

YOU CAN SAVE THE



ALCON BLUE.





# *EuCAN Save The Alcon Blue*

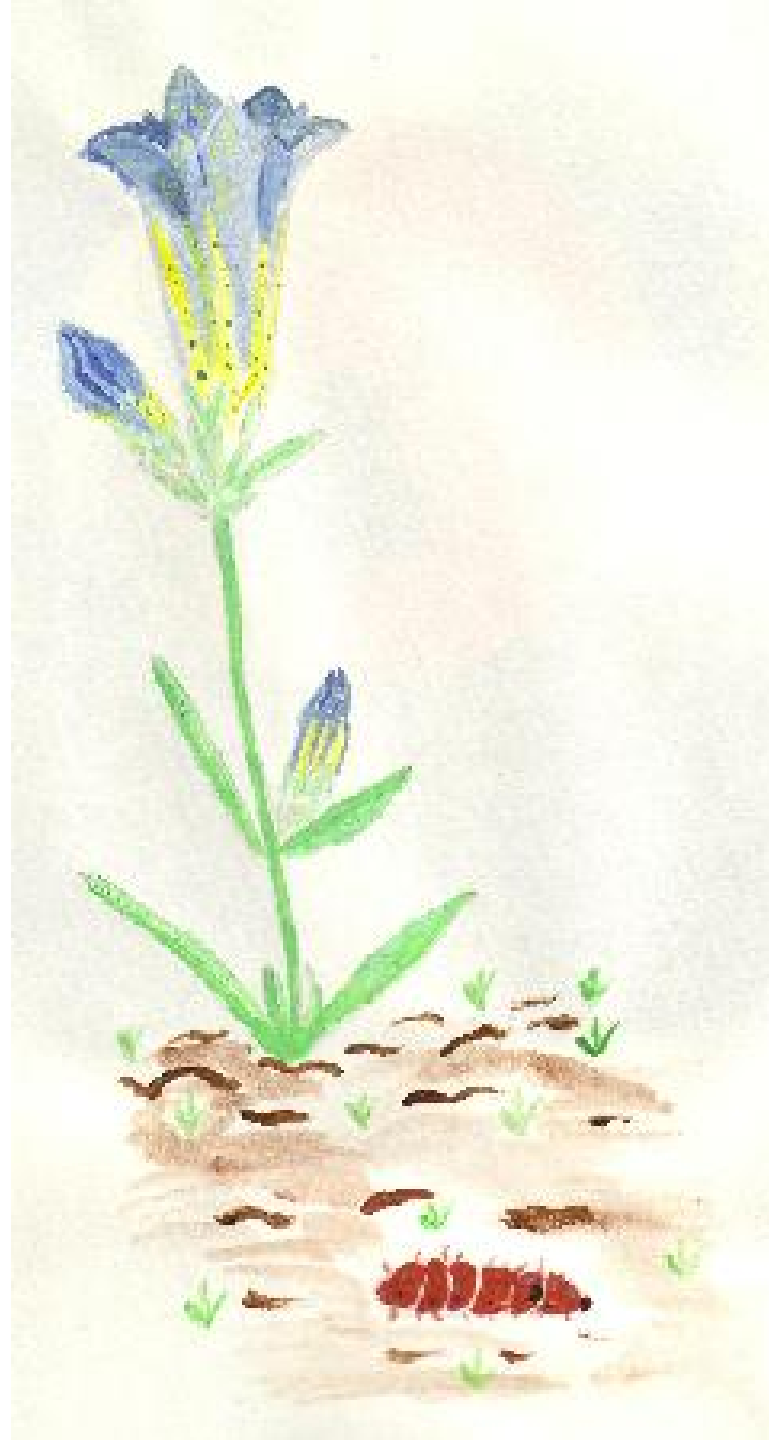
by  
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2010





*My name is Alcon Blue, I live in grassland habitats and my species is threatened by habitat loss. This is the story of the perils faced in my life and how they were overcome.*





*It started on the day I hatched out of my egg to find I was  
on a marsh gentian.*

*‘Umm, yummy.’*

*I munched my way through the plant tissues and seeds  
inside, as a few weeks passed by.*

*One day I felt full and in need of a change. I crawled  
underneath a leaf, and dropped to the ground. There I  
settled down for a rest, under a very pretty new gentian,  
as mine was full of holes and wilting.*







*I suddenly had the overwhelming urge to call my friends. I emitted a set of chemicals matching those given off by ant larvae and sure enough the ants came matching along. They picked me up and carried me away.*





*They carried me back to the nest, where I was placed in a snug and warm spot amongst their larvae. The ants started to bring me food and clean me. It was the perfect spot for me to grow up in.*





*One calm day in the nest all panic broke out! A Eumerus wasp had broken in and was spraying pheromones all around. The ants became confused and started attacking each other.*





*Eumerus wasps are my arch enemy, because their larvae eat me – that is what the wasp was looking for. She wanted to lay her eggs on me. Luckily for me there was another blue larva in the nest and she didn't notice me. I know the other blue larva is lost and a wasp will emerge from that larva.*

*Eventually order returned to the nest and life continued as normal for a little longer.*







*On a warm day at the start of summer I built myself a chrysalis, knowing that in here I would develop into an adult. So I settled down and waited as the days passed by.*





*Then came the day when I started to emerge as a butterfly. I still faced one challenge, because I could no longer produce the signals to trick the ants into thinking I was one of them. This meant I had to run the gauntlet to get out of the nest alive. My scales were loose and the ants' jaws could not quite get a grip of me, so I emerged safely into the world.*





*I stretched my wings and found they were ready for some flight. After all this time in the company of another species, I had the overwhelming need to find someone from my species, preferably a girl. So I set off in search of a mate, oh, and some food.*

*I remembered my hatch day, when I was born on a marsh gentian plant. I thought to myself that this must be a good place for me to look for a mate. After a bit of food I set off to find a marsh gentian.*





*It turned out not to be as easy as I thought. I flew around looking for the requirements for our breeding grounds, marsh gentians and ant nests. But all I saw was lots of scrubland and grasslands with no useful plants or ant hills. I started to wonder where I was going to find a breeding ground and a potential mate.*







*While searching I bumped into an egret who told me a story of what he saw over the winter months.*

*'A group of people were working in the scrubland that used to support your species before the scrub took over,' he said.*

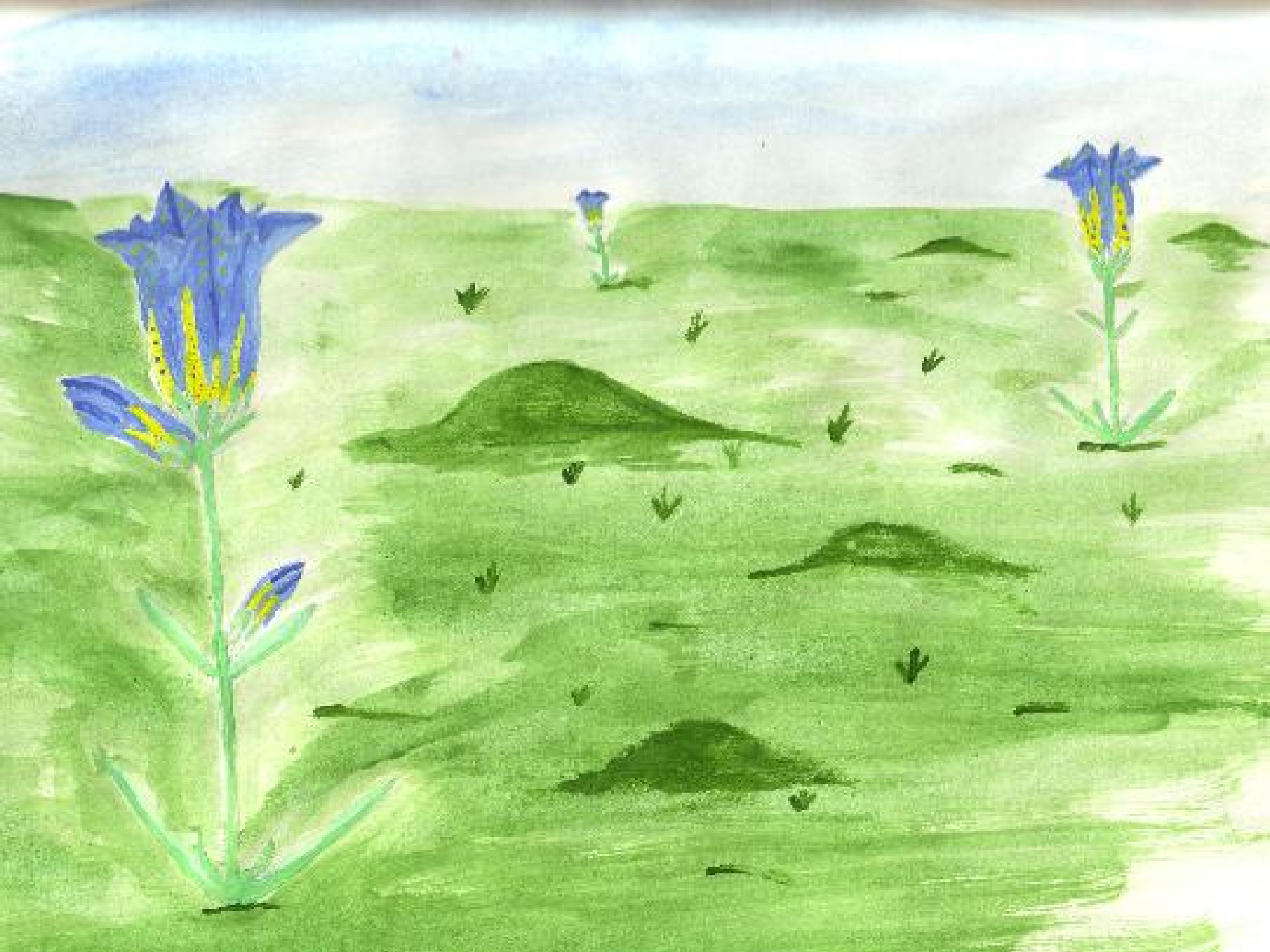
*'Really, what were they doing?' I inquired.*

*'They were burning scrub and cutting long grass, it looks like it used to in the days when lots of you bred there.*

*There are lots of ant hills and those pretty plants your young like to eat,' he replied.*

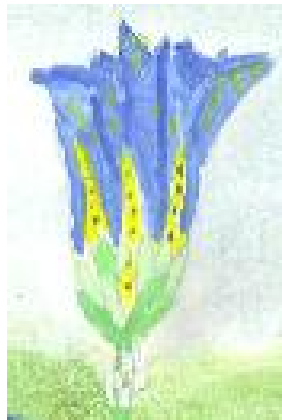
*I asked for directions and flew off at high speed to find this site.*





*Sure enough when I arrived it looked just like the egret said it would. Lovely blue marsh gentians and open space with lots of ant hills.*

*Then a movement on the far side of the area caught my eye, and I went to investigate.*





*It was a female, and we fed for a bit and talked about the difficulties in finding good breeding grounds. Then we realised we were in one and decided to have some young of our own. She flew off to lay our eggs on a marsh gentian, so when our young hatched they would have food ready for them.*





*I worry about the difficulties my young will face.*

*They not only have to grow to be a butterfly  
against the odds, they have to be able to find a  
future mate and breeding grounds. I hope the  
egret keeps seeing people working to restore our  
breeding sites.*







*With a look back at my beautiful breeding grounds, I flew off to try to find more breeding sites and reduce my concerns over our future.*

