

WILD ECHO

Butterflies of Turkey Turkey

Sunday 08th - Sunday 22nd July 2018

Trip report by Dr. Mario Langourov

Tour leader: Dr. Mario Langourov¹

Tour participants: Mr. Roy Hilton
Mr. Peter Hilton
Mr. John Maddocs
Mr. Ian Lawson
Mr. Dave Griffith
Mr. Bruce Graham
Mr. Nick Freeman

Day 1 Sunday 08th July

Outbound from Adana en route to Kızkalesi.

According to the plan, at 21:30, I and Ian (who travels with me from Sofia) arrived at the airport and start looking around for John, but there is no sign of it. We wandering when my phone rings - John, who went out from domestic flights, but had to take his bag from international flights. We are waiting for the rest of the participants, their flight arrives, all the passengers leave, but there is no sign of the British. Eventually I find them at international flights and after a brief bustle, around midnight we heading to the hotel, picturesquely situated on the Mediterranean coast.

Day 2 Monday 09th July

Kızkalesi (Corycus); Göksu Canyon, Kargıcak; Uzuncaburç.

Weather: sunny and very hot (35°C).

As we woke up, I found gloomy Bruce, who arrived yesterday with an earlier flight and went straight to the hotel. It turns out that his luggage has not arrived and after a phone call, they inform us that it is expected later today. The hotel owner proposed to take and bring it, which we agreed to and took on the first goal of the day - the ruins of the ancient city Kızkalesi (Corycus) - one of the best preserved places on the Mediterranean coast. The first species that we saw is a hint for the exotic that is waiting us during the tour - Indian Grass Blue (Pic. 2). Here definitely is the kingdom of Indian Grass Blues, they are everywhere – basking, copulating,

¹ All photos in this report were taken during the holiday by ©Mario Langourov

egg-laying on the food plant. The other species are very few, including Swallowtail, Wall Brown, Small White (a target species for one of the participants 🤩), Lang's Short-tailed Blue and many Harduns /*Stellagama stello*/ (Pic. 3). Time is passing and we moved to another area - Göksu Canyon, where we encountered many Small Desert Blues (Pic. 4), Little Tiger Blues and the we saw in flight Two-tailed Pasha. Other additions to our list are Scarce Swallowtail and Mallow Skipper. When we have to continue, we found Nick's absence and after a short searching we discovered him on the opposite bank of the river, where he pursues Grass Jewels. We all got out of the car and at the end everybody made good pictures. In the afternoon we visit also another ancient city – Diocæsarea/Olba, famous for the temple of Zeus, located there. Not far from its rock necropolis we found a proper butterfly paradise, where we saw a number of extremely local species of Europe - Grass Jewel, Balkan Marbled White, Dusky Meadow Brown, Tessellated Skipper and on the thistles there are several large butterflies – Hermits, Cardinals and White-banded Graylings. Shortly before we leave, we decided to have a look at the necropolis, where we see Krueper's Small White (Pic. 5) and start chasing it. After all, everyone manages to make nice pictures and we continue to have a look at the ruins of the ancient city. Slightly tired but very happy we end the day with a delicious dinner on the terrace with the view and nice breeze. After mentioning that in some places in Turkey we can not buy beer, some of the participants decide that in this case we have to supply and after short disputes we get 40 beers, that we gently put under the seats and gently tingling while we driving.

Day 3 Tuesday 10th July

Korykos; Limonlu Valley; Gülek.

Weather: sunny and hot (30°C).

Today we head to our next base, located at the footslopes of Aladağlar. Our first stop is again on the Mediterranean coast– the deep rocky valley of Limonlu River. Here we ran across Southern White Admiral, and Swallowtail, flying near the surrounding rock edges, over the young olive groves. Over the river we saw a Violet Dropwing /*Trithemis annulata*/ in a patrolling flight and later on it landed on a dead branch, posing nicely for all photographers (Pic. 6). Undoubtedly the "stars" here were Alcides Skipper and Pigmy Skipper (Pic. 7) and in addition, we found very fresh Grass Jewel, posing extremely well. After repeatedly we lose sight of them eventually they are found and pose extremely well. Along the way we stopped to buy local bananas grown in huge greenhouses near the river and we continue to Gülek, where we're enjoying our picnic lunch in a nice shade under huge pine trees. We followed one of the small valleys surrounding us, where we find the first of many Small Anatolian Blues, Olive Skipper, but certainly one of the attractions was Eastern Rock Grayling, seeking the coolness of the pine trunks and big rocks. Among others, it is worth to mention Mountain Small White, Eastern Bath White, Lesser Spotted Fritillary, Hungarian and Oberthür's Grizzled Skippers. In the late afternoon we have time for a brief refreshment stop in the shades, near a small mountain spring. After check-in in our small family hotel we admire the beautiful view of the snowy peaks of Aladağlar, while eating delicious home-cooked food.

Day 4 Wednesday 11th July

Aladağlar Mountains.

Weather: sunny and hot; breezy occasionally (30°C-32°C).

Today, we first turn our attention to the footslopes of the mountain and near a small stream we discovered a good number of exotic species: Anatolian Green-underside Blue (Pic. 8), Odd-spot Blue (Pic. 9), Reverdin's Marbled Skipper, together with more familiar ones like Anomalous Blue, Purple-shot Copper, Sooty Copper, Meleager's Blue, Amanda's Blue and large number of Long-tailed Blues. Then, we continued our journey, climbing higher into the heart of the mountain. Shortly after we arrived at a wonderful spot with clouds of mudpuddling butterflies, one of the guards of Aladağlar National Park stops and we started a gesture conversation about paying the entrance. This proves impossible to solve without external help and he calls his boss, who speaks some English. We sorted things out and when it closes the phone, the guard wants a completely different price than agreed... There were two or three more conversations with the headquarters - I explain in English, they decide and explain to the guard in Turkish and we finally decide that we have understood each other. Next problem was with the tickets - they are of 2.5 or 5 Turkish liras each, and we have to pay 450 TL, so we start counting of tickets - first the guard, then me and then – again from the beginning... All the time he tries to consider the available tickets to get the necessary amount, but alas - even after twenty calculations, applying all known and unknown mathematical methods, the amount remains the same. At the end he ran out of tickets, somewhere around 400 TL, so we shook our hands and split up as friends. While doing this (within three quarters of hour), the participants are having fun shooting mudpuddling butterflies, and when I looked at them, I horribly found that Dave is covered with a thick layer of mud from head to toe 🤢. It becomes clear that he can not get into the car in this condition and he had a shower under a blast of nearby fountain. While we waiting to dry out, we continued our observations and in the crowd we found Eastern Brown Argus (Pic. 10), Wagner's Blue, Chelmos Blue, Zephyr Blue, Eastern Baton Blue, Mazarine Blue, Adonis Blue, Persian Skipper (Pic. 11), Levantine Skipper. When we were ready we continued to the zone of Greek Junipers and among the thorny bushes blossom noticed Great Steppe Grayling, Great Sooty Satyr, Gerhard's Black Hairstreak, Spotted Fritillary, and for the pleasure of everyone - Klug's Tawny Rockbrown, which we are pursuing within quarter of hour, trying to shoot with wings open. Each step brings new and interesting species, but we have to continue to stop at one more place – a small dry valley, where the group is scattered in search of new attractive species. Here we managed to disturb and track some Greylings, including White-banded Grayling and Hermit. The hospitable hosts and an extraordinary table, full of all sorts of traditional Turkish cuisine (and beer! 😊), are waiting for us.

Day 5 Thursday 12th July

Topuzdağı Pass; Cappadocia: near Ürgüp, Zelve.

Weather: sunny and breezy; hot (32°C).

After breakfast we head to Cappadocia (UNESCO World Heritage Site), where we will spend one night. After a while we stop to look at the blooming vegetation and bare rocky slopes in one of the mountain passes - Topuzdağı. Here, on the flowers, among the others, stand out Turkish Furry Blue (Pic. 12), Meleager's Blue, Lebanese Anomalous Blue, Champan's Blue. After a brief detour we transfer to the rocky hill, where the large satyrids are numerous. Once disturbed they fly ten-fifteen meters and land again, so with some patience, anyone can photograph them. The stars here were Amasian Satyr (Pic. 13), Tawny Rockbrown, White-banded Grayling, Great Steppe Grayling. Just before we move, we discovered also Purple Hairstreak and Lesser Fiery Copper. We enjoy a picnic lunch in the shade near a fountain not far from Ürgüp. Here, near a small creek we tried to find Lattice Brown, but unsuccessfully and we decided to move on. We drove to Zelve open air museum for an afternoon session. Among the impressive sandstone and carved in it full underground city with houses, churches, stables and wineries we found Firdussi's Blue, Mithridates, Osiris Blue, Anomalous Blue and passing Scarce Swallowtails. On the sandstone walls around posing Southern Commas, White-banded Graylings and Hermits. Before retiring to the hotel, under the thick shadows of the trees, we relax with a cooling glass of cold orange juice and even have time for another brief stop near a rock, called "The Camel", where we enjoy a delicious home-made ice cream. At the end of the day we enjoy a local dance procession and nice dinner in a restaurant on the main square, immersed in the wonderful atmosphere of Göreme.

Day 6 Friday 13th July

Cappadocia: Ortahisar, near Ürgüp; Ziyaret Pass.

Weather: sunny and hot; late afternoon cloudy and windy (27°C).

After breakfast we undertook an exploration of the region of Cappadocia, hoping to find Nogel's Hairstreak. Alas, no luck but we found some other interesting species. We visit two viewpoints, from where appear breathtaking views over the stunning natural sandstone formations around. In a dry valley, among ubiquitous Large White, Small Heath, Brown Argus, we soon noticed Persian Fritillary and the first Turkish Fiery Copper for the tour. In addition, Swallowtail and Scarce Swallowtail flying around and on the flowers of fragrant thyme nectaring Poseidon Blue and Great Steppe Graylings (Pic. 14). Then we moved to "The Camel", where we enjoy again the delicious home-made ice cream and explored a nearby shrubby valley. There we saw Dusky Meadow Brown, Lebanese Anomalous Blue, Firdussi's Blue, Oriental Marbled Skipper. Now we can calmly turn to our next base in semi-arid areas near Malatya. Along the way, we had enough time to stop near a mountain pass, where was quite windy, but we found an interesting subspecies of Balkan Marbled White (ssp. *massageta*), Anatolian Clouded Yellow, Eastern Baton Blue. This is where we came across the first for the trip Loew's Blue (Pic. 15) and we spent half an hour taking pictures. After some confusion with the required number of the rooms in the hotel near Gürün, finally we resolved it and have some rest before dinner.

Day 7 Saturday 14th July

Near Darende; near Gürün; Gökpınar.

Weather: sunny and hot; at some places breezy to windy (~31°C).

After breakfast we headed to the rocky valleys south of Gürün, to devote the day of careful studying of different habitats. In the dry rocky valley, where we stopped first, were common Tawny Rockbrowns, Hermits, Dusky Meadow Browns, Adonis Blues. Not far from Darende, next to some orchards, an irrigation system attracting a significant number of species, but undoubtedly the biggest attention were paid to Anatolian Fiery Copper (Pic. 16) and Turkish Fiery Copper (Pic. 17), patrolling on a nearby tall plants. Here we also admired quite cooperative Southern Small White, Odd-spot Blue, Eastern Knapweed Fritillary, Dingy Skipper and Grass Jewel. A local family, that pick apricots from the garden invites us to eat some and at the end gives us a full bag of juicy and extremely aromatic fruits. We had a picnic lunch there and continued to our next goal – semidesert valley near Gürün, where hoping to find Wagner's Steppe Brown and Saadi's Heath. Alas, no luck but we find numerous Persian Skippers, Amasian Satyrs, Hungarian Skippers, Gerhard's Black Hairstreaks (Pic. 18) and other, more common species. Then we moved to the beautiful area near Gökpınar karst lake, nestled among the bare arid hills. The group splits and the participants started to explore different habitats – lake shore, woodlands, rocky gullies or arid sandstone hills with scattered shrubs and flowers. Just out of the car, the first species we saw were Staudinger's Steppe Brown, Eastern Baton Blue, Green-veined White and Berger's Clouded Yellow. Near the lake, on a tree trunk, a male Lattice Brown was very cooperative, posing nicely, even with wings wide open (Pic. 19)! On the yellow flowering yarrows, covering nearby sandstone hills, nectaring Sloe Hairstreaks and female Lesser Fiery Copper, but around were also Lebanese Anomalous Blues. Several Lesser Lattice Browns, seeking for a shade of small bush, time to time posing nicely on the thistles around. The time passes and we have to go back to the hotel.

Day 8 Sunday 15th July

Near Gürün; Yağdonduran Pass; near Zara.

Weather: overcast and windy; late afternoon sunny and calm (~26°C).

Before we take north to Zara, we stopped again to explore the semidesert valleys near Gürün. Between the rare bushes especially numerous were Orange Hermits (Pic. 20), Poseidon Blues and Hopffer's Blues, low over the ground flew Persian Fritillaries (Pic. 21), and Southern Comma posing nicely with wings open, absorbing morning sunshine. We continued north, driving through mountain passes and deep flowering valleys to stop at Yağdonduran pass, where Bosnian Blue was numerous, but now here is a highway under construction and the small stream, where many butterflies mudpuddling previously, unfortunately disappeared... Also, the weather conditions were quite gloomy – overcast and windy, but still on the surrounding hills we managed to find Hermit, Balkan Marbled White, Chapman's Blue, Silver-studded Blue, Painted Lady. We stopped at a roadside restaurant to have "pide" or "köfte" with salad for lunch, but some participants decided to skip the lunch and explored restaurant surroundings. When they came back, Dave's missing for half an hour and when finally returned, became clear that he was chasing a Hoopoe and completely

lost imagine of the time... We continued and before check in at the hotel we made our final stop near the city. Here, between the trees and bushes especially numerous were Lesser Lattice Browns (Pic. 22) and Meleager's Blues, low over the ground slowly flew Wood Whites. This is where we come across the first Great Banded Grayling, Large Tortoiseshell, Dark Green Fritillary and Black-veined White, and Scarce Coppers were very cooperative. Sandy Grizzled Skipper posing nicely with wings open, absorbing the sunshine, and Anomalous Blue, together with Sooty Copper and Amanda's Blue demonstrates their preference for the white flowers around. Balkan Marbled White and Marbled White, both occur together. We have dinner in the restaurant of the very nice hotel and retire to rest in our rooms.

Day 9 Monday 16th July

Near Zara; Kızıldağı Pass; Sakaltutan Pass.

Weather: sunny with some clouds, hot and still (20°C÷28°C).

After a nice breakfast in the hotel, we stopped not far from the city to explore a nearby limestone valley. Here, we found ourselves among flowering meadows on both sides of the road and started our exploration. It was very productive place, where at every step we encountered pleasant surprises - either Freyer's Fritillary, or Eastern Wood White and near the rocks – Great Banded Grayling. Among fragrant grasses are not rare Osiris Blues, Long-tailed Blues, Purple-shot Coppers and Tessellated Skippers, which readily pose in front of the cameras. Around there on the thistles there were several large butterflies – Tawny Rockbrowns, Cardinals and High Brown Fritillary. Our next stop was near Kızıldağı Pass, where among the more common Small Tortoiseshell, Meleager's Blue, Heath Fritillary, Southern White Admiral, we soon noticed Iolas Blue (Pic. 23), Blue Argus and the first Pearly Heath and Red Admiral for the tour. In addition, Niobe Fritillaries flying around and on the flower of fragrant thyme nectaring False Chalk-hill Blue (Pic. 24), Ilex Hairstreak, Idas Blue and Reverdin's Blue. On the flowers of nearby scarp, I found Small Bath White and part of the group managed to take some shots. Other interesting species here were Marsh Fritillary, Twin-spot Fritillary, Dark Green Fritillary and Rebel's Hairstreak. As we gather to continue, two of the participants disappeared and after half an hour using the horn, they still missing, so I decided to give a lift of the others to another place, not far from here. One participant (who was ill previous days) wishes instead of a picnic lunch proper one, so with him we went to a nearby restaurant and when we returned after half an hour to the first place, we found a quite impressive scene. The two missing participants, one with partly broken shorts covered with old bloody traces and the other cover with a thick layer of mud, both without any document, standing by the road and trying to explain the situation to two officers of Turkish Jandarma, who only speak Turkish 🤔... Ultimately, soldiers called on the phone to someone in their headquarters and I managed to explain to the polite gentleman at the other end of the line in English who we are, what we're doing and where we're going. Still, the Jandarma officers decided to drive after us to be sure that we do not go back to their territory and were deeply amazed when I stopped again two kilometers later to collect the other four participants, coming out of the woods as guerrillas 😊... Finally, under the astonished gazes of Turkish Jandarma, we continued to Sakaltutan Pass. In its surroundings we decided to have a look at the rocky slopes, which brought us Freyer's Tawny Rockbrowns,

and on the flowers around - Turkish Furry Blue, Firdussi's Blue and Lesser Fiery Copper. It is time to turn to Erzincan, where the hospitable hotel is expecting us.

Day 10 Tuesday 17th July

Near Çağlayan; Girlevik Waterfalls.

Weather: sunny and warm, still (24°C-25°C).

Almost the entire day we spent in the surroundings of Çağlayan, where at first we found Loew's Blue, Odd-spot Blue, Small Anatolian Blue, Powdered Brimstone. Briefly after we started our walk in a dry valley in Munzur Dağları, I spotted first pearl of the day - Lebanese Silver-line! I started shouting, when it flew to a nearby stone and what a surprise! – landed just in front of a mating pair (Pic. 25)! We all besieged them for at least half an hour photosession, interrupted by the frequent rebounds of some participants to the shade of nearby shrubs that created the so called "bushes"-joke. After the tour one of the participant spent two more days in Bulgaria, trying to see Cynthia's Fritillary and sent me SMS: "No gondola, no Yestrabets, no Cynthia's, NO BUSHES!!" ... Finally, we continued higher in the valley and near a mountain creek enjoyed nicely posing Ionian Emperor. We payed attention to Small Anatolian Blue and Gerhard's Black Hairstreak, which were quite common there. We found ourselves in a place, where we saw several Silver-washed Fritillaries posing on the surrounding flowers and rarely flying above the track. Also, among the numerous Silver-studded Blues and Poseidon Blues we ran across some other Skippers - Yellow-banded Skipper, Marbled Skipper and Oriental Marbled Skipper. Southern Comma and Large Wall Brown flying between the rocks and briefly basking. On the way back, Grey Asian Grayling (Pic. 26) draw our attention – it posing nicely on the rocks, when disturbed flying off to be back again shortly. At the end we decided to take another look around the trees, with the hope of seeing the eluding till that moment Bosnian Blue (Pic. 27) and we paid off - we came across a mass of mudpuddling specimens, together with Anatolian Skipper (Pic. 28), Turquoise Blue and some other Blues and Skippers. Near the trees were Lattice Browns and Speckled Woods too. As a last touch we finished with another gem – nicely posing Large Silver -line (Pic. 29)! And while most of us are lying on the ground, shooting petty butterflies, some devote themselves to 'act photography', which is inspired by a marvelous Anatolian model (Pic. 30). Finally, we stopped near the amazing Girlevik waterfalls, where we tried to take a group picture for the trip report, but realized that Nick is missing – he was cooling the beer in one of the creeks around... In the late afternoon we got back to the hotel, where to spend our second night here.

Day 11 Wednesday 18th July

Kopdağı Pass; Palandöken Dağları.

Weather: sunny till early afternoon; PM some light shower, than sunny again (~20°C).

After breakfast we drove east through beautiful mountain scenery for about 150 kilometres, passing the majestic Euphrates river - the longest and one of the most historically important rivers of Western Asia. We arrived at the Kop pass by mid-morning and the weather was once again superb for butterfly watching. Before

lunch we explored an area of riverbank woodland and grassy slopes near to the road. This is a superb place for butterflies and our visit did not disappoint. The long list of species seen included large numbers of Chelmos Blues (Pic. 31) and Turkish Furry Blue, Lesser Lattice Brown, Mountain Small White, Cardinal, Twin-spot Fritillary, Knapweed Fritillary, Southern White Admiral, Powdered Brimstone. Among fragrant grasses between the dry sandy slopes Balkan Marbled Whites flying and readily posing in front of the cameras, on the tall grasses patrolling Scarce and Sooty Coppers and in fast purposeful flight some Small Tortoiseshells pass above our heads.. Suddenly I came across Eros Blue, which was mudpuddling on the cart road, together with Larger Anatolian Blue, Zephyr Blue and Marbled Skipper. The prize here undoubtedly was the relatively rare Rebel's Hairstreak (Pic. 32), which was nectaring on the yellow flowering yarrows around. Chased away by the aggregating storm clouds we head to the hotel, located on the impressive 2220 meters altitude at the foot of Mount Palandöken over Erzurum, where under the light shower we had our picnic lunch. Meanwhile the rain weakens and stops, which encourages us to explore the highest parts of the Palandöken Mt taking the gondola-lift. Here, because of weather conditions - cloudy and relatively cool, the butterflies were not very active but later, in a small and rocky mountain valley, we found many Russian Heats, Alcon Blue and fresh Large Blues, some of which egg-laying on Oregano. Other butterflies recorded here include several Silver-studded Blues, Lederer's Heath, Osiris Blue, Pontic Blue (Pic. 33), Clouded Yellow, Painted Lady. Thanks to the weather conditions we managed to make good pictures of the nicely posing specimens. After a wonderful day in the field we went back to the excellent Palan Hotel.

Day 12 Thursday 19th July

Tortum Valley; Tortum Waterfalls.

Weather: sunny and warm, but cloudy later on (25°C)

After a good buffet breakfast we headed north-east, driving for just above an hour to dry rocky habitat near Tortum. The weather was superb – warm and sunny, with the temperature around 25°C. We stopped at a side road and starting to explore the orchards and rocky area. In the shade of the trees around we found Freyer's Grayling, Great Banded Grayling and Speckled Wood, while on the rocks posing False Grayling. The main attraction here became several specimens of Fiery Copper (Pic. 34), posing nicely on the nearby tall plants or on rock surfaces. What a pleasant surprise! So, we besieged them with our cameras, spending at least half an hour chasing the perfect picture. In a nearby dry valley we found also White-bordered Grayling and Eastern Rock Grayling, followed by female Lesser Fiery Copper and a Blue-spot Hairstreak on the flowers. During our walk we found also Orange Hermit, Purple-shot Copper, Scarce Swallowtail, Southern White Admiral. Just before we headed back, we discovered an Ionian Emperor (Pic. 35), posing on a tree branch and spent quarter of hour climbing on the almost vertical slope in an attempt to secure the perfect shooting position. Later we paid some attention to Levantine Skipper and Oberthür's Grizzled Skipper, both landed on the nerby plants. After a light lunch at a restaurant, located on the banks of Tortum River, following its curves we continued to our next stop – the impressive Tortum Waterfalls. The results not late – just off the car we saw the first of a dozen Long-tailed Blue, plus a fresh mudpuddling Inky Skipper (Pic. 36). A little bit further, on the tall plants patrolling or basking Short-tailed Blues and not far from there – Olive Skipper. On the fennel-

stems were many Swallowtail caterpillars and, on the flowers, – diverse species of Blues, noteworthy Hopffer's Blue, Poseidon Blue, Anomalous Blue, Grass Jewel, Adonis Blue. Finally, we headed to the hotel located in the picturesque Altıparmak Valley, where we were cordially welcomed by our Georgian hosts.

Day 13 Friday 20th July

Kaçkar Dağları.

Weather: sunny till midday, than cloudy and rainy; warmish (22°C)

The day is dedicated to the highest zone of Kaçkar Mts and Kaçkar National Park and its surroundings, so we were changing the landscape and today we are surrounded by rivers and creeks, forests, lush herbage and many flowering plants. Driving higher, we fell into a large field, bordering with the forest edge, steep slopes and mountain creek. This is where we came across the first Scotch Arguses, Transcaucasian Fritillaries (Pic. 37) and the very similar (upperside) False Heath Fritillary. Among the more common Wood White, Amanda's Blue, Scarce Copper, we soon noticed Caucasian Spotted Fritillary (Pic. 38) and the first White Letter Hairstreak for the tour. In addition, Queen of Spain Fritillary flying around and on the flower of fragrant thyme nectaring Sooty Coppers. Among many mudpuddling Damon Blues, there was a single Hi Blue (Pic. 39). We continued higher, but before that we stopped where Eastern Rock Grayling aggregated on the road, together with False Grayling and on the shrubs around nectaring Marbled Fritillary. Suddenly, an Apollo flying down near a rock surface, took our attention and then we saw two or three more around! Not far from there we then explored the high-mountain zone, where our eyes were attracted immediately by Damon Blues, around flying Scotch Arguses, Black-veined Whites and Dark Green Fritillaries. The place was extremely rich and near small mountain creek we discovered Marsh Fritillary and Lederer's Heath. Near the same creek on the wet soil were completely covered by mudpuddling butterflies – here we enjoyed Pontic Blue, Silver-studded Blue, Zephyr Blue, Mountain Argus, Geranium Argus, Larger Anatolian Blue (Pic. 40), Osiris Blue and many Skippers, including Aegean Skipper, Large Grizzled Skipper, Olive Skipper, Hungarian Skipper, Essex Skipper and Dingy Skipper. In a short time, our list grows up to 30 species, but dark rainy clouds began to accumulate, covering the entire sky, so we decided to have a pleasant lunch in a small restaurant, combined with some drinks, and then, under the heavy rain, we headed to our hotel and after dinner we have a well-deserved rest.

Day 14 Saturday 21st July

Çoruh Valley.

Weather: sunny and hot (25°C-30°C)

We dedicate the day to the impressive Çoruh Valley, stuck between majestic rock faces of the surrounding mountains. In a small dry valley, covered with Christ-thorn were fairly common Little Tiger Blues (Pic. 41) and Mountain Small Whites. At our next stop, in the shadows of some mulberry trees, we found numerous and very photogenic White-bordered Graylings (Pic. 42) devouringly sucking sweet juices from the ground in the company of Freyer's Grayling. We dedicated to them more than half an hour in an attempt to make the

perfect shot, waiting to capture the interim opening of their wings too. After that follow orchards, interspersed with small pieces of arable land and dry river valley, and here we observed Southern White Admiral, Scarce Swallowtail, Holly Blue, Adonis Blue. On the way back there were several Ionian Emperors and eventually everyone saw it and made good pictures. Around the rocks nervously was fluttering Southern Comma (Pic. 43) and Wall Brown. Here we came across some species of dragonflies, notably Dark Pincertail (Pic. 44) and we spent half an hour chasing the perfect picture. Later we visited a side valley, and the first butterfly we noticed was a Reverdin's Blue, nicely posing on flowers and numerous Odalises near a small stream. Near small stream, among fragrant grasses were not rare Short-tailed Blues, which readily pose in front of the cameras. Around there were Little Tiger Blue, Eastern Wood White, Brimstone and fresh Grass Jewel (Pic. 45), egg-laying on the food-plant - *Andrachne telephioides*. On the opposite shore some participants encountered very cooperating Ionian Emperor posing nicely on flowers. In the early afternoon we headed towards Erzurum, having a light lunch at a restaurant located on the banks of Çoruh River, and then we continued south through beautiful mountain scenery. Not far from the hotel we found an excellent restaurant for our farewell dinner, covered with some beers.

Day 15 Sunday 22nd July

Erzurum Airport.

Because the flight was relatively early we headed to the airport, where we said our goodbyes and we wished "Until we meet again". During the tour we passed 2700 km, but despite the seemingly big distance it does not feel to be that much because of the comfortable and rapid movement mostly on highways and first-class roads.

The total number of butterflies we have seen came to the amazing 169 species, which represent nearly a half of the country's fauna! Also, many interesting species of dragonflies and visited some of the most beautiful places in Turkey.



Pic.1. The group at Kızıkaiesi. Left to right: Bruce, local boy, Ian, Dave, Roy, Nick, Peter, Mehmet (Rain Hotel owner), John, Mario



Pic 2. Indian Grass Blue (*Zizeeria karsandra*)



Pic. 3. Hardun (*Stellagama stellio*)



Pic.4. Small Desert Blue (*Lachides galba*)



Pic.5. Krueper's Small White (*Pieris krueperi*)



Pic.6. Violet Dropwing (*Trithemis annulata*)



Pic.7. Pigmy Skipper (*Gegenes pumilio*)



Pic.8. Anatolian Green-underside Blue (*Glaucopsyche astraea*)



Pic.9. Odd-spot Blue (*Turanana endymion*)



Pic.10. Eastern Brown Argus (*Plebeius eurypilus*)



Pic.11. Persian Skipper (*Spialia phlomidis*)



Pic.12. Turkish Furry Blue (*Polyommatus menalcas*)



Pic.13. Amasian Satyr (*Satyrus amasinus*)



Pic.14. Great Steppe Grayling (*Chazara persephone*)



Pic.15. Loew's Blue (*Plebeius loewii*)



Pic.16. Anatolian Fiery Copper (*Lycaena asabinus*)



Pic.17. Turkish Fiery Copper (*Lycaena ochimus*)



Pic.18. Gerhard's Black Hairstreaks (*Satyrium abdominalis*)



Pic.19. Lattice Brown (*Kirinia roxelana*)



Pic.20. Orange Hermit (*Chazara bischoffii*)



Pic.21. Persian Fritillary (*Melitaea perseis*)



Pic.22. Lesser Lattice Brown (*Esperarge climene*)



Pic.23. Iolas Blue (*Iolana iolas*)



Pic.24. False Chalk-hill Blue (*Polyommatus corydonius*)



Pic.25. Lebanese Silver-line (*Cigaritis acamas*)



Pic.26. Grey Asian Grayling (*Pseudochazara geyeri*)



Pic.27. Bosnian Blue (*Agriades dardanus*)



Pic.28. Anatolian Skipper (*Muschampia proteides*) © Dave Griffith



Pic.29. Large Silver -line (*Cigaritis maxima*)



Pic.30. Anatolian girl 🤗👍



Pic.31. Chelmos Blue (*Polyommatus iphigenia*)



Pic.32. Rebel's Hairstreak (*Satyrium myrtale*)



Pic.33. Pontic Blue (*Polyommatus coelestinus*)



Pic.34. Fiery Copper (*Lycaena thetis*)



Pic.35. Ionian Emperor (*Thaleropsis ionia*)



Pic.36. Inky Skipper (*Erynnis marloyi*)



Pic.37. Transcaucasian Fritillary (*Melitaea caucasogenita*)



Pic.38. Caucasian Spotted Fritillary (*Melitaea interrupta*)



Pic.39. Hi Blue (*Polyommatus merhaba*)



Pic.40. Larger Anatolian Blue (*Polyommatus aedon*)



Pic.41. Little Tiger Blue (*Tarucus balkanicus*)



Pic.42. White-bordered Grayling (*Hipparchia parisatis*)



Pic.43. Southern Comma (*Polygonia egea*)



Pic.44. Dark Pincertail (*Onychogomphus assimilis*)



Pic.45. Grass Jewel (*Chilades trochylus*)







