



*Championing UK's most special species:
the wildlife of UK's Overseas Territories (UKOTs) and
Crown Dependencies (CDs)*

FACT-SHEET ON:

**Glanville Fritillary *Melitaea cinxia*
Crown Dependencies: Guernsey and Alderney**

The Glanville Fritillary was named after Lady Eleanor Glanville, the 18th Century entomologist who discovered it. It is said that, when she died in 1709, her will was disputed by one of her sons on the grounds of lunacy, because of her interest in butterflies. (It is fortunate that we now live in more enlightened times.) The checkered pattern on its wings gives rise to the term fritillary, which comes from the Latin word "fritillus" meaning "dicebox".

Importance: The species is on the northern edge of its range in the British Isles, and it breeds regularly in just three localities. There are strong colonies in the Isle of Wight on the south coast of England, some on Guernsey's west coast, and large numbers in Alderney, both islands in the Channel Islands.

Ecosystem: In the British Isles, they are a highly restricted species and are mostly found on soft under-cliff and chine grassland. Adults lays eggs on one of two food plants, English Plantain *Plantago lanceolata* or Spiked Speedwell *Veronica spicata*, depending on their preference. However, once hatched the larvae will feed on both.

Threats: Although found over much of Europe and temperate Asia, the Glanville Fritillary is not a migratory species and so suitable habitat is crucial. Temperature changes, as a result of climate change, are having an impact on many butterfly species worldwide, but some are able to alter or expand their range readily as they can be highly migratory. Without the right habitat or conditions to breed, this species is likely to become vulnerable. It has been listed under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan as a priority species.

Needs: According to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan for the species, further research on impact of climate change and monitoring and research on habitat requirements is needed.



Glanville Fritillary adult (above) and caterpillars (below). © UKOTCF and Alderney Wildlife Trust.

