

Large Copper Butterfly

Regno: fauna

Invertebrates

 [lycaenadispar.jpg](#) [1]

Large Copper Butterfly- *Lycaena dispar*

Medium sized species, in which the female is generally larger than the male and the bright colours differ between the two sexes. In the male, the upperside of the wing is a brilliant orange with a brown border, but a paler orange and speckled with brown in the female; the underside is a brilliant greyish-blue.

The adults can be seen in flight from May to September. The over-wintering larvae look like terrestrial isopods, whilst the pupae are usually attached to their host plant, the Great Water Dock (*Rumex*) by a silken girdle (succint pupae).

Distribution in Italy is central-northern but the Large Copper can also be found in some relict stations like the Fucecchio Marshes, Bientina Marshes (Tanali and Bottaccio) and the Lame di Fuori of San Rossore.

The species is under threat wherever it is distributed, even though it is a protected species in several European countries.

The main cause of its fall in numbers is the total disappearance or reduction of their natural habit - marshlands, wetlands and wet meadows.

The loss of traditional crafts linked to this type of environment, which entailed the regular harvesting of canes, has also contributed to the fall in population: this is because the canes choke the Great Water Dock (*Rumex*), the species' food plant.

In England, for example, the sub species *L. dispar dispar* became extinct in 1850 when the fenlands dried up and because of indiscriminate capture by collectors: the individuals we can see in some marshlands today belong to the sub-species *L. d. bavatus* introduced from Holland.

Source URL: <http://www.zoneumidetoscane.it/en/large-copper-butterfly>

Links:

[1] <http://www.zoneumidetoscane.it/sites/default/files/lycaenadispar.jpg>