

Project Update: May 2011

The first project activities started in March 2011 with short field surveys in eastern Serbia. One of the highlights of these starting activities was finding very rare Compton tortoiseshell (*Nymphalis vaualbum*) in Gornja Vrežina, a small village near Niš City, where the species was not recorded. A month later we organised a small meeting in Temska village at foothills of Mt. Stara Planina together with Serbian botanists and ornithologists. Besides research activities, that was a nice opportunity to plan and make schedule of future activities and promote biodiversity to local community. After that, a small group went to Negotin to investigate new potential Natura 2000 areas, and by the end of April 2011 the same group joined a spring camp in Ovčar-Kablar gorge, financed by Tourist organisation of Čačak.

The culmination of spring research activities became a discovery of Gruner's orange tip (*Anthocharis gruneri*), a new butterfly species for Serbian fauna. The Gruner's orange tip habitat is situated near Miratovac village in a dry, rocky terrain with strong sub-Mediterranean influence coming from south. The locality used to be a war zone between Serbia and Kosovo Albanians until recently, so no scientific research was performed in a long period. The first impressions suggest that area should be included as one of the Prime Butterflies Areas.

Apart from research activities, we prepared project promotional T-Shirts and information panels to be put on Mt. Stara Planina. Simultaneously, a lot was done in preparing a Serbian Butterfly Field Guide. The book is expected to be in print by the end of summer and is aimed to promote the butterfly biodiversity of Serbia to general public, above all to beginners. In this manner, we organised a small field trip to Mt. Stol which was a nice opportunity to promote butterfly diversity to wider public and to plan future activities.



Left: *Anthocharis gruneri*, a new species for Serbian fauna. Right: Entomological gathering on Mt. Stol.