



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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Butterflies recover from dip

Dutch butterfly numbers recovered further in 2001. A few rare species have shown an increase in numbers after their low in 1999: the brown argus, grizzled skipper and small pearl-bordered fritillary did well in 2001. Among the common species the comma, hedge brown and wall brown had a good year. In spite of this many butterfly species are going through difficult times. Garden butterflies such as the brimstone, the peacock and the small tortoiseshell have hardly been seen this year. New results from counts by Statistics Netherlands and the Butterfly Foundation show that on the whole, the butterfly population is still twenty percent below the level of the base year, 1992.

Increase in species of special interest

The wildlife policy of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Fisheries concentrates on a number of species requiring special attention, such as the small pearl-bordered fritillary and the grayling. These species are rare and threatened with extinction in the Netherlands, and therefore require extra protection. On average there has been an improvement in the prevalence of these species. The brown argus, grizzled skipper and small pearl-bordered fritillary in particular did better than in previous years. The numbers of silver-studded blue and the tree grayling, but also the more common niobe fritillary and the silver spotted skipper remain low, however. Although the index shows a slight improvement, the populations are still twenty percent below those of ten years ago. Remarkably, the small blue and the mazarine blue started breeding again in the Netherlands. These species had not been observed here for a number of years.

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