

# SPATIA WILDLIFE

## *Butterflies of Turkey*

Turkey

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June - Wednesday 09<sup>th</sup> July 2014

Trip report by Dr. Mario Langourov

**Tour leader:** Dr. Mario Langourov<sup>1</sup>

**Tour participants:** Mr. Michael Darlow  
Mr. John Walford  
Mr. Derek Longhurst  
Mr. Nick Freeman

### **Day 1      Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June**

Outbound from Adana en route to Ta ucu.

Although everyone arrive on the same flight the tour participants should be divided after landing, so Derek emerges from internal output lines (scheduled one day available for sightseeing in Istanbul), while the other three ó from the international. Once we gather together, we head to our hotel for the first two nights, picturesquely situated on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. After check-in and refresh and after a short walk through Ta ucu Marina we are going for dinner on a restaurant terrace with wonderful view of the bay.

### **Day 2      Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> June**

K,zkalesi (Corycus); Uzuncaburç; Göksu Canyon, Karg,cak.

Weather: sunny and very hot (29°C÷39°C).

We start with the ruins of the ancient fortress K,zkalesi (Corycus) - one of the best preserved places on the Mediterranean coast and the first species that we see is a hint for the exotic that is waiting for us during the tour - Indian Grass Blue (Pic. 2). While we vanity and chase these little fellows before our eyes appears Lebanese Silver-line (Pic. 3)! Besides being very beautiful, it is very well-intentioned, posing calmly on various plants and lighting conditions so that all of us manage to get the desired photos. Here definitely is the kingdom of Indian Grass Blue, they are everywhere ó vacationing, copulating, egg-laying in the food plant. Time is passing and we move to another area of the ancient city - Olba, famous for the temple of Zeus, located here. Not far from his rock necropolis we find a veritable butterfly paradise where we see a number of extremely local species of Europe - Grass Jewel, Balkan Marbled White, Dusky Meadow Brown, and on the flowering plants they are several Hairstreaks - Blue-spot, Ilex, Sloe. Under the shade of a small tree we eat our picnic lunch, and briefly around us appear Mersin Grayling. In the afternoon we visit also Göksu Canyon, where we encounter Small Desert Blue (Pic. 4), Little Tiger Blue and the only for the tour Lang's Short-tailed Blue. Slightly tired but very happy we end the day with a delicious dinner on the terrace with

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<sup>1</sup> All photos in this report were taken during the holiday by ©Mario Langourov

the view.

### **Day 3      Friday 27<sup>th</sup> June**

Kumkuyu; Limonlu Valley; Gülek.

Weather: sunny and very hot (27°C÷39°C).

Today we head to our next base, located at the foot of Alada lar. Our first stop is again on the Mediterranean coast, near to well-preserved Roman aqueduct. Relatively not lots of species, but one of them is Levantine Marbled White (Pic. 5)! We photograph it among the shadows of a young olive forest and we move to our next goal ó the deep rocky valley of Limonlu River. Here we encounter Eastern Rock Grayling, seeking the coolness of the pine trunks and Southern Swallowtail, flying over the surrounding rock edges. Once again we descend around the river and managed to find Small Anatolian Blue and one of the few Speckled Wood in Turkey. Along the way we stop 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 shaped resting place, even having a small talk over the World Cup with local children. We take on to one of the small valleys surrounding us, where we find the first Small Bath White (Pic. 6), Levantine Skipper, but certainly one of the attractions is the Aegean Meadow Brown, imparting an exotic flavor. In the late afternoon we have time for one more place where in abundant occurs the food plant of Iolas Blue - Bladder Senna (*Colutea arborescens*) and the result is not late - along with the numerous Long-tailed Blue we notice several Iolas Blue. Here we find the only one for the tour Green-veined White. After check-in in our small family hotel we admire the beautiful view of the snowy peaks of Alada lar, while eating some home-cooked food.

### **Day 4      Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June**

Alada lar Mountain.

Weather: sunny and hot; afternoon cloudy & some showers (25.5°C-32°C).

Today, we first turn our attention to the foot of the mountain and near a small stream we discover Anatolian Green-underside Blue (Pic. 7), Anatolian Fiery Copper, Meleager's Blue - most pose mud-puddling. Unfortunately our stay here ends unpleasant because Michael loses one of their cameras. Unsuccessfully we're looking for it for some time and finally we decide to go on our way, climbing higher in the heart of the mountain. Here in the shadow of several Greek Junipers we eat picnic lunch and begin to research. Among the thorny bushes blossom discern Great Steppe Grayling (Pic. 8), Mountain Argus, Geranium Argus, Alcedo Blue, Russian Heath, Aegean Skipper and for the pleasure of everyone - Odd-spot Blue. Each step brings new and interesting species, but we hear the first rumble of an approaching storm. Soon thud the first big rain drops turned into fleeting Mediterranean rain. We decide to wait a while in the bus and after the rain stops we head to small dry valley where the group is scattered in search of new attractive species. Despite the decrease in temperature we manage to disturb and track large number of butterflies - White-banded Grayling (Pic. 9), Freyer's Tawny Rockbrown, Tawny Rockbrown. Crossing one of the nearby villages we stop for short moment of photographing among colony Asia Minor Sousliks and after that we're returning to the hotel.

### **Day 5      Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June**

Topuzda , Pass; Cappadocia: near Ürgüp, Zelve.

Weather: sunny and still; hot (25°C-30°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 - Topuzda ,. Here, on the blossoming flowers among the other stand out Turkish Furry Blue (Pic. 10th), Meleager's Blue, Lebanese Anomalous Blue, The Hermit. After a brief detour we transfer to the rocky hill, where the large satyrids are numerous. Once disturbed they fly ten meters and land again, so with some patience, anyone can shoot. The stars here are Amasian Satyr (Pic. 11th), Telephassa Grayling, White-

banded Grayling, Great Steppe Grayling. We enjoy a picnic lunch in the shade near a fountain near Ürgüp. Here near a small creek we find Lattice Brown, Balkan Marbled White, Southern Comma. After check-in in the hotel in Göreme we go out for an afternoon session in Zelve open air museum. Among the impressive sandstone and carved in them whole underground cities with housing, churches and wineries we are able to glimpse Firdussi's Blue, Osiris Blue, Anomalous Blue and many Iolas Blue. At the end of the day we enjoy a nice dinner in a restaurant on the main square, immersed in the atmosphere of Göreme.

## **Day 6      Monday 30<sup>th</sup> June**

Cappadocia: Ortahisar, near Ürgüp; Ziyaret Pass; Maz,k,ran Pass.

Weather: sunny and still; hot (27°C-30°C).

After breakfast we undertake to explore the region of Cappadocia, hoping to find Nogel's Hairstreak. We visit two viewpoints, from where appear breathtaking views over the stunning natural formations around. Not long after Nogel's Hairstreak is found (Pic. 12th)! We admire at several specimens sucking nectar from flowering plants nearby. Around we also see Persian Fritillary, Spotted Fritillary, Sooty and Purple-shot Coppers. Now we can calmly turn to our next base in semi-arid areas near Malatya. Along the way, we stop near two mountain passes, where we find the Anatolian Clouded Yellow, Small Anatolian Blue, Mithridates, Sigbert's Blue, Dusky Meadow Brown, Levantine Skipper. After some confusion we find the hotel, situated near Gürün, where we will spend the next two nights.

## **Day 7      Tuesday 01<sup>st</sup> July**

Near Darende; Gökp,nar.

Weather: sunny and still; hot (27°C-33°C).

After breakfast we head to the rocky valleys south of Gürün, to devote the day of careful studying of different parts. In the dry valleys are common Klug's Tawny Rockbrown (Pic. 13th), Dusky Meadow Brown, and also - Eastern Greenish Black-tip, Grass Jewel. Not far from Darende we find drip irrigation system in the peach garden, attracting a significant number of species - Orange Hermit (Pic. 14), Wagner's Blue, Odd-spot Blue, Loew's Blue (Pic. 15). In the nearby olive forest we admire at quite cooperative Saadi's Heath. We have lunch at the hotel, located on the way to our next goal - the beautiful area near Gökp,nar karst lake, nestled among the bare arid hills. Here we find Lesser Lattice Brown, Eastern Baton Blue, Cardinal, Pogge's Skipper, and on the yellow flowering yarrows we find many Gerhard's Black hairstreaks (Pic. 16). Before departure, our attention is drawn to the Blues perched on the road and we stop for a closer look. We find that these are mostly Eastern Brown Argus and Zephyr Blue. The time passes and we have to go back to the hotel.

## **Day 8      Wednesday 02<sup>nd</sup> July**

Near Gürün; Ya donduran Pass; near Zara.

Weather: sunny and hot, still (~ 30°C).

Before we take north to Zara again we stop near Gürün hoping to find Wagner's Steppe Brown. Alas, no luck but we find Tawny Rockbrown, Saadi's Heath (Pic. 17th), Amasian Satyr, Sigbert's Blue and other more common species. When we get in the bus, I accidentally put the alarm on, and after a 30-minute bumpy "battle" it appears that the batteries are weak and there is no way it can be turned off ... With howling alarm we go back in the town, where some people kindly give us directions to watchmaking workshop and ultimately we can continue. Near a fountain in the mountain pass we stop to take a look and we face numerous Levantine Skippers, and also Loew's Blue, Persian Skipper. Greatest interest are the multiple instances Bosnian Blue (Pic. 18) landing on the wet sand. We eat "pide" with salad for lunch in a roadside restaurant and we continue. We take a short break and we walk along the coast of K,z,lirmak River and before check in at the hotel we stop over the city. In flowering plants we see Sandy Grizzled Skipper, Marbled Skipper, Osiris Blue, Eastern Brown Argus, Berger's Clouded Yellow. We have dinner in nice little restaurant not far from the hotel and retire to rest in our rooms.

## **Day 9      Thursday 03<sup>rd</sup> July**

Near Zara; K,z,lda , Pass; Sakaltutan Pass.

Weather: sunny and hot, still (22°C-30°C).

The breakfast is included in our hotel price, but it turns out that our participants don't like the menu and we decide to stop not far from the city and do picnic breakfast. We stop among flowering meadows on both sides of the road and after we eat we take a look around. Among other species stand out Marsh Fritillary, Freyer's Fritillary, Great Sooty Satyr and some Blues. Our next stop is near K,z,lda , Pass, where fall and Larger Anatolian Blue (Pic. 19th), Blue Argus (Pic. 20), Lesser Fiery Copper, Yellow-banded Skipper. At this point we see many types Fritillaries (Spotted, Niobe, Dark-green, Glanville, Queen of Spain, Heath, Knapweed) and one of the few for the tour Alcon Blue, Reverdin's Blue, Scarce Swallowtail, Black-veined White. In the early afternoon we reach Sakaltutan Pass. In its surroundings we decide to look rocky slopes, which brings us Anatolian and Freyer's Tawny Rockbrowns, and on the flowers around - Gerhard's Black Hairstreak and Purple-shot Copper. It is time to turn to Erzincan, where the hospitable hotel is expecting us. Here, while Allah does not look, beer lovers manage to obtain the invigorating liquid, the taste of it we had forgotten in the last three days.

## **Day 10      Friday 04<sup>th</sup> July**

Near Ça layan; Girlevik Waterfalls.

Weather: sunny and hot, still (30°C-33°C).

Almost the entire day we spend in the surroundings of Ça layan, starting with a walk in a dry valley in Munzur Da ı, where we find the Southern White Admiral, Eastern Baton Blue, Persian Skipper, but undoubtedly the "stars" are Levantine Silver-line (Pic. 21) and Large Silver -line. After repeatedly we lose sight of them eventually they are found and pose extremely well. On the wet sand near the karst spring a number of Blues are gathering - Bosnian Blue, Osiris Blue, Odd-spot Blue, Mazarine Blue, as well as Eastern Grayling. Near the river we encounter Lattice Brown, Great Banded Grayling, Eastern Wood White, Scarce Copper. We also stop near the amazing waterfalls Girlevik, where we see Zephyr Blue and other common species and take a picture for a souvenir (Pic. 1). In the late afternoon we get back to the hotel where to spend our second night there.

## **Day 11      Saturday 05<sup>th</sup> July**

Kopda , Pass.

Weather: cloudy with sunny spells; heavy rain in a midday and evening (~ 20°C).

We head into our penultimate base near Erzurum, as en route we will visit another mountain pass - Kop. Once we reach it we scatter around, but shortly after the first drops of rain fall, which force us to gather near the bus. Soon the drops turn into torrential rain and we decide to bolster our time with lunch in the town of Bayburt. But our plan fails - we are in the midst of the holy Ramadan and nowhere in the city we can find food ... Meanwhile the rain weakens and stops, which encourages us to go back again in the area of the pass and to have a picnic lunch. Meadows in this area are wonderful and after sun shyly shows through the clouds again we get to explore. Here we find Eros Blue, Odd-spot Blue (Pic. 22), Pontic Blue, Meleager's Blue, Sandy Grizzled Skipper, Yellow-banded Skipper. Among the tall grass Lesser Lattice Brown (Pic. 23) there are numerous and each one of us is able to discern and shoot them. We find also more common species, but relatively rare in Turkey - Small Tortoiseshell, Twin-spot Fritillary, Idas Blue. 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.

## **Day 12      Sunday 06<sup>th</sup> July**

Palandöken Da lar,.

Weather: cloudy with sunny periods; cool (14°C-22°C)

After breakfast we head to the slopes of Palandöken, to devote the day of careful study of the different areas in the mountains. Not far away from the hotel, near a small stream the mountain meadows are full of life and among others we can highlight here the incredible amount of Russian Heath, among them - and a single Lederer's Heath, and then long time we look for more, but it is unsuccessfully. As an opal drops on the leaves sparkle Balkan Copper, but we also see and the topaz glare of Pontic Blue (Pic. 24) and Larger Anatolian Blue. We decide to take a look at the highest part of the mountain (over 3000 meters) as far as we can go with the bus. In this part the activity is low and we manage to find Geranium Argus, Bosnian Blue, Small Tortoiseshell, Painted Lady and family Horned larks. We go back down into the lower parts where near blooming meadow we stop for picnic lunch, and then we take a look around and add to the list for the day Lesser Fiery Copper, Purple-shot Copper, Balkan Marbled White, Long-tailed Blue. The afternoon we spend in the highland area in the company of Christoph's Clouded Yellow, Glanville Fritillary, Olive Skipper, Eastern Bath White. It is time to return to the hotel and after dinner we have a well-deserved rest.

## **Day 13      Monday 07<sup>th</sup> July**

Egerti; Ispir; Çoruh Valley.

Weather: sunny; warmish (28°C)

Heading back on the road to our next target - Çoruh River and the surrounding mountains. On the way we stop in a small valley, where on the flowers we monitor Tessellated Skipper (Pic. 25th), Marbled Skipper, Rebel's Hairstreak (Pic. 26th), Gerhard's Black Hairstreak, Swallowtail, Black-veined White, Southern White Admiral, Cardinal, Yellow-banded Skipper and only Green Hairstreak. After a light lunch at restaurant located on the banks of Çoruh River, following its curves we replace the mountain landscape with Mediterranean one. Unfortunately this valley is under massive immersion because of the construction of a cascade of giant dams, some of which are already completed and others - under construction. So once we pass such a dam we stop along the banks of the river, where we find the Short-tailed Blue, Small Bath White, Eastern Rock Grayling, Great Banded Grayling, Eastern Brown Argus (Pic. 27). Here (once again) we are discovered by the guardians of order from the Turkish Jandarma, but because foreign languages are not one of their best qualities, it takes us a long time to clarify what we do. Ultimately, they called on the phone to someone in their headquarter and manage to explain to the polite lady on the other end of the line in English who we are and where we're going. Our goodbye is friendly, but there's not much of a time left and we head to the hotel in Yusufeli, where we will finish the tour.

## **Day 14      Tuesday 08<sup>th</sup> July**

Çoruh Valley.

Weather: sunny and hot to very hot (25°C-38.5°C)

We dedicate the whole day at the impressive Çoruh Valley, "stingy" as in a vice grip of the surrounding mountains. On our first stop in the shadows of the trees we are able to find numerous and very photogenic White-bordered Grayling (Pic. 28) sucking salts and sweet juices from the earth in the company of Freyer's Grayling. We dedicate to them more than half an hour in an attempt for perfect shot, and waiting to capture the transient opening of their wings. After that follow orchards, interspersed with small pieces of arable land and dry river valley, here we have to mention Hopffer's Blue, Scarce Swallowtail, Short-tailed Blue. When we go back to the van from nearby area Nick manage to shoot and another one of our goals today - Ionian Emperor. We visit the side valley, and we're greeted by Adonis Blue, Marbled Fritillary and numerous odalisques near a small stream and under the shadow of a small alcove near the murmuring fountain we make picnic lunch. In order to reach our next goal we cross the river on a suspension bridge and there we

come across Orange Hermit, Little Tiger Blue, Eastern Wood White, and friendly man who gives us cherries. We decide to finish the day at the place where we started it, which is proving to be a great idea - here we encounter very cooperating Ionian Emperor (Pic. 29) which we manage to shoot. Around the rocks nervously is fluttering Southern Comma (Pic. 30), and Grass Jewel (Pic. 31). It's time to head back to the hotel and sit down for a farewell dinner.

## **Day 15      Wednesday 09<sup>th</sup> July**

Erzurum Airport.

After breakfast we head towards Erzurum, and because the flight is relatively early, unfortunately we do not have time for the last stop before the airport where after covering of 2700 km. we say our goodbyes and we wish "Until we meet again." 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 is 152 species for this tour.



Pic.1. The group at Girlevik. Right to left: Derek Longhurst, Michael Darlow, John Walford, Nick Freeman, Mario Langourov



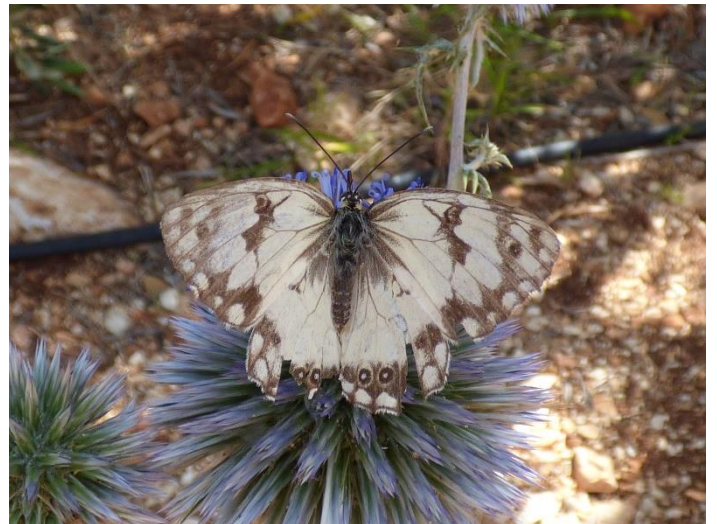
Pic.2. Indian Grass Blue (*Zizeeria karsandra*)



Pic.3. Lebanese Silver-line (*Cigaritis acamas*)



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



Pic.5. Levantine Marbled White (*Melanargia titea*)



Pic.6. Small Bath White (*Pontia chloridice*)



Pic.7. Anatolian Green-underside Blue (*Glaucopsyche astraea*)



Pic.8. Great Steppe Grayling (*Chazara persephone*)



Pic.9. White-banded Grayling (*Pseudochazara anthelea*)



Pic.10. Turkish Furry Blue (*Polyommatus menalcas*)



Pic.11. Amasian Satyr (*Satyrus amasinus*)



Pic.12. Nogel's Hairstreak (*Tomares nogelii*)



Pic.13. Klug's Tawny Rockbrown (*Pseudochazara pelopea*)



Pic.14. Orange Hermit (*Chazara bischoffii*)



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



Pic.16. Gerhard's Black Hairstreaks (*Satyrium abdominalis*)



Pic.17. Saadi's Heath (*Coenonympha saadi*)



Pic.18. Bosnian Blue (*Plebejus dardanus*)



Pic.19. Larger Anatolian Blue (*Polyommatus aedon*)



Pic.20. Blue Argus (*Aricia anteros*)



Pic.21. Levantine Silver-line (*Cigaritis cilissa*)



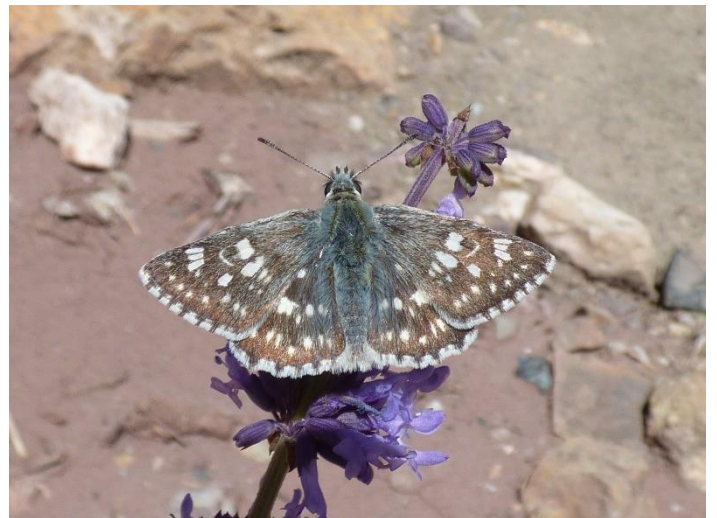
Pic.22. Odd-spot Blue (*Turanana endymion*)



Pic.23. Lesser Lattice Brown (*Esperarge climene*)



Pic.24. Pontic Blue (*Polyommatus coelestinus*)



Pic.25. Tessellated Skipper (*Muschampia tessellum*)



Pic.26. Rebel's Hairstreak (*Satyrium myrtale*)



Pic.27. Eastern Brown Argus (*Plebejus eurypilus*)



Pic.28. White-bordered Grayling (*Hipparchia parisatis*)



Pic.29. Ionian Emperor (*Thaleropsis ionia*)



Pic.30. Southern Comma (*Polygonia egea*)



Pic.31. Grass Jewel (*Chilades trochylus*)