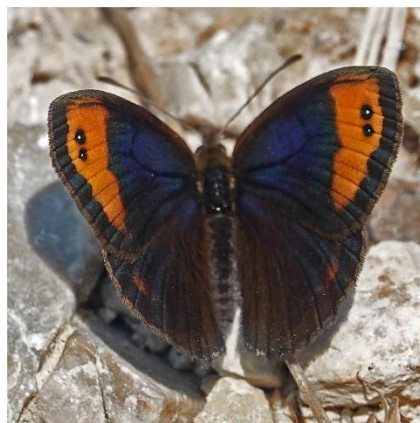


# Butterflies of Montes Universales

Mariposa Nature Tours trip report

31<sup>st</sup> July – 6<sup>th</sup> August 2025

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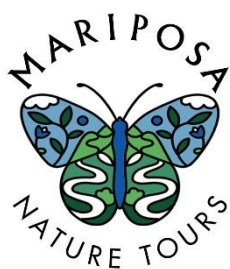
Tour leader Jon Dunn

Trip report by Jon Dunn

(Images, clockwise from top left: Iberian Sooty Copper © Clive B; Oberthur's Anomalous Blue © Martin;

Zapater's Ringlet © Clive P; Southern Hermit © Stephen)

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Mariposa Nature Tours Ltd

2 Ashtree Cottages

Langrove

Parkmill

Swansea

SA3 2EB, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 7748 598768

Email: [info@mariposanature.com](mailto:info@mariposanature.com)

Website: [www.mariposanature.com](http://www.mariposanature.com)

## Introduction

This one-centre tour, based in the historic town of Albarracin in Teruel Province, takes in many of the best butterfly sites in the region, concentrating in particular on areas with permanent water sources in this otherwise relatively arid part of Iberia. This is a tour the Mariposa founders pioneered many years ago, and remains a firm favourite of ours due to the sheer abundance of butterflies we encounter, a spectacle that includes many Iberian specialities in their number.

Joining us for this tour were Clive P & Jan, Kay, Clive B, Stephen, Harry, and Martin.

What follows is a daily diary for the week, followed by gallery and species lists.

## Day 1, arrivals day, 31<sup>st</sup> July

Despite air traffic control and radar issues the previous day in London, everyone's flights arrived smoothly this morning in Valencia, where our guests were met by Jon. We headed off towards Teruel, where the final member of our group, Kay, was waiting for us having made her way to Spain from the UK overland via train – a journey that, by the sound of it, had also been smooth and pleasingly without any drama.



We reached the outskirts of Albarracin at 4pm, time to allow us an hour and a half of leg-stretching and early butterfly in a dry river valley, or ramblas. This was fruitful, and gave us a taste of what we might expect in the week to come – most notably blues and graylings aplenty, with somewhat higher numbers than usual of Adonis Blue, pleasingly. Auguring well for us, Jon was delighted by the floral abundance that greeted us – it looked like the spring and

summer hadn't been too dry, and there was plenty of nectar sources and presumably larval foodplants to be found by the butterflies.

By the time we compiled our checklist, this brief introduction to the butterflies of the Montes Universales had already delivered us 30 species. We'd surely improve on this significantly tomorrow, provided the rather gloomy weather forecast didn't come to pass...

## Day 2, 1<sup>st</sup> August

The anticipated bad weather hadn't materialised by daybreak, though the forecast now had it set to arrive over us around 1pm. We set off promptly after breakfast to make the most of the day. Bad weather at this time of year is almost unheard of in the arid Montes Universales, so it was with some scepticism that we viewed the forecast at all!

Nonetheless, there was some light cloud in the sky, which over the course of the unfolding morning gradually coalesced into something a little more threatening. Not that, by lunchtime, we much minded, for the morning had been kind to us where butterflies were

concerned, and the lack of direct sunlight had slowed them down somewhat – so we'd enjoyed some terrific views of the butterflies we'd found.

We started the day at the ramblas near to the hotel that we'd dipped our toes into the previous afternoon. Our logic for concentrating on this area was impeccable – traditionally this had been a strong site for Southern Hermit, arguably the biggest target of all for the week, and we wanted to maximise our time here over the week to better our odds of seeing this incredibly rare species.

Graylings certainly weren't in short supply here – over the course of the morning the dull conditions allowed superb sustained views of Striped, Tree and regular Grayling and, just before lunch, Rock Grayling too. But of Southern Hermit there was no sign...

However, where blues were concerned we'd had a pleasant surprise at the very outset, when Clive B found a pristine male Mother-of-Pearl Blue. This too posed beautifully for us. Nearby, Jan found our first Oberthur's Anomalous Blue, an Iberian endemic, so much appreciated by all. Cinquefoil and, to a lesser extent, Sage Skipper proved numerous, while just before lunch Jon found a Mallow Skipper to add to the skipper tally.



Oberthur's Anomalous Blue © Martin

Before we left the site, we bumped into a Finnish butterflyer who, when chatting to Jon, had some important news to share – two days previously, he'd see two Southern Hermit here! The weather had been, however, much warmer. Today the temperature hadn't risen over 21°C, and that surely had to be dampening large Satyrid activity.

We headed inland, to a point in some ruderal fields where the ramblas was but a stream bed. We gave this area a couple of hours attention, with our picnic lunch breaking that up. Alas the cloud cover was much denser now overhead, some distant rumbles of thunder boded ill, and the wind picked up too. Our Finnish friend had elected to abandon his day's butterflying, but we kept going – while the pickings here were slim, we added some more species to the daily and weekly account – a couple of fresh Knapweed Fritillary, Berger's Clouded Yellow, and Small Copper.

However, as the afternoon wore on, Jon made a decision that was to prove pivotal – to return to the morning's site and to devote the next hour or so to a concerted Southern Hermit hunt. The ramblas should be a little more sheltered and, as it proved when we got there, the temperature was rising as the sun burned through the clouds. Surely this was now time for some hot Satyrid action?



Mother-of-Pearl Blue © Clive B



We split up, half the group heading on foot further up the ramblas valley than hitherto, and the remainder staying nearer to the vehicle. Jon set off up the sides of the ramblas, scaling the stony slopes away from the flowery valley bottom – his logic being that the torpid hermits might only now be animating up there. Within half an hour this paid off when he disturbed a large butterfly that, in flight, had tell-tale flashing creamy white upperwing markings. Surely a hermit of some description, but which one? It landed nearby, and changed the course of the day – a fine Southern Hermit!



Jon shouted the news at the top of his voice, and Stephen came running quickly, the first guest to connect with it, shortly followed by Clive B and Harry. Jon asked them to keep tabs of the butterfly, and ran gingerly downhill and up the ramblas to find the others. Clive P and Kay tackled the steep climb up to where the three Southern Hermit guardians were still with the butterfly, and to our collective joy it was still showing impeccably well. A huge result – this butterfly, at the edge of its world range here in the Montes

Universales, has given cause for concern in recent years that it may be in decline. Our perseverance had paid off with one of the great European butterfly rarities.

How better to celebrate that than with a cold drink, an ice cream, or both?! We adjourned back into Albarracin and enjoyed our just desserts in the pretty town square. Light, warm rain began falling now, which we could shelter from beneath the overhanging balconies of the half-timbered houses that hung above us. We'd dodged the showers, and found butterfly treasure today.

### Day 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> August

We set off in cool conditions this morning for Noguera – not untypically cool, for Albarracin lies at 1,150 metres above sea level, so it gets chilly at night even in the height of summer. Our morning destination was just 20 minutes easy drive away, so we arrived well before the sun had risen high in the sky and added much heat to the day. At first, as we wandered into a string of meadows that line the bottom of a sheltered valley, butterfly activity was rather subdued, as we would expect – the first insects we found were torpid Iberian Marbled White, and Small Heath.





Iberian Sooty Copper © Clive B

It wasn't long, however, before we found the first of the regional specialities we were hoping for, the Spanish *iphiodes* subspecies of Chestnut Heath, spotted roosting in long grass by Jon. This attractive, heavily spotted subspecies was greatly admired and, with our eyes tuning in to the browns, we began sifting through the various meadow browns that were now waking up and taking to the air, feeding greedily on the many green-flowering eryngiums that studded the fields. Before long we'd seen all three possible species – Meadow Brown, Dusky Meadow Brown, and Oriental Meadow Brown.

Other new species came thick and fast. Harry found our first Iberian Sooty Copper – the first of several we would encounter in the course of the morning. Iberian Scarce Swallowtail began to appear, feeding on tall thistles in the meadows' damper margins.

Fritillaries began to come thick and fast – another Knapweed our first of the day, but quickly followed by Silver-washed, Dark Green, High Brown, Cardinal, and Queen of Spain. Harry and Jon also had a surprise Weaver's Fritillary – a little faded and tatty, but indisputably what it was. Something we'd expect here on our spring tours, but a first for the summer butterfly tour. Overhead, keen eyes spotted soaring raptors as the morning warmed up, with Egyptian Vulture and Goshawk both noted.



Weaver's Fritillary © Harry

By midday we drifted back to our vehicle – pausing en route for a truly enormous female Purple-shot Copper – replenished our water bottles, and moved downhill to where the stream at the valley bottom crossed the track in two shallow fords. Here we found our first Azure Chalkhill Blue puddling at the ford edge, alongside many Silver-spotted Skipper and a single Iberian Scarce Swallowtail. Stephen came with the news that a little up the track, where it vanished into woodland cover, a damp area had half a dozen more Iberian Scarce Swallowtail puddling together!



Iberian Scarce Swallowtail © Martin

We spent a happy hour watching this puddling extravaganza, as the swallowtails were joined by several flirtatious Wood White, many more Silver-spotted Skipper, and the whole lot regularly buzzed by Golden-ringed Dragonfly. Occasional fly-by butterflies added our first Red Admiral of the week, and our first Swallowtail of the day.



After we'd had our picnic lunch, we headed the short distance down the road to the heights of Sierra Alta. One species in particular was on our minds here, Mountain Argus, and we quickly found several, helpfully posing alongside regular Southern Brown Argus, giving us the opportunity to compare their markings and sizes – the Mountain a marginally larger insect, and with the orange forewing markings tapering out towards the wing's apex.

On the very top of Sierra Alta a huge convention of swallowtails was underway, with dozens of Swallowtail and smaller numbers of Iberian Scarce Swallowtail coming and going, engaging in regular dogfights and courtships. At times we could hear their wings clattering as they struck one another mid-air! Occasionally Rock Grayling would fling themselves skywards too to mix things up in the territorial aerial combat. This was a fabulous display.



After an hour, and with clouds massing and thunder rumbling in the distance, we decided to call it a day and head back for home. Our prudence was satisfied with fork lightning cracking the sky ahead of us and, soon enough, torrential rain. Jon blamed this drama for missing the turning to Albarracin... A short, apologetic detour later, we retraced our steps and were home soon enough, getting into the hotel before the rain set in, our slight delay being rewarded by the extraordinary sight of a twister or tornado formed in the distance below the storm clouds on the horizon ahead of us. A dramatic end to a very butterfly-rich day.

#### Day 4, 3<sup>rd</sup> August

We set off for what has historically been an extremely rich and productive site for us, the expansive valley of El Vallecillo, with our hopes set high. The site has never yet failed to deliver in buckets of butterflies, and so it was to prove this morning.

The site is unusual in that it has a naturally boggy area sitting in the middle of an otherwise dry grassland area fringed by coniferous woodland. This natural small wetland is used as a drinking point and wallow by the local cattle and sheep, whose grazing keeps the grassland in optimum condition for butterflies – and, naturally, where there's exposed muddy margins and some animal faeces, there will be puddling butterflies!



Their dubious tastes set aside, there are also abundant thistles and eryngium in the area to provide sweeter alternatives. All in all, there's plenty to attract butterflies here.

The thistles were our first port of call, immediately distracting us with vast numbers of nectaring Great Banded Grayling – it appeared to be a classic year for this large Satyrid. We also

found good numbers of the attractive local subspecies of Chestnut Heath between our vehicle and the bog.

Once at the bog itself, many Cinquefoil, Sage, Small, and Silver-spotted Skipper were puddling enthusiastically, along with dozens of Azure Chalkhill Blue – this latter species was arguably the most numerous of the day, for as we drove through the woods onto the site there were countless hundreds swarming on the verges of the stony track.



Sage Skipper © Clive B

Wandering a little further afield in the drier areas, Jon found our first Blue-spot Hairstreak nectaring on eryngium, while Harry picked out a fine Iberian Sooty Copper nearby. With Jan and Kay making up the advance party ahead of the rest of the group, we began to find at



Azure Chalkhill Blue © Clive B

first Oberthur's Anomalous Blue, but soon some strongly marked Ripart's Anomalous Blue and, finally, some gleaming Damon Blue too. At one point we had all three species sharing a small eryngium bush!

The rest of the group mostly headed to this area, with False Grayling also on offer here. Our visit was, however, cut a little short by the arrival on

the scene of a herd of beautiful grey cattle and their drovers. We beat a prudent retreat at this point, the status of this site apparently having changed from being public access...

We had lunch a little way down the entrance track, enjoying good views of Mother of Pearl Blue here, as well as more Azure Chalkhill Blue, both grounded by a spell of cloudy weather, making them approachable for photos with wings spread. Our first Red Underwing Skipper was also found here.

After lunch, we headed to the nearby Cascada del Molino de San Pedro, arriving shortly after our Finnish friend Teppo – who greeted our arrival with the announcement that he'd got us an unusually settled and approachable Esper's Marbled White! And sure enough, he really did – this butterfly was amazingly compliant and cooperative, and shared its flowering stage with a nectaring False Grayling at one point!



Esper's Marbled White © Clive P

Nearby, there was also a Spanish Purple Hairstreak to be seen – something of a shadow of one, really, for this butterfly was very worn and faded indeed, testament to a life lived to the full and, with any luck, a new generation of its kind begun during that life's tenure.

With a little time left to us in the afternoon, we decided to return to the road to Pozondon, to see if better weather conditions today might be more conducive to finding either Hermit or Black Satyr. While neither were forthcoming, we nonetheless enjoyed good views of Spanish Chalkhill Blue and Knapweed Fritillary here, and Clive added a final new species for the day to the week's overall account – a fly-by Cleopatra. This took our weekly total to a respectable 77 species.

### Day 5, 4<sup>th</sup> August



Our first site today was the furthest-flung site we'd visit during the course of the week, a high mountaintop an hour away from Albarracin. The scenery en route was spectacular, an unfolding panorama of the countryside of this largely untouched and uninhabited area of Spain. Such beautiful wild country is perfect habitat for Iberian Ibex, and it was with some of those we'd started the day, from the terrace of our hotel, from whence Clive P and Jan alerted us to three playful young animals capering on a rocky outcrop across the Albarracin gorge from where we watched them, spellbound.

The high elevation site we headed to is known to us as Bailey Ridge, commemorating a past guest who alerted us to the presence of Spanish Argus upon its heights. Spanish Argus is a decidedly scarce and localised species, and a tricky one to catch up with. We were delighted to quickly find several mint-fresh examples on the wing, typically obsessed with the flowers of their storksbill larval foodplant. Clive B's sharp eyes found our first Hermit of the week, this first example soon to be followed by at least three more individuals in close proximity.



We spent an hour here enjoying close views of both species, while Griffon Vulture soared initially below us, and by the time we left were gaining height for a day of patrolling the thermals.

We made our way next to the Rio Jucar where it flowed from its source towards Tragacete. Walking beside the crystal clear, gurgling waters of the river was a joy, with a great many

butterflies to be seen from the very outset – Cardinal and Great Banded Grayling most obvious, but more subtle delights were there to be seen too – Dusky Heath, Chestnut Heath, another Hermit... and blues. Oh so many blues...





Where the river spilled over the gravel track we walked upon, there was inevitably puddling activity – predominantly Azure Chalkhill Blue, but also Mother-of-Pearl and Common Blue mixed among them and, for Harry and Jon, our first Escher's Blue too. Clive B, scouring the thistles, found a significant scarcity in these parts, a Nettle-tree Butterfly, which was duly admired by all.

It was on the walk back to the minibus for lunch that Jan called Jon to see a butterfly she'd found on the track – she knew it was a ringlet, and there was only one thing it could possibly prove to be – our first Zapater's Ringlet! Cue much delight as we rushed to see it. Clearly newly emerged, for it was so pristine and strikingly iridescent blue on the forewings, it was behaving curiously, puddling avidly on the track, and eschewing nectar sources altogether. After a while of this behaviour it suddenly took to the air and flew away strongly.

Our arrival at our final site for the day, a small abandoned quarry with prolific white scabious that Black Satyr are slavishly fond of, was slightly delayed when our vehicle was flagged down by the leaders of a group of girl guides and boy scouts. One of the children had an injured foot, and the leaders needed one of their number to be taken to the nearest village to use a landline to summon assistance – there was no mobile signal for anyone here. We duly obliged, paying forwards the good fortune we'd enjoyed hitherto.



The quarry had no sign of our satyr quarry, alas, but we left for Albarracin and celebratory ice creams in good spirits – we'd done really well today, and could look forward to the grand finale tomorrow with the Zapater's Ringlet pressure lifted from our shoulders!

### Day 6, 5<sup>th</sup> August



We like to think that in Moscardon we save the best until last – that's partly because we like to finish this tour with a flourish, in an area that even by the high standards of the Montes Universales is particularly good for butterflies; but also for practical reasons, as it's a great site for Zapater's Ringlet, which is traditionally a late species to emerge. The later we visit Moscardon, the better our chances of encountering fresh

insects on the wing. We were to be joined there today by Sandrine and her husband.

Just half an hour from our comfortable lodgings in Albaraccin, we were on site by 9:30am, and devoted the morning and early afternoon to exploring the extensive open valley bottoms of the area. With dew still fresh on the grass and wetting our boots, butterflies were at first still torpid, and extremely approachable. In some areas basking male Azure Chalkhill Blue lay like blue confetti on the grass before us, while many Iberian Marbled White were also wings wide open, absorbing sunlight to warm themselves for the day ahead.

We soon began to find scarcer species – False Grayling and Iberian Sooty Copper were seen in some numbers, while the many eryngium bushes, thick with Azure Chalkhill Blue and Gatekeeper, also harboured Damon Blue, Oberthur's Anomalous Blue, and Blue-spot Hairstreak.

Our initial search for Zapater's Ringlet drew a blank, though the aforementioned species, and more besides, were keeping us busy. Marbled Fritillary and Southern White Admiral were both seen, new for the week, while another Nettle-tree Butterfly also cropped up. Overhead, Kay spotted a Short-toed Eagle.



False Grayling © Clive B



Zapater's Ringlet © Clive B

Jon and Teppo, however, bumped into a Zapater's Ringlet, though frustratingly it promptly flew steeply uphill into the woods that flanked the valley. After lunch we resumed our search, some of the group looking for any new fritillaries that might be encountered, while others concentrated on *zapateri*. It was Clive B who found four of the latter, one of which settled and showed incredibly well – cloud had gathered in the early afternoon, and this played to our advantage, for the ringlet basked for minutes at a time with its wings wide open, showing off its deep dark chocolate and rich orange markings to great effect.

Flushed with this success, we finished the day at a nearby puddling site, where we found many dozens more Azure Chalkhill Blue and Cinquefoil Skipper busily imbibing minerals at the water's edge, with a scatter of further blues and skippers in their number – Chapman's, Holly, Lang's Short-tailed and Oberthur's Anomalous were all present, and Sage and Silver-spotted Skipper made up the numbers on the skipper front. Many discarded blue wings on the damp streamside bore mute testimony to the predations of the local White Wagtails on the Azure Chalkhill Blues!



Cinquefoil Skipper © Harry



We returned to Albarracin for final ice creams and/or cold drinks in the town square. The unwelcome discovery that Harry had lost his mobile phone was softened by Sandrine mentioning she'd found a phone at Moscardon – and, when Jon and Harry returned there in the early evening, it was still where Sandrine had carefully left it. Phew!

At dinner this evening we presented Maite, our hardworking and generous hostess, with a small token of our gratitude to share with her staff. The welcome in Albarracin is always warm, and over the years we've become good friends with Maite and her team.

### Day 7, 6<sup>th</sup> August

With our flights leaving later in the day, we were in a position to enjoy a little last foray into the ramblas on the outskirts of Albarracin this morning – inevitably, with Southern Hermit on our minds, but mainly simply to enjoy one last immersion in the myriad blues and



Striped Grayling © Stephen

graylings on offer there. Alas, we didn't bump into a hermit on this occasion, but the other butterflies were very much present, not least Spanish Chalkhill Blue and many Striped Grayling in particular.

Keeping a keen eye on the time, we allowed ourselves a little over an hour here before heading south towards Valencia, and beyond, our destination the rather insalubrious surroundings

of a carpark beside a beach near El Salar. We arrived at lunchtime, but one glance at the vehicle's thermometer, and a cautious foray outside the door by Jon was enough to persuade us that, in this instance, the sensible thing to do would not be to eat our picnic al fresco, but instead to remain in the vehicle with the benefit of the air conditioning until the moment we committed to searching for our last butterfly target of the week, Mediterranean Skipper.

This species is extremely tolerant of hot, humid conditions... we, on the other hand, knew we'd wilt before too long outside – the air temperature was hanging around 36°C, and the humidity down here at sea level was extremely high, exacerbating the heat. We made sure we were all well-hydrated, and ventured forth. Usually the skippers are to be found in the vicinity of the carpark, nectaring on scabious flowers, but there were precious few scabious flowers to be seen there today, and no skippers.



Mediterranean Skipper © Clive P

We expanded our search perimeter, ranging more widely away from the carpark, and it was Jon who found two Mediterranean Skipper a little way inland, on the margins of a small and presumably regularly watered agricultural plot. Sure enough, they were obsessed with



scabious flowers – and one another, regularly tussling when either caught sight of the other. Nonetheless, they tended to settle well and posed nicely for images.

The final quarry found, it was time to head back towards Valencia's airport, ensuring everyone was there in good time for their flights and onward travel arrangements.

### Afterword

This had been an extremely successful visit to one of our favourite regions of Europe, let alone Spain, the butterfly-rich countryside of the Montes Universales. While the weather occasionally threw us a curveball with some rain, this never wrote off a day, and usually was just an hour or two in duration, and later in the day when our butterfly was all but done. Conditions on the ground were superb, with more flowers and general verdancy than Jon had seen in all his years coming to Albarracin in late summer, and the butterflies were just as prolific – numbers of Azure Chalkhill Blue, in particular, were spectacular. Our week concluded with 84 species seen well by the group.

Of course, the cherry on the cake was our finding Southern Hermit again – this species is something of an enigma, present in Montes Universales at the very northern extremity of its world range, and apparently fluctuating in numbers from year to year. We had a hunch that this variance might actually reflect the specifics of where we were looking for it in the landscape, rather than necessarily its changing fortunes – and events this year seemed to bear that out. Needless to say, we've passed this information on to our Spanish lepidopterist friends, and we'll see what more we can add to the picture in coming years.

Jon, and all of us at Mariposa, would like to take this opportunity to thank the group for being such terrific, convivial company throughout the week. Many good laughs were had, and tales shared, which all added to the good atmosphere that prevailed. We must all thank our good friend Teppo for his assistance – our roving eyes in the field, with whom we exchanged information to the benefit of all concerned. We look forward to seeing you all again someday soon!

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BUTTERFLIES OF MONTES UNIVERSALES 31 <sup>st</sup> JULY – 6 <sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2025								
	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
	<b>Butterflies</b>							
1	Mediterranean Skipper <i>Gegenes nostradamus</i>							✓
2	Mallow Skipper <i>Carcharodus alceae</i>		✓					
3	Marbled Skipper <i>Carcharodus lavatherae</i>							
4	Southern Marbled Skipper <i>Carcharodus baeticus</i>							
5	Tufted Marbled Skipper <i>Carcharodus flocciferus</i>							
6	Red-underwing Skipper <i>Spialia sertorius</i>				✓	✓		
7	Sage Skipper <i>Muschampia proto</i>	✓	✓		✓		✓	
8	Safflower Skipper <i>Pyrgus carthami</i>							
9	Cinquefoil Skipper <i>Pyrgus cirsii</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Olive Skipper <i>Pyrgus serratulae</i>							
11	Rosy Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus onopordi</i>		✓		✓			
12	Sandy Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus cinarae</i>							
13	Large Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus alveus</i>							
14	Essex Skipper <i>Thymelicus lineola</i>							
15	Small Skipper <i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>				✓	✓		
16	Lulworth Skipper <i>Thymelicus acteon</i>	✓	✓				✓	
17	Silver-spotted Skipper <i>Hesperia comma</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
18	Large Skipper <i>Ochlodes sylvanus</i>			✓	✓			
19	Apollo <i>Parnassius apollo</i>							
20	Iberian Scarce Swallowtail <i>Iphiclides feisthamelii</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
21	Swallowtail <i>Papilio machaon</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
22	Wood White <i>Leptidea sinapis</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
23	Black-veined White <i>Aporia crataegi</i>							
24	Large White <i>Pieris brassicae</i>			✓				
25	Small White <i>Pieris rapae</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
26	Green-veined White <i>Pieris napi</i>			✓				
27	Southern Small White <i>Pieris mannii</i>							
28	Bath White <i>Pontia daplidice</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
29	Clouded Yellow <i>Colias crocea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
30	Berger's Clouded Yellow <i>Colias alfacariensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
31	Brimstone <i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
32	Cleopatra <i>Gonepteryx cleopatra</i>				✓	✓		
33	Small Copper <i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	
34	Purple-shot Copper <i>Lycaena alciphron</i>			✓				
35	Iberian Sooty Copper <i>Lycaena bleusei</i>			✓	✓		✓	
36	Spanish Purple Hairstreak <i>Laeosopis roboris</i>				✓			
37	Purple Hairstreak <i>Favonius quercus</i>							
38	Blue-spot Hairstreak <i>Satyrrium spini</i>				✓		✓	
39	Ilex Hairstreak <i>Satyrrium ilicis</i>							
40	False Ilex Hairstreak <i>Satyrrium esculi</i>							
41	Sloe Hairstreak <i>Satyrrium acaciae</i>	✓	✓		✓			
42	Long-tailed Blue <i>Lampides boeticus</i>	✓	✓					
43	Geranium Bronze <i>Cacyreus marshalli</i>							
44	Lang's Short-tailed Blue <i>Leptotes pirithous</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
45	Short-tailed Blue <i>Cupido argiades</i>							
46	Holly Blue <i>Celastrina argiolus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
47	Chequered Blue <i>Scolitantides orion</i>							
48	Green-underside Blue <i>Glaucopsyche alexis</i>							
49	Silver-studded Blue <i>Plebejus argus</i>				✓			
50	Idas Blue <i>Plebejus idas</i>							
51	Southern Brown Argus <i>Aricia cramera</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
52	Mountain Argus <i>Aricia montensis</i>			✓				
53	Spanish Argus <i>Aricia morronensis</i>					✓		
54	Turquoise Blue <i>Polyommatus dorylas</i>			✓				
55	Mother-of-Pearl Blue <i>Polyommatus nivescens</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		
56	Amanda's Blue <i>Polyommatus amandus</i>							
57	Escher's Blue <i>Polyommatus escheri</i>					✓		
58	Chapman's Blue <i>Polyommatus thersites</i>	✓	✓				✓	✓
59	Common Blue <i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
60	Adonis Blue <i>Polyommatus bellargus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
61	Azure Chalkhill Blue <i>Polyommatus caelestissimus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
62	Spanish Chalkhill Blue <i>Polyommatus albicans</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
63	Oberthür's Anomalous Blue <i>Polyommatus fabressei</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
64	Ripart's Anomalous Blue <i>Polyommatus ripartii</i>				✓	✓		
65	Damon Blue <i>Polyommatus damon</i>				✓	✓	✓	
66	Silver-washed Fritillary <i>Argynnis paphia</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
67	Cardinal <i>Argynnis pandora</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
68	Dark Green Fritillary <i>Speyeria aglaja</i>			✓		✓	✓	
69	High Brown Fritillary <i>Fabriciana adippe</i>			✓	✓		✓	
70	Niobe Fritillary <i>Fabriciana niobe</i>			✓				
71	Queen of Spain Fritillary <i>Issoria lathonia</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
72	Lesser Marbled Fritillary <i>Brenthis ino</i>							
73	Twin-spot Fritillary <i>Brenthis hecate</i>							
74	Knapweed Fritillary <i>Melitaea phoebe</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	
75	Lesser Spotted Fritillary <i>Melitaea trivia</i>							
76	Spotted Fritillary <i>Melitaea didyma</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
77	Provençal Fritillary <i>Melitaea deione</i>							
78	Red Admiral <i>Vanessa atalanta</i>			✓	✓	✓		
79	Painted Lady <i>Vanessa cardui</i>			✓	✓	✓		
80	Peacock <i>Aglais io</i>							
81	Small Tortoiseshell <i>Aglais urticae</i>							
82	Comma <i>Polygonia c-album</i>		✓			✓	✓	
83	Large Tortoiseshell <i>Nymphalis polychloros</i>							
84	Southern White Admiral <i>Limenitis reducta</i>						✓	
85	Speckled Wood <i>Pararge aegeria</i>			✓			✓	
86	Wall Brown <i>Lassiomata megera</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			
87	Large Wall Brown <i>Lassiomata maera</i>			✓		✓		
88	Pearly Heath <i>Coenonympha arcania</i>							
89	Chestnut Heath <i>Coenonympha glycerion</i> f. <i>iphioides</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
90	Dusky Heath <i>Coenonympha dorus</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
91	Small Heath <i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>			✓	✓		✓	



	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
92	Gatekeeper <i>Pyronia tithonus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
93	Southern Gatekeeper <i>Pyronia cecilia</i>	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
94	Spanish Gatekeeper <i>Pyronia bathsheba</i>	✓		✓				
95	Meadow Brown <i>Maniola jurtina</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
96	Dusky Meadow Brown <i>Hypnonephele lycaon</i>			✓				
97	Oriental Meadow Brown <i>Hypnonephele lupina</i>	✓		✓				
98	Zapater's Ringlet <i>Erebia zapateri</i>					✓	✓	
99	Esper's Marbled White <i>Melanargia russiae</i>				✓			
100	Iberian Marbled White <i>Melanargia lachesis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
101	Black Satyr <i>Satyrus actaea</i>							
102	Rock Grayling <i>Hipparchia alcyone</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
103	Grayling <i>Hipparchia semele</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
104	Tree Grayling <i>Hipparchia statilinus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
105	Striped Grayling <i>Hipparchia fidia</i>	✓	✓			✓		✓
106	False Grayling <i>Arethusana arethusa</i>		✓		✓		✓	
107	Great Banded Grayling <i>Brintesia circe</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
108	Hermit <i>Chazara briseis</i>					✓		
109	Southern Hermit <i>Chazara prieuri</i>		✓					
	<b>Other possibilities</b>							
1	Mazarine Blue <i>Cyaniris semiargus</i>							
2	Nettle-tree Butterfly <i>Libythea celtis</i>					✓	✓	
3	Panoptes Blue <i>Pseudophilotes panoptes</i>							
4	Large Blue <i>Phengaris arion</i>							
5	Oberthür's Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus armoricanus</i>							
6	Meleager's Blue <i>Polyommatus daphnis</i>							
7	Marbled Fritillary <i>Brenthis daphne</i>						✓	
8	Heath Fritillary <i>Melitaea athalia</i>							
9	Glanville Fritillary <i>Melitaea cinxia</i>							
#	Weaver's Fritillary <i>Boloria dia</i>			✓				
#	Southern Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus malvoides</i>			✓			✓	
	<b>Daily total:</b>	30	36	52	53	47	46	17
	<b>Running total:</b>	30	41	67	76	81	83	84
	<b>Miscellaneous flora &amp; fauna</b>							
	Iberian Ibex <i>Capra pyrenaica</i>					✓		
	Short-toed Eagle <i>Circaetus gallicus</i>						✓	

## Galleries

All images that follow were kindly shared by tour participants



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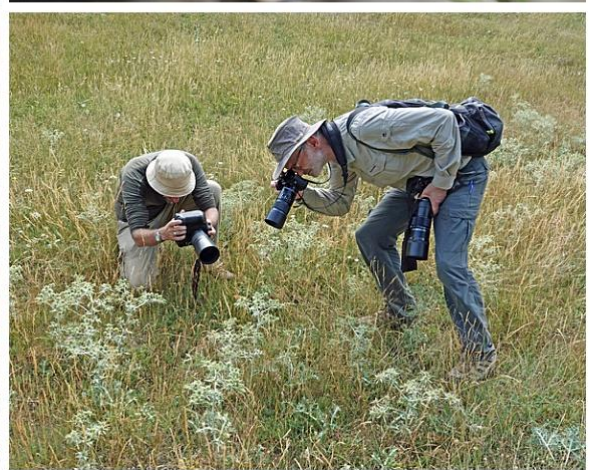
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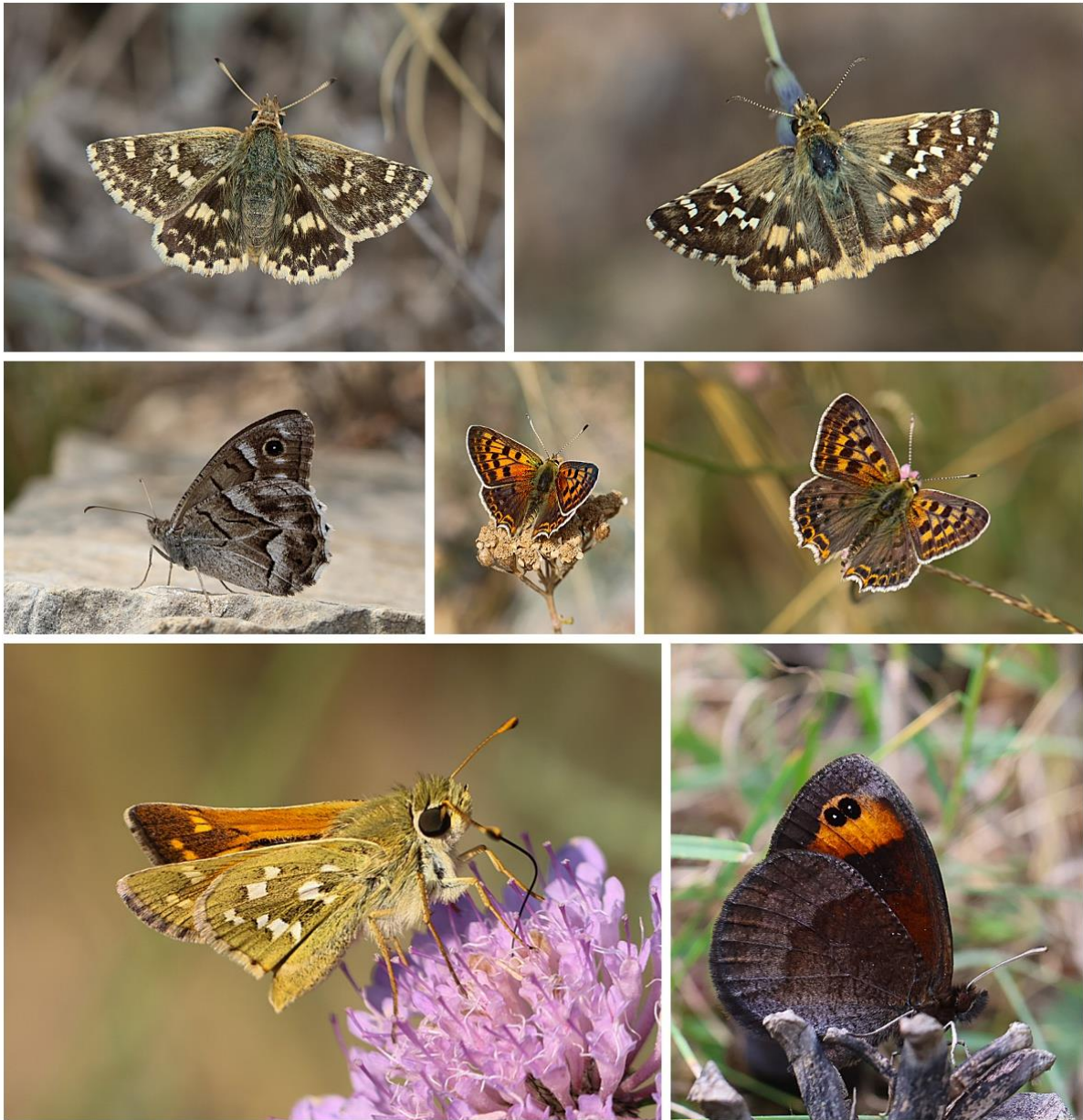


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**And finally...** If you like the sound of Butterflies of Montes Universales, next year's tour is available to book on our website – though in 2026 it's a tour with a twist, as our week there coincides with a total solar eclipse passing over northern Spain! We're marking this special occasion with a special edition of Butterflies of Montes Universales, incorporating the eclipse, and co-hosted by our good friend Kate Humble. At the time of writing, one room remains available to be booked, either with twin/double or single occupancy.

[Butterflies and Solar Eclipse in the Montes Universales](#)

Alternatively, we have other butterfly tours that promise a feast of fritillaries and a bonanza of blues elsewhere in Spain, and many more besides!

[Spring Butterflies of Central & Northern Spain](#)

[Spring Butterflies of Andalusia](#)

[Summer Butterflies of the Spanish Pyrenees](#)

[Autumn Exotica in Andalusia](#)