



Module **M. Biodiv. 482** –
Field Studies in Conservation Biology

The **Purple Emperor**: indicator of forest disturbance and management

Central Europe's forests are changing: Climate change leads to increasing tree mortality, and increasing forest disturbance from bark beetle outbreaks and windstorm. High energy prices trigger more wood harvest after a 200-year period of increasing wood volume. Biodiversity responses to changing forest structure are rapid. The Purple Emperor (*Apatura iris*) is a fascinating, elusive, yet understudied indicator of all the aforementioned processes, as it relies on disturbance, early-successional tree species and old-growth high canopy synchronously. We have started to track occurrence and caterpillar survival in Göttingen in 2023.

We aim to establish a year-round long-term monitoring of the species' abundance, occupancy, survival, and responses to forest disturbance and management at Göttinger Wald.
We offer work on various research questions related to parts of the annual cycle: surveys of the imagines in summer, and of larvae and pupae in winter.
We are looking for MSc students, ideally but not necessarily with some knowledge in butterfly ecology and surveys, who would conduct this research as part of M. Biodiv. 482, ideally in **a small group of 3-4 people**. Especially the winter surveys require patience, a high degree of motivation and readiness to be out in poor weather!

Interested? Please get in contact with Johannes Kamp, Department of Conservation Biology (johannes.kamp@uni-goettingen.de) (no deadline). The first round of surveys will start in **November 2026**.

