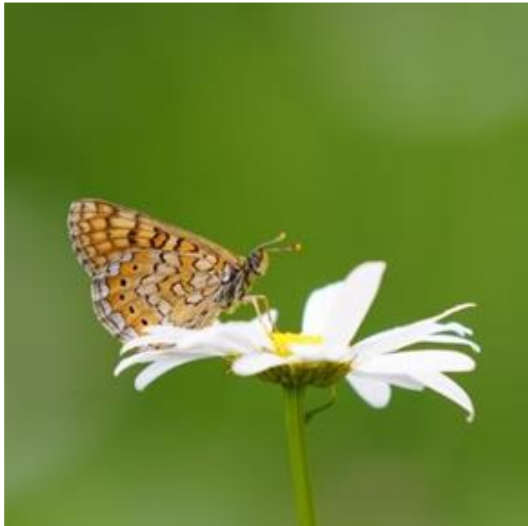


Tour Report

Bulgaria – Butterflies & Birds of Bulgaria

20-28 June 2019

Euphydryas aurinia



Melitaea didyma



European crested tit



Little owl



Compiled by: Assen Ignatov

Leaders: Dr Stoyan Beshkov & Assen Ignatov

Day 1: Thursday 20 June 2019

Weather: sunny, then changeable with showers; 26°C

After a sunny start in Sofia, it clouded over as we drove away from the airport. The first stop was at Rila Monastery where we saw pallid swifts flying above.

Our second stop was in the Kresna Gorge to look for butterflies and other insects. We saw numerous caterpillars, some attractive grasshoppers and almost all the European species of martins and swallows. Our last stop for the day was to enjoy a quick view of some griffon vultures.

Day 2: Friday 21 June 2019

Weather: sunny, 28°C

An early morning birdwatching walk was very productive – in terms of birds, we saw golden orioles, common nightingales and red-backed shrike, and we also spotted a red fox.

After a good breakfast we went to Kozhuha Hill (or volcano). A walk on the northern part of it resulted in roller, short-toed eagle and long-legged buzzard. It was also a very rich place for butterflies and there were a few moths too including skippers, graylings, blues and fritillaries.

Twice we saw a tortoise and few green and wall lizards.

We found a nice spot for lunch then went to Rozhen Monastery. Going back to Melnik, it was good to find time to visit the town and do some wine-tasting in one of the local cellars. We had good views here of a very dark little owl.

Then we had dinner in the hotel garden.

Day 3: Saturday 22 June

Weather: sunny, 28°C

After another early birdwatching walk followed by breakfast, we headed to Slavianka Mountain. Here we stopped to see calandra lark and black-headed buntings and to enjoy panoramic views across to the Struma Valley and surrounding mountains.

We stopped the minibus south of Izvora Hut, in the heart of old marble quarry. This is a very rich habitat for many different animals – highlights here were singing wood lark, hunting short-toed eagle and some passing cirl buntings. There were lots of interesting butterflies and dragonflies; however, the species everybody wanted to take photos of were some thirsty Camberwell beauties and large tortoiseshells.

It was hot but we managed to walk in the shade of some very old *Platanus* trees, and took our lunch in a cool, shady place with a fountain. The afternoon was similar to the morning but with many beautiful damselflies and green lizards.

In the evening we had dinner in the garden again.

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Day 4: Sunday 23 June 2019

Weather: changeable with patches of rain & sunshine, 26°C

After breakfast we drove to the Pirin Mountains, stopping before the top of the pass to admire some apollo butterflies. After managing some good views we walked the few hundred metres to Orelek Peak. Serins were singing around us, we also spotted goldcrests and firecrests, and heard nutcrackers and bullfinches. We also managed to get good views and photographs of a crested tit.

It was a bit cool to be ideal for butterflies, but we did see a lot of ringlets and blues.

Our next stop was in the town of Gotce Delchev where we bought fruit, vegetables and stopped for a coffee and ice-cream. We continued to drive east, stopping near the Mesta River where they are renovating a few fish farms and here we saw some waders and singing olivaceous warbler.

After the village of Satovcha, we had our picnic lunch in pleasant sunshine (about 24°C), serenaded by goldfinches and with eagles flying overhead.

Our last stop for the day was near Borino village. Here we mostly looked for fritillaries (knapweed, lesser spotted) and blues (small, sooty and Balkan), plus some interesting plants including a few orchids. Before arriving at our hotel, we made a stop to show the group where we would be looking for wallcreeper the next day ... but actually managed to see this sought-after bird well, and after only having to wait for a few seconds! It was a nice surprise and very exciting.

Day 5: Monday 24 June 2019

Weather: rainy & sunny – changeable, 24°C

We spend all the morning in the Trigrad Gorge area. Before breakfast we headed out above the hotel, following the old Roman Bridge and road. It was raining while we had our lunch of grilled trout in a local hut; after lunch we walked back out into the gorge again. In the afternoon we walked from Osmanov vir to Chairite – the highlight being views of many dippers.

After the rain it was cooler and fresh with not so many butterflies; however, we had good views view because the atmosphere pressure was low. Many orchids and toads.

Day 6: Tuesday 25 June 2019

Weather: changeable, 28°C

Today involved a lot of driving, with a comfort stop in Smolyan and lunch just past Ardino. The highlights from today's road trip were breeding night herons, pygmy cormorants and little egrets.

Our new base was the town of Krumovgrad, in the Eastern Rhodope Mountains.

Day 7: Wednesday 26 June 2019

Weather: mostly cloudy with a few showers – changeable, 28°C

After breakfast we drove for 30 km to Potochnitca. A 20-minute walk brought us to the local 'Vulture restaurant' where there were many griffon vultures, black kites and black storks as well as good views of Egyptian vultures, and a singing (but well hidden) subalpine warbler. Before heading back to our hotel, we saw fallow deer leaving the 'restaurant' as well as a good many butterflies, an ant lion plus a few dragonflies.

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Crossing the village, we saw a little owl chasing some of the local birds – shrikes, buntings, sparrows, starlings and barred warbler.

After lunch, we set off to our next location, stopping en route to look for butterflies but also finding some fallow deer feeding near to the road. The rain started and we made the decision to return to Krumovgrad a little bit earlier than planned.

After dinner we went out to see if we could hear a scops owl ... but they remained elusive!

Day 8: Thursday 27 June 2019

Weather: mostly sunny, 29°C

Today we headed to Madzharovo to see vultures again. En route, we saw an Egyptian vulture above us, so we stopped to admire it. Stoyan suggested that we follow a small road going down to the valley. It was good idea as it turned out that there were many raptors (including honey buzzard), woodpeckers – green, lesser-spotted and middle spotted, very close long-tailed tits, ravens, orioles and many butterflies.

Bellow one of the griffon vulture colonies we had a pleasant walk and saw blue rock thrush, Ortolan bunting, vultures, swifts, peregrine and rock swallows.

Our last lunch of the trip was in a wooden pavilion with panoramic views of the Arda River valley.

Day 9: Wednesday 28 June 2019

Weather: mostly sunny, 28°C

Transfer to Sofia airport.

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Checklist



	Common Name	Latin Name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9
	BIRDS	AVES									
1	Mute swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>						✓			
2	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>						✓			
3	Black stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>							✓	✓	
4	White stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
5	Little bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>						✓			
6	Black-crowned night heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>						✓			
7	Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>						✓	✓	✓	
8	Little egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>						✓			
9	Pygmy cormorant	<i>Microcarbo pygmeus</i>						✓			
10	Great cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓	✓					✓	✓	
11	Egyptian vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>				✓			✓	✓	
12	European honey buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>							✓	✓	
13	Griffon vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>							✓	✓	
14	Black kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>							✓		

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15	Long-legged buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>		✓						✓	
16	Common buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
17	Common moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>						✓			
18	Eurasian coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>						✓			
19	Wood sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>							✓		
20	Yellow-legged gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	
21	Rock dove	<i>Columba livia</i>					✓				
22	Common wood pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓		H				✓	✓	
23	European turtle dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	
24	Eurasian collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
25	Common cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	H		H	V				H	
26	Little owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>		✓		H			✓		
27	European nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>						H			
28	Alpine swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>					✓	✓		✓	
29	Common swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
30	Pallid swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	
31	European roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>		✓	✓						
32	Common kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>						✓			
33	European bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>		H	H	H		✓		H	
34	Eurasian wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>		V							

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35	Middle spotted woodpecker	<i>Dendrocoptes medius</i>			H					H	
36	Lesser spotted woodpecker	<i>Dryobates minor</i>		H	V					V	
37	Syrian woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i>		H							
38	Great spotted woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>				H					
39	European green woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>		H	H	H				✓	
40	Common kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	
41	Red-backed shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
42	Woodchat shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>		✓	✓				✓		
43	Eurasian golden oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
44	Eurasian jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
45	Eurasian magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
46	Spotted nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>					H				
47	Western jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	✓					✓	✓	✓	
48	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	✓				✓	✓			
49	Hooded crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
50	Northern raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>				✓	✓		✓	✓	
51	Coal tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>				✓	H				
52	European crested tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>				✓					
53	Sombre tit	<i>Poecile lugubris</i>		H							
54	Eurasian blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		✓	✓	✓				✓	

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55	Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
56	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>		H	✓				✓		
57	Eurasian skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>								✓	
58	Crested lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
59	Calandra lark	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>			✓						
60	Sand martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>						✓			
61	Barn swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
62	Eurasian crag martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
63	Common house martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
64	Red-rumped swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
65	Long-tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>			✓	✓				✓	
66	Common chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>				✓	✓	✓		H	
67	Great reed warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>						✓			
68	Eastern olivaceous warbler	<i>Iduna pallida</i>		✓							
69	Common grasshopper warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>						H			
70	Eurasian blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
71	Lesser whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	✓	✓	H						
72	Eastern Orphean warbler	<i>Sylvia crassirostris</i>							✓		
73	Subalpine warbler	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>							H		
74	Common whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓					

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75	Common firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>				✓	✓				
76	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>				H	H				
77	Eurasian wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	H		✓	✓	✓				
78	Western rock nuthatch	<i>Sitta neumayer</i>								✓	
79	Eurasian nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	✓							✓	
80	Wallcreeper	<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>					✓				
81	Eurasian treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>				H		H			
82	Short-toed treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>								✓	
83	Common starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
84	Ring ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>									
85	Common blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
86	Mistle thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>				✓					
87	European robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>			✓	✓	✓				
88	Common nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
89	Black redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
90	Northern wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>				✓					
91	White-throated dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>				✓	✓	✓			
92	House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
93	Italian sparrow	<i>Passer italiae</i>								✓	
94	Spanish sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

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95	Grey wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
96	White wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
97	Common chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
98	Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	✓	✓	✓						
99	Eurasian bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>				H					
100	European greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
101	Red crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>				✓					
102	European serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
103	Eurasian siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>				✓	✓	✓			
104	Corn bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
105	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>				H					
106	Rock bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>					H				
107	Ortolan bunting	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>							H	H	
108	Cirl bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>		H	H					H	
109	Black-headed bunting	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
	BUTTERFLIES & MOTHS	LEPIDOPTERA									
1	Essex skipper	<i>Thymelicus lineola</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
2	Lulworth skipper	<i>Thymelicus acteon</i>								✓	
3	Large skipper	<i>Ochlodes venatus</i>		✓	✓		✓				

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4	Dingy skipper	<i>Erynnis tages</i>		✓					✓		
5	Mallow skipper	<i>Carcharodus alceae</i>		✓	✓					✓	
6	Grizzled skipper	<i>Pyrgus malvae</i>					✓				
7	Oberthur's grizzled skipper	<i>Pyrgus armoricanus</i>								✓	
8	Sandy grizzled skipper	<i>Pyrgus cinarae</i>			✓						
9	6-spot burnet	<i>Zygaena filipendulae</i>			✓	✓					
10		<i>Zygaena ephialtes</i>								✓	
11	Transparent burnet	<i>Zygaena purpuralis</i>				✓	✓				
12	Chimney sweeper	<i>Odezia atrata</i>					✓				
13	Black-veined moth	<i>Siona lineata</i>					✓				
14	Speckled yellow moth	<i>Pseudopanthera macularia</i>					✓				
15	Cream-spot tiger moth	<i>Arctia villica</i>					✓				
16	Burnet companion moth	<i>Euclidia glyphica</i>					✓				
17		<i>Zygaena nevadensis</i>				✓					
18	Slender Scotch burnet	<i>Zygaena loti</i>					✓				
19		<i>Zygaena angelicae</i>					✓				
20	Humming-bird hawkmoth	<i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>			✓	✓					
21	Apollo	<i>Parnassius apollo</i>				✓					
22	Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>		✓	✓					✓	
23	Scarce swallowtail	<i>Iphiclides podalirius</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

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24	Wood white	<i>Leptidea sinapis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
25	Eastern wood white	<i>Leptidea duponcheli</i>	✓		✓				✓	✓	
26	Clouded yellow	<i>Colias crocea</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
27	Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>			✓	✓					
28	Black-veined white	<i>Aporia crataegi</i>			✓						
29	Large white	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>			✓	✓					
30	Small white	<i>Pieris rapae</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
31	Balkan green-veined white	<i>Pieris napi (balcana complex)</i>	✓		✓	✓				✓	
32	Southern small white	<i>Pieris mannii</i>			✓					✓	
33	Mountain small white	<i>Pieris ergane</i>			✓						
34	Kreuper's small white	<i>Pieris krueperi</i>						✓		✓	
35		<i>Pontia edusa</i>						✓		✓	
36	White admiral	<i>Limenitis camila</i>				✓					
37	Southern white admiral	<i>Limenitis reducta schiffmuelleri</i>		✓	✓					✓	
38	Poplar admiral	<i>Limenitis populi</i>					✓				
39	Peacock	<i>Inachis io</i>			✓	✓					
40	Painted lady	<i>Cynthia cardui</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
41	Small tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>			✓						
42	Comma	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
43	Silver-washed fritillary	<i>Argynnis paphia</i>			✓	✓		✓	✓		

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44		<i>Argynnis aglaja</i>							✓		
45	Cardinal	<i>Argynnis pandora</i>								✓	
46	High brown fritillary	<i>Argynnis adippe</i>							✓		
47	Niobe fritillary	<i>Argfynnis niobe</i>				✓					
48	Queen of Spain fritillary	<i>Issoria lathonia</i>				✓			✓		
49	Marbled fritillary	<i>Brenthis daphne</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	
50		<i>Euphydryas aurinia bulgarica</i>					✓				
51	Knapweed fritillary	<i>Melitaea phoebe</i>		✓	✓	✓					
52		<i>Melitaea didyma meridionalis</i>		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
53	Lesser spotted fritillary	<i>Melitaea trivia</i>				✓					
54	Heath fritillary	<i>Melitaea athalia</i>			✓	✓	✓				
55	Marbled white	<i>Melanargia galathea</i>			✓	✓			✓	✓	
56	Balkan marbled white	<i>Melanargia larissa</i>							✓		
57	Eastern rock grayling	<i>Hipparchia syriaca</i>								✓	
58	Balkan grayling	<i>Hipparchia senthes</i>			✓						
59		<i>Hipparchia circe</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
60	Oriental meadow brown	<i>Hyponephele lupina</i>			✓						
61	Meadow brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
62	Ringlet	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>					✓				
63	Small heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>				✓					

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64	Balkan heath	<i>Coenonympha rhodopensis</i>				✓					
65	Chestnut heath	<i>Coenonympha glycerion</i>				✓					
66	Speckled wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓			
67	Lattice brown	<i>Pararge roxelana</i>								✓	
68	Wall brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	
69	Mourning cloak	<i>Vanessa antiopa</i>			✓						
70	Painted lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
71	Red admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>			✓	✓					
72	Comma	<i>Nymphalis c-album</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
73	Large tortoiseshell	<i>Nymphalis polychloros</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓			
74	Small tortoiseshell	<i>Nymphalis (Aglais) urticae</i>			✓						
75	Nettle tree butterfly	<i>Libythea celtis</i>			✓	✓					
76	Ilex hairstreak	<i>Nordmannia ilicis</i>							✓		
77	Small copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>		✓	✓				✓	✓	
78	Sooty copper	<i>Lycaena tityrus</i>		✓	✓				✓		
79		<i>Lycaena virgaureae balcanicola</i>				✓					
80		<i>Lycaena candens leonhardi</i>				✓					
81	Lesser fiery copper	<i>Lycaena thersamon</i>								✓	
82		<i>Heodes alciphron melibaeus</i>			✓						
83	Balkan purple-edged copper	<i>Palaeochrysophanus candens leonhardi</i>				✓					

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84	Holy blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>	✓	✓	✓						
85	Large blue	<i>Maculinea arion</i>			✓						
86	Silver-studded blue	<i>Plebejus argus</i>			✓	✓	✓				
87	Brown argus	<i>Plebejus agestis</i>			✓		✓		✓		
88	Idas blue	<i>Lycaeides idas</i>			✓	✓	✓				
89	Turquoise blue	<i>Plebicula dorylas</i>				✓					
90	Anomalous blue	<i>Polyommatus admetus</i>			✓						
91	Escher's blue	<i>Polyommatus escheri</i>			✓	✓					
92	Meleager's blue	<i>Polyommatus daphnis</i>			✓						
93	Common blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
94	False eros blue	<i>Polyommatus eroides</i>			✓	✓					
95	Adonis blue	<i>Polyommatus bellargus</i>									
96	Mazarine Blue	<i>Polyommatus (Cyaniris) semiargus</i>			✓	✓			✓		
97	Chalkhill Blue	<i>Polyommatus coridon</i>									
98	Amanda's Blue	<i>Polyommatus amandus</i>			✓	✓	✓				
99	Chapman's Blue	<i>Polyommatus thersites</i>									
100	Hungarian skipper	<i>Spialia orbiter</i>		✓	✓				✓		
101	Yellow-banded skipper	<i>Pyrgus sidae</i>			✓				✓		
102	Small skipper	<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>				✓					
103	Chequered skipper	<i>Carterocephalus palaemon</i>					✓				

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104	Eastern festoon	<i>Zerynthia cerisy</i>							✓		
105	Lesser Bath white	<i>Pontia chloridice</i>								✓	
106	Sloe hairstreak	<i>Satyrrium acaciae</i>			✓				✓	✓	
107	Osiris blue	<i>Cupido osiris</i>			✓						
	OTHER SPECIES										
1	Odalisque	<i>Epallage fatime</i>						✓			
2	Huge violet ground beetle	<i>Carabus sommeri</i>					✓				
3	Balkan goldring	<i>Cordulegaster heros</i>			✓						
4	Banded demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>			✓						

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