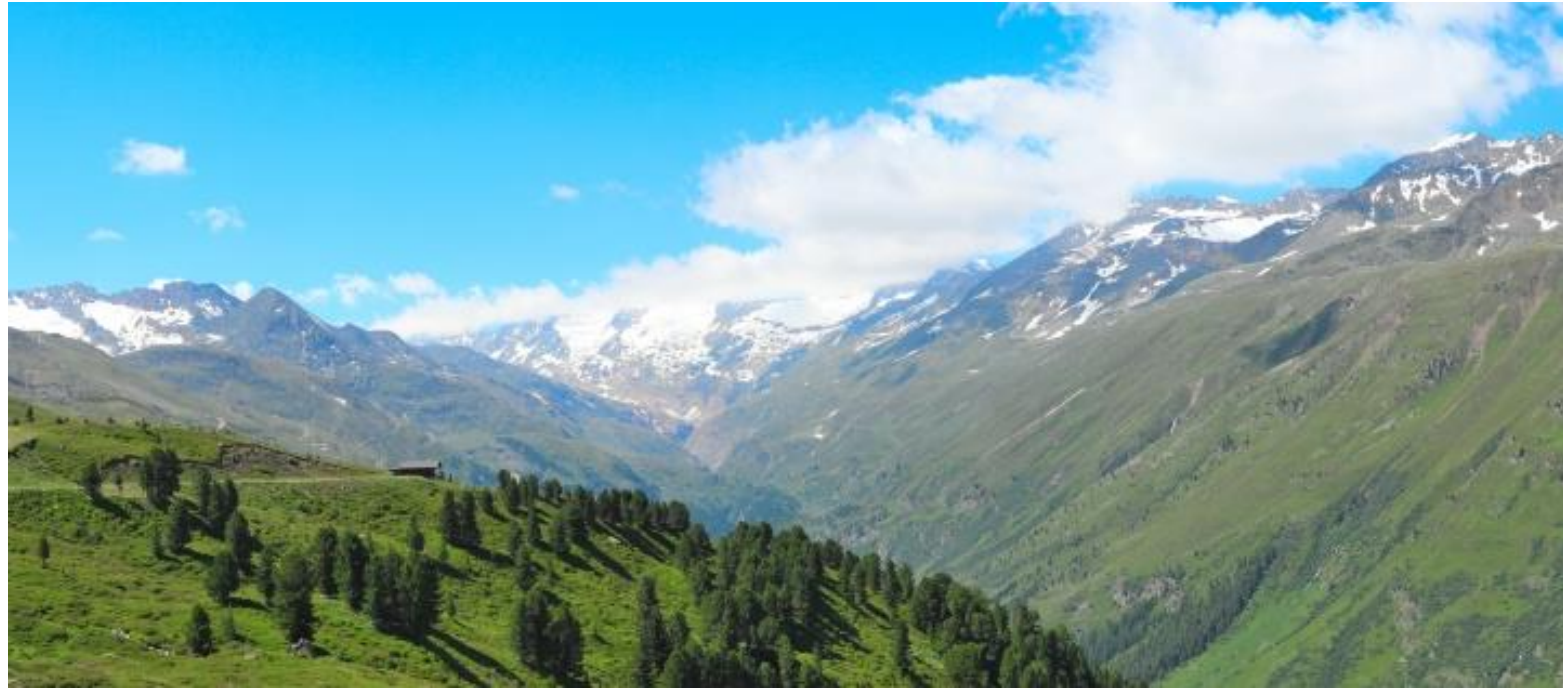


Trip Report By

Bob Shiret



View of the Otztal Valley from Hochgurgl

Introduction

Our last visit to Obergurgl was four years ago and that report is on the cloudbirders website so I have tried not to repeat too much info that was in the original. Again we stayed at the Hotel Lohmann which was very good, ideal for families, cost via TUI was around £1200 each for 11 nights including half board and taxi transfer. In this report I have highlighted three new walks, some new birds and many new butterflies. It must be stressed again that this is not the ideal location for a birding holiday, but if you enjoy walking in fabulous scenery and seeing some interesting birds and wildlife then it may be for you! Weather on our trip was interesting to say the least, on the day of our arrival in Obergurgl was at nearly 30 degrees C, the next day the morning temperature dropped to 5 degrees in the morning rising to 12 degrees in the afternoon, on the day of our departure it went back up again to the mid 20`s. We had some rain but most days we were out for at least six hours without recourse to wet weather gear.

Birdwatching Areas

River Valley below Obergurgl

This area is about five minutes walk from the Lohmann Hotel: follow the road down out of the rear of the hotel onto the meadow below and before you reach a dung heap there is a path on the right through the meadow which leads up to a ravine type walk for a couple of hundred metres. This area was good for **Common Redpoll, Black Redstart, Linnet, Crag Martin, Sand Martin, Swift, Great Tit, Coal Tit, House Sparrow, Crow, Siskin, White Wagtail, Fieldfare, Blackbird, Crow, Treecreeper** and **Wheatear**. A startled **Weasel** was seen briefly but (as usual!) was too quick for my camera.



Common Redpoll

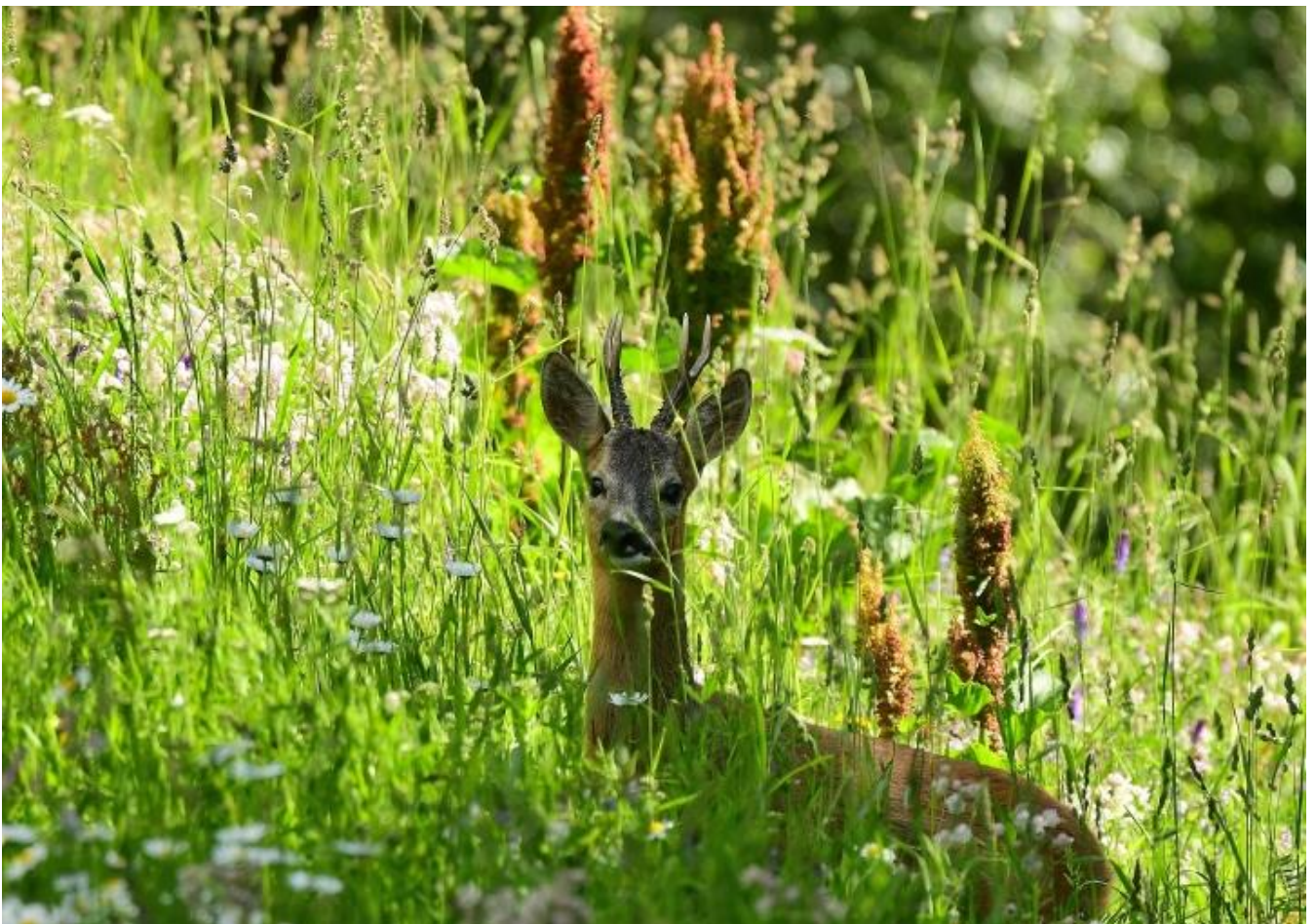
I have pictured and listed butterflies later in this report but I should mention here that this area along the side of the river is sheltered out of the wind with an abundance of wildflowers (not seasonally cut) must rank as the best area for butterflies in the whole area with several different types of [Fritillaries](#), [Blues](#), [Ringlets](#), [Hairstreaks](#), [Swallowtails](#), [Skippers](#), [Coppers](#), [Heaths](#) and [Whites](#). Seen for the first time by me was this superb [Broad-bordered Bee Hawk Moth](#) pictured below which I had not come across before, only when examining the pictures in our hotel room did I realise that it was not a [Hummingbird Hawk Moth](#), which were also seen.



Broad-bordered Bee Hawk Moth



A view of the flowers on this walk with a footbridge just visible in the background, beyond the bridge are further flower meadows and woodland where this [Roe Deer](#) crossed our path.



[Roe Deer](#)

Top of the Obergurgl gondola (Hohe-Mut)



As you can see from the above picture there was still snow on the ground on the top of the mountain, you can also see in the foreground a large number of [sheep](#) which were not there on our previous visit. Unfortunately this means that the grassy meadow is nibbled very low inhibiting flowers, insects and other wildlife, I found this very surprising in what is supposed to be a [Unesco Biosphere Reserve](#). The issue of farm animals dominating the ecosystem occurs through the whole valley, in three weeks of intense searching the mountain terrain by me plus three other birders doing the same none of us saw any sign of [Chamois](#) or [ibex](#). Only [cows](#), [sheep](#) and [horses](#) seen up to a height of over 3000 metres.



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This [Snowfinch](#) was feeding on the edge of a snow patch on top of the mountain.

Glaisachkoglbahn Gondola (Sölden)

For this new walk we turned right outside the middle station gondola, carried along the main track for a while and then veered left onto a smaller path for a reasonably level pleasant walk. Along here we came across a flock of **Alpine Choughs** for the first time in the area, they seemed to be having an argument with a resident pair of **Raven** until they flew off. Also seen on this walk were several **Nutcrackers** which were seen/heard on almost every walk we did and several **Water Pipits**. A very distant **Golden Eagle** was seen here whilst chatting with some farmers who were scanning the mountains opposite with scopes looking for their livestock!



Alpine Choughs at distance doing displays



Nutcracker with attendant insect photobombing the picture!

New walk from Obergurgl (Hohe-Mut) middle gondola station

To reach this new area take the main track uphill from the gondola for about 45 minutes and you reach a Café (very good for coffee/strudel) turn right here and follow the path up and down to a fairly level walk along the mountainside. This walk was very good for **Alpine Accentor**, about three pairs, **Water Pipits** and for some reason several **Marmots** in plain sight.



Alpine Accentor



Marmot (posing for the picture!)

Butterflies

As stated earlier I do not want too much replication of my earlier report so the only butterflies noted below are in addition to those detailed in 2015 apart from [Swallowtail](#) which I managed to photograph this time, by the end of our holiday they were quite common. Thanks to Robin Griffiths for help with ID.



Swallowtail



Green Hairstreak



Large Blue



Green underside Blue



Osiris Blue



Common Blue



Sooty Copper



Alpine Grizzled Skipper



Dingy Skipper



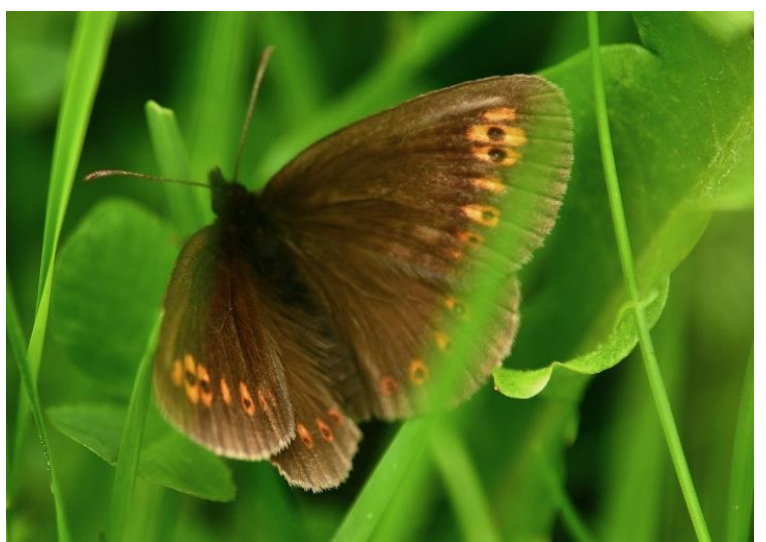
Large Grizzled Skipper



Large Skipper



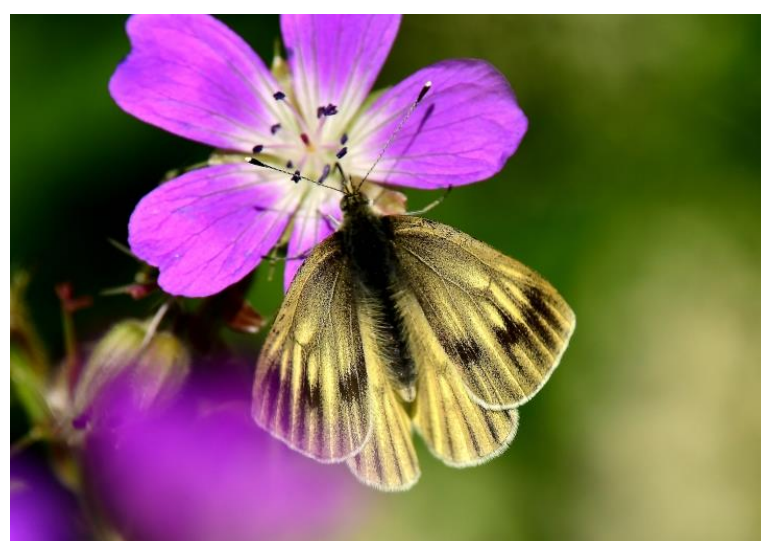
Chequered Skipper



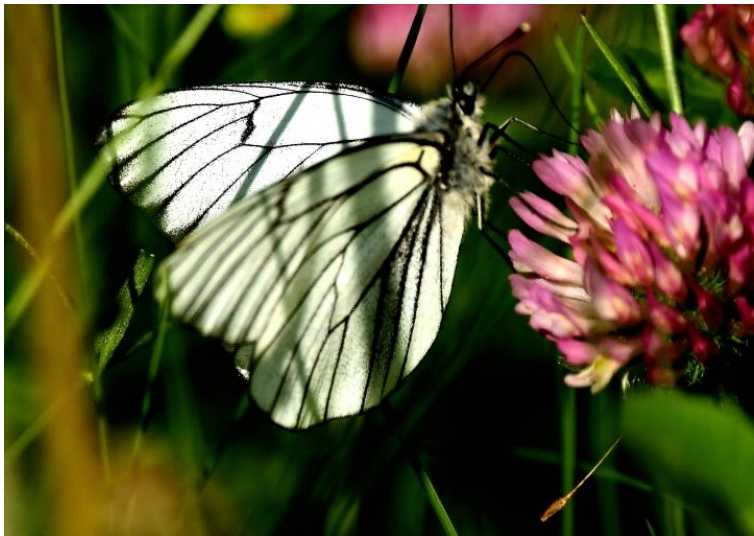
Almond-Eyed Ringlet



Green-Veined White



Mountain Green-Veined White



Black-Veined White



Wood White



Geranium Argus.

The only butterfly seen on our trip and not pictured above was a [Small Skipper](#) which was seen in [Italy](#).

["Mountain Rose"](#)



The picture above is full of what's referred to in the [Obergurgl](#) nature pamphlet as [Mountain Rose](#) which when it is covered in snow in winter the pamphlet states it stops it being eaten by birds and animals. Unfortunately this is not true, this is an aggressive spreading shrub which is of no interest to animals, insects or birds at any time of year. I first came across it in [Andorra](#) where they were making efforts to eradicate it. In [Obergurgl](#) it is spreading fast in a lot of areas that were once havens for wildlife (and sheep!).

[Summary](#)



View of [Obergurgl](#) valley a short distance from ravine walk detailed earlier

Hopefully the reader can see from the report that this is a truly special area for a walking in spectacular scenery and enjoying the birds and butterflies that abound. One of the things that will bring us back again is the fact that there are four gondolas in the area all easily accessible to ensure that a different walk can be undertaken every day, even a day trip to [Italy](#) is easy and worthwhile with the Otztal card which comes with every stay in all the hotels.

Bird Species List

Snowfinch

Alpine Accentor

Linnet

Redpoll

Wheatear

Black Redstart

Water Pipit

House Sparrow

Blackbird

Fieldfare

Crow

Raven

Alpine Chough

Nutcracker

Treecreeper

Nutcracker

Golden Eagle

Crag Martin

House Martin

Swift

20 Species Seen

Butterfly Species List (not including any seen in 2015)

Large Blue

Green-underside Blue

Osiris Blue

Common Blue

Large Skipper

Chequered Skipper

Large-grizzled Skipper

Dingy Skipper

Small Skipper

Alpine-grizzled Skipper

Sooty Copper

Green Hairstreak

Geranium Argus

Almond-eyed Ringlet

Mountain green-veined White

Green-veined White

Black-veined White

Wood White

18 Species seen in addition to the 39 species
seen in 2015