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## Welcome

Work to conserve the world's swallowtails is continuing and in this edition of *Papilio!* we bring you updates from Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Sabah, Jamaica and the UK. Our small but hard-working team of volunteers is achieving some remarkable results on tiny budgets, largely through our determination to base projects with local communities and NGOs wherever possible, building commitment and capacity for the long-term. There are many ways in which you could help us too, so why not get in touch with your ideas? We would love to hear from you!



**Natewa Swallowtail to Benefit from New Butterfly House on Fiji's Vanua Levu**

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After his survey in 2019, SBBT Associate Clive Huggins made a return trip to Fiji in June and July 2022, again with Operation Wallacea, based at their central Natewa forest camp site. His role was to lead a butterfly survey carried out by a team of students along several established transects, where over 1,000 butterflies from 21 species were recorded. Two species were added to the Natewa list, one a new record for Fiji. Particular attention was paid to the small population, limited range and larval foodplant of the rare endemic *Papilio natewa*.



Clive visited the new Butterfly House at the coastal community of Vusaratu, to meet Jone Raituva, Conservation Officer of NatureFiji, who was posted there for three months under an SBBT grant to help maintain the facilities and encourage community involvement. A successful opening event in June was reported by the [Fijian Broadcasting Corporation](#). Jone undertook surveys of the distribution of *P. natewa* and its foodplant in preparation for a captive breeding programme at the butterfly house. A key supporter is SBBT's Honorary Coordinator for the Natewa Swallowtail programme, Richard Markham, who propagates foodplants at his agri-ecotourism business, [KokoMana](#). With the post-COVID return of tourists to Fiji, he hopes the Vusaratu Butterfly House will provide income to the community and discourage worrying levels of deforestation on Vanua Levu's Natewa Peninsula.



[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)Kinabalu Birdwing (*Troides andromache*)

Photo: Corné van der Linden

### Kinabalu Birdwing Conservation Enhanced by Community Engagement Work

With financial support from SBBT, Dutch MSc student Corné van der Linden travelled out to Sabah in August 2022 to carry out enhanced community engagement work with the network of homestay enthusiasts who have been planting out foodplant vines in semi-degraded habitats to help the birdwings living on the slopes of Mt Kinabalu. He found numerous larvae and pupae of several birdwing species at these sites and has reported that the grass-roots scheme initiated by Stephen Sutton with support from SBBT is clearly working well. During his time there, he observed that the [Kinabalu Birdwing](#) will make use of a foodplant for laying even when the surroundings are quite heavily modified, and he made some useful recommendations on the management of the *Aristolochia* nurseries. It's great news that Corné will continue his work in Sabah for some years, studying the biogeography and genomics of birdwing butterflies for a PhD. Needless to say, we will keep in close touch and support his work wherever possible.

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)Swallowtail (*Papilio machaon britannicus*)

Photo - Martin Partridge

### **Saltwater Surge in the Norfolk Broads Warns of Challenges Ahead for the British Swallowtail**

In September 2022 a wind over tide event forced saltwater from the North Sea up to 25km inland along the Rivers Bure and Thurne, in the heartland of the [British Swallowtail's](#) breeding areas. Tens of thousands of freshwater fish were killed along with uncounted molluscs and other invertebrates. Impacts on British Swallowtail breeding areas went unrecorded during this out-of-season disaster but SBBT is increasingly concerned that more of the remaining 16 breeding sites will be destroyed in coming years. In common with 60% of wildlife in the Broads National Park, the butterfly's larval foodplant, Milk-parsley, cannot tolerate brackish conditions. Water levels in the Upper Thurne have risen more than 15 cm in the past twenty years and with the impact of sea-level rise due to climate change, the rate of rise is increasing. 2022 was the hottest year ever recorded in the UK, with average temperatures breaching 10 degrees Celsius for the first time. Urgent discussions are ongoing about flood and saltwater management in the Broads, but practical actions remain few.





### SBBT 's Honorary Advisor on Captive Breeding Visits PNG

Richard Bennett has a lifetime's experience in captive breeding and, during a visit to Brisbane from his butterfly farm in Kenya he was able to fit in a visit to Higaturu in Popondetta, Papua New Guinea, to inspect the [Queen Alexandra's Birdwing](#) breeding facility and advise on ways to bring it into successful production. He made recommendations for the design of a new flight cage, and demonstrated ways to improve husbandry. His visit provided valuable impetus to a project that has been hard-hit by the COVID epidemic.



### Jamaica's Homerus Swallowtail to Benefit from Genetic Barcoding in 2023

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Prof. Eric Garraway at Jamaica's University of the West Indies is acting as local anchor for a planned project with Dr Fabien Condamine this year. Fabien, based at [ONRS](#) in Montpellier, France, is a world expert on the genetics of swallowtails and has elaborated many evolutionary relationships through his work. The aim of this project is to discover whether Jamaica's eastern and western populations of the [Homerus Swallowtail](#) are identical or should be treated as separate taxa when much-needed conservation plans are laid. A solution to this long-standing problem may at last be within our grasp.



Golden Birdwing (*Troides rhadamantus*)

Photo Martin Partridge

### Discussions Begin to Bring Live Birdwings to Britain

Gavin Welsh, owner and manager of "[Butterfly World](#)" in Stockton-on-Tees, UK is engaging with SBBT in discussions about ways and means to present live birdwings to the visiting public whilst ensuring full compliance with the CITES regulations. All birdwings are listed on CITES, most of them under Appendix II, which permits international trade under licence. SBBT believes that displays of living birdwings in the UK could enhance public interest in conservation efforts back in their natural haunts in Indonesia, Malaysia and other parts of Southeast Asia. But the practical reality is that most butterfly house owners find the licencing procedures unduly complicated and burdensome. Gavin spent many years breeding butterflies in the Solomon Islands, and, with his help, SBBT hopes to find ways to enable more people to experience the beauty of living birdwings, transported to the UK as pupae, without burning up the air miles or damaging native populations.



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