of meeting with volunteers was developing long-time monitoring scheme on regional and national level. More than 130 people of different ages and professionals from different part of our region took part in this activity.

2. Training workshops.

At the start of field season (May in our region) we organized several training workshops on butterflies observation and accounting. The main subjects of workshops were butterflies' identification and transect method for accounting butterflies. We teach volunteers need in survey design and butterfly recording.

We trained volunteers to identify butterflies in environment. Special colorful key was published for volunteers.

We organized field training and we teach volunteers to use transect method. This method was recommended by Butterfly Conservation Europe for monitoring. Professional coordinator of butterfly conservation project facilitated this training.

Volunteers were trained:

- how to choose area for transect?
- what is the recommend length of transect?
- how you can divide transect into the sections for description of conditions?
- how to fill the transect protocol correctly?
- what whether is the best for counting butterflies?

We involved about 70 people in these workshops.

3. Data collection.

The main direction of our project since May till September 2012 was collection and accumulation of data about distribution of butterflies in region. We improved increased the volunteer's network, include new habitat, species and geographic coverage. 32 transects were established in Bryansk region in 2012, total number of transect is 42. It covers $\frac{3}{4}$ areas of our

region. We made records about 68 butterfly species in field season of 2012. All received data was included in special database. It will be used for future analyse.

4. Educational materials.

Our team initiated public awareness campaign for attracting and drawing people into the butterfly conservation. We prepared and printed different special educational materials: leaflets, posters, and banners. They informed people about butterflies of our region and threats for their existing. We published special information about Red Data Book species, their habitats and needs for protection. These educational materials were spread between volunteers, different educational institutions, schools, non-governmental organizations, environmental protection organization.

5. Educational programs in schools.

We held different lectures, seminars, game lessons with schoolchildren in primary and secondary school of our region. We told about general aspects of biology butterflies, their unique colors, meaning of butterflies in nature and their conservation, about methods and needs of protection of this group of insects. Schoolchildren made butterfly origami. It was very interesting for them.

6. Creation website.

We designed and created web-site «Butterfly Conservation Project» directed on attracting people from different regions of Russia in developing butterfly monitoring scheme. This website is available on link <http://www.proekt-babochki.org>.

We included in website following information in Russian language:

- our goals and object,
- main directions of project,
- how you can help,
- registration of new participant,
- methods of recording butterflies,
- report about your activity,
- report about your recording of butterflies,
- threatens for butterflies,
- form for uploading data,
- fotogallery,
- our partners,
- useful links,
- our contacts.

This website helps volunteers easy to upload information about all transects, protocols, records and to download different educational materials. Through website people can ask questions and receive quickly answers from project coordinators.

7. Our data was included in new edition of The European Butterfly Indicator for Grassland species: 1990-2012 (The Butterfly Conservation Europa). This is international program publish results of observation for the population trends of seventeen grassland butterfly species in Europe. We gave data of our recording about 6 widespread grassland butterflies:

Ochlodes sylvanus,
Anthocharis cardamines,
Lycaena phlaeas
Polyommatus icarus
Coenonympha pamphilus
Maniola jurtina;

and 4 specialist grassland butterflies:

Erynnis tages
Cupido minimus
Cyaniris semiargus
Polyommatus coridon

Previous The European Butterfly Indicator for Grassland species: 1990-2009 shows that since 1990 butterfly populations declined by almost 70%. It indicates a dramatic loss of grassland biodiversity. This also means that the situation has not improved since the previous version of the indicator was published.

The main driver behind the decline of grassland butterflies is the change in rural land use: agricultural intensification where the land is relatively flat and easy to cultivate, abandonment in mountains and wet areas, mainly in Eastern and Southern Europe. Inclusion information about Russian butterflies lets to estimate our data, compare and supplement European data.

8. Participating in the Rufford Small Grant Recipients Conference

Svetlana Goloshchapova made presentation about our project «Initiation of volunteer butterfly conservation movement in Western Russia» at the Rufford Small Grant Recipients Conference in Armenia which took place from 27 to 30 September 2012.

In conclusion I would like to acknowledge Rufford Small Grant Foundation to support our project and organization of Rufford Small Grant Recipients Conference in Armenia where recipients of grant could to present their project, shared about success of project and discussed problems of cooperation in conservation projects in world.