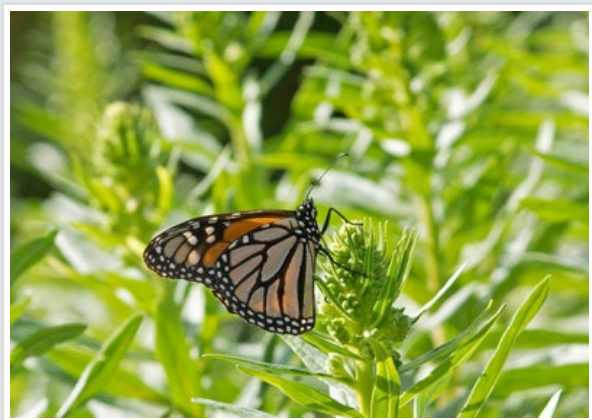


Tenerife

by Tony Moore, 12-Jan-17 04:50 PM GMT

Just back from a rather disappointing break in Tenerife. Only managed to find four species. Small whites were fairly common and we saw Monarch, *Gonepteryx cleobule* and Canary Speckled Wood all in a park in Icod in the north. There was only one Brimstone, which declined to be photographed as did three *xiphioides*. There were several Monarchs floating around and they did not seem bothered by human presence. They have a lovely flight, with sharply angled wings, often with legs dangling. I'd not seen this butterfly close to before, and one did stop long enough for a pic of sorts:



We searched long and hard for the Canary Blue, sadly without success. I suppose two 'lifers' hardly counts as a disaster, but I had hoped for a few more.

Tony M.

Re: Tony Moore

by Padfield, 12-Jan-17 09:41 PM GMT

Hi Tony. I'm a few posts out of date! But I wanted to thank you for the *Sarota* pdf – very interesting. Assuming it's correct, which I have no reason to doubt, it seems Seitz, DeVries and d'Abrera have all been wrong-footed by the same misidentification, perhaps as a result of the missing type specimens for these species. D'Abrera even quotes Seitz as saying *acantus* has black legs, which is clearly wrong. Something similar happened with *Euchloe simplicia* and *Euchloe ausonia* in European books, many of which persisted in getting them the wrong way round long after the error had been identified.

Sorry about the lack of species in Tenerife ...

Guy

Re: Tony Moore

by Wurzel, 13-Jan-17 11:18 PM GMT

Sorry you didn't have much luck in Tenerife Tony 😞 It seems that you went to the right places perhaps it was the time of year? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Tony Moore

by NickMorgan, 13-Feb-17 10:42 PM GMT

Hi Tony,

Thank you for your comment on my blog. I am sorry that I have been a bit out of touch this year. I have just been catching up with your personal diary. Wow, you do get about!!! You have been to some fantastic places in the past 12 months. I wonder if January is just a little early for most species in Tenerife. I was really surprised to see so much in July, thinking that March or April could have been better. I look forward to hearing how you get on in Mauritius.

Tony Moore

by Tony Moore, 29-Apr-17 04:53 PM GMT

Just back from a week in Morocco, staying in an olive growing area about 50 km south of the capital. Clouds of whites and Clouded Yellows along the roadsides – great to see such numbers – reminded me of childhood. 🇲🇦. Most were Small Whites with the occasional LW (these were enormous by UK standards, especially the females.. I was pleased to find a few Green-striped Whites among them and one Greenish Black-tip.



Also a few very bright Small Coppers,



and Wall Browns.



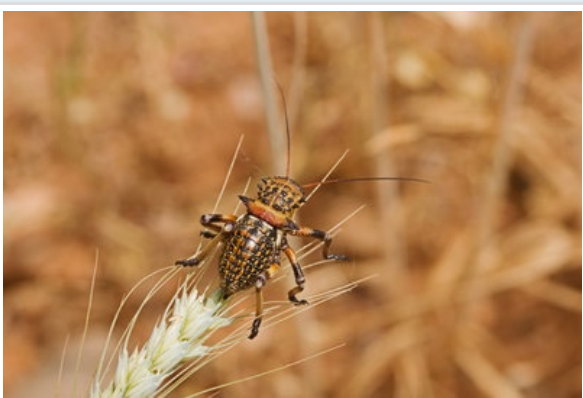
An small owl (Scops??)landed about 50 mtr away and this was the best I could do with my 105.



This beetle was very common:



No idea about species (Bugboy....??). Or this 50mm, cricketish beastie:



The best for later...

Tony M.

Re: Tony Moore

by Wurzel, 29-Apr-17 08:18 PM GMT

Cracking Green striped white and black tip Tony 😊 Your Owl looks more like it is a Little Owl than Scops which have sticky up 'ears' 😊
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Tony Moore

by Padfield, 29-Apr-17 08:33 PM GMT

You don't half get around, Tony!!

I agree with Wurzel about the owl – it has the typical annoyed expression of a little owl. I'm on the edge of my seat for what is to come ...

Guy

Re: Tony Moore

by bugboy, 29-Apr-17 10:22 PM GMT

Agreed, that is a Little Owl, or the north African race/subspecies/form thereof.

As for the Beetle, I'm not entirely sure. At first glance it certainly looks like a Burying Beetle *Nicrophorus sp.* but the antennae don't look right and also it seems to be eating that flower. As far as I'm aware, Burying Beetles stick to eating corpses and other insects so my guess it's mimicking them.

The other Cricketish thing is indeed a Cricket of some kind. The probable group it belongs too are often referred to armoured Bush Crickets.

Some lovely butterflies there as well 😊

Re: Tony Moore

by David M, 29-Apr-17 10:26 PM GMT

Fantastic, Tony. Great to see species rarely referenced on here. Have you any more to come?

Re: Tony Moore

by Chris Jackson, 30-Apr-17 03:50 PM GMT

Nice original and unexpected photos, Tony. I can't possibly imagine what you have in store for us.
Chris

Re: Tony Moore

by Tony Moore, 02-May-17 12:38 PM GMT

Hope I haven't raised too many hopes, there's not much more to come 😊

We had a day in the High Atlas hoping to find *deserticola*, but I think we were too far west. On the walk up to an open mountainside there were several perfect Cleopatras swooping about and a sad little Glanville Frit. I also saw what I think may be *M. phoebe ssp. gaisericus* – perhaps someone could comment?

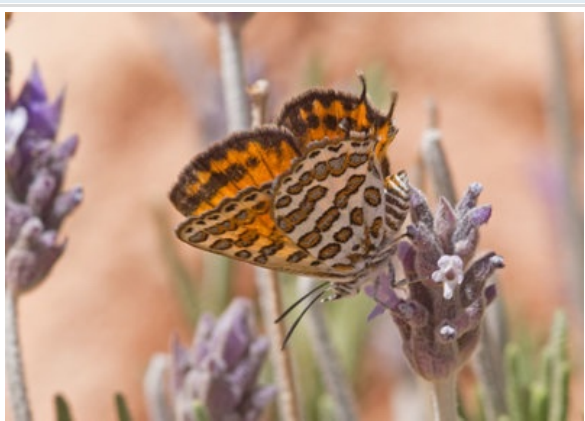




On the tops I saw a fleeting Moroccan Orange-tip and several Desert Orange-tips. This last is a beautiful, delicate little butterfly, but very skittish. I only had one chance, which sadly is pretty poor.



There were a few stunted Wild Lavender bushes about and one revealed this beauty:



Allard's Silverline. A species I never considered finding and a highlight for yours truly.

Morocco is a great butterfly place, but stay in the mountains if you go.

Tony M.

Re: Tony Moore

by David M, 03-May-17 10:29 PM GMT

What a find that Allard's Silverline was, Tony. Exotic is an insufficient adjective.

You won't find that one in Europe!!

Re: Tony Moore

by Chris Jackson, 04-May-17 05:51 AM GMT

Hear, hear, for the Allard's Silverline. I'd like to add that one to my album. 😊
Chris

Re: Tony Moore

by Kip, 04-May-17 08:30 PM GMT

Fantastic to see a shot of Allard's.. 🇹🇹 well done you. 😊

Re: Tony Moore

by Tony Moore, 06-May-17 12:58 PM GMT

Thanks, Guys, for your kind comments. Hope to have some serious exotica to post in a couple of weeks 🇹🇹 ...

Tony M.

Re: Tony Moore

by trevor, 06-May-17 04:57 PM GMT

Stunning stuff, Tony. and every one ' foreign ' to me. It is amazing what's out there, beyond our shores.

Best wishes,
Trevor.

Re: Tony Moore

by Padfield, 06-May-17 09:00 PM GMT

Hi Tony. What they said! 😊 Really special butterflies, and all things I've yet to see too.

With regard to the *Melitaea*, this is a difficult group and subject to almost continual revision, but according to Oorschot and Coutsis, 2014, following Tshikolovets, 2011, *Melitaea phoebe gaisericus* is properly nominate *Melitaea punica*, a species probably restricted to Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. No other member of the *phoebe* complex flies there (Oorschot and Coutsis refer all the specimens of *M. phoebe* illustrated in Tennent's *Butterflies of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia to punica*). Leraut (2016) follows the same nomenclature, distinguishing f. *gaisericus* from high altitude in the Middle-Atlas, notable for its larger size. For what it's worth, he calls *Melitaea punica* 'Oberthür's fritillary.'

It will probably all be different tomorrow, but for today you can call your butterfly Oberthür's fritillary, *Melitaea punica*, and feel like someone who's just bought the latest iPhone. 😊

Guy

Re: Tony Moore

by Tony Moore, 06-May-17 09:48 PM GMT

Thanks, Guy,

What's an iPhone? 🇹🇹

Tony.

Re: Tony Moore

by David M, 07-May-17 09:29 PM GMT

Tony Moore wrote:

Aaah! A man cut from the same cloth as me! 😊

Re: Trip to India

by Tony Moore, 19-May-17 05:26 PM GMT

Just returned from a trip to Lama Camp, 2400mts up in the north-east Indian Himalayas in Arunachal Pradesh, on a failed attempt to see Bhutan Glory. They can apparently be found in May, but are much commoner in Sept/Oct. However, as this would be the monsoon season, the prospect of a week in a tent staring out at the rain, did not appeal, and I mistakenly chose the earlier time.

My trip started well when I was bumped up to Business Class for the flight to Delhi, and instead of languishing, cramped in 'cattle class' for nine hours, hoping that the world might end prematurely, I was seated in luxury, being plied with Champagne by elegant Indian stewardii, prior to an excellent dinner and seven hours sleep in a proper bed. Pretty damn good! I flew straight on to Guwahati, where I stayed the night before the 10 hour, 380 km trip up to Lama (not for the faint-hearted!). My driver arrived at 7 a.m. the next morning and off we went. Once in the mountains, the road became very hairy indeed, especially the last 20 km of rocky track up to Lama. We were regularly no more than a tyre's width from a near vertical, unprotected drop of several hundred metres. Acrophobics and those of a nervous disposition should probably give it a miss...

The camp proved to be just that – a motley collection of fixed tents and shacks – with a phenomenal view 10 km down the valley to Tenga:



It was, actually, a bit Spartan for my old bones. No electricity (except for battery charge), no running water or showers, hole-in-the-ground bog, no beer and veg curry three times a day!

After a couple of days, it did assume a quaint charm. The main problem was that it was very early season and there weren't many butterflies, although most of those I did see were in pristine condition. Despite that, I probably would have done better to forget BG and go a month later. However, I did find some interesting stuff, although most of it was on the sandy track with little opportunity for creative photography. My first butts were on the way up, when we stopped for a bite at a wayside caff. (Dahl curry and the most delicious puris I'd ever eaten – 85 pence!).

There were several Indian Tortoiseshells (*Aglais cashminensis*) nectaring outside. These are very like our ST, but more 'contrasty', especially the females:



At the camp, it was cloudy and rainy the first day and I didn't see a butterfly. The next morning was bright and clear and I set off down the track. This proved to be a 'Puncharium', with four species seen: Lesser, Tailed, Orange and Mixed. Sadly, no Plum Judy to keep them company. The first few that I saw all had closed wings and it was a surprise to find that they were Riodiniinae, rather than Lycaenids. As soon as there were open winged ones, they looked very 'Dukey':

Lesser Punch (*Dodona dipoea*)



Mixed Punch (*Dodona ouida*)



Tailed Punch (*Dodona eugenes*)





There was also a Plain Sulphur (*Dercas lycorias*)



There were a few tiny, rather hairy 'Blues', which proved to be Darjeeling Straightwing Blues (*Orthomiella pontis*)



A few 'Helens' and 'Windmills' were floating around the treetops, but there they stayed. Still pretty good for a first proper day. 😊

Re: Tony Moore

by David M, 19-May-17 06:15 PM GMT

Good Lord, Tony, is there nowhere off limits to you!! 😊😊

Sounds like one hell of a journey so fair play, you deserve all the butterflies you can get.

I will very much look forward to seeing further instalments.

Re: Tony Moore

by Padfield, 19-May-17 07:04 PM GMT

Keep them coming, Tony! As always, it is a great pleasure to follow your butterfly travels.

Guy

Re: Tony Moore

by Tony Moore, 20-May-17 05:35 PM GMT

Many thanks, David and Guy. Hope the rest doesn't disappoint 🍷

Lama is mainly known as a mecca for 'birders', being second only to the Andes in species diversity according to a local researcher. Certainly, the place rang with birdsong, day and night. I did manage a pic of a Scarlet Minivet, which was just about in range of my 105mm:



This was our cook in his kitchen:



After a first breakfast of warmed western style sliced bread, sprinkled with sugar, I managed to convince him that I would prefer Indian food. Thereafter, I had the most delicious parothas, chapatis and puris. Only vegetarian food was allowed on the campsite, but although I often had no idea what I was eating, it was universally very good. However, after four days of veggie food, I jokingly suggested that I would be happy with a live chicken for dinner. I was the only visitor at the time and Ami reappeared ten minutes later. "Are you liking mutton, Sir?". "Can a duck swim?" said I. An hour later, I was tucking into excellent lamb and mushroom curry.

Most of the butterflying consisted of slowly walking up and down the mountain tracks, trying to find stuff before it saw me. Punches were quite common, including this Orange Punch (Dodona egeon):



Quite a rare little butterfly, the Powdery Green Sapphire (Heliophoros tamu), showed both upper and lower surfaces:





An underside shot of another Sapphire, which looks very similar, but which had shining blue uppers, has to be a different species:



This is Eastern Veined Labyrinth (*Neope pulaha*) I think. There are several Neopes, but most are very characteristically marked:





Although the viz was often poorish, I awoke on day 5 with a distant view of the real Himalayas:



Life is good 😊

Re: Tony Moore

by bugboy, 20-May-17 05:57 PM GMT

 Powdery Green Sapphire 

Re: Tony Moore

by Chris Jackson, 20-May-17 07:11 PM GMT

What a report, Tony.
Great account and great images, I'm breathless (and hungry for a curry and a beer).
Chris

Re: Tony Moore

by Padfield, 20-May-17 07:33 PM GMT

Brilliant butterflies!

Heliophorus androcles has more extensive and brighter blue in the male than *tamu* and flies in the region. I suspect your second *Heliophorus* is that. There is another species, *saphir*, that is even more brilliant on the upperside but I don't know if it flies there. Its type locality is Tibet.

Guy

Re: Tony Moore

by Tony Moore, 20-May-17 10:16 PM GMT

Thanks, Guys, for your kind comments.

Guy, the Butterflies of India site does not list *H.saphir* or, surprisingly, *androcles*, but Adrian Hoskins suggests India to for both?? Yer pays yer money...

Tony.

Re: Tony Moore

by Tony Moore, 20-May-17 10:32 PM GMT

Just checked some shots of *Heliophorus androcles* and it looks spot on with the slightly longer tails.
Tony.

Re: Tony Moore

by Padfield, 20-May-17 11:00 PM GMT

Yes, I think *androcles* is the one. D'Abrera says of *saphir* (or rather, of *moorei*, of which *saphir* is often said to be a subspecies) that it is essentially a Chinese species, sometimes taken in the north-west of India and often found in Sikkim, Assam and northern Burma. He illustrates it with *saphir*, and the tails do look shorter, though it is difficult to say with old, set specimens, whether they have simply got worn.

Butterflies of India does have *moorei*.

Guy

Re: Tony Moore

by David M, 21-May-17 12:02 AM GMT

Tony, that Powdery Green Sapphire was worth the trip all on its own. An absolutely stunning insect and one of the most beautiful I have ever seen.

Thanks for sharing.

Re: Tony Moore

by Tony Moore, 21-May-17 10:49 AM GMT

Thanks, David,

I was pretty pleased myself 😊, especially when it ran along the sand a bit and opened its wings for a few seconds. There were a few Sapphires during the week, but that was the only open wing chance I saw.

Tony.

Re: Tony Moore

by Tony Moore, 21-May-17 03:20 PM GMT

My last day dawned fine and sunny, and after my mandatory veg curry, I mooched off down the track. First 'newbie' was a very pale 'Blue':



This, I'm now sure is the Albocaeruean Blue *Udara albocaerulea* following observations by Guy (to whom many thanks).The dark margins and light central patches of the forewings are just apparent through the undersides Next, a couple of Satirids. The Pallid Argus (*Callerebia scanda*). The beautifully marked pale under hindwing is very obvious in flight:



Then a single Himalayan Newar Three-ring (*Ypthima newara*):

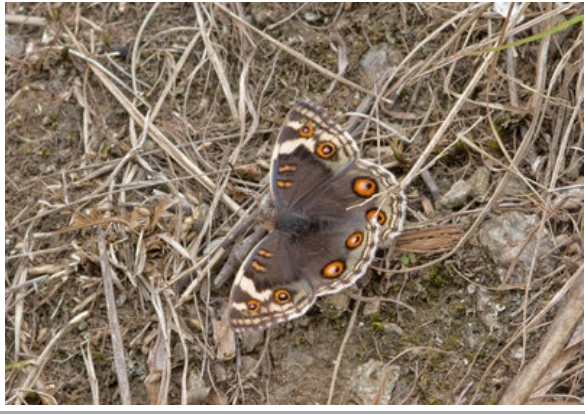


Later on, I disturbed a butterfly which appeared to be deep shining blue black as it flew around my legs. When it settled, it was a gorgeous golden brown! It proved to be a Blue Forester (*Lethe scanda*):



From the photograph alone, one might wonder why it was called 'Blue'.

My day finished with (I think) the brown form of the Pale Blue Pansy (*Junonia orythia swinhoei*) – not much of a shot, but my only chance:



I thought that was me finished as my transport back to Guwahati was coming at 7 a.m. the next day. It tipped with rain all night and on the way down, the next day there was a massive landslip and the road was all but obliterated:



The road guys had been working through the night, but we were still held up for 50 mins. This proved to be a blessing in disguise as there was lots of lovely fresh damp sand about. The camera was quickly out as there were several Chestnut Tigers (*Parantica sita*) floating around. This has to be the most elegant and beautiful of the 'Tigers' with the chestnut suffusion on the hindwings. Unfortunately, they were very jumpy and this was the best that I could do (no open wing shot ggrrrh!):



I then nearly stepped on a stunning fresh Tabby (*Pseudergolis wedah*):



And then to crown it all, a Common Windmill (*Byasa polyeuctes*) dropped down for a salt lunch:



Three that I didn't expect, put a real gloss on a very interesting holiday.

I came within a whisker of missing my flight from Delhi – but that's another story...

Tony M.

Re: Tony Moore

by Padfield, 22-May-17 08:49 PM GMT

Hi Tony. I'd suggest *Udara albocaerulea* for your first blue, both because of the submarginal markings (only spots, no crescents) and your description of it as 'very pale'.

Guy

Re: Tony Moore

by David M, 22-May-17 09:18 PM GMT

You certainly made the most of your enforced delay, Tony.

The first Blue looks superficially like our own Holly Blue, but God alone knows how many similar species are present in that paradise you visited.

I think I'd feel overwhelmed being assaulted by so many different types of unfamiliar butterflies. Well done for having the courage to get out to a place few of us visit.

Re: Tony Moore

by Tony Moore, 22-May-17 09:40 PM GMT

Thanks, Guy for the ID, which certainly looks good on the Indian site. It was the photograph which caused to most trouble with the guys from Singapore, whose expertise I frequently use with tropical stuff. No one even offered an opinion.

This butterflying is a hell of a compulsive interest – I'm already thinking of a return trip next year – if I should live so long, already... 🤪

Tony.

Re: Tony Moore

by David M, 22-May-17 09:45 PM GMT

Tony Moore wrote:

..if I should live so long, already...

I think you're being a bit premature there, Tony...especially having met you!! 😊

That said, at least you'd be one of the very few who could genuinely say you died happy!! If I collapse in the French Alps one day I won't feel in the least cheated. I can't think of a better way to go....

....sorry for being morbid....but you started it! 😊

Re: Tony Moore

by Tony Moore, 22-May-17 11:52 PM GMT

Cardiac arrest in the Alps is OK, but I still hanker after being shot in bed by a jealous husband 😊😊😊

T.

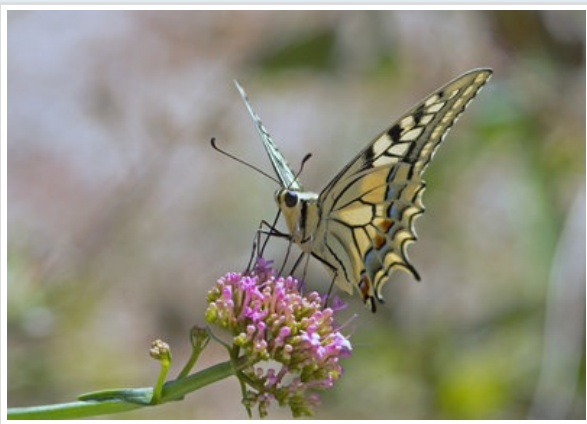
Tony Moore

by Tony Moore, 23-Jun-17 01:22 PM GMT

Just back from a few days on Ischia, one of the unsung jewels of the Mediterranean. Flowers everywhere, but despite several treks into the hills, surprisingly few butterfly species 😊. The commonest by far was Wall Brown, with dozens being seen in many places. It reminded me of my childhood when WB was also the commonest species where I was in the Midlands (and still am – grrrr! Lord knows why?). I did see a couple of Ilex Hairstreaks – I think...



Otherwise, there were a few Specklies', several Cleopatras, Common Blues and Swallowtail and Scarce ST. This Swallowtail was determinedly feeding in quite a strong breeze and this was the best I could do:



So, the butterflies were disappointing, but the pizza and the 'polpo' were great 🍕.

Tony M.

Re: Tony Moore

by Pauline, 23-Jun-17 06:55 PM GMT

Tony Moore wrote:

Cardiac arrest in the Alps is OK, but I still hanker after being shot in bed by a jealous husband 😊😊😊

Keep up the banter guys – it's putting a smile on my face 😊 Loving your sense of humour.

Re: Tony Moore

by David M, 23-Jun-17 11:31 PM GMT

Pizza and Polpo with accompanying Swallowtails is even better, Tony!

Re: Tony Moore

by Tony Moore, 24-Jun-17 11:05 AM GMT

Thanks, Pauline, for your approbation 😊 .

We have to be careful not to turn UKB into Dave and Tone's Laugh-in. (For those old enough to remember Rowan and Martin!). 🍷🍷🍷

Tony M.

Black Hairstreak

by Tony Moore, 27-Jun-17 02:09 PM GMT

After several years of unsuccessful searching, I finally found a Black Hairstreak egg yesterday 😊 .



Tony M.

Re: Black?? Hairstreak

by Tony Moore, 27-Jun-17 10:11 PM GMT

Sorry, Guys,

Looks like wishful thinking on my part 😊 . Current thinking is that it is an unhatched Brown Hairstreak egg from last year. Any thoughts, anyone?

Tony M.

Re: Tony Moore

by Pete Eeles, 05-Jul-17 08:25 PM GMT

Looks good for a Brown Hairstreak egg to me ... definitely not Black Hairstreak.

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Mayrhofen

by Tony Moore, 01-Aug-17 06:28 PM GMT

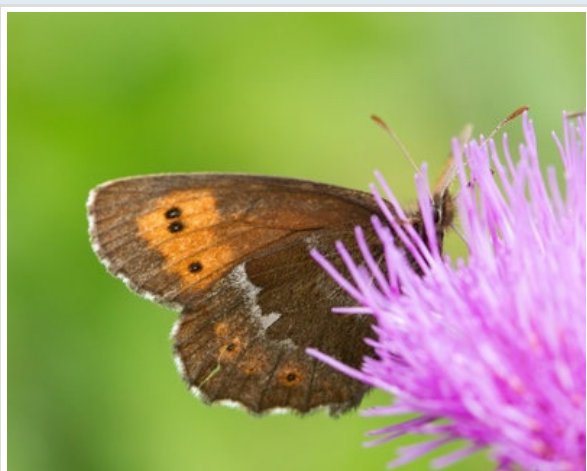
Just back from a short 'Alps fix' in Mayrhofen, where I saw not one piece of litter during my stay - what a pleasant change after fast-food Britain. It is a beautiful area with acres of flowery meadows, but unfortunately, almost all are seeded and cordoned off, so that access to good butterfly areas is problematic.

On my first day, I took a bus up the Stilluptal valley, where there is a dam and artificial lake. I had been informed by our rep that 500 species of butterfly were to be found in this valley! When I tried to disabuse her, suggesting that there are not that number in the whole of Europe, she would brook no argument as it was 'on the internet'...

There was a likely looking strip of ground between the road and the lake and this produced the first butterflies. There were some very fresh Silver-washed Frits:



I was encouraged by the sight of a fresh Scarce Copper, an Apollo in the distance and the first of the many confusing *Erebias* to be found there. All pix were taken between 1000 and 2000 mt. Any ID suggestions that I make are distinctly tentative, and expert feedback would be very welcome. One of the big problems that I find with *Erebias* is getting an upper and lower shot of the same butterfly. These are upper and under of (I think) Arran Brown, the commonest of the *Erebias* in the area:



Two others from the same time – suggestions please – I have no idea:



The next two days tipped with rain most of the time and looking at the forecast seemed likely to continue for the week – not a happy prospect. However, day four dawned bright and clear and I set off by bus for the Hintertux Glacier for what was to be my best day. TBC...

Re: Tony Moore

by David M, 01-Aug-17 09:14 PM GMT

I'm not an expert on *erebia* by any means, Tony, but your last specimen has a look of Lesser Mountain Ringlet to me, and I have seen this species in Austria before at a similar time of year.

Re: Tony Moore

by Padfield, 01-Aug-17 09:48 PM GMT

Yes – the last one does look like *melampus*. The hint of the extra spot towards the apex of the forewing suggests *sudetica* but the general sweep of the spots on forewing and hindwing counts against that, I think. The hindwing spots are too irregular in size. I imagine the previous one is *alberganus*.

Guy

Re: Tony Moore

by David M, 01-Aug-17 09:54 PM GMT

Your montane butterfly eye is SO much keener than mine, Guy.

Yes, of course, Almond-Eyed is likely for the first of those latter two – you'd have thought I'd be better attuned having just seen hundreds of them in the French Alps!!! 😊

Re: Tony Moore

by Roger Gibbons, 01-Aug-17 10:37 PM GMT

I haven't looked in detail, but my instinct is *euryle* for the first two (on the basis of the underside) and *manto* for the third.

Roger

Re: Tony Moore

by Padfield, 01-Aug-17 10:51 PM GMT

Funnily enough, my immediate instinct on shape and appearance was *manto* for that one, but I've never seen *manto* with pupils on the hindwing like that – hence my non-committal, 'I imagine it's *alberganus*'. However, Leraut has examples from Austria with pupils. So I'm inclined to agree with Roger. The wingshape doesn't look very *alberganus*. An underside would clear it up ...

Guy

Re: Tony Moore

by Tony Moore, 01-Aug-17 11:09 PM GMT

Thank you all so much for the input 😊 . There were good numbers of what I thought might be *manto* around. They drop into the undergrowth at the least provocation. Is this one? :



Tony M.

Re: Tony Moore

by David M, 01-Aug-17 11:12 PM GMT

Well, if THAT one's *alberganus* I'll take up birdwatching instead! 😊

Re: Tony Moore

by Padfield, 02-Aug-17 06:56 AM GMT

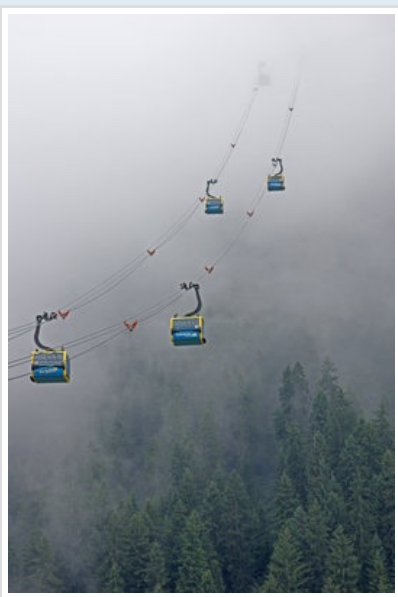
Yes, that last one's definitely *manto*!

Guy

Re: Rainy Days

by Tony Moore, 02-Aug-17 07:00 PM GMT

The Penkenbahn disappearing ;into the mist:



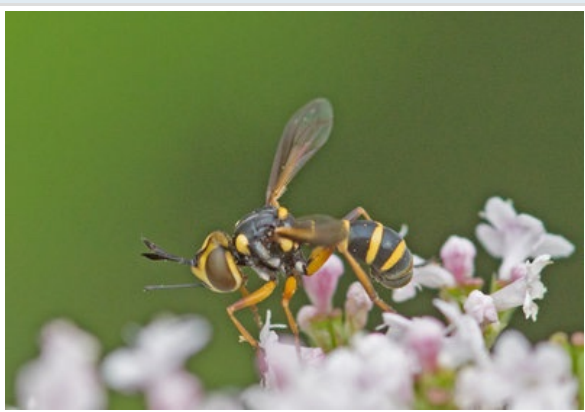
The day was enlivened by this little visitor:



The rain gave over for an hour and I used my free Penkenbahn trip. An early Alpenrose:



A neat little wasp:



And the biggest hoverfly I've ever seen. Much stouter than the English Volucelli:



By then I was soaked, and the siren voices of the hotel bar called ever more loudly...

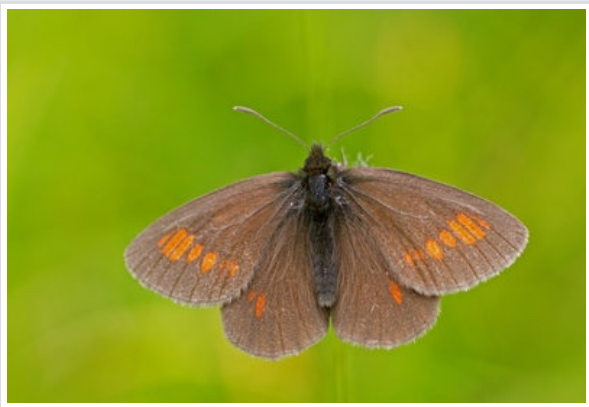
Re: Austrian Alps

by Tony Moore, 03-Aug-17 02:36 PM GMT

One which I forgot from avant le deluge was a Large Wall Brown, the only one I saw all week:



On Wednesday I was up at the Sommerbergalm, the first stage of the Hintertux cable-car(2100m), by 11.30. The sky had clouded over and it was quite chilly. I wandered around for an hour, seeing very little and was considering a return to the relative warmth of the valley, when I saw a smallish *Erebia*, which looked a bit different. It was not very active and after chasing it around for the best part of an hour, managed both upper and under shots:



I think it's a Blind Ringlet (my first), so was pretty pleased with that. By now the coolth had ameliorated and there were more butts flying around. I had seen a few worn Maz Blues, but this smart female suddenly appeared:

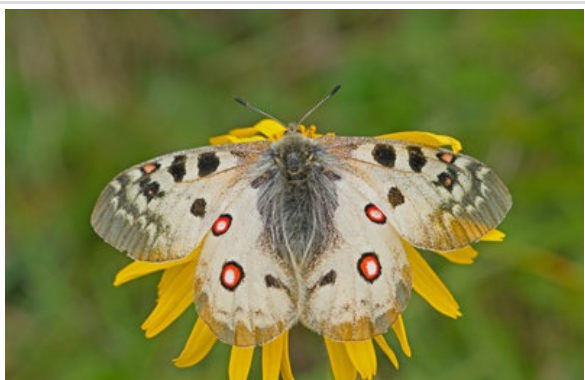
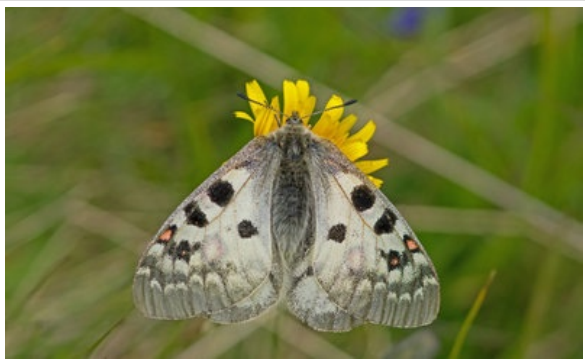


A little further on in a sheltered depression was this spanking fresh little *Boloria* :



I think it's *pales*, which means that all the experts will say *napaea*. Actually, I don't care if it's *Charaxes jasius*, it was a beautiful little butterfly.

As I was working my way back to the lift, there was a rocky area off to the left with some sedums around. It was a bit steep for my old pins, but I went up anyway. 30 metres later:



Serendipity, indeed! And with its head showing, rather than buried up to the neck in some flower head. It was very dozy and I was able to photograph it at will. Certainly a memorable butterfly moment for me.

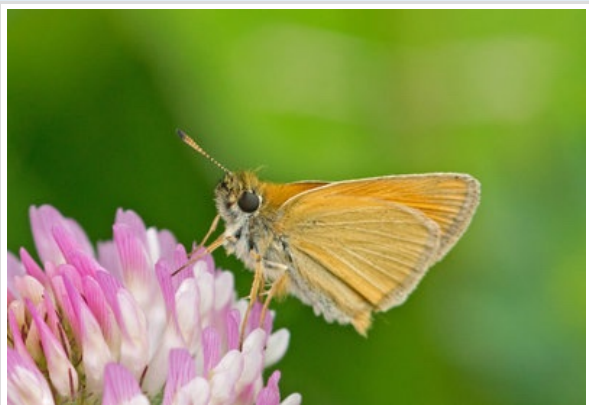
I spent the last day up the Rosenalmbahn, walking down the piste from the top to the Mittelstation. Many Ringlets, including these, which I hope are both *E. euryale* :

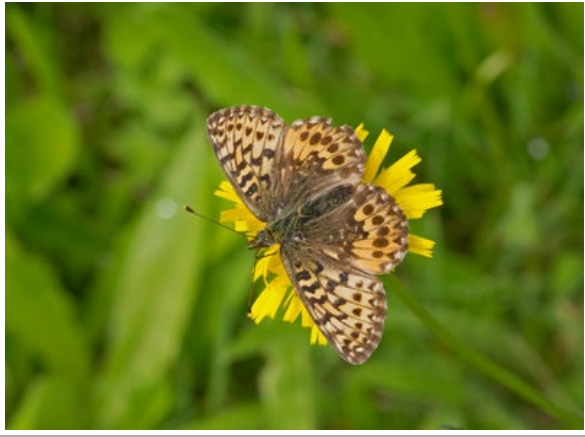


A magnificent fresh Red Admiral kept me busy for a bit:



and an Essex Skip and a Tatty Titty Fritty finished the day:





There were a couple of other *Erebia*, which I'll post in the I.D. Section.

Austria is not like Mercantor or the Dolomites, but still an agreeable place to spend a week (stay at the Strass Hotel, via Ingham's cheapos - food was exceptional).

Re: Tony Moore

by Roger Gibbons, 03-Aug-17 03:58 PM GMT

Sorry to be a spoilsport but the *Erebia* is *manto* again, even if it is blind. These *Erebia* are as much of a minefield as *Pyrgus* (well, almost). Just to illustrate that, *manto* has a Pyrenean subspecies *constans* which is dark brown to black and completely devoid of any markings upper or underside, so it doesn't look remotely like the nominate species.

I agree your *Boloria* is *pales*. I don't claim to be an expert, but this one looks pretty clear to me.

Roger

Re: Tony Moore

by Tony Moore, 03-Aug-17 04:26 PM GMT

Thanks, Roger (ARRrrrrgggh!),

One out of two, anyway... 🍵

T.

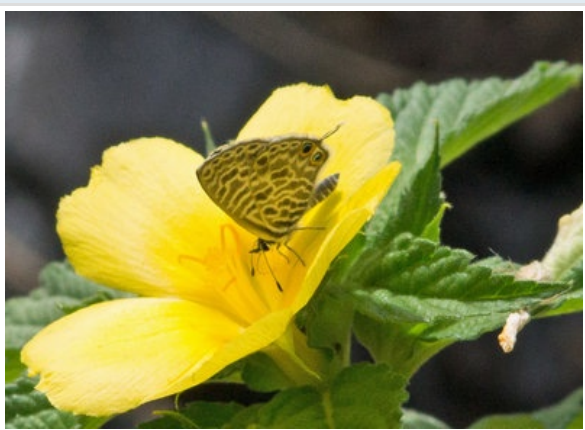
Re: Mauritius

by Tony Moore, 11-Sep-17 10:55 AM GMT

Just returned from two weeks in Mauritius on a R&R trip for my hard working wife - I should be so lucky!

Presumably, because of its remoteness, the island only boasts 30 or so butterfly species, but most are fairly common, and about half of them were seen during our stay, plus a real surprise on the last day...

The hotel had a draconian anti-mosquito spraying regime so there was little to be found in the gardens. Fortunately, there was a track opposite, through some derelict farm land, which was absolutely heaving with butterflies. Most were lycaenids - Lang's Short-tailed Blue (*Leptotes pirithous*) the commonest. These were more strongly marked than their European counterparts:



There were good numbers of African Grass Blues (*Zizeeria knysna*):



and the occasional Tiny Grass Blue (*Zizula hylax*):



I watched one of these ovipositing and could barely see the ovum, it was so tiny – probably no more than .25mm diameter – too small for my camera to cope with!

The Leopard (*Phalanta phalantha*) was also very common, sailing around the vegetation but rarely still long enough for a photograph:



Many Malagasy Grass Yellows (*Eurema floricola*) flapped around the bushes, but also rarely stopped:



I visited this track most days and also saw a few Citrous Swallowtails (*Papilio demodocus*), African Emigrants (*Catopsilia florella*) and one *Coeliades ernesti*, a largish Hesperid, but sadly no photos.

There was no need of an alarm clock there as we were woken each morning by the raucous cries of the Scarlet-whiskered Bulbul, an elegant species, which could often be persuaded to take food from the hand:



The Common Fody was another frequent visitor:



Tony M.

TBC

Re: Tony Moore

by David M, 11-Sep-17 10:11 PM GMT

You're like Phineas Fogg, Tony, with your regular globetrotting! 😊

Interesting to see species from parts of the world few of us visit, and I particularly like the Common Fody. I used to breed birds and this species looks a bit like a Bullfinch x Canary mule. Very attractive.

Re: Mauritius

by Tony Moore, 12-Sep-17 03:30 PM GMT

On the second day, we did a 10k trek through the Bras d'Eau nature reserve, a few miles to the north. It is one of the last strongholds of the Mauritian Paradise Flycatcher - now down to about 200 pairs on the planet. During a brief rest break, one appeared a couple of metres away. We had a great view, but by the time I had the camera ready, it had turned around. For what it's worth, here's a poor back view of a rare little bird:



In the reserve, we had our first views of the Brilliant Blue (*Junonia rhadama*). The male is an impossible electric blue in the sunshine and several of them flying together is a memorable sight. When they land with open wings, they are very jumpy and it took a while to get these shots:



The underside is very cryptic, and when sitting with closed wings, they seem to feel safe and are more easily approached:



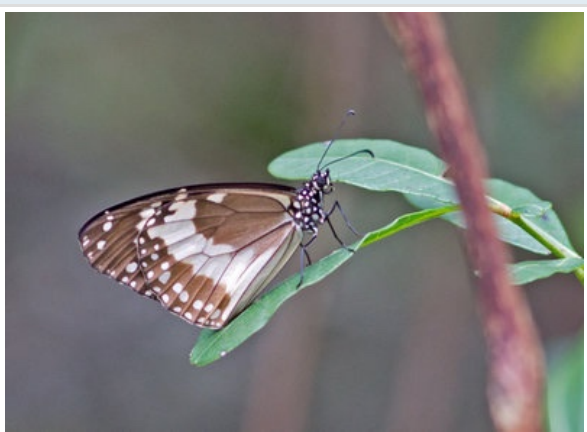
A little Satyrid – *Heteropsis narcissus* – was very common in any shady woodland. It is slightly larger than a Small Heath, but rarely sat with open wings:



When fresh, it is a little jewel, but this rather worn one was the only open wing chance that I had:



We saw three Mauritian Friars (*Amouris phoedon*), an endemic species on the walk; they fly quite slowly around the trees in shaded areas. One finally landed low enough for a shot. An elegant species:



They are slightly smaller than the Plain Tiger (*Danaus chrysippus*) which was also seen along the rides:



A day spent in the famous Pampelmousse Botanical Gardens was something of a disappointment. It is really an arboretum, with no flowers and precious little fauna.

The only photograph from the trip was a Green-backed Heron (*Butorides striatus*):



I had a late walk along the track when I got back. I spent some time watching a Grass Yellow, hoping that it might settle, when I realised that I was not the only one watching it... An endemic Ornate Gekko (*Phelsuma ornata*) was also looking for dinner:



TBC

Re: Tony Moore

by Sonam Dorji, 12-Sep-17 08:17 PM GMT

The Brilliant blue is indeed Brilliant butterfly!!!

Re: Tony Moore

by David M, 12-Sep-17 09:35 PM GMT

Sonam Dorji wrote:

The Brilliant blue is indeed Brilliant butterfly!!!

Indeed it is. Exceptionally beautiful insect, and the others are highly attractive too, along with the birds and that magnificent lizard.

Re: Mauritius

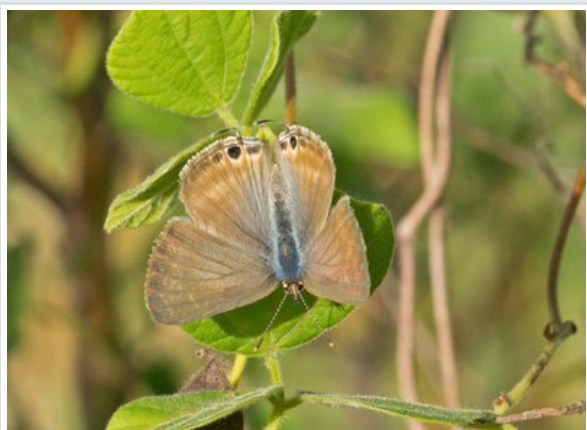
by Tony Moore, 13-Sep-17 09:48 PM GMT

One of the best 'wildlife' places on the island is the Black River Gorge, where there are bits of original forest, including the once widespread Ebony. We dutifully did a trek in this National Park, but were eventually defeated by the Mauritian equivalent of the Stable Fly (*Stomoxys calcitrans*) They swarmed in their thousands, landing and biting any bit of exposed skin, totally unaffected by Deet or any other repellents - murderous little beasts. We did see a couple of Citrous Swallowtails (*Papilio demodocus*) and a probable Mascarene Crow (*Euploea euphon*), but by then were so uncomfortable that we were hammering back to the car.

Back on the track near our hotel, I found a largish, strongly flying lycaenid, which proved to be the Brown Playboy (*Deudorix antalus*). This is a splendid insect, whizzing around after anything which appears in its territory. They became more common as we got into September:



I also saw a single Long-tailed Blue (*Lampedes boeticus*) - at least, that's what I think it was:



We visited a wonderful old plantation house called 'Eureka', which had been lived in until 1986. It had the most marvellous grounds, which bordered a deep valley with several waterfalls and swimming holes. It was something of a scramble to get to the bottom, but well worth it, both for the waterfalls and a sighting of an endemic butterfly, high on my hit-list – *Neptis frobenia*. It has no English name, but should be called the Mauritian Sailor. It flew around in a patch of dappled sunlight and sat beautifully for its photograph:



The highlight of the trip was saved for the last day, when we trekked around the Vallee de Ferney. This is a working sugar plantation that extends into a largely untouched wooded valley with marked trails. It is the last stronghold of the Mauritius Kestrel and they have a couple of reared birds, which are fed daily. During our very pleasant trek, we saw the usual suspects, but when we returned to the kestrel feeding station, I saw a large butterfly – or possibly a small bird – land on a dead tree about thirty metres away. As I approached, it became obvious that it was something unusual – it looked like a charaxid, of which family, none is known to occur on Mauritius:



The expert opinion is that it is a female Blue-spotted Emperor (*Charaxes cithaeron*), an East African species unrecorded in Mauritius! It looked in very clean condition to have been blown 2000 miles across the Indian Ocean. There seems to be little interest in butterflies in Mauritius and I wonder if the species has been quietly breeding in the valley without being noticed. At this time, I'm awaiting a reply from the Mauritian authorities, but I'm still jumping up and down with excitement. An amazing end to a wonderful holiday.

Re: Tony Moore

by Wurzel, 14-Sep-17 08:48 PM GMT

Fantastic range of species Tony 😊🇧🇪🇧🇪 Though I'm not sure about the 'Brown Playboy' sounds a little unPC that 🤔

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Tony Moore

by Tony Moore, 14-Sep-17 09:39 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel – it did seem something of a privilege to see such stuff.

I have still heard nothing back from the Mauritian authorities about the Blue-spotted Emperor. They do appear to be consumed with apathy where matters entomological are concerned. Does anyone have any ideas about whom I might contact? If a first time species were found in Britain, it would be on the front page of the Times! 🇧🇪🇧🇪🇧🇪

Tony M.

Re: Tony Moore

by NickMorgan, 14-Sep-17 10:38 PM GMT

Hi Tony,

Great to see the butterflies you saw in Mauritius. Not surprisingly you saw much the same as I did, although I didn't manage a *Neptis frobenia*, which I had really hoped to see. I have a contact at the Mauritius Wildlife Foundation who I contacted after my visit. He is a butterfly enthusiast, but wasn't quick to respond to my first e-mail. The butterfly I saw was *Hypolimnas anthedon*, which hadn't been recorded on Mauritius since 1957! I will look out his contact details and PM them to you. It may be at my work e-mail, so will be next week.

Thank you for sharing your pictures. I certainly want to go back to Mauritius soon.