



EUROPEAN  
BUTTERFLIES  
GROUP

# eNewsletter

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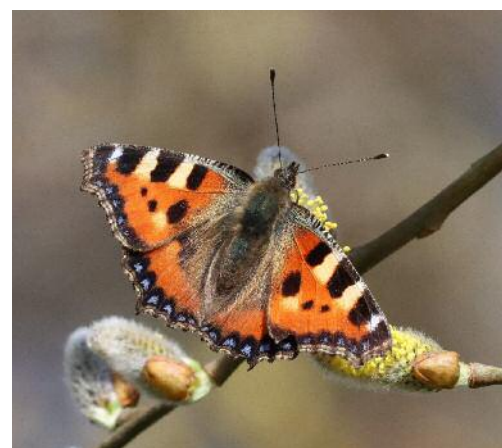
### Rimplas, France ..... 35

Like me you are probably resigned to local butterflying this summer, but hoping that life will be back to normal by next summer and that you will be able to resume butterflying further afield. Maybe this magazine will give you some ideas.

You might for example consider a camping holiday (ideas on page 10), a gite in southern France (page 24) or a hostelry in the Alpes-Maritimes (page 35). If your interest is tracking down localised species, then there are several nice Ringlets in

the French Pyrenees (page 18). If you like an organised tour, you can see **Zapater's Ringlet** and plenty of other species in the Montes Universales in Spain (page 13). If you prefer somewhere a bit different, under your own steam, you could consider Transylvania (page 28) or Western Turkey (page 31).

I hope that all readers are well and in good spirits,



Making the best of butterflies at home  
– a **Small Tortoiseshell** (*Aglais urticae*)  
photographed during my daily  
exercise walk.





# Notices and News

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[EuropeanButterflyGroup/](https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanButterflyGroup/)

## Making your observations count

*by Mike Prentice (EBG Chairman)*

Sam Ellis, Butterfly Conservation's new International Director, has been working with Butterfly Conservation Europe and the EBG Committee to consider how best to ensure that members' European butterfly records can be captured and used to help increase knowledge and conserve butterflies. The following guidance has been authored by Christina Sevilleja along with Sam, Chris van Swaay and Martin Warren from Butterfly Conservation Europe.

A new development, referred to in the guidance, is the eBMS app Butterfly-Count. This has been launched by the European Butterfly Monitoring Scheme which is led by Butterfly Conservation Europe and the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology. The app enables you to record both 15 minute counts and butterfly transects. For information on how to install the app onto Apple and Android devices, and how to use it, go to the eBMS website at <https://butterfly-monitoring.net/ebms-app>. (But it does not supplant existing mechanisms for recording within the UK, where appropriate, such as BNM, Garden Butterfly Survey, Big Butterfly Count and UK BMS).

Obviously at present (April 2020) due to COVID-19 all of us in the UK are advised to stay at home and Butterfly Conservation has instructed us not to walk transects. In other countries it is similarly important to stick to national rules. However when the time comes that we are able to go out and look for butterflies again please ensure that your observations are captured somewhere other than just in your notebook.

The guidance is as follows:

In order to conserve butterflies effectively we need to have good information on species distributions and trends in abundance. However outside parts of western and northwestern Europe such data is sparse. You can help us gather better data from across Europe in the following ways:

- Conduct a butterfly transect. This provides high quality data on relative abundance and trends (as well as distribution). The method is simple: make a transect of approximately 1 kilometre and try to count the butterflies each week in the flight season with good weather conditions. It does not matter if you miss a week or two, we can still make an estimate of the numbers. A detailed manual on how to set up and monitor a transect is available here at <https://butterfly-monitoring.net/sites/default/files/Pdf/Butterfly%20Transect%20Counts-Manual%20v1.pdf>. If you live in a country with an existing Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (BMS) then this eBMS webpage <https://butterfly-monitoring.net/bms-schemes> will give you an overview of whom to contact. If you live in one of the other European countries without a BMS, you can record your own transect directly on the eBMS website (<https://butterfly-monitoring.net/>). The project Assessing Butterflies in Europe (ABLE) at <https://butterfly-monitoring.net/able&> aims at filling the gaps for transect counts in Europe.





- Conduct a 15 minute count. With the ButterflyCount app you can count butterflies for 15 minutes (and pause at any point to take a photo or for identification). You can walk around, move along a path or stay in a field, as long as you enter all the butterflies (including the very common ones) using the app. The app has made it very simple to do so, it records the route with your phone GPS or you can draw yourself the area recorded. You can do one or more 15 minute counts anywhere in Europe as long as the weather is good enough for butterflies to be active. Such 15 minute counts are especially ideal for either remote locations (e.g. rare species in mountainous regions) or when you are on holiday. You can do it anywhere: in the garden of your hotel, on the camping site, on a great butterfly spot, or simply along a field beside the road. All counts are welcome.
- Make casual records of butterflies you see and add them onto a database where they can be used for distribution mapping, research and conservation. You can also enter any 'old' data as well. You can either enter data onto an existing national website (if one exists) or use one of the butterfly projects on international websites such as [observation.org](http://observation.org) or [inaturalist.org](http://inaturalist.org) which accept records from anywhere in the world. All such data becomes available to researchers as well as BCE partners. Both these international systems have a smartphone app which you can use in the field, and you can also upload 'old' records from an excel file or enter your old observations via a web portal. Once verified, all data is gathered at the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF.org). If you are worried about privacy or sensitive records, there are settings to control this. You can hide your observations from all other recorders or make them open. However, observations of rare or threatened species are almost always hidden and can only be viewed by administrators.

Any records you submit will improve our knowledge and help protect the butterflies we love. Butterflies are also useful indicators of changes in other less well-known insect groups. Such knowledge thus helps us to understand changes in our environment and conserve wildlife as a whole. •

**Mike Prentice**

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## Identification guides on the EBG Website

There are now five identification guides on the EBG website prepared by EBG member Bill Raymond. They comprise newly-completed guides on the ***Boloria*** and ***Euphydryas*** families (**Small Fritillaries**) and updated guides on ***Pieris*** (**Whites**), ***Gonepteryx*** (**Brimstones**) and ***Argynnis***, ***Brenthis***, ***Fabriciana*** and ***Speyeria*** (**Large & Medium Fritillaries**). New distribution maps have been included in each case.

Take a look here: <http://www.european-butterflies.org.uk/species.html>

The guides are concise but hugely detailed and expertly presented. Bill has made use of the very best sources and in his credits he gives special thanks for information and photographs to Bernard Watts from [www.butterflyeurope.co.uk](http://www.butterflyeurope.co.uk). The ***Boloria*** and ***Euphydryas*** guides credit photographs by Matt Rowlings from [eurobutterflies.com](http://eurobutterflies.com), Roger Gibbons from [butterfliesoffrance.com](http://butterfliesoffrance.com), Vincent Baudraz from [lepido.ch](http://lepido.ch), and Nick Greated-Davies from [bulgarialepis.com](http://bulgarialepis.com). •



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## AGM and Members Day, Saturday 17 October 2020

If life returns to normal in the autumn, we plan to hold the AGM and Members Day at the IBIS hotel in Birmingham (near New Street Station), on the afternoon of Saturday 17 October 2020. This is the same venue as last year. Details will be placed on the website nearer the time. •

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## If you change your e-mail address

Please inform Anne Spencer (Membership Secretary) if you change your email address. This is so that you continue to receive the newsletter and occasional emails to all members. Anne's email is [rhoslan.anne@gmail.com](mailto:rhoslan.anne@gmail.com) •

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## 2021 EBG Calendar

Anne would also like to receive your entries for the 2021 Calendar Competition. Entries to Anne (maximum 3 per entrant) by 1 September please, ensuring that the English common name of the butterfly is on each photo caption. Photos may be from any year. Anne's email again is [rhoslan.anne@gmail.com](mailto:rhoslan.anne@gmail.com) •

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## Updated Index of EBG Newsletters

All EIG/EBG Newsletters up to EBG 25 (May 2019) are on the EBG website (in the About EBG section) together with an up-to-date index which also covers EBG 26 – see <http://www.european-butterflies.org.uk/downloads/EBG%20newsletter%20index%201%20to%2026.pdf> Thank you to Graham Revill for keeping the index up-to-date. •

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## News from France Spring 2020

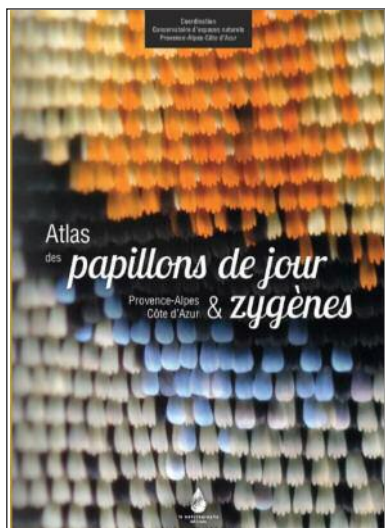
*Contributed by Jude Lock ([lock.jude@gmail.com](mailto:lock.jude@gmail.com))*

### The PACA Atlas (Atlas des papillons de jour & zygènes Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur) - Hardback, in French, 544 pages, published January 2020.

This Atlas was coordinated by Stéphane Bence and Sonia Richaud from the Conservatoire d'espaces naturels Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France and edited jointly with Le Naturographe éditions.

European Butterflies Group are privileged to have been one of the technical partner organisations of the Atlas and thanks go to members and friends of the Group for their involvement.

The PACA region encompasses six departments in South-eastern France: Alpes-de-Haute-Provence, Hautes-Alpes, Alpes-Maritimes, Bouches-du-Rhône, Var and the Vaucluse. The region hosts an exceptional biodiversity of species. The atlas comprises 680,000 records, covering 260 species of butterflies and Zygaenidae being approximately 87% of known species of metropolitan France, for the period 1834 – 2019. ▼





## Notices and News cont.



The Atlas is an excellent quality hardback book which is a pleasure to hold and read. It is beautifully produced, with a clear layout, and amply illustrated with species and habitat photographs, maps and tables. It is full of useful and informative details and it is evident that a lot of thought has gone into its production.

The initial section of the book contains prefaces, credits and an introduction. The following sections put the Atlas into context with detailed background information of the region, from the brief history of regional entomologists to the pages depicting the regions vastly different geographical zones and habitats, with its varied climate and the wealth of species to be discovered. There are comprehensive details of species' legal status and conservation within France.

The chapter "une région sous pression" covers the general degradation of ecosystems and decline of insect populations which can be seen by comparing records from the same area over a 30-year period, and from the historical records of Jean-Henri Fabre in his work "souvenirs entomologiques" concerning the Vaucluse. The many

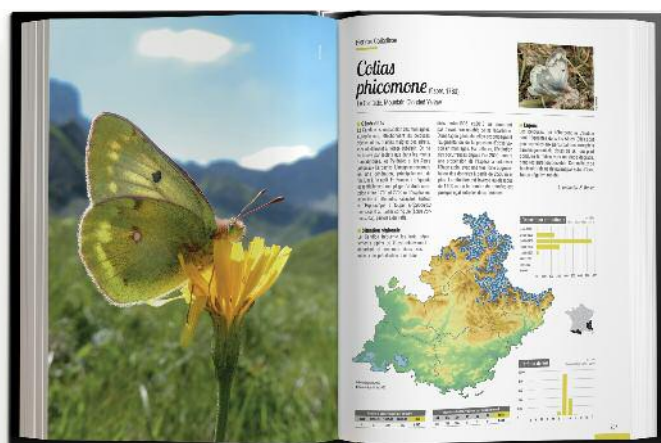
European studies from 2010 confirm this trend. The human population of the region increased by 73% during the period 1962 – 2009. The threats and concerns are detailed by area, from heavy construction in Basse Provence and the Arrière-pays méditerranéen, to changes in pastoralism with extensive farming or its abandonment, the destruction of wetlands, etc. Even species found in the relatively isolated alpine areas are being threatened by climate change.

Pages 140 to 505 present the species by family, commencing with the Zygaenidae, written by our partner Eric Drouet from GIRAZ. There is a detailed entry for each species, comprising a species photograph, name in Latin and vernacular French

and English, a general species description, a regional description, conservation status and threats, a distribution map for PACA (indicating observations for the periods before and after the year 2000), flight period, and altitude bands. The number of observations within each of the six departments is given for the periods pre-1900, 1900-79, 1980-99, and 2000-19. A small map of France shows the species distribution within France.

The summary pages from pages 512 detail the comprehensive status of each species, showing whether the species is stable, in regression or expansion in each of the biogeographical zones (divided into Basse Provence, Arrière-pays méditerranéen, Préalpes du Sud and Montagnes Sub-alpines). They also detail species' legal status, including national protection, IUCN Red List conservation status for PACA, France and Europe, and regional heritage status (ZNIEFF PACA).

The Atlas mentions an absence of observations over the recent 20-year period for Mountain Small White (*Pieris ergane*). ▼



This is one of the rarest and least studied species of the region. It was classified as VU in the 2014 IUCN Red List for PACA, but according to the Atlas the distribution of the species is being directly influenced by the changing climate. More information is needed to understand whether the biological cycle of *Aethionema saxatile*, the host plant, remains compatible with the development of the butterfly, up to and including the second generation of the chrysalis.

This is a beautifully produced high quality large hardback book, 20 cm x 28 cm. It is full of information which is both clear and well presented. It is a weighty tome at over 2.2 Kg, and will be a lasting record of the butterflies of the region as well as a reference point for the study of insects and their adaptation to current and future climate changes.

The Atlas is available to purchase from the website of Le Naturographe: <https://www.naturographe-editions.fr/> The price is 49€ plus postage 13€. Payment is accepted by PayPal in euros.

You can watch an excellent video presentation about the Atlas, with English subtitles, on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/4SSOYpbFwLk> •

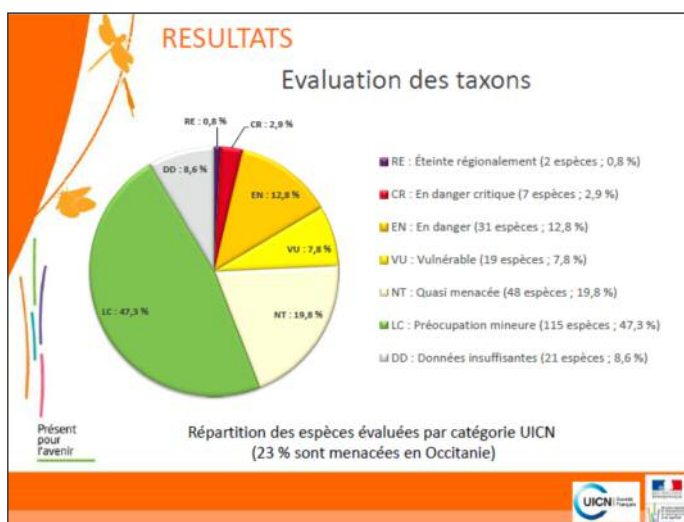
### Jude Lock



### The Red List for Butterflies and Zygaenidae of Occitanie, France (Liste rouge des Lépidoptères Rhopalocères & Zygènes d'Occitanie), 2019

Occitanie is the second largest region in mainland France. Previously known as the regions of Languedoc-Roussillon and the Midi-Pyrénées, it comprises the departments of the Aude, Aveyron, Gard, Haute-Garonne, Gers, Hérault, Lot, Lozère, Hautes-Pyrénées, Pyrénées-Orientales, Tarn and the Tarn-et-Garonne.

This Red List was coordinated by the OPIE (Office pour les insectes et leur environnement), the CEN MP (Conservatoire d'espaces naturels Midi-Pyrénées) and the CEN LR (Conservatoire d'espaces naturels Languedoc Roussillon). It was validated by the UICN on 7th November 2019 and by the CSRPN on 25th November 2019. It was developed from almost 600,000 records of which 89% span the period from 2008 – 2018. Many thanks are due to those members who have contributed records.



Of the 245 species evaluated, 57 species or 32% are evaluated as threatened (CR, EN or VU) in Occitanie. The details can be consulted on the website of the CEN MP: <https://www.cen-mp.org/liste-rouge-rhopalo-zygenes-occitanie/>.

The detailed evaluation report in pdf, and the Red List in Excel format, can be downloaded from the bottom of the page of the website. In addition to the Red List for Occitanie, the Excel file includes the Red List status for Europe (2010), France (2012), Catalogne (2018), Auvergne (2013), Rhône-Alpes (2018) and Aquitaine (2018). •



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### Butterfly stamps – The Butterfly Effect

In January 2020, the French Post Office (La Poste) issued a booklet of 12 stamps for priority post (first class post) in France, entitled Effets papillons. Each stamp is illustrated with details of butterfly wings. The title is a nod to Edward Lorenz who in 1972 entitled one of his scientific lectures "Can the beating of a butterfly's wings cause a tornado in Texas", known as l'effet Papillon (The Butterfly Effect). The title of the booklet plays with this expression.

Included in the pictures are *Zerynthia rumina*, *Melitaea phoebe*, *Parnassius nomion*, and *Papilio machaon*. You can see the photos here:

[https://www.phil-ouest.com/Timbre.php?Nom\\_timbre=Carnet\\_papillons\\_2020](https://www.phil-ouest.com/Timbre.php?Nom_timbre=Carnet_papillons_2020)

[https://www.laposte.fr/toutsurletimbre/rendez-vous-philateliques/tous-les-rendez-vous/en\\_cours/carnet-effets-papillons](https://www.laposte.fr/toutsurletimbre/rendez-vous-philateliques/tous-les-rendez-vous/en_cours/carnet-effets-papillons) •

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### Chasing the Peak White (*Pontia callidice*) at high altitudes – Vera Molesworth Muspratt and the Vire Muspratt-Batan

In Issue 17 of the Newsletter, May 2015, I wrote about Vera Molesworth Muspratt (1887 - 1962), an early pioneer of butterfly observation in the French Pyrénées. Here are some further notes about her observations of **Peak Whites** (*Pontia callidice*) at the highest of altitudes, and her mountaineering exploits.



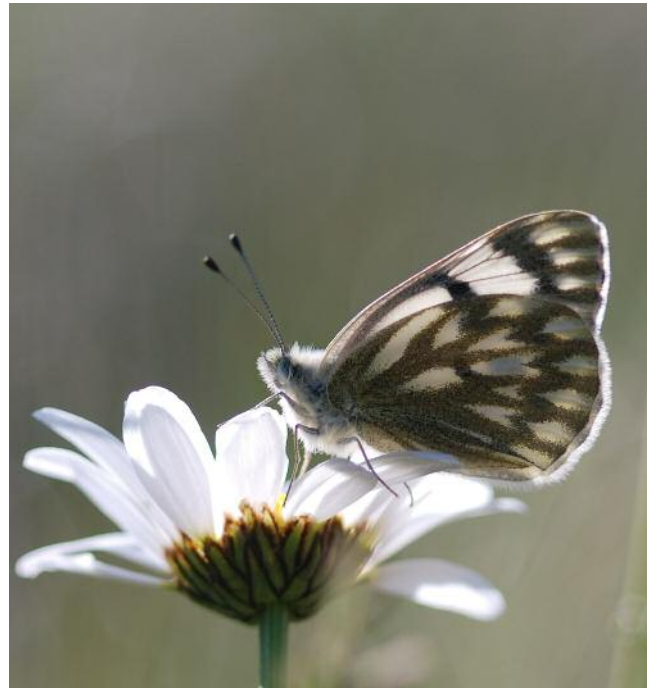
**Peak White** (*Pontia callidice*),  
photo by Mathieu Menand

Vera wrote numerous articles from her observations of butterflies, including Butterflies on Hilltops in the Lepidopterists' News of 1954. In the article Vera says "In the central Pyrenees there is one species, ***Synchlœ callidice* Esper** [now ***Pontia callidice* Hübner**], which haunts some of the very high summits in July. I have seen them more than once on mountain tops of 3000 m. altitude and over, and it is specially because of their behaviour in these high regions that I think it is height that the butterflies like when they go up to these summits and nothing else.

"About the 10th of July in 1936 or 1937 I climbed the Pic Long, 3194 m. of altitude. There had been a lot of snow that year and this rocky peak was completely draped in snow from about 150 m.

beneath the summit down to 1700 m, and in many places lower. While I was resting on a bit of uncovered rock half way up the northern glacier, a ***S. callidice*** perched itself on my knee; it was a lady....We counted about 15 to 20 flying around that summit at their usual terrific pace....These butterflies must have come from at least 1700 m. beneath the Pic Long and flown up over glacier and snow just to circle round the top."





**Peak White** (*Pontia callidice*), photos by Jean-Louis Fourés

#### *The Vire Muspratt-Batan*

In July 1938, Vera with Louis Batan (1900-1970), a mountain guide from Cauterets, walked from the south face of the Néouvielle to the breach (brèche) of the Néouvielle situated at 2926 m via a steep crevasse, crossing a glacier and up a corridor of crumbling scree. This steep route had previously only been undertaken by hunters, being the shortest route linking the Barèges side of the Néouvielle and the Cap-de-Long region of the Néouvielle.

Staying at the Chalet-refuge d'Oredon Vera met Henri Ferbos (1920-2007) and his brother Jacques. Henri, a philosophy teacher born in Bordeaux, had moved to Pau to teach, he was a great mountaineer and wrote four notebooks entitled simply "le Montagne: 1932-1978 ; 1978-1991 ; 1991-1998 ; 1998-...." These notebooks are known as les carnets de courses d'Henri Ferbos.

The brothers arrived at the chalet at around 3 am one morning after an unsuccessful attempt of La Crête des Halharisès. Henri having rather overexerted himself and hurt his Achilles tendon was obliged to rest on the terrace of the chalet for the next day whilst his brother further explored the Néouvielle. Henri talks of a memorable meeting with Vera and her guide Louis Batan, where they talked endlessly of the mountains and Vera offered champagne!

Vera and her guide indicated their route to Henri who then named it, as is the custom, the Vire Batan, otherwise known to this day as the Vire Batan-Muspratt, Vire Muspratt-Batan or simply Vire Muspratt. I can't imagine any other lepidopterists having a climbing route named after them. •

**Jude Lock**

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# Mapping European Butterflies



## The Distribution of Butterflies and Skippers in Europe by Otakar Kudrna

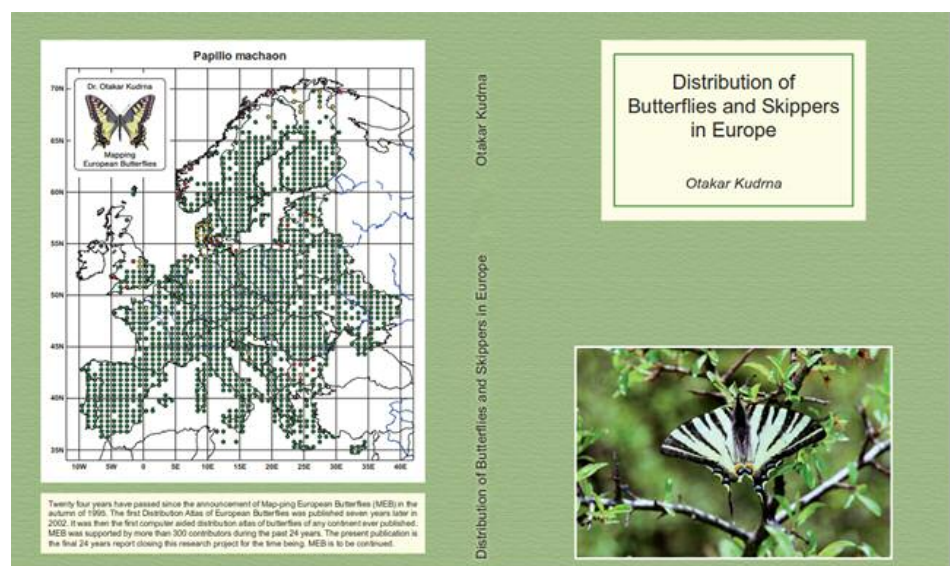
**Published by The Czech Butterfly Conservation Society, 2020**

Otakar Kudrna has devoted his life to European butterflies starting the Mapping European Butterflies project (MEB) in 1995 and publishing his first Atlas in 2002. This is the final edition and the culmination of a lifetime's work. It is based on over a million records derived from the literature, museum specimens and collaboration with vast numbers of lepidopterists from Portugal to Russia. It has been updated to incorporate the latest taxonomy and scientific names of 445 species found in Europe. Species confined to the Canary Islands, Madeira and the Azores are included in tables. The maps for each species are in alphabetical order by scientific name. There are many references, a comprehensive glossary, sources for each reference location etc. There are interesting discussions on climate changes since the last ice age. Each dot on the map represents approximately a 50km square. Such is his dedication to accuracy and detail I doubt whether a single dot is incorrect.

Otakar has not had an easy life, escaping from communist Czechoslovakia in 1968 and coming to the UK. He now lives in Germany. This work will be a lasting legacy. It gives us the starting point from which we can observe how global warming and habitat loss affect butterfly biogeography.

The book can be ordered directly from the publisher Ceska Spolecnost pro Ochranu Motylu (SOM) Solni 127, CZ-38301 Prachatice (Czechia), email [petr.272@centrum.cz](mailto:petr.272@centrum.cz) or from any good Natural History bookseller under ISBN 978-80-903212-1-2. Recommended retail price 45 € + postage & packing. •

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# Campsites for Butterflies

## Campsites for Butterflies

by Simon Spencer

Travelling in Europe in a small campervan looking for butterflies, as we have done for many years, is one of the best ways of pursuing our hobby.

### *Wild camping*

In some places you can wild camp on a good butterfly site and have butterflies round your camping place. This avoids the main disadvantage of campervans that there is an hour's work setting them up and then some time packing up to go out for the day. However not everyone is comfortable wild camping. When the Greek locals say keep your fridge in the car or the bears will get at it, it makes you long for a nice safe campsite. The showers and toilets of a good campsite are particularly welcome as one gets older and the folding spade and solar shower less welcome.

### *Campsites in good locations*

The best compromise, of course, is a campsite that happens to be a good butterfly site where a reasonable walk will get you an interesting list and if you are into photography some good photos. This is what this article is about: those campsites where the campervan can be left on site and the surrounding countryside has a wealth of species. 15 are listed in the table below. For photography you can get out early in the morning when butterflies are trying to warm up in the sunshine rather than buzzing about in the midday heat. Many of my butterfly friends are rather envious as their spouses are reluctant to join them on butterfly trips whereas Anne and I both enjoy it. However, not

The campsite at Valjouffrey



every spouse wants to spend all day, every day looking for butterflies but quite likes to laze in the sun with a book. With a campsite with good butterfly walks both sides can be accommodated.

### *France*

Campsites vary a lot across Europe. France, which is the obvious destination for a butterfly enthusiast with a small camper, has a campsite in every village. They are numerous, cheap and usually more than adequate. The typical Camping Municipal is on the edge of the village, often near the sports facilities, is only crowded in mid August and almost never needs prior booking. The best way to find campsites in Europe is to download the App Archie to your ▼





phone and bring up its interactive map with all the campsites listed. It knows where you are. Click on any of the As and it will give you the name of the site, opening dates, its contact phone number, altitude and GPS coordinates. The As are colour coded. ACSI is similar. For the long drives through France it is perfect. If you know where to find butterflies you can find out if there is a campsite nearby.

We have had several EBG expeditions to Les Faures in Valjouffrey and its butterflies are magic - **Lesser Purple Emperor** (*Apatura ilia*) and **Poplar Admiral** (*Limenitis populi*) nearby and **Apollo** (*Parnassius apollo*) flying across the campsite. Ceillac and Molines-en-Queyras we discovered last year and we will go back. Les Marmottes on the top of the Col de Larche tends to get full but is ideally situated.

### *Italy*

Italy in contrast has few campsites which can be uncomfortably crowded and almost always need booking in high season. I suspect that the reason that there are so few campsites in Italy is that they are harassed by the Guardia di Finanza. Italian campsites often insist on hanging on to your passport which they tend to keep in the top drawer of the owner's desk. Good campsites in Italy do exist but we have rarely found them in good sites for butterflies. The Il Sole in Demonte is the best and in June uncrowded.

### *Greece*

Greece used to have a lot of campsites but few people drive there now so many have closed. Easyjet flights are now very cheap and far less than the cost of driving. Wild camping is rarely a problem in the many mountain butterfly sites. Local Greeks are friendly and welcoming. The roadside springs give you excellent drinking water. There are a few camping sites that we have used and recommend but none are really walking distance from good butterfly sites. The Apollon in Delphi is friendly and pleasant and a good base for excursions to Parnassos. We have used it often. The Castle View on the edge of Mystras is convenient for Taygetos but it is a drive not a walk. The Vrachos Kastraki in Kalam-baka near the monasteries of the Meteora is one of the few mainland Greece sites that is not coastal.

We have used it often. The Castle View on the edge of Mystras is convenient for Taygetos but it is a drive not a walk. The Vrachos Kastraki in Kalam-baka near the monasteries of the Meteora is one of the few mainland Greece sites that is not coastal.

### *Spain*

Spain has good campsites although not as abundant as in France. The Cuidad De Albarracin site in Albarracin is great for exploring the Montes Universales but ▼

### **Albarracin**







the better butterfly areas are not quite on its doorstep.

### *Elsewhere*

Switzerland has a very strong currency and can be very expensive but it has many good campsites and is a great place for butterflies. The three listed are places we go back to and rarely disappoint.

Germany has fewer butterflies but good campsites. Austria has better butterflies and also good campsites. •

Campsite name and location	GPS	Country	Notes
Chanterane, Molines-en-Queyras	44°43'25.2" 6°51'55.7"	France	Good walks from site
Les Eaux Chaud, Digne-les-Bains	44°05'11.8" 6°15'03.1"	France	Good butterflies within a few Km
Les Mèlèzes, Ceillac	44°39'14.2" 6°47'20.1"	France	Good walks from site
Les Faures, Valjouxfrey	44°51'37.9" 6°03'10.6"	France	Good walks from site
Toy, Luz-St-Sauveur	42°52'24.0" -0°00'07.8"	France	Good walks from site
Les Marmottes, Col de Larche	44°26'46.5" 6°51'09.6"	France	Good walks from site
Apollon, Delphi	38°29'01.3" 22°28'32.1"	Greece	Good butterflies within a few Km
Castle View, Mystras	37°04'09.7" 22°22'54.1"	Greece	Good butterflies within a few Km
Kalogria, Stoupa	36°50'56.9" 22°15'32.0"	Greece	Good walks from site
Vrachos Kastraki, Kalambaka	39°42'48.2" 21°36'57.2"	Greece	Good butterflies within a few Km
Il Sole, Demonte	44°19'22.1" 7°17'32.8"	Italy	Good walks from site
Bellariva, Gordevio, Ticino	46°13'16.7" 8°44'31.1"	Switzerland	Good walks from site
Chappela, Cinuos-chel, Engadine	46°37'57.3" 10°00'50.0"	Switzerland	Good walks from site
Pè da Munt, Santa Mari	46°35'48.8" 10°25'32.2"	Switzerland	Good walks from site
Ciudad De Albarracin, Albarracin	40°24'42.0" -1°25'38.1"	Spain	Good butterflies within a few Km

**Simon Spencer**

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Photos by Anne Spencer



# Zapater's Ringlet

**Zapater's Ringlet (*Erebia zapateri*) and other desirable butterflies of the Montes Universales, Spain**

**by David Moore**

Away from the northern mountain ranges of Spain, butterflies of the *Erebia* genus are relatively few in number on the Iberian Peninsula. However, there is one species that resides almost exclusively within the Montes Universales, which is part of the Sistema Iberico mountain range which runs from near Burgos in the north west to the outskirts of Valencia in the south east.

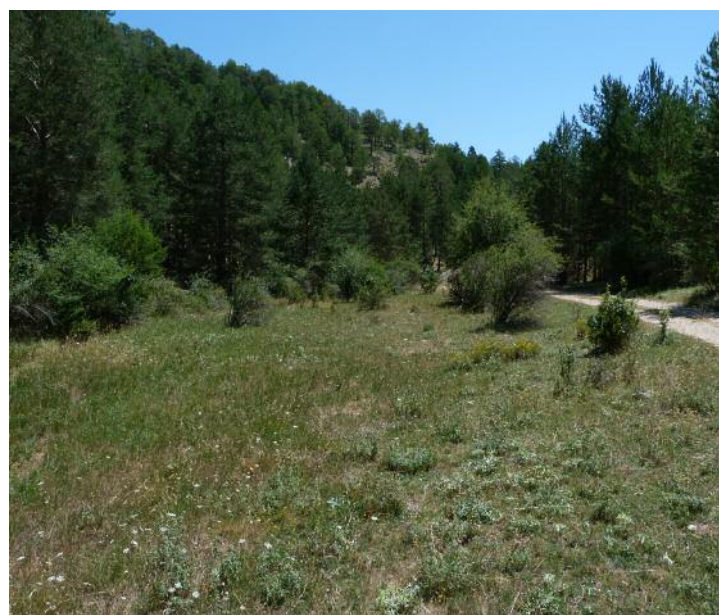
**Zapater's Ringlet (*Erebia zapateri*)**, named after the Spanish naturalist Bernardo Zapater (1823-1907), is a butterfly of woodland clearings between 1,200m and 1,700m in oak and/or pine forest and is a late-emerging species, with the males only appearing at the very end of July, and the females several days later.

## *Timing*

Having visited the area between 28 July and 3 August in 2018 and seen only three individuals, an additional couple of days was added to 2019's trip and this proved judicious as it was on 4th August that numbers suddenly increased.

## *Habitat*

With information rather scant regarding the exact preferences and behaviour of this species, it took quite a while to find their chosen habitat. This proved to be a series of very shady clearings in pine woodland, adjacent to a grassy plain, north west facing so that the morning sun took some while to penetrate the canopy. ▼



Habitat of **Zapater's Ringlet (*Erebia zapateri*)**





Zapater's Ringlet cont.

### Behaviour

The males would fly almost incessantly within these semi-lit clearings, whilst sometimes venturing out into the open plain beyond, though never far. In some ways, this habitat preference was akin to that of the **Speckled Wood** (*Pararge aegeria*), which is rarely found in open territory, but whilst *aegeria* has a tendency to perch for long intervals, *zapateri* males show a distinct reluctance to bask, perhaps due to their almost black ground colour being able to absorb warmth very quickly in the mid-mornings by when, in this region during August, temperatures are routinely nudging towards 30 degrees



Zapater's Ringlet (*Erebia zapateri*)



Zapater's Ringlet (*Erebia zapateri*)

Between 10am and 11am, they would settle on the ground for short periods, often opening their wings to show that striking, pale orange stripe which extends for nearly the whole length of the forewing sub-marginal and post discal area. As temperatures rise, this habit largely ceases though, with the butterfly then usually keeping its wings closed.

Like many *Erebia* they are attracted to human perspiration. My rucksack, camera bag and trousers were all investigated with enthusiasm and a few minutes spent sitting on a tree stump saw half a dozen at least saunter around me, with their buzzing flight pattern proving very reminiscent of **Common Brassy Ringlet** (*Erebia cassioides*).

A small number were seen nectaring. The plants visited were scabious, eryngium, lavender and thistles.

At a known site for this species on 4th August I counted 44 *zapateri* within a 90 minute period, on a circuitous route through the woodland and round to a 300m sheltered strip of terrain adjacent to the roadside. So, in the right places, this species is far from uncommon and one suspects that by mid-August, when the females have emerged, their numbers could easily be in three figures. ▼





Zapater's Ringlet cont.

*Other species: Lycaenids and Satyrines*

Of course, leaving it that much later to visit this area would mean losing out on some of the many other desirable species whose flight period would be coming to an end.



**Mother-of-Pearl Blue** (*Polyommatus nivescens*)



**Azure Chalkhill Blue** (*Lysandra caelestissima*)

**Mother-of-Pearl Blue** (*Polyommatus nivescens*) is one such species that is on the wane by mid-August, as is **Oberthur's Anomalous Blue** (*Polyommatus fabressei*). These two are still easy to find in early August however, along with 100 or so other species, with many being found in quite astonishing numbers.

**Azure Chalkhill Blue** (*Lysandra caelestissima*) approaches plague numbers in certain locations, whilst **Great Banded Grayling** (*Brintesia circe*), **Rock Grayling** (*Hipparchia hermione* [=alcyone]) and **Iberian Marbled White** (*Melanargia lachesis*) can also be counted in the multi-thousands.

*Two specialities*



**'Spanish' Chestnut Heath** (*Coenonympha glycerion iphioides*)



**Iberian Sooty Copper** (*Lycaena bleusei*), male

There are a few other 'specialities' of this region which are worth mentioning. The *iphioides* form of **Chestnut Heath** (*Coenonympha glycerion*) is a particularly beautiful member of this family, more resembling a **Russian Heath** (*C. leander*) than the Chestnut Heaths routinely found in the French Alps, for instance. ▼





Zapater's Ringlet cont.

Similarly, the local *bleusei* form of **Sooty Copper** (*Lycaena tityrus*) is stunning and quite unrecognisable from the male nominate form, requiring a 'double take' when one sees it for the first time. It is now treated as a full species on the EBG list.

#### *Species of drier habitats*



**Southern Hermit** (*Chazara prieuri*)



**The Hermit** (*Chazara briseis*)

Some of the drier, more arid sites in this region are home to a surprisingly large array of species, many of them highly desirable. The most obvious of these is the Iberian endemic, **Southern Hermit** (*Chazara prieuri*). In fact, in 2019 this species was seen in greater numbers than those of its close cousin, **The Hermit** (*Chazara briseis*). **Black Satyr** (*Satyrus actaea*) is localised but can be common in the right places, whilst **Striped Grayling** (*Hipparchia fidia*) is another attractive late summer Satyrine that can usually be relied upon in dry, stony locations.

Other notables include **Spanish Argus** (*Aricia morronensis*), which can be found at just a single site in this region, **Southern Marbled Skipper** (*Carcharodus baeticus*), which is around in small numbers, **Cinquefoil Skipper** (*Pyrgus cirsii*), which is the default *Pyrgus* in this area in late summer and is very common, and **Oriental Meadow Brown** (*Hyponephele lupina*), which requires patience and resolve to track down due to the large numbers of the similar **Dusky Meadow Brown** (*Hyponephele lycaon*) with which it flies. ▼



**Dusky Meadow Brown** (*Hyponephele lycaon*)



**Oriental Meadow Brown** (*Hyponephele lupina*)



The mountains themselves are neither as high as those in the Pyrenees, nor as precipitous. The highest point is just less than 2,000m and the drier climate means that the vegetation is rather different than that seen in the northern Spanish ranges, with much juniper scrub amongst tracts of mainly pine woodland.

The road network is very good, with little in the way of traffic, and there are plenty of campsites and hotel accommodation, usually at much cheaper rates than elsewhere in western Europe. Albarracin is a good base, no more than an hour's drive from any of the good sites, and is one of the most picturesque towns in the whole of Spain, being a former Moorish fortified village dating back to the 11th century, all of which makes spending time studying butterflies in this area even more of a pleasure. •

**David Moore**

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All photographs by David Moore. David leads for Greenwings in the Montes Universales, and is joining the EBG Committee as Treasurer.



# Pyrenean Ringlets

## Some Ringlets of the Midi-Pyrénées

by Jude Lock

Of the 14 or so Ringlet (*Erebia*) species that occur in the Midi-Pyrénées, four have a restricted distribution and are of particular interest to visitors – **Pyrenees Brassy Ringlet** (*Erebia rondoui*), **False Dewy Ringlet** (*E. sthenno*), **Lefébvre's Ringlet** (*E. lefebvrei*), and **Gavarnie Ringlet** (*E. gorgone*). They can be an enjoyable challenge to find and identify. Two years ago I prepared some notes on the first three of these species to help some Swedish visitors. The editor suggested that they would be of interest to readers generally, so they have been tidied up and here they are.

### 1. Pyrenees Brassy Ringlet (*Erebia rondoui*)

**Taxonomy:** *Erebia rondoui* Oberthür, 1908

This species was described by Charles Oberthür in honour of his friend Jean-Pierre Rondou (1860-1934). Rondou was a Pyrenean entomologist and teacher from the village of Gèdre in the Hautes Pyrénées. Often referred to as “l’homme aux papillons”, he was the author of many works, the most highly acclaimed being 4 volumes of manuscripts “La monographie de la Vallée de Barèges” and the “Catalogue des Lépidoptères des Pyrénées”. Rondou was awarded the Chevalier de la Légion d’honneur in 1931 for his work as an entomologist.

*Erebia rondoui* is a Pyrenean endemic comprising 2 subspecies, *rondoui* which is found in the Hautes Pyrénées and also from the Vallée d’Aspe to the extreme west of the Pyrénées-Orientales, and *goya* Fruhstorfer, 1909, found in the Pyrénées-Orientales and Andorra. (See the species entry in the Web’obs online database for the Butterfly Atlas of the Midi-Pyrénées at <http://www.webobs.cen-mp.org/>)

#### Description

The upperside is dark brown, with a metallic green brassy sheen when fresh. The forewing has a tapering orange band which contains two black subapical ocelli (eyespot). The ocelli are large and fused and have white pupils. The hindwings of the butterflies I see locally have hindwings that are well developed with 3 (sometimes 4) pupiled ocelli in orange patches. The underside is greyish with ▼



**Pyrenees Brassy Ringlet** (*Erebia rondoui rondoui*), male and female and underside



Pyrenean Ringlets cont.



**Western (Common) Brassy Ringlet** (*Erebia arvernensis*), male. (Right-hand photo by Nigel Peace)

faint transverse wavy lines; females are lighter than the males. They are very distinguishable in flight due to the silvery sheen of the underside. Many of the specimens I have seen in the Barèges valley are highly coloured.

There is possible confusion with **Western (Common) Brassy Ringlet** (*Erebia arvernensis*, now considered distinct from *E. cassioides*), which can be found in close proximity to *rondoui*, although *arvernensis* prefers a slightly more humid habitat. The black ocelli in *arvernensis* on the upperside forewing are touching rather than fused and look more like a figure of 8. Both sexes have duller orangey bands than *rondoui*.

#### **Habitat**

Found on dry stony grasslands and open grassy and rocky slopes at 1300-2750m, but more frequently at 2000 - 2200m. According to Henri Descimon ('Observations sur la biologie des Lépidoptères Rhopalocères vivant dans les Hautes-Pyrénées', 1957 re-edited 2010), the species prefers grassland with *Nardus stricta* (Matgrass).

Specimens can be observed settled on the rocks where they position themselves open-winged to catch the sun. They warm up quickly and can fly in quite low temperatures. It can be a difficult butterfly to approach unless they are warming up or feeding as they are very sensitive, even to the auto focus light from a camera.



*Erebia rondoui* habitat, Barèges

#### **Host plants**

The larva feed on various grasses, *Poa* and *Festuca ovina* (Sheep's Fescue). According to Tristan Lafranchis in "La Vie des Papillons", the adults nectar on *Senecio pyrenaicus* (Pyrenean Ragwort) although I have seen them on other plants, including *Armeria alpina* (Alpine Thrift).

#### **Flight period**

July – early September although they can be on the wing locally from the end of June and there can also be late flyers during September. They disappear at the first signs of ground frost.

#### **Distribution in Midi-Pyrénées**

Considered quite rare in the Midi-Pyrénées with the majority of observations in the Hautes-Pyrénées where it is not uncommon. Locally present in the Barèges, Gèdre, Gavarnie and Cauterets valleys.

**Red List status:** NT (Near Threatened) for Occitanie.







Pyrenean Ringlets cont.

## 2. False Dewy Ringlet (*Erebia sthenno*)

**Taxonomy:** *Erebia sthenno* Graslin, 1850

In 1850 the French entomologist Adolphe de Graslin described *Erebia sthenno*, having received a specimen captured during the first 15 days of July in the valley of Lesponne, Hautes Pyrénées, by the naturalist Xavier Philippe. Jacques Pierre Xavier Philippe Camus (1802 – 1866) had settled in Bagnères-de-Bigorre in 1831 after several years in the army and on return from Algeria.

The taxon is considered a subspecies of **Dewy Ringlet** (*Erebia pandrose*) by Cupedo (2007). However Pascal Dupont and colleagues at the MNHN (National Museum of Natural History, Paris) consider *sthenno* a species in its own right, endemic to the Pyrénées, until proved otherwise by molecular genetic studies.

### Description

One of the smaller Ringlets, it has completely black (blind) ocelli. The hindwing underside has faint dark irregular transverse lines, and is pale grey or pale brown. The underside of the forewing has a mottled grey brown border. From my experience the grey underside of the male bears a resemblance to a Brassy Ringlet in flight.

B.C.S. Warren in his book the Monograph of the Genus *Erebia* (1936 British Museum) states the two chief characteristics are the position of the black spots (close to the wing margins on both fore and hindwings) and the colouration of the underside. The underside colouration is very soft, all the markings on the hindwings being very diffused, with the males having a more leaden colour, the females more or less buff. ▼



False Dewy Ringlet (*Erebia sthenno*), male



False Dewy Ringlet (*Erebia sthenno*). Photo: Neil Thompson



False Dewy Ringlet (*Erebia sthenno*), female. Photos: Keith Woonton





Pyrenean Ringlets cont.

This is a species which can be difficult to observe as they fly away at the slightest disturbance.

#### **Habitat**

This is essentially a montane species, characteristic of mountain pastures of rough rocky grassland slopes dominated by *Nardus stricta* (Matgrass), on acid soil, found between 1700 and 2650m and often on north facing slopes. This type of terrain covers a large area of the Pyrénées and can be very diverse depending on ground humidity and the intensity of grazing. Some areas have a very rich flora, others are very species poor. *E. sthenno* can sometimes be found around Rhododendron and Juniper bushes.

#### **Host plants**

To date, according to the Butterfly Atlas of the Midi-Pyrénées, no caterpillars have been observed. According to literature the caterpillar lives on various tussock-forming grasses, such as *Festuca*. The females fix their eggs to the strands of grasses. It seems likely that egg-laying occurs in areas with exposure to sunshine; pupation takes place in May or June immediately after the snow has melted.

#### **Flight period**

Late June – July. Most observations on the Web'obs database have been recorded between 10th – 20th July. The equal second number of recordings is between 10th – 20th June and 1st – 10th July and then the period 20th – 30th July, but records are sparse.

#### **Distribution in Midi-Pyrénées**

The species is considered quite rare in the Midi-Pyrénées. It is present in the Hautes-Pyrénées, Ariège and the Haute-Garonne. It can form important local colonies although its complete distribution is unknown as there are few records. Historically, Rondou comments that it was quite common. *E. sthenno* is also present in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques.

**Red List status:** EN (Endangered) for Occitanie, CR (Critically Endangered) for Aquitaine.

### **3. Lefèbvre's Ringlet (*Erebia lefebvrei*)**

**Taxonomy:** *Erebia lefebvrei* Boisduval, 1828

Alexandre Louis Lefèbvre captured this species at the summit of the Pic de Lévis (2463m, Hautes Pyrénées) on the 15 July 1822 (a detail from the Histoire naturelle des lépidoptères ou papillons de France, supp 1, by Jean Baptiste Godart). Lefèbvre sent the specimen to Boisduval who subsequently dedicated the species to him. Lefèbvre (1798 – 1867) was a French entomologist who in 1832 was one of the (many) founding members of the "Société Entomologique de France".

Endemic to the Pyrénées and Cantabrian mountains of North-West Spain. ▼



Pyrenean Ringlets cont.

### Description

A very dark butterfly. On the underside the males appear almost black and females dark brown. On the upperside forewings both sexes have large twinned black spots with a white pupil in the apex area. There are more ocelli at the edge of the reddish-orange band on the forewings and on the marginal area of the hind-wings. The reddish-orange band is suffused and variable and the ocelli are prominent bold black with luminous white pupils, the upperside ocelli being more developed in females of the species.

According to B.C.S. Warren the two chief characteristics of this species are the presence of reddish-orange bands on the upper forewing and the large size of the black spots which vary in number from three to five on both fore- and hindwings. An infallible test in very fresh male specimens is that a dense mass of androconial scales can be seen all over the central area of the upper side forewings.



**Lefèvre's Ringlet** (*Erebia lefebvrei*), male upper and undersides



**Lefèvre's Ringlet** (*Erebia lefebvrei*), female upper and undersides

### Habitat

Found from 1600 to 3000m. Rocky rough grazing slopes with low density flora and shale scree, often on limestone and at high altitude. According to Henri Descimon, the adults can be found on denuded slopes and areas where *Crepis pygmaea* (Pygmy Hawksbeard) and *Cardus carlinoides* (Pyrenean Thistle) grow. ▼





Pyrenean Ringlets cont.

The males fly fast and close to the ground, often patrolling above the scree in search of females. The females frequently seek grassy spots near the bare slopes where the males also fly. I often see specimens settled on sun-warmed rocks, or tucked into sheltered areas of scree, especially when the sun goes in. The dark undersides serve to absorb the warmth of the heat-retaining rocks.

#### ***Host plants***

Various grasses. Females lay individual eggs on the tufts of grasses, and caterpillars feed on small Festuca - *Festuca glacialis* according to Henri Descimon.

#### ***Flight period***

Late June to early August.

#### ***Distribution in the Midi-Pyrénées***

Present across the Pyrénées with the exception of the Aude. Considered rare in the Midi-Pyrénées (Web'obs), although it can be locally abundant. Historically, J.P. Rondou, in his manuscript 'La Monographie de la Vallée de Barèges', noted *E. lefebvrei* as assez commun, ie fairly common. •

**Red List status:** EN (Endangered) for Occitanie.

#### **Jude Lock**

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All photos by Jude Lock except where indicated.



# Haute-Vienne, France

## Moving to Haute-Vienne, France

by Heidi Smith

We have been bowled over by the all wildlife we have here at Le Moulin de Pensol, but butterflies and moths are undoubtedly the stars of the show.



I moved here from Norfolk in February 2018 to start a gîte business with my husband Nik. Le Moulin is a former water mill, and has three gîtes in a converted barn facing the main mill building across the river. There is an additional house next door from which we offer bed and breakfast. We are fortunate enough to have 20 acres of land.

Norfolk was a wonderful county to live in and we enjoyed the wildlife of the Broads and the North Norfolk coast. But the abundance of insect life we have found here is incredible, and an order of magnitude greater than that which we saw in the UK. We are in the middle of the Parc Naturel Régional Périgord Limousin, and the surrounding area is mostly forestry and fields grazed with brown-eyed Limousine cattle.

The Mill

### *Getting to know the Fritillaries*

Our first glimpse of just what a magical piece of land we had acquired came from a butterfly species. One day while walking the dogs on one of our fields we noticed groups of hairy black caterpillars in clumps. There were perhaps 100 clumps each containing about 200 caterpillars. Closer inspection revealed they had bright red eyes. We took to the internet to identify them, and the hive-mind of Twitter and Facebook soon revealed them to be the caterpillars of the **Glanville Fritillary** butterfly. We were so excited and we woke in the night worrying about them ▼



Queen of Spain Fritillary (*Issoria lathonia*)



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary (*Boloria selene*)





Haute-Vienne, France cont.

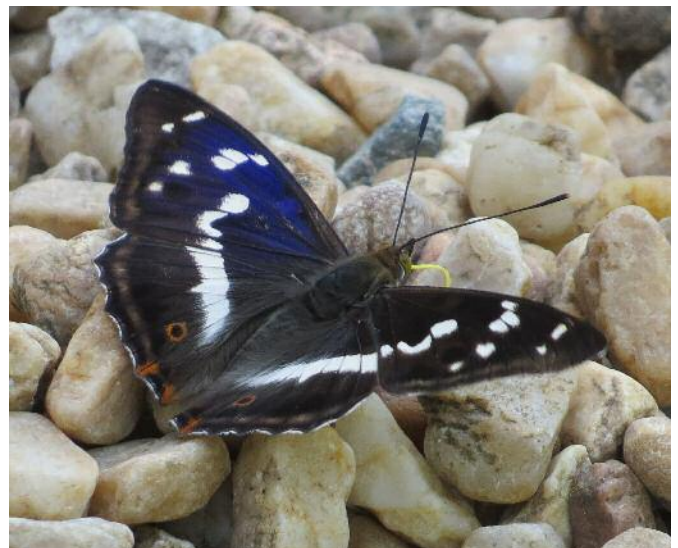
during sharp thunderstorms. This year (2019) the population is even larger, and we have learned to tell them apart from our other **Fritillaries** – **Heath**, **False Heath**, **Queen of Spain**, **Silver-washed**, **Pearl-bordered** (and **Small Pearl-bordered**), **Meadow**, **Weaver's** and **Knapweed**!

### Emperors

Our search for the **Purple Emperor** was also something of a saga. I had read that men had been driven mad in the past looking for this elusive butterfly. I thought we probably had them as we have many mature oak trees surrounded by sunny glades. Having three dogs, we had no shortage of material to use for bait, and we baited the glades with dog poo, dog food and fish paste. Many other species showed an interest but there was no sign of His Imperial Majesty. One day we saw a large brown butterfly feeding on some rotten peaches. As it took off we caught sight of an iridescent flash of purple and thought we had it. It landed and we took a photo, but closer examination revealed it to be the **Lesser Purple Emperor**, form *clytie*. Still pretty cool but not the real thing.



**Lesser Purple Emperor** (*Apatura ilia f. clytie*)



**Purple Emperor** (*Apatura iris*)



**Scarce Swallowtail** (*Iphiclides podalirius*)

This pattern repeated itself a few more times. We saw the nominate form of Lesser Purple Emperor and many examples of form *clytie*, but we had all but given up on seeing a proper Purple Emperor. Then one day I opened the back door and there was a magnificent specimen sunning himself on our granite doorstep. He obligingly stayed while photos were taken and duly confirmed on Facebook – found him at last.

### Unfamiliar Swallowtails

Coming as we had from the Norfolk Broads, we were no strangers to swallowtail butterflies, but were entranced by the numerous specimens of **Scarce Swallowtail** which flit around the buddleia trees in the summer. The French call these Flambé – which describes them perfectly. Swallowtails are also present, but they seem quite different to the Norfolk form. ▼





Haute-Vienne, France cont.



**Speckled Wood**  
(*Pararge aegeria*) - the southern  
(nominate) form

#### *Speckled Woods with a difference*

Another species which seem to be virtually unrecognisable to me in France is the **Speckled Wood**. In the UK I thought of these butterflies as mildly coloured, brownish with yellow spots and confined almost wholly to woodlands. In France we find them out in the meadows and to me they seem to show up in the field as intensely chequered and more orange than yellow and brown. In fact I often say to Nik "what's that Fritillary" - only to have him roll his eyes and reply "Speckled Wood again". I am told that this is because we have the southern European version here, but it looks like a completely different species to me.

#### *Less showy favourites*

Some of my favourites are not large and showy and have to be courted and watched quietly for some time before they give up their significant but more subtle charms. The **Small Coppers** are just so beautiful. The third flight at the end of the summer always seem so tiny and intensely copper coloured they are like tiny flying brooches. I think one of the best butterfly photos Nik has ever taken was of the humble **Ringlet**. Its "eyes" showing up so beautifully against the brown of its underwings. Sometimes the **Meadow Browns** and **Walls** demand that you pause and watch them in the meadows. Frumpy and brown as they may look in the ID books – in the field when newly emerged they are beautiful.



**Ringlet** (*Aphantopus hyperantus*)



**Geranium Bronze** (*Cacyreus marshalli*)

The blues are all delightful. At the end of the summer they gather together on the large clumps of Michaelmas daisies that we grow just for this purpose, and if you brush past them they rise in a cloud of fluttering blue, like petals.

We have seen the odd **Geranium Bronze** this year. Interesting, as they are not native to this country (rather like ourselves), but like us enjoy its climate and abundant pelargonium geraniums. A sweet, small curiosity of a butterfly. ▼





Haute-Vienne, France cont.

### *Fascinating Maps*

I have also been fascinated by the **Maps**. I had never heard of this species when in the UK and they are everywhere here. Confusingly changing their patterns drastically from first to second brood, and then varying the pattern again for the third brood. The first look a little like **Tortoiseshells** or **Commas**, to my eyes predominantly orange. The second flight is completely different and you would swear they were a different species, much more like **White Admirals**. The map pattern from where they get their name is very striking and visible on the underside of the wings.



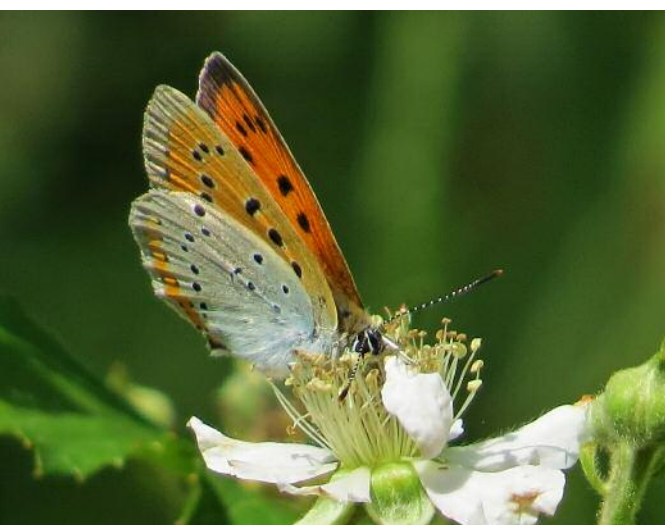
**Map** (*Araschnia levana*) first generation



**Map** (*Araschnia levana*) second generation

### *Sorry to boast*

An exciting spot of a large copper last year brought the number of species we have seen in our garden and grounds to 60. This felt like an important number to us as we were aware that there are 59 species which are resident or regularly recorded in the UK. So we were now able to say that we can see more species in our gardens and land than in the whole of the UK!



**Large Copper** (*Lycaena dispar*)

### *Managing our land for butterflies*

With this abundance of butterflies comes a great responsibility. We want to increase both the number of species we have on our land but also the populations of each species. I used to work with farmers in the UK, trying to get them to farm in a more environmentally sensitive way. We would take them out onto their land in January and February and ask them "where are your pollinators now?" The point of this was that everyone is keen on butterflies in June and July, but of course unless you give them a place to overwinter and complete their life-cycle, you don't get to enjoy the good bit of watching the adults in the summer. At Le Moulin de Pensol we try and make sure that throughout our land we have appropriate food plants, nectar plants and lots of safe places to overwinter and pass on to the next stage of the life-cycle whether as an egg, larva, pupa or adult. •

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All photos by Heidi and Nik Smith, except Speckled Wood by the editor





# Transylvania

## Ten Days in Transylvania

by Chris Tracey

Departing from Gatwick Airport via Gate No 1 was a new experience for me but sure enough Wizz Air to Cluj Napoca was in pole position and our journey to Transylvania started with a very reasonably priced ticket and a problem-free flight. Hiring a car at the airport was the easy bit then travelling to the southern Carpathian Mountains involved a 240 km journey from Cluj through several towns - thank goodness for Google Maps – but the roads were well signed and after a while dodging the potholes felt a bit like being at home. After stocking up in Deva with a week's supply of food we headed to the tiny community of Paulesti, about 45 minutes from the nearest town of Brad.

### Our Carpathian Cottage

The path to the cottage wound its way through a meadow full of orchids, dark pink Common Spotted, interspersed with Twayblade, Lesser Butterfly and emerging Fragrant orchids. **Wood White**, **Orange Tip**, **Common Blue** and **Holly Blue** were later regularly seen along this path and one morning there were apparently two species of **Green-veined White** (the familiar *Pieris napi* and **Mountain Green-veined White** *P. bryoniae*) puddling together with **Black-veined White**.

**Scarce Swallowtail** (*Ipheclides podalirius*) and **Painted Lady** (*Vanessa cardui*) with Carpathian Mountain background



The meadows surrounding the cottage looked promising, superficially a sea of cow parsley and buttercups but closer examination revealed a botanically rich mix of flowers. Around the cottage were ancient walnut and cherry trees festooned with lichen which made me wish I had brought the moth trap. Garden birds were few but included a family of Willow Tits, daily visitors checking for insects in the lichen and soon coming regularly to a handful of walnuts on the garden seat. We heard a Nightjar one evening.

The weather was unsettled and wet for the first couple of days but when the sun came out it was warm and immediately brought butterflies ▼





Transylvania cont.



Are there two **Green-veined White** species here (*Pieris napi* & *bryoniae*) along with the **Black-veined White** (*Aporia crataegi*)?

Walking down the track one wet afternoon I found a small colony of **Chequered Skippers** nectaring on Ragged Robin and along the verges **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary**, **Glanville Fritillary**, **Heath Fritillary**, **Grizzled Skipper**, **Small Heath** and **Pearly Heath** and a **Small Grass Emerald** puddling in the track.

#### *Canine hazards*

By day three the weather had improved and temperatures were rising into the high twenties. We walked up through the orchard above the cottage and past four neighbouring cottages where elderly ladies in headscarves and aprons tended their potato patches. Everyone had their own barking dog and we were advised to carry sticks. On the one occasion I might have used it the dogs won and I retreated back down the path but the trusty staff soon became an essential aid helping me up through the steep climb to the flower meadows and even to the top of the local mountain.

#### *Higher meadows*

The higher meadows were bursting with thyme. Back home **Large Blue** had already started emerging and I felt sure they must be here but it was not until 10th June that we saw the first one, already egg-laying. Also flying here **Purple-shot Copper**, **Sooty Copper**, **Green-underside Blue**, **Queen of Spain**, **Marsh**, **Weaver's** and **Heath Fritillaries**, **Chestnut Heath**, **Scarce** and **Common Swallowtails**, **Eastern Baton Blue**, **Small Blue**, **Brimstone** and several different **skippers**. Many day-flying moths including **Transparent Burnet** and **Black-veined Moth** were here too. We met one elderly farmer with half a dozen goats who wandered these meadows allowing the goats to graze wherever they wished but we couldn't help wondering if they alone could keep the scrub from encroaching on the swathes of thyme. As in many remote places the younger generation of would-be farmers have found they cannot make a living here and have moved to the towns.







Transylvania cont.



**Poplar Admirals** (*Limenitis populi*) and **Scarce Fritillaries** (*Euphydryas maturna*) on something smelly

#### *An unsavoury feast*

One sunny morning as we drove back down the road to check out a local beauty spot I saw several large dark butterflies in the middle of the road. When we stopped we found they were **Poplar Admirals** taking

minerals from the road and we could see that the sides of the road were littered with those that had collided with car windscreens or been run over. When we reached our destination **Poplar Admirals** were feasting on a dead slow worm and scats of wild boar, joined by **Scarce Fritillaries**, a **Mazarine Blue** and one **Red Admiral**. My offering of tuna mayonnaise was eagerly accepted by the **fritillaries**. **Camberwell Beauty**, **Wood White**, **Common Glider** and **Marbled Fritillary** were also seen here.



**Scarce Fritillaries** (*Euphydryas maturna*) on tuna fish mayonnaise

Our ten days at the Carpathian Cottage had started as the google equivalent of sticking a pin in a map

but it turned out be a perfect butterfly holiday. My Carpathian Mountains compulsory reading was of course Dracula but the one small bat seen emerging from the cottage one evening was ever so slightly disappointing and I have to say it is probably easier to just watch the film if you want to continue to believe in vampires! •

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# Western Turkey

**Western Turkey, 15 – 23 August 2019**

**by Peter Bygate**

## *Isparta and Konya Provinces*

From Antalya we headed north to our lakeside hotel in Egirdir – pronounced ‘Ayer-dish’ – to re-run the old Greentours ‘Turkish Lake District’ trip Alan Bernard and I made in May some 20 years ago! Somewhere around Akbelenli towards Kovada Lake we stopped to stretch our legs and to inspect a small stream running through an essentially parched brown landscape. Amazingly, a **Two-tailed Pasha** (*Charaxes jasius*) came to check us out, unusual being a long way from the sea, and **Grass Jewels** (*Freyeria trochylus*) nectared on the mint flowers, as did a fleeting **Eastern Bath White** (*Pontia edusa*).

On a visit to the Davraz Dagi (2,637m) ski resort off the ‘new’ dual carriageway to Isparta we were pleasantly surprised to find **Cardinal** (*Argynnis pandora*), **Turkish Furry Blue** (*Polyommatus menalcas*), **Painted Lady** (*Vanessa cardui*), **Adonis Blue** (*Lysandra bellargus*), **Great Banded Grayling** (*Brintesia circe*) and **Clouded Yellow** (*Colias crocea*) nectaring mainly on a short bank of blue flax flowers.



**Turkish Furry Blue** (*Polyommatus menalcas*)



**Great Banded Grayling** (*Brintesia circe*)

A sharp spell of rain coincided with lunchtime, taken inside the car, the only vehicle in the vast car park. Afterwards, we walked up the ski slope picking up very weary **Balkan Marbled White** (*Melanargia larissa*) but not a lot else. A sudden heavy downpour with hail had us dashing for cover.

## *The Sultan mountains*

The following day we explored the Sultan mountains taking the 695 to the Pass at Yellibel Geçidi, altitude 1600 metres in Konya Province, pulling in at a scruffy litter-strewn layby shortly after. It was fairly sheltered here and a running stream nourished mint and agrimony to flower. ▼



Western Turkey cont.



The 'sliver of rich habitat'



False Graylings (*Arethusana arethusa*)



Blue Argus (*Aricia anteros*)



Anatolian Fiery Copper (*Lycaena asabinus*)

A sliver of rich habitat supported **Sooty Coppers** (*Lycaena tityrus*) and **Anatolian Fiery Coppers** (*Lycaena asabinus*), **False Graylings** (*Arethusana arethusa*), **Blue Argus** (*Aricia anteros*) a huge female **Hermit** (*Chazara briseis*), **Spotted Fritillaries** (*Melitaea didyma*) and the ubiquitous **Cardinal**. An excellent two hours passed here and after our meagre 'lunch' we began our return stopping at the Pass where a track forms a kind of crossroads. We walked up the quieter side which had a stream running down it leading to good butterflying and bringing a satisfactory close to the day.

#### *Towards Mount Dedegol*

The next day under a blue sky the brisk wind had now shifted from the north. On silky smooth roads we headed south along the lake taking the turn toward the range of Dedegol Dagi (2,998m) hoping to relocate some of the sites from our previous visit. A Jandarma road block beckoned us to pull over and passports were duly inspected. ▼





Through Aksu we took a left towards Yakakoy and Yenisarbademli but nothing looked remotely familiar in the parched terrain. Almost out of desperation we pulled in where a dry stream-bed crossed under the road at a hairpin and were surprised to find Cardinals on the thistles, including a mating pair, a **Dark Green Fritillary** (*Speyeria aglaja*), **Anatolian Chalkhill Blue** (*Polyommatus ossmar*), probable **Eastern Rock Grayling** (*Hipparchia syriaca*), **Berger's Clouded Yellow** (*Colias alfacariensis*), and more **Turkish Furry Blues**!

We retraced our route until taking the left turn after Terziler towards Kocular and then on to Katip. All pretty pointless. We turned back and pulled off the road close to a river and pleasingly found **Southern White Admiral** (*Limenitis reducta*), a female **Cardinal** and a new species, **Freyer's Grayling** (*Hipparchia fatua*) and **Meleager's Blue** (*Polyommatus daphnis*) on *Eryngium*, so not a total waste of time.



**Freyer's Grayling** (*Hipparchia fatua*)



**Meleager's Blue** (*Polyommatus daphnis*)

#### *Bagoren village*

Our final day in Egirdir dawned windy again as we headed for the hamlet of Bagoren, seemingly more delapidated than ever, but an **Anatolian Skipper** (*Muschampia proteides*) was a good find and a **Southern Comma** (*Polygonia egea*) called in. A final visit to the Davraz Dagi ski station saw activity much reduced since our previous visit a few days before but Stable Flies were a new and unwelcome addition.

Today we'd transit to our second centre, in Antalya's old town. Past the turning to Adada an unusually wet area with abundant mint, bramble blossom and agrimony failed to produce a single butterfly! Running parallel to the river on the way to Sutculer we found several worn **High Brown Fritillaries** (*Fabriciana adippe*) taking thistle nectar, plus **Freyer's Grayling** and **Anatolian Fiery Copper**. Sutculer is a pleasant large agricultural town, its central square dominated by mature trees, a couple of café restaurants and families sitting at tables. A **Large Tortoiseshell** (*Nymphalis polychloros*) whistled around the square at eaves' height. ▼



Western Turkey cont.

### Antalya Province

The long trek west across to the 685 was an experience – a combination of lousy maps, poor signs, dusty forest tracks, counter-intuitive routes and passing through a stunning deep limestone gorge somewhere en route. Eventually we reached the main road and turned south hitting the evening rush around Antalya. This is a city with a 1.33 million population, twice the size of Leeds, and once again road sign directions were a major problem.

### Termessos

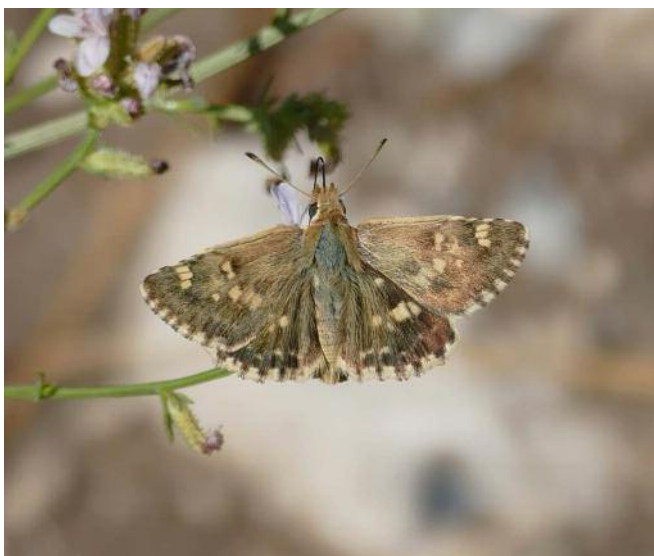
Termessos, the classical ancient site sitting at 1,000m in the Taurus Mountains, was the destination for our last full day and after paying a nominal charge we proceeded up the 8km largely deserted road through green shrubbery and straw-coloured vegetation parking in the shade of a tree at the top. Butterflies were few and far



The road up to Termessos



Cardinal, female (*Argynnis pandora*)



Sage Skipper (*Muschampia proto*)

between amongst the crumbling ruins with highlights being **Sage Skipper** (*Muschampia proto*), **Holly Blue** (*Celastrina argiolus*) and a sole, weary **Nettle-tree Butterfly** (*Libythea celtis*) and when a cool gust came through a female **Cardinal** dashed for cover in a tree.

On departure day the bin lorry came around at 5.30am making sure everybody knew about it, and breakfast was interrupted by a power outage. A final stroll down to the harbour to take some photos of the tiny **Indian Grass Blue** (*Zizeeria karsandra*) completed the trip.

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More photos from this trip can be seen on [www.lepidigi.net/turkey-8-19](http://www.lepidigi.net/turkey-8-19)





# Rimplas, France

## Rimplas, Alpes-Maritimes, France

by David Tomlinson



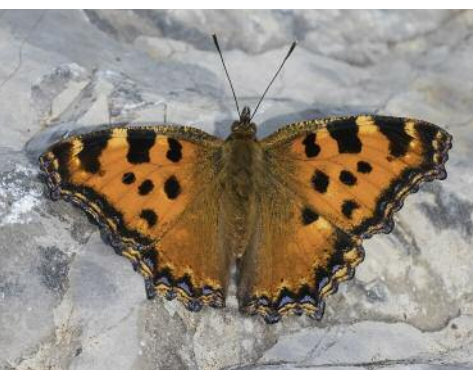
**Purple-shot Copper**  
(*Lycaena alciphron*)



**Amanda's Blue**  
(*Polyommatus amandus*)



**Spotted Fritillary**  
(*Melitaea didyma*)



**Large Tortoiseshell**  
(*Nymphalis polychloros*)

I am not keen on conducted wildlife holidays. My wife and I prefer to do our own thing, even though this inevitably means fewer species seen than the specialist groups find. But we are not too proud to take advantage of information available from the tour companies. So when we decided to visit the Alpes-Maritimes in France, I made a thorough search of the web for reports. We flew to Nice and had a couple of days there before picking up a rented car and driving to Rimplas on the southern edge of the Alpes-Maritimes, a distance of about 70 km (45 miles). We rented a car with satnav, which was a big help, because getting out of Nice and onto the right road was tricky.

### Why choose Rimplas?

The research of the trip reports made it clear that Rimplas was one of the best places to stay and the Hostellerie du Randonneur was the ideal accommodation, so we had booked that some months before. We went at the end of June. Stephane, the patron of the hotel, speaks pretty good English, so booking via the web is easy. It was an excellent place to stay. There were no frills, but it was comfortable and the food was good.

The added bonus is the track just behind the hostel, which descends into the valley for a couple of kilometres and you are in amongst the butterflies within minutes. The species change as you descend into the valley and over three or four walks down this track we had over 40 species. You can also walk up the road out of the village, climbing higher towards a church and see a few other species. Hence you can spend a profitable couple of days without driving if you don't want to, but we did, and exploring the roads to the north and east brought different habitats and more new species. As expected, **Apollos** (*Parnassius apollo*) were higher up and other species were found in the alpine meadows.

### Highlights

The weather was unpredictable and we had a couple of fairly serious rainstorms, probably inevitable in a mountainous region, but they didn't last long and the sun came out again fairly promptly. What were the highlights? Too many to count. I had little experience of continental butterflies, so many of the species were new to me, but even if I had been familiar with many of them, the sheer numbers were a delight. At times you didn't know where to look and most of the species that we saw were present in plentiful numbers, so there were good opportunities for identification. I suppose that the spectacular species were **Scarce Swallowtail** (*Iphiclides podalirius*), **Purple-shot Copper** (*Lycaena alciphron*), **Large Tortoiseshell** (*Nymphalis polychloros*), and **Black-veined White** (*Aporia crataegi*), and several species of Fritillary, Skippers and Blues were all outstanding. Even the local Marbled Whites were more striking than ours. I would be happy to answer any specific questions about the visit and the place in response to emails. I recommend the area and the Hostellerie unreservedly and we will be going back there, perhaps for a longer visit and to take in a second site further north. •

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