



Turkey

EIG Contact	Neil Thompson (webmaster@bc-eig.org.uk)
Local Contact	
Butterfly Conservation Europe Partner	DKM www.dkm.org.tr/main_eng.html
Local Recording Scheme	www.nuhungemisi.gov.tr in English and Turkish, a bit hit and miss at present
Butterfly List	Will be available via DKM website

Books

Die Tagfalter der Türkei

by G Hesselbarth, H Van Oorschot and S Wagener (1995)

3 volumes, hardback, in German. A comprehensive work, but not a field guide due to its sheer weight!

A Field Guide to the Butterflies of Turkey

By Ahmet Baytaş (2007)

A photographic guide to the butterflies of Turkey and a perfect companion in the field.

Highly recommended, all species described and almost all have photographs. Available in English and Turkish.

Websites

www.dkm.org.tr Downloadable pdfs of the Red List, updated national checklist, candidate PBA list and more. All documentation will be in Turkish and English.

www.oktaysubasi.com Bitlis area, SE Turkey; photos with names in Turkish, Latin and English

www.antakya-kelebek.org Hatay-Şanlıurfa (Ali Atahan), in Turkish with scientific names

www.kelebek-turk.com Photographs of butterflies in Turkey taken by Turkish butterfly enthusiasts. In Turkish with scientific names. Select 'Arama' (Search) on the home page. From the 'Tür' (Species) menu select the species you would like to see photos of (Tümü means All). At the bottom of the screen click 'Arama Yap' (Make Search).

www.cesa-tr.org Many province and site lists, many documents in English.

Holidays



Sites & Species

European PBA includes 5 sites but an updated candidate list will be available from the DKM website in 2011.

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 that are unique to Turkey.

The famous 'biogeographic crossroads' give Turkey a staggering diversity of butterflies – around 380 species, more than 40 of them endemic.

Widespread species include a mix of familiar and unfamiliar species. The splendid Scarce Swallowtail (*Iphiclides podalirius*) with its long tails and striped wings, and the smaller Queen of Spain Fritillary (*Issoria lathonia*), with pearly spots on the underside of its orange and black wings. Both can be seen from March to September, from Europe to China. By contrast, False Apollo (*Archon apollinus*) is unique to Turkey and the Middle East. It's typical of many species that are special to Turkey; common where it occurs yet very little known.

The colourful coppers, hairstreaks and blues are well represented in Turkey with 150+ species. Most special, but perhaps least prepossessing are the Agrodiaetus blues, or 'Agros'. Fiendishly difficult to identify, with their wings closed all Agros look almost identical. But when the males fly, they are flashes of a stunning array of blues. The taxonomy of Agros is hazy and scientists are finding that even DNA analysis doesn't always help, but it is certain that Turkey has many which are endemic. Characteristic of the Central Anatolian shrub steppes (and easy to identify) is the Turkish Furry Blue (*Polyommatus menalcas*).

On the Black Sea, the temperate, damp and leafy habitats provide an opportunity for east and west to meet. Here you may be lucky and see the spectacular Peacock (*Inachis io*), though a very common visitor to gardens in western Europe it's scarce in Turkey. In the same forest glades and with more luck you may also see the globally endangered Caucasian Festoon (*Zerynthia caucasica*) from the southern slopes of the Caucasus, this is rare wherever it occurs.

The north-east corner of Turkey is dominated by high mountains and deep valleys. From the hot dry shrublands of the Çoruh valley, up leafy stream valleys past sunny hay meadows to subalpine pastures and sparsely vegetated mountain peaks there is a huge diversity of habitats and butterflies. More than 200 species have been recorded from the Yusufeli-Artvin area alone, more than most European countries.

The extreme south-eastern corner of Turkey is something of a Mecca for butterfly watchers. Van and Hakkari connect with the climate, mountains and plains of Iran and the south Caspian, so many of the species here are unfamiliar and several are endemic to this part of the Anti Taurus mountains. Working to understand the biogeography of butterflies here is very difficult because the biogeographic region straddles the borders with Iran and Iraq. One wonders how many of the Turkish endemics found only in this SE corner of



Turkey also occur over one of the borders. Unfortunately for biologists and conservationists, butterflies are no respecters of national frontiers and do not understand the value of being a political endemic!

From here, westwards to the NE corner of the Mediterranean, is the best place in Turkey to see tropical butterflies from Africa and Arabia. With climate change we might expect new arrivals, but where to look for them in this industrially farmed landscape? The rocky outcrops in the Çukurova plain near Ceyhan, some topped by ancient castles, are strategically placed at the northern end of the Levant and have provided valuable islands of natural habitat for many centuries.

We end our journey on the Aegean coast and travel northwards to the forests of Thrace on the border with Greece and Bulgaria. Here there are many butterflies on the edge of their European range that are exciting for Turkish butterfly watchers but not much of a draw for visiting butterfly enthusiasts from further west!