Issue 16 | Nov 2014

EUROPEAN INTERESTS GROUP

eNewsletter

CONTENTS

Butterfly Conservation

Welcome to EIG 16. It has lots of material. There are cheery articles on the wealth of butterflies still to be found in Greece, Estonia, and France. There is depressing news on **Danube Clouded Yellow** (*Colias myrmidone*) in Romania. There are lots of photos and you can just enjoy the pretty images or you can study them closely and improve your identification skills. I hope there is something here for you.

I am looking forward to my role as Editor. According to *The Aurelian Legacy* - a book about British butterflies and their collectors - the editing of entomological journals has been a pursuit of eccentric Englishmen for more than 200 years. I am pleased to be part of that long tradition!

Nigel Peace November 2014

From the EIG Chairman Simon Spencer

EIG AGM 2014

The EIG AGM on 25 October was very successful. The joint AGM with Hampshire and IOW Branch came about as a bit of an accident. We had already booked Hampshire and IOW Branch's usual location and persuaded **Martin Warren** (BC CEO) to speak on 10 years of progress for Butterfly Conservation Europe, before Hampshire and IOW Branch sought to book the location themselves on the same date. When they heard about our booking we both thought a joint meeting would be a great idea. We thought it was a good opportunity to acquaint a wider audience with our work and get more people excited about European butterflies.

I had to miss the AGM myself as I am recovering from an operation and though up and about I am not really up to long journeys yet. **Anne**, my wife was there holding the fort on my behalf. She sold several 2015 EIG calendars. Many thanks to all those who have sent in photographs. Every year it gets more difficult to choose between them. I am very grateful to **Mike Prentice** for taking charge of the day.

Mike Prentice and Dudley Cheesman keep order at the 2014 AGM.

Just occasionally in life you realize that what you have aimed for over a number of years has now been achieved. Here we were a group of five EIG members doing a survey of a national park in Greece accompanied by our friend and local butterfly expert **Lazaros Pamperis** and local park conservation officer **Rika Bisa** whom we had met on Mount Chelmos in 2008.

We were working together as a team making an important contribution to the records of the park on butterflies which were very limited before we started. Not much escaped our attention and with the combined expertise available there were not many question marks in the dataset. The team work is important and works well. Some of us use nets and concentrate on finding and identifying butterflies and other tend to take photographs. The subsequent correction of field records using the photographs is very valuable and instructive and can be done at leisure with reference books available. The photographs themselves are a valuable record. The learning process is greatly enhanced by the collective identification of butterflies by the team. Working alone you never have that confirmation. It was also great fun. We went to some fabulous places that without **Rika's** help and local knowledge we would not have found. We did not know what we would find in the way of butterflies. That is always very different and more useful than a tour of well known butterfly sites. This was what EIG was set up to do – work with local experts to make surveys of butterflies as a team. Last year it was helping **Miguel Munguira** in Spain. It also makes a very enjoyable holiday. The evening discussions on local culture and history were very well informed and instructive. As in most of Greece the traditional shepherds are now a rarity. This is likely to have a big impact on butterflies. I hope we go back many times and do the same in other national parks. **John Salmon's** report on the EIG trip to the Tzoumerka - Peristeri National Park features on pages 9 to 13. We would like to send another expedition to work with **Lazaros** earlier in the summer. We are also in the early stages of thinking about a butterfly meeting in Greece. This would be less ambitious than the Digne conference but on the same lines. It is likely to take place in spring 2016. There is a recent surge in interest in butterflies in Greece mainly prompted by **Lazaros'**s book the '*Butterflies of Greece*' and no doubt helped considerably by **Lazaros** giving away many copies of the Greek edition despite investing his life savings in its publication!

Committee changes

EIG has had a year of consolidation and we have had a bit of a change around in roles on the committee. **Dudley Cheesman** has taken over as Treasurer from **Nigel Peace** allowing **Nigel** to take over editing the newsletter from myself and **Anne**. We now use a professional designer for the newsletter so it now looks very professional. A big thank you to **Nigel** for doing such a good job as Treasurer and to **Dudley** for taking it on. This will mean that I have more time to attend to the growing task of being Chairman.

We are drafting in more help. **Matt Berry** has set up an EIG facebook page and we are going to make sure that the EIG website www.bc-eig.org.uk is refreshed ▼

From the EIG Chairman Simon Spencer cont.

▸ more frequently. I have an excellent Germany country page from **Marion Thomas** that is now finished and **Jude Lock**, our indefatigable EIG representative in France, has researched all the regional butterfly recording schemes in France (see www.bc-eig.org.uk/countries.html) to encourage EIG members to send in their records. She also lists useful local contacts in France. There are still gaps on the country pages – for example most of Scandinavia and Portugal – but we are getting there. The coverage of France is also not complete with nothing on the Alps. We would welcome contributions. We are beginning to get people sending in records to local recording schemes in France and elsewhere. Now that the recording spreadsheet is fully developed we will roll it out for all countries in Europe.

Drive for more members

We are going to have a bit of a marketing campaign this winter and try and raise the number of EIG members from the present 250 to a higher percentage of Butterfly Conservation's 25,000 members. We have revamped the EIG membership leaflet. It will go out early next year with the Butterfly magazine. I welcome further joint activities with Branches. I have spoken at Branch AGMs about EIG and we like to meet Branches and tell them what we do. Because we are a national group we actually have very few opportunities to meet members. We would like to find more opportunities for this and we will follow up a suggestion to have an EIG contact in each BC Branch and make available EIG articles for Branch newsletters.

More EIG members would mean more income to spend on things like trying to conserve **Danube Clouded Yellow** (***Colias myrmidone***) in Romania where self-funded volunteers have a role but there is also a need to pay local people to actually do something before this butterfly disappears. Long term associate of EIG **Szabolics Safian** (**Safi**) is on the case and has been researching one of the few remaining group of colonies in Romania with our help. We hope to make further progress next year.

EIG trips

We ran a butterfly ID training camp this summer in Valjouffrey in the Ecrins National Park in France. It was aimed at young inexperienced EIG members who could run up mountains and catch lots of butterflies. As it turned out we were all rather elderly but we did see some great butterflies. It is such a rich area and we were lucky with the weather. The weather in the Alps this year was generally poor. **Dudley Cheesman** has written an account on pages 24 to 25.

We would like to do more public EIG trips. **Mike Williams** has run a number of successful EIG fund raising tours and raised over 20,000 euros for the Hungarian Natural Heritage Trust. He is planning an EIG fund raising tour of Macedonia on 13 to 20 July 2015. Not everyone wants the hassle of organising an EIG trip. They are great fun but we are desperately short of leaders. They don't have to be spectacular or involve an itinerary to see as many butterfly species as possible. If you feel you could take this on or have any ideas please get in touch with me. From the contacts we have built up over the years and our contacts in Butterfly Conservation Europe we now have access to a network of butterfly people all over Europe. These people like to receive our records. Some also appreciate our practical help. Some like **Lazaros** will come and join us for a week. •

JOIN US! EIG fund raising tour of Macedonia 13 to 20 July 2015

Simon Spencer
Chairman EIG.

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From the Newsletter Editor Nigel Peace

Nigel Peace.

I am delighted to have taken over as Newsletter Editor. **Simon and Anne Spencer** have done a Herculean job in producing the first 15 editions. They have made the Newsletter interesting and informative, and ensured a high standard of presentation. They deserve a big 'thank you' from all of us who have enjoyed reading it since the first issue in April 2007. Now it is my turn to carry their work forward.

Some of you will know me from EIG visits to the butterfly section of the Natural History Museum, where I work as a volunteer one day a week. Others of you will know me from EIG trips to Europe. I can claim a reasonable knowledge of European butterflies, as an enthusiastic amateur rather than a professional lepidopterist.

Role of the Newsletter

There are over 400 species of European butterflies and taken as a whole they are so much more interesting than the 60 or so to be found in the UK. I want the Newsletter to enthuse readers about European butterflies, to help readers to find out where European species can be seen, and to learn how to identify them. I hope that producing a high quality Newsletter will encourage more Butterfly Conservation members to join EIG. It is an essential marketing tool for us. More EIG members will mean more subscription income and a greater capability to carry out surveys and support conservation initiatives.

Request for articles

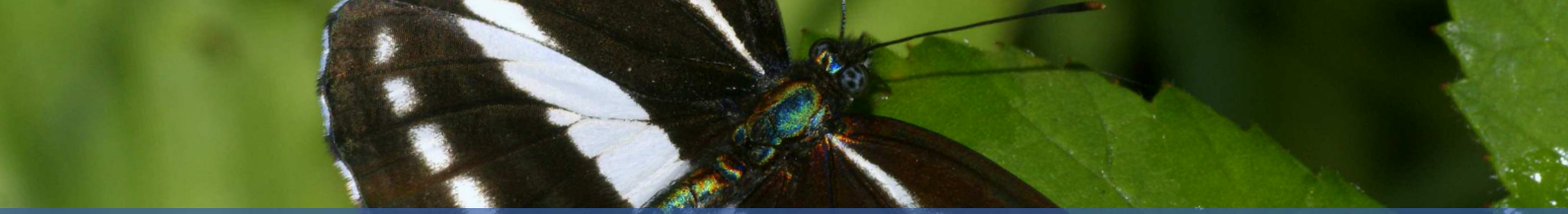
I have used my contacts to secure material for this Newsletter and I am grateful to contributors for some excellent articles. I think I can now put species names to a few more of my '**Mountain/Shepherd's Fritillary**' photographs and I will be visiting Estonia and Valjouffrey before long! It would be great if unsolicited material were to come forward for future issues of the Newsletter. The deadlines for the next two issues are 31 March 2015 and 30 September 2015. I would welcome articles/contributions on the following:

- Identification
- Places to visit
- Trip reports
- Taxonomic updates
- News items
- Photographic features (eg photospots)
- Anything else you think will be of interest!

Please send your articles and photographs to Nigel on email: liz-nigel@hotmail.co.uk
Tel No: 01420 85496

CONTRIBUTORS DEADLINES
for next two issues
31 March 2015
and
30 September 2015

Nigel Peace
liz-nigel@hotmail.co.uk



Notices and News

Woodland Brown
(***Lopinga achine***)

Chequered Skipper
(***Carterocephalus palaemon***)

Scarce Heath
(***Coenonympha hero***)

EIG Country Pages

Have you visited the country pages on the EIG website recently? They contain some excellent new material, and have now acquired critical mass. Go to www.bc-eig.org.uk/countries.html for the following and use them for planning your next butterfly holiday.

Germany

Marion Thomas has compiled a comprehensive chapter covering books, websites, travel, sites and species. The amount of detail is fantastic – the chapter is a book in itself. As Marion says, 'Germany is an easy destination for self-organised trips, with a first-class road and public transport network and plenty of excellent holiday accommodation of all types, plus the practical advantage that English is very well spoken and understood. Although the summer weather is rather less reliable than in southern Europe, Germany offers an enormous range of cultural and historic attractions, so that it is easy to find alternative diversions in the event of an inclement weather day.'

Marion comments that there are two categories of butterfly habitat, in very broad terms, for which the areas found in Germany may be regarded as of most significance on a Europe-wide basis. The first of these is damp temperate deciduous and mixed woodland, where species such as **Woodland Brown** (***Lopinga achine***), **Poplar Admiral** (***Limenitis populi***), **Black Hairstreak** (***Satyrium pruni***), **Chequered Skipper** (***Carterocephalus palaemon***), **Purple Emperor** (***Apature iris***), and **Lesser Purple Emperor** (***Apatura ilia***) are to be found.

The other significant category includes cool bog, moorland and damp grassland areas. Some of the few remaining western European populations of the glacial relict species **Scarce Heath** (***Coenonympha hero***) and **Violet Copper** (***Lycaena helle***) are found in such habitats, as well as species such as **Bog Fritillary** (***Boloria eunomia***), **Cranberry Fritillary** (***B. aquilionaris***), **Marsh Fritillary** (***Euphydryas aurinia***), **Large Heath** (***C. tullia***) and several interesting **Copper** (***Lycaena***) and **Large Blue** (***Phengaris***) species.

France

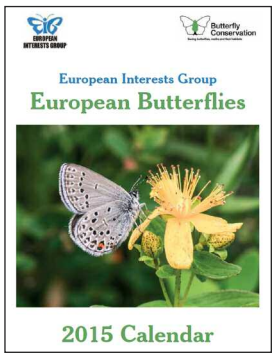
There are chapters covering eight regions, each written by an expert. There is also an overview by Jude Lock which among other things includes a section on Recording groups, schemes and partners in France. This has just been updated by Jude and is now comprehensive, listing recording partners for each region of France.

Jude includes a short section on regional atlases, mentioning among others the *Atlas des Papillons de Jour de Bourgogne et Franche-Compte* which is reviewed on page 26. She notes that two new atlases, covering Nord-Pas-de-Calais and Midi-Pyrenees, are expected during 2015.

Other countries

Other chapters cover Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey. More are in preparation. •

Nigel Peace



EIG Calendar 2015 and EIG Poloshirts

The EIG Calendar 2015, featuring 12 photos by EIG members, is now available from **Anne Spencer**. The cost is £8 for one or £15 for two, plus postage and packing.

Grey poloshirts, with one top pocket and an embroidered EIG logo, can also be obtained from **Anne**. The cost is £15 each and sizes available are M, L, XL and XXL. Please order from **Anne** by email: rhoslan.anne@gmail.com. •

EIG on Facebook

Find us on Facebook

A reminder that EIG has a Facebook page – www.facebook.com/BC.EuropeanInterests Group. When you visit the page, please press the 'like' button to ensure you are connected to the page and receive all our updates. If you have anything that you would like to share on the page, **Simon Spencer** can advise. As a guide, text should be no more than 100 words for a post. •

EIG Fundraising Tour to Republic of Macedonia, 13 to 20 July 2015

The next EIG fundraising tour will again be led by **Mike Williams** and this time will be to the Republic of Macedonia (formerly part of Yugoslavia) from 13 to 20 July 2015. Target species will include the endemic **Macedonian Grayling** (***Pseudochazara cingovskii***) and **Grey Asian Grayling** (***Pseudochazara geyeri***).

The cost will be £1495 per person plus single supplement and return airfare to Skopje. The price includes full board and accommodation, the services of a guide, and all transport within Macedonia.

If you are interested in joining the tour, please register your interest with Mike - mike@stagborough.fsnet.co.uk. The full itinerary will be available shortly. •

The Marsh European Award 2014

The Marsh Award for the conservation of European lepidoptera was this year awarded to **Dr Chris van Swaay**, the senior officer of Dutch Butterfly Conservation. **Chris** has led their excellent recording and monitoring schemes for more than two decades and has managed many practical conservation projects. He has also published extensively on trends in butterflies and has helped to develop several novel methods of analysis. One example of his work is the bringing together of data from monitoring schemes across Europe to produce a European Grassland Butterfly Indicator, which shows a decline of over 50% in the last 20 years. This more than anything has demonstrated to EU officials the deterioration of this crucial habitat and the value of butterflies as indicators. **Chris** is passionate about the conservation of European butterflies and also an excellent speaker – as exemplified by a witty video accepting the award, shown at the BC AGM on 15 November 2014. •

Danube Clouded Yellow
(***Colias myrmidone***)
Female. Romania July 2013.
Photo © Nigel Peace

Danube Clouded Yellow
(***Colias myrmidone***)
Male. Romania July 2013.
Photo © Nigel Peace

Update on Danube Clouded Yellow (*Colias myrmidone*)

I said in the last two EIG Newsletters that I expected the **Danube Clouded Yellow** (***Colias myrmidone***) to become extinct in the EU27 countries fairly soon, unless some serious concerted action could be taken. On the Red List it is Endangered in Europe and Critical in the European Union. It has already been lost from several countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria and Germany.

Romania – a depressing picture

EIG is part of an international partnership that is monitoring the situation in Romania and we have helped **Szabolcs Sáfián** (**Safi**) and team return to Georgheni this summer to assess the situation. A Romanian PhD student **Robert Walcz** has been doing monitoring as part of his degree and **Matthias Dolek** from Germany visited the sites in October. (**Matthias** is funded by ANL, the Bavarian Academy for Nature Conservation and Landscape Management, for a co-operation with **Prof. Rakoşy** at Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj.) The picture they paint is extremely depressing. The best sites seem to be cleared of scrub and now they are very heavily grazed, while others were found newly afforested.

The problem is much more complex than grazing or not grazing. In the past the slopes were grazed but there was much less forest on them. In the early 2000s the pastures and hay meadows became abandoned due to people moving away from agriculture. The overgrowth of the meadows and establishment of scrub created extensive habitats for ***myrmidone***, where the foodplant *Chamaecytisus* could grow freely and abundantly on slopes with favourable climate. This was probably when ***myrmidone*** became locally abundant and this stage lasted until the consolidation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in Romania along with its subsidies. At the same time, the Romanian government completed the re-privatisation of the land and started collecting information on the new land users, which resulted in new areas being drawn under management. Obviously, many of the new users did not want to keep animals and they took advantage of the subsidies on afforestation. This is how some of the best ***myrmidone*** areas were planted with spruce. Unfortunately on some other slopes succession took over the meadows, and now a mixed hazel-spruce-birch forest is found. The foodplant is still abundant but unsuitable for ***myrmidone*** because of shading.

The impact of the Common Agricultural Policy

What we are witnessing at the moment is direct result of the CAP, which does not allow shrub cover on subsidised pasture. Thus local farmers have started to remove shrubs, including the foodplant *Chamaecytisus*, from their land. As subsidies grow for animal keeping the disappearance of suitable habitats will hasten. Several cattle farmers recently invested in the area to establish new herds and they will definitely not be happy to hear that they should reduce the intensity of grazing. Also the cattle farmers do not actually own the land, they only utilise it on lease, and the conditions of vegetation of the pasture will therefore receive much less care than when they were grazed only by the cattle of the individual owners. The area has no protection status.

Matthias Dolek's visit last month confirms these observations. He found the best areas completely grazed down with no young stages of ***myrmidone*** at all. They could still be found in the afforested areas. Some caterpillars were found on food plants ▾

next to planted trees – these sites will be lost quickly in the next years. Most caterpillars were found in a 'forgotten corner' next to a large pasture without any obvious border or fence. The immediate threat is obvious. He also visited another ***myrmidone*** site in the Apuseni mountains west of Cluj where he also found overgrazing of the site.

We have been discussing a LIFE project but unless key areas can be managed for the requirements of ***myrmidone*** it will be lost as has happened in so many countries. A small group will visit the area in 2015 to assist with monitoring the population. • **Simon Spencer**

Violet Copper
(***Lycaena helle***)
Male. France June 2013.
Photo © Roger Gibbons

PLEASE NOTE: If you intend to offer your assistance, please copy to Simon Spencer email: cerisyi@bt internet.com

Request for Assistance: Violet Copper (Lycaena helle) in the French Pyrenees

Nick Bowles has been involved (with **Graham Hart**) in surveying the **Violet Copper** (***Lycaena helle***) in the French Pyrenees. Last year he found that in 11 years since an original survey by **Graham**, the population had shrunk to approximately 10% of the previous survey findings and that several small colonies had been lost. A paper on this was presented by **Graham** at the Butterfly Conservation Symposium at Southampton University in April this year, Nick's research was published by the Amateur Entomologists' Society, and a joint paper was published in a book specifically about the **Violet Copper**.

Nick will be going back to the Pyrenees in May and June 2015 to try to get more data and to really pin down why the species is doing very well at some sites and dreadfully at other apparently similar ones. He would be very pleased to be joined by EIG members for some or all the time. There is no funding for this work, but Graham has found a flat which can be used as a base in Querigut. This is near to the biggest populations in the east but some hours from sites at the southern edge of the 'colony/metapopulation'. If you are interested in helping, contact **Nick** at nick.bowles@ntlworld.com. •

Butterfly Monitoring in Romania

Paul Kirkland has reported further progress in developing butterfly monitoring in Romania. 17 transects have now been established. A workshop was held in Cluj in April 2014, and 14 participants attended a Butterfly Camp near Gheorgeni in July. There is an active Facebook page and a new website has been created (http://fluturomania.wordpress.com/). •

EuCAN

And finally! EuCAN Community Interest Company promotes conservation placements in the UK and Europe. It is running two holidays next year to raise funds for training and conservation visits, in La Brenne (France) and Aggletek National Park (Hungary). See www.eucan.org.uk.

Butterfly Conservation
Charity registered in England & Wales (254937) and in Scotland (SCO39268)
Company limited by guarantee, registered in England (2206468)
Registered office: Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5QP.
Email: info@butterfly-conservation.org Website: www.butterfly-conservation.org

NW Greece survey

EIG Survey in Epiros, NW Greece, 2 to 10 July 2014

The survey was undertaken mainly in the National Park of Tzoumerka – Peristeri (Peristeri is also known as Lakmos). The purpose was to record all butterfly species present. EIG members **Martin Davies, Nigel Peace, Mike Prentice, John Salmon** and **Simon Spencer** took part, and we were extremely fortunate to be joined by **Rika Bisa**, conservation officer for the Park, whom some of us had met on the EIG survey of Chelmos in 2008, and **Lazaros Pamperis**, author of the magnificent *The Butterflies of Greece* (2nd edition 2009), who has unrivalled knowledge of Greek butterflies and their habitats.

Rika Bisa, Simon Spencer, Martin Davies, Nigel Peace, Mike Prentice, and Lazaros Pamperis in Tsoumerka - Peristeri National Park, July 2014. John Salmon is behind the camera.

The Park covers a very large area (c.900 km.2) of Epiros broadly south of Metsovo, and has a wide range of habitat from high mountain (highest point over 2400m.; 7 of our sites were over 1600m.), with seasonal streams which were by and large dry, or nearly so, to river valleys – although even the largest of them has limited flow by early July. In this area, mainly inhabited until recently by pastoral Vlachs, there is little arable. It was impossible in the time available to make a thorough survey: we could only explore as wide a range of habitat as possible. The survey in the Park ended on 7 July, but **Lazaros** and three members of the team went to selected parts of the area west of Ioannina on the following three days.

For the first 3 days we explored the northern part of the Park from Metsovo, and then moved to Syrrako in the centre of the Park, where the Park President, **Mr. Christos Chasanis**, very kindly gave us both hospitality in his hotel, which proved an admirable centre, and helpful advice on grazing in the area and other matters. Our final stay in the Park was for a night at the Forest Village (Dasiko Chorio) near Kataraktis.

Butterflies

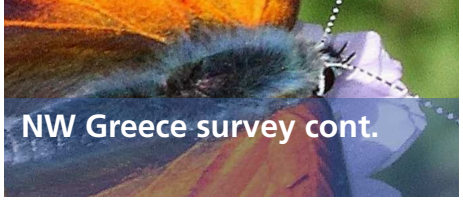
For the complete list of species seen, see below: only some can be mentioned here. Red Data List species are indicated as Vulnerable (VU) or Near Threatened (NT).

It was perhaps chance that made the species count of the first site we explored the highest of the whole survey in the Park, even though we were not there for more than an hour; but it was good to find one of our target high altitude Heath species, **Russian Heath** (***Coenonympha leander***), at our second site, and at two others on the fourth day; we did not find the other, **Balkan Heath** (***C. orientalis: VU***), in the Park, but did observe one or two in the Katara Pass a short distance outside it; we recommend that the Pass be accorded National Park status in order to afford it, and other important species there, the necessary protection.

Russian Heath (***Coenonympha leander***) Photo © Nigel Peace

Red Data List species

Lazaros advised us that the season in Greece in general was a week to a fortnight later than usual. That was no doubt why we saw fewer **Apollo** ▾



Balkan Heath
(***Coenonympha orientalis***)
Photo © Nigel Peace

Blue Argus
(***Aricia anteros***)
Photo © Nigel Peace

Balkan Copper
(***Lycaena candens***)
Photo © Nigel Peace

▸(***Parnassius apollo: NT***) than we had hoped; but one flew quickly over us on our penultimate day in the Park, and we probably saw another on the final day there; but they could not be seen on the thistles on which **Lazaros** had found them nectaring in previous years in the Katara Pass. **Clouded Apollo** (***Parnassius mnemosyne***: NT), however, was seen there and at two high altitude sites within the Park. **Southern Swallowtail** (***Papilio alexanor***) was seen only once, at one of our lower sites, and was worn.

Other Red Data List species observed were mainly Blues. **Eastern Baton Blue** (***Pseudophilotes vicrama***: NT) was found at 6 sites inside, and a further 2 outside, the Park. The typical feeding patterns of the larvae of **Iolas Blue** (***Iolana iolas***: NT) were found at one site in the Park and another on the final three days. **Turquoise Blue** (***Polyommatus dorylas***: NT) was seen at three Park sites, and **Blue Argus** (***Aricia anteros***: NT) at two. **Niobe** and **Lesser Spotted Fritillary** (***Argynnis niobe*** and ***Melitaea trivia***: NT/EU27) were seen at one each.

Other species

There was a wide range of other species, often in considerable numbers. ***Coppers*** were disappointingly infrequent: we saw only 4 species in the Park, only 2 of them at more than 1 site. **Hairstreaks** were only marginally better, except that there were many **Ilex** (***Satyrium ilicis***) at most sites. **Zephyr Blue** (***Plebejus sephirus***) was present at 11, often in large numbers mud-puddling in the afternoon; **Silver-Studded Blue** (***Plebejus argus***) was similar, but at fewer sites. Apart from the (very) **Common Blue** (***Polyommatus icarus***), **Brown Argus** (***Aricia agestis***) and **Mazarine Blue** (***Cyaniris semiargus***), other blues were seen in small numbers, although there were no species of the old ***Agrodiaetus*** genus, and we altogether failed to find the **Small Blue** (***Cupido minimus***).

Skippers were found in small numbers, except **Mallow**, **Small** and **Large** (***Carcharodus alceae***, ***Thymelicus sylvestris*** and ***Ochlodes sylvanus***). There were remarkably few ***Pyrgus*** species, but **Persian Skipper** (***Spialia phlomidis***) was nice to see in the Park, and we were pleased to find **Mediterranean Skipper** (***Gegenes nostrodamus***) at one site on our penultimate day, although it was a long way from the Park.

Pieridae were among the commonest species encountered, including **Black-veined**, **Large**, **Small** and **Wood Whites** (***Aporia crataegi***, ***Pieris brassicae***, ***P. rapae***, and ***Leptidea sinapis complex***) and **Brimstones** (***Gonopteryx rhamni***); **Clouded Yellow** (***Colias crocea***) was at even more sites than the **Common Blue**. Other species were found on fewer sites, but included **Mountain** and **Southern Small Whites** (***Pieris ergane, P. mannii***), **Cleopatra** (***Gonopteryx cleopatra***) and two other **Clouded Yellows**, **Greek** and **Berger's** (***C. aurorina***, ***C. alfacariensis***).

Nymphalidae were also among the species most often seen, including **Silver-washed**, **Spotted** and **Heath Fritillaries** (***Argynnis paphia***, ***Melitaea didyma*** and ***M. athalia***), **Painted Lady** (***Vanessa cardui***), **Wall**, **Large Wall** and **Meadow Browns** (***Lasiommata megera*** and ***L. maera***, and ***Maniola jurtina***) and **Small** and **Pearly Heath** (***Coenonympha pamphilus*** and ***C. arcania***). At the other end of the scale, we found **Northern Wall Brown** (***Lasiommata petropolitana***) at only one site – the Katara Pass, outside the Park. The handsome **Southern White Admiral** (***Limenitis reducta***) was at 9 sites, but the **White Admiral** (***L. camilla***) was absent; by contrast the **Southern Comma** (***Polygonia egea***) was much less frequent than the **Comma** (***P. c-album***). ▾

Persian Skipper
(***Spialia phlomidis***)
Photo © Nigel Peace

Pearly Heath
(***Coenonympha arcania***)
Photo © Nigel Peace

▸ We saw none of the Greek species of **Purple Emperor** (***Apatura metis***, ***ilia*** and ***iris***) even though we searched suitable habitat, including some in the Park, but also far outside it by the River Kalamas further to the West. We caught glances of passing **Two-tailed Pashas** (***Charaxes jasius***), two of them a considerable distance from the coast, but sadly no more.

Greek history

Especially on the final three days, we were much indebted to **Lazaros** for taking us to sites which not only had much interest for butterflies, but also for Greek history: at Souli we saw, from below, the Kiapha Fort built by Ali Pasha of Ioannina (to whose court Byron travelled) against the Souliotes who defied him for years.

Most of our penultimate day was spent near the Albanian border, where we saw the boyhood village of Nicholas Gage, author of Eleni: an account of how his mother, at the cost of her own life, enabled him and others of her children to escape during the final stages in 1949 of the Greek Civil War; a street is now named after her.

Other natural history

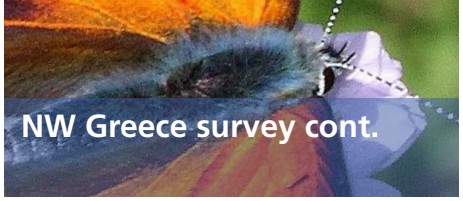
The Park is not only excellent for butterflies but also for other natural history. There were magnificent shows of the remarkable Balkan Lizard Orchid (*Himantoglossum caprinum*), including a dozen or so a few hundred metres from our hotel in Syrrako; Rika showed us fascinating Yellow-Bellied Toads (*Bombina variegata*) playing dead, and Balkan Stream Frogs (*Rana graeca*), and we saw bear paw-prints if not bears themselves.

Farming practice and land use

Many areas of Greece have experienced a rapid change in agriculture over the last 40 years. Whereas then many Greeks and particularly the Vlach community derived their income from shepherding sheep and goats and making those products for which Greece is rightly famous, namely feta cheese and Greek yoghurt, today a different generation, better educated and reluctant to put up with the hardship of shepherding, aspire to a better life. Sheep and goat numbers have declined dramatically though this might not always be apparent from the official statistics. Much of upland Greece is now undergrazed rather than overgrazed and beef cattle are much more widespread than they used to be as they are much less work than milk sheep and goats. The opportunity of being able to water cattle from bowsers or pickup trucks, a consequence of the creation of dirt roads, has enabled some farmers to adapt successfully to a new situation.

In the lower areas of the park we encountered former arable land that had been abandoned and relatively little sheep or goat grazing. There was evidence of recent increase in scrub cover such as Crataegus or Juniper. Further up there was more grazing, often by cattle but probably a tenth of the grazing pressure that would have existed 40 years ago. There was less evidence of scrub growth but abandoned summer grazing enclosures and homesteads were commonplace. One would have presumed that the former occupants would have operated the traditional transhumance bringing stock from the lowlands for the summer grazing.

Initially the abandonment of land is good for butterflies. Flowers can set seed and insects can complete their life cycle without being eaten by ruminants. Even moderately dense scrub cover can support good butterfly populations if there are still grass areas between the trees. However once abandonment starts ▾



We recommend:

1 Livestock numbers in the park should be surveyed and recorded with a view to having a baseline with which to monitor future changes.

2 Dated satellite or aerial photographs should be acquired to monitor scrub growth and other changes to the habitat.

3 The Katara Pass, where the group found Balkan Heath (*Coenonympha orientalis*), should be protected by inclusion of this area within a National Park.

4 Further survey and monitoring of butterflies should be undertaken particularly in the higher parts of the Park and at different seasons. Our survey only covered one week in early July. Though this may be the peak flight period, butterflies can be found from March till October.

5 A similar EIG volunteer group should visit the Park in May or early June.

6 Butterfly ecotourism should be encouraged. Though there are not the very local Greek endemics that are found at other National Parks such as Mount Chelmos and other places such as Mount Phalakron, the Park has considerable potential as a butterfly ecotourism destination with sufficient infrastructure to accommodate it particularly in Metsovo. Syrrako still has the charm of the old Greece which is perhaps lacking in more visited places.

7 Similar EIG surveys of other Greek National Parks should be encouraged. EIG is always willing to supply self-funded volunteers to survey butterflies in National Parks.

▸ and scrub becomes established there is an inevitable succession to some form of secondary woodland unless the scrub is mechanically cleared, heavily grazed by goats or it catches fire. The pine trees often develop within the juniper or Crataegus scrub which offer them protection from grazing.

Acknowledgements

We relied extensively on the knowledge and experience of both **Rika** and **Lazaros**, and also their humour and company. Without them, the survey would not have been possible; they also made it thoroughly enjoyable.

I am indebted to **Simon Spencer** for the paragraphs on farming practice and land use, which draw on discussion especially with **Mr. Christos Chasanis**. I am also indebted to **Simon** for his role in framing the recommendations; and to **Nigel Peace** for the photographs. Finally, we are very grateful to the Thriplow Charitable Trust for a generous contribution to the costs of the survey. •

John Salmon

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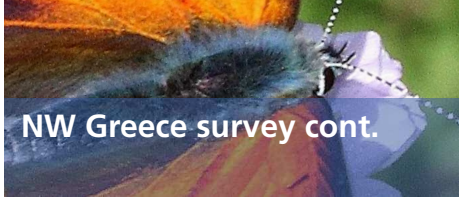
Total species list

The first figure after each species is the number of sites at which the species was recorded; the second figure (in brackets) is the number of those sites in the Park

Dingy Skipper (*Erynnis tages*) 2(1)	**Mallow Skipper** (*Carcharodus alceae*) 13(5)
Oriental Skipper (*Carcharodus orientalis*) 5(4)	**Persian Skipper** (*Spialia phlomidis*) 2(2)
Hungarian Skipper (*Spialia orbifer*) 8(6)	**Sage Skipper** (*Muschampia proto*) 2(0)
Grizzled Skipper (*Pyrgus malvae*) 2(2)	**Oberthur's Grizzled Skipper** (*Pyrgus armoricanus*) 1(1)
Essex Skipper (*Thymelicus lineola*) 7(6)	**Small Skipper** (*Thymelicus sylvestris*) 17(15)
Large Skipper (*Ochlodes sylvanus*) 9(8)	**Mediterranean Skipper** (*Gegenes nostrodamus*) 1(0)
Clouded Apollo (*Parnassius mnemosyne*) 3(2)	**Apollo** (*Parnassius apollo*) 2-3(1)
Scarce Swallowtail (*Iphiclides podalirius*) 23(12)	**Swallowtail** (*Papilio machaon*) 11(6)
Southern Swallowtail (*Papilio alexanor*) 1(1)	**Wood White** (*Leptidea sinapis complex*) 16(8)
Eastern Wood White (*Leptidea duponcheli*) 3(3)	**Black-veined white** (*Aporia crataegi*) 17(16)
Large White (*Pieris brassicae*) 15(12)	**Southern Small White** (*Pieris mannii*) 3-4(1-2)
Small White (*Pieris rapae*) 13(6)	**Mountain Small White** (*Pieris ergane*) 7(6)
Green-veined White (*Pieris napi*) 7(5)	**Eastern Bath White** (*Pontia edusa*) 8(5)
Clouded Yellow (*Colias crocea*) 37(27)	**Greek Clouded Yellow** (*Colias aurorina*) 2(2)
Berger's Clouded Yellow (*Colias alfacariensis*) 2(2)	**Brimstone** (*Gonepteryx rhamni*) 15(13)
Cleopatra (*Gonepteryx cleopatra*) 7(4)	**Small Copper** (*Lycaena phlaeas*) 7(3)
Grecian Copper (*Lycaena ottomana*) 3(0)	**Sooty Copper** (*Lycaena tityrus*) 3(3)
Purple-shot Copper (*Lycaena alciphron*) 1(1)	**Balkan Copper** (*Lycaena candens*) 1(1)
Purple Hairstreak (*Favonius quercus*) 2(1)	**Green Hairstreak** (*Callophrys rubi*) 1(1)

continued ▾



NW Greece survey cont.

Total species list *continued*

Blue-spot Hairstreak *(Satyrium spini)* 1(0)	**Ilex Hairstreak** (*Satyrium ilicis)* 22(16)
Sloe Hairstreak *(Satyrium acaciae)* 2(2)	**Long-tailed Blue** (*Lampides boeticus)* 4(3)
Lang's Short-tailed Blue *(Leptotes pirithous)* 6(4)	**Holly Blue** (*Celastrina argiolus)* 11(6)
Eastern Baton Blue *(Pseudophilotes vicrama)* 8(6)	**Green Underside Blue** (*Glaucopsyche alexis)* 1(0)
Iolas Blue (larvae) (*Iolana iolas*) 2(1)	**Zephyr Blue** (*Plebejus sephirus*) 11(11)
Silver-studded Blue *(Plebejus argus)* 8(8)	**Idas Blue** (*Plebejus idas*) 1(1)
Reverdin's Blue *(Plebejus argyrognomon)* 1(1)	**Brown Argus** *(Aricia agestis)* 20(18)
Blue Argus *(Aricia anteros)* 2(2)	**Mazarine Blue** *(Cyaniris semiargus)* 9(9)
Turquoise Blue *(Polyommatus dorylas)* 4(4)	**Amanda's Blue** *(Polyommatus amandus)* 3(3)
Chapman's Blue *(Polyommatus thersites)* 5(5)	**Common Blue** *(Polyommatus icarus)* 33(22)
Meleager's Blue *(Polyommatus daphnis)* 1(1)	**Adonis Blue** *(Polyommatus bellargus)* 3(3)
Chalk-hill Blue *(Polyommatus coridon)* 1(1)	**Nettle-tree Butterfly** *(Libythea celtis)* 8(5)
Silver-washed Fritillary *(Argynnis paphia)* 22(14)	**High Brown Fritillary** *(Argynnis adippe)* 3(3)
Niobe Fritillary *(Argynnis niobe)* 2(1)	**Queen of Spain Fritillary** *(Issoria lathonia)* 5(2)
Marbled Fritillary *(Brenthis daphne)* 5(5)	**Twin-spot Fritillary** *(Brenthis hecate)* 2(2)
Pearl-bordered Fritillary *(Boloria euphrosyne)* 1(1)	**Weaver's Fritillary** *(Boloria dia)* 1(1)
Red Admiral *(Vanessa atalanta)* 5(5)	**Painted Lady** *(Vanessa cardui)* 26(20)
Peacock *(Aglais io)* 3(2)	**Small Tortoiseshell** *(Aglais urticae)* 4(4)
Comma *(Polygonia c-album)* 7(6)	**Southern Comma** *(Polygonia egea)* 3(1)
Camberwell Beauty *(Nymphalis antiopa)* 4(4)	**Large Tortoiseshell** *(Nymphalis polychloros)* 9(9)
Glanville Fritillary *(Melitaea cinxia)* 2(2)	**Knapweed Fritillary** *(Melitaea phoebe)* 5(5)
Spotted Fritillary *(Melitaea trivia)* 1(1)	**Lesser Spotted Fritillary** *(Melitaea didyma)* 17(14)
Heath Fritillary *(Melitaea athalia)* 13(13)	**Southern White Admiral** *(Limenitis reducta)* 9(5)
Two-tailed Pasha *(Charaxes jasius)* 3(1)	**Lattice Brown** *(Kirinia roxelana)* 5(3)
Speckled Wood *(Pararge aegeria)* 8(5)	**Wall Brown** *(Lasiommata megera)* 21(12)
Northern Wall Brown *(Lasiommata petropolitana)*1(0)	**Large Wall Brown** *(Lasiommata maera)*10(6)
Balkan Heath *(Coenonympha orientalis)* 1(0)	**Pearly Heath** *(Coenonympha arcania)* 16(16)
Russian Heath *(Coenonympha leander)* 3(3)	**Small Heath** *(Coenonympha pamphilus)* 16(10)
Southern Gatekeeper *(Pyronia cecilia)* 1(1)	**Meadow Brown** *(Maniola jurtina)* 26(19)
Woodland Ringlet *(Erebia medusa)* 5(5)	**Ottoman Brassy Ringlet** *(Erebia ottomana)* 1(1)
Esper's Marbled White *(Melanargia russiae)* 1(1)	**Marbled White** *(Melanargia galathea)* 26(24)
Balkan Marbled White *(Melanargia larissa)* 18(11)	**Great Sooty Satyr** *(Satyrus ferula)* 6(3)
Woodland Grayling *(Hipparchia fagi)* 9-10(5-6)	**Eastern Rock Grayling** *(Hipparchia syriaca)* 0-1(0-1)
Delattin's Grayling *(Hipparchia volgensis)* 0-1(0)	**Balkan Grayling** *(Hipparchia senthes)* 0-2(0)
Great Banded Grayling *(Brintesia circe)*15(11)	

Identification feature

Identifying Mountain Fritillary (*Boloria napaea*) and Shepherd's Fritillary (*Boloria pales*)

When I was first asked if I would write an article on the identification of certain species, I clearly confused the article I would like to *read* with the article I would like to *write*, because I suggested the two high altitude fritillaries, **Mountain Fritillary** (*B. napaea*) and **Shepherd's Fritillary** (*B. pales*). Hindsight suggests that this might have been a rather rash act of volunteering as these two species are notoriously confusing and often, if not usually, fly together.

Their geographical distribution is mainly limited to the higher reaches of the Alps and the Pyrenees, together with other more easterly locations such as the Dolomites and the Julian Alps. According to the Tolman & Lewington guide published by Collins, the nominate form of ***pales*** flies in the eastern Alps and the more easterly locations, while the subspecies ***palustris*** flies in the western Alps and other isolated locations in the Balkans. The subspecies ***pyrenesmiscens*** flies in the Pyrenees. This article is primarily concerned with the ***palustris*** subspecies. ***Napaea*** flies in the Alps and in a small region of the Pyrenees, as well as in northern Scandinavia. Both ***pales*** and ***napaea*** are generally found at altitudes of 2000m and above, although sometimes slightly lower. It is generally found that, where they fly in the same locality, which seems to be quite often, ***pales*** can usually be found at higher levels than ***napaea.***

Individual variation

It would be wise to start with the caveat that many species, especially those that fly at altitude, are subject to variation in their colouring and markings and even, to some extent, wing shape. From my observations of ***Pyrgus*** **grizzled skippers** (of which some 14 species occur in France), it becomes apparent that only some 85% closely match the "classical" markings, 10% are at the periphery and just about identifiable, and 5% can really only be identified because they look less *unlike* one species than any other, plus other factors such as geography, altitude, flight period, etc. Books, often for reasons of limitation of space, include only the classical specimens (and often not key subspecies, or even females) and thus imply (by omission) that all specimens of the species look like the ones they show. Fortunately, the butterflies themselves do not have to thumb through the pages of T&L.

Reference is made on several occasions to the specific location of marks, in the context of spaces between veins (s1 etc) in order to define the marks being addressed. For simplicity, this link gives the "roadmap", reproduced from Tristan Lafranchis' book, with permission: http://www.butterfliesoffrance.com/wing%20diagram.htm

I would further confess that I do not purport in any way to be an expert on these two ***Boloria*** species and that, while I have seen many of them, they have nearly all been in the French and Swiss Alps. The views expressed here are a combination of experience in the field set against the background of information available from books and websites.

▸ *Females*

Having got all the disclaimers out of the way, let's start with the positives: the females of both species, perhaps less commonly seen than the males, are quite distinct. Female ***napaea*** usually have a very suffused appearance, often a purplish sheen when fresh (more so than the example shown below). ***Pales*** are more dusky than their male counterparts, but clearly closer to the colouring of the males than is true for ***napaea***. Although the dusky, suffused colouring of female ***pales*** is usually sufficient to differentiate the sexes, this can be reinforced by reference to body shape, where the female body is fatter (depending on degree of gravidity); also, the female body is shorter than the male and stops short of the end of the hindwing, whereas the male body extends to the end of the hindwing. Here are photos of the uppersides of both species, which I believe to be typical:.

Shepherd's Fritillary
(***Boloria pales***) female.
Photo © Roger Gibbons

Mountain Fritillary
(***Boloria napaea***) female.
Photo © Roger Gibbons

▸ *Wing shape*

It is generally considered that ***napaea*** has a wider, narrower (top to bottom) forewing shape, the forewings being significantly wider than the hindwings. However, the wing shape does seem to vary from highly angular in some specimens, to quite rounded.

Shepherd's Fritillary
(***Boloria pales***)
male - the white line is explained below.
Photo © Roger Gibbons

Mountain Fritillary
(***Boloria napaea***) male.
Photo © Roger Gibbons

▸ *Upperside – strength of markings*

It is usually considered that the black markings of ***napaea*** are thinner and finer than those of ***pales***. It is probably true that a specimen with rather bolder, thicker, markings is likely to be ***pales*** (but not always – see the ***napaea*** photo below), but perhaps the converse is not consistently true. The ***napaea*** example above is probably typical for this species.

Shepherd's Fritillary
(***Boloria pales***) male.
Photo © Roger Gibbons

Mountain Fritillary
(***Boloria napaea***)
male - a non-typical heavily marked example.
Photo © Roger Gibbons

Upperside forewing post-discal series of black spots

Both species have a series of post-discal black spots in s1b to s6 of broadly consistent size. They are broadly in line, but there is a disjoint between s3 and s4 to a greater or lesser degree (the point of the disjoint is shown by the white line in the photo above). It is widely considered that if the disjoint is very marked, then this indicates ***pales***. If there is almost no discernible disjoint, then ***napaea*** is most likely. This seems to hold true in most cases, and is quoted by Lafranchis in his book on the identification of European species. However, there are variations of degree in between which maybe only indicate a degree of probability.

For illustrations, see the ***pales*** and ***napaea*** photos under "*Wing shape*" above. ▾

▸ I am given to understand that in Bozano's *Guide to the Butterflies of the Palearctic Region*, it is stated that the black mark/line in s2 of the upperside forewing discal series:

- touches (or very nearly touches) the discoidal cell in ***pales***
- is usually separated from the discoidal cell in ***napaea***.

I do not have a copy of this book, nor have I seen it, but this indicator has been relayed to me from a trusted expert. I have not used this myself, so cannot express an opinion. Those who have done so, often come to a different conclusion regarding identification from those using the post-discal series described above.

Undersides

These are perhaps, as with many species, more definitive in terms of separating species, certainly so with the two under question here. A view of both surfaces should increase the confidence levels of identification quite considerably.

The hindwing of ***pales*** is distinctly more reddish, more of a deeper brownish-red, and ***napaea*** is usually more of a delicate orange-red on a ground colour that is often a soft beige (although the ***napaea*** example below is perhaps more delicately coloured than typical). The markings of ***pales*** are less distinct and seem to merge into each other more than in ***napaea***. The discal series of marks are perhaps the most definitively shaped, with those in s1 and s7 being subject to the greatest difference between the two species. These are indicated on the ***napaea*** photo below, the white line pointing to s1, the black line pointing to s7.

Shepherd's Fritillary
(***Boloria pales***)
Photo © Roger Gibbons

Mountain Fritillary
(***Boloria napaea***)
Photo © Roger Gibbons

▸ It appears that the s1 mark in ***napaea*** is narrower in the centre than ***pales***, indented strongly especially at the external edge. In ***pales***, this mark appears much wider and less "waisted".

The s7 mark appears to be closer to a regular rectangle in s7 for ***napaea***, whereas in ***pales*** the external edge is quite angled.

These features appear to be consistent.

Conclusions

The differentiation of these two species is particularly difficult, as may be evident from the cautious statements that pepper this article. It probably requires a sight of both surfaces to increase confidence levels to near to 100%, although this is difficult in the field, unless netting (which I am personally not prepared to do). It probably requires substantial expertise to identify with confidence on a Europe-wide level, but local experts tend to know the particularities of their own populations, and local knowledge is often critical.

In general, I would (if pressed) say that the key features for identifying male ***pales*** and ***napaea*** are (in order of preference):

1. the linearity (or not) of the upperside forewing series of post-discal black spots, where linearity indicates ***napaea*** and a disjoint between s3 and s4 indicates ***pales***.
2. the colouring and underside hindwing markings in s1 and s7 of the discal band (see text above for details).
3. the strength of the upperside black markings, where thinner markings indicate ***napaea***.

It is perhaps best to treat this article as the "starter for ten" and invite comments, critique or additional features not mentioned here. The EIG web site is due to be revised and expanded in the coming months and this may provide a suitable forum for the debate on such issues.

Roger Gibbons
www.butterfliesoffrance.com

Estonia

Surprising Estonia

Ever since I can remember I have wanted to see two of Western Europe's rarest butterflies, the **False Ringlet** (*Coenonympha oedippus)* and the **Scarce Heath** (*Coenonympha hero)*. So when my friend **Adrian Hoskins** http://www.learnaboutbutterflies.com/, who has been responsible for most of my finest butterfly experiences, announced that he was going to Estonia to see the **Scarce Heath** I did not hesitate to sign up for the trip. I will admit however that I knew almost nothing of Estonia except for its location on the Eastern shore of the Baltic and was somewhat sceptical as to what else we might see.

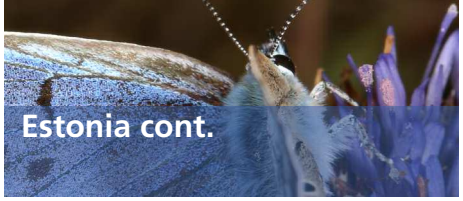
Scarce Fritillary (***Euphydryas maturna***)
Photo © Tony Hoare

On looking it up I discovered that I was right about its location on the south side of the Gulf of Finland, situated uneasily just to the west of St Petersburg. This implied that it had very cold winters by our standards and that it would be light nearly all night at the time of our visit in early July. It is a small country but its one and a quarter million inhabitants, who speak a language closely allied to Finnish, live mainly in the towns, leaving plenty of room for extensive forests. It also appeared to be pretty flat and to have lots of wetlands. As well as the **Scarce Heath** there were a number of other desirable species on the list with which Adrian supplied us, notably the **Poplar Admiral** (***Limenitis populi***), **Pallas's Fritillary** (***Argynnis laodice***) and **Scarce Fritillary** (***Euphydryas maturna***) together with a variety of other northern **Fritillaries**, the **Yellow-legged Tortoiseshell** (***Nymphalis xanthomelas***), the **Woodland Brown** (***Lopinga achine***) and a species that has long eluded me, the **Cranberry Blue** (***Plebejus optilete***).

Estonian forestry track.

Offshore on Saaremaa

I had to miss the first two days of the trip but **Eleri Lopp-Valdma**, the ground agent http://www.estonianwildlifetours.com/, provided impeccable arrangements for me to meet the others on Saaremaa, Estonia's largest off-shore island. I was met at the bus station by **Adrian** and our local guide **Urmas**, who is Estonia's leading (perhaps only!) microlepidopterist and we set off in the minibus towards the manor house that was our accommodation. On the way there we stopped in a woodland meadow to have a quick look at some Mulleins to see if we could find any larvae of the **Mullein Moth** (***Cucullia verbasci***). Despite the late hour there was still some butterfly activity, mostly **Black-veined Whites** (***Aporia crataegi***) but I was astonished suddenly to ▾



Scarce Fritillary (***Euphydryas maturna***)
Photo © Tony Hoare

Large Blue (***Phengaris arion***)
Photo © Tony Hoare

Tehumardi, site of Large Blue.

▸ come across a **Scarce Fritillary**. I called the others over and made a dash for my camera which was still packed for travelling but the butterfly had flown before the others could get a good view and my sighting was greeted by some justified scepticism. I was however sure of my identification as I was familiar with the genus and had got a close view of the butterfly – a life butterfly on our first stop, what a fantastic start!

The others had already seen both **Poplar Admiral** and **Woodland Brown** and so I was very keen to get going next day. We drove to a site new to the others which was known to have both species and the **Woodland Brown** soon made its appearance but proved very difficult to photograph as it always stopped flying under cover. A number of **White Admirals** (***Limenitis camilla***) flew down the track raising hopes of **Poplar Admiral** but we saw none of that butterfly. We did see numbers of **Broad-bordered Bee Hawk Moths** (***Hemaris fuciformis***) nectaring at the abundant flowers along the forest track. Further stops provided us with ample chances to photograph **Lesser Marbled Fritillary** (***Brenthis ino***), **Heath Fritillary** (***Melitaea athalia***), **Chestnut Heath** (***Coenonympha glycerion***) and both **Purple-edged Copper** (***Lycaena hippothoe***) and **Large Copper** (***L. dispar***). **Chestnut Heath** and **Lesser Marbled Fritillary** were to become familiar butterflies and were widespread while we were in Estonia. Towards the end of the day the others agreed to make another try for **Poplar Admiral** and we were at last successful, giving me my second life butterfly of the trip.

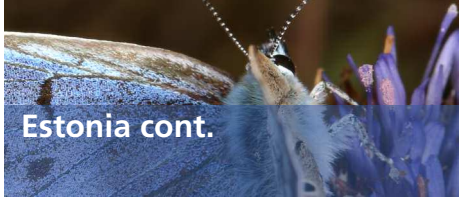
Tehumardi

That evening we were joined by Andro, a post-graduate student of lepidoptera who was to be our local guide for the balance of the tour and next morning we said good-bye to Urmas and his wife and left Saaremaa for the mainland but not before we had paid a visit to the Tehumardi War Memorial, site of a fierce and bloody battle during the Second World War and, of greater interest to us, the **Large Blue** (***Phengaris arion***). On a bright and breezy morning we struggled to get good photographs and the butterfly was not present in large numbers but the site also yielded **Small Copper** (***Lycaena phlaeas***) and **Small Blue** (***Cupido minimus***).

Tori, south-west Estonia

Once on the mainland we visited a woodland site to look for **Arran Brown** (***Erebia ligea***) which provided us with our first sightings of **Wood White** (***Leptidea sinapis***) and **Geranium Argus** (***Aricia eumedon***) but only fleeting possible glimpses of our target through the trees. Then it was on to a site known to have my special wish, the **Scarce Heath**. I had feared that we might be too late for the butterfly and so it proved – the **Chestnut Heath** was abundant and we found a mated pair of **Mazarine Blues** (***Cyaniris semiargus***) but no **Scarce Heath**. We spent that night and the next in an immaculately kept holiday house just outside the little town of Tori in the province of Pärnumaa, to the south-west of the country, known for its horses. On both mornings we were entertained by a pre-breakfast visit from the **Yellow-legged Tortoiseshell** which gave us a keen appetite!

We started the next day with a walk through some ▾



Chestnut Heath
(***Coenonympha glycerion***)
Photo © Tony Hoare

Lesser Purple Emperor
(***Apatura ilia***)
Photo © Tony Hoare

Tolkuse raised bog.

▸ woods where, to my joy and relief, we found a couple of **Scarce Fritillaries** for everyone to see and photograph. My joy was even greater when we found a magnificent male **Large Copper** as well, together with a **Purple Emperor** (***Apatura iris***) which posed helpfully on the ground and **Titania's Fritillary** (***Boloria titania***) as well. The afternoon was spent in a completely different habitat, among the sand dunes of Rannametsa and the Tolkuse bog, where we went looking for **Moorland Clouded Yellow** (***Colias palaeno***) and **Cranberry Blue**. However all the blues that we found proved to be **Silver-studded Blues** (***Plebejus argus***) and we saw no **Clouded Yellows** of any kind. The afternoon was not wasted as we saw a lovely Pool Frog (*Pelophylax lessonae*) which posed most obligingly beside our path.

Eastern Estonia

After our two nights in Tori we moved on to our final location, Lokko Talu farmhouse in eastern Estonia, stopping in woods on the way. For two days we were regally entertained with an abundance of **Purple Emperors** and **Lesser Purple Emperors** (***Apatura ilia***) flying along the forest tracks and stopping to feed on droppings or carrion. We must have seen about twenty or thirty on the ground and, after trying for years for a single grounded sighting in the UK, it made a fabulous change to be able to photograph the Emperors to our hearts' content. Our guide Andro was a bit bemused by our enthusiasm as, for him, this was nothing exceptional! We also had good sightings of the very charismatic **Large Chequered Skipper** (***Heteropterus morpheus***) with its utterly distinctive dipping flight.

Laeva forestry

Our second day in the woods of Laeva forestry brought the **Yellow-legged Tortoiseshell** to the ground, as well as further photo calls with **Scarce Fritillary**, **White Admiral** and **Large Chequered Skipper** and a couple of lovely **Scarlet Tiger Moths** (***Callimorpha dominula***). It was in these woods that Andro's special knowledge as a worker in lepidoptera was so valuable as there are miles and miles of forest tracks and many, many hectares of woods but he knew just where the good spots were. During the afternoon of the second day in the woods he took us to a further site where he hoped to show us the elusive **Moorland Clouded Yellow**. That butterfly continued to elude us but the site was alive with **Fritillaries** – **Dark Green Fritillary** (***Argynnis aglaja***), **High Brown Fritillary** (***A. adippe***) and **Silver-washed Fritillary** (***A. paphia***) (I have a picture with all three species in it) and I saw my third life butterfly of the trip that afternoon, **Pallas's Fritillary**.

Eastern border

Eleri, our ground agent, joined us for the last day. She had originally expected to show us a more rounded view of the wildlife of her country but had been very firmly told that we were there only for the butterflies and I think she wanted to check that we really were happy. Having started the trip in the western islands we finished on the eastern border, very close to Russia. A transect has been walked in the nature reserve of the Piusa caves for some time and ▾

Estonia cont.

Large Chequered Skipper (***Heteropterus morpheus***)
Photo © Tony Hoare

▸ Andro hoped to show us some of the local specialities.

He was spectacularly successful! We saw five of the smaller **Fritillaries**, **Knapweed Fritillary** (***Melitaea phoebe***), **Glanville Fritillary** (***M. cinxia***), **Heath Fritillary**, **Queen of Spain Fritillary** (***Issoria lathonia***) and **Weaver's Fritillary** (***Boloria dia***), and the **Large Blue** again but the absolute star of the show was **Purple-shot Copper** (***Lycaena alciphron***) which in this location had such a heavy purple suffusion that the underlying copper was barely visible. Eleri had ample proof of our enthusiasm as we competed to get the best angles for our photographs. Another item that caught our attention was the caterpillar of the **Alder Moth** (***Acronicta alni***) with its extraordinary filamentous appendages. We even saw the **Moorland Clouded Yellow** at last but only as a fly-by. Any disappointment we might have felt was quickly dissipated by a very obliging **Yellow-legged Tortoiseshell** which settled nearby as we ate our lunch.

Vastseliina castle

Our final location was Vastseliina castle where there is a population of the **Clouded Apollo** (***Parnassius mnemosyne***) in a nearby meadow. That butterfly was not on the wing but Adrian was delighted to see one of his particular targets, the summer brood of the **Map butterfly** (***Araschnia levana***) in a clearing on the way there. By the meadow itself we met a few **Pearly Heaths** (***Coenonympha arcania***), our last new species for the trip.

Purple-shot Copper (***Lycaena alciphron***)
Photo © Tony Hoare

A memorable trip

We never did see the **Scarce Heath**, the butterfly that had brought me to Estonia and I only saw three species that were entirely new to me, so why is the trip as memorable as it is? Firstly we were very lucky with the weather, which was sunny throughout, secondly the excellence of our local guides, both of them very knowledgeable about the butterflies and their whereabouts, thirdly the high standard of our accommodation where all our food was home cooked and of a very good quality. But above all it was the country itself with its abundance of flowers, wildlife and butterflies that give the butterfly photographer so many opportunities. **Ringlets** (***Aphantopus hyperantus***) were present in almost plague proportions and it was a joy to see Fritillaries almost everywhere that we went. We saw a great many White Storks (*Ciconia ciconia*), and Common Cranes (*Grus grus*) were a first for me. Although we paid scant attention to the many flowers the great swathes of Wood Cow Wheat (*Melampyrum nemorosum*) in yellow and purple were unmissable. And we were made very welcome wherever we went. It's a surprising place, Estonia, and I am so pleased that I went, thank you Adrian and Eleri for such a wonderful experience! •

Yellow-legged Tortoiseshell (***Nymphalis xanthomelas***)
Photo © Tony Hoare

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Valjouffrey

EIG Trip to Valjouffrey, western Ecrins, France, 12 to 19 July 2014

Set against the original objectives for this trip, it could hardly be described as a success. **Simon Spencer** had proposed the venue as a base for identification training for younger members. Those of us participating were well past our youth – **Simon & Anne Spencer**, and Anne's sister **Sue, Richard** & **Margaret Hart, Adrian** & **Alison Neil, Jean** & **me**, plus a later and younger arrival, **Robert Humble** – average age somewhere between 60 and 70 (at least one of us rather older!)!

However, it was memorable for a number of reasons: the location of the Bonne valley east of La Mure is delightful with spectacular scenery, we had the best spell of settled weather in the almost 9 weeks **Jean** and **I** had spent in the summer in France, we hit the exact time of the emergence of **Scarce Copper** (***Lycaena virgaureae***), and had good sightings of **Poplar Admiral** (***Limenitis populi***), not to mention 90 or so species altogether, and we had great, good-humoured company. As always on EIG trips it was fun.

Location

La Mure is some 40km south of Grenoble on the N85, with Valbonnais, the principal village leading into Valjouffrey c.10km east on the D526; the D526 continues east to Entraigues, then over the Col d'Ornon to Le Bourg d'Oisans. From Entraigues a minor road, D117, leads to La Chapelle-en-Valjouffrey, then Le Faures up to Le Desert, a distance of a further 17km. Hotel accommodation is limited in the valley, but B&B, and apartment accommodation can be found. **Simon**, **Anne** and **Sue** stayed at the campsite in Les Faures; **Robert** joined them on site later in the week. This location and **Simon's** VW Camper became the HQ for activities, as usually happens.

Scarce Copper (***Lycaena virgaureae***) male.
Photo © Dudley Cheesman

Scarce Coppers

We saw the first male **Scarce Coppers** (***L. virgaureae***) on the Sunday afternoon, and on Monday they were numerous – quite dramatic, and a surprise for those of us used to finding singletons. Numbers continued to build and on the Tuesday we saw the first females. This was the dominant species throughout, not just on and around the campsite where there were grasslands to explore, but along the roadside verges. A walk up towards the Cascade de la Pisse (yes!) from Le Desert on the Wednesday produced c.50 species, including the first **Damon Blue** (***Agrodiaetus damon***) seen by some. Many other species of blue were also seen, together with the larger ▾

▸ **Fritillaries**, and several species of **Ringlet**.

A great deal of excitement

We returned down the valley via the old road and found **Poplar Admiral** (***L. populi***) on a midden. This caused a great deal of excitement but it spent most of the time with wings closed tight, so it proved difficult for photographers to get an open-wings shot. On Thursday, **Simon**, **Richard** and **I** walked to La Chalp, then found a **Lesser Purple Emperor** (***Apatura ilia***) at the Spencers' dining table upon return to the campsite. We were missing the smaller fritillaries but did confirm one **Nickerl's Fritillary** (***Mellicta aurelia***) as a result of capture in the net.

Scarce Copper (***Lycaena virgaureae***) female.
Photo © Dudley Cheesman

Poplar Admiral
(***Limenitis populi***)
Photo © Dudley Cheesman

Valsenestre

Our final collective visit was to Valsenestre where we saw **Poplar Admiral** (***L. populi***) in flight, and **Simon** found a **Geranium Argus** (***Eumedonia eumedon***) nectaring on ornamental flowers at the entrance to a villager's garden. In the evening we enjoyed a meal together at Le Chardon Bleu in Valbonnais, where **Jean** and **I** were staying.

If there was one lesson from the trip, it is that if you can't net you must get photographic evidence to validate any species seen. •

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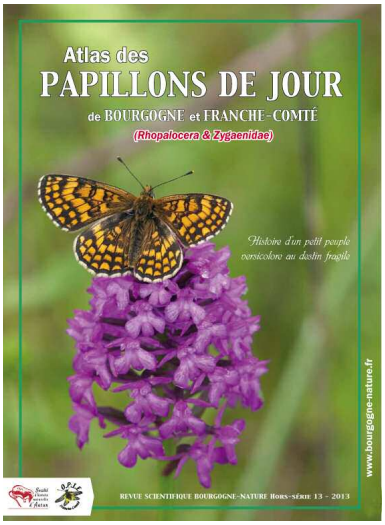
Book Review



Atlas des Papillons de Jour de Bourgogne et Franche-Compte
Revue Scientifique Bourgogne-Nature Hors-serie 13-2013, 494pps, 28x20cms

I came across this book purely by chance. Following a butterfly trip to the Foret de Moloy, Cote d'Or, I called at the Morvan PNR HQ at St. Brisson, Nievre, to ask about the re-introduction of the **Violet Copper** (***Lycaena helle***) by **Henri Descimon** in 1975, along with **Bog Fritillary** (***Boloria eunomia***). Whilst waiting for the 'expert' to be found I found this Atlas for sale on the bookshelf (€40).

Comprehensive work

This is a beautiful and comprehensive work on the butterflies of the two regions, produced by the Societe d'Histoire Naturelle d'Autun (SHNA) and l'Office pour les Insectes et leur Environment de France-Compte (OPIE,FC), supported by hundreds of recorders and other contributors.

Most informative

A history of butterflies and their recording in the two regions is followed by the Atlas methodology, a section on ecology, habitat and vegetation, and then the species pages complete with copious notes and distribution maps. There is a bibliography with a final review of threatened species (red list), and glossary. It is the most beautiful and informative atlas I have come across within Europe.

In conclusion, I did glean considerable information on ***L. helle***, sadly now believed to be extinct here, or almost so, with no recent records, and ***B. eunomia***, that continues to thrive in a small area of the Morvan. •

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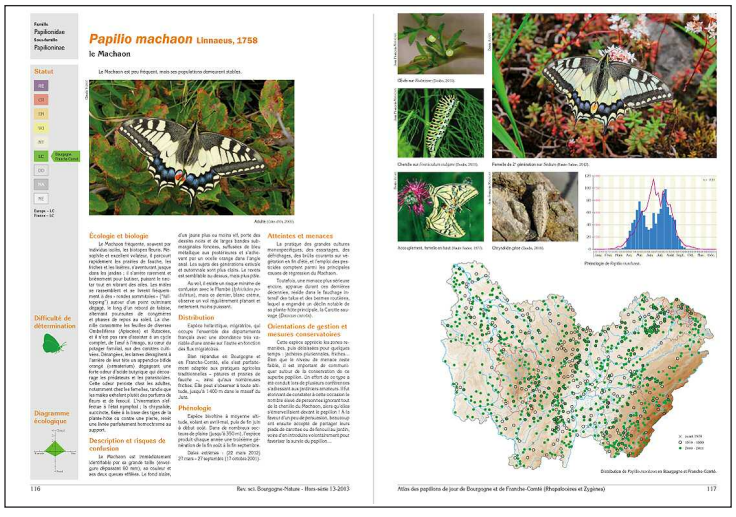
The Atlas is advertised for sale on the bibliotheque section of the Bourgogne-Nature website for €47 including carriage.

email:
contact@bourgorne-nature.fr,

website:
www.bourgogne-nature.fr.



Photospot

Any reader who would like to submit a few photographs to conclude subsequent newsletters is most welcome to do so.

Coppers from around the World

Coppers of the genus ***Lycaena*** are among my favourite butterflies. The dazzling uppersides of the four species – **Violet Copper** (***L. helle***), **Purple-shot Copper** (***L. alciphron***) **Scarce Copper** (***L. virgaureae***) and **Balkan Copper** (***L. candens***) – are illustrated earlier in this newsletter. It is easy to think of ***Lycaena*** as a European genus, but in fact it has a worldwide distribution, found throughout the Holarctic, in South Africa and in New Zealand. Here are some pictures of four beautiful species that I have seen in Western China and New Zealand. They are perfect insects. I hope you like them. •

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Lycaena li male, 1400m, W Sichuan, China, May 2012.
Photo © Nigel Peace

Lycaena pang male, 4075m, W Sichuan, China, May 2012.
Photo © Nigel Peace

Common Copper sp (***Lycaena sp***) Arthur's Pass, South Island, New Zealand, December 2012.
Photo © Nigel Peace

North Island Boulder Copper (***Lycaena boldenarum***), Tongariro NP, New Zealand, January 2013.
Photo © Nigel Peace