# A French / Italian Foray

17th – 21st September 2026

# Introduction

This was a short break, a mix of wildlife and touristy stuff in France and Italy. Wildlife targets were Alpine Ibex, Snow Vole and White Winged Snowfinch.

I flew with Ryanair from Stansted to Turin, both flights were actually on time and without any issues. I booked car hire with Target car through Ryanair, it was cheap, just a Fiat Panda but it did the job.

All accommodation and excursions were booked in advance.

**Notre-Dame de Toute Prudence**

# Friday 7th August

**Alpine Chough**

After collecting the car I did a few touristy bits before heading out towards France, my destination was the Vanoise National Park. I made a few stops mainly to look at interesting plants such as finding Cobweb House Leek in flower.

I eventually made it to the area which was good for Alpine Ibex and started searching. I found several Alpine Chamois and some Alpine marmots but no Ibex. I reached the Col de I'Iseran and searched down the other side for several km before returning back across the Col but no luck. I finished the search at the Col and set up the moth trap and noticed vole holes round the church so set some mammal traps around the church. I checked the moth trap after a couple of hours and noticed one of the mammal traps had moved all the bait had gone but the trap did not catch, I checked and it was not working, so I swapped it with another.

**Migratory Locust**

Alpine Marmot

# Saturday 8th August

I had 2 Snow voles in the mammal traps, they were much larger than I expected. Moth wise I was surprised that I had actually caught any. Conditions not the best for moth trapping, 3 degrees and at 3000m high in very misty conditions so I was surprised that I has actually caught any. So 8 species including a Brindled Ochre was very nice.

As it got light, I continued my search for Ibex, I had several chamois and a marmot before finding a small herd of Ibex that showed quite well.

I headed off and made a few stops looking for snowfinches, I had no luck but at one stop I had a Brocken spectre. I eventually made it to the Col du Petit-Saint-Bernard which I explored for wildlife plenty of confiding Alpine marmots but no sign of any Snowfinches. Late afternoon I left and headed to Courmayeur for the night.

I stopped to set the mammal traps by the river and set up the moth trap nearby. After dinner I checked on the moth trap and it was very disappointing only 4 species, Colostygia aqueata the only moth of note.

Brocken Spectre

Alpine Ibex

Alpine Ibex

Hummingbird Hawkmoth

The mammal traps yielded 3 catches from the now 8 traps, 2 snow voles and a wood mouse.

I booked the cable car to go up Pointe Helbronner for fantastic views of Mont Blanc and the Glacier. On the way back I stopped at mid station where you can get out an explore the botanical garden and its surroundings. Most alpine flowers were over but a few were still flowering and these attracted Queen of Spain fritillaries and some clouded yellows.

I wandered round away from the garden finding plenty of grasshoppers a few flowering alpines but not much else. Back in the town for some food etc. I found a small garden full of flowers that had a silver washed fritillary and several hummingbird hawkmoths.

**Edelweiss**

Jacob’s Ladder

Giant Scabious

# Sunday 20th September

Today was mostly a touristy day but early evening I headed  the hills above Superga just outside Turin. Here I set the mammal traps in the pine woodland and setup the moth trap. The moth trap was crazy with moths turning up all the time, hundred and hundreds mostly Small mottled willows but a nice selection of other species but just ones and twos of these. A few species of note, latin the pick but Palpita vitrealis, Antigastra catalaunalis, Dumeril's Rustic, Idia calvaria, whitespeck and Tiliacea sulphurago of note

Plenty of interesting bycatch a Great Silver diving beetle and several ladybirds Eyed, 10 spot, cream streaked, 12 spotted, Harlequin, Orange, striped and a few betles.

**Glacier mouse-ear**

# Monday 21st September

Cobweb House Leek

A bit of a touristy morning but I did find a few bits of wildlife, including several Common wall lizards a migratory locust and some Alpine swifts.

And after lunch I headed to the airport to fly home.

Common Wall Lizard

# Lists

Clouded Yellow

# Birds - 43

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Alpine Chough | Hooded Crow | Rock Pipit |
| Wheatear | White Wagtail | Chukar |
| Mistle Thrush | Blackbird | Meadow Pipit |
| Coal Tit | Great Tit | Green Wodpecker |
| Peregrine | Kestrel | Raven |
| Black redstart | Wren | Robin |
| House Sparrow | Feral Pigeon | Buzzard |
| Crag Martin | Linnet | Starling |
| Coot | Blue Tit | Long Tailed tit |
| Carrion Crow | Magpie | Jay |
| Firecrest | Sparrowhawk | Alpine Swift |
| House Martin | Sand Martin | Nuthatch |
| Pied Flycatcher | Willow Tit | Chiffchaf |
| Tawny Owl | Serin | Jackdaw |
| Grey Heron | | |

**Rock Pipit**

**12 Spot Ladybird**

# Mammals - 7

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Alpine chamois | Alpine Ibex | Alpine Marmot |
| Common Pipistrelle | Kuhl's Pipistrelle | Snow Vole |
| Wood Mouse | | |

**Snow Vole**

# Herps - 2

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Common frog | Common wall Lizard | |

# Selected Insects

| **Moths** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Autumn green carpet | Hummingbird Hawkmoth | Dark Arches |
| Scarce Bordered Straw | Angle shades | Brindled Ochre |
| Delicate | Large Yellow Underwing | Turnip |
| White Speck | Common Marbled Carpet | Scopula incanata |
| Colostygia aqueata | Antigastra catalaunalis | Bared Red |
| Barred Sallow | Broad Bordered Yellow Underwing | Brimstone |
| Buff Arches | Buff Footman | Chestnut |
| Copper Underwing ag | Crambus Pascuella | Cydia Splendana |
| Dumeril's Rustic | Dusky carpet | Idia calvaria |
| Isturgia arenacearia | Latin | Latticed Heath |
| Lesser Broad Bordered Yellow Underwing | Lesser Cream Wave | Light Emerald |
| Lesser Yellow Underwing | Mint Moth | Mother of pearl |
| Oak Hooktip | Oncocera semirubella | Orange Swift |
| Palpita vitrealis | Pediasia contaminella | Phycitodes albatella |
| Pyrausta despicata | Pyrausta sanguinalis | Red Line Quaker |
| Riband Wave | Rush Veneer | Rosy Footman |
| Satellite | Scarce footman | Silver Y |
| Small Fan Footed wave | Small Mottled Willow | Square Spotted rustic |
| Tiliacea sulphurago | Vestal | Willow Beauty |
| Yellow Shell | | |
| **Butterflies** | | |
| Clouded yellow | Comma | Geranium Bronze |
| Queen of Spain Fritillary | Silver Washed Fritillary | Small White |
| Common Blue | Red Admiral | Large White |
| **Others** | | |
| Migrant Hawker | Violet Carpenter Bee | Wartbiter |
| Blue Winged Grasshopper | Black-clouded Longhorn Beetle | Brown Chafer |
| Field grasshopper | Iberian Banded Grasshopper | Large Banded Grasshopper |
| Migratory Locust | Podisma pedestris | Purple Meadow Bush Cricket |
| Radiated Wolf Spider | Red Legged Shieldbug | Striped Ladybird |
| Brown Marmorated Shieldbug | Cream Spot Ladybird | Cream Streaked Ladybird |
| Eyed Ladybird | Great Silver Water Beetle | Oedemera femoralis |
| Orange Ladybird | 12 Spotted Ladybird | Southern green Shieldbug |

**Queen of Spain Fritillary**

# Selected Plants

**Alpine Gypsophila**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Alfalfa | Alpine Gypsophilia | Alpine Rockcress |
| Alpine lady’s Mantle | Alskie Clover | Arabis Hirsuta |
| Autumn Crocus | Bilberry | Brooklime |
| Campanula scheuchzeri | Carthusian Pink | Charlock |
| Chicory | Cobweb House leek | Common mouse ear |
| Common Spleenwort | Common whitebeam | Cypress Spurge |
| Dark Stonecrop | Dewberry | Draba Azoides |
| Dwarf Alpine Yarrow | Edelweiss | Exobasidium vaccinii-uliginosi |
| Fairies' thimbles | Field gentian | Giant Scabious |
| Glacier Mouse ear | Goats beard | Halberd Willow |
| Hedgerow Cranesbill | Hoary Plantain | Holly Fern |
| Horse Mint | hyssop-leaved mountain ironwort | Jacob’s Ladder |
| Knotgrass | Knotted Pearlwort | Livelong Saxifrage |
| Mountain houseleek | Northern Milkvetch | Peach leaved Bellflower |
| Purple cranesbill | Purple Saxifrage | Rosebay Willowherb |
| Rowan | Saxifraga oppositifolia | Shining Scabious |
| Shrubby Cinquefoil | Slender Bedstraw | Spiked Speedwell |
| Spring Sandwort | Tall fleabane | Stemless Carline Thistle |
| Tansy | Thick-leaved Stonecrop | Yellow Mountain Saxifrage |

**Carthusian Pink**

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