

Butterflies of the French Alps

Mariposa Nature Tours trip report

24th June – 1st July 2024



Tour leaders David Moore & Emmanuelle Juan

Trip report by David Moore

Images kindly shared by our guests

(Images above, clockwise from top left: Purple-edged Copper (Kaz & Tad), Southern Swallowtail (Clive), Marbled Fritillary (Nigel), Alpine Heath (Harry))



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Introduction

This two-centre tour of the southern Alpes-Maritimes and the Queyras region further north in France provides a kaleidoscope of colour, from the butterflies to the flowering plants and general geology of this wonderful part of Europe.

Joining us for this tour were Simon, David J, Tad & Kaz, Andrew, Clive, Harry, Dudley & Jean and Nigel.

What follows is a daily diary for the week, followed by species lists, and guests' galleries.

Day 1, 24th June

Arrivals day at Nice is always a fast moving affair, with flights from various airports being used to reach this destination on the Cote d'Azur.

Thankfully, there were no major delays, meaning that the group was able to get to the first destination in Rimplas in good time to explore the renowned forest track just up the road from the accommodation.

Being late in the afternoon, butterfly activity was a little suppressed, so it was agreed that any sightings would be added to the first full list of the week the next day.

Day 2, 25th June



Southern Swallowtail © Clive

The first full day started off with a major surprise discovery, when Clive reported he had found a roosting male **Southern Swallowtail** *Papilio alexanor* by the roadside leading up to the fort. Sure enough, it remained there with wings fully open (this is normal roosting behaviour in this species) so that each member of the group could come and take a look at this beautiful, mint-fresh specimen, a species very seldom encountered in this part of France.

After everyone had finished breakfast, the group made their way up to the fort at the high point of

the village. Frustratingly, much of the vegetation had been strimmed, so butterfly numbers were consequently reduced. However, there was still a range of desirables to be seen, such as **Adonis Blue** *Polyommatus bellargus*, **Weaver's Fritillary** *Boloria dia*, and **Cleopatra** *Gonepteryx cleopatra*.

The weather was still a little cloudy higher up in the valley, but the decision was made to go in any case to the ski-centre at nearby La Colmiane, and once the destination had been reached, there were sufficient sunny intervals to allow butterflies to take flight.

Almond-eyed Ringlet *Erebia alberganus*, was one of the first to be seen, followed shortly after by **Bath White** *Pontia daplidice*. Walking down the slope several more species were encountered, notably **Black-veined White** *Aporia crataegi*, **Knapweed Fritillary** *Melitaea phoebe*, and **Mazarine Blue** *Cyaniris semiargus*.



Adonis Blue © Harry

However, the principal target, **Mountain Alcon Blue** *Phengaris rebeli*, was not present in its usual haunt on the steep bank at the bottom of the slope, nor were any of its eggs seen on the gentian plants, which had still yet to reach half-size, demonstrating the adverse effects of the cool spring the region had experienced.

The afternoon spent on the forest track was more productive, given that the drop in altitude of 500m meant that things were more advanced than they had been at the ski-centre.



Marbled Skipper © Nigel

A **Marbled Skipper** *Carcharodus lavatherae* was sighted soon after arriving on the track, and further down, there was an immaculate **Blue-spot Hairstreak** *Satyrium spini* simply crying out to have its photo taken, which it duly did.

Red-underwing Skipper *Spialia sertorius* was another that appeared on this upper section, along with **Baton Blue** *Pseudophilotes baton* which can almost always be relied on at the first hairpin bend on the path where there is a stretch of thyme, its larval host plant, growing at the

base of the rocky slope.

Several **Escher's Blue** *Polyommatus escheri* were seen, mostly on the lavender flowers, whilst **Chequered Blue** *Scolitantides orion* was a very welcome addition as the group made their way further down the track.

Pearly Heath *Coenonympha arcania* was probably the commonest species, but there were reminders of how late the season was, with **Duke of Burgundy** *Hamaeris lucina* recorded at the second hairpin, and several reasonably fresh **Marsh Fritillary** *Euphydryas aurinia* being seen at various points along the walk.

As the group neared the end of the track, a couple of **Purple-shot Copper** *Lycaena alciphron* were seen active amongst a stretch of bramble, whilst a notable find lower down was an immaculate **Large Tortoiseshell** *Nymphalis polycholoros*, which basked on the ground for several minutes before returning to the canopy of a cherry tree.



Baton Blue © Kaz & Tad

As ever, the species range was excellent on the track, but butterfly numbers were down on previous years. In spite of that, after the first full day, 48 different species had been seen.

Day 3, 26th June

Given the experience of the first day, it was with a little trepidation that the group set out to explore higher altitude sites this morning.

The first stop was around 1,450m, but little was about except for spring species such as **Dingy Skipper** *Erynnis tages*, **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** *Boloria euphrosyne*, and **Orange-tip** *Anthocharis cardamines*.

It was only after the trip that Kaz revealed, via an image, that she had managed to capture an **Apollo** *Parnassius apollo* in flight, which proved to be the only one recorded all week!



A further surprise was when what were originally thought to be Almond-eyed Ringlet turned out to be almost all be **De Prunner's Ringlet** *Erebia triaria*, a species that has normally vanished by late June, even at altitude.

Undeterred, the group ascended to 2,200m, but here there were only transient species passing through, the bulk of which were **Large White** *Pieris brassicae*, and **Clouded Yellow** *Colias crocea*.

It was decided to take lunch back down at lower altitude, at a site around 1,500m where there were several picnic tables at a riverside location.

This is normally a reliable site for good numbers of **Geranium Argus** *Eumedonia eumedon*, but only one individual could be found amongst the masses of cranesbill flowers.

Still, there was a selection of other butterflies in the damp, flowery meadows, such as **Glanville Fritillary** *Melitaea cinxia*, **Green Hairstreak** *Callophrys rubi*, **Mountain Green-veined White** *Pieris bryoniae*, and even a **Camberwell Beauty** *Nymphalis antiopa*, but the absence of any altitude specialists really set the tone for the whole week. The season was behind by at least two weeks.

Another quick sortie down the forest track by the hotel added a few more desirables. Both **Ilex Satyrium** *ilicis* and **False Ilex Hairstreak** *Satyrium esculi* were encountered by some of the group, whilst **Comma** *Polygona c-album* and **Swallowtail** *Papilio machaon* were also about. Andrew was also happy as he managed to pick up a Baton Blue in the same area where some had been sighted the previous day.



In total, 19 new species had been seen on this second full day, bringing the total to 67.

Day 4, 27th June



Transit day on this tour involves travelling west through the perched villages of Roure and Roubion, emerging at the ski-station of Valberg.

Just prior to this is a village called Les Launes, on the outskirts of which is a semi-wooded flowery meadow which is a hotspot for a variety of butterfly species.

The flowers in this meadow were in particularly good health, no doubt due to conditions being cooler and damper than usual, and for once there were a fair few butterflies on the wing, with **Purple-edged Copper** *Lycaena hippothoe* being unmissable due to its reflective hues catching the strong sunlight.

Over by the damp area at the tunnel leading under the road, there were several butterflies taking fluids, including **Amanda's Blue** *Polyommatus amandus* and **Heath Fritillary** *Melitaea athalia*. Nearby, the close cousin of the latter, **False Heath Fritillary** *Melitaea diamina*, was also seen.

Further along the meadow, David J noticed two **Clouded Apollo** *Parnassius mnemosyne*, which turned out to be a mating pair, which was amazing given how late it was in the flight period of this late spring species.

David M and Clive patrolled the narrow track between the steep bank and the light woodland and were delighted to find a handful of Mountain Alcon Blue, which stayed around long enough for all the group to see.

Another new species for the week was **Large Grizzled Skipper** *Pyrgus alveus*, with **Osiris Blue** *Cupido osiris* and **Sooty Copper** *Lycaena tityrus* also being recorded for the first time.



Clouded Apollo © Harry

Provencal Fritillary *Melitaea deione* was the other notable find here, but overall it was just such a pleasure to be in a wonderful environment replete with both butterflies and flowering plants.

With the weather continuing warm and sunny, it was time to cross over into the Var valley and head up to a fabulous site by the Lac d'Estenc, which is the source of the River Var.

The mosaic of both damp and dry habitat attracts a great range of butterfly species, but one that was entirely unexpected was the **Peacock** *Inachis io* seen immediately upon getting out of the vehicles at the car park. This was only the second time in a decade that the guides had seen one in this region.



Darwin's Heath © Clive

There were plenty of butterflies puddling at the side of the car park in the damp earth. amongst which was the week's first **Olive Skipper** *Pyrgus serratalae*.

The boardwalk and the lake beyond looked beautiful as ever, and the copious sainfoin flowering on the banks of the lake attracted many butterflies, including **Darwin's Heath** *Coenonympha darwiniana*, which is a butterfly with a very restricted distribution.

With the views having been soaked up and lunch eaten up, it was time to head over Col de la Cayolle to the final site of the day, another riverside track about 3km on the northern side of the col.

En route, an impromptu stop was made to see and photograph a female **Mountain Dappled White** *Euchloe simplonia*, which was behaving in an unusually accommodating manner by the standards of this species, regularly alighting on flowers to take nectar.

After arrival at the site, the first noticeable thing was the stunted vegetation. It looked like mid-May rather than late June. However, there were still plenty of butterflies along the track leading uphill, including several flighty **Berger's Clouded Yellow** *Colias alfacariensis*, and the odd Swallowtail.

Part way along there is an area where water trickled off the steep slope forming damp patches along the stony track. There were plenty of **Southern Grizzled Skipper** *Pyrgus malvoides* attracted to these moist areas, with the occasional De Prunner's Ringlet imbibing too.

Green-underside Blue *Glaucopsyche alexis* and **Northern Wall Brown** *Lasiommata petropolitana* were welcome additions here, whilst **Large Blue** *Phengaris arion* was also seen amongst the thyme growth along the bank.



Clive's eagle eyes added **Mountain Clouded Yellow** *Colias phicomone* and **Glandon Blue** *Plebejus glandon* to the week's total, but sadly no **Small Apollo** *Parnassius phoebus* were recorded, at a site that is usually very reliable for them. Yet another indicator of the late season.

The next hour and a half was spent travelling through Barcelonnette and on to the ski resort of Vars where the next part of the tour would be based at. The 19 new species by now had taken the tally to 86, which was laudable given the vagaries of the season.

Day 5, 28th June

The main aim today was to try to track down some of the real high altitude specialists at Col Agnel, on the border with Italy.

This was sure to be a challenge given the experience at the col further south a few days earlier, and indeed so it proved, with few butterflies active at the rarefied altitude of 2,600m; largely just Southern Grizzled Skipper, and Large and Mountain Green-veined White.

One newcomer that passed through however was **Peak White** *Pontia callidice*, although as is normal in this species, it was in no mood to stop.

A couple of Mountain Dappled White were seen too but given the near absence of flowering plants and the blanched grass, which had probably been under snow a couple of weeks earlier, it was decided drop down a little in altitude to a riverside site a few kilometres down the road.



Unsurprisingly, there was far more in the way of flowers and butterflies at this location, although still far less than one would expect in a normal year.

A good early find was **Alpine Grizzled Skipper** *Pyrgus andromedae*, which can always be expected to turn up here. Sadly, there was no sign of the other target species, **Alpine Blue** *Plebejus orbitulus*, although the swollen river meant crossing over to the damp meadow on the other side, where this species can most reliably be found, was rendered impossible.

The piece of ground where the vehicles had been parked did have a pleasant surprise though in the shape of a **Small Tortoiseshell** *Aglais urticae*, which was probing the earth for minerals.

The next stop was around 200m lower still, with a handy refreshment hut opposite for those who wished to partake. The riverbanks are replete with the larval host plant of Small Apollo,



Alpine Heath © Harry

but again there was no sign of this insect, although Clive, Dudley & Jean called the guide over to a nearby damp area of the track where the week's first (and only) **Grison's Fritillary** *Melitaea varia* was enthusiastically puddling.

Another first was **Alpine Heath** *Coenonympha gardetta*, which was active in the grassy meadows nearby along with several **Queen of Spain Fritillary** *Issoria lathonia*, and good numbers of Mazarine Blue.

The weather had been hot and glorious in its entirety, however the lack of sunshine and real warmth in the preceding few weeks had taken its toll on butterfly numbers as well as range of species, with just five added today, bringing the week's total now to 91.

Day 6, 29th June

The weather was extremely overcast this morning, forcing a change of plan to the intended itinerary.

There was no option but to descend in altitude to the Durance Valley which, at just 1,000m, is realistically as low as one can go around this area. The cloud remained, but was much thinner here, and occasional glimpses of the sun meant that a few butterflies were brave enough to risk taking flight.

One of these was **Sloe Hairstreak** *Satyrium acaciae*, a first for the week, and another was **Silver-studded Blue** *Plebejus argus*, which had unusually not hitherto been seen above 1,500m, but had emerged at this lower elevation.



Safflower Skipper © Clive

A handful of other desirables were seen, including Green-underside Blue, Purple-edged Copper, **Safflower Skipper** *Pyrgus carthami*, and **Marbled Fritillary** *Brenthis ino*, but conditions were marginal at best and following lunch it was decided to take the risk and return to the col close to the hotel just in case things improved.

Sadly, they didn't, and for many in the group it was a rare, if unwelcome, opportunity to put coats on as the cool wind made it feel more like March than June.



Marbled Fritillary © Nigel

Rather irritatingly, the weather brightened up a little after 17:30h. In the light of this, some took a walk in the immediate environs of the hotel, with a handful of butterflies seen, including a fresh female Large Blue.

Just two new species were added during the course of this unseasonable cloudy and cool day, meaning that 93 species had now been recorded on the trip.

Day 7, 30th June

Whilst things had improved weatherwise, the forecast was for cloud and cool conditions at altitude, so sadly the intended journey to Col d'Izoard had to be abandoned.

Two lower altitude sites were chosen, one being a repeat visit to the Durance Valley and the other being at just 1,500m where conditions were likelier to remain fine.

Given the increased chances of overcast conditions in the afternoon, the first point of call was at Ceillac, which proved quite lively as the damp car park featured many puddling butterflies which, as per usual, were more approachable than those visiting flowers.

A couple of mint-fresh Swallowtail were the most eye-catching, and there was a fine Olive Skipper imbibing with several others of its kind, including Alpine Grizzled and Safflower Skipper.

In the light woodland, there were excellent numbers of Mountain Alcon Blue, the most the guide had ever seen at one location, and there were also occasional Large Blue flying by, adding to the splendour.



Mountain Alcon Blue © Nigel

Several Mountain Green-veined White were seen in the woodland glades, with frequent sightings of Northern Wall Brown, whilst in the more open areas near the river there were a handful of False Heath Fritillary and many Silver-studded Blue. Close scrutiny led to the



Spanish Purple Hairstreak © Nigel

discovery of two new species for the week. In amongst the Almond-eyed and De Prunner's Ringlets, one stood out. It was the first **Large Ringlet** *Erebia euryale* of the trip. This species is usually incredibly common so it was a unique, if bittersweet, experience to be overjoyed at the sight of just one!

Then, on returning to the car park, a brown lycaenid was found puddling in amongst a host of blues and skippers. This was a **Mountain Argus** *Aricia artaxerxes*, recognisable by its much reduced orange forewing lunules.

After lunch, there was still enough sunshine to spark butterflies into life, and returns were quite satisfactory at the site near Réotier, with the main target **Spanish Purple Hairstreak** *Laeosopis roboris* being found very quickly at the top of the meadow, nectaring from umbellifers.

The field next to where the vehicles had been parked proved particularly productive, with many fresh Marbled Fritillary, along with the first sightings of **High Brown Fritillary** *Fabriciana adippe*, and **Silver-washed Fritillary** *Argynnis paphia*, which were attracted to the many thistles growing in the field, as well as the bramble flowers around the perimeter.

A few more Ilex and Sloe Hairstreak were spotted, with Purple-shot Copper providing a flash of bright colour. There was also a **Lang's Short-tailed Blue** *Leptotes pirithous*, giving an exotic feel to things.

To end the day, it was decided to travel via Lac de Serre Ponçon to a hillside site with a series of lightly wooded meadows.

It was hot at this lower elevation, so much so that most of the butterflies had obviously preferred to roost, but there were still a couple of notable finds. **Mallow Skipper** *Carcharodus alcaea* was seen along the track, whilst a colony of **White-letter Hairstreak** *Satyrium w-album* was discovered amongst the mature elms at the side of the path. **Southern White Admiral** *Limentis reducta* was also seen nectaring from the brambles.



Thankfully, the group had managed to escape the vagaries of today's weather, and visits to lower altitude generated eight new species, which is excellent for the final full day of any tour. There were still sites to be visited *en route* to the airport the next day, but the three figure target had finally been breached, with 101 species now recorded.

Day 8, 1st July

Departure day usually involves a journey direct to the airport, but the group all had late afternoon or evening flights, and the guides decided that because it would likely not be worth stopping at altitude along Col de la Bonette, an extended stop would be had at St Dalmas le Selvege on the southern side of the col.



The weather remained good, meaning that there were plenty of butterflies to see on arrival at this delightful location.

A further delight was bumping into the venerable Roger Gibbons, who has more experience of the butterflies of this area than probably anyone. It was he who helped identify an **Oberthur's Grizzled Skipper** *Pyrgus armoricanus* found puddling amongst many other species near the bridge over the river.

The nearby steep meadow yielded another Peacock, and then another first, with the dainty **Meadow Fritillary** *Melitaea parthenoides*, being tracked down by the guide.

The adjacent meadow is especially rich in flowers, and amongst the many butterflies frequenting it was the week's first **Chestnut Heath** *Coenonympha glycerion*.

The other two species seen for the first time were **Titania's Fritillary** *Boloria titania*, found by Clive, and **Idas Blue** *Plebejus idas*. Both these species are normally fairly common but were clearly just emerging on this first day of July.

A last picnic lunch was taken in the picturesque setting of the river valley before the final journey to Nice airport was made to allow everyone to catch their flights home.

Footnote and acknowledgements

This tour turned out to be an enjoyable one, although it must be noted that Western Europe suffered from an abnormally poor season for insects generally in 2024, particularly at higher altitudes.

As a consequence, very little was found above 2,000m and one suspects the chilly conditions through May and into the first half of June put back the emergence of many species found at this elevation.

Even lower down, whilst the species range was good, numbers were comparatively poor in comparison to normal years. On the upside, the rainfall had allowed the plants to flourish, meaning the areas visited were greener than normal.

In spite of the above, recording 106 different butterfly species in a single week in Europe is a decent effort and Mariposa would like to thank everybody for their assistance in tracking these down, and their good humour when the weather was not especially conducive to butterfly hunting.

The company was convivial, the hotels excellent, and the region as beautiful as ever.



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BUTTERFLIES OF THE FRENCH ALPS								
24 th June – 1 st July 2024								
	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
	Butterflies							
1	Mallow Skipper <i>Carcharodus alceae</i>						✓	
2	Tufted Marbled Skipper <i>Carcharodus flocciferus</i>							
3	Marbled Skipper <i>Carcharodus lavatherae</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	
4	Dingy Skipper <i>Erynnis tages</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Large Skipper <i>Ochlodes sylvanus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Oberthur's Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus armoricanus</i>							✓
7	Foulquier's Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus foulquieri</i>							
8	Large Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus alveus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Alpine Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus andromedae</i>				✓		✓	
10	Carline Skipper <i>Pyrgus carlinae</i>							
11	Safflower Skipper <i>Pyrgus carthami</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Southern Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus malvoides</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Olive Skipper <i>Pyrgus serratulae</i>			✓			✓	✓
14	Red-underwing Skipper <i>Spialia sertorius</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
15	Lulworth Skipper <i>Thymelicus acteon</i>	✓					✓	✓
16	Essex Skipper <i>Thymelicus lineola</i>			✓			✓	
17	Small Skipper <i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
18	Brown Argus <i>Aricia agestis</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
19	Mountain Argus <i>Aricia artaxerxes</i>						✓	
20	Silvery Argus <i>Aricia nicias</i>							
21	Geranium Argus <i>Eumedonia eumedon</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		
22	Geranium Bronze <i>Cacyreus marshalli</i>							
23	Holly Blue <i>Celastrina argiolus</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
24	Small Blue <i>Cupido minimus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
25	Osiris Blue <i>Cupido osiris</i>			✓	✓		✓	
26	Mazarine Blue <i>Cyaniris semiargus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
27	Green-underside Blue <i>Glaucopteryx alexis</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
28	Lang's Short-tailed Blue <i>Leptotes pirithous</i>						✓	
29	Mountain Alcon Blue <i>Phengaris alcon f. rebeli</i>			✓			✓	✓
30	Large Blue <i>Phengaris arion</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	
31	Silver-studded Blue <i>Plebejus argus</i>					✓	✓	
32	Glandon Blue <i>Plebejus glandon</i>			✓				
33	Idas Blue <i>Plebejus idas</i>							✓
34	Alpine Blue <i>Plebejus orbitulus</i>							
35	Amanda's Blue <i>Polyommatus amandus</i>			✓				
36	Adonis Blue <i>Polyommatus bellargus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
37	Chalkhill Blue <i>Polyommatus coridon</i>							
38	Damon Blue <i>Polyommatus damon</i>							
39	Furry Blue <i>Polyommatus dolus</i>							
40	Turquoise Blue <i>Polyommatus dorylas</i>							
41	Eros Blue <i>Polyommatus eros</i>							

	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
42	Escher's Blue <i>Polyommatus escheri</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
43	Common Blue <i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
44	Chapman's Blue <i>Polyommatus thersites</i>							
45	Baton Blue <i>Pseudophilotes baton</i>	✓	✓	✓				
46	Chequered Blue <i>Scolitantides orion</i>	✓	✓	✓				
47	Purple-shot Copper <i>Lycaena alciphron</i>	✓					✓	
48	Purple-edged Copper <i>Lycaena hippothoe</i>			✓		✓		
49	Small Copper <i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>			✓				
50	Sooty Copper <i>Lycaena tityrus</i>			✓				
51	Scarce Copper <i>Lycaena virgaureae</i>							
52	Green Hairstreak <i>Callophrys rubi</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
53	Purple Hairstreak <i>Neozephyrus quercus</i>							
54	White-letter Hairstreak <i>Satyrium w-album</i>						✓	
55	Sloe Hairstreak <i>Satyrium acacia</i>					✓	✓	
56	Ilex Hairstreak <i>Satyrium ilicis</i>		✓	✓			✓	
57	False Ilex Hairstreak <i>Satyrium esculi</i>		✓					
58	Blue-spot Hairstreak <i>Satyrium spini</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
59	High Brown Fritillary <i>Argynnis adippe</i>						✓	
60	Dark Green Fritillary <i>Argynnis aglaja</i>							
61	Niobe Fritillary <i>Argynnis niobe</i>							
62	Silver-washed Fritillary <i>Argynnis paphia</i>						✓	
63	Weaver's Fritillary <i>Boloria dia</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
64	Pearl-bordered Fritillary <i>Boloria euphrosyne</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
65	Mountain Fritillary <i>Boloria napaea</i>							
66	Shepherd's Fritillary <i>Boloria pales</i>							
67	Titania's Fritillary <i>Boloria titania</i>							✓
68	Marbled Fritillary <i>Brenthis daphne</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	
69	Lesser Marbled Fritillary <i>Brenthis ino</i>							
70	Marsh Fritillary <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>	✓		✓	✓		✓	
71	Cynthia's Fritillary <i>Euphydryas cynthia</i>							
72	Queen of Spain Fritillary <i>Issoria lathonia</i>		✓	✓	✓			✓
73	Heath Fritillary <i>Melitaea athalia</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
74	Glanville Fritillary <i>Melitaea cinxia</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
75	False Heath Fritillary <i>Melitaea diamina</i>			✓			✓	✓
76	Spotted Fritillary <i>Melitaea didyma</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
77	Meadow Fritillary <i>Melitaea parthenoides</i>							✓
78	Knapweed Fritillary <i>Melitaea phoebe</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
79	Grison's Fritillary <i>Melitaea varia</i>				✓			
80	Small Tortoiseshell <i>Aglais urticae</i>				✓		✓	
81	Lesser Purple Emperor <i>Apatura ilia</i>							
82	White Admiral <i>Limenitis camilla</i>							
83	Southern White Admiral <i>Limenitis reducta</i>			✓			✓	✓
84	Large Tortoiseshell <i>Nymphalis polychloros</i>	✓	✓	✓				
85	Comma <i>Polygona c-album</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
86	Southern Comma <i>Polygonia egea</i>							
87	Red Admiral <i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
88	Painted Lady <i>Vanessa cardui</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
89	Scarce Swallowtail <i>Iphiclides podalirius</i>			✓			✓	✓
90	Swallowtail <i>Papilio machaon</i>		✓	✓			✓	✓
91	Apollo <i>Parnassius apollo</i>		✓					
92	Clouded Apollo <i>Parnassius mnemosyne</i>			✓				
93	Small Apollo <i>Parnassius phoebus</i>							
94	Orange-tip <i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
95	Black-veined White <i>Aporia crataegi</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
96	Berger's Clouded Yellow <i>Colias alfacariensis</i>			✓			✓	✓
97	Clouded Yellow <i>Colias crocea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
98	Mountain Clouded Yellow <i>Colias phicomone</i>			✓				
99	Mountain Dappled White <i>Euchloe simplonia</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	
100	Cleopatra <i>Gonepteryx cleopatra</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
101	Brimstone <i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>		✓	✓			✓	✓
102	Wood White <i>Leptidea sinapis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
103	Large White <i>Pieris brassicae</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
104	Mountain Green-veined White <i>Pieris byroniae</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	
105	Green-veined White <i>Pieris napi</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
106	Small White <i>Pieris rapae</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
107	Peak White <i>Pontia callidice</i>				✓			
108	Bath White <i>Pontia daplidice</i>	✓						
109	Duke of Burgundy <i>Hamearis lucina</i>	✓	✓	✓				✓
110	Ringlet <i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>							
111	Great Banded Grayling <i>Brintesia circe</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
112	Pearly Heath <i>Coenonympha arcania</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
113	Darwin's' Heath <i>Coenonympha darwiniana</i>			✓		✓	✓	
114	Dusky Heath <i>Coenonympha dorus</i>							
115	Chestnut Heath <i>Coenonympha glycerion</i>							✓
116	Small Heath <i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
117	False Mnestra Ringlet <i>Erebia aethiopella</i>							
118	Almond-eyed Ringlet <i>Erebia alberganus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
119	Common Brassy Ringlet <i>Erebia cassioides</i>							
120	Mountain Ringlet <i>Erebia epiphron</i>							
121	Large Ringlet <i>Erebia euryale</i>						✓	
122	Arran Brown <i>Erebia ligea</i>							
123	Piedmont Ringlet <i>Erebia meolans</i>							
124	Sooty Ringlet <i>Erebia pluto</i>							
125	Woodland Grayling <i>Hipparchia fagi</i>		✓					
126	Dusky Meadow Brown <i>Hyponephele lycaon</i>							
127	Large Wall Brown <i>Lassiomata maera</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
128	Wall <i>Lassiomata megera</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
129	Meadow Brown <i>Maniola jurtina</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
130	Marbled White <i>Melanargia galathea</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
131	Speckled Wood <i>Pararge aegeria</i>	✓	✓	✓				
132	Great Sooty Satyr <i>Satyrus ferula</i>							
	Other possibles...							
1	Dusky Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus cacaliae</i>							
2	Warren's Skipper <i>Pyrgus warrensis</i>							
3	Rosy Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus onopordi</i>							
4	Silver-spotted Skipper <i>Hesperia comma</i>							
5	Meleager's Blue <i>Meleageria daphnis</i>							
6	Long-tailed Blue <i>Lampides boeticus</i>	✓					✓	✓
7	Spanish Purple Hairstreak <i>Laeosapis roboris</i>						✓	
8	Scarce Fritillary <i>Euphydryas maturna</i>							
9	Provençal Fritillary <i>Mellicta deione</i>			✓		✓		✓
10	Poplar Admiral <i>Limenitis populi</i>							
11	Camberwell Beauty <i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>		✓					
12	Peacock <i>Inachis io</i>			✓				✓
13	Southern Small White <i>Pieris mannii</i>	✓						
14	Southern Swallowtail <i>Papilio alexanor</i>	✓						
15	Northern Wall Brown <i>Lassiomata petropolitana</i>			✓		✓	✓	
16	Alpine Heath <i>Coenonympha gardetta</i>				✓	✓	✓	
17	Lesser Mountain Ringlet <i>Erebia melampus</i>							
18	Blind Ringlet <i>Erebia pharte</i>							
19	Dewy Ringlet <i>Erebia pandrose</i>							
20	Silky Ringlet <i>Erebia gorge</i>							
21	Marbled Ringlet <i>Erebia montana</i>							
22	De Prunner's Ringlet <i>Erebia triaria</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	
23	Grayling <i>Hipparchia semele</i>							
24	Rock Grayling <i>Hipparchia alcyone</i>							
25	Black Satyr <i>Satyrus actaea</i>							
	Daily total	48	57	77	39	39	77	54
	New for trip	48	19	19	5	2	8	5
	Running total	48	67	86	91	93	101	106
	Birds (with thanks to Andrew for compiling these)							
1	Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>							
2	Black Grouse <i>Lyrurus tetrix</i>							
3	Rock Dove <i>Columba livia</i>							
4	Common Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>							
5	Collared Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>							
6	Common Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>							
7	Eurasian Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>							
8	Alpine Swift <i>Tachymarptis melba</i>							
9	Common Swift <i>Apus apus</i>							
10	Little Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius dubius</i>							
11	Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>							
12	Yellow-legged Gull <i>Larus michahellis</i>							

13	Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>
14	Sandwich Tern <i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>
15	Great Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
16	Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>
17	Bearded Vulture <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>
18	Griffon Vulture <i>Gyps fulvus</i>
19	Short-toed Eagle <i>Circaetus gallicus</i>
20	Eurasian Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>
21	Black Kite <i>Milvus migrans</i>
22	Great Spotted Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos major</i>
23	Eurasian Green Woodpecker <i>Picus viridis</i>
24	Common Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
25	Ring-necked Parakeet <i>Psittacula krameri</i>
26	Red-backed Shrike <i>Lanius collurio</i>
27	Eurasian Jay <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
28	Common Magpie <i>Pica pica</i>
29	Eurasian Jackdaw <i>Corvus monedula</i>
30	Carrion Crow <i>Corvus corone</i>
31	Hooded Crow <i>Corvus cornix</i>
32	Common Raven <i>Corvus corax</i>
33	Coal Tit <i>Pariparus ater</i>
34	Crested Tit <i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>
35	Willow Tit <i>Poecile montanus</i>
36	Eurasian Blue Tit <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>
37	Great Tit <i>Parus major</i>
38	Woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i>
39	Eurasian Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i>
40	Eurasian Crag Martin <i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>
41	Barn Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>
42	Western House Martin <i>Delichon urbicum</i>
43	Western Bonelli's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>
44	Common Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
45	Cetti's Warbler <i>Cettia cetti</i>
46	Long-tailed Tit <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
47	Eurasian Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
48	Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>
49	Sardinian Warbler <i>Curruca melanocephala</i>
50	Western Subalpine Warbler <i>Curruca iberiae</i>
51	Goldcrest <i>Regulus regulus</i>
52	Common Firecrest <i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>
53	Eurasian Nuthatch <i>Sitta europaea</i>
54	Eurasian Treecreeper <i>Certhia familiaris</i>
55	Eurasian Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
56	White-throated Dipper <i>Cinclus cinclus</i>
57	Common Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
58	Mistle Thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>
59	Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>
60	Eurasian Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>
61	Fieldfare <i>Turdus pilaris</i>
62	European Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>

63	Common Nightingale <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>
64	Common Redstart <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>
65	Black Redstart <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>
66	Whinchat <i>Saxicola rubetra</i>
67	Northern Wheatear <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
68	Indian Silverbill <i>Euodice malabarica</i>
69	Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>
70	House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>
71	Italian Sparrow <i>Passer italiae</i>
72	Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
73	White Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>
74	Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>
75	Water Pipit <i>Anthus spinoletta</i>
76	Common Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
77	European Greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i>
78	Common Linnet <i>Linaria cannabina</i>
79	European Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
80	Citril Finch <i>Carduelis citronella</i>
81	European Serin <i>Serinus serinus</i>
82	Rock Bunting <i>Emberiza cia</i>
83	Cirl Bunting <i>Emberiza cirlus</i>
84	Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citronella</i>
	Moths (with thanks to Andrew for compiling these)
1	<i>Actinotia radiosa</i>
2	<i>Adscita</i> spp.
3	Downland Conch <i>Aethes tesserana</i>
4	Common Grass-veneer <i>Agriphila tristella</i>
5	Light Feathered Rustic <i>Agrotis cinerea</i>
6	White-spotted Sable <i>Anania funebris</i>
7	Cinerous Pearl <i>Anania fuscalis</i>
8	Common Roller <i>Ancylis badiana</i>
9	Wood Tiger <i>Arctia plantaginis</i>
10	Apple Fruit Moth <i>Argyresthia conjugella</i>
11	Silver Y <i>Autographa gamma</i>
12	Common Wave <i>Cabera exanthemata</i>
13	Mother Shipton <i>Callistege mi</i>
14	Meadow Longhorn <i>Cauchas rufimitrella</i>
15	Barred Marble <i>Celypha striana</i>
16	Latticed Heath <i>Chiasmia clathrata</i>
17	Southern Grass Emerald <i>Chlorissa cloraria</i>
18	Dusky Grass-veneer <i>Chrysocramboides craterella</i>
19	Garden Grass-veneer <i>Chrysoteuchia culmella</i>
20	<i>Cnephasiini</i> spp.
21	Large Clover Casebearer Moth <i>Coleophora trifolii</i>
22	Hook-streaked Grass-veneer <i>Crambus lathoniellus</i>
23	Box Tree Moth <i>Cydalima perspectalis</i>
24	Marbled Piercer <i>Cydia splendana</i>
25	Clouded Buff <i>Diacrisia sannio</i>
26	Common Drill <i>Dichrorampha petiverella</i>
27	Silver Shade <i>Eana argentana</i>

28	Common Heath <i>Ematurga atomaria</i>
29	White-foot Bell <i>Epiblema foenella</i>
30	Small Argent and Sable <i>Epirrhoe tristata</i>
31	Burnet Companion <i>Euclidia glyphica</i>
32	<i>Eucosmini spp.</i>
33	<i>Eurrhysis pollinalis</i>
34	Twirler Moth spp. <i>Gelechiidae spp.</i>
35	Yarrow Plume Moth <i>Gillmeria pallidactyla</i>
36	<i>Heterogynis</i>
37	Small Waved Umber <i>Horisme vitalbata</i>
38	Dingy Knot-horn <i>Hypochalcia ahenella</i>
39	Golden-yellow Wave <i>Idaea aureolaria</i>
40	<i>Idaea deversaria</i>
41	<i>Idaea flaveolaria</i>
42	Isle of Wight Wave <i>Idaea humiliata</i>
43	<i>Isotrias spp.</i>
44	<i>Lampronia rupella</i>
45	Clouded Border <i>Lomaspilis marginata</i>
46	<i>Lythria sanguinaria</i>
47	Eurasian Hummingbird Hawkmoth <i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>
48	<i>Metaxmeste phrygialis</i>
49	<i>Metaxmeste schrankiana</i>
50	Yellow-barred Gold <i>Micropterix aureatella</i>
51	<i>Mompha idaei</i>
52	Sandy Longhorn <i>Nematopogon schwarziellus</i>
53	Brassy Longhorn <i>Nemophora metallica</i>
54	Rush Veneer <i>Nomophila noctuella</i>
55	<i>Notodonta spp.</i>
56	Chimney-sweeper <i>Odezia atrata</i>
57	Arched Marble <i>Olethreutes arcuella</i>
58	Violet Cosmet <i>Pancalia leuwenhoekella</i>
59	Grass Rivulet <i>Perizoma albulata</i>
60	Garden Midget <i>Phyllonorycter messaniella</i>
61	Small Purple-barred <i>Phytometra viridaria</i>
62	Little Grass-veneer <i>Platytes cerussella</i>
63	<i>Pleurota aristella</i>
64	<i>Pleurota pungitiella</i>
65	Diamondback Moth <i>Plutella xylostella</i>
66	Speckled Yellow <i>Pseudopanthera macularia</i>
67	Bagworm moth spp. <i>Psychidae spp.</i>
68	Plume Moth #1 <i>Pterophorinae spp.</i>
69	Plume Moth #2 <i>Pterophorinae spp.</i>
70	Plume Moth #3 <i>Pterophorinae spp.</i>
71	<i>Pyrausta aerealis</i>
72	Mint Moth <i>Pyrausta aurata</i>
73	Straw-barred Pearl <i>Pyrausta despicata</i>
74	Scarce Purple and Gold <i>Pyrausta ostrinalis</i>
75	Scarce Crimson and Gold <i>Pyrausta sanguinalis</i>
76	<i>Rhodostrophia calabra</i>
77	Common Pink-barred <i>Rhodostrophia vibicaria</i>

78	Meadow Grey <i>Scoparia pyralella</i>
79	Lewes Wave <i>Scopula immorata</i>
80	Black-veined Moth <i>Siona lineata</i>
81	<i>Stenoptilia spp.</i>
82	Mistletoe Clearwing <i>Synanthedon loranthi</i>
83	<i>Syricoris spp.</i>
84	Common Marble <i>Syricoris lacunana</i>
85	Pygmy <i>Thyris fenestrella</i>
86	Silver-ground Carpet <i>Xanthorhoe montanata</i>
87	Red Twin-spot Carpet <i>Xanthorhoe spadicearia</i>
88	Six-spot Burnet <i>Zygaena filipendulae</i>
89	<i>Zygaena romeo</i>
90	Transalpine Burnet <i>Zygaena transalpina</i>
	Beetles (with thanks to Andrew for compiling these)
1	<i>Agapanthia dahl</i>
2	Golden-bloomed Longhorn Beetle <i>Agapanthia villosoviridescens</i>
3	Tobacco-coloured Longhorn Beetle <i>Alosterna tabacicolor</i>
4	Blood-red Longhorn Beetle <i>Anastrangalia sanguinolenta</i>
5	Eyed Ladybird <i>Anatis ocellata</i>
6	<i>Anobium spp.</i>
7	<i>Anthaxia Helvetica</i>
8	Hungarian Anthaxia <i>Anthaxia hungarica</i>
9	<i>Anthaxia morio</i>
10	Varied Carpet Beetle <i>Anthrenus verbasci</i>
11	<i>Arima marginata</i>
12	<i>Attagenus trifasciatus</i>
13	<i>Brachyta interrogationis</i>
14	Western Grape Rootworm <i>Bromius obscurus</i>
15	<i>Calathus spp.</i>
16	Dark Sailor Beetle <i>Cantharis fusca</i>
17	<i>Cantharis livida</i>
18	Grey Sailor Beetle <i>Cantharis nigricans</i>
19	Gloomy Soldier Beetle <i>Cantharis tristis</i>
20	European Rose Chafer <i>Cetonia aurata</i>
21	<i>Chrysanthia viridissima</i>
22	<i>Cicindela gallica</i>
23	Garden Figwort Weevil <i>Cionus hortulanus</i>
24	<i>Clanoptilus arnaizi</i>
25	Yellow-fronted Soft-winged Flower Beetle <i>Clanoptilus elegans</i>
26	<i>Clanoptilus spp.</i>
27	<i>Clytra laeviuscula</i>
28	Four Spotted Leaf Beetle <i>Clytra quadripunctata</i>
29	<i>Clytra spp.</i>
30	7-spot Ladybird <i>Coccinella septempunctata</i>
31	<i>Coraebus rubi</i>
32	<i>Cratosilis denticollis</i>
33	black-and-red pot beetle <i>Cryptocephalus bipunctatus</i>
34	<i>Cryptocephalus sericeus</i>
35	<i>Cryptocephalus spp.</i>

36	Pectinate Click Beetle <i>Ctenicera pectinicornis</i>
37	Sulphur Beetle <i>Cteniopus sulphurous</i>
38	<i>Danacea spp.</i>
39	<i>Dinoptera collaris</i>
40	<i>Ebaeus spp.</i>
41	<i>Enicopus ater</i>
42	<i>Evodinus clathratus</i>
43	Daffodil Leaf-beetle <i>Exosoma lusitanicum</i>
44	Harlequin Ladybird <i>Harmonia axyridis</i>
45	Adonis Ladybird Beetle <i>Hippodamia variegata</i>
46	Mountain Monkey Beetle <i>Hoplia argentea</i>
47	<i>Isomira spp.</i>
48	Speckled Longhorn Beetle <i>Judolia cerambyciformis</i>
49	<i>Judolia erratica</i>
50	<i>Lachnaia italic</i>
51	Portuguese Firefly <i>Luciola lusitanica</i>
52	<i>Malachius spp.</i>
53	Pine Sawyer Beetle <i>Monochamus sutor</i>
54	<i>Mordellochroa abdominalis</i>
55	Four-spotted Blisterbeetle <i>Mylabris quadripunctata</i>
56	<i>Mylabris variabilis</i>
57	Striped Ladybird <i>Myzia oblongoguttata</i>
58	<i>Neocrepidodera spp.</i>
59	<i>Oedemera atrata</i>
60	Yellow-legged Thick-legged Flower Beetle <i>Oedemera flavipes</i>
61	<i>Oedemera lurida</i>
62	<i>Oedemera podagrariae</i>
63	<i>Oreina speciose</i>
64	<i>Oreina spp.</i>
65	Armadillo Weevil <i>Otiorhynchus armadillo</i>
66	Mediterranean Spotted Chafer <i>Oxythyrea funesta</i>
67	<i>Paracorymbia hybrid</i>
68	Garden Chafer <i>Phyllopertha horticola</i>
69	<i>Phytoecia affinis</i>
70	Jewel Reed Beetle <i>Plateumaris sericea</i>
71	<i>Podagrica spp.</i>
72	Chequered Click Beetle <i>Prosternon tessellatum</i>
73	Fairy-ring Longhorn Beetle <i>Pseudovadonia livida</i>
74	Common Red Soldier Beetle <i>Rhagonycha fulva</i>
75	<i>Rhagonycha spp.</i>
76	Mullein Weevil <i>Rhinusa tetra</i>
77	Spotted Longhorn Beetle <i>Rutpela maculate</i>
78	<i>Stenurella bifasciata</i>
79	Small Black Longhorn Beetle <i>Stenurella nigra</i>
80	<i>Timarcha spp.</i>
81	Bee Beetle <i>Trichius fasciatus</i>
82	<i>Trichodes alvearius</i>
83	Bee-eating Beetle <i>Trichodes apiaries</i>

84	<i>Trichodes leucopsideus</i>
85	Apple Blossom Beetle <i>Tropinota hirta</i>
86	<i>Vadonia unipunctata</i>
87	Bug Flower Chafer <i>Valgus hemipterus</i>
Orchids (with thanks to Andrew for compiling these)	
1	Pyramidal Orchid <i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>
2	Common Spotted Orchid <i>Dactylorhiza fuchsia</i>
3	Broad-leaved Marsh Orchid <i>Dactylorhiza majalis</i>
4	Elder-flowered Orchid <i>Dactylorhiza sambucina</i>
5	Dark-red Helleborine <i>Epipactis atrorubens</i>
6	Chalk Fragrant Orchid <i>Gymnadenia conopsea</i>
7	<i>Gymnadenia corneliana</i>
8	Lizard Orchid <i>Himantoglossum hircinum</i>
9	Giant Orchid <i>Himantoglossum robertianum</i>
10	Burnt Orchid <i>Neotinea ustulata</i>
11	<i>Ophrys gresivaudanica</i>
12	Early Purple Orchid <i>Orchis mascula</i>
13	Lesser Butterfly Orchid <i>Platanthera bifolia</i>
14	Globe-flowered Orchid <i>Traunsteinera globosa</i>

Guests' Galleries

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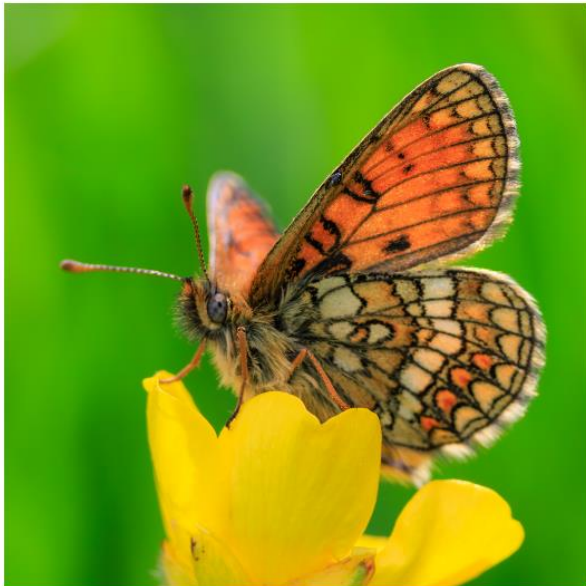
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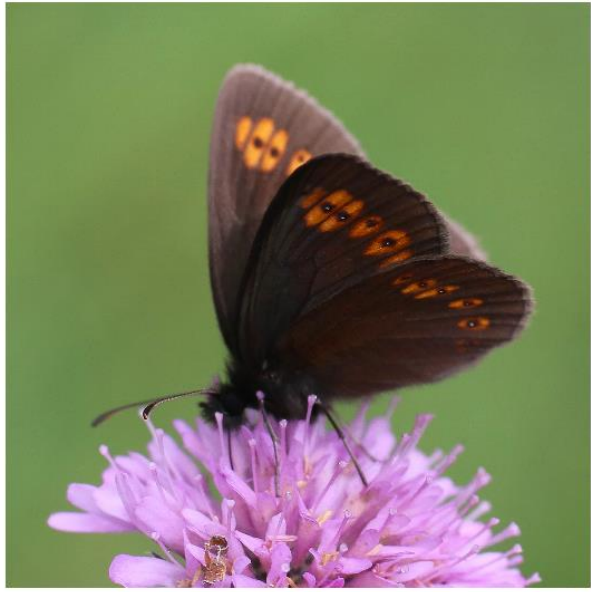
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And finally... If you like the sound of Butterflies of the French Alps, next year's tour is available to book on our website:

[Butterflies of the French Alps](#)

Alternatively, we have other butterfly tours with remaining availability in 2025 that explore other wonderful montane areas in France, Italy and Spain!

[Spring Butterflies of the French Pyrenees](#)

[Butterflies of the Italian Alps & French Mercantour](#)

[Summer Butterflies of the Spanish Pyrenees](#)

[Butterflies of the Hautes Pyrenees](#)

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