



European Butterflies Group

Identification Guide to the Polyommatae Group of 'Blues' and 'Arguses' in Europe

Part 2: The Local Species

Designed by Bill Raymond

For more information on all aspects of European butterflies please go to european-butterflies.org.uk

The other free to download guides in this series are available at [EBG Identification Guides](#)

Introduction

Most users of this second part of the Guide to Polyommatae will have come from Part 1 to continue seeking the identity of their specimen. Other users may be experienced in identification, know their specimen is not one of the 'Commoner' Species in Part 1, and use this Part 2 to investigate the 'Local' Species. For ease of use, therefore, this second part repeats the same format as Part 1 with a How to Use Section, Explanation of Terms, Species List, Species Profiles, and Distribution Maps. It does not have a key as this is provided in Part 1 for identifying the 'Commoner' Species and if unsuccessful then suggesting which 'Local' Species here in Part 2 should be considered. Depending upon demand an integrated complete guide combining Parts 1 and 2 may be designed and published.

Location is obviously one of the most important factors for identifying these 'Local' Species and is a good starting point to help narrow down the possibilities. To this end a useful 'Location Filter' covering Europe, the Mediterranean and Canary Islands is provided at the start. This allows you to quickly assess what 'suspects' could be present and go to their Species Profile.

For information and reference the introductory notes from Part 1 are reproduced below:

Polyommatae are a difficult and confusing group to identify. They are prone to variation which exacerbates the difficulties, plus, in many cases, several similar species can fly together. The uppersides of the majority of Polyommatae males are noticeably blue or a shade of blue/silvery blue with most females usually brown with some degree of blue scaling. Confusingly, however, some males are brown and the more widespread of these species are known as Anomalous Blues and Arguses.

The undersides of both sexes of Polyommatae are generally similar apart from the females usually being browner with bolder marks. The markings on the underside are in many cases the key to differentiating the species and it is often the case that one mark alone is not sufficient, with a combination of marks being necessary for a 'confident' identification. Female uppersides are especially difficult to separate and attempting this by use of photographs is often a case of choosing the most likely possibility. Thus, in many instances a view of both upper and underside is required.

Bill Raymond

How to use Part 2

Introduction

Please read the Introduction which gives some background to the difficulties of identifying Polyommatae.

Linking from Part 1

This part 2 is designed to be used in conjunction with Part 1 by describing the 45 'Local' Species and explaining how they can be distinguished from similar 'Commoner' species described in Part 1.

Arriving here from Part 1 to investigate one of the 'Local' Species will hopefully confirm the identification of your specimen. If identification is unconfirmed then you will need to consider starting again from the Keys in Part 1 or continue looking here in Part 2 where **Location** could be an important factor. See below.

Location Checklists

Location helps greatly to narrow down the possibilities for the identification of a 'Local' Species here in Part 2.



[Click here to use the Location Filter](#)

List of Species

The species described in Part 2 will be referred to in the text as the 'Local' Species.

If you wish to go direct to a Species Profile [click here](#) to go to the alphabetical list of 'Local' Species.

Explanation of Terms used

The simplified terminology used in Part 1 is continued here in Part 2. This link  **Terms**  to the explanation of these terms is provided for easy reference on every page.

For simplicity, common English names have been used in the text where possible and in some instances the scientific conventions on the use of italics may not have been strictly followed.

Species Profiles

Each of the Species Profiles tries to describe and illustrate a 'typical' specimen'. Keep in mind that: [i] there is considerable variation and in some cases the illustrated specimen may not exactly match the description in the text. This is because the illustration is chosen **to show the key identification features**, [ii] very often, several underside marks and not just the key features need to be compared for a confident identification, [iii] in some cases it may only be possible to identify a specimen by capture, a practice which should only be undertaken by skilled observers with the appropriate authorisation. The arrangement and order of the Species Profiles is designed, where possible, to have species which are difficult to separate on the same or adjoining pages to facilitate comparison.

**Please note: Some features highlighted here in Part 2 are more fully explained in the descriptions of the similar 'Commoner' Species' in Part 1.*



This symbol indicates guidance notes/extra information to help identification.

[Continued on next page]

How to use Part 2 cont'd

Distribution Maps

Details of distribution for each species can be found in many of the Species Profiles and at the end of the guide. See [Appendix 2](#) for details of the geographical area covered.

A link to the maps  [Maps](#)  is included on appropriate pages.

NOTES:

[a] Flight period and size: *These are very variable and have only been included where they may be helpful in identification.*

[b] Colour: *The depth of colour seen on a butterfly is dependent on the intensity of the light and the angle at which the specimen is viewed. This means that blue scaling can appear as light blue, dark blue, silvery blue and all colours in between. Similarly, orange markings can appear yellowish or red. Brown can also be light or dark. Ageing, wear and loss of scales will also affect the look of a butterfly. Colour can therefore, in many instances, be inconsistent and unreliable for identification purposes and is little used in this guide as a comparative feature. It is mentioned ONLY where it is considered consistent and helpful.*

[c] Some familiar identifying features which are frequently cited in other identification guides have not been included due to these features being considered inconsistent and therefore unreliable.

Species that might be confused with the 'Blues' and 'Argus'

The Polyommata group of 'Blues' and 'Argus' featured in this guide are small brown and blue butterflies **the majority of which are unlikely to be mistaken** for species outside of this group. Nevertheless, the **brown upperside** of some 'Blues' and 'Argus' [mostly females] might possibly be confused with the **uppersides** of other Lycaenidae species. **Fortunately, a view of the underside should remove any doubt.** The uppersides of these superficially similar looking species are illustrated below for comparison. Please refer to other sources for more information if necessary.

Sooty Copper
[*Lycaena tityrus*]
male



subspecies
subalpinus

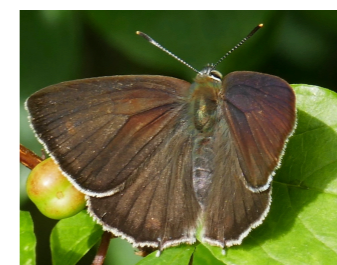


Purple-edged Copper
[*Lycaena hippothoe*]
subspecies *eurydame*



Purple Hairstreak
[*Favonius quercus*]

if angle of illumination
not revealing purple clearly

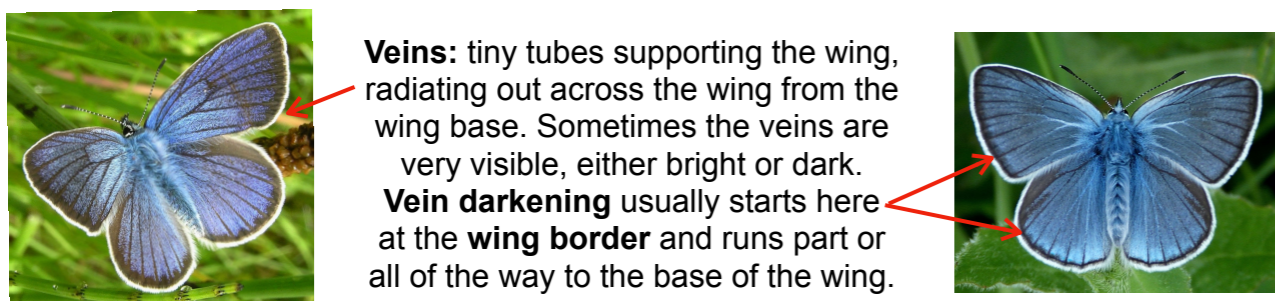
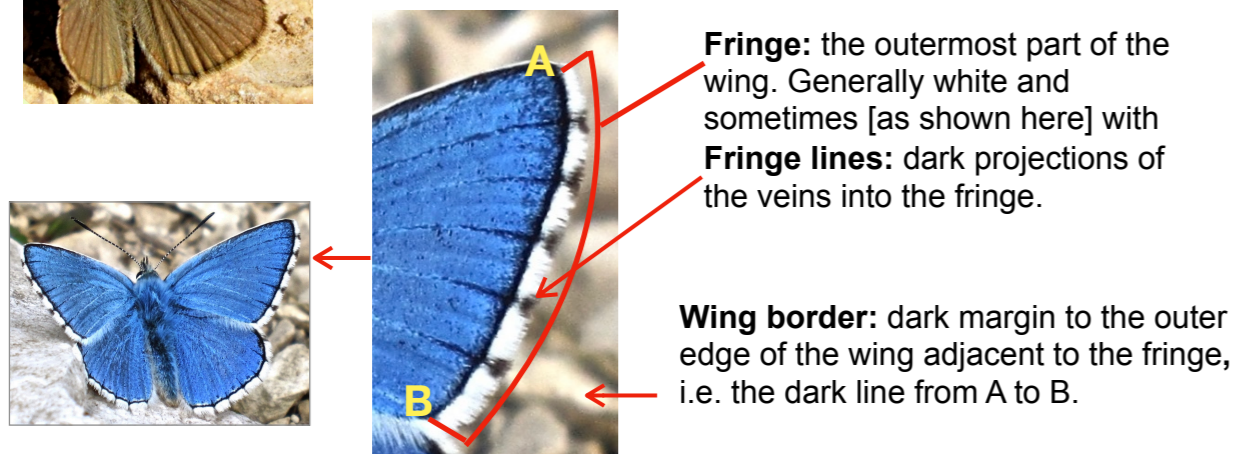
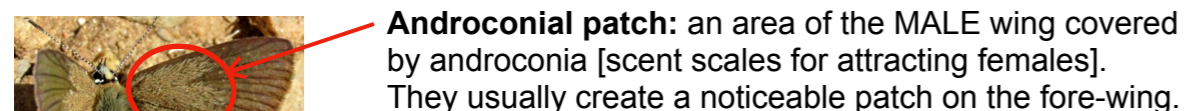
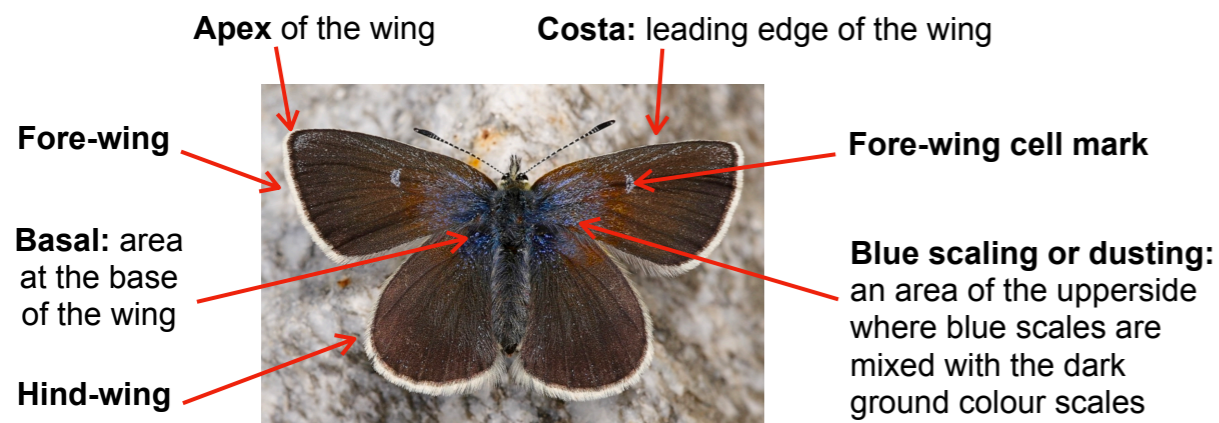


Note: Some of the other 'Hairstreaks' also have brown uppersides which might initially be confused on the wing. However, they usually rest with wings closed giving an underside view which should remove any doubt.

Explanation of terms used

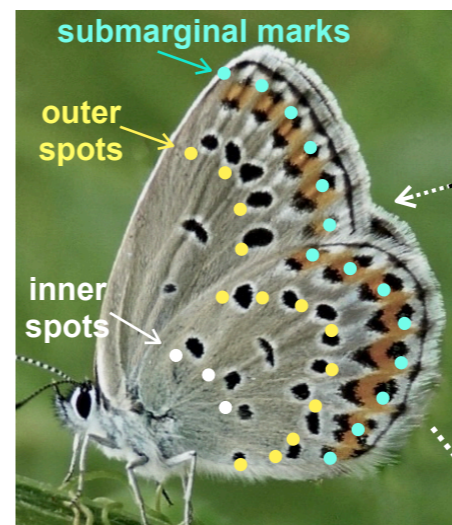
For a positive identification of 'Blues' it is generally necessary to closely examine the markings on the upperside and the underside. The diagrams below explain the simplified terms used in this guide to describe the distinguishing features. [Click here](#) for links to all Species Profiles.

UPPERSIDES



UNDERSIDES

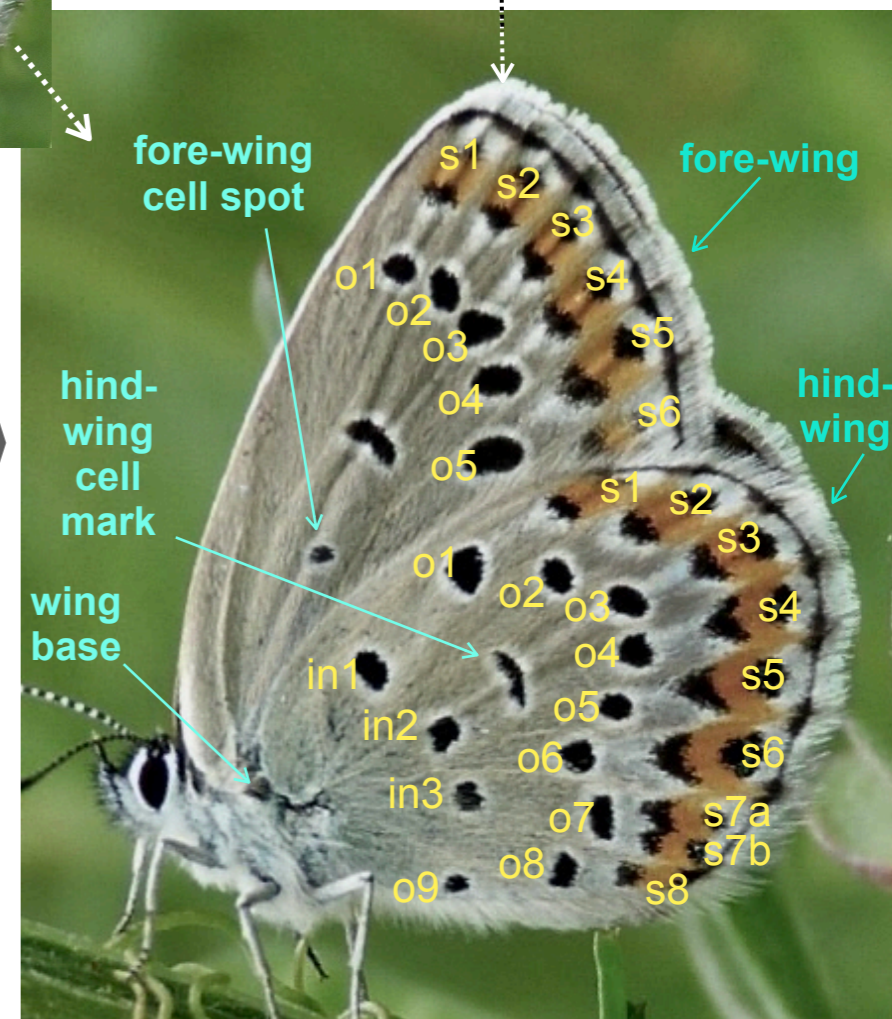
[males and females usually have similar markings]



There are **three main bands of marks and spots** between the veins on the underside fore and hind-wing. Starting from the base of the wing outwards they shall be referred to as **inner spots, outer spots and submarginal marks**. They are numbered as shown in the diagram below.

- s = submarginal marks**
- o = outer spots**
- in = inner spots**

Note: Spot numbering is from top of the wing downwards - the reverse to that used in many other guides which count upwards. From photos it is usually difficult to see the first vein or spot at the bottom of the wing. Counting upwards to check position can thus be problematic.



The terms **inner** and **outer** are used to indicate nearer to and further from the base of the wing respectively.

The 'Local' Species

To go directly to a detailed Species Profile click on the species name below.

[African Babul Blue \[*Azonus jesous*\]](#)

[Arctic Blue \[*Agriades aquilo*\]](#)

[Bellier's Blue \[*Plebejus bellieri*\]](#)

[Bright Babul Blue \[*Azonus ubaldus*\]](#)

[Common Tiger Blue \[*Tarucus theophrastus*\]](#)

[Dusky Large Blue \[*Phengaris nausithous*\]](#)

[Eastern Short-tailed Blue \[*Cupido decoloratus*\]](#)

[Grass Jewel \[*Freyeria trochylus*\]](#)

[Iolana debilitata](#)

[Loew's Blue \[*Plebejidea loewii*\]](#)

[Nevada Blue \[*Polyommatus golgus*\]](#)

[Panoptes Blue \[*Pseudophilotes panoptes*\]](#)

[Polyommatus timfristos](#)

[Sardinian Blue \[*Pseudophilotes barbagiae*\]](#)

[Spanish Argus \[*Aricia morronensis*\]](#)

[African Grass Blue \[*Zizeeria knysna*\]](#)

[Azure Chalkhill Blue \[*Lysandra caelestissima*\]](#)

[Blue Argus \[*Aricia anteros*\]](#)

[Canary Blue \[*Cyclirius webbianus*\]](#)

[Cretan Argus \[*Kretania psylorita*\]](#)

[Eastern Baton Blue \[*Pseudophilotes vicrama*\]](#)

[False Baton Blue \[*Pseudophilotes abencerragus*\]](#)

[Grecian Anomalous Blue
\[*Polyommatus aroaniensis*\]](#)

[Kolev's Anomalous Blue \[*Polyommatus orphicus*\]](#)

[Lorquin's Blue \[*Cupido lorquini*\]](#)

[Oberthür's Anomalous Blue
\[*Polyommatus fabressei*\]](#)

[Paphos Blue \[*Glaucopsyche paphos*\]](#)

[Pontic Blue \[*Neolysandra coelestina*\]](#)

[Scarce Large Blue \[*Phengaris teleius*\]](#)

[Spanish Chalkhill Blue \[*Lysandra albicans*\]](#)

[Andalusian Anomalous Blue \[*Polyommatus violeatae*\]](#)

[Bavius Blue \[*Pseudophilotes bavius*\]](#)

[Bosnian Blue \[*Agriades dardanus*\]](#)

[Chelmos Blue \[*Polyommatus iphigenia*\]](#)

[Dark Grass Blue \[*Zizeeria karsandra*\]](#)

[Eastern Brown Argus \[*Kretania eurypilus*\]](#)

[Gavarnie Blue \[*Agriades pyrenaicus*\]](#)

[Higgins' Anomalous Blue \[*Polyommatus nephohiptamenos*\]](#)

[Little Tiger Blue \[*Tarucus balkanicus*\]](#)

[Mother-of-Pearl Blue \[*Polyommatus nivescens*\]](#)

[Odd-spot Blue \[*Turanana taygetica*\]](#)

[Piedmont Anomalous Blue
\[*Polyommatus humedasae*\]](#)

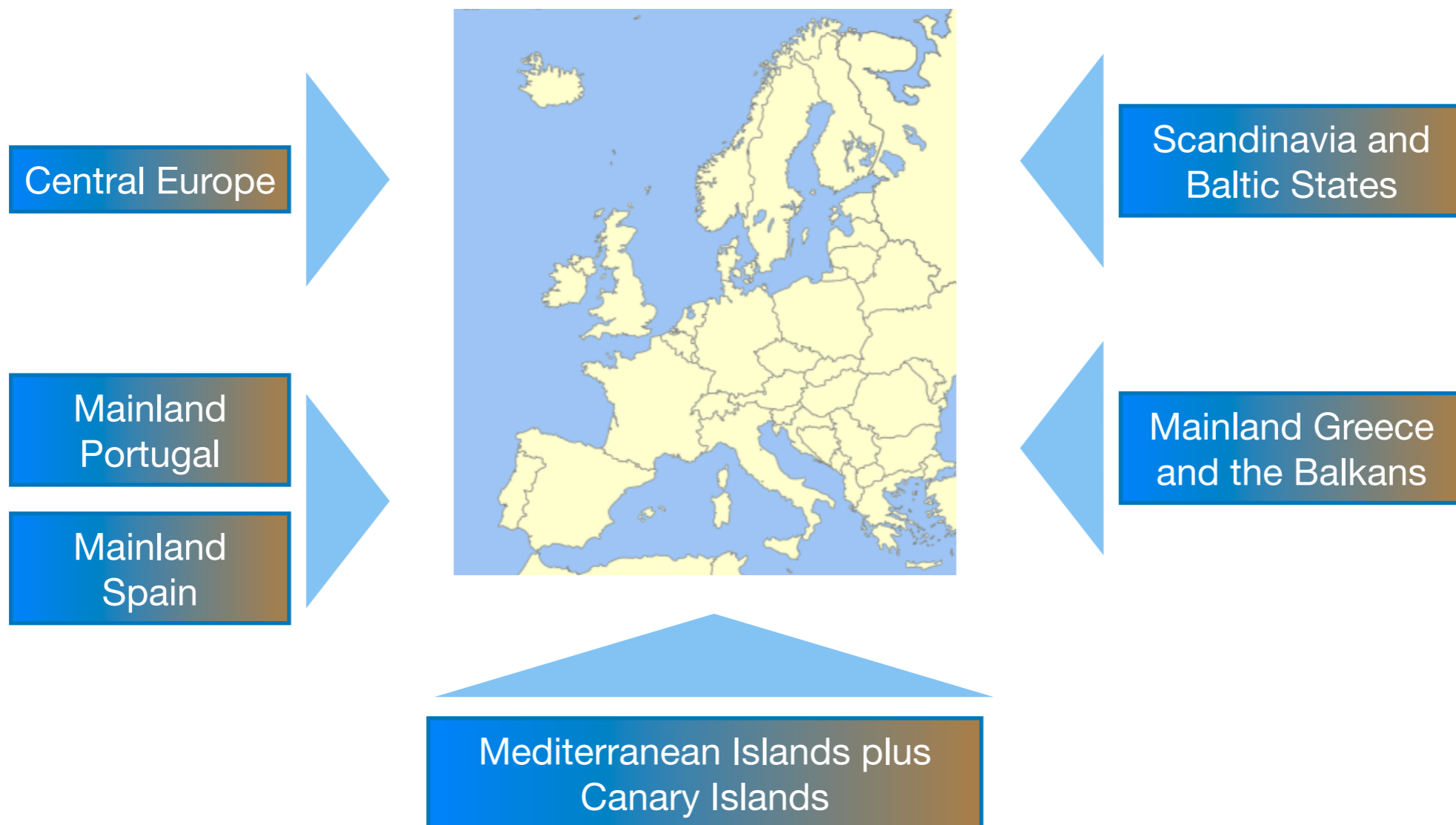
[Provence Chalkhill Blue \[*Lysandra hispana*\]](#)

[Small Desert Blue \[*Luthrodes galba*\]](#)

[Zullich's Blue \[*Agriades zullichi*\]](#)

Location

If you cannot identify your specimen as one of the 'Commoner' Species in Part 1 and you wish to search for your specimen amongst the 'Local' Species here in Part 2 then perhaps start by using Location. The majority of the 'Local' Species are only found in southern Europe. Click below to go to the checklist of 'Local' Species present in these regions.



Location Checklists

Mainland Greece and the Balkans

Check the grid opposite for the list of 'Local' Species currently present or possibly present in each country. Click on the species name to go to the Species Profile.



Key:

- Currently present
- Possibly present
- Extinct

1.
MAINLAND GREECE

ALBANIA 2

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA 8

BULGARIA 4

CROATIA 9

HUNGARY 11

MONTENEGRO 5

NORTH MACEDONIA 3

ROMANIA 7

SERBIA & Kosovo 6

SLOVENIA 10

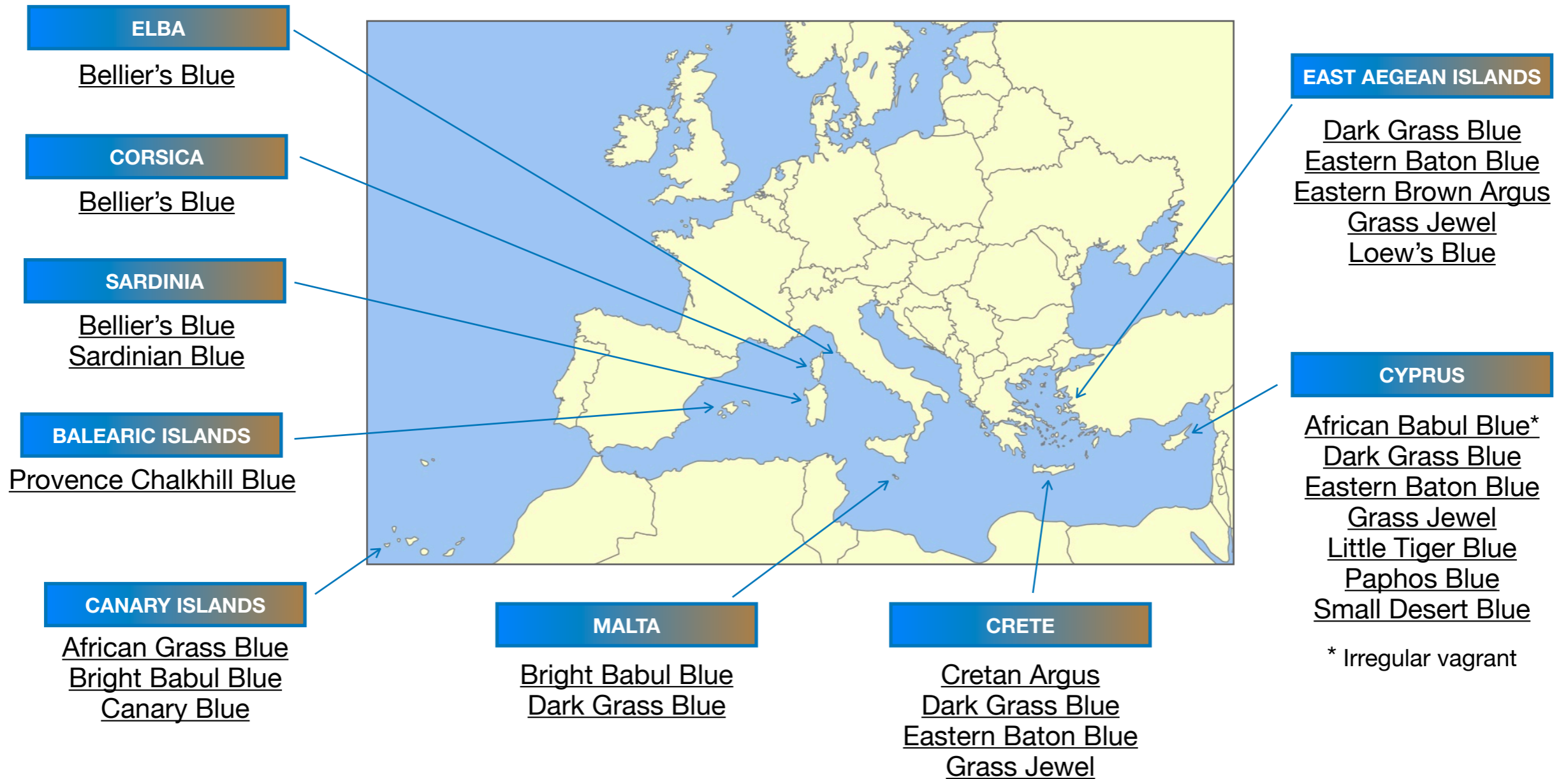
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
<u>Bavius Blue</u>		?										
<u>Blue Argus</u>												
<u>Bosnian Blue</u>		?										
<u>Chelmos Blue</u>												
<u>Dusky Large Blue</u>												
<u>Eastern Baton Blue</u>												
<u>Eastern Brown Argus</u>												
<u>Eastern Short-tailed Blue</u>												
<u>Grass Jewel</u>												
<u>Grecian Anomalous Blue</u>												
<u>Higgins' Anomalous Blue</u>												
<u>Kolev's Anomalous Blue</u>												
<u>Little Tiger Blue</u>												
<u>Odd-spot Blue</u>												
<u><i>Polyommatus timfristus</i></u>												
<u>Pontic Blue</u>												
<u>Scarce Large Blue</u>												

* Absent from Kosovo

Location Checklists

Listed below are the 'Local' Species currently present on these islands. Click on the species name to go to the Species Profile

Mediterranean Islands plus Canary Islands

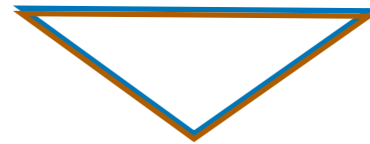


* Irregular vagrant

NOTE: Azores, Madeira and Sicily are not listed here as they have NO 'Local Species' currently present.



Species Profiles



Upperside MALE and FEMALE



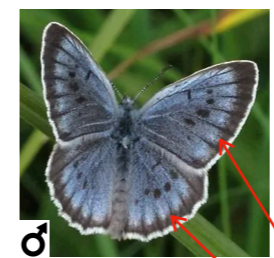
Male is a dull blue with: [i] wide dark wing borders, [ii] variable large outer spots, mainly on the fore-wing.

Female is dark brown sometimes with a little blue scaling. There are NO noticeable marks or spots.

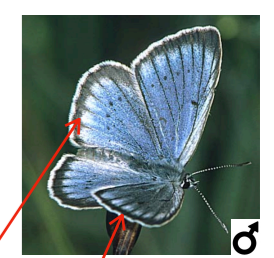
These two species, colonies of which are found mainly across central Europe, share the same habitat. Often flying together, they usually always occur in wet grassland on or close to their shared foodplant, Great Burnet [*Sanguisorba officinalis*]. Their noticeably **larger size** may lead to confusion with Large Blue and Alcon Blue [see below].

Scarce Large Blue [*Phengaris teleius*]

Upperside MALE and FEMALE



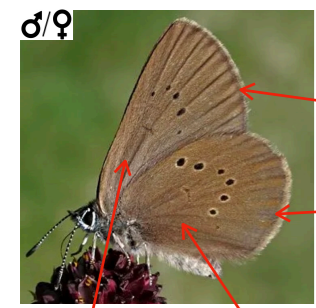
Male is bright blue and usually has: [i] a row of variably sized outer spots on both wings. These spots can be faint or absent [as shown right]. [ii] a broad well defined wing border.



Both Dusky and Scarce Large Blue rarely settle with wings open. It is therefore usually necessary to **identify using the undersides**.

Pale patches between the dark veins close to the borders of both wings may help to distinguish from the Dusky Large Blue

Underside MALE and FEMALE



Sexes are similar

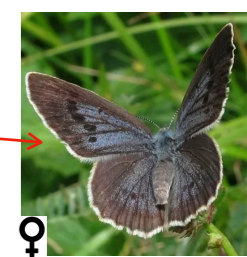
NO noticeable submarginal marks on either wing

NO inner spots on either wing

Key Identification Feature
Distinctive underside markings:
BOTH wings of the male and female undersides are medium to dark brown with:
 [i] NO submarginal marks,
 [ii] NO inner spots,
 [iii] a row of outer spots faintly outlined in white,
 [iv] faint cell marks.
This combination of markings is quite different from all other species in Parts 1 and 2.

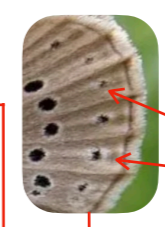
Key Identification Features
MALE upperside:
Usually obvious pale patches on both wings between the dark veins close to the wing border.
MALE and FEMALE underside:
Submarginal marks are usually weak and pale on both wings.

Female has a dark blue ground colour. Wide dark wing borders can obscure the large outer spots on both wings. Presence of these spots will differentiate from female Dusky Large Blue.

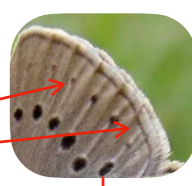


Underside MALE and FEMALE

Sexes are similar



Submarginal marks on both wings generally:
 [i] weak on the inner row
 [ii] pale and shadowy on the outer row



Similar 'Commoner' Species

which might confuse are **Large Blue [*Phengaris arion*]** and **Alcon Blue [*Phengaris alcon*]**. Both Dusky Large and Scarce Large can be found flying with the Large Blue and Alcon Blue. In fact all four species can be found flying together. The notes below should help to differentiate from one another.

Dusky Large Blue v Large Blue & Alcon Blue

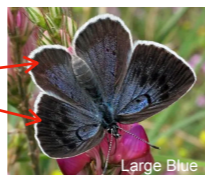
Dusky Large is usually **easily distinguished** from Large Blue and Alcon Blue by its **unique pattern of underside markings**. [See above].

Females may be identified by observing the plant used for egg laying. Gentiana species for Alcon Blue and Thyme species or Marjoram [*Origanum vulgare*] for Large Blue. Dusky and Scarce Large both use Great Burnet [*Sanguisorba officinalis*].

Scarce Large Blue v Large Blue

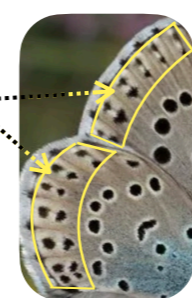
Upperside MALE

Large Blue males normally separated from Scarce Large by: [i] **larger outer spots** on fore-wing, [ii] **absence of pale patches** here.



Underside MALE & FEMALE

Large Blue distinguished by its **bold** rows of parallel black submarginal marks on both wings.



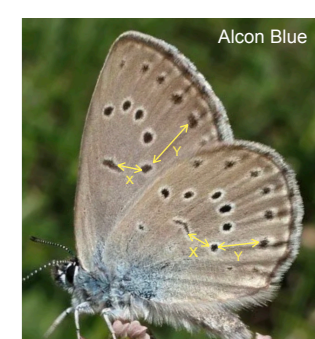
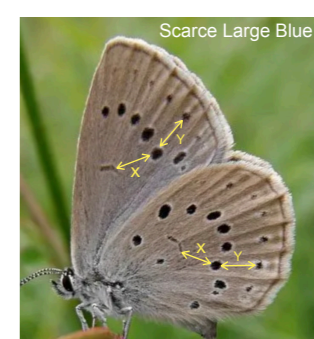
Upperside FEMALE

Females are very similar, especially the darker forms of Large Blue. Identify by underside or association with the foodplant.

Scarce Large Blue v Alcon Blue

Upperside MALE & FEMALE

Scarce Large and Alcon Blue males are quite different. The similar females can be separated by their undersides.



Underside MALE & FEMALE

To distinguish Scarce Large from Alcon compare distances **x** and **y** between the marks shown above. On Scarce Large **x** roughly equals **y**, whilst on Alcon **x** is noticeably shorter than **y**. This difference is usually more evident on fore-wing.
 Note: Cited differences in colour and spot size are considered unreliable.

Provence Chalkhill Blue
[*Lysandra hispana*]

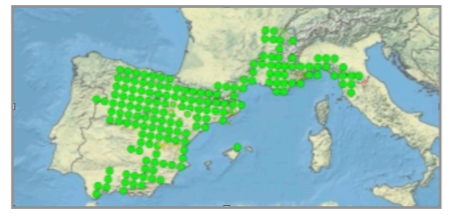
Chalkhill Blue species are very variable [including frequent hybridisation in Spain] **with few consistent features that definitively separate them.** The comparisons of 'typical' specimens below can help identification.

Spanish Chalkhill Blue
[*Lysandra albicans*]

Azure Chalkhill Blue
[*Lysandra caelestissima*]

Distribution

Coasts of northwest Italy, south France, east Spain. Inland in north Spain from north east westwards, south of Pyrenees, towards southern Cantabrians. The exact range is uncertain.



Absent from southwest, west and northwest of Iberia. Exact range in Spain is unclear. Widespread on limestone areas.



Only found in the Montes Universales area of east central Spain. Usually flies above c.1000m.



Key Identifying Feature

First brood: mid April-mid June, **Second brood:** end August onwards

Single brood: late June - end August

Single brood: end July - end August

Flight time

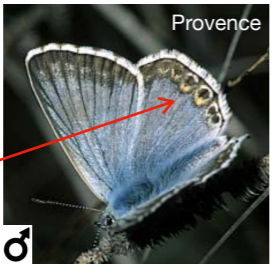
Provence first brood usually over before the height of the main flight period of Spanish and Azure. Provence second brood will generally appear fresher than late worn Spanish and Azure specimens.

[Terms](#) →

Upperside MALE



Often some visible trace of orange submarginal mark[s] on hind-wing.



Spanish usually much paler than Provence



Spanish males tend to appear virtually white in flight

Form arragonensis is found in northern Spain. Generally darker with a row of pale marks inside the submarginal marks.

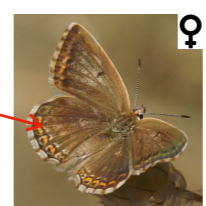


Male is a distinctive bright blue.

Upperside FEMALE



Female Provence, Spanish and Azure uppersides are difficult to identify due to their variability. To separate: [i] **try to identify males** as it may be possible to assess that only one species is present in your location, [ii] look for **faint thin white marks** inside the orange submarginal marks on the hind-wing which indicates Spanish, [iii] Spanish usually also has no blue scaling, [iv] look for **bright reddish submarginal marks** on hind-wing which generally indicate Provence.



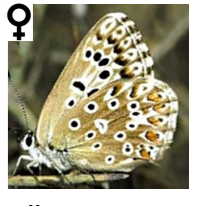
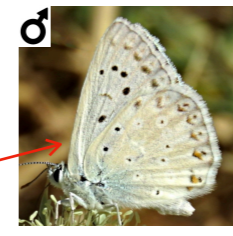
Female sometimes pale blue

Underside MALE and FEMALE



Provence, Spanish and Azure undersides have no consistent distinguishing features for identification* Sexes are similar though females generally browner than males. To help separate: [i] **try to identify males** [see above], [ii] look for **bright reddish submarginal marks** on hind-wing which indicates Provence, [iii] **Spanish normally paler than Provence and Azure** with southern Spanish males often almost white.

**Note: Other cited differences regarding colouration are not considered reliable.*



Female usually more heavily marked than male

Similar 'Commoner' Species

which confuses is **Chalkhill Blue** [*Lysandra coridon*] found in northern Spain and widely across Europe. See below for notes to help differentiate.

Chalkhill Blue

Distribution within the ranges of Provence, Spanish and Azure Chalkhill Blues

Peak flight time
Around early July to early August in southern France. Slightly later in northern Spain from mid July to mid August.



Chalkhill Blue v Provence Chalkhill Blue

[i] Provence first brood usually over before Chalkhill flies and second brood will generally appear fresher than late Chalkhill specimens.

[ii] Chalkhill male is usually a somewhat brighter blue compared with the duller grey/green blue of Provence.

Note: Other cited differences regarding colour are considered unreliable

Chalkhill Blue v Spanish Chalkhill Blue

[i] Spanish male upperside generally paler with on average less bold dark upperside wing borders.

[ii] Spanish female upperside usually has **faint thin white marks** inside the orange submarginal marks on the hind-wing [see above]. These marks are less common on Chalkhill.

Chalkhill Blue v Azure Chalkhill Blue

Azure males are usually a striking bright blue comparable to the Adonis Blue.

The three 'Local' species of ANOMALOUS BLUES in Spain and Italy

Oberthur's Anomalous Blue [*Polyommatus fabressei*]



Found in east and north central Spain. Sistema Iberico and Sistema Central [Provinces of Soria, Madrid, Teruel and Cuenca]

Key Identifying Feature

Location

Allowing for some possible limited overlap, Anomalous Blues are **only found in three zones in Spain**. Each zone has **only one species** flying in it as follows: [i] **Ripart's** [see foot of page] in the **north**, [ii] **Oberthur's** in **eastern central**, [iii] **Andalusian** in **south/south east**.

Andalusian Anomalous Blue [*Polyommatus violetae*]



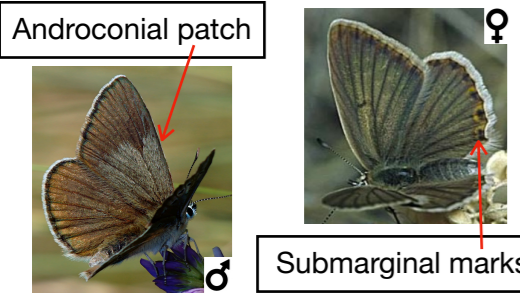
North east Granada, Sierra de La Sagra, eastern slopes of Sierra Nevada, Sierras de Segura and Cazorra [Jaen], Sierra de Alcaraz [Albacete], Sierra de Tejada [Malaga]

Piedmont Anomalous Blue [*Polyommatus humedasaе*]



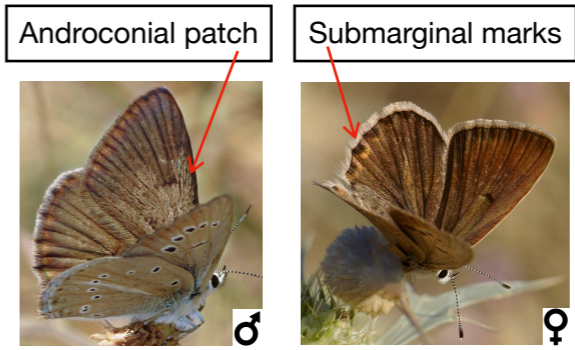
The only Anomalous Blue found in France and Italy is Ripart's [see foot of page] except around the Cogne valley in northwest Italy where **Ripart's is absent and ONLY Piedmont is present**.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE



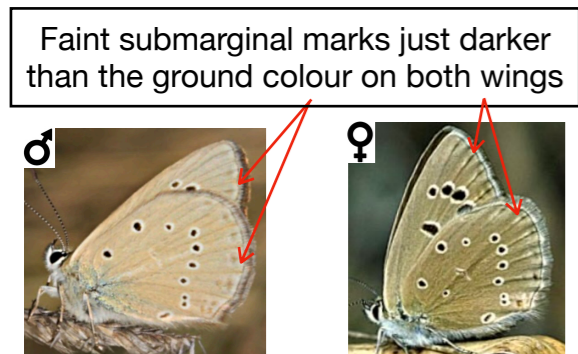
Uppersides of male and female Oberthur's and Andalusian are **virtually indistinguishable** from one another, with:

- [i] veins that appear darker than the ground colour,
- [ii] an **androconial patch** usually visible in the basal area of the **male** fore-wing,
- [iii] dark submarginal marks on female hind-wing. These marks often contain some orange.



Uppersides have same features as Oberthur's and Andalusian.

Underside MALE and FEMALE

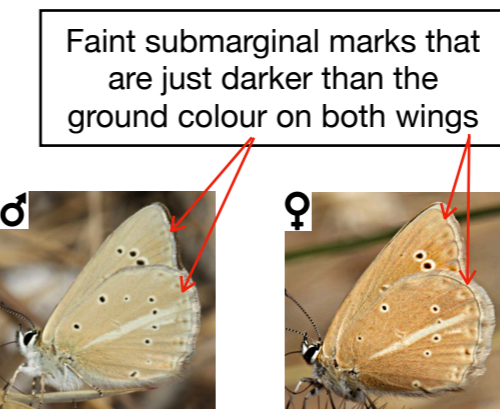


Undersides of Oberthur's and Andalusian males and females are similar. Females generally browner with bolder marks [especially Oberthur's]. To help differentiate from one another look for:

White stripe on underside hind-wing

Usually NO white stripe. Sometimes a stripe, [generally weak] is visible.

White stripe is common but can be faint or absent.

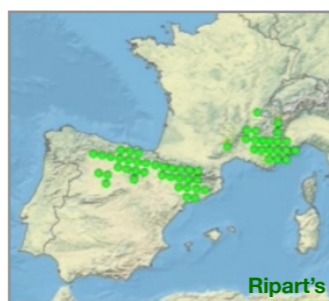
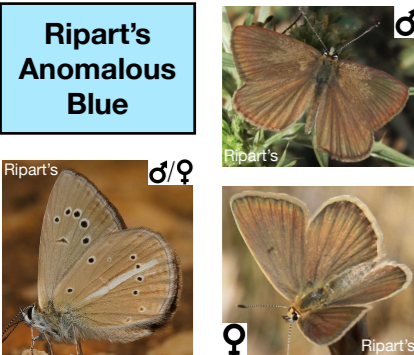


Undersides similar to other Anomalous Blues. Normally **NO** [or very weak] white stripe on hind-wing.

[i] Identification straightforward [see location notes above], [ii] Usually **no white stripe** which helps distinguish from Damon and Ripart's [see below]

Similar 'Commoner' Species

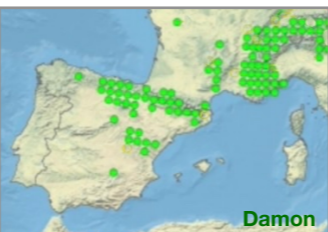
which might cause confusion are **Ripart's Anomalous Blue [*Polyommatus ripartii*]**, and **Damon Blue [*Polyommatus damon*]**. See notes below.



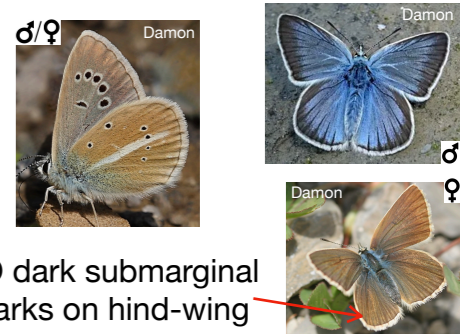
Found in Spain, France and Italy, Ripart's upperside is virtually indistinguishable from Oberthur's, Andalusian and Piedmont. Separate by:

- [i] **location** [see above],
- [ii] the **consistent bold white stripe** on Ripart's underside hind-wing.

Damon Blue



Present in Spain, France and Italy, the Damon Blue could be found with Oberthur's, Andalusian and Piedmont. Damon underside is similar but with a **consistent bold white stripe** on the hind-wing. An upperside view of male or female should readily distinguish.



NO dark submarginal marks on hind-wing

In many cases these four species can **only be positively identified by analysis of genitalia/chromosomes/DNA**. The examples below are considered 'typical' specimens.

Grecian Anomalous Blue
[*Polyommatus aroaniensis*]

Found in mountainous areas of northern, western and southern Greece. Mainly found below 1500m.



Kolev's Anomalous Blue
[*Polyommatus orphicus*]

Range still uncertain. Currently known from mountainous areas of Albania, Bulgaria, North Macedonia and northern Greece.



Higgins' Anomalous Blue
[*Polyommatus nephohiptamenos*]

Flies in mountainous areas of northern Greece and rarely in bordering mountains of southern Bulgaria. **Usually found above the tree line**, sometimes at lower altitudes.



Polyommatus timfristos

This new species is currently only known from Mt. Timfristos and Mt. Parnassos in central Greece.



Key Identifying Feature

Location may be sufficient in some cases to distinguish these four 'Local' Anomalous Blues from one another. See the distribution maps above.
Note: Several similar 'Commoner' species including Anomalous Blue and Ripart's Anomalous Blue are widespread in this area. Consider the distribution maps and notes below.

The **UPPERSIDES** of these four species are almost indistinguishable from one another. They have these features in common: [i] veins noticeably darker than the ground colour, [ii] a noticeable androconial patch in basal area of male fore-wing, [iii] darkish submarginal marks, often containing some orange, on female hind-wing. The **UNDERSIDES** are also very similar due to variation, especially the presence or absence of the underside hind-wing white stripe. Notes on differentiating are given below but these are **not diagnostic**.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE

Uppersides indistinguishable from the other three species on this page.

Male wing fringes are usually a bright white which may help distinguish from Grecian and Kolev's.

Underside MALE and FEMALE

Hind-wing:
[i] submarginal marks effectively absent,
[ii] usually NO white stripe but can be present,
[iii] spots generally small. Several often absent.

The presence of a noticeable white stripe* here between the cell mark and outer spot 3 will in most cases distinguish Kolev's from Ripart's which frequently fly together.
* not present on form *eleniae*

Generally has a white stripe on hind-wing which could separate from Grecian. However, the stripe can be faint but it is rarely absent.

The underside ground colour normally appears noticeably paler than Grecian and Kolev's

Usually a white stripe [can be faint/absent] which could separate from Grecian.

Notes: [i] only identifiable by DNA/chromosome analysis, [ii] upperside photos taken at correct flight time and location, but not confirmed as *timfristos*.

Similar 'Commoner' Species

which can confuse are **Anomalous Blue** [*Polyommatus admetus*], **Ripart's Anomalous Blue** [*Polyommatus ripartii*]. Also the females of **Damon Blue** [*Polyommatus damon*] and **Mazarine Blue** [*Cyaniris semiargus*]. See notes below to help differentiate.

Anomalous Blue

Underside has: [i] submarginal marks on both wings, [ii] NO white stripe on hind-wing. These features should distinguish from the four 'local' species above.

Ripart's Anomalous Blue

Ripart's v Higgins'

Unlike Ripart's, Higgins' mostly found above tree line or c.1500 m. and has: [i] bright white wing fringes on the male, [ii] a paler underside ground colour.

Note: Cited differences about shape of white stripe are considered unreliable.

Ripart's v Grecian and Kolev's

Ripart's bold hind-wing white stripe will usually distinguish from:
[i] Grecian [ii] Kolev's specimens without a hind-wing white stripe. See above for details of Kolev's fore-wing stripe which can also separate.

Damon Blue

Damon v Grecian

Damon's: [i] blue male upperside and [ii] bold underside white stripe help distinguish from Grecian.

Damon v Kolev's

Separate by uppersides. Damon: [i] male is blue, [ii] female has light veins and no submarginal marks

Mazarine v Grecian

Upperside of: [i] Mazarine male is blue, [ii] Mazarine female has bright white fringes.

Grecian Anomalous Blue

Undersides can be separated by the position of outer spot 2 in relation to spots 1 and 3.

Just below a straight line between 1 and 3.

In a straight line with 1 and 3.

Spanish Argus [*Aricia morronensis*]

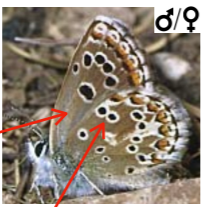


A very variable species with numerous localised races **mainly flying at high altitudes** in Spain's major mountain ranges including the Pyrenees [very local on French side]. The two most notable subspecies are included below.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE



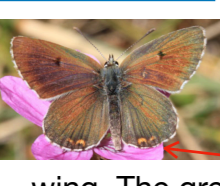
No cell spot here



A 'colon' mark is usually present

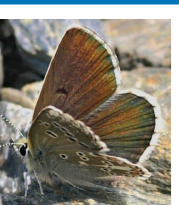
Male and female uppersides are similar with 'typical' specimens having: [i] fringe lines, [ii] a dark fore-wing cell mark [may be ringed white], [iii] a few orange submarginal marks, often more on female.

Subspecies *hesselbarthi*



Hesselbarthi is found around 1000m near Abejar, in Soria. It is similar to *morronensis* but is said to be larger with some well defined orange marks on the upperside hind-wing. The greater size is unconfirmed but may apply to the first brood which flies May/June.

Subspecies *ramburi*



Ramburi is similar to *morronensis* but usually has less well developed: [i] upperside orange submarginal marks, [ii] underside markings. Its habitat is above the tree-line on bleak slopes with little vegetation in the Sierra Nevada.

Similar 'Commoner' Species

Southern Mountain Argus

Southern Mountain Argus v Spanish Argus

Separate by underside. Spanish Argus has: [i] **bolder spots**, [ii] a **darker** ground colour, [iii] slightly **smaller** orange marks.



Brown Argus



Brown Argus v Eastern Brown Argus

Brown Argus [both sexes] has: [i] a dark fore-wing cell mark, [ii] fringe lines or 'chequering', [iii] a 'colon' mark on underside hind-wing.

Brown Argus v Blue Argus

Blue Argus: [i] female upperside usually has **less bold/bright** orange marks than Brown Argus, [ii] underside spots are **variable** [see above]. This helps separate.



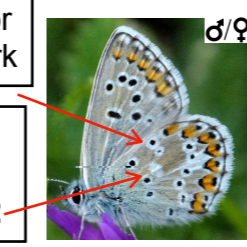
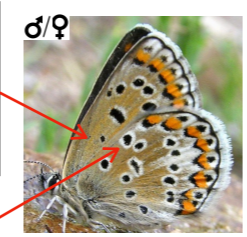
Fore-wing cell spot variable. If present [as shown here] this helps separate from other *Aricia* species.

'Colon' mark usually present

Underside spots can also vary as shown below:

Outer spot o2 may be small or absent altering the 'colon' mark

Hind-wing cell mark often contains little or no black and is very close to inner spot in2

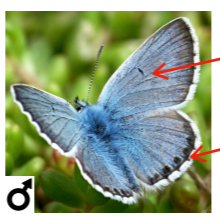


Blue Argus [*Aricia anteros*]

Flies in Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, Bulgaria southwards to the Peloponnese in Greece.



Upperside MALE and FEMALE



Noticeable dark cell mark

Dark submarginal marks, may merge with wing border.

Females similar to Brown Argus [see comparison below]

Underside MALE and FEMALE



Eastern Brown Argus [*Kretania eurypilus*]



Found only in the Taygetos mountains [southern Peloponnese] and the island of Samos.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE



Sexes are similar with females usually having more upperside orange submarginal marks.



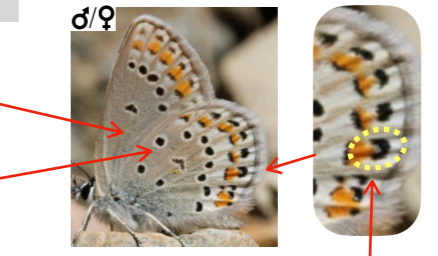
In the Taygetos the uppersides could be confused with females of these subspecies: [i] *menelaos* of Eros Blue, [ii] *helena* of Mazarine Blue. An underside view will readily distinguish.

Underside MALE and FEMALE

Underside features which identify are shown below:

NO cell spot here

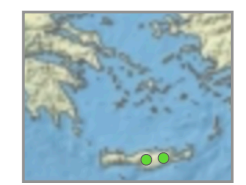
NO 'colon' mark here



Tiny patch of blue scales is often present in mark s6

Terms

Cretan Argus [*Kretania psylorita*]



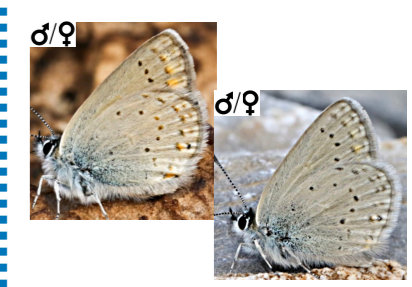
Endemic to Crete. Flying above c.1000m. in the high mountains the Cretan Argus **cannot be confused** with any other species found on the island.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE



Males and females generally appear similar. The number of orange submarginal marks is variable with females usually having more complete rows.

Underside MALE and FEMALE



Sexes are similar. Outer spots and submarginal marks are small, inner spots absent.

Northern Brown Argus v Eastern Brown Argus

Northern Brown Argus [both sexes] has: [i] dark fore-wing cell mark, [ii] some faint fringe lines, [iii] a 'colon' mark on underside hind-wing.

Northern Brown Argus v Blue Argus

Blue Argus underside spots are variable [see above]. This can help separate.

Northern Brown Argus



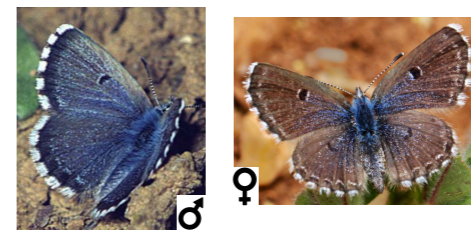
Panoptes Blue [*Pseudophilotes panoptes*]

False Baton Blue [*Pseudophilotes abencerragus*]

These two species found in Iberia are often **very difficult or impossible to separate from photographs**. They share the features listed below.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE

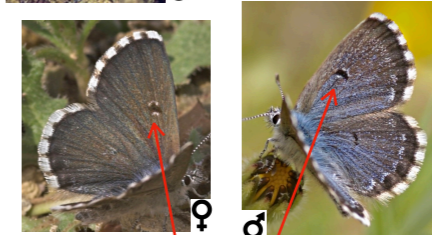
Colour: sexes can appear similar but females usually darker with less blue



Fringe lines: both sexes have bold dark fringe lines or 'chequering'

Submarginal marks: rows of black marks on both wings. These are not always visible [especially on fore-wing] as they frequently merge with the wing border.

Cell marks: usually noticeable dark cell marks on both wings. Often fainter on hind-wing and harder to see on females.



Undersides of male and female are similar. The spots are bold with a cell spot on the fore-wing.



Dark cell mark frequently has a white outline. This can help distinguish from Panoptes. See comparison below.

Sardinian Blue [*Pseudophilotes barbaggiae*]



Endemic to Sardinia. Found on the Gennargentu Massif in central southern Sardinia it is **unlikely to be confused** with any other species found on the island.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE



In the field males and females can both appear brown depending on age and density of blue scaling. Characteristic features are: [i] fringe lines or 'chequering', and [ii] fore-wing cell marks. Usually found around species of Thyme, the foodplant.

Underside MALE and FEMALE

Sexes similar Boldly spotted underside with a cell spot on the fore-wing.

Location may be sufficient in some cases to distinguish. See the distribution maps below.



Panoptes is widespread in Spain, more local in Portugal.



False Baton is local in: central and southern Spain, southern half of Portugal.

Key Identification Features Panoptes v False Baton

Flight time

Panoptes has two broods: Early April/May and July. False Baton is single brooded: Early April/May.

A number of differences found on the average 'typical' specimen may also help to differentiate:

- **MALE upperside:** Panoptes generally appears a lighter, brighter blue than the dark greyish blue of False Baton.
- **MALE & FEMALE upperside:** Fore-wing cell mark on False Baton often has a noticeable pale white outline. [see above]
- **MALE & FEMALE underside:** Ground colour of Panoptes can look blue/grey compared with the more brown/grey of False Baton.
- **Foodplant:** False Baton is usually found close to its foodplant, the labiate *Cleonia lusitanica*.

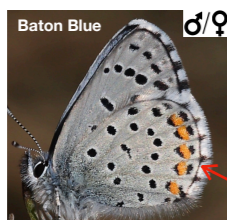
N.B. Due to variation, all the above features are best used in conjunction to assess the probability of identity. Taken singly they are not reliable.

Similar 'Commoner' Species

which can confuse are **Baton Blue [*Pseudophilotes baton*]** and **Chequered Blue [*Scolitantides orion*]**.



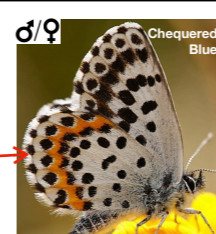
Baton Blue



Baton and Chequered v Panoptes and False Baton

Uppersides of all four species are very similar. An underside view is required. This will readily separate as Panoptes and False Baton have **virtually NO orange marks on underside hind-wing**, except for occasional vestigial faint traces of orange. Chequered and Baton normally have numerous orange submarginal marks.

Chequered Blue



Distribution in Iberian Peninsula

Bavius Blue [*Pseudophilotes bavius*]



Eastern Baton Blue [*Pseudophilotes vicrama*]

Bavius Blue flies in Bulgaria, mainland Greece, North Macedonia, Romania, and is possibly present in Albania. Bavius is very variable with several subspecies being cited. The suggested differences for these subspecies are considered unreliable and they are not included here.

Colonies of Eastern Baton Blue are found in many parts of eastern Europe. See below for details of distribution.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE

Colour: sexes similar but females usually darker with less blue



Submarginal marks: orange marks present on hind-wing of both sexes. These vary in size and number but usually more on females.

Fringe lines: both sexes have bold dark fringe lines or 'chequering', especially on fore-wing

Key Identification Feature

Upperside hind-wing submarginal marks:

Male and female upperside hind-wings have ONE or more orange submarginal marks. This will distinguish from the similar looking Chequered Blue [see below] and Eastern Baton Blue [see opposite] with which it may be found flying.

Key Identification Feature

Underside hind-wing submarginal marks:

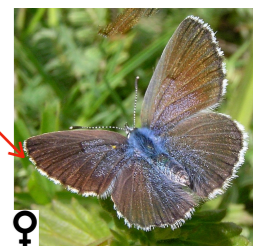
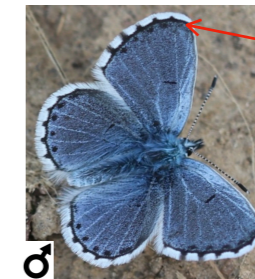
Male and female underside hind-wings always have exactly FIVE orange submarginal marks with NO orange marks in s1 and s2. This will distinguish from the similar Chequered Blue [see below] and Bavius Blue [see opposite] with which it may be found flying.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE



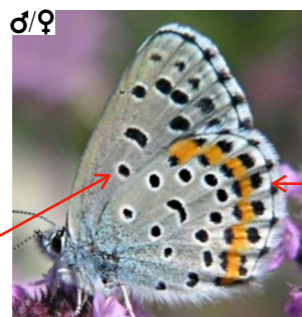
Colour: sexes can appear similar but females are usually darker with less blue than males

Fringe lines: both sexes usually have bold dark fringe lines or 'chequering', especially on the fore-wing



Underside MALE and FEMALE

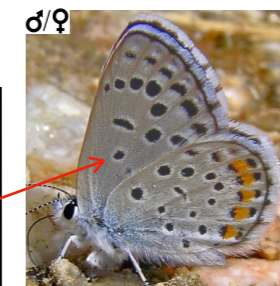
Boldly spotted undersides of male and female are similar. Usually a cell spot on fore-wing but sometimes absent.



Invariably at least seven orange submarginal marks on hind-wing of both sexes

Underside MALE and FEMALE

Sexes are similar. Normally boldly spotted but this varies. Usually a cell spot present on the fore-wing but sometimes absent.



Hind-wing submarginal marks:

NO orange marks in s1 and s2.

Always exactly FIVE orange marks in s3 to s7

Similar 'Commoner' Species

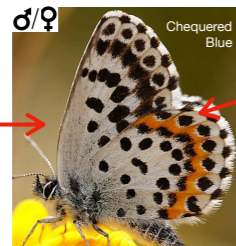
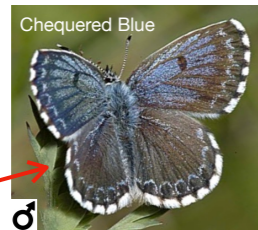
which can confuse are **Chequered Blue [*Scolitantides orion*]** and **Baton Blue [*Pseudophilotes baton*]**. See comparisons below to help differentiate.

Chequered Blue

Chequered Blue can be found flying in many parts of the ranges of both Bavius and Eastern Baton Blue

Chequered v Bavius

Both sexes of Chequered have:
 [i] NO orange marks on the upperside which easily distinguishes from Bavius [see above],
 [ii] very large prominent underside spots which stand out from the pale white ground colour.



Chequered v Eastern Baton

Uppersides of Chequered and Eastern Baton can appear similar. **A view of the underside is needed to confirm identification.**

Look for the orange submarginal marks in s1 and s2 of the Chequered's hind-wing which reliably distinguishes from Eastern Baton [see above].

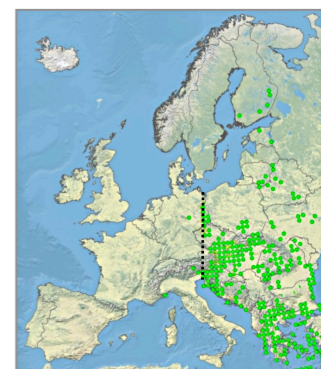
Baton Blue

Baton v Eastern Baton

Uppersides and undersides of these two species are very similar and **virtually impossible to separate**. Fortunately their ranges have a very limited overlap where they might be found flying together. This is roughly along a line drawn due north from the Italy/Slovenia border to Scandinavia. This imaginary line is represented by the dotted line on the maps opposite.



Baton Blue



Eastern Baton Blue

Mother-of-Pearl Blue [*Polyommatus nivescens*]



Nevada Blue [*Polyommatus golgus*]

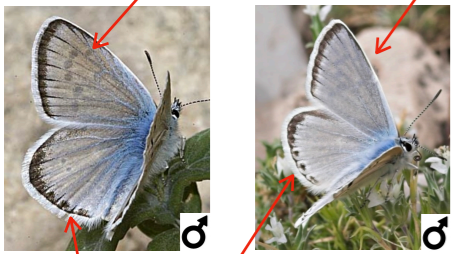
Upperside MALE and FEMALE

Shadow of underside spots frequently appear on upperside

Colour: male is a pale blue grey



Found in calcareous areas of eastern Spain from the south coast to southern Pyrenees



Female is brown, usually with a row of orange submarginal marks on both fore and hind-wings.

Submarginal marks: usually a row of dark marks on hind-wing

Indistinguishable from female Turquoise Blue [see below]

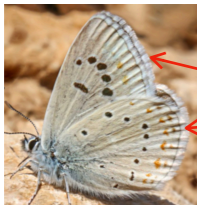
Key Identification Feature

Males are distinguished from all other species by the combination of:

- [i] pale blue grey upperside and
- [ii] band of white submarginal marks on underside fore-wing.

Underside MALE and FEMALE

Sexes are similar



Submarginal marks: orange marks on both wings are frequently small/faint.

Submarginal marks: Generally no significant dark marks, especially on fore-wing, which is often virtually a white band.



Mother-of-Pearl males in flight can often be mistaken for the Spanish Chalkhill Blue [*Lysandra albicans*]. A view of the upperside and/or underside at rest should readily distinguish.

At their lower altitudes *golgus* and/or *sagratrox* might be found flying with Mother-of-Pearl. Any confusion about identity caused by the similar undersides and female uppersides should hopefully be resolved by the presence of the easily differentiated males.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE



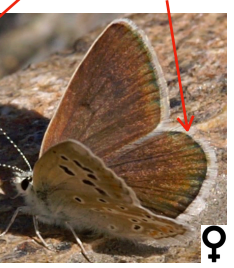
Flies at high altitudes on open sparsely vegetated slopes in the Sierra Nevada of southeastern Spain. Subspecies *sagratrox* is found above c.1800m some distance away on the Sierras: La Sagra, Seca, Cazorla and Guillimona.



Wing border: dark and narrow

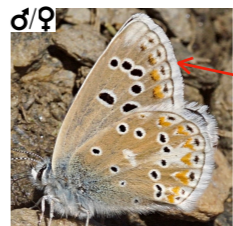
Submarginal marks: usually some small dark marks on hind-wing

Female is brown with a small number of orange submarginal marks on both wings which are sometimes very faint/absent



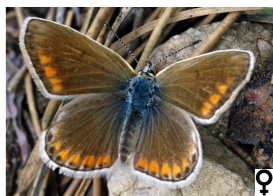
Underside MALE and FEMALE

Sexes are similar



Fore-wing submarginal marks: Usually a prominent terminal white mark. Other marks dominated by white.

Subspecies sagratrox



Sagratrox differs from *golgus* as follows: [i] males are generally a brighter blue with very narrow dark wing borders, [ii] female uppersides have more complete orange marks, especially on fore-wing, [iii] undersides normally appear paler.

Similar 'Commoner' Species

which may confuse are Turquoise Blue [*Polyommatus dorylas*], Catalonian Furry Blue [*Polyommatus fulgens*], Common Blue [*Polyommatus icarus*], Escher's Blue [*Polyommatus escheri*]

Catalonian Furry Blue



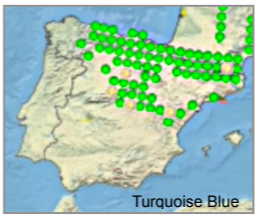
Catalonian Furry v Mother-of-Pearl

These two species will only be found flying together in northern Spain. **To separate uppersides**, the Catalonian Furry Blue normally has: [i] a noticeable androconial patch on male fore-wing, [ii] no orange marks on female.



Undersides, especially males and worn specimens, can appear similar. Look for any trace of orange marks which confirms Mother-of-Pearl.

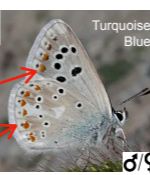
Turquoise Blue



Turquoise v Mother-of-Pearl

The distribution of these two species **only overlaps** in the northern half of Spain.

Male uppersides quite different but females **virtually inseparable**. Use the presence of males to infer identification.



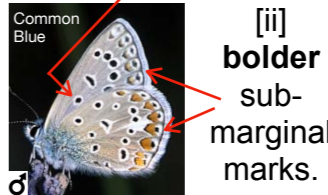
Undersides similar but Turquoise usually has slightly larger orange marks and slightly darker submarginal marks

Turquoise v Nevada

These two species are very similar but their identification is easily determined **by location as their ranges do not overlap**

Common Blue v Nevada

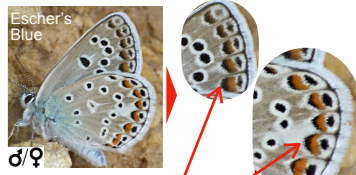
Male and female uppersides similar. **Separate by the underside.** Male and female Common Blue have: [i] a cell spot here,



[ii] **bolder** submarginal marks.

Escher's Blue v Nevada

Uppersides of male and female similar. **Separate by underside.** Escher's Blue usually has:



strong black inner edges to the orange submarginal marks.

Chelmos Blue [*Polyommatus iphigenia*]

This species is only present in the Peloponnese within a restricted range around Mount Chelmos.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE

Narrow well defined dark border

The bright blue Chelmos males might be mistaken in flight for Turquoise Blue and *polonus* [a hybrid of Chalkhill and Adonis Blue] which are also present. A view of the underside should readily distinguish.

Female is uniformly dark brown with bright white fringes

Underside MALE and FEMALE

A row of some dark brown and orange submarginal marks usually present on the female fore-wing

Noticeable broad white stripe on hind-wing

Similar 'Commoner' Species

which might confuse is Ripart's Anomalous Blue [*Polyommatus ripartii*]

Ripart's Anomalous v Chelmos

Ripartii is the only species present with an underside hind-wing white stripe. It flies in numbers on Mt Chelmos. Both male and female *ripartii* might be confused with the upperside of female Chelmos. Differentiate by the generally darker brown of Chelmos females. Undersides are easier to separate. Look for: [i] grey colour of Chelmos males, [ii] the dark fore-wing submarginal marks of Chelmos females.

Odd-spot Blue [*Turanana taygetica*]

Only found in mountains of the Peloponnese including Mount Chelmos and the Taygetos. Usually flies above the tree line at over c.1500 m.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE

Wide dark wing border

Fore-wing cell mark

Both sexes often have some pale submarginal marks on both wings

Odd-spot Blue is noticeably **small** and usually found near its foodplant, *Acantholimon androsaceum*.

Underside MALE & FEMALE

Brown with basal blue scaling

Key Identification Feature
Outer spot **o4** is noticeably displaced towards the outer edge of the fore-wing.
No other Polyommatinae species has this feature

Sometimes orange submarginal marks are present on hind-wing, especially around **s6**

Similar 'Commoner' Species

that may confuse is Silver-studded Blue [*Plebejus argus*]

Although the Odd-spot Blue is **very small** the uppersides of males and females might be mistaken for other species that are present, e.g. the widespread Silver-studded Blue.

A view of the underside should readily distinguish.

Pontic Blue [*Neolysandra coelestina*]

Restricted to southern Greece. Flies on the Mount Chelmos Massif and some nearby locations.

Upperside MALE & FEMALE

Male is deep blue, with bright white fringes, wide well defined black wing borders and partial vein darkening.

Brown, sometimes a few faint orange submarginal marks on hind-wing

Underside MALE & FEMALE

Large area of basal blue/green scaling on hind-wing

No orange marks on underside

Female browner with some orange hind-wing submarginal marks

Similar 'Commoner' Species

which may confuse are: Green-underside Blue [*Glaucopsyche alexis*], Mazarine Blue [*Cyaniris semiargus helena*], Silver-studded Blue [*Plebejus argus*]

Green-underside v Pontic

[i] Males: Uppersides similar but Green-underside has a slightly **narrower** wing border. Underside also similar but Green-underside fore-wing outer spots usually noticeably **larger** than its hind-wing outer spots.

[ii] Females: Green-underside has: [a] **no** orange marks on underside [b] frequent basal blue scaling on upperside.

Helena v Pontic

The Mazarine Blue subspecies *helena* is found in Pontic's range.

To distinguish:

[i] Males: Dark wing borders on *helena* usually **narrower**.

Helena underside hind-wing has orange markings.

[ii] Females: *helena* has: [a] **less** blue/green scaling on the underside hind-wing,

[b] noticeably **stronger** orange marks on upperside and on **both** the underside fore-wing and hind-wing.

Silver-studded v Pontic

Uppersides of both sexes are similar. A view of the **quite different undersides** will identify.

These four *Agríades* species can appear similar but there is no possible confusion as their distributions do not overlap

Gavarnie Blue [*Agríades pyrenaicus*]



Mainly found in central Pyrenees of France and Spain around Gavarnie. Also present in eastern Pyrenees. Subspecies *asturiensis* flies in the Cantabrian Mountains of north west Spain. Usually above c.1800m.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE

Narrow, well defined dark wing border.

Pale submarginal marks on hind-wing

Dark cell mark on fore-wing.

Dark brown with dark fore-wing cell marks

Underside MALE and FEMALE

Sexes similar

Generally very few black marks or spots on hind-wing

Usually faint orange submarginal marks here on hind-wing

Subspecies *asturiensis*

Found in the Cantabrian Mountains *asturiensis* differs from *pyrenaicus* as follows:
 [i] Male *asturiensis* usually has pale submarginal marks on **both** upperside wings, [ii] Female *asturiensis* generally has **white outlines** to the **cell marks** and a **row of submarginal marks** on the upperside **hind-wing**.

Underside is very similar to *pyrenaicus*

Similar 'Commoner' Species

which might confuse are: **Alpine Blue [*Agríades orbitulus*]** and **Glandon Blue [*Agríades glandon*]**

Gavarnie's underside may be confused with Alpine and Glandon. However, Gavarnie is:
 [i] found flying with Glandon **only** in the Pyrenees, [ii] **not found** flying with Alpine.

Glandon v Gavarnie

[i] Glandon MALES have a **bluer upperside** and **wide** dark wing borders, [ii] Glandon underside hind-wing usually has **slightly bolder** and **more numerous** black marks.

Zullich's Blue [*Agríades zullichí*]



Flies in southern Spain above c. 2500m on high summits of Sierra Nevada.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE

Sometimes pale marks present, mostly on males

Cell marks on both wings

submarginal marks on hind-wing

Underside MALE and FEMALE

Sexes similar

Normally a cell spot present here

A 'colon' mark is usually present

Zullich's Blue frequently flies with Spanish Argus subspecies *ramburi*. Distinguish by Zullich's underside having: [i] a fore-wing cell spot, [ii] fewer/fainter hind-wing orange marks. Zullich's can usually be found close to its foodplant *Vitaliana primuliflora* subspecies *assuana*.

Similar 'Commoner' Species

which may confuse are: **Alpine Blue [*Agríades orbitulus*]** and **Glandon Blue [*Agríades glandon*]**.
 Fortunately, Zullich's, Arctic and Bosnian are easily identified as: **neither Alpine nor Glandon (or any other similar species) is found flying with them**

Arctic Blue [*Agríades aquilo*]



Found in north of Norway, Sweden and Finland.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE

Sometimes a visible cell mark on the fore-wing

Submarginal marks can be present on hind-wing

Female is brown with variable markings. Usually has: [i] cell marks on both wings, [ii] some pale hind-wing submarginal marks surrounded by white, [iii] pale marks on fore-wing

Underside MALE and FEMALE

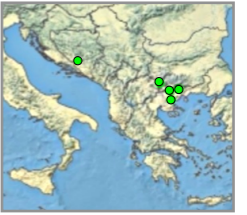
Sexes are similar

Fore-wing spots prone to variation

Almost no black marks on hind-wing, just white blotches.

Arctic Blue is distinctly small and hard to follow in flight.

Bosnian Blue [*Agríades dardanus*]



Small colonies in south west Bulgaria, Bosnia, and north east Greece. Possibly present in Albania.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE

Large, dark cell marks on both wings, usually less prominent on hind-wing.

Bright white fringes

Female is uniformly brown

Underside MALE and FEMALE

Sexes similar, with females usually slightly darker than males

Markings are bold on the fore-wing, usually less distinct on the hind-wing.

Bosnian Blue is easily identified [see below]. It is noticeably small and difficult to spot as it flies low across the ground.

Eastern Short-tailed Blue [*Cupido decoloratus*]

Lorquin's Blue [*Cupido lorquini*]

Iolana debilitata



Found locally in eastern Europe. For a full list of countries go to [Location](#) section.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE

This species displays considerable variation. Below are the features found on what is generally regarded as a 'typical' specimen.



♂



Flies in southern Iberia. Approximate northern limit in Spain is just north of Sierra Nevada. In Portugal, centred on Algarve but also farther north. Found from sea level near coast to c. 2000m.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE



Iolana debilitata flies in the Iberian peninsula where it replaces the more widespread Iolas Blue.

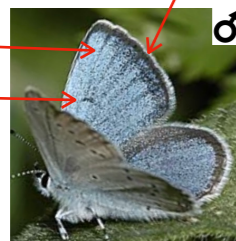
Iolana debilitata [sometimes referred to as the Spanish or Western Iolas Blue] is **almost indistinguishable from the Iolas Blue [*Iolana iolas*]** described in detail in Part 1. They can only be differentiated by close inspection of genitalia etc. Thankfully their ranges do not overlap and **location is sufficient to distinguish between them**. The Pyrenees is generally regarded as the dividing line between these two species. Therefore, any specimen found in the Pyrenees and southwards should be assumed to be *debilitata* unless a detailed check of morphology has been made which comes to a different conclusion. The Iolas Blue is found from southern France eastwards into Europe.

Broad wing border. diffusing inwards

Vein darkening

Fore-wing cell mark

Dull blue

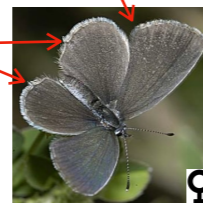


♂

Tail:

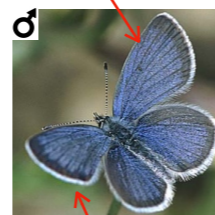
both sexes have small tails, often vestigial or absent. [Click here](#) for help on missing tails.

Females uniformly dark brown, nearly black

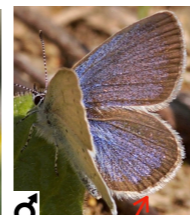


♀

Usually some dark veins

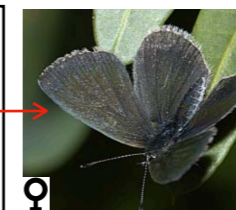


♂



♂

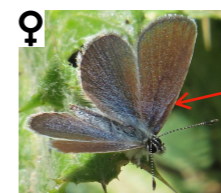
Uniformly dark brown ground colour



♀

Wide dark wing borders, sometimes diffuse

Sometimes a trace of basal blue scaling



♀

Underside MALE and FEMALE

Sexes similar



♂/♀



Chevron like inner dark mark here in s6

Orange patch sometimes present [as shown here]

Similar 'Commoner' Species

which may confuse are: **Short-tailed Blue [*Cupido argiades*], Provençal Short-tailed Blue [*Cupido alceas*], Small Blue [*Cupido minimus*], and Osiris Blue [*Cupido osiris*].**
All the above species can be found flying with *decoloratus*

NOTE: For all the comparisons below keep in mind that eastern European specimens of these widely distributed Polyommatae can differ markedly from the 'typical' description.

Provençal Short-tailed v Eastern Short-tailed

These two species are **virtually impossible to separate definitively using photographs**, being recognised as separate species by differences in genitalia. Many sources cite several features which will distinguish but these are not considered consistent enough for a reliable identification. For a description of 'typical' Provençal Short-tailed Blue that is reasonably consistent in western Europe [click here](#).

Short-tailed v Eastern Short-tailed



♂/♀

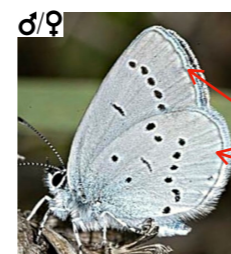
Very similar uppersides. Most reliable way to distinguish is by underside hind-wing. Short-tailed Blue usually has at least **two bright orange marks** close to the tail.

Small and Osiris v Eastern Short-tailed

Confusion can occur when tails are absent or vestigial on Eastern Short-tailed. For guidance on how to recognise missing tails [click here](#).

Underside MALE and FEMALE

♂/♀



Sexes similar

No noticeable submarginal marks on either wing

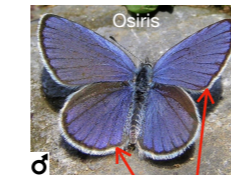
Similar 'Commoner' Species

which might confuse are:
Small Blue [*Cupido minimus*] and Osiris Blue [*Cupido osiris*]

Small and Osiris v Lorquin's



♂



♂

Narrow wing border

[i] Uppersides: Female Lorquin's is very similar to female Osiris and both sexes of Small Blue. Male Lorquin's is easily distinguished from: [a] Small Blue by colour, [b] male Osiris by its much wider wing border. **Identifying males is the only reliable method of separating these 3 species.**

[ii] Undersides: All three species have virtually indistinguishable undersides.

[iii] Distribution: Overlap of Lorquin's Blue with Osiris Blue is most unlikely but is possible with the Small Blue. [See Part 1 for a detailed comparison of Osiris/Small and other similar species]

Upperside MALE and FEMALE



♂



♀

Underside MALE and FEMALE



♂/♀

As with the Iolas Blue *debilitata* has a close association with the main foodplant Bladder Senna [*Colutea arborescens*]. Males hunt around the bushes for females.

Common Tiger Blue
[*Tarucus theophrastus*]

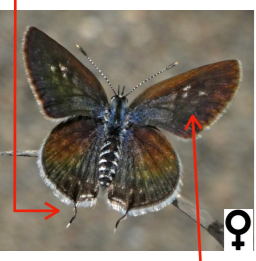


Found in the south eastern coastal area of Spain

Upperside MALE and FEMALE



Tail: both males and females have long prominent tails

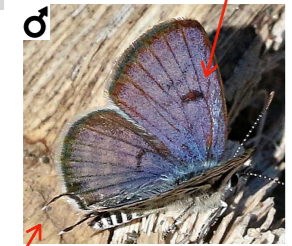


Usually some bright white marks in centre of female fore-wing but these can be absent

Underside MALE and FEMALE

Sexes similar

Cell mark: usually a bold fore-wing mark



Colour: both sexes have a brown ground colour but the male usually has a purply blue sheen which can appear very bright



Key Identification Features

Location:

Common Tiger and Little Tiger Blue are very similar. Fortunately their ranges do not overlap and they are not found flying together.

They are easily recognised by their:

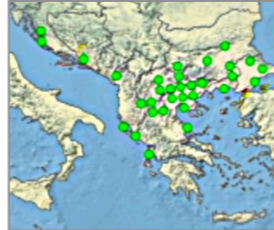
- [i] noticeably small size,
- [ii] distinctive underside appearance with a pattern of black and white markings,
- [iii] striped abdomens.

Apparent marks: Patterns of dark and light marks can appear on both wings of these two species but these are probably the result of the strong underside markings showing through the wings

Underside marks: Distinctive pattern of black and white markings

Abdomen: Distinctive black and white stripes

Little Tiger Blue
[*Tarucus balkanicus*]



Flies in the Balkans. Also present on Cyprus.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE



Colour: Both males and females have a brown ground colour but the male normally has a purply blue sheen which can often be very bright



Cell marks: usually a diffuse dark mark on male fore-wing with one or two other dark marks alongside.

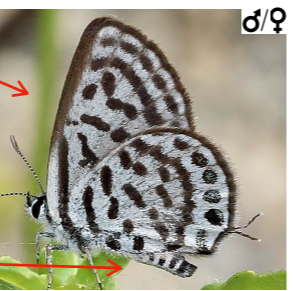


Tail: both sexes have prominent long tails



Underside MALE and FEMALE

Sexes similar



Bright Babul Blue
[*Azanus ubaldus*]

Malta, Canary Islands. Irregular vagrant in Italy.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE



Some faint submarginal marks on the hind-wing



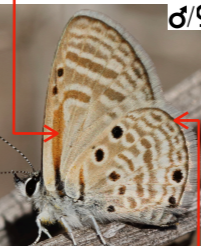
Female is uniformly brown

Depending on direction of light, male is brown with a pale blue sheen



Underside MALE and FEMALE

NO forewing dark spot



NO dark spots in s1, s2, s3

Key Identification Features

Bright Babul v African Babul

- **Size:** African is small but Bright Babul is even smaller with a wingspan of only 10-15 mm.
- **MALE & FEMALE underside:** [i] A dark forewing spot is present on African. NO similar spot on Bright Babul. [ii] African usually has some dark spots in s1, s2, s3.

Similar 'Commoner' Species

which might confuse is a specimen of **Lang's Short-tailed Blue** [*Leptotes pirithous*] with tails that are vestigial or absent due to wear and tear etc.

For guidance on how to recognise the clues that indicate missing tails [click here.](#)



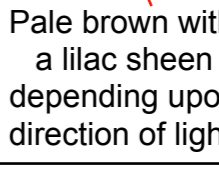
African Babul Blue
[*Azanus jesus*]

Irregular vagrant in Cyprus and far south of Spain.

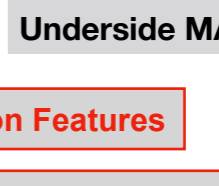
Upperside MALE and FEMALE



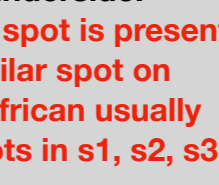
Often some faint fringe lines



Pale brown with a lilac sheen depending upon direction of light

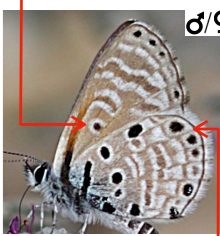


Light brown, sometimes a little blue basal scaling



African Babul usually: [i] rests with wings closed, [ii] found close to acacia trees, its larval foodplant.

Forewing dark spot



Usually dark spots in s1, s2, s3

Bellier's Blue [*Plebejus bellieri*]



Endemic to the islands of Corsica and Sardinia. A form of Bellier's Blue, *villai*, replaces it on the island of Elba.



Upperside MALE and FEMALE



Male is a dull blue with wide dark wing borders.



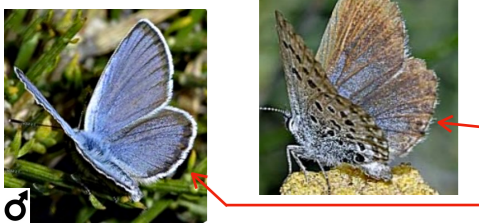
Female is brown usually with some basal blue scaling which can be extensive. Variable orange submarginal marks on hind-wing.

Underside MALE and FEMALE



Male and female undersides are similar with orange/black submarginal marks on both wings and some shining blue/silver scales within them on the hind-wing. Females generally have bolder, brighter markings.

Form *villai*



Form *villai* replaces *bellieri* on Elba. It is similar but the uppersides can differ: [i] Females can have a greater amount of blue scaling and fainter orange marks, [ii] Males may have narrower wing borders.

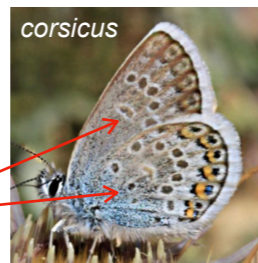
Similar 'Commoner' Species

which might confuse are **Silver-studded Blue [*Plebejus argus*]**, **Idas Blue [*Plebejus idas*]**, and **Reverdin's Blue [*Plebejus argyrognomon*]**

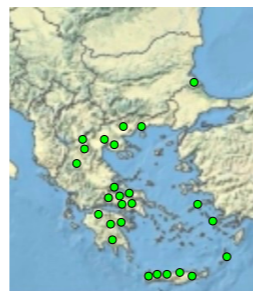
Silver-studded Blue is **not present on Sardinia or Elba** but its subspecies *corsicus* is found on Corsica. This is the only butterfly which might confuse. Reverdin's and Idas are also similar but are **not present** on these islands.

Silver-studded Blue ssp. *corsicus* v Bellier's

Both species are small and best separated by the undersides. Male and female *corsicus* have faded, less bold looking undersides than Bellier's with the **cell marks, inner and outer spots grey coloured** as opposed to black on Bellier's.



Grass Jewel [*Freyeria trochylus*]



Recorded from Bulgaria, Greece, Crete, East Aegean Islands. Also present on Cyprus.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE

The sexes are similar in appearance though females may be slightly larger.



Both sexes are brown with two to four large black and orange submarginal marks on the hind-wing.

Key Identification Feature

Tiny size:
The Grass Jewel is unlikely to be confused with any other species due to its very small size. It is Europe's smallest butterfly with a wingspan of only 15-18 mm. This tiny size makes it very difficult to spot in flight and at rest.

Underside MALE and FEMALE



The sexes are similar with distinctive large orange and black hind-wing submarginal marks containing some blue scaling.

African Grass Blue [*Zizeeria knysna*]

Dark Grass Blue [*Zizeeria karsandra*]



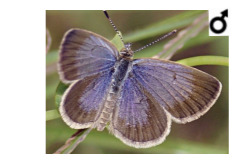
Flies in Portugal, Spain, and the Canary Islands.

Found on Malta, the East Aegean Islands, Crete, Cyprus and southern Italy.

Key Identification Feature

Location: These two species are indistinguishable. Fortunately their ranges do not overlap and they are not found flying together.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE



Males are dullish blue with wide dark wing borders

The amount of blue scaling varies greatly on the brown females, ranging from being almost like males to completely brown



Both these species are noticeably **small** and frequently found near habitation, in gardens, parks and around cultivated areas.

Underside MALE and FEMALE

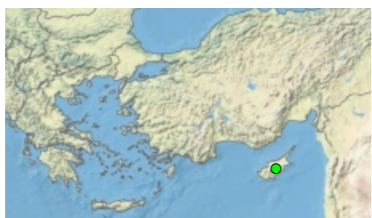


Male and female undersides of both species are very variable and similar. Cited differences regarding spots are inconsistent and considered unreliable.

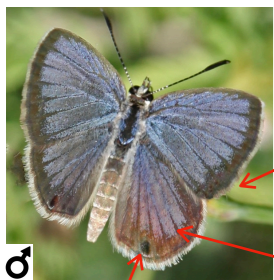


Small Desert Blue [*Luthrodes galba*]

Endemic to Cyprus



Upperside MALE and FEMALE



Wide dark border on both wings

Vein darkening

One or two dark submarginal marks here on hind-wing



Females predominantly brown with variable blue scaling. Sometimes can appear similar to males.

Key Identification Feature

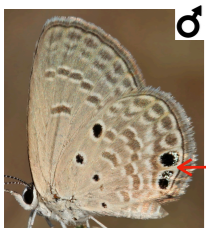
Underside:

Small Desert Blue is noticeably small. Its pattern of underside markings [see below] is unlikely to be confused with the undersides of the other species present on Cyprus.

Underside MALE and FEMALE

Male and female are similar

Two black submarginal marks edged by silvery blue scales

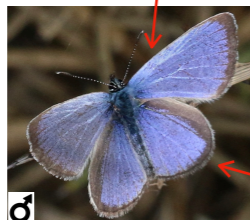


Paphos Blue [*Glaucopsyche paphos*]

Endemic to Cyprus

Upperside MALE and FEMALE

Costa is usually pale and bright



Wide dark wing border, normally well defined



Brown with varying degrees of basal blue scaling

Key Identification Feature

Paphos Blue is unlikely to be confused with most of the other Cyprus species. The absence of orange marks and the bold dark fore-wing outer spots on the underside will usually confirm its identification on Cyprus, except from the **Dark Grass Blue** which might confuse. Use the comparison below to separate.

Paphos v Dark Grass

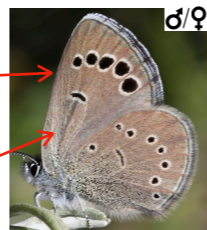
- **Size:** Paphos generally larger
- **Fore-wing cell spot:** absent on Paphos, present on **Dark Grass**.
- **Eye colour:** Paphos has black eyes, **Dark Grass** has grey eyes.

Underside MALE and FEMALE

Sexes similar

Fore-wing spots larger than hind-wing spots

NO cell spot here



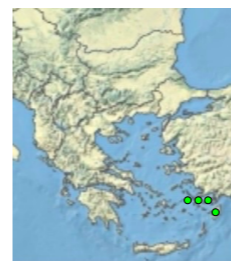
Similar 'Commoner' Species

which may confuse are:

Green-underside Blue [*Glaucopsyche alexis*] and **Black-eyed Blue [*Glaucopsyche melanops*].**

Fortunately, neither species is present on Cyprus

Loew's Blue [*Plebejidea loewii*]



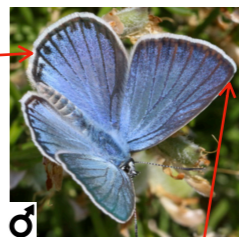
Only recorded from these East Aegean Islands: Kalimnos, Kos, Patmos, Rhodes, Tilos.

Upperside MALE and FEMALE

Variably sized dark submarginal marks on hind-wing



Broad dark wing border, especially on fore-wing



Females are brown with some large orange and black submarginal marks on hind-wing. Orange marks of varying strength on fore-wing.



Key Identification Feature

Blue scaling on underside hind-wing:

Loew's Blue is unlikely to be confused with any of the other species found on the islands listed above. The presence of blue scales in the underside hind-wing orange and black submarginal marks [see below] will confirm its identification.

Underside MALE and FEMALE



Usually 2 or 3 orange and black submarginal marks here. Some containing blue scales.



Female is browner than male with some orange fore-wing submarginal marks

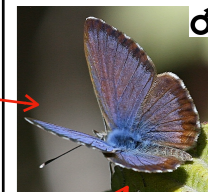
Canary Blue [*Cyclirius webbianus*]

Only found on the Canary Islands of Tenerife, La Palma, La Gomera and Gran Canaria

Upperside MALE and FEMALE



Males have a purplish blue sheen



Both sexes usually have fringe lines or 'chequering' on both wings



Females are brown but can appear orange in bright sunlight as shown above left

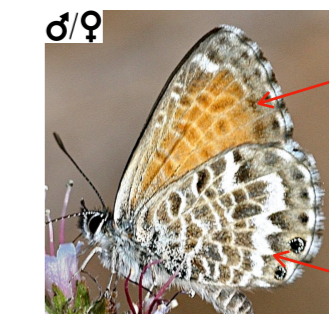


Underside MALE and FEMALE

Key Identification Feature

The distinctive colour and pattern of the underside markings, especially the orange fore-wing, is quite different from any other species in Parts 1 or 2 of this guide to the Polyommatae.

Male and female are similar



Orange fore wing ground colour

Bold white band.

'Local' Species Distribution Maps

● Up to 1950

● 1951 - 1980

● After 1980

Irregular vagrant
in Cyprus and far
south of Spain



African Babul
Blue →

Andalusian
Oberthur's
Piedmont
Maps →

Grecian
Higgins'
Kolev's
*Polyommatus
timfristus*
Maps →

Anomalous Blues



Arctic Blue →



Bavius Blue →



Bellier's Blue →



Blue Argus →



Bosnian Blue →

Malta and Canary
Islands. Irregular
vagrant in Italy

Bright Babul
Blue →

Only found on the
Canary Islands of
Gran Canaria,
La Palma,
La Gomera
and Tenerife

Canary Blue →

Azure
Spanish
Provence
Maps →

Chalkhill Blues



Chelmos Blue →



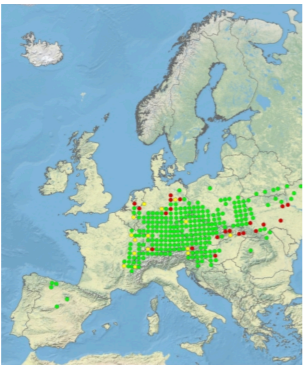
Common
Tiger Blue →

Only found
on the island
of Crete

Cretan Argus →

Only found on
Malta, the East
Aegean Islands,
Crete, Cyprus
and Italy [Sicily]

Dark Grass
Blue →



Dusky
Large Blue →



Eastern
Baton Blue →



Eastern
Brown Argus →



Eastern Short-
tailed Blue →



False
Baton Blue →



Gavarnie Blue →

'Local' Species Distribution Maps

● Up to 1950

● 1951 - 1980

● After 1980



Flies in the Iberian peninsula where it replaces the more widespread Iolas Blue

Grass Jewel →

Iolana debilitata →



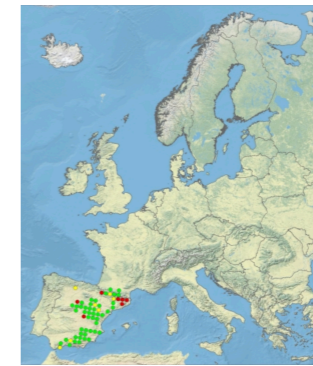
Only recorded from East Aegean Islands of: Kalimnos, Kos, Patmos, Rhodes, Tilos

Little Tiger Blue →

Loew's Blue →



Lorquin's Blue →



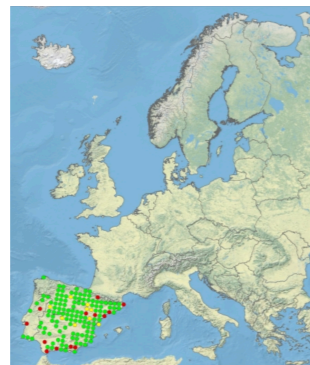
Mother-of-Pearl Blue →



Nevada Blue →



Odd-spot Blue →



Panoptes Blue →

Only found on the island of Cyprus

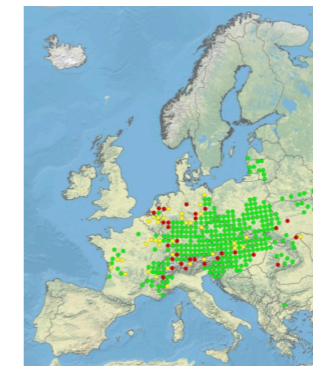
Paphos Blue →



Pontic Blue →

Only found on the island of Sardinia

Sardinian Blue →



Scarce Large Blue →

Only found on the island of Cyprus

Small Desert Blue →



Spanish Argus →

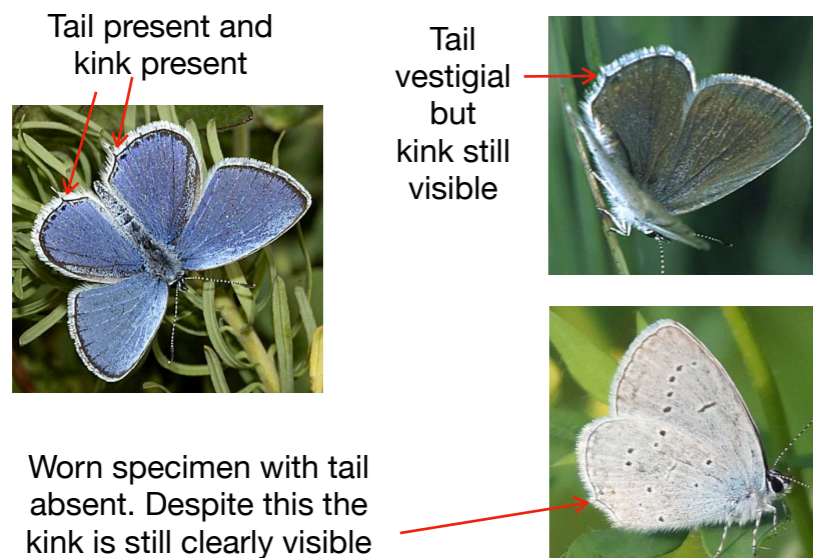


Zullich's Blue →

Appendix 1

ABSENT TAILS

Sometimes the tail on species is vestigial/absent due to wear etc. This may lead to problems with identification. However, there is generally a **kink in the dark marginal line** indicating where the tail would have been which should help to identify. This kink, visible on both upper and underside, is illustrated in the photos below.



[BACK to Eastern Short-tailed Blue](#) ➔

[BACK to African and Bright Babul Blue](#) ➔

Provençal Short-tailed Blue [*Cupido alcetas*]

The description below is reasonably consistent for this variable species in western Europe. Eastern European specimens, however, **can differ markedly**.

Upperside MALE



Wing border: sharply defined narrow dark border

Submarginal marks: frequently has a single prominent mark close to the tail

Tail: both sexes have a short tail, sometimes vestigial

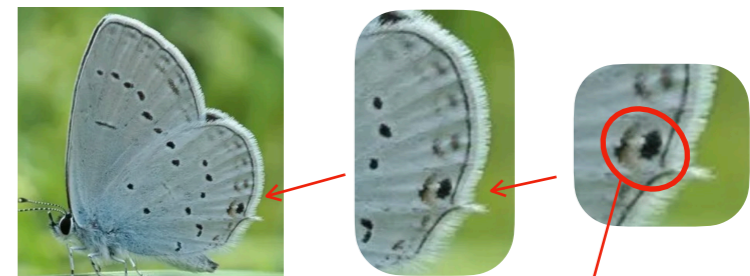
Upperside FEMALE



Colour: black/dark brown, usually with no basal blue scaling

Hind-wing submarginal marks: normally has NO marks

Underside MALE and FEMALE



Hind-wing submarginal mark s6: Normally a faint mark with NO significant orange.

[BACK to Eastern Short-tailed Blue](#) ➔

Appendix 2

Geography

The geographical area covered is as shown on the Distribution Maps excluding the coast of northern Africa.

Taxonomy

The current EBG checklist of European butterflies has been followed which comprises species found in Europe up to the eastern boundary of the European Union. This checklist was compiled by an international committee of taxonomic experts.

Acknowledgements

The distribution maps are reproduced by kind permission of LepiDiv Projekt. For more information please visit [LepiDiv](#)

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Other Photographic Credits: Milind Bakhare [CC BY-SA 4.0] *Azanus jesous* male upper, e-bjerregaard [CC BY-NC 4.0] *Agriades aquilo*, male upper, underside, Luca Boscain [CC BY-NC 4.0] *Plebejus bellieri* female upper, Daryl de Beer [CC BY-NC 4.0] *Azanus jesous* male upper, Zeynel Cebeci [CC BY-SA 4.0] *Luthrodes galba* female upper, Paul Kipling *Agriades aquilo* male and female upper, Simon Oliver [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0] *Cupido lorquini* female upper, Андрей Татаринов [CC BY-NC 4.0] *Agriades aquilo* female upper.

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