



Media Release

Embargoed until 1 May 2023

Save Our Butterflies

Ninety-three percent of New Zealand's native butterflies and moths are unique to Aotearoa! They are found nowhere else in the world – and if they die out, they can never be reintroduced.

The family of copper butterflies is a great example. They are native to NZ whereas the monarch and cabbage white butterflies are not.

“Some native butterflies are already teetering on the edge of survival,” said Brian Patrick, the MBNZT's Biodiversity Advisor. “There's a tiny purple copper butterfly which now exists only in one coastal carpark in the South Island. It needs our protection – but firstly it needs to be identified!”

We all need our butterflies to thrive so that they can continue their important work as pollinators, food for birds and to brighten our summers.

“Sadly, successive governments have invested too little in research and taxonomy, the naming of species,” said Angela Moon-Jones, who is spearheading a campaign to save our NZ butterflies. “We are far behind most other countries of the world.”

“We have a chance to change this, but we need the support of caring New Zealanders now to save our precious butterflies, said Angela. “We are so grateful that we have some wonderful sponsors already helping our cause.”

The Moths and Butterflies of NZ Trust is campaigning to raise \$15,000 in twelve days, to fund DNA research into identifying copper butterflies and understanding their habitats. There is more information on their Givealittle page, <https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/save-our-butterflies>

Ends – 238 words

<https://www.nzbutterflies.org.nz/project/butterfly-discovery-project/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100087047462408>

Photographs

For high resolution photographs, free for use, please contact Jacqui Knight (below).

Interview Opportunities

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Team Members:

- Dr Lyn Barnes, media and volunteer, formerly senior lecturer AUT Communication Studies
- Dr Thomas Buckley, Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research
- Dr George Gibbs, retired professor, Victoria University of Wellington
- Dr Robert Hoare, Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research
- Robert Jones, volunteer
- Ruud Kleinpaste **MNZM**, entomologist, 'The Bug Man'
- Jacqui Knight, founding trustee MBNZT
- Angela Moon-Jones, Project Manager, volunteer
- Brian Patrick, volunteer, Biodiversity Advisor, MBNZT