

**Re: Matsukaze**

by Matsukaze, 18-Apr-20 06:07 PM GMT

Some early-spring butterflies here in east Mendip.



*Comma, 26 March 2020*



*Peacock, 26 March 2020*



*Peacock, 6 April 2020*



*Orange-tip, 9 April 2020*

**Re: Matsukaze**

by Wurzel, 18-Apr-20 07:39 PM GMT

Good to see you back Matsukaze with cracking shots as well 😊 Hope you're getting plenty of exercise 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

**Re: Matsukaze**

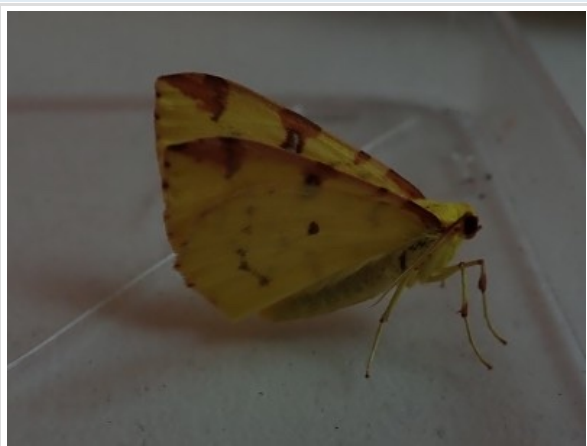
by Matsukaze, 18-Apr-20 09:18 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel – yes, plenty of exercise, being at the top of the hill helps as I take my time going down it and then come back up it fast at the end! Plenty of butterflies around, all the usual suspects for the time of year except Red Admiral, though I am going to struggle to see Green Hairstreak and the Dizzy Skippers this year. Hope all is well and take care!

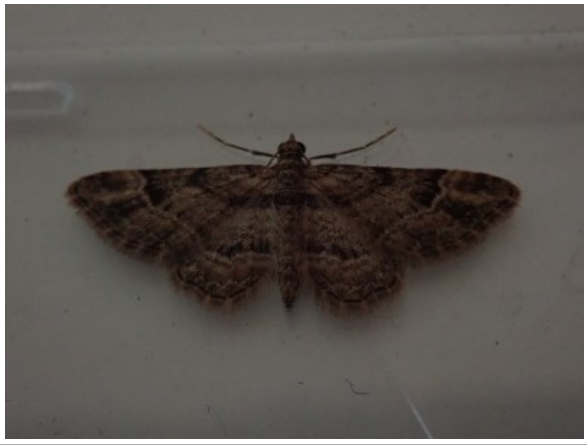
**Re: Matsukaze**

by Matsukaze, 18-Apr-20 11:54 PM GMT

There have been some fine moths to light in the last few weeks, as well.



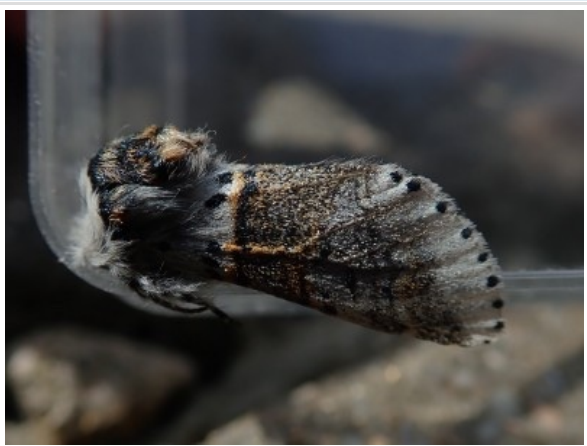
*Brimstone Moth*



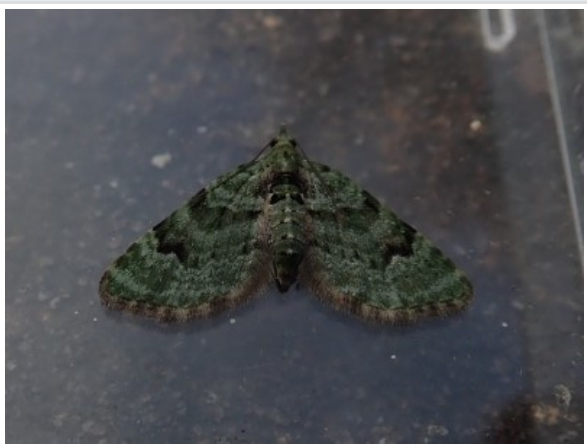
*Double-striped Pug*



*Common Pug*



*Sallow Kitten*



*V-Pug*



*Brindled Beauty*



*Early Thorn*

### Re: Matsukaze

by David M, 19-Apr-20 08:28 PM GMT

Good to see you've stumbled across a few butterflies, Chris, as well as several rather attractive moths, of which Sallow Kitten has to take the award for most eye-catching.

### Re: Matsukaze

by Matsukaze, 22-May-20 11:51 PM GMT

A friendly visitor last night – Elephant Hawk-moth.



### Re: Matsukaze

by David M, 24-May-20 08:59 AM GMT

`{quote=Matsukaze_post_id=153988_time=1590187872_user_id=23}`A friendly visitor last night – Elephant Hawk-moth.

Lucky you, Chris. What a stunner! 😊

## Re: Matsukaze

by Matsukaze, 26-Jun-20 01:10 PM GMT

I've never been very good at keeping this diary up to date - I never did get round to writing up the second half of our Provençal holiday last year. As it was this time last year, now seems a good moment to try to catch up. I don't have my notes to hand so commentary will be a bit sparse, I'm afraid.

### 22 June

Can anyone help ID the fritillary?



*Fritillary somewhere in lowland Provence*



*Grooger the Frog*

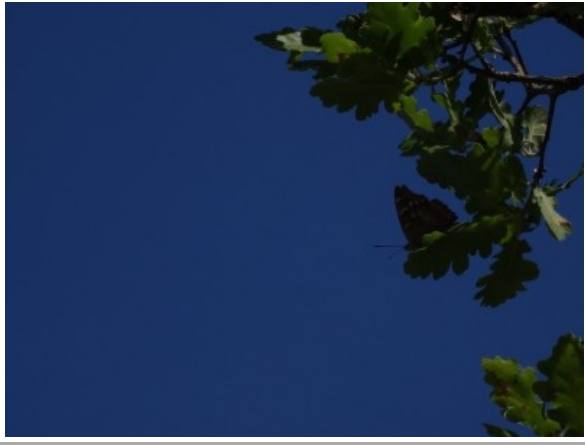
### 23 June

In the 1960s the Black Hairstreak was recorded from the cliffs at Pont-de-Garruby where the road crossed the Verdon on the Var/Alpes de Haute-Provence border. The bridge and road disappeared in the early 1970s when the reservoir was constructed, but the cliffs still remain, far harder of access now than they were then. I made the questionable decision to try seeing if there was still suitable habitat there, clambering around in temperatures above 36C. In truth I could not tell one way or the other, as there were sufficient oaks and similar around to restrict visibility to a few metres. I had lunch beside a wetland where great crested grebes were making unearthly growling noises, and butterflies were visiting the mud for salts. The Lesser Emperor seems to be not uncommon around the shores of the lake where the shore is not precipitous and willows/poplars can establish. I found it at several places.

Painted Ladies were on migration, a steady stream of them flying from east to west; this was a constant theme of the rest of the holiday.



*Nettle-tree butterfly*



*Lesser Purple Emperor*

## Re: Matsukaze

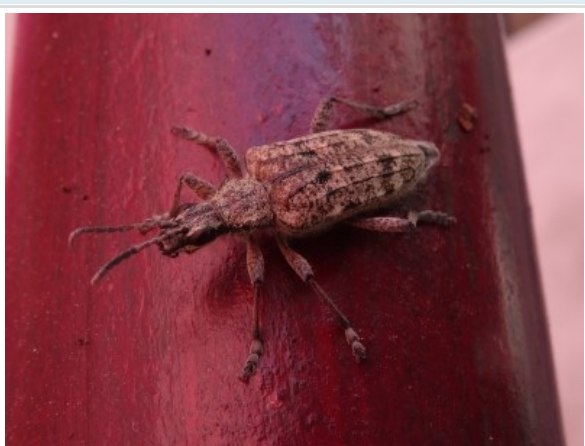
by Matsukaze, 26-Jun-20 01:20 PM GMT

24 June

In an attempt to get cool, we headed high into the hills, to a spot in Alpes-de-Haute-Provence well known for its butterflies. There were plenty of them! One patch of thyme attracted a small cloud of *Mellicta fritillaries*, which would not let each other settle. ID help with the fritillaries and the *Erebia* (3 photos of the same insect) would be appreciated (roughly 1200-1500 metres altitude).



*Fritillary in meadow*



*Beetle*



*Ageing Duke of Burgundy*



*Fritillaries*



*Fritillaries*



*Sooty Copper*



*Sooty Copper*



*Small Blue nectaring on vanilla flavour kidney vetch*



*Mazarine Blue*



*Painted Lady nectaring on raspberry ripple flavour kidney vetch*





*Orsini's Viper – Europe's smallest snake*



*Erebia sp.*



*Erebia sp.*



*Erebia sp.*



*Fritillary sp.*



*Male Common Blues*

### Re: Matsukaze

by Matsukaze, 26-Jun-20 08:49 PM GMT

25 June

**The Golden City of the Fritillaries**

This patch of yellow composites attracted seven species of fritillary, some in good numbers.



Queen of Spain, Knapweed, Weaver's, Niobe, Silver-washed, Marbled, and one *Mellicta* I could not identify.



*Niobe Fritillary*



*Mellicta sp.*



*Escher's Blue*



*helice?*



*helice?*

**26 June**

When people from Marseille express nervousness at the oncoming heatwave, you listen. We decided to relocate in a hurry, trying to find somewhere as far up a mountain as we could, and spent the day travelling to the Aosta valley in Italy. I balked at the thought at trying to negotiate the Turin ring road without a map in temperatures of 42 C, so we ended up on a very winding journey north through Alpine valleys and over a variety of passes. This included the highest road pass in Europe, the Col de l'Iseran, where it was evident that the snow had only just melted – there was still plenty of it about and the freshly-exposed grass was still sodden and had yet to take on any green. Astonishingly, there were butterflies up here; migrating Painted Ladies, and a resident species, *Erebia pandrose* (Dewy Ringlet?). The moth is on the British list, from a few locations in the Highlands.





*Broad-bordered White Underwing*

On the way down, a beast I initially mistook for a small dog, then a beaver, ran in front of us – our first marmot.



### Re: Matsukaze

by Wurzel, 27-Jun-20 05:35 PM GMT

Great set of reports Matsukaze 🤔🇩🇪 I'll probably embarrass myself totally with my identifications but I'll have a go...In the first 'Fritillaries' photo 2 posts ago (after aging Duke) I reckon the one in the middle with wings open is a Meadow Frit 🤔 I reckon the most recent Mellicta sp is a Provencal there seem to be orange spots in the lunules ? 🤔🤔 Finally I reckon the Cloudy isn't a helice but a male Berger's (it isn't as two-tone, yellow and white, like a Helice and the fore wing is more rounded and less shark fin than a Pale Cloudy)...I await corrections for all of these but at least I had a go 🤔🤔

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

## Re: Matsukaze

by David M, 28-Jun-20 08:33 AM GMT

You did right to travel to altitude, Chris. There was one day in late June when the temperature exceeded 100 degrees even in Rimplas which is at 1,050m!! Goodness knows what it was like near sea level.

In your post before last the first Fritillary looks suspiciously like a female Provençal and I fancy the *erebia* is Piedmont Ringlet. In the last post I would say you're definitely right regarding Dewy Ringlet.

## Re: Matsukaze

by Matsukaze, 04-Jul-20 12:09 AM GMT

### 27 June 2019 – Aosta and the Great St Bernard Pass

We spent much of the day resting, but I always have to look around a new place and see what butterflies were about. In this case there was a Queen of Spain fritillary nectaring on a viper's bugloss type plant, but the most interesting thing was finding a cluster of bladder senna bushes, with the seed-pods well out. It was too late for Iolas Blues, but I remembered that Guy used to find them just the other side of the mountain in Switzerland and I wondered...

Later that afternoon we went up the mountain as far as the Swiss frontier at the top. Sara paddled in the lake, which was still partially covered by ice. On the way back down we stopped off for butterflies, finding among other things small cluster of mud-puddling blues. Alpine Heath and Geranium Argus were new to me. The latter were not behaving themselves; they were well away from their foodplant, though the next day I was to find them acting more traditionally.





*Sooty Copper*



*Alpine Heath*



*Geranium Argus*



*Geranium Argus*



*Geranium Argus and ??*



*Mazarine Blue*

**Re: Matsukaze**

by David M, 06-Jul-20 03:36 PM GMT

There's potential for your *Geranium Argus* partner (?) to be *Osiris Blue*, Chris, although it could equally be *Small Blue*. Did you get a glimpse of the uppersides? It's not *Mazarine*.

**Re: Matsukaze**

by Matsukaze, 07-Jul-20 04:20 PM GMT

Hi David, most likely *Small Blue*, as there were *Small* and *Mazarine* present but I didn't notice *Osiris*. I made the mistake of not noting immediately afterwards what I had photographed at the time.

**Re: Matsukaze**

by David M, 07-Jul-20 05:57 PM GMT

[quote=Matsukaze post\_id=155796 time=1594135210 user\_id=23] Hi David, most likely *Small Blue*, as there were *Small* and *Mazarine* present but I



didn't notice Osiris. I made the mistake of not noting immediately afterwards what I had photographed at the time.

I do that regularly, Chris so no worries.

Probably was *minimus* as in my experience Osiris is generally not around in July in southern France.

## Re: Matsukaze

by Matsukaze, 21-Nov-20 10:50 PM GMT

28 June 2019 – Grand St Bernard Pass (Swiss side)

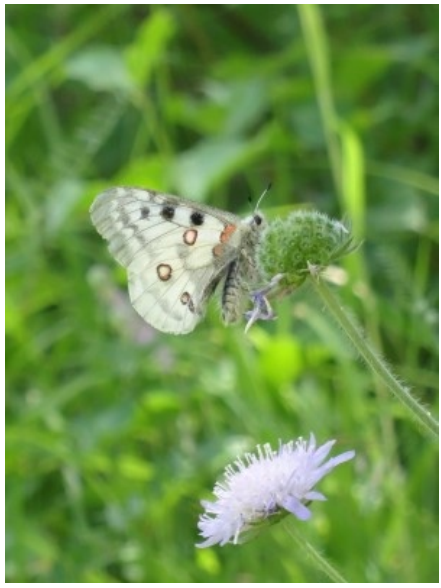
The next day we went over the top of the pass and into Switzerland – the last time I had been there I was far too young to be identifying butterflies (though old enough to know what snakes were – it was the first time I had seen one). The first 'lep' I saw was a Small Tortoiseshell basking on one of the concrete bunker-type installations that line the road on the way down from the top of the pass. The first new species of the day came at an unpromising, scruffy stretch of verge further down, where a Northern Wall Brown fluttered and perched just too far away for a satisfactory photo. A Geranium Argus did what Geranium Arguses are supposed to do, resting in the flower of the foodplant. I then saw what my notes describe as 'Alpine Clouded Yellow', presumably *phicomone*:



At the same place was an uncooperative *Erebia*, perhaps Arran Brown or Scotch Argus:



Our original notion had been to try to drive to Martigny for lunch, but the heat was oppressive and the countryside becoming increasingly manicured, so halfway down we turned off the main road and settled down for a picnic next to an extremely steep, flower-rich bank. Of course there were butterflies – a brief appearance from a fritillary (Pearl-bordered perhaps, but on 28 June?), a fly-by from an Apollo, and a dark butterfly which came down the bank several times to taunt me before flying back somewhere I could not follow. At the time I thought it was an *Erebia* but my photo showed it to be something else – a Great Sooty Satyr.



On returning back near the top of the pass we stopped off by the side of a stream where a sheltered corner proved good for butterflies – Grizzled Skipper, Small Blue, Mazarine Blue, Chequered Skipper (a first for me) and Green Hairstreak. The highlight was a fly-by from a Camberwell Beauty, which I chased until it disappeared over a cliff, and I had just about enough sense remaining not to follow. At above 2000 m, I presume this Argus is *artaxerxes*:



At the top of the pass we watched the dogs from St. Bernard's refuge being exercised and paddling in the water, and then returned to Italy.

### Re: Matsukaze

by Wurzel, 22-Nov-20 07:46 PM GMT

Cracking range of species Matsukaze – I'd love to get to the Alps 🤔🇮🇹 Could the Fritillary have been a Small Pearl rather than a Pearl as the do have a second brood on the continent? Also just a long shot but could the blue with the Geranium Argus have been a Holly Blue?

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Matsukaze

by David M, 23-Nov-20 01:57 PM GMT

Nice to see a few continental species, Chris.

I'm sure your Frit is Pearl Bordered (clear floating triangles visible on the ups). I often see this species well into July at altitude in the French Alps (alongside Orange Tips) so late June is well within their flight period.

I agree with Great Sooty Satyr (can't be Black Satyr that far north), but your *Erebia* looks to probably be Piedmont Ringlet rather than what you suggested. The unh spots and lack of white fringe are what make me err towards *meolans*, although I have learned (from Roger & Guy) that other *erebia* have forms that exhibit these spots where the nominal form does not (*adyte* if I'm not mistaken).

### Re: Matsukaze

by Matsukaze, 25-Nov-20 01:31 PM GMT

[quote=Wurzel\_post\_id=159515\_time=1606074415\_user\_id=9821] Cracking range of species Matsukaze – I'd love to get to the Alps 🤔🇮🇹 Could the Fritillary have been a Small Pearl rather than a Pearl as the do have a second brood on the continent? Also just a long shot but could the blue with the Geranium Argus have been a Holly Blue?

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

Thanks – hopefully I'll be back in 2021... I didn't think it was SPBF, as the site was dry grassland and SPBF seems to like it wet – I just had no idea what the other options are that we don't get in the UK.

### Re: Matsukaze

by Matsukaze, 25-Nov-20 01:37 PM GMT

#### David M wrote:

Nice to see a few continental species, Chris.

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Thanks David! I have a long way to go still with the Erebias.

**Re: Matsukaze**

by Wurzel, 25-Nov-20 08:13 PM GMT

Just had another look and managed to remember how to zoom in on internet explorer – you were right first time it's a Pearl – 'duck face' marking and flying chevrons visible on the wing margins when you actually look rather than glance 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

**Re: Matsukaze**

by David M, 29-Nov-20 09:06 PM GMT

`{quote=Matsukaze post_id=159562 time=1606311428 user_id=23}`Thanks David! I have a long way to go still with the Erebias.

Me too, Chris. Whilst they're not quite as bad as the *pyrgus* genus, the fact that there are so many isolated populations around the higher mountains of Europe means that local forms abound and unless you are familiar with them, it can be quite a shock to see a form far removed from the one with which you are familiar. The degree of variation is quite unlike any other group, IMO.