

THE TRAVELLING NATURALIST

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FRANCE

Wildlife of the Pyrenees

17 – 24 June 2015

TOUR REPORT

Leader: David Fairhurst

Wednesday 17 June

After a trouble-free flight from Heathrow, we arrived mid morning in Toulouse. The hire minibus formalities over with it wasn't long before we were heading southwest along the motorway. We stopped for lunch along a backwater of the River Garonne just outside Cazerres. This pleasant spot held a few dragonflies including scarce chaser. An adult night heron did a fantastic fly past, a pair of firecrests gave superb close views and kingfisher whizzed past. From here we headed into the wooded hills and meadows around Ausseing. Two stops along quiet lanes produced a wealth of birds, butterflies and flowers. Our first stop held a dazzling display of orchids including bee, common spotted, fragrant, greater butterfly and a Serapias species. Birds included peregrine falcon, hobby and short-toed treecreeper.

The butterflies here stole the show though: we hardly had to move from our parking spot to see such species as white admiral, blue-spot hairstreak, ringlet, plus marbled, silver-washed and Glanville fritillaries; marbled whites were everywhere! Short-toed treecreepers continued to sing but still refused to be seen at our second stop and once it again it was all about butterflies: short-tailed and common blues were everywhere!

Our destination in the Pyrenees was still two hours away so we had to drag ourselves away, heading via Loudres to Luz-Saint-Sauveur. We arrived in the foothills of the Pyrenees early evening and everybody had time to acquaint themselves with the hotel (and the large friendly dog) before sitting down to our evening meal.

Thursday 18 June

The Chateau just behind the hotel was our destination for the optional pre-breakfast walk, it produced a few birds and a nice view down over the town. Breakfast over with, we headed just a short drive away to Col du Tourmalet a to the east of town. The views in the high mountains were spectacular.

We took the track that leads eventually to the Observatoire du Pic du Midi de Bigorre. Along the track we saw good numbers of water pipits, northern wheatears, black redstarts, Alpine choughs, and overhead our first griffon vultures – all these species were ones that we would see almost daily in the high mountains. The highlight along the track was a small group of half a dozen displaying Alpine accentors. These high

mountain 'dunnocks', like most of the species breeding this high up descend to lower altitudes in the winter and looking at their behaviour had only recently returned. We had our first introduction to alpine flowers with species such as Alpine buttercup, Alpen rose and Alpine toadflax. On returning to the road we had a welcome cafe-stop before enjoying super close views of a male snowfinch hopping amongst the park vehicles.

We lunched at a lower altitude just off the old road by a fast flowing stream before enjoying an afternoon stroll. Birds included whinchats, dipper, tree pipit, many more water pipits and overhead wonderful views of golden eagle and Egyptian vulture. By turning several large stones we were able to find the rare Pyrenean brook salamander. Butterflies were everywhere and included: pearl-bordered fritillary, large grizzled skipper and masses of small blues.

Friday 19 June

Today, following breakfast, we drove south to the delightful small town of Gavarnie. Following the trackside stream we strolled for several hours under glorious blue skies to the impressive Cirque de Gavarnie. Along the way we saw many bird species including a pair of crested tits, singing common treecreepers, tree pipit and a showy singing garden warbler. Flowers were everywhere and were highlighted by the wonderful Pyrenean Turk's cap lily. We managed 'scope views of two rather distant Pyrenean chamois (or Izard) on the mountainside and butterflies included pearl-bordered fritillaries and piedmont ringlets. After a satisfying stop at the Cirque hotel, we continued a little before lunching on the rocks with Alpine choughs hopping around us and a golden eagle circling over the high tops.

On our return down the valley we saw a brief male citril finch but four Alpine swifts performed much better and appeared to be breeding in the large cliff opposite the hotel. A black stork was a surprise sighting slowly flying north over the mountains and to our amazement the bird was then pestered by a golden eagle, both bird tumbling through the sky! Just outside Gavarnie we had another welcome drinks/ice cream stop before reaching the minibus.

We had a short stop on the return journey to the hotel to the lower slopes above Saussa and the butterflies here were superb. New species included green-underside blue, black-veined white, large wall brown and chequered skipper. Also here were yet more hummingbird hawkmoths, several broad-bordered bee hawkmoths and our first sightings of the incredible Ascalaphids (owl-flies). We were just about to leave when two superb lammergeiers sailed over head – what an amazing ending to a stunning day!

Saturday 20 June

The whole day was spent in one of the, if not **the**, best valleys in the French Pyrenees – Vallee d' Ossoue. The weather once again was superb – unbroken sunshine and soaring temperatures. Driving almost to the head of this spectacular valley we walked small sections back down the track then drove a short distance before repeating this all the way down the valley. Alpine marmots were much in evidence with some performing wonderfully. Birds included a male red-backed shrike mobbed by a male stonechat, amazing close views of a pair of citril finch, common crossbill, water pipits and red-billed chough. Butterflies were everywhere and in the case of the Small Blue in uncountable numbers. Other species included: purple-edged copper, apollo, false heath fritillary, pearly heath, marbled skipper, brimstone, plus mazarine, Adonis and turquoise blues.

Whilst lunching we had the incredible site of a single adult lammergeier low over our heads – one of the highlights of the trip for most of us! Flowers in the valley included: Pyrenean saxifrage, black vanilla and burnt-tip orchids, St. Bernard's lily, Pyrenean hyacinth, mountain pansy and Pyrenean spurge. After a short cafe break back in Gavarnie in the mid afternoon we returned to the lower valley for the last hour and we weren't disappointed with a stunning pair of rock thrushes and a showy rock bunting.

Sunday 21 June

This morning we headed to the scenic spot of Lac des Gloriettes. After negotiating the narrow road and

hairpin bends we arrived in the already busy car park of this popular spot. A short stroll around the dam produced yet more butterflies including a stunning sooty copper and northern wall brown. Just below the dam and drowned out by the noise of the falling water was a cracking singing male rock thrush. The largest numbers of choughs (both Alpine and red-billed) we saw all week we were here and included several flocks numbering nearly 100. A stunning adult Egyptian vulture gave us a nice close flyby. Good numbers of Alpine marmots were seen and recently fledged northern wheatears were everywhere.

After lunch at Gloriettes we headed back to the slopes above Saussa and the masses of butterflies. Highlights included a Queen of Spain fritillary that had set up territory on small section of road, large number of lesser marbled fritillaries, a very confident swallowtail and watching Apollos sail up and down the small roadside scree slopes.

Monday 22 June

After breakfast we headed southwest of Gavarnie to the high mountain pass at Col de Tentes. Here we took the track that leads across the border and into Spain. As we walked along the track a Pyrenean chamois decided to bound across right in front of us giving superb close views. An Alpine accentor was heard singing from a scree slope and good numbers of Alpine chough were seen. Once across the border and in Spain we sat down and enjoyed the incredible views, the guide took advantage of nearby boulder for a pee and whilst gone the group found a small group of snowfinches, which promptly disappeared on his return! As we returned down the mountain in the minibus we rounded a corner to find a large group of griffon vultures in the road right in front of us.

We lunched in the shade at the start of the Vallee d' Ossoue before enjoying the afternoon wandering along the lower valley. Butterflies included yet more, lovely apollos, heath fritillary and Oberthur's grizzled skipper. We also found an amazing looking red-and-black-striped stink bug.

Tuesday 23 June

Our final full day and for the first time all week low cloud had descended and it was almost (*almost*) a relief to be out of the sun! Breakfast over with, we headed up the winding roads toward Col du Troumouse. Here we enjoyed a pleasant stroll from the Auberge de Millet up the deserted road. Several new plants were found including yellow wood violet, rock redcurrant and large-flowered butterwort. Alpine marmots, northern wheatears and black redstarts were much in evidence. A short drive and another stroll from the higher car park again produced a few new flowers including Alpine eyebright and garland flower. It was still flat calm and still rather cloudy but every now and then a clear patch in the cloud would appear to reveal the incredible scenery.

After another excellent lunch above Saussa by the small bridge and stream, we slowly ambled for several hours along the track seeing yet more butterflies, incredible flowers and some great birds including tree pipit, corn bunting, whinchat, golden eagle and a singing quail.

Wednesday 24 June

After a leisurely breakfast we loaded up the minibus (not before a fantastic encounter with a huge stag beetle in the hotel porch!) and bid '*Au revoir*' to the fantastic hotel and its staff. We set out heading northeast back towards Toulouse. En route we had short stop alongside the River Garonne and added a few more bird species to our already great list, these included: great crested grebe, green sandpiper and nightingale. From here we headed into the hills and meadows around Ausseing to look for butterflies and once again we were not disappointed with yet more 'new' species. A map butterfly performed superbly for us as Silver-washed Fritillaries whizzed by and a Provençal fritillary gave itself up long enough for us to identify it. Several huge great banded graylings were seen alongside a hay field that was in the process of being cut with good numbers of black kites following the tractors.

A brief stop at the backwater of the River Garonne just outside Cazeres and then it was on to Toulouse airport and onwards to Heathrow without any delays. Thanks for a great trip!

BIRD SPECIES RECORDED

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

One calling from a meadow above Saussa on 23/6

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

At least 20 by the River Garonne at Cazères on 17/6 and 24/6

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Six or so on the River Garonne on 24/6

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Two en-route to Luz-St-Sauveur on 17/6

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

About a dozen on the River Garonne on 24/6

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

One en route to Luz-St-Sauveur on 17/6, a single at Luz-St-Sauveur on 22/6 and at least a dozen by the River Garonne on 24/6

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

One by the River Garonne at Cazères on 24/6.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

A single flying high north over the mountains at Gavarnie was rather unexpected. At one point it attacked by a Golden Eagle!

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

One or two seen daily throughout the tour.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Two were seen over the hills near Ausseing on 17/6

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

A single seen over the hills near Ausseing on 17/6

European Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

A rather brief sighting of a dark morph bird over Luz-St-Sauveur on 19/6 was our only sighting.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

One or two daily at a variety of sites

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Common, widespread and recorded daily. Most numerous in the lowlands, particularly on the A64 between Tarbes and Toulouse, but several daily in the hills and around Luz-St-Sauveur.

Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*

Perhaps the star bird of the tour. Noted in the mountains on four dates with a peak of five seen on 20/6.

One low over our heads whilst eating lunch at Vallée d'Ossoue on 20/6 was very well received

Eurasian Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*

Recorded from 18/6 to 23/6, with c. 50 seen on two dates. A group of c. 20 birds were found sitting right by the roadside as we descended from Col de Tentes on 22/6

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*

Superb adults seen at Col du Tourmalet on 18/9 and at Lac des Gloriettes on 21/6

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

A single carrying prey on 21/6 over the hotel was our only sighting

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Widely recorded in small numbers and noted almost daily.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

An adult and a 2cy (1st summer) bird at Col du Tourmalet on 18/9; two adults at Gavarnie on 19/6, a sub-adult at Saussa on 21/6 (literally just above heads and displaying!) and another there on 23/6

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

One was preening on a large mat of floating vegetation on the River Garonne on 24/6

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

Small numbers by the River Garonne at Cazères on 17/6 and 24/6.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Noted daily in towns and villages.

Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Frequently seen between Tarbes and Toulouse on 17/6 and 24/6. Less numerous in the hills

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Several birds seen and one heard by the River Garonne on 18/6/ and 24/6

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Noted daily in towns and villages.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

One heard at Lac des Gloriettes on 21/6 and another heard at Saussa on 23/6

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*

At least 4 at Cirque de Gavarnie on 19/6 showed well around the cliff just to the west of the hotel

Common Swift *Apus apus*

Common, widespread and recorded daily. Numerous at Luz-St-Sauveur.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

One by the River Garonne at Cazères on 17/6.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Up to two birds seen and heard most mornings

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Heard calling on 2 mornings in the hills around Luz-St-Sauveur and heard and seen at Saussa on 23/6

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

A pair with a nest in the hills around Luz-St-Sauveur gave incredible close views on 20/6, a single male at Vallée d'Ossoue on the same date was mobbed by a male Stonechat and a single male was seen as we drove up Col de Tentes on 22/6

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Seen daily at a variety of sites

Magpie *Pica pica*

Common in the lowlands between Tarbes and Toulouse, but less so in the hills.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

Up to a dozen recorded on 5 dates at various sites in the mountains but by far the largest flock was c. 75 at Lac des Gloriettes on 21/6

Alpine Chough *Pyrrhocorax graculus*

Very common in the hills above the tree line, and seen daily from 18/6 to 23/6, with over 120 seen at Gavarnie on 19/6

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Small numbers seen almost daily

Northern Raven *Corvus corax*

Ones and twos recorded on all but one date at a variety of sites

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Several heard and seen at Cirque de Gavarnie on 19/6 and on two dates in the hills around Luz-St-Sauveur

Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus*

At least two in the woods as walked toward the Cirque de Gavarnie on 19/6.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Up to ten recorded daily at numerous sites.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Small numbers recorded daily at numerous sites, but slightly less common than Great Tit.

Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

Common at Luz-St-Sauveur, with many pairs nesting in the village, and great views from the Napoleon III bridge. Occasionally seen elsewhere in the hills.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Small numbers recorded on three dates.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Widespread in small numbers; much more common than Swallow and seen daily in Luz-St-Sauveur and birds breeding in the high mountains at Cirque de Gavarnie and Lac des Gloriettes

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Small recorded on three dates.

Sky Lark *Alauda arvensis*

Birds heard singing high up at Col du Troumouse, Saussa and Col dé Tentés and Col du Tourmalet.

Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli*

A male singing and showing in woodland near Ausseing on 24/6

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Heard daily at a variety of sites.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common, widespread and regularly encountered – often the first bird of the day, heard from the hotel at Luz-St-Sauveur.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Singing males at Cirque de Gavarnie on 19/6 and Saussa on 21/6 and one carrying food there on 23/6

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Singles around Ausseing on 17/6 and 24/6

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

A pair showed very well in trees alongside the River Garonne on 17/6. A bird was seen and heard most mornings in the trees right in front of our hotel!

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

At least two singing and seen at Cirque de Gavarnie on 19/6

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Widespread, frequently heard and recorded daily, but only occasionally seen.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Noted on four dates mainly in the hills around Luz-St-Sauveur

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla*

Several males singing on 17/6 around Ausseing but sadly none showed.

Common Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

At least three singing at Cirque de Gavarnie on 19/6

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Common in the lowlands between Tarbes and Toulouse.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Common throughout the region and seen daily.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Regularly heard early morning and occasionally seen at Luz-St-Sauveur. Appears to favour deep cover and only a few seen.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

One or two seen or heard on six dates.

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

One singing in scrub alongside the River Garonne on 24/6

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Small numbers seen daily.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Common, widespread and recorded daily.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

A male and female at Col du Tourmalet on 18/6 and several males and juveniles in meadows above Saussa on 21/6 and 23/6.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Small numbers recorded at Saussa and Vallée d'Ossoue on three dates

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Common in the hills, particularly on rocky scree slopes and boulder fields. All were of the distinctive pale form, *O. o. libanotica*.

Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis*

A pair in the quarry at Vallée d'Ossoue on 20/6 and a male showed well at Lac des Gloriettes on 21/6.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

An adult carrying food in a stream at Col du Tourmalet on 18/6 was our only sighting

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Closely associated with human activity and noted daily in towns and villages.

Snowfinch *Montifringilla nivalis*

An adult feeding on the roadside at Col du Tourmalet on 18/6 gave wonderful views and three showed briefly on at Col de Tentes on 22/6 (missed by the leader as had popped behind a boulder for a 'private moment'!)

Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris*

At least six at Col du Tourmalet on 18/6 were seen singing and displaying! Another male briefly at Col de Tentes on 22/6

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Small numbers recorded on most dates singing seemingly out of place on the high tops!

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Seen or heard daily in small numbers by streams and lakes.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Seen or heard daily in small numbers.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Singing males recorded at Cirque de Gavarnie, Vallée d'Ossoue, above Saussa, Lac des Gloriettes and in the hills around Luz-St-Sauveur

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

Common above the tree line with up to ten daily between 18/6 and 23/6, although 20 or more noted at Col du Tourmalet on 18/6

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Common, widespread and recorded daily.

Serin *Serinus serinus*

Widespread and recorded daily but typically just two or three daily. Regularly encountered around Luz-St-Sauveur but absent from higher elevations.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Singles recorded on just two dates

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Widespread and recorded daily but typically just two or three daily. Regularly encountered around Luz-St-Sauveur but absent from higher elevations.

Linnet *Linaria cannabina*

Recorded daily in small numbers at variety of sites

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Two at Cirque de Gavarnie on 19/6 and three at Vallée d'Ossoue on 20/6

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Three at Napoleon III bridge on 24/6

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Two in the hills above Luz-St-Sauveur briefly on 20/6

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Noted on four dates, mostly singing males in scrub above the tree line.

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia*

One gave superb prolonged views at Vallée d'Ossoue on 20/6

Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra*

A single male on the slopes above Saussa on 23/06

MAMMALS**Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus***

Two in hills around Luz-St-Sauveur on 19/6

Pyrenean Chamois [Izard] *Rupicapra pyrenaica*

Two at Cirque de Gavarnie on 19/6 and two at Vallée d'Ossoue on 20/6. Another gave wonderful views as it

crossed the track in front of us at Col de Tentes on 22/6

Alpine Marmot *Marmota marmota*

Common on grassy alpine slopes above the tree line.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Pyrenean Brook Salamander *Euproctus asper*

One found under stones by the side a fast flowing stream on the approach to Col du Tourmalet on 18/6

Common Frog *Rana temporaria*

Seen on just three dates.

Western Green Lizard *Iacerta bilineata*

At least three seen in Vallée d'Ossoue on 20/6

Common Wall Lizard *Podarcis muralis*

Common on rock faces and scree above the tree line and seen daily from 18/6 to 23/6.

BUTTERFLIES

Swallowtail *Papilio machaon*

Seen on four dates in small numbers

Apollo *Parnassius apollo*

Seen on two dates in ones and twos at Vallée d'Ossoue and at Saussa

Clouded Apollo *Parnassius mnemosyne*

Seen on four dates at a variety of sites and in reasonable numbers

Black-veined White *Aporia crataegi*

Seen daily from 19/6 to 23/6, with ten or more noted most days.

Large White *Pieris brassicae*

Common, widespread and seen daily.

Green-veined White *Artogeia napi*

Singles on two dates.

Orange-tip *Anthocharis cardamines*

Two or three seen on four dates.

Clouded Yellow *Colias crocea*

Seen daily between 18/6 and 23/6, at a variety of sites with 12 or more noted most days

Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni*

Seen on three dates.

Wood White *Leptidea sinapis*

Noted daily in small numbers

Blue-spot Hairstreak *Satyrrium spini*

One near Ausseing on 17/6

Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi*

Ones and twos seen daily.

Sooty Copper *Lycaena tityrus*

One superb individual at Lac des Gloriettes on 21/6

Purple-edged Copper *Lycaena hippothoe*

Ones and twos recorded on three dates at Saussa, Lac des Gloriettes and Vallée d'Ossoue

Short-tailed Blue *Everes argiades*

Singles recorded near Ausseing on 17/6 and 24/6

Small Blue *Cupido minimus*

Seen daily from 18/6 to 23/6, particularly numerous in the hills near streams and springs, when 100 or more may gather at favoured locations.

Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus*

One near Cazères on 17/6.

Silver-studded Blue *Plebejus argus*

A female at Saussa on 23/6 was our only sighting

Green-underside Blue *Glaucopsyche alexis*

A male was seen well and photographed at Saussa on 19/6.

Brown Argus *Aricia agestis*

Small numbers seen on four dates

Mazarine Blue *Cyaniris semiargus*

Seen on three dates at Saussa, Lac des Gloriettes and Vallée d'Ossoue

Turquoise Blue *Plebicula dorylas*

Ones and twos seen at Saussa and Vallée d'Ossoue on two dates

Chalk-hill Blue *Lysandra coridon*

A male was seen well and photographed at Saussa on 21/6

Adonis Blue *Lysandra bellargus*

Small numbers daily from 20/6 to 23/6

Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*

Small numbers on three dates

Duke of Burgundy *Hamearis lucina*

A single at Vallée d'Ossoue on 20/6

White Admiral *Limenitis camilla*

Small numbers near Ausseing on 17/6 and 24/6

Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*

Singles on two dates

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*

Seen daily in small numbers

Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*

Numerous throughout and recorded daily from 18/6 to 24/6, with seemingly good numbers moving north through the mountains

Comma *Polygonia c-album*

Ones and twos on three dates

Map *Araschnia levana*

One showed very well near Ausseing on 24/6

Silver-washed Fritillary *Argynnis paphia*

Small numbers recorded near Ausseing on 17/6 and 24/6

Dark Green Fritillary *Argynnis aglaja*

Singles in woodland just near Saussa on 21/6 and 23/6

Queen of Spain Fritillary *Issoria lathonia*

One cracking butterfly at Saussa on 21/6 seemed to be holding territory on a short section of road and gave wonderful views

Marbled Fritillary *Brenthis daphne*

One nectaring on brambles near Ausseing on 17/6

Lesser Marbled Fritillary *Brenthis ino*

By far the most numerous fritillary with good numbers (many tens) recorded between 20/6 and 23/6 at a variety of sites

Pearl-bordered Fritillary *Clossiana euphrosyne*

Small numbers recorded on three dates

Glanville Fritillary *Melitaea cinxia*

One feeding on knapweed, showed well and was photographed near Ausseing on 17/6

False Heath Fritillary *Melitaea diamina*

Recorded at Saussa and Vallée d'Ossoue on four dates, with at least ten recorded most dates

Heath Fritillary *Melitaea athalia*

Ones and twos at Vallée d'Ossoue on 20/6 and Saussa on 23/6

Provençal Fritillary *Melicta deione*

One near Ausseing on 24/6

Marbled White *Melanargia galathea*

Common near Ausseing on 17/6 and 24/6

Great Banded Grayling *Kanetisca circe*

Three of these impressive beasts were seen near Ausseing on 24/6

de Prunner's Ringlet *Erebia triaria*

Ones and twos recorded at Saussa and Vallée d'Ossoue on two dates

Piedmont Ringlet *Erebia meolans*

The common ringlet at higher elevations, with up to 25 daily from 18/6 to 23/6.

Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*

Common near Ausseing on 17/6 and 24/6

Ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus*

Only seen at lower elevations with small numbers recorded near Ausseing on 17/6 and 24/6

Gatekeeper *Pyronia tythonus*

Two seen near Ausseing on 17/6

Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*

Small numbers recorded on three dates

Pearly Heath *Coenonympha arcania*

Singles on three dates

Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria*

A single on the walk back from Cirque de Gavarnie on 19/6 was our only sighting

Large Wall Brown *Lasiommata maera*

Ones and twos recorded on four dates at a variety of sites

Northern Wall Brown *Lasiommata petropolitana*

Two at Lac des Gloriettes on 21/6

Grizzled Skipper *Pyrgus malvae*

Common in good numbers daily between 18/6 and 23/6

Large Grizzled Skipper *Pyrgus alveus*

One near Col du Tourmalet on 18/6

Oberthür's Grizzled Skipper *Pyrgus armoricanus*

Recorded at Saussa and Vallée d'Ossoue on two dates

Mallow Skipper

One at Saussa on 23/6

Marbled Skipper *Carcharodus lavatherae*

Recorded at Saussa and Vallée d'Ossoue on two dates

Dingy Skipper *Erynnis tages*

Common in good numbers daily between 18/6 and 23/6

Large Chequered Skipper *Heteropterus morpheus*

Singles near Ausseing on 17/6 and 24/6

Chequered Skipper *Carterocephalus palaemon*

One at Saussa on 19/6

Small Skipper *Thymelicus flavus*

Ten or more between 18/6 and 23/6

Large Skipper *Ochlodes venatus*

Almost daily in small numbers

MOTHS**Hummingbird Hawk *Macroglossum stellatarum*****Broad-bordered Bee Hawk *Hemaris fuciformis*****Chimney Sweeper *Odezia atrata*****Black-veined Moth *Siona lineate*****GOOD-LOOKING BUGS****Red and black striped Stink Bug *Graphosoma lineatum***

Ascalaphid *Libelloides longicornis* (also known as the Owlfly)

Stag Beetle

PLANTS

(Some of the more charismatic plants in no particular order)

Pyrenean Snakeshead *Fritillaria meleagris*
Welsh Poppy *Meconopsis cambric*
Asphodel *Asphodelus albus*
Mountain Kidney Vetch *Anthyllis montana*
Spring Gentian *Gentiana verna*
Fairy Foxglove *Erinus alpines*
Long-flowered Primrose *Primula halleri*
AlpenRose *Rhododendron ferrugineum*
Nottingham Catchfly *Silene nutans*
Alpine Forget-me-Knot *Myosotis alpine*
Moss Champion *Silene acaulis*
Pyrenean Buttercup *Ranunculus pyrenaicus*
Alpine Toadflax *Linaria alpine*
Yellow Turk's-cap *Lilium pyrenaicum*
Common Columbine *Aquilegia vulgaris*
Pyrenean Eryngo *Eryngium bourgatii*
Spiked Rampion *Phyteuma spicatum*
Pyrenean Hyacinth *Hyacinthus amethystinus*
Pyrenean Spurge *Euphorbia chamaebuxus*
Pyrenean Saxifrage *Saxifrage longifolia*
Pyrenean Aster *Aster pyrenaicus*
Rock Narcissus *Narcissus rupicola*
Mountain Pansy *Viola lutea*
St. Bernards's Lily *Anthericum liliago*
Common Dodder *Cuscuta epithimum*
Cream Clover *Trifolium noricum*
Common House Leek *Sempervivum tectorum*
Pyrenean Germander *Teucrium pyrenaicum*
Great Meadow Rue *Thalictrum aquilegifolium*
Alpine Rock Jasmine *Androsace alpina*
Rock Redcurrant *Ribes petraeum*
Alpine Moon Daisy *Leucanthemopsis alpina*
Pyrenean Trumpet Gentain *Gentiana occidentalis*
Alpine Skullcap *Scutellaria alpina*
Long-leaved Lungwort *Pulmonaria longifolia*
Creeping Bellflower *Campanula rapunculoides*
Ciliate Rock Jasmine *Androsace chamaejasme*
Globeflower *Trollius europaeus*
False Vetch *Astragalus vesicarius*
Alpine Sow-thistle *Cicerbita alpina*
Dusky Cranesbill *Geranium phaeum*
Yellow Wood Violet *Viola biflora*
Large Flowered Butterwort *Pinguicula grandiflora*
Alpine Eyebright *Euphrasia alpina*
Garland Flower *Daphne cneorum*
Bee Orchis *Ophrys apifera*
Common Spotted Orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*
Fragrant Orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea*
Greater Butterfly Orchid *Platanthera clorantha*