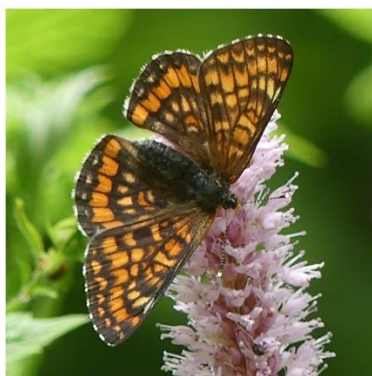


Butterflies of the Italian Alps & French Mercantour

Mariposa Nature Tours trip report

11 – 18 June 2024



Tour leaders Paul Selby, Emmanuelle Juan, David Moore & Roger Gibbons

Trip report by Paul Selby

Images kindly shared by our guests

(Images above, clockwise from top left: Scarce Fritillary (Emma), Southern Swallowtail (Allan), Black-veined White (Lynn), Turquoise Blue (Barrie))



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Introduction

This was the first Mariposa trip to these wonderfully scenic parts of Italy and France. It was based in two beautiful and butterfly-rich locations - firstly in the village of Bagni di Vinadio in the Italian Alps and, secondly, in the village of Rimplas in the French Mercantour.

The guests joining us were Allan, Julian, Rod & Lynn, Aidan & Emma, Andrew, Hugh, Barrie & Anita.

Day 1, Tuesday 11th June

Unexpected news greeted us in the days before arrival. The weather had been very poor in this part of Europe throughout the previous three months. So much so, all three main mountain passes that would allow us to drive from Nice airport to our first hotel in Bagni di Vinadio were closed for repairs. In normal years, this repair activity after winter would have been conducted in May. But the snow melt was so late this year, it was only now being started in early June.

What this meant was that, instead of a relaxed 180 minute direct drive that included two decent butterflying stops along the way, we would need to take an unprecedented five hour motorway drive east into Italy, before heading north, and then west.



This was clearly a disappointing start to the trip for the guests arriving at Nice, but it was taken in good spirits over lunch at the airport. Thankfully the exit from the airport car parks went well, and the roads were quiet, meaning we arrived at 6pm, giving everyone an hour to freshen up and unpack, prior to the introductory welcome ahead of dinner.

We were extremely lucky to have expert guide Roger Gibbons as co-guide for the first 5 days of the trip, and Roger met us at the hotel, with his wife Ann. Everyone introduced themselves to one another, and we discussed our aims and hopes for the week ahead.

We then sat down to the first of many fantastic five course dinners at the hotel, the food being universally superb.

Day 2, Wednesday 12th June

After the long drive the day before, everyone was raring to go the next morning. The weather forecast was mixed, but we set off for the short thirty minute drive to the hillsides to the north of Demonte, where **Scarce Fritillary** *Euphodryas maturna* has its only colonies in Italy.

There were decent sunny spells at our first site, but it became clear straight away just how late the 2024 season was for butterflies. **Large White** *Pieris brassicae* was by far the

commonest butterfly, and there were good numbers of fresh-looking **Orange Tip** *Anthocharis cardamines*. Also common were **Adonis Blue** *Polyommatus bellargus* and **Heath Fritillary** *Melitaea athalia*, individuals of both species looking mint fresh. Lynn also spotted a **Sooty Copper** *Lycaena tityrus*, which turned out to be one of only three sightings all week of this normally common species.

A number of us also spent some time studying some distant photos of either a **Large Wall Brown** *Lasiommata maera* or **Northern Wall Brown** *Lasiommata petropolitana*. Thankfully Emmanuelle got a good photo that enabled us to discuss the specific identification criteria, with us all settling on the latter species.



Heath Fritillary © Lynn



Almond-eyed Ringlet © Aidan

After ninety minutes, we moved onto the second site, nearby. By this time, it was cloudier, and sunny spells were very brief. The meadow was gorgeous, full of wonderful wildflowers at, or close to, their peak. However, butterfly numbers were low. **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** *Boloria selene* did show themselves well, and a good number of the group saw both **Weaver's Fritillary** *Boloria dia* and **Almond-eyed Ringlet** *Erebia alberganus*. Roger and Paul also spotted our first **Turquoise Blue** *Polyommatus dorylus* of the week, always a lovely species to see.

We had lunch at the precise spot a Scarce Fritillary had been seen the previous year, but despite a few spells of sunshine, we had no luck, and we left the site strongly suspecting that this species hadn't emerged yet this year.

Our last stop for the day was down the valley from our hotel. The meadows here, by the river, are stunning, especially with the mountains in the background. The weather forecast for the afternoon was poor, but actually it turned out to be sunny when we arrived. This was fortuitous, and we were able to get some excellent views and photo opportunities with **Duke of Burgundy** *Hamearis lucina* and **Geranium Argus** *Aricia eumedon*. Again, both were mint fresh. The latter species was seen almost exclusively on Geranium, of course!

Also putting on a good display were **Clouded Apollo** *Parnassius mnemosyne*. Such was the behaviour of all the individuals we saw, it felt like they had only emerged that afternoon. This gave us all a great opportunity for close range photos.

Despite the mixed weather, and the disappointment about missing out on Scarce Fritillary, we all agreed it had been a good first proper day. Four of us had a celebratory swim in



Clouded Apollo © Andrew

the geothermally heated hotel swimming pool, before sitting down for the daily checklist, and then dinner.

The hotel owner, Franco, told us that evening that he'd never known a worse spring for weather in his life. No wonder butterfly numbers were low, and we were seeing such late emergences!

Day 3, Thursday 13th June

Again, the weather forecast for the day was uncertain. But we set off with a positive attitude for the drive to sites nearby at Entracque and Valdieri. Our first stop was at Ponte di Porcera; in three previous mid-June visits to this site, **Poplar Admiral** *Limenitis populi* had been seen



Mazarine Blue © Rod

on the bridge, so anticipation was particularly high for this spectacular and sought after species.

The wildflowers and scenery here were superb, and in the sunshine, a really good number of butterfly species were flying. **Green Hairstreak** *Callophrys rubi* were in good numbers, as were **Mazarine Blue** *Cyaniris semiargus* and **Small Heath** *Coenonympha pamphilus*. But it was the fritillaries that many of us were mainly focused on – between us we racked up **Glanville** *Melitaea cinxia*, **Pearl-bordered** *Boloria euphrosyne*, **Knapweed** *Melitaea phoebe*, **Lesser Spotted** *Melitaea trivia*, **Spotted** *Melitaea didyma* and **Provençal** *Melitaea deione* fritillaries.

We spent ninety minutes here, but we all could easily have stayed longer. Despite missing out on Poplar Admiral, all guests loved this location.

It was a short twenty minute drive to our lunch spot, a hairpin bend meadow known for its colony of **Reverdin's Blue** *Plebejus argyrognomon*. True to form for the location, after a bit of searching, a lone and tatty female was found. We could not explain why this species was so tatty when so many other species were so fresh. The 2024 season was proving hard to predict!



Knapweed Fritillary © Lynn



Pearly Heath © Emma

The track nearby proved to be a great location for a range of other species too. **Marbled Skipper** *Carcharodus lavatherae*, **Large Skipper** *Ochlodes sylvanus*, **Brimstone** *Gonepteryx rhamni*, **Cleopatra** *Gonepteryx cleopatra*, **Holly Blue** *Celastrina argiolus*, **Green-underside Blue** *Glaucopsyche alexis*, and **Pearly Heath** *Coenonympha arcania* all put in their first appearances of the trip.

Our final site for the day was a quarry near Valdieri, known for its colony of **Southern Swallowtail** *Papilio alexanor*, an extremely scarce species in Italy, and indeed in much of Europe too. The habitat here was much drier and hotter, and always produces species not seen elsewhere on the trip. True to form, we saw **Safflower Skipper** *Pyrgus carthami* and **Purple-shot Copper** *Lycaena alciphron*, which we didn't see anywhere else in Italy during the week.



Purple-shot Copper © Barrie

The habitat is also good for **Chequered Blue** *Scolitantides orion*, a target species for Andrew. All of us were delighted when he found one!



Chequered Blue © Andrew

Shortly afterwards, the cry of "Swallowtail" went out, as one chased a Brimstone. But which swallowtail species was it? We found out soon enough as it showed very territorial behaviour, flying non-stop for over sixty minutes over the rocks higher up. A few of us, including a very nimble Julian, carefully climbed the steep slopes for closer views. After we realised it wasn't going to land, a number of us took "sports mode" photos, or took stills from videos. It was clear it was a male Southern Swallowtail. Indeed, we saw two in the end.

We were all delighted with the day, a total of 54 species seen, and the week list now up to 66. This was Roger and Ann's last evening with us, and it was a particular delight for many of us to spend time listening to their stories of butterfly summers past in France.

Day 4, Friday 14th June

This turned out to be the worst day of weather all week, with cloud cover nearly all day. That said, it didn't rain until 4pm, but when it did, it was heavy!

Our morning was spent in the Val d'Arma. Firstly, we visited a location where **Camberwell Beauty** *Nymphalis antiopa* had been seen before – surprisingly we hadn't seen one yet on the trip. No luck at this site, sadly, but we did get our best views of **Chapman's Blue** *Polyommatus thersites* of the week.

Secondly, we visited a large roadside meadow, higher up the valley. A good number of orchids were seen here. There were also large numbers of flowering Sainfoin, which made some of us speculate if we might see **Osiris Blue** *Cupido osiris*... and happily, we did!

At our third spot, where we ate lunch, the cloud was getting thicker. We did get some good views of **Berger's Clouded Yellow** *Colias alfajariensis* though, which was unusually and helpfully torpid.

This was the crossover point for our guides. Roger (and Ann) left, so we all thanked them for their time, and wished them safe travels. We then stopped briefly back at the hotel, where we met David Moore, who had flown into Nice airport that morning, having spent the previous 8 days guiding the Mariposa Butterflies of North Greece trip. He'd then driven across the Col de la Lombarde, which had opened to traffic just that day – a relief for everyone, not least David!



Berger's Clouded Yellow © Lynn

After introductions and re-acquaintances, we decided to gamble with the weather and try the meadows down our hotel valley. This time, it wasn't so good, with it being cool, windy, and threatening rain. After an hour, with very little seen, half of the group returned in the minibuses, early to the hotel. The others walked back more slowly, stopping at a campsite bar along the way for refreshments!

Day 5, Saturday 15th June

Another mixed weather forecast today, but broadly, it turned out better than forecast.



Amanda's Blue © Barrie

Our first stop was a new site for the week, a set of meadows to the west of Entracque. Despite being a relatively small site, each part of the meadow has slightly different conditions, leading to a huge range of species to be seen. **Lang's Short-tailed Blue** *Leptotes pirithous* and **Provençal Short-tailed Blue** *Cupido alcetas* were both new species for the week. There were also good sightings of **Amanda's Blue** *Polymmatius amandus*, Turquoise Blue, Green Hairstreak,

Queen of Spain Fritillary *Issoria lathonia* and Pearly Heath. Anita found a very torpid Provençal Fritillary, which was so placid and settled she was able to draw it.

We then made the short but slightly tortuous drive up the Termi di Valdieri. Here we had good views of both Chamois and Marmot. One of the target butterfly species in this valley was **Mountain Green-veined White** *Pieris byroniae*. The females are easy to tell apart from normal **Green-veined White** *Pieris napae*, but the males can be more difficult. So, we all took lots of photos of likely looking individual butterflies. Paul managed to take a good photo of a male



Puddling Pierids © Rod

bryoniae, but it was Emmanuelle who took the only photo of a female. While chasing whites, Paul also found a **Mountain Dappled White** *Euchloe simplonia*, a species which Emma had also seen at a separate location.

With the weather looking like it was closing in, we headed back down the valley looking for a good lunch stop. The location for lunch chose itself, as Paul spotted a **Camberwell Beauty** *Nymphalis antiopa*! Luckily, there was a parking spot literally 10 metres away and, pleasingly, all the group managed to see this species over the course of the forty five minute stop.



Southern Swallowtail © Allan

We decided to return to Ponti di Porcera, in the hope of Poplar Admiral. No luck again sadly and, given the extensive searching, we again had to conclude this species hadn't emerged yet this year. However, we did see **Western Dappled White** *Euchloe crameri* here, along with a good variety of fritillary species.

David persuaded us it was worth stopping again, on the way back at the quarry near Valdieri. He thought that the warm but overcast conditions may allow better pictures of Southern Swallowtail. As ever, he was correct, with half the group managing good photos when an individual male settled twice.

In total we saw 65 species of butterfly today, an excellent total, bringing us to 79 for the trip as a whole.

Day 6, Sunday 16th June

The morning dawned with crystal clear blue skies, by far the best weather of the trip so far. This made leaving our fantastic first hotel even harder! After saying our goodbyes to Franco and his team, we headed off for a return visit to meadows north of Demonte. Our hope was that the four intervening days might have been sufficient enough for the first Scarce Fritillary of the season to have emerged.

We arrived quite early, and many of the butterflies were extremely torpid. However it was already clear that the four days had made some difference, with there being a good number more **Meadow Brown** *Maniola jurtina* and Almond-eyed Ringlet on the wing than our previous visit. Thankfully, avoiding disappointment, David found a Scarce Fritillary, which was very settled and allowed good photos to be taken. As we were leaving, Paul spotted a large bright orange fritillary, which Aidan managed to photograph and



Scarce Fritillary © Emma

identify as **Dark Green Fritillary** *Argynnis aglaja*. This turned out to be our only sighting of this species all week.



Col de la Lombarde © Aidan

We then travelled onwards in convoy up the Col de la Lombarde. The weather remained perfect, and the scenery was stunning in the sunshine. As we reached the top, it was clear why the pass had been closed up until the previous two days, as there were still very high snowdrifts to the side of the road, and the repairs to the road itself were fresh.

We stopped for lunch just five minutes beyond the Col on the French side. There was a steady stream of white butterflies migrating north, hilltopping. Also around was **Peak White** *Pontia callidice*, flying typically fast and powerfully, but at least two individuals were seen.

After lunch, we moved on and stopped at two more sites along the main road, beyond the Isola 2000 ski resort. At the first stop were a number of **de Prunner's Ringlet** *Erebia triaria*. Most importantly, Barrie and others spotted the first and only **Apollo** *Parnassius apollo* of the trip. At the second stop we found **Escher's Blue** *Polyommatus escheri*.



Escher's Blue © Barrie

A further forty five minute drive and we arrived at our second hotel in Rimplas. Eager to see what the different location and habitat might bring, around half the group walked partway down the famous track to the side of our hotel. It did bring more species, including **Marsh Fritillary** *Euphdryas aurinia*. But even here it was clear it was a late season, and there were less individual butterflies than in a normal year.

Day 7, Monday 17th June



Scarce Swallowtail © Rod

This was the final full day, and the weather dawned warm and sunny again. Our first stop was literally a five minute drive up the hill to the fort above Rimplas. Despite being quite early, the hot direct sunshine meant that many of the butterflies were highly active already. **Scarce Swallowtail** *Iphiclides podalirius* and **Swallowtail** *Papilio machaon* were both seen, as was **Sloe Hairstreak** *Satyrium acacia*, **Southern White Admiral** *Limenitis reducta*, and **Marbled White** *Melanargia galathea*.

There were also some very attractive highly colour variant female Spotted Fritillary. Just as we were setting off, we stopped the vans again, as a large tawny butterfly revealed itself to be a **Large Tortoiseshell** *Nymphalis polychloros*.

After this distraction, we drove for around an hour north to the village of Saint Dalmas Le Selva and its surrounding meadows. Those meadows were floriferous and in near perfect condition. Our main target here was **(Mountain) Alcon Blue** *Phengaris alcon* form *rebeli*, and while we found its larval host plant, there was sadly no sign of the butterfly itself. **Wood White** *Leptidea sinapis* were extremely common here, photographs revealing one of them turning out to be **Eastern Wood White** *Leptidea duponcheli*. **Large Grizzled Skipper** *Pyrgus alveus* was also seen.



Swallowtail © Emma

After lunch, we returned back to Rimplas, for a longer time at the renowned track to the side of the hotel. Most of us spent at least two hours walking the full length and back again.



Baton Blue © Barrie

Many species were seen, including Purple-shot Copper, **Ilex Hairstreak** *Satyrium ilicis* and Chequered Blue. But the highlight for Andrew was **Baton Blue** *Pseudophilotes baton*, which was a new species for him, and one that proved to be quite confiding.

In total, today had brought the most amount of individual butterfly species, with 68 seen. This took the total trip list to a very good 94

species. Over dinner, we reflected on and celebrated a really good trip, with fantastic company in the most wonderful scenery.

Day 8, Tuesday 18th June

Hugh had a very early flight this morning, so David drove him back to Nice airport - we'd said our goodbyes to them both the night before. The rest of the flights were in the afternoon, so there was just enough time for some of the guests to do an hour or two of butterflying in the morning, in and around Rimplas. No new species were seen, but some good photos were taken of torpid individual butterflies warming themselves in the early morning sun.

It was then time to drive the roughly 60 minutes back to Nice airport with both minibuses. The trip went smoothly, apart from some fun and games with re-fuelling one of the minibuses!

We all said our final goodbyes to each other, the eight days having flown by so quickly.

Footnote and acknowledgements

The total butterfly species count for the trip was 94. This was a really good number, given how delayed the season had been, perhaps 3 to 4 weeks behind a "normal" year. While this



inevitably meant some of the early summer species such as Poplar Admiral and Titania's Fritillary were missed, we were compensated with freshly emerged individuals from many other species, for example Clouded Apollo.

We were also rewarded with some excellent views of Chamois and Marmot, as well as the closest views any of us had ever seen of Honey Buzzard. The meadows were spectacular throughout, and included many species of orchid.

As ever with these trips, it isn't just about the wildlife. Both hotels were superb, with excellent food at breakfast and dinner, as well as the packed lunches. There was also a brilliant group dynamic throughout. Not just in terms of the broad range of knowledge, which all shared generously, but also in terms of laughs and jokes, with none of us taking ourselves too seriously. The guides would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for making this a memorable and highly enjoyable week, and look forward to travelling together again someday soon.



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BUTTERFLIES OF THE ITALIAN ALPS & FRENCH MERCANTOUR 11-18 JUNE 2024									
	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
	Butterflies								
1	Dingy Skipper <i>Erynnis tages</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Mallow Skipper <i>Carcharodus alceae</i>							✓	
3	Marbled Skipper <i>Carcharodus lavatherae</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
4	Tufted Marbled Skipper <i>Carcharodus flocciferus</i>								
5	Red-underwing Skipper <i>Spialia sertorius</i>			✓			✓	✓	
6	Safflower Skipper <i>Pyrgus carthami</i>			✓					
7	Alpine Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus andromedae</i>								
8	Southern Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus malvoides</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
9	Olive Skipper <i>Pyrgus serratulae</i>								
10	Rosy Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus onopordi</i>								
11	Oberthur's Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus armoricanus</i>			✓					
12	Large Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus alveus</i>							✓	
13	Essex Skipper <i>Thymelicus lineola</i>			✓		✓			
14	Small Skipper <i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>			✓				✓	✓
15	Lulworth Skipper <i>Thymelicus action</i>								
16	Large Skipper <i>Ochlodes sylvanus</i>			✓		✓		✓	✓
17	Clouded Apollo <i>Parnassius mnemosyne</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
18	Apollo <i>Parnassius apollo</i>						✓		
19	Scarce Swallowtail <i>Iphiclides podalirius</i>					✓		✓	✓
20	Swallowtail <i>Papilio Machaon</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
21	Southern Swallowtail <i>Papilio alexanor</i>			✓		✓			
22	Wood White <i>Leptidea sinapis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
23	Eastern Wood White <i>Leptidea duponcheli</i>							✓	
24	Orange-tip <i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
25	Western Dappled White <i>Euchloe crameri</i>					✓	✓		
26	Mountain Dappled White <i>Euchloe simplonia</i>					✓			
27	Black-veined White <i>Aporia crategi</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
28	Large White <i>Pieris brassicae</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
29	Southern Small White <i>Pieris mannii</i>					✓	✓		
30	Small White <i>Pieris rapae</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
31	Green-veined White <i>Pieris napae</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
32	Mountain Green-veined White <i>Pieris byroniae</i>					✓			
33	Peak White <i>Pontia callidice</i>						✓		
34	Bath White <i>Pontia daplidice</i>					✓			
35	Mountain Clouded Yellow <i>Colias phicomone</i>								
36	Clouded Yellow <i>Colias crocea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
37	Berger's Clouded Yellow <i>Colias alfacariensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
38	Brimstone <i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
39	Cleopatra <i>Gonepteryx cleopatra</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

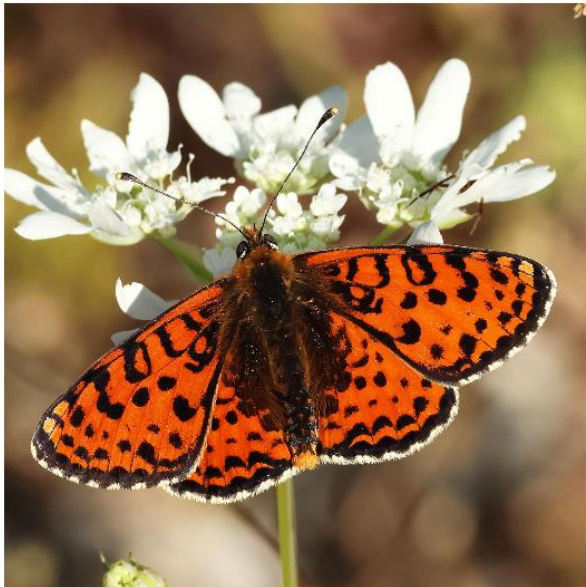
	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
40	Duke of Burgundy <i>Hamearis lucina</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
41	Small Copper <i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>		✓				✓	✓	✓
42	Scarce Copper <i>Lycaena virgureae</i>								
43	Sooty Copper <i>Lycaena tityrus</i>		✓			✓		✓	
44	Purple-shot Copper <i>Lycaena alciphron</i>			✓			✓	✓	
45	Purple-edged Copper <i>Lycaena hippothoe</i>								
46	Purple Hairstreak <i>Favonius quercus</i>								
47	Green Hairstreak <i>Callophrys rubi</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
48	White-letter Hairstreak <i>Satyrium w-album</i>								
49	Blue-spot Hairstreak <i>Satyrium spini</i>					✓			
50	Ilex Hairstreak <i>Satyrium ilicis</i>							✓	
51	False Ilex Hairstreak <i>Satyrium esculi</i>								
52	Sloe Hairstreak <i>Satyrium acacia</i>							✓	
53	Long-tailed Blue <i>Lampides boeticus</i>								
54	Lang's Short-tailed Blue <i>Leptotes pirithous</i>					✓			
55	Small Blue <i>Cupido minimus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
56	Osiris Blue <i>Cupido osiris</i>				✓			✓	
57	Short-tailed Blue <i>Cupido argiades</i>								
58	Provençal Short-tailed Blue <i>Cupido alcetas</i>					✓			
59	Holly Blue <i>Celastrina argiolus</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	
60	Baton Blue <i>Pseudophilotes baton</i>						✓	✓	✓
61	Chequered Blue <i>Scolitantides orion</i>			✓		✓		✓	
62	Green-underside Blue <i>Glaucopsyche alexis</i>			✓	✓	✓		✓	
63	Large Blue <i>Phengaris arion</i>								
64	Alcon Blue <i>Phengaris alcon</i>								
65	Silver-studded Blue <i>Plebejus argus</i>		✓			✓	✓	✓	
66	Idas Blue <i>Plebejus idas</i>								
67	Reverdin's Blue <i>Plebejus argyrognomon</i>			✓					
68	Geranium Argus <i>Aricia eumedon</i>		✓	✓				✓	
69	Brown Argus <i>Aricia agestis</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
70	Mountain Argus <i>Aricia artaxerxes</i>								
71	Silvery Argus <i>Aricia nicias</i>								
72	Mazarine Blue <i>Cyaniris semiargus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
73	Escher's Blue <i>Polyommatus escheri</i>						✓	✓	✓
74	Turquoise Blue <i>Polyommatus dorylas</i>		✓	✓		✓			
75	Amanda's Blue <i>Polyommatus amandus</i>		✓			✓	✓	✓	
76	Chapman's Blue <i>Polyommatus thersites</i>			✓	✓				
77	Common Blue <i>Polyommatus icarus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
78	Eros Blue <i>Polyommatus eros</i>								
79	Meleager's Blue <i>Polyommatus daphnis</i>								
80	Adonis Blue <i>Polyommatus bellargus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
81	Chalkhill Blue <i>Polyommatus coridon</i>								
82	Silver-washed Fritillary <i>Argynnis paphia</i>								
83	Dark Green Fritillary <i>Argynnis aglaja</i>						✓		
84	High Brown Fritillary <i>Argynnis adippe</i>								

	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
85	Niobe Fritillary <i>Argynnis niobe</i>								
86	Queen of Spain Fritillary <i>Issoria lathonia</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	
87	Lesser Marbled Fritillary <i>Brenthis ino</i>								
88	Marbled Fritillary <i>Brenthis daphne</i>			✓				✓	
89	Pearl-bordered Fritillary <i>Boloria Euphrosyne</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
90	Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary <i>Boloria selene</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓		
91	Titania's Fritillary <i>Boloria titania</i>								
92	Weaver's Fritillary <i>Boloria dia</i>		✓				✓	✓	✓
93	Scarce Fritillary <i>Euphydryas maturna</i>						✓		
94	Marsh Fritillary <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>						✓	✓	
95	Glanville Fritillary <i>Melitaea cinxia</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
96	Knapweed Fritillary <i>Melitaea phoebe</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
97	Lesser Spotted Fritillary <i>Melitaea trivia</i>			✓		✓			
98	Spotted Fritillary <i>Melitaea didyma</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
99	False Heath Fritillary <i>Melitaea diamina</i>							✓	
100	Provençal Fritillary <i>Melitaea deione</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
101	Grisons Fritillary <i>Melitaea varia</i>								
102	Meadow Fritillary <i>Melitaea parthenoides</i>								
103	Nickerl's Fritillary <i>Melitaea aurelia</i>					✓			
104	Heath Fritillary <i>Melitaea athalia</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
105	Nettle-tree Butterfly <i>Libythea celtis</i>								
106	Red Admiral <i>Vanessa atalanta</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
107	Painted Lady <i>Vanessa cardui</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓
108	Peacock <i>Aglais io</i>							✓	
109	Small Tortoiseshell <i>Aglais urticae</i>		✓			✓	✓	✓	
110	Comma <i>Polygonia c-album</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
111	Camberwell Beauty <i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>				✓	✓		✓	
112	Large Tortoiseshell <i>Nymphalis polychloros</i>						✓	✓	
113	Poplar Admiral <i>Limenitis populi</i>								
114	White Admiral <i>Limenitis camilla</i>								
115	Southern White Admiral <i>Limenitis reducta</i>							✓	✓
116	Lesser Purple Emperor <i>Apatura ilia</i>								
117	Speckled Wood <i>Pararge aegeria</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
118	Wall Brown <i>Lasiommata megera</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
119	Northern Wall Brown <i>Lasiommata petropolitana</i>		✓			✓			
120	Large Wall Brown <i>Lasiommata maera</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
121	Pearly Heath <i>Coenonympha arcania</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
122	Chestnut Heath <i>Coenonympha glycerion</i>								
123	Small Heath <i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
124	Ringlet <i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>								
125	Meadow Brown <i>Maniola jurtina</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
126	Large Ringlet <i>Erebia euryale</i>								
127	Mountain Ringlet <i>Erebia epiphron</i>								
128	De Prunner's Ringlet <i>Erebia triaria</i>				✓		✓	✓	

	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
129	Almond-eyed Ringlet <i>Erebia alberganus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
130	Common Brassy Ringlet <i>Erebia cassioides</i>								
131	Bright-eyed Ringlet <i>Erebia oeme</i>								
132	Piedmont Ringlet <i>Erebia meolans</i>								
133	Marbled White <i>Melanargia galathea</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
134	Great Sooty Satyr <i>Satyrus ferula</i>								
134	Woodland Grayling <i>Hipparchia fagi</i>		✓						
136	Grayling <i>Hipparchia semele</i>								
137	Great Banded Grayling <i>Brintesia circe</i>								
	Daily total:	3	39	55	32	64	59	69	29
	Running total:	3	39	65	68	78	86	94	94
	Species name								
	Miscellaneous flora & fauna (with thanks to Barrie & Julian for orchid information supplied)								
	Common Spotted Orchid <i>Dactylorhiza fuchsia</i>								
	Elder-flowered Orchid <i>Dactylorhiza sambucina</i>								
	Man Orchid <i>Orchis anthropophora</i>								
	Military Orchid <i>Orchis militaris</i>								
	Monkey Orchid <i>Orchis simia</i>								
	Early Purple Orchid <i>Orchis mascula</i>								
	Pyramidal Orchid <i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>								
	Green-winged Orchid <i>Anacamptis morio</i>								
	Burnt Orchid <i>Neotinea ustulata</i>								
	Three-toothed Orchid <i>Neotinea tridentata</i>								
	Lizard Orchid <i>Himantoglossum hircinum</i>								
	Violet Limodore <i>Limodorum abortivum</i>								
	Bee Orchid <i>Ophrys apifera</i>								
	Late Spider Orchid <i>Ophrys fuciflora</i>								
	Lesser Butterfly Orchid <i>Platanthera bifolia</i>								
	Alpine Marmot <i>Marmota marmot</i>								
	Alpine Chamois <i>Rupicapra rupicapra</i>								

Guests' Galleries

All images that follow were kindly shared by tour participants.



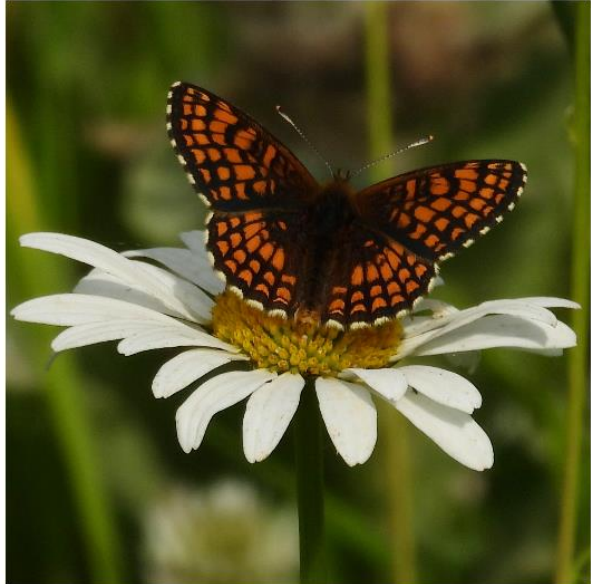
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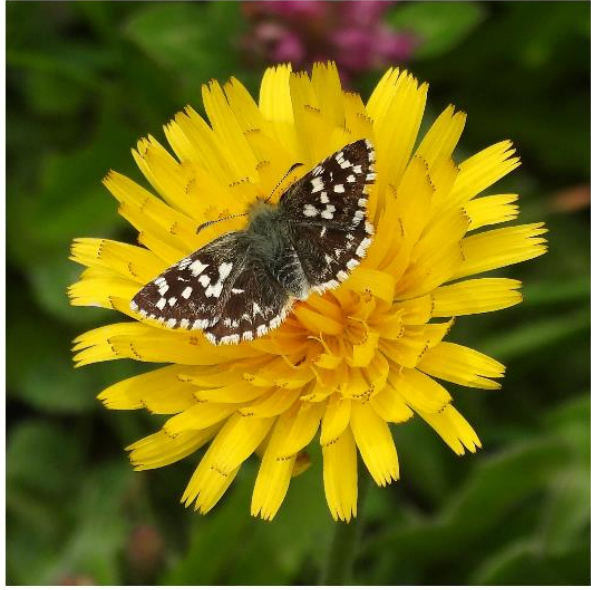
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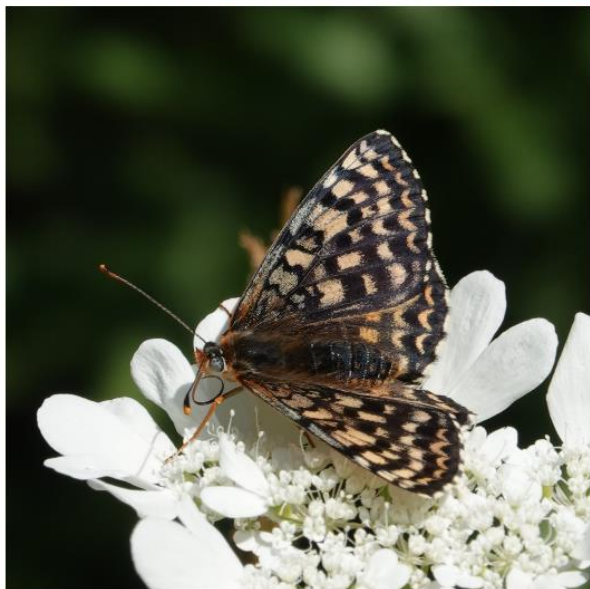
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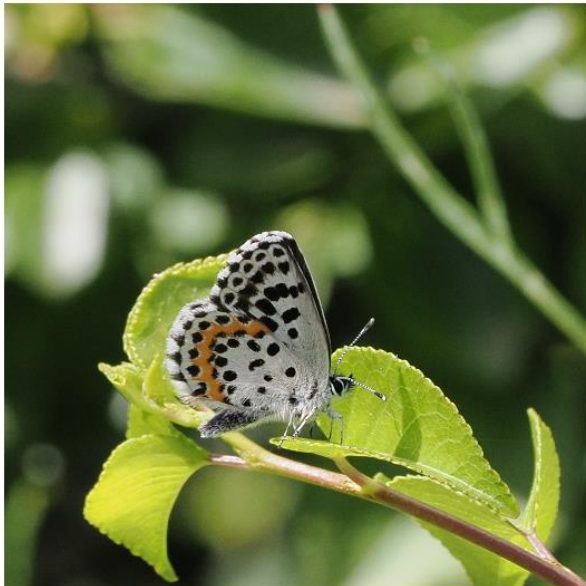
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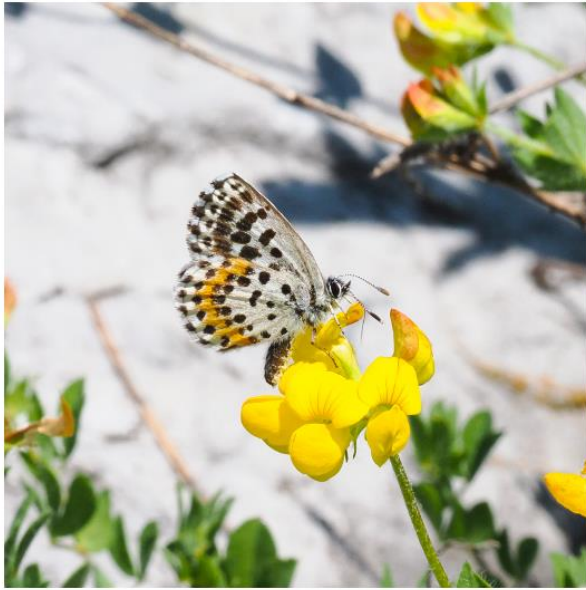
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And finally... If you like the sound of Butterflies of the Italian Alps & French Mercantour, there are just a handful of places remaining available to join us on the tour in 2025. Full details of the 2025 tour are on our website:

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

Alternatively, we have other butterfly tours with availability in spring / summer 2025 that explore other wonderful parts of southern Europe! Here are just a few...

[Spring Butterflies of the French Pyrenees](#)

[Summer Butterflies of the Spanish Pyrenees](#)

[Butterflies of the Picos de Europa](#)

[Butterflies of the Montes Universales](#)