



Madeira

Madeiran Brimstone: *Gonepteryx maderensis*

Madeiran Speckled Wood: *Pararge xiphia*

Madeiran Large White: *Pieris wollastoni*

In 2021 Sam Ellis and Mike Prentice took part in surveys as part of the project undertaken by Butterfly Conservation Europe and Madeira Fauna and Flora to survey the Madeiran endemic butterflies. Madeira is home to three of Europe's most endangered species, Madeiran Brimstone *Gonepteryx maderensis* (Endangered), Madeiran Speckled Wood *Pararge xiphia* (Endangered) and Madeiran Large White *Pieris wollastoni* (Critically Endangered). These were the threat categories current at the time of the surveys.



Gonepteryx maderensis Photo Sam Ellis



Pararge xiphia Photos Keith Woonton



Pieris wollastoni Male left and female right. Photos Museu Municipal do Funchal

The whole team undertook **648 15-minute counts along 534 km** of survey routes, recording all butterfly species and their abundance. Some more inaccessible areas were surveyed using drones. Over 10,000 individual butterflies of fourteen species were recorded during the surveys. There were no sightings of *P. wollastoni* and, as it has not been reliably recorded since 1986, it must now be presumed globally extinct

G. maderensis was only recorded on 33% of survey routes (117 individuals) and was more or less confined to laurel forests, but *P. xiphia* was both more widely distributed (80% of survey routes) and more abundant (>2,000 individuals) and was also encountered in other habitats.

Based on historic data updated with the results of the surveys undertaken, the threat categories of these 3 endemics were re-assessed in the latest Red List as follows; Madeiran Brimstone *G madarensis* (Endangered), Madeiran Speckled Wood *P xiphia* (Near Threatened) and Madeiran Large White *P wollastoni* (Extinct).

Species Recovery Plans were published for the 2 extant species, together with a Species Action Plan aimed at learning the lessons of the global extinction of Madeiran Large White *P wollastoni*. Following the survey work, a Madeiran Butterfly Monitoring scheme was established. For more details, see Butterfly Conservation Europe's website and an article in [EBG Newsletter 31](#).



Gonepteryx maderensis Photo Chris van Swaay