

First record of *Clossiana selene* in Greece (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae)

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Abstract. A restricted colony of *Clossiana selene* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) is reported for the first time from Greece. The species appeared to be locally common in mid-July 2011, however its known distribution so far is extremely limited, encompassing only a small marshland area surrounded by coniferous forest in the West Rhodópi mountain range, NE Greece, very close to the Bulgarian border. The small size of its habitat, which is of unusual nature in Greece, in conjunction with the general rarity of this butterfly in SE Europe, call for immediate environmental protection by the authorities.

Samenvatting. Eerste melding van *Clossiana selene* in Griekenland (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae). Een erg lokale kolonie van *Clossiana selene* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) wordt hier voor het eerst uit Griekenland gemeld. De soort bleek plaatselijk gewoon te zijn midden juli 2011, maar ze komt uiterst lokaal voor, nl. in een klein moerassig gebied omgeven door pijnbomen in de westelijke Rhodopen, N.-O.-Griekenland, dicht bij de Bulgaarse grens. De kleine afmetingen van deze in Griekenland uiterst ongewone biotoop, alsook de algemene zeldzaamheid van deze soort in Zuidoost-Europa, maken een onmiddellijke bescherming van dit gebied door de autoriteiten noodzakelijk.

Résumé. Première mention de *Clossiana selene* en Grèce (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae). Une population très localisée de *Clossiana selene* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) est mentionnée ici pour la première fois, de Grèce. L'espèce était commune en mi-juillet 2011, mais sa distribution en Grèce est très locale et se limite à un marais entouré de sapins, dans les Rhodopes occidentales (N.-O. de la Grèce), près de la frontière bulgare. La dimension de ce petit biotope, qui est d'une nature exceptionnelle en Grèce, et la rareté de l'espèce en Europe Sud-Est, demandent une protection immédiate des autorités.

Key words: Nymphalidae – *Clossiana selene* – Greece – West Rhodópi Mts.

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Introduction

Clossiana selene ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) is a butterfly species with Holarctic distribution, found in Europe, Asia and North America (Tolman & Lewington 1998). In Europe it is found chiefly in its northern and central parts, becoming increasingly uncommon towards the southeast. There are no records from Albania or the

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, whereas in Bulgaria the butterfly is considered rare, known only from small, scattered colonies in the Pirin and Rila mountain ranges in the southwestern parts of the country (Abadjiev 1995, 2001). No reports had been known so far from Greece, although many areas adjacent to the northern Greek border have systematically been monitored by Greek lepidopterists over the last 25 years.

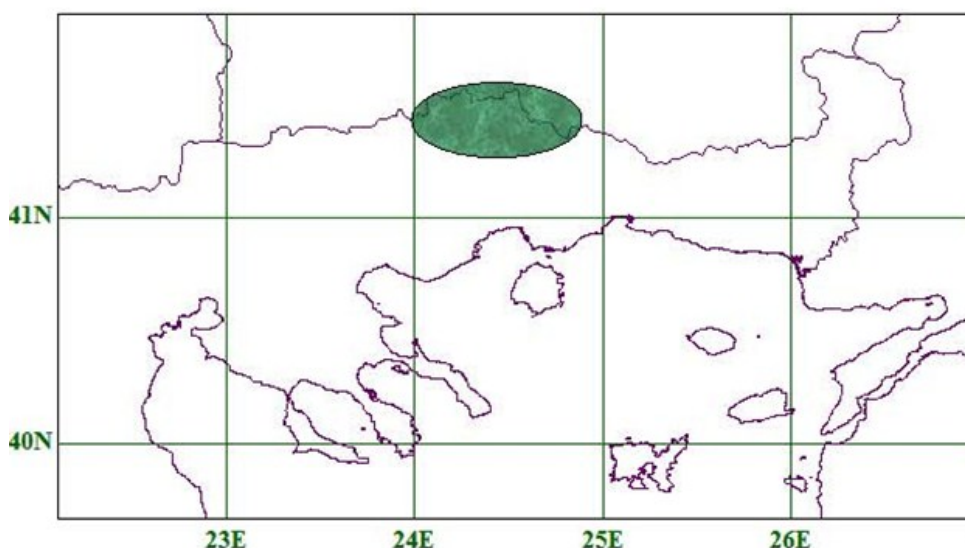


Fig. 1. The West Rhodópi mountain range on the Greek-Bulgarian border, hosting a colony of *Clossiana selene*.

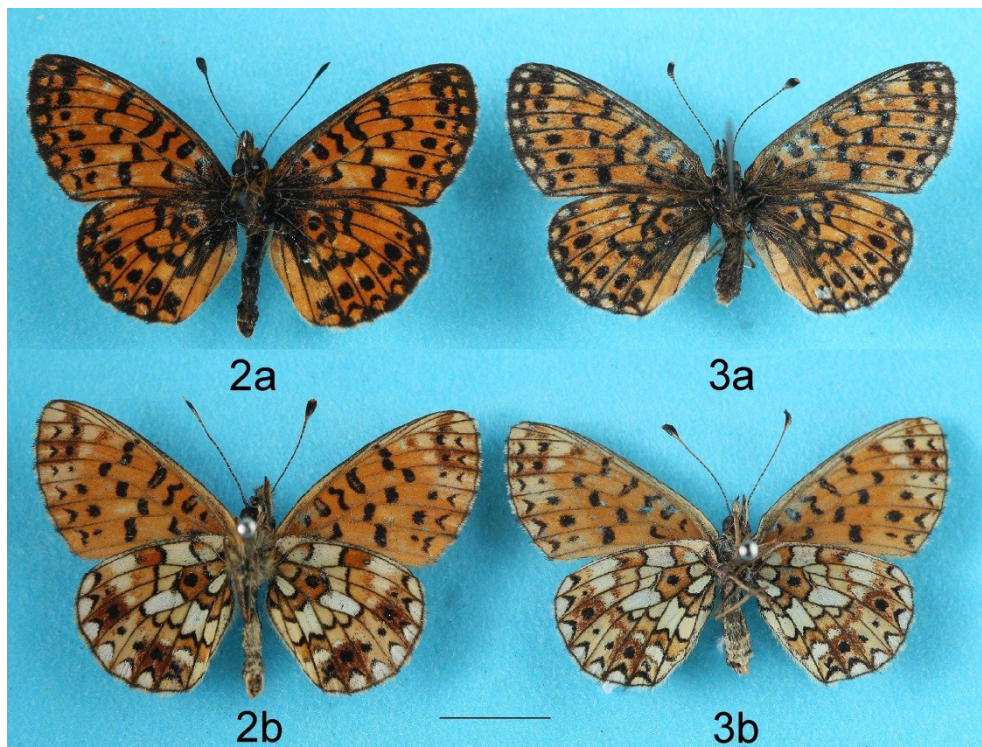
First record from Greece

On July 11, 2011 the author was visiting the West Rhodópi mountain range, in Drama prefecture, NE Greece (see Fig. 1). A large part of the area was declared a National Park in 2010, and a special collecting permit is

now required. Among several fritillary species feeding on thistles in a clearing of the coniferous forest, a worn specimen was captured, which surprisingly turned out to be a *C. selene*. The particular clearing was rather dry, which is not normal for *C. selene* occurrence. The author assumed that the specimen was probably a stray, and set

out searching for a damper locality. Indeed, after some strenuous walking, a marshland was revealed in another forest clearing, where the butterfly was found in relatively high numbers. A total of 15, mostly fresh males

were captured in a time period of about two hours. On July 15 the area was visited again, and two, reasonably fresh females were also collected. One specimen of each gender is depicted in Figs. 2 and 3.



Figs. 2–3. *Clossiana selene* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775), Greece, 2a.– West Rhodópi Mts., 1450 m, 11.vii.2011, ♂ upperside; 2b.– idem, underside; 3a.– West Rhodópi Mts., 1450 m, 15.vii.2011, ♀ upperside; 3b.– Idem, underside. Scale bar: 1 cm.

The particular marshland is exceptionally remote, located very close to the Bulgarian border, which explains to some extent the fact that the colony had been unknown before. It is crossed by a stream and vegetated by tall grass, which makes on site movement difficult. It strongly resembles typical habitat of *C. selene* in Scandinavia and Canada, a type of environment which is extremely rare, if not unique, in the latitude range of Greece. Other species found to be common at the same locality include *Brenthis daphne* (Bergsträsser, 1780), *Mellicta athalia* (Rottemburg, 1775), *Erebia oeme* (Hübner, 1804), *Erebia ottomana* (Herrich-Schäffer, 1847), *Coenonympha glycerion* (Borkhausen, 1788), *Coenonympha rhodopensis* (Elwes, 1900), *Lycaena candens* (Herrich-Schäffer, 1844), *Carcharodus flocciferus*

(Zeller, 1847), and thousands of annoying *Tabanus* flies (which is another feature reminiscent of marshes and bogs further up north!).

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