

Trip Report By

Bob Shiret



View of mountains showing much more snow at lower levels than for many years.

Introduction

Our holiday was organised through Inghams at a cost of around £1600 each for two weeks half board at the Alpinland Hotel, which is highly recommended. Due to the high snow levels the walks at the top of the Gondola were off limits due to snow on the walks down. This was not too much of an issue because the Otzal card issued to all people staying in Obergurgl gives free access to all four Gondolas in the area and all buses which are every half an hour. As I have mentioned in previous reports this is not the place to come for a purely bird watching holiday but there are some nice birds to see plus plenty of other wild life.

Birds of the high Alps

This year due to the poor weather earlier in the year there were fewer migrants than usual, I have constructed a total list at the back of this report included some information in this section for the potential visitor. Interestingly for the first time on any of our visits this year we saw several Thrushes and Blackbirds in the Obergurgl area, perhaps a sign of a warming climate.

White Winged Snowfinch

We have only ever seen these birds at the top Gondola station in Obergurgl, get an early trip to the top, turn left out of the gondola station for 200 yards and then walk along the meadow to the right going downhill, hopefully you will make contact. Also in this area Alpine Accentors are regularly seen.



White Winged Snowfinch

Other interesting birds seen on our trip were a Golden Eagle at eye level when having a coffee in a café being harassed by two Ravens. Alpine Choughs at the mid station at Solden and Blackbirds and Song Thrushes that we have never seen here before.

On our previous four visits surprisingly we have never made contact with any Woodpeckers, but this year whilst resting in the pine forest below Obergurgl I saw a Woodpecker on two occasions without being able to positively identify, probably Greater Spotted or Lesser Spotted. There were nest holes around about four inches wide so if they are Lesser Spotted this maybe why we have not seen any at low level.

Other birds seen in the village include White Wagtail, Redpoll, Crag Martin, House Martin, Barn Swallow and Black Redstarts. Nutcrackers are common in the pine forest below Obergurgl and are heard more than seen! A full list is at the rear of this report.



Redpoll

Dragonflies

On our previous four trips we never got close to any dragonflies so were very pleased to make contact with a couple this year, especially one being attacked by a large spider!

White-faced Darter

In the sequence below you can see the White-faced Dragonfly seen in the pine forest below Obergurgl resting on a log, then being set upon by a large spider, freeing itself and then resting on near bye vegetation, I have put the camera timecodes on each picture.



31 mins 35 seconds



32 mins 00 seconds



32 mins 22 seconds



33 mins 00 seconds

As you can see from the above, the spider grabs the dragonfly who then escapes and rests up near
bye.



This Broad-bodied Chaser was found on the walk by the river downstream from Obergurgl along with another of the same species, although we had done this walk many times on previous visits this was our first encounter, interestingly on our return home there was one flying round in our garden!

Butterflies

If you have looked at any of my previous reports you will know that Obergurgl is one of the premier sites in Europe for butterflies, to give info on the premier site follow these directions; from the central bus station in Obergurgl follow the road down beyond the station past the underground parking entrances and fire station, you will soon come across a track on the left, take this turning and when you come to a dung heap turn right along the path and you will come to a riverside walk which continues for a couple of miles. This is the area where you will see many of the butterflies detailed in this report, it is also a very easy walk.



Weaver's Fritillary and Large Copper



Scarce Copper



Probable Water Ringlet



Large White and Small White



Swallowtail



Common Brassy Ringlet



Green-veined White



Purple Shot Copper



Titania's Fritillary



Dingy Skipper



Adonis Blue



Heath Fritillary



Osiris Blue



Wood White



Fentons Wood White



Woodland Ringlet



Green Hairstreak



Southern Small White



Mazarine Blue



Assman`s Fritillary



Northern Wall Brown



Bright- eyed Ringlet



Piedmont Ringlet



Scarce Fritillary



Black-veined White



Large Ringlet



Mountain Green-veined White

The Mountain Green-veined White were only seen in the vicinity of a small pond on the side of the river downstream from Obergurgl, there is a hut there as well.



Alpine Heath



Furry Blue



Almond-eyed Ringlet



Oberthur's Grizzled Skipper



Sudetan Ringlet



Nickerl's Fritillary



Pearl-bordered Fritillary



Piedmont Ringlet



Arran Brown



Large Wall Brown



Mountain Argus



Dusky Grizzled Skipper



Grizzled Skipper



Cranberry Blue



Purple-edged Copper



This record shot of a Peak White was

taken on our second week when they had just emerged, the only place to see them is at the top of the second gondola in Obergurgl. Butterflies seen but not pictured above were ; Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral, Orange Tip, Speckled Wood, Clouded Yellow. There is a full list of all the butterflies seen on this trip at the end of this report. One large butterfly type (7-8cms) that was seen in several locations in glades around 1800-2000 metres was flying very fast at head height and never landed, it was mainly brown in colour with a cream edging, unfortunately we were never able to identify it!

Summary

Obergurgl is the ideal place to have a holiday in early July as the spring flowers are in full bloom and the walks and views are truly superb, this is why when we visit we meet many others who return year after year like us. Couple this with a really good family hotel like the Alpinland and plenty of wildlife to see it really does have a lot going for it!

Bird Species List

Blackbird

Song Thrush

Fieldfare

House Sparrow

Common Swift

Redpoll

Chaffinch

Crag Martin

House Martin

Black Redstart

White Wagtail

Kestrel

Nutcracker

Water Pipit

White-winged Snowfinch

Raven

Alpine Chough

Golden Eagle

Total=18

I suspect this number is down on previous years to the very wet/cold weather in the weeks leading up to our visit.8

Butterfly Species Seen

Weaver`s Fritillary*

Large Copper

Scarce Copper

Water Ringlet

Large White

Small White

Swallowtail

Common-brassy Ringlet

Green-veined White

Purple-shot Copper*

Titania`s Fritillary

Dingy Skipper*

Adonis Blue

Heath Fritillary

Osiris Blue

Wood White

Green Hairstreak

Southern Small White

Mazarine Blue

Assmann`s Fritillary*

Northern Wall Brown

Bright-eyed Ringlet*

Piedmont Ringlet

Scarce Fritillary

Black-veined White

Large Ringlet

Mountain Green-veined White

Alpine Heath

Furry Blue*

Almond-eyed Ringlet

Oberthur`s Grizzled Skipper

Sudetan Ringlet

Nickerl`s Fritillary

Arran Brown

Large Wall Brown

Mountain Argus

Dusky Grizzled Skipper

Grizzled Slipper*

Cranberry Blue

Purple-edged Copper

Peak White

Butterflies seen but not pictured above;

Small Tortoiseshell

Red Admiral

Orange Tip

Speckled Wood

Clouded Yellow

Painted Lady

Species with * symbol have not been seen by us before

in Obergurgl

Total seen on this trip=47

Total species seen on five trips to Obergurgl=91