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## Habitat loss blamed for more species decline

Gland, Switzerland, Tuesday 16 March 2010 (IUCN) – Habitat loss is having a serious impact on Europe’s butterflies, beetles and dragonflies. The release of the European Red List, commissioned by the European Commission, shows that nine percent of butterflies, 11 percent of saproxylic beetles (beetles that depend on decaying wood) and 14 percent of dragonflies are threatened with extinction within Europe. Some species are so threatened that they are at risk of global extinction and are now included in the latest update of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™.

*“When talking about threatened species, people tend to think of larger, more charismatic creatures such as pandas or tigers, but we mustn’t forget that the small species on our planet are just as important, and are also in need of conservation action,”* says **Jane Smart, Director, IUCN Biodiversity Conservation Group**. *“Butterflies, for instance, play a hugely pivotal role as pollinators in the ecosy*

## Editor's notes

- The European Red List is publicly available at:  
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist>  
[www.iucnredlist.org/europe](http://www.iucnredlist.org/europe)
- The European Commission's page on nature and biodiversity:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/index_en.htm)
- The IUCN Regional Office for Pan-Europe:  
[www.iucn.org/europe](http://www.iucn.org/europe)
- Biodiversity – the web of life on which we depend – is in decline around the world. Habitat loss is the greatest threat to beetles, butterflies and dragonflies in Europe. Other threats include changes in the agricultural practices, over-abstraction of water, urbanization and climate change
- Compiled by the IUCN and its partners, the European Red Lists are a framework to classify species according to their extinction risk within Europe. Threatened species are those that are classified as Critically Endangered, Endangered, or Vulnerable.

## The European Red List

The European Red List is a review of the conservation status of c.6,000 European species (mammals, reptiles, amphibians, freshwater fishes, butterflies, dragonflies, and selected groups of beetles, molluscs, and vascular plants) according to the *IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria* and the *Guidelines for Applying IUCN Red List Criteria at Regional Levels*. It identifies those species that are threatened with extinction at the regional level – in order that appropriate conservation action can be taken to improve their status. The European Red List is primarily funded by the European Commission.

## About Butterfly Conservation Europe

Butterfly Conservation Europe is an umbrella organisation aimed at halting the decline of butterflies, moths and their habitats across Europe and preventing further species extinction. It focuses on helping to implement the Convention of Biological Diversity with respect to butterflies, moths and their habitats, and contributing to the EU target of halting biodiversity loss by 2010. Further information: [www.bc-europe.eu](http://www.bc-europe.eu)

## About European Invertebrates Survey – The Netherlands

The European Invertebrate Survey promotes the research on and publication of distributional and ecological information on invertebrates. It houses databases on the distribution of Dutch invertebrates and cooperates with sister organizations in other countries in order to produce monographs on European invertebrates. The organization promotes the conservation of invertebrates and their habitats by building networks of volunteers and specialist and by disseminating information. The European Invertebrates Survey – The Netherlands is a non-governmental organization registered in the Netherlands. Much of the information is made available through the Dutch Species Register ([www.nederlandsesoorten.nl](http://www.nederlandsesoorten.nl)), [www.ortheur.org](http://www.ortheur.org) and [www.naturalis.nl/eis](http://www.naturalis.nl/eis).

## About the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ (or the IUCN Red List) is the world's most comprehensive information source on the global conservation status of plant and animal species. It is based on an objective system for assessing the risk of extinction of a species should no conservation action be taken. Species are assigned to one of eight categories of threat based on whether they meet criteria linked to population trend, population size and structure and geographic range. Species listed as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable are collectively described as 'Threatened'.

The IUCN Red List is not just a register of names and associated threat categories. It is a rich compendium of information on the threats to the species, their ecological requirements, where they live, and information on conservation actions that can be used to reduce or prevent extinctions.  
[www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org)

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ is a joint effort between IUCN and its Species Survival Commission, working with its Red List partners BirdLife International, Conservation International's Center for Applied Biodiversity Science, NatureServe, and the Zoological Society of London.

## **About IUCN**

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges by supporting scientific research; managing field projects all over the world; and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN, international conventions and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice.

The world's oldest and largest global environmental network, IUCN is a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists and experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 professional staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. IUCN's headquarters are located in Gland, near Geneva, in Switzerland.

[www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)

## **About the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) and Species Programme**

The Species Survival Commission (SSC) is the largest of IUCN's six volunteer commissions with a global membership of 7,500 experts. SSC advises IUCN and its members on the wide range of technical and scientific aspects of species conservation and is dedicated to securing a future for biodiversity. SSC has significant input into