

# *Parnassius apollo* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Apollo Butterfly or Mountain Apollo

Family: Papilionidae

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*Parnassius apollo* is one of the **most common butterflies in the Alpine area**, from the montane zone to the snow line, right up to an altitude of almost 3,000 meters.



(Photo Walter Barra, Fotolia)

Its bright colours and the shape of the wings make it rather showy. The males have a white, almost translucent background with black eye-spots sprinkled with grey. The borders of the forewings are transparent. The hindwings have **two large, red eye-spots with black borders and a white centre**, adding a splash of colour. The females, which are

larger than the males, have larger red eye-spots.

The body is covered with a thick brown fur which protects it from the cold.

It **prefers sunny slopes or flowery grasslands exposed to the sun**, close to rocky screes or forest glades.

In flight, it alternates between gliding and sudden spurts of flight, and makes a characteristic light rustling noise with its wings.

The larvae are black with yellow or reddish-orange speckles around the edges, and feeds on succulent plants such as Sedum and Sempervivum.

Due to the deterioration of its habitats and capture by collectors, the species is **considered vulnerable** and has been listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive.