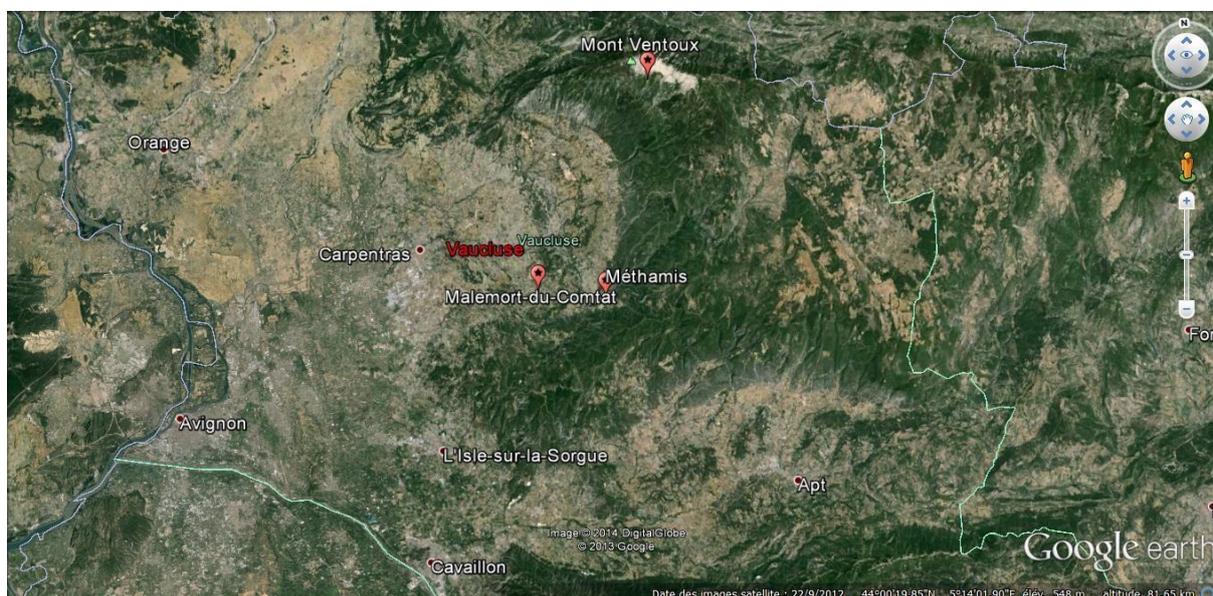


Vaucluse, France

Bibliography:

- Papillons de jour Rhopalocères et zygènes Atlas de Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur, Naturalia Publications (2009). This publication gives detailed distribution maps for each species.



Google Vaucluse

General: The Vaucluse department (no.84) is a landlocked department in the French region of Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur, lying immediately to the east of the River Rhone. From little above sea-level at Avignon (the principal city in the department) the land rises to 1909m. at the summit of Mont Ventoux, known also as “Le Géant de Provence”. Alongside the Rhone, and on the flat terrain beyond, agriculture predominates and much of this is vineyards, although cherries, olives and other orchard trees are cultivated.

As the ground rises the soils become rockier and there are extensive areas of unimproved grassland and light woodland, which are rich in butterflies.



Species: In his book “Les Papillons de jour de France, Belgique et Luxembourg” Lafranchis shows 154 species in the distribution maps as being present in the Vaucluse. Of these, seven have not been recorded since 1980, leaving 147 species considered as present in 2000. The distribution map of the Chequered Blue (*Scolitantides orion*), indicates that the species is not to be found in the department, but I have found it at one location repeatedly over the ten years I have been visiting the area.

Target Species:

Sage Skipper *Muschampia proto*

Apollo *Parnassius apollo*

Southern Festoon *Zerynthia polyxena*

Spanish Festoon *Zerynthia rumina*

Southern Swallowtail *Papilio alexanor*

Nettle-tree *Libythea celtis*

Two-tailed Pasha *Charaxes jasius*

Eastern Wood White *Leptidea duponcheli*

Portuguese Dappled White *Euchloe tagis*

Large Blue *Phengaris arion*

Chequered Blue *Scolitantides orion*

Provencal Chalkhill Blue *Polyommatus hispana*

Larche Ringlet *Erebia scipio*

Western Marbled White *Melanargia occitanica*



Provence Chalk-hill Blue *Polyommatus hispana*

Large Blue *Phengaris arion*

In the spring and early summer there are many species to be found at low and medium altitudes. In July and August as plants and grass dry up at lower altitudes, the higher or more sheltered, moister locations are more productive. In September, although butterfly numbers are down on May and June, there is still plenty to see at all altitudes.

Hotspots I have found:

Mont Ventoux, a UNESCO site, with habitats ranging from dry maquis scrub through open woodland and meadows to Alpine scree. Target species: Apollo

Valley of the Nesque from Malemort-du-Comtat (located 8k ESE of Carpentras) eastwards to Méthamis and onwards towards Sault. Although a dry riverbed in the butterfly season, the sides of the river have a variety of habitats (unimproved pasture, oak woodland and dry scrubland) and, where it runs through gorges, it remains cool and relatively moist; it is accessible on foot for much of its length.



Two-tailed Pasha *Charaxes jasius*



Apollo *Parnassius apollo*

Target species: Provencal Chalkhill Blue (*Polyommatus hispana*), Chequered Blue (*Scolitantides orion*), Two-tailed Pasha (*Charaxes jasius*) (I have only seen it twice in ten years), Portuguese Dappled White (*E tagis*) (I have only seen it once). Also to be seen from time to time is the Large Tortoiseshell (*Nymphalis polychloros*). In June the Ilex Hairstreak (*Satyrrium ilicis*), False Ilex Hairstreak (*S esculi*) and Blue-spot Hairstreak (*S spini*) are common.

Smallish private Campsite located at Malemort-du-Comtat with its own restaurant, swimming pool and tennis court, open May 1 to September 30. Reservations not normally needed outside the main holiday period of July and August. Own transport needed. Quiet location with Nightingales and Cicadas.

Camping Font-Neuve, Route de Méthamis, 84570 Malemort-du-Comtat

website www.campingfontneuve.com

Page contributed by G.R.