

Time started  Time stopped

Wind Speed Still  Medium  Strong

Cloudiness Clear / Light  Medium  Heavy

Temperature Cold  Mild  Hot

Rainfall None  Light  Heavy

Number of Glanville Fritillary sightings

Activity of butterfly when first spotted

Flying	Nectaring
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Egg laying	Basking
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Location when first spotted

Down cliff  Top of cliff, seaward side of path  Top of cliff, field side of cliff

Other species recorded

Name

Date	Time started
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## Survey

During your cliff-top walk, your help with the survey for adults on the wing would be greatly appreciated. Simply complete the details below during your walk and drop off the slip in the leaflet dispenser here or in one along the path. Please do so even if only to confirm that you didn't see any Glanville Fritillaries.

Your survey forms will be collected daily during the main flight period and collated and used to help us understand the size and distribution of each Glanville colony. Thank you.

## Conservation

Close monitoring has shown that our management support is needed to ensure that the Glanville has sufficient suitable habitat. A possible reason for its decline is that the opportunity for Plantain-rich habitat to develop and persist for a few years has reduced because of increased rates of cliff erosion.

Our habitat management work with the coastal landowners is therefore focused on ensuring that the cliff-top grassland has as much Ribwort Plantain as possible and abundant nectar plants like Thrift (*Armeria maritima*), Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and Kidney Vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*).

[butterfly-conservation.org](http://butterfly-conservation.org)  
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# The Glanville Fritillary Butterfly

A rare coastal jewel

## History

The Glanville Fritillary (*Melitaea cinxia*) is named after Eleanor Glanville, a wealthy lady entomologist, who collected the first specimens in Lincolnshire in 1702. It is a Continental species and in Britain is at the northern edge of its range.



## Distribution

This is a special species for the Isle of Wight which, with the Channel Islands, supports the entire native population in the British Isles. Three types of interconnected coastal habitat are used: patches of short grassland on the cliff slumps and falls, the grassy chine flanks and more recently along the narrow strip of cliff-top grassland. The presence of Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) in suitable stages of growth is essential. Within these habitats there is a very warm microclimate, which appears critical to the growth of the caterpillars in early spring.

Whilst large annual fluctuations in colony size are typical, over recent decades surveys have shown a gradual reduction in numbers, raising concern that it is now vulnerable to extinction.



Chrysalis



Caterpillar

## Identification

Whilst there are several species of fritillary butterfly in the British Isles, the Glanville Fritillary is the only one flying at this location at this time of year. Note that the Wall butterfly also occurs on the south coast of the Isle of Wight;

Adult ♂

it differs in having a single black-and-white eyespot on the upper and underside of the forewing and the under hindwing is a mix of greys and browns.

Adult ♀



## Life cycle

The tiny eggs are laid in batches of 50–250 between May and July under the leaves of its main caterpillar food plant, Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*). Although the food plant occurs here in abundance, only plants growing in a fairly sparse sward provide optimal conditions for caterpillar growth.

The caterpillars emerge and feed from late July to October living together as a colony in and basking on a web which they first spin over the Plantain. There can be quite large numbers living together, often in excess of 300, but generally 40–60 individuals.

The caterpillars hibernate from October until late February, then emerge to start feeding again. The species can spend about ten months of its life cycle as a caterpillar. As the caterpillars near maturity, they eventually become solitary before pupating.

Emerging as a butterfly they are on the wing from late April/early May until the end of June/early July. There is only one generation a year.



Eggs