

NEWSLETTER

**Issue 5
April 2009**

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the weakness of the pound against the euro there seem to be still lots of people interested in European butterflies. EIG has more members and is making progress on a number of fronts. We had our first EIG UK meeting apart from the AGMs in the Natural History Museum's temporary home in Wandsworth. It was a great success and the dozen of us who went really enjoyed meeting up and it was a real treat to be able to see the butterflies close up. The drawers can be turned over so one can see the undersides and there are 10 million butterflies to choose from. We will make it an annual event but serious researchers with something they want to investigate can arrange their own visits. Geoff Martin and Blanca Huertas looked after us very well but we must warn you that they are MOVING and will be back in South Kensington next winter so new



EIG Visit to NHM

visitors should wait till then. It is also important to give them a list of species that you wish to examine so they can get the drawers out ready for you.

The EIG code of practice outlined in the last newsletter was adopted at the EIG AGM last November. As before we have held our AGM as part of the BC AGM. Though there was no dissent at the meeting and most EIG members are quite happy to sign up to a code of practice that precludes collecting there has been criticism from some quarters and I am pleased to include an article by Otakar Kudrna in this issue that eloquently argues the case for collecting. After all where did those butterflies that we admired in the Natural History Museum come from? Kudrna's Distribution Atlas of European Butterflies published in 2002 is the basis for most of the distribution maps in modern field guides and has been used very recently for a major study of how climate change might affect butterfly distribution reviewed on pages 4,5&6. Kudrna's atlas required a specimen to substantiate all difficult records and if the taxonomy changes as with wood whites for example people can look at the specimens again. As always reality is never simple. I gave up collecting years ago in my teens. I quite like the idea of having a certificate in my pocket that can assure a Spanish or German policeman that I am not a collector or to facilitate the almost impossible process of obtaining an official permit to use a net. However if I happen to catch Brown's Grayling *Pseudochazara amydone* in northern Greece next summer I will have a dilemma. The species has not been seen for thirty years and is going to be a RDB vulnerable species on the new Red Data Book that is being produced at the moment. It would be nice to be able to prove that it still exists and I may not be able to do that just with a photograph. If we leave it to breed we can always go back. Kudrna and others have also questioned the technique of examining the genitalia of live butterflies as advocated in Lafranchis 'Butterflies of Europe' which gives drawings. Though in my experience this is very useful for *Mellicta* and *Hipparchia* spp. it requires sensitive fingers and good eyesight. I would like to see the results of an experiment where the survival of a group of butterflies that have been examined is compared to a control. It would also be useful to show that the males are still fertile.

Whether Nigel Peace's article on Taxonomy in the last EIG newsletter or the need for a revision of the Red Data Book of European butterflies prompted Butterfly Conservation Europe (BCE) into setting up a 'taxonomy committee' is uncertain. The great news is that they have. There is a short article by Rudi Verovnik on page XX. Rudi has assembled a powerful team and has the diplomatic skills to make the process work. We very much hope that they can come to a conclusion and we can help promote the list afterwards. It will take some getting used to.

I hope to report on the new Red List of European butterflies in the next newsletter. It will be different. Having participated in the process, a collaboration between BCE and IUCN, I was struck by the contrast in information between different parts of Europe. Holland and the UK, with professional butterfly 'conservation' organisations can produce graphs and quantitative data on butterfly declines but even anecdotal information is scarce for Greece. France, a large country with lots of butterflies, has little idea of trends.

The EIG website www.bc-eig.org.uk continues to make progress and the number of Country pages is growing and more are promised. Cyprus, Greece, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland are done. This is already a valuable source of information for people seeking information on where to see butterflies. We are working on France but that will need regional contributions from several people. Bulgaria, Portugal, Italy, Hungary and Germany are promised. More contributions are required. It is the nature of web pages that they are quite easy to change so additional material or revisions can be made later. Anyone who can fill in one of the gaps please get in touch with me.

There are two EIG trips this year. A trip to Hungary continuing our work in the Orseg National Park is now fully subscribed and a trip to Romania 19th to 28th August to start a long term international collaboration on the Danube Clouded Yellow (*Colias myrmidone*) has nearly its full complement.

Simon Spencer
Chairman EIG

Contact Details:

Chairman:

Simon Spencer - email: cerisyi@btinternet.com - Tel No: 01691 648339

Vice-Chairman/Field Trip Organiser:

Mike Williams - email: mike@stagborough.fsnet.co.uk - Tel No: 01299 824860

Minutes Secretary:

Ian Duncan - email: duncaniz@aol.com - Tel No: 01684 574965

Membership Secretary:

Anne Spencer - email: apaturation@metis@yahoo.co.uk - Tel No: 01691 648339

Website Manager:

Neil Thompson - email: webmaster@bc-eig.org.uk - Tel No: 07999090194

Newsletter Editors:

Simon & Anne Spencer - as above

Other Committee Members:

Nigel Spring - email: nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk - Tel No: 01963 23559

Dates for your Diary:

BC International Symposium, Reading March 25th – 28th 2010

EIG 2010 Calendar

Most of the calendars we produced for 2009 were sold. EIG would like to put together another one for 2010 and run a competition using 13 (incl one for the cover) of the best Butterfly photos sent in from members.

Photos for the calendar should be:

** Minimum 1500 by 1000 pixels (although this is only 1.5 Mpixels, check that the camera is not set to take low resolution images, which may be smaller than this). Larger images are perfectly acceptable.*

**Only JPEG or raw images are acceptable.*

We would like a bit of blurb about the butterflies – where/when they were photographed and any other relevant information etc. Permission will have to be given by the photographer that EIG/BC can use the photo for the calendar free of charge.

The closing date is 1st September 09 - please send photos as attachments to Anne Spencer apaturation@metis@yahoo.co.uk

Request for Information

Martin Wiemers (martin.wiemers@univie.ac.at) would like recent records of butterflies from the Canary Islands

Tom Prescott (BC Scotland – tprescott@butterfly-conservation.org) is seeking information on *Dendrolimus pini* the Pine Tree Lappet a recent arrival in Scotland.

To kill or not to kill – that is the question!

I sincerely apologise to the surely most famous English playwright for having utilized a verse from his most famous monologue for the headline of this humble contribution on the subject of the everlasting dispute between lepidopterists and butterfly collectors on the one hand and butterfly watchers on the other. To the first group under the collective term “lepidopterists” I count scientists, bona fide and amateur researchers, and serious collectors, whose valuable collections are available for research purposes. Butterfly watchers make no collections, butterfly photos excepted; they do not need voucher specimens because, I suspect, they do not know what to do with them.

I want to make abundantly clear: Collecting is the only reliable method for recording and study of butterflies; voucher specimens stored in depositories (such as in museums and the like) facilitates the revision of the identification and the proof of the record. Voucher specimens are available to science and for instance in case of subsequent revisions of the taxonomic status or splitting of taxa concerned, they enable checking and updating of records. Voucher specimens and collections are more important for the advancement of lepidopterological research, than the majority of butterfly watchers can realize. Butterfly photos can be beautiful, I like them very much, but they are illustrations only, not butterflies.

It is quite easy to identify nearly all British and Dutch butterflies in the field, perhaps a few species excepted. It may be difficult to recognize *Pieris napi* (Linnaeus, 1758) from *P. rapae* (Linnaeus, 1758) in flight, but it hardly matters. In addition, it is impossible to tell *Leptidea sinapis* (Linnaeus, 1758) from *L. juvernica* Williams, 1946, in the field and we do not even know if the latter species, described from Ireland, is present in the UK, so that it does matter, especially since it is in the British Islands not abundant and widespread and may be in urgent need of species specific conservation measures. *

Nonetheless, impoverished Great Britain (or the Netherlands) inhabited by some 60 butterfly species cannot be compared to Europe, inhabited by seven or eight times as many species, many of which can only be identified by a specialist using a microscope and preparations of genitalia or androconia. At present, there are a few research groups working on a “re-classification” of European butterflies utilising DNA, apart from other taxonomic characters. I am a member of one such group and help on occasions two other groups. It is difficult to obtain suitable fresh research material and the ban on collecting makes our task, our research, much more difficult, than it already is. Our basic research is more important for the conservation of most threatened species, than butterfly watchers appreciate. Thus, the ban on collecting poses a serious threat to successful conservation of butterflies in Europe.

Now, butterfly watchers may argue, that researchers should simply apply for ‘collecting permits’ to the authorities concerned. I had to do it many times before I retired. I could write stories and even novels about time I have wasted; All ‘permits’, if at all received in time, I had to ‘interpret’ my way, to make them useful in the field. I have given up field work on the day I retired. Imagine that a medical doctor would have to apply for a permit to treat a patient in his chosen way to an official in a state agency responsible for treating patients. No doubt, the death rate would boom.

Lepidopterists are today generally seen as ‘black sheep’ or potential criminals by most conservationists and the like. Some 12 years ago, I was nearly arrested by Spanish police while taking a photograph of *Brintesia circe* (Fabricius, 1775) sitting on a thistle on a roadside. My butterfly net was in my car, invisible to the able police; thank God, I could produce a valid permit. In Spain, the situation was (and probably still is) so absurd, that all reserves are excluded from all permits; as the result, there were (are) no data for the reserves. Subsequently, no conservation measures for butterflies inhabiting them can be taken.

On the other hand, massive afforestation in Sierra de los Filabres led prior to 1996 to the destruction of the extensive habitats of *Parnassius apollo nevadensis* Oberthür, 1891, (there are at least two other names for this interesting subspecies, I have chosen the oldest one). Some 30 years ago, hundreds of individuals of this distinct subspecies could have been observed on any single day. The afforestation with pine not only destroyed the habitat, it also led to a population explosion of *Thaumtopoea processionea* (Linnaeus, 1758); the subsequent application of insecticides to bring it under control, has concluded the disaster.

It is well known, that butterflies are threatened by the loss of habitat and that no European butterfly species has become extinct due to collecting. It is also established that no European butterfly species has ever been saved by a ban on collecting. A ban on collecting, or rather a ban on observing butterflies, as imposed for instance by German and Spanish legislation, serves no useful purpose, except providing alibi for those, who destroy butterfly habitats, and indirectly blaming lepidopterists (s.l.), who are too few, to have a lobby or to influence elections. A self-imposed ban on catching (rather than on collecting) of butterflies is definitely counterproductive; it accepts in an indirect way, that butterfly collectors are or may be co-responsible the general decline of butterflies in Europe. Thus, such self-imposed ban as practiced by EIG is counter productive for the conservation of butterflies.

I would like to reflect upon another point of the EIG Code of Practice, on a method supposed to enable the identification of some taxonomically difficult species in the field – the examination of the genitalia of live butterflies for identification purposes. The examination of genitalia with a hand magnifying glass in the field cannot be taken seriously and amounts to tormenting animals! I wonder how many butterflies survive this procedure and how long they live after having been ‘identified’. I doubt that they are capable of reproduction after having been ‘examined’ and ‘identified’. And, of course, anyone is prone to errors as long as there is no voucher specimen, nothing can be done to check and perhaps correct the record.

I have examined a few thousands of butterfly genitalia, under a microscope, after these have been properly dissected and mounted, on a microscope slide. Despite my extensive experience I would never dream of “examining” the genitalia in the field and I reject this procedure as maltreatment, too.

The online butterfly recording as practiced for instance in impoverished Holland is bound to fail in species rich parts of Europe. European records without voucher specimens are questionable. Yet, there are ways a “netless” butterfly watcher can do valuable work. Some 20 years ago, when I visited Isola Ponza, *Hipparchia sbordonii* Kudrna, 1984, was abundant all over the island. Last year a serious butterfly collector and MEB recorder visited Isola Ponza and found no *H. sbordonii* at all. He arrived a little late after its peak abundance, but this species is long lived. We know that there was an extensive fire on M. Guardia a few years ago. We hope that *H. sbordonii* has survived, but hoping and knowing is not the same. There are many rare endemic species in Europe nobody takes care of.

In addition to this, there are “phantoms” like *Pseudochazara amymone* Brown, 1976. The type series is not available (I had a brief look at it over 30 years ago), the type locality may be intentionally imprecise or even false. A Greek butterfly watcher, Lazaros Pamperis, claims to have observed it on two or three occasions; his photos depict a worn *Pseudochazara* that may be *P. amymone*, or not. A group of EIG members could search the potential localities. Of course, a photo would not help much, since the status of *P. amymone* is unknown: a local ecological race of another species or an exceptionally rare hybrid? However, in this case voucher specimens would be necessary to enable the determination of the identity and taxonomic status of *P. amymone*.

I am sure of the best intentions behind the BBCS EIG Code of Practice. Nonetheless, I suggest that the Code be reconsidered and rewritten. It may help to consult the Code compiled by the Committee for the Conservation of British Insects some 30 years ago. As long as the Code is aimed chiefly at the general public, to improve the image of that “funny man with a net” chasing after butterflies, then it is of no use. Instead, the influential BCE should make the public, the legislators and decision makers aware of the positive contribution of that “funny man with a net”. The BCE must make clear to them, that it is the “funny man with a net”, to whom we are obliged for nearly all what we know on European butterflies. Without him, there would be no butterfly conservation, no RDB! The EIG should make this clear to BCE. After all, for instance, the late great English lepidopterists R.F. Bretherton, L.G. Higgins and B.C.S. Warren were these “funny men with a net”, too.

Coming back to answering our basic question “Kill or not to kill”: The rational answer is “Kill!” if it is useful or necessary for research purposes including recording, but remember, that you are taking on the full responsibility for the voucher specimen you have taken.

Otakar Kudrna

* *L. juvernica* is better known as *L. reali* Reissinger, 1990.

P.S.

In my “Aspects of the conservation of butterflies in Europe”, published some 20 years ago and out of print, there is a chapter “Considerations on the significance of collecting for the conservation of European butterflies and lepidopterological research”, pp. 74-88.

A response to Nigel Peace's article in EIG Newsletter 4 'A List of European Butterflies. A role for EIG?

I am writing you as one of the two coordinators of the current European butterfly list update which was recently initiated by Butterfly Conservation Europe (BCE) for the purpose of the new Red Data book (RDB) of European Butterflies. With Martin Wiemers, also as the other coordinator, we are well aware of the importance of this task and have invited many leading European taxonomists to join us in our efforts. Nigel Peace's contribution in EIG Newsletter No. 4 describes well the role of such a list and its importance, and our aim is to get the updated list both scientifically justified and widely accepted. However reaching a consensus among experts is the most difficult task. The 'original sin' is not that every taxonomist considers their own solution the correct one, but because in many cases there is still no conclusive evidence available, it is hard to make a decision. Thus, the process of putting together the list will be a long one, and possibly it will not be finished on time for the Red Data Book update.

The list of butterfly taxonomy experts already involved (in alphabetical order) includes: Emilio Balletto, John Coutsis, Otakar Kudrna, Miguel Munguira, Rudi Verovnik (coordinator), Niklas Wahlberg, Martin Wiemers (coordinator) with additional contributions on single species from Willy de Prins, Enrique Garcia-Barros, and Torben Larsen. As the list will also be used as an update of the list in Fauna Europaea (www.faunaeur.org/) Albert Vliegthart will coordinate the adoption of the new list by Fauna Europea. Other people involved representing more users of the list than taxonomists include Martin Warren, Josef Settele and Chris van Swaay. I consider that even if there will be no further experts involved the body of knowledge in the current group is sufficient to get us to our final goal. As proposed by Otakar Kudrna a taxonomic committee should then be formed to make regular updates of the list based on new evidence as it becomes available.

As we all are volunteers on this project with paid work to do it is hard to say when the list will be ready for publication, but Martin and I will do our best to make it soon.

Rudi Verovnik

Editor's Note:

EIG greatly welcomes this initiative by BCE and looks forward to the conclusions which we would be happy to publicize and adopt. As I said in a note for Nigel's article BCE is the organization to take this on and we are delighted that they have accepted the challenge. Rudi Verovnik and Martin Wiemers should be congratulated in persuading such a strong team to take part.

Book Review

The 'Climatic Risk Atlas of European Butterflies' the result of a major international collaboration led by Josef Settele is worrying reading for those who expect that global warming will be detrimental to many scarce butterflies. Starting with Otakar Kudrna's data from the 'Distribution Atlas of European Butterflies' they applied a variety of climate change models to see what the effect would be. Britain does rather well and may acquire new species as distributions tend to move north but the overall effect is fairly disastrous. The opportunity for butterflies to change their distribution in response to climate change is very limited especially for very local species in southern Europe. It cannot be overemphasised how dependent this study was on the original data meticulously collected by Kudrna and his colleagues in the MEB. The book can be read online at www.pensoftonline.net/biorisk

Simon Spencer

An Elusive Northern Acrobat



O. jutta 'baltic grayling', male

© Ted Benton

In the course of several trips to northern Europe, seeing and photographing some of the rarest butterflies, one species – often reported to be quite common in its habitats – had eluded the camera. This was *Oeneis jutta*, the 'baltic grayling'. *Jutta* is one of only four members of its genus that occur in Europe (west of Russia), and is the most widespread. *Oeneis bore*, 'arctic grayling' is confined to bleak habitats in the Arctic north. *O. norma* 'norse grayling' is also a predominantly Arctic species but it ranges further south in Scandinavia, while its close relative, *O. glacialis*, 'alpine grayling' lives

at high altitudes in the Alps (see Kudrna 2002). On earlier forays into Scandinavia, we (Bernard Watts and I) had treated with some scepticism the claim that *jutta* appears only in even years. Certainly, numerous species take two or more years to complete their life-cycle in Scandinavia, but how could a whole population have so synchronised their two-year cycle than none would appear in odd years? However, a very successful trip in 2005 to Sweden and Norway yielded almost all the hoped-for species – except *jutta*. The butterfly eluded us on yet another trip in June 2006. This time we had gone with the grain of received wisdom, and tried an even year.

On this occasion our expert local adviser, Claes Eliasson, suggested we might be just too late for *jutta*: as always, he was right!



O. jutta 'baltic grayling', female

© Ted Benton



Habitat of *O. jutta* 'baltic grayling', central Sweden

© Ted Benton

So, when we set out on 2nd June 2008 for Sweden, *jutta* was high on our list of 'target' species, and we felt we had given ourselves as good a chance as we were able! Again, Claes was his usual amiable and helpful self, and suggested a bog quite close to his home at Lindesberg. The bog had a central area of open, wet ground with bog-cotton, coarse grasses and sedges, and, especially towards the outer edges, shrubs of dwarf birch, *Vaccinium* (spp.), and encircling stands of conifers. Here we saw our first specimens of *jutta* – mostly males, a few of them quite worn, and semi-

transparent. They were difficult to pick out, sitting tight low down on the trunks of the pines, and perfectly camouflaged with their wings closed, and forewings hidden between the irregularly patterned grey-brown hindwings. Initially we spotted them by accidentally disturbing them, and watching them fly on to the next tree in line only to 'disappear' against the rough bark.



O. jutta 'baltic grayling', male and female, courtship

However, by dint of standing quite still by the boundary between trees and the open bog (and accepting the slow seepage of water into ones boots!), it was possible to observe the distinctive behaviour of *jutta* when undisturbed. Both sexes seem to be addicted to settling for extended periods on the trunks of the trees – usually ones close to the margins of the open bog, and usually from one to two or three metres above the ground. Periodically there would be a game of 'musical chairs' during which several insects would leave their resting places and re-settle on nearby tree-trunks.

Typically, they settle with forewings raised, showing the orange-brown underside and apical spots, but quickly lower them and 'disappear' against their background. Occasionally a male would fly from his perch and begin the most extraordinary dance: flying to the base of a nearby tree, fluttering rapidly up the trunk to a point close to the first branches, and then flying on to the base of another tree, only to 'tumble' and flutter its way up the trunk of that one. This – or some variant on the theme – was the principal observed activity of the males. The point of this activity became clear at another bog on 8th June. A fluttering male encountered a female *jutta* some two metres up the trunk of a pine tree. He alighted a few centimetres above her and after a brief 'courtship' during which both insects rapidly opened and closed their wings, they mated and flew of '*in copula*' into the rank vegetation of the open bog.

Presumably this pattern is not a fixed one, as it differs greatly from that described in Henriksen and Kreutzer's wonderful, pioneering *Butterflies of Scandinavia in Nature*:



O. jutta 'baltic grayling', mating pair

© Ted Benton

'As soon as the ♀ has taken to flight a wild chase begins across the marsh, zig-zagging at the height of a few metres towards the marsh edge, forest floor or path. The ♂ is quicker and often flies closely above the ♀, until they descend in circles and mating takes place on the ground.' (Henriksen & Kreutzer 1982:106)

Occasionally the butterflies would fly low over the open bog, sometimes settling on the flower-heads of bog-cotton, or dipping deeper into the vegetation. These were mainly

females, and, we supposed, were engaged in egg-laying. Various authors suggest coarse, tussocky grasses, including purple moor grass (*Molinia coerulea*), Manna grass (*Glyceria*) and deer's grass (*Scirpus caespitosus*) as probable larval host-plants, but Eliasson (Eliasson, Ryrholm & Gärdenfors 2005) gives bog-cotton (*Eriophorum* spp.). Certainly, the females seemed attracted to this plant when in the open bog, and bog-cotton was present in the habitat wherever we saw the butterfly. Occasional males, too, flew into the open bog, presumably to imbibe moisture. As Henriksen and Kreutzer note: '♀♀ at ground level are less attractive to ♂♂ and have surely already mated.'

Thanks to Claes Eliasson and Bernard Watts – and to anyone with a convincing explanation of this ‘odd’, even-year butterfly!!.



Habitat of *O. bore* ‘arctic grayling’, © Ted Benton
northern Norway



***O. bore* ‘arctic grayling’,** © Ted Benton
northern Norway



***O. glacialis* ‘alpine grayling’,** © Ted Benton
European Alps



***O. norna* ‘norse grayling’,**
northern Sweden

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Ted Benton, March 2009

Sardinia 2008



Corsican Heath (*c.corinna*)

for more than one trip ! The endemics are, Corsican Swallowtail (*Papilio hospiton*), Corsican Dappled White (*Euchloe insularis*), Sardinian Blue (*Pseudophilotes barbagiae*), Bellier's Blue (*Plejebus bellieri*), Sardinian Chalkhill Blue (*Lysandra gennargentii*), Corsican Fritillary (*Argynnis elisa*), Corsican Wall Brown (*Lasiommata paramegaera*), Corsican Heath (*Coenonympha corinna*), Sardinian Meadow Brown (*Maniola nurag*), Corsican Grayling (*Hipparchia neomiris*) and *Spialia therapne* (a split from Red-underwing Skipper) plus the form of Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais (urticae) ichnusa*), which may or may not be a full species.

We arrived by ferry from Genoa early in the morning to the sight of fishermen wading in the shallows near Olbia casting their nets although we could not see what they were catching. Our first stops on the drive south yielded only Large Whites (*Pieris brassicae*), Small Whites (*Pieris rapae*), Holly Blues (*Celastrina argiolus*), Common Swallowtails (*Papilio machaon*), Bath Whites (*Pontia daplidice*), Great Banded Graylings (*Brintesia circe*), Painted Ladies (*Vannessa cardui*) and Clouded Yellows (*Colias crocea*). A roadside lucerne field yielded many more Clouded Yellows, Common Blues (*Polyommatus icarus*), Cleopatras (*Gonepteryx cleopatra*), a Mallow Skipper (*Carcharodus alcea*) and Long-tailed Blues (*Lampides boeticus*) – all very good after 3 days continuous rain on the Italian mainland but nothing out of the ordinary. As we headed south we saw Small Copper (*Lycaena phleas*), Peacock (*Inachis io*), Large



Corsican Wall Brown (*L.paramegaera*)

Tortoiseshell (*Nymphalis polychoros*), Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*), Comma (*Polygonia c-album*), but with the added spice of Nettle-tree butterfly (*Libethia celtis*) and Two-tailed Pasha (*Charaxes jasius*) – things were definitely improving. Our first contact with any of the endemics came towards the end of the day on a grassy hillside towards the middle of the island where we stumbled upon Corsican Heath (*Coenonympha corinna*) and Sardinian Meadow Brown (*Maniola nurag*), in reasonable numbers, as well as Southern Brown Argus (*Aricia agestis crameri*).

Next day found us exploring once again the centre of the island in the general area around Monte Gennargentu as this was the only area mentioned in Tolman as a locality for any of the target species. New species for the island included Small Heath (*Coenonympha pamphillus* f. *lyllus*), Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*), Southern White Admiral (*Limenitis reducta*) and a fleeting glimpse of Corsican Wall Brown (*Lasiommata paramegaera*). Later in the day on Monte Pipinari we saw more Corsican Heath (*Coenonympha corinna*) and Sardinian Meadow Brown and finally had good views of Corsican Wall Brown.



Sardinian Meadow Brown (*M.nurag*)

habitat is “dry, rocky scrub clearings and slopes “ – a description which seems to apply to about half of Sardinia!). Fired more by naïve optimism than genuine hope, we attacked a potentially suitable-looking slope. After about 45 minutes, during which we kept catching distant tantalising glimpses of a low-flying dark insects, to our delight we finally caught up with several Sardinian Blues (*Pseudophilotes barbaggiae*), well camouflaged amongst the low vegetation. They were obviously a *Pseudophilotes* but decidedly brown on the upper wing rather than blue and with well-chequered margins on some of the fresher individuals. This find was quickly followed nearby by discovery of a single individual of *Spialia therapne*, a very strikingly marked little skipper. These turned out to be out only sightings of these two endemics.

We spent the next few days generally in the same sort of area around Monte Gennargentu seeing more of the same general species as before, as well as Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*), Peacock (*Inachis io*), Silver-washed Fritillary (*Argynnis paphia*), Oberthur's Grizzled Skipper (*Pyrgus armoricanus*) and the *ichnusa* form of Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*) (showing large areas of clear orange in the upperwing). Later in the week, we drove to the North of the island and added a few other new species for our trip including Geranium Bronze (*Cacyreus marshali*), Green Hairstreak (*Callophrys rubi*) and Gatekeeper (*Pyronia tithonius*).

In all during our week on the island, we only saw about 37 species, which is low for a week at this time on the Continent. However there are many species that do not fly at all in Sardinia. We had tried hard but were disappointed not to find Corsican Swallowtail (*Papilio hospiton*) or Corsican Grayling (*Hipparchia neomiris*), both of which should have been on the wing, but we were probably too late for Corsican Dappled White (*Euchloe insularis*) and too early for Corsican Fritillary (*Argynnis elisa*)

– they will all have to wait for another time! The island itself is scenically very beautiful with lots of good areas of natural

vegetation, fantastic beaches and good food (especially fish and shellfish) and wine. Other memorable highlights of the trip included seeing 27 Eleanora's Falcons wheeling around a cliff-face and 15 or so Large Tortoiseshells (*Nymphalis polychloros*) feeding on fallen cherries in an orchard, accompanied by a stunning Two-tailed Pasha (*Charaxes jasius*).

Mike Prentis & Martin Davies

Our efforts so far had not yielded a sighting of Sardinian Blue (*Pseudophilotes barbaggiae*), so next morning we determined to try to rectify this by some focussed searching. Reading the books we had noted that it had not been discovered until 1982 and after several days already scouring likely hillsides we were beginning to suspect that we knew why! On a road up to Brunco Spina we stopped yet again, having decided that the habitat looked like what we imagined was suitable for Sardinian Blue (*Pseudophilotes barbaggiae*) (but this was based on little more information than that their preferred



Sardinian Blue (*P.barbaggiae*)

Casa Ana - May 2008

Having heard very favourable reports about Casa Ana and, keen to try new butterfly territory, we made our reservation with Anne Hunt for a short break in late May 2008. As with any new venture, there was a mixture of excitement and mild anxiety as we climbed into our hire car at Malaga airport and set off into the hills clutching the directions sent by Anne. The journey was very straightforward, with only one small mistake on my part, and we were soon dropping down into the little village of Ferreirola where we were greeted with a scene straight out of a spaghetti western. The beautifully maintained white painted buildings were a charm and we stood for some while as we took in the ambience before tracking down our lodgings. Casa Ana is set on the edge of a deep valley and enjoys uninterrupted views of the nearby hills and we could not wait to meet our host. Anne enthusiastically showed us around the apartment and, in no time at all, we were settled in and totally relaxed.

After the lengthy journey, we were ready for our evening meal, and what a meal! A banquet would more ably describe what confronted us and we left the table well fed and relaxed. A short walk around the village sorted our scrambled bearings and we retired for the night.

Being unfamiliar with the local geography, after a hearty breakfast (feast), we set off to locate some suitable butterfly country. The temperature was unseasonably cold at a lowly 8 degrees and I held little hope of any butterflies as we climbed higher up the valley towards Trevez. The terrain promised alpine species but, with a stiff breeze now blowing, we knew that any sightings were unlikely so headed west once more in search of lower altitude.

Between Pitres and Pampaneira, we came across a small lay-by by the side of the road and pulled in for a break. The now very strong breeze was blowing over the lay-by and creating a sheltered area noticeably warmer than elsewhere. After just a few minutes, we were engaged in filming Small White (*Pieris rapae*), Swallowtail (*Papilio machaon*), Moroccan Orange Tip (*Anthocaris euphenoides*), Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*), Pearly Heath (*Coenonympha arcania*), Mallow Skipper (*Carcharodes alcea*), Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*), Small Copper (*Lycaena phleas*), Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*), Small Skipper (*Thymelicus sylvestris*), Mazarine Blue (*Cyaniris semiargus*), Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*), Queen of Spain Fritillary (*Issoria lathonia*), Knapweed Fritillary (*Melitaea phoebe*), Red-underwing Skipper (*Spialia sertorius*), Clouded Yellow (*Colias crocea*), Brown Argus (*Aricia agestis*) and a pair of mystery fritillaries. Seventeen species in a lay-by in unfavourable conditions was far more than we had expected and two hours disappeared as we filmed and photographed the ever-changing sight before us. It was now time to return to Casa Ana for a shower and another fabulous meal.

The weather conspired to slow down the proceedings the following morning and we decided to check out habitat in the hills above Capileira. The habitat was very interesting indeed and would, in any other conditions, support many altitude species but today the sky was on the ground and it was impossible to see more than a few metres and we descended to find some warmer weather. The lay-by offered some shelter once again and we stopped off along the way and picked up Spanish Gatekeeper and Wall Brown as we took some refreshments.

Dropping down into the village of Carataunas, we found some good weather and were soon recording Bath White (*Pontia daplidice*), Clouded Yellow (*Colias crocea*), Small White (*Pieris rapae*) and Spanish Marbled White (*Melanargia ines*) and a Cardinal (*Argynnis pandora*) alongside the road. Several small butterflies were flying around the many broom bushes and closer inspection revealed Long-tailed Blues (*Lampides boeticus*). Females were laying eggs on nearly every flower and I lost count after I reached treble figures. There must have been literally thousands of eggs and I could well imagine the consternation of the local bean growers as the resulting larvae would make short work of any prospective crop should they turn their attention to it. Moving further into the hills, we were rewarded with Swallowtails (*Papilio*

machaon) laying eggs on the roadside umbellifers and what a sight they were. All legs and flapping wings, and all but impossible to photograph but most exciting on video.

With the sun now dropping low in the sky, we returned to Casa Ana but called in at the lay-by once again for a quick look around. I had intended to follow the dry streambed up into the hills on the next visit but, with nothing spoiling, we set off anyway and eventually broke out onto a plateau where Queen of Spain Fritillaries (*Issoria lathonia*) dashed around in profusion. This sheltered microclimate was ideal for butterflies and I wished we had discovered it earlier in the day as more species put in an appearance. Having lost yet another two hours, we headed home to shower and relax before tackling another fantastic meal.

With brighter skies at last, the following morning saw us heading off towards Trevelez and beyond to Mecina-Bombaron where we stopped at several interesting roadsides. A small path beside a bridge over a gorge took us into a little vale where wild flowers danced in the light breeze in stark contrast to the surrounding, rugged hills. Moroccan Orange Tips posed for both film and photographs along with Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*) and numerous Clouded Yellows (*Colias crocea*) and we quite forgot about time yet again. The remainder of the day was spent at various roadsides and likely looking fields with good results.

Towards the end of our stay, we explored the local habitat below Casa Ana and were surprised to find Long-tailed Blues on the doorstep and eggs on every legume. Add to this, the wonderful sound of Nightingales, and we were in a small paradise, alive with butterflies and birds. A short walk up the lane revealed yet more hidden meadows full of flowers and butterflies. Our final meal was taken with a degree of regret, we would miss this special treat for sure.

Casa Ana provided us with a very relaxing holiday in excellent butterfly terrain and I can recommend the venue without hesitation. Anne was the perfect host and the meals supplied by Helen and her husband were simply fantastic and a credit to their talents. As with most holidays in mountainous countryside, timing is important and, had we been able to stay longer, our species count would have doubled without doubt. 2008 will be remembered for the dire weather patterns and Spain was no exception and it is testament to the venue that it was able to provide good sightings in difficult conditions. The peace and tranquillity is difficult to convey but suffice it to say that it is addictive and it was with much regret that we packed our bags and bade farewell and headed back towards Malaga. If there was to be a saving grace it was the ease of finding the route home with no queues or lost directions, which is more than could be said for our visit to Granada but that, as they say, is another story!

Peter Kirby
Butterfly Conservation (Kent Branch)

MARCH BUTTERFLIES IN ANDALUSIA

This was a week's family holiday based in Nerja, about an hour's drive east of Malaga on the southern Spanish coast, with the opportunity for some walks in the nearby hills of the Sierras of Tejada and Almijara in the region known as La Axarquia. The weather throughout was dry and pleasantly warm, with temperatures in the 20 to 25 C range.



Spanish Festoon (*Zerinthia rumina f. canteneri*)



Lorquins Blue (*Cupido lorquini*)

On the first walk on 23rd March we went deep into the hills and saw Spanish Festoon (*Zerinthia rumina*), Berger's Clouded Yellow (*Colias alphacariensis*), Green Hairstreak (*Callophrys rubi*), Provence Orange Tip (*Anthocaris euphenoides*), Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) and Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*). Booted and Bonelli's Eagles soared on high in the late afternoon, and wildflowers were in abundance, including two orchids, Mirror Orchid and Gennaria.

On 25th March we saw several Wall Brown (*Lasiommata megera*) as well as most of the species already seen. The day was more memorable for the array of Orchids on view, including Sawfly, Man, Italian Man, Pink Butterfly, Mirror and Sombre Bee Orchids, and one which we were unable to identify.

For most of the rest of the holiday we kept to lower altitudes. Near the coast on 26th March we saw Lang's Short-tailed Blue (*Leptotes pirithous*), Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*) and Swallowtail (*Papilio machaon*), and on the following day Lorquin's Blue (*Cupido lorquini*), at first mistaking it for Small Blue (*Cupido minimus*). The 27th March also brought a sighting of the *canteneri* form of Spanish Festoon (*Zerinthia rumina*), described in Tolman and Lewington as having a 'yellow-ochreous' ground colour.



String of Pine Processionary moth caterpillars

On the last day, crossing a path near a river at 9 o'clock in the morning, we stumbled on, but fortunately did not step on, a string of Processionary moth caterpillars, probably Pine Processionaries, with a tail-ender struggling to catch up.

Stephen Lewis & Lucy Miller

French Lepidoptera, etc.in Les Landes (updated 23/02/2009)

I was fortunate enough to spend a week last August in the Maritime Pine and Cork Oak forest plantations of Southwest France with little better to occupy me than photograph butterflies while my wife attended a Dominican pilgrimage in Lourdes. We flew out together via Bristol to Biarritz where we were met by my welcoming sister-in-law and her Basque husband. After conveying Mrs. Gray to her destination I returned with my hosts to their home, a traditional cottage built in a clearing in pine forest near Souston (co-ordinates 43 deg.,45'N, and 1 deg. 19' W) in Les Landes some 25 km. north of Biarritz and some 5 km. from the sea. The continuous sunshine was welcome after what passes for a British summer!

Sitting in the shade with a glass of local red wine on arrival, my eye was taken by the flame-like flickering of a small group of Cardinal butterflies above a Buddleia bush strategically placed in the middle of the lawn. Only when I approached nearer did I become fully aware of several hundred Broad-bordered Bee Hawkmoths in continuous movement as they searched out nectar and I soon learned that daylight photography needed a flash to help freeze the wing pattern.



Map Butterfly (*Araschnia levana*)

© Tom Gray

Throughout my stay I only had one brief opportunity to photograph a single stationary hawkmoth at rest on the underside of a leaf.

The Buddleia bush also served to attract several other butterfly species (Listed below with some indication of numbers). I was frustrated by the briefness of the visit and hyperactivity of a solitary Swallowtail (*Papilio machaon*) which escaped my camera which was often pointed at dragonflies and damsels along the bank of the stream which bordered the garden, but I could not resist taking pictures of the camouflaged Crab Spider

trapping insect visitors on the flowers of a Mallow, nor of the contrasting warning colours of Argiope spiders on their webs amongst the vegetation, both species being restricted to the south coast in Britain.

My grateful thanks goes to my in-laws, Theresa and Christian Hontanx, whom I think are now much more aware of the biodiversity of their garden in Les Landes.

Tom Gray

Species list:- Cardinal (*Argynnis pandora*) (10), Swallowtail (*Papilio machaon*) (1), Brimstone (*Gonopteryx rhamni*) (<5), Small Copper (*Lycaena phleas*) (>50), White Admiral (*Limenitis camilla*) (>10), Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*) (2), Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*) (>5), Peacock (*Inachis ino*) (1), Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) (1), Broad-banded Bee Hawkmoth (*Hemaris fuciformis*)(>100), Map (*Araschnia levana*) (circa 10), Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*) (circa 5), Large White (*Pieris brassicae*) (1).

Additional roosting moths present:- Buff Ermine (*Spilosoma luteum*), White Ermine (*Spilosoma lubricipeda*), Silver Y (*Plusia gamma*), Birds' Wing (*Dypterigea scabriuscula*), and Rosy Footman (*Miltochrista miniata*).

Good Campsites to stay on in Europe for Butterfly Hunting

Simon and I have travelled a lot through Europe during the past few years and have found some really lovely campsites on our travels some of which we would like to share with those who camp or have campervans should you be travelling in these areas – I fully recommend a stay on any of these campsites. These campsites all share one thing in common: you can see good butterflies within a short walk of the campsites.

'Les Faures Campsite' – La Chapelle, Valjouffrey - France



Situated in La Chapelle, La Chapelle-en-Valjouffrey: Parc National des Ecrins South of Grenoble towards Gap turn left in La Mure up the valley to Valbonnais – Entraigues – La Chapelle-en-Valjouffrey

This site is one of our favourites, it was used by the first EIG expedition in 2006.

The campsite is situated in the valley between two mountain ranges. There are lots of flower-covered meadows in spring and early summer with lots of butterflies and

Looking up the valley to Le Desert from the campsite.

flowers – you can walk out from the campsite up through wood and meadows to Le Desert (approx 6km) and further again up the valley to Cascade de Pisse where you can find Alpine Grayling (*Cenis glacialis*) There are also some other valleys in the area where you can drive or walk to.

The site is only open from May – September. It has open meadowland with some shade trees. It has good basic facilities – toilets, showers, dishwashing area, laundry sinks and there was a fridge/freezer in use when we have stayed there. There is a pizzeria on site, which serves the most delicious pizzas – they also did a Moules & Frites lunch one Sunday when we were camping which was delicious. Electricity is available but you need to use your own long extension lead. We have never had to book to get on this site – the telephone number advertised is: +33 04 76 30 12 99 (not sure if this number is still in use)

The butterfly list for this campsite and its environs is very long and Apollo (*Parnassius apollo*) drift regularly across the campsite. Scarce Copper (*Lycaena vigaurae*) can be very common.

'Camping Chapella' – Chapella - Switzerland



Situated in Chapella in the Engadine Valley between Zernez and Zuoz – a family run site, good facilities, showers, kitchen area, laundry etc., There is 2 areas of camping - one is along the riverside below the main site but has a very steep slope to get to it – the main camping area is open with lovely views of the valley and mountains even snow-capped in July!! You can order bread for collection in the morning – the office has a small shop with some groceries and local products. This site only has a few electric hook up points.

You can do some walking from the site – there is also a railway station within walking distance from the site that goes up to Davos, Susch and connections for the Glacier Express down to Italy. Within driving distance of Fluella and Albula Passes. Sometimes you can even see Mouflon on top of the mountains above the site. . We have seen Asian Fritillary (*Euphydryas intermedia*) in nearby meadows.

Website: www.campingchapella.ch - email: camping.chapella@bluewin.ch

'Camping De da Munt' St. Maria - Switzerland



This campsite is situated in Sta. Maria in the Mustair Valley south east from Zernez over the Pass de Fuorn from Zernez not far from Mustair. This is a very popular site and I recommend booking. The pitches are on different levels above the office and each pitch has a campfire circle for making campfires (it can get quite cold in the evenings) firewood is sold at the office. The site has basic facilities but good – showers - dish washing area etc., (you do have to pay for the hot water for showers and dishwashing) there is also a small room to sit and read etc., I am not sure if there are any electric hook up points.

There are plenty of good signed walks out from the site and the campsite is within easy reach of Swiss National Park with lots of walks – there is a regular post bus service that runs from the village up and down the valley. Tel: +41 081 858 71 33

Camping Vidor – Pozza - Val di Fassa - Italy



This is a family run campsite, which is situated in Pozza in the Val di Fassa. It is an old established campsite but in 2008 opened new facilities of reception/recreation area, which includes an indoor swimming pool/fitness/leisure centre- after a day out walking, these facilities are very beneficial! It also has a nice bar/restaurant, good stocked shop and lovely showers/toilets, kitchen area, laundry etc., Most of the pitches are of a hard base – no mud! It is a very popular site and I would recommend you book well in advance for the months of July/August. The views of

the Dolomites from the site are spectacular especially in the evening when sun going down.

You are able to walk out from this site up 2 valleys and it is also a really good place to explore the Dolomites from. Campsites in Italy as good as this are unusually rare!

Contact:

website: www.campingvidor.it

email: info@campingvidor.it

Tel: +39 0462 763247



If you would like to recommend any other campsites where you have stayed please let me know.

Anne Spencer

The EIG Website www.bc-eig.org.uk

Anything that should go on the website – it's your website. Please email any thoughts, ideas, or whatever you have, to webmaster@bc-eig.org.uk. Thank you.

Butterfly Conservation

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Registered office: Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset. BH20 5QP.

Tel: 0870 7744309

www.butterfly-conservation.org