



Dukes On The Edge



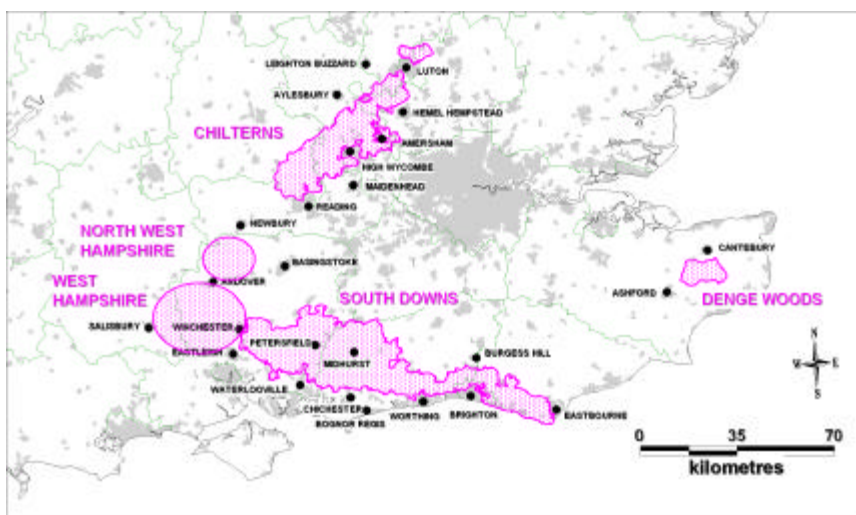
The Duke of Burgundy is one of the UK's fastest declining butterflies, down by nearly 50% in 10 years. About 130 colonies still remain in the UK, but most of these are very small and considered vulnerable - action is needed now to prevent further losses and restore networks of suitable habitat where it can thrive.

Butterfly Conservation's Dukes On The Edge project aims to halt the decline of this threatened butterfly in South East England by involving land managers and volunteers in conservation action. The Duke of Burgundy is a species that lives on the edge between open woodlands and sheltered, scrubby grasslands – habitats that are at risk from both neglect and over-management. But there's good evidence that the right management, carefully targeted, can bring the species back from the brink: we've recently had great success in Kent and Sussex through conservation action led by volunteers. This is the approach we're rolling out across the south east, safeguarding Duke of Burgundy populations in some of the region's most important natural landscapes.

Get involved in saving the Duke of Burgundy

- Tell us where you've seen the butterfly in the last 5 years
- Help us survey for the species so that we can target conservation effort
- Learn how to identify the Duke of Burgundy, its eggs, larvae and habitat
- Take part in our free training programme and acquire new skills
- Join our local volunteer groups taking action to improve key sites
- Get free site advice and help with management costs
- Find out how your organisation can work with us as a project partner
- Help us to show how threatened species can be brought back from the brink

To find out more and get involved, contact Dan Hoare:
dhoare@butterfly-conservation.org 01962 621703



Dukes On The Edge target landscapes: as well as these areas, we'll get involved anywhere in the region that has recently supported Duke of Burgundy.



Duke of Burgundy in the South Downs

The South Downs is now one of the national strongholds for the Duke of Burgundy, and has some of the largest remaining colonies in the country. However there are also lots of smaller sites where the populations are considered vulnerable, and the butterfly could be lost without appropriate habitat management. Duke of Burgundy caterpillars feed on Cowslips and Primroses – both of these plants are very common but need to be growing in just the right conditions to be suitable for the butterfly.

The Dukes On The Edge project has a major focus on the South Downs, and we're interested to hear of all sightings of the butterfly in the area. The South Downs National Park boundary is a useful indicator of the broad area that we're working in, although we are also involved in sites outside this boundary. The project involves partnership work with the South Downs National Park Authority, Hampshire County Council and many landowners.

There are strong Duke of Burgundy colonies at Butser Hill and other sites in the Meon Valley, with colonies in both woodland and grassland sites between here and Winchester. There are fewer known colonies east of Butser Hill, with a handful remaining in West Sussex as far east as Arundel (Heyshott Down is the most prominent of these Sussex sites). But this is a butterfly that can wander and colonise new sites, or hang on in small numbers without being very conspicuous.



Duke of Burgundy breeding habitat at Butser Hill



Duke of Burgundy larva



South Downs Volunteer Rangers have helped create butterfly habitat by cutting scrub to encourage new cowslip growth, and also help in monitoring butterflies

Photos by Dan Hoare

In the South Downs:

- please let Butterfly Conservation know of any Duke of Burgundy sightings
- if you are involved in the management of a site that has Duke of Burgundy or contains suitable habitat, get in touch and we can provide management advice and may be able to help with surveys and funding for habitat improvements
- contact us if you'd like to take part in our free training events in 2012 and 2013, or get involved in active conservation management of important butterfly sites in the area
- take a look at the excellent websites of our local branches in Sussex and Hampshire & the Isle of Wight to hear about the latest sightings, guided walks and other events, and for lots more information on butterflies, moths and their habitats

www.sussex-butterflies.org.uk

www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk

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Hampshire
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