

While We're Discussing Butterfly Counts, How About

Talking Turkey?

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Above: A hillside in Kayseri Province; habitat for eastern steppe festoon (Zerynthia deyrollei), clouded apollo (Parnassius mnemosyne) and many blues.



Right: Two members of the survey team, Didem and Hulya, celebrating the sightings of green hairstreak (Callophrys rubi), orangetip (Anthocharis cardamines) and Russian heath (Coenonympha leander).

I took my first butterflying trip to Turkey in 1999,

only a couple of years after I had become hooked on butterflies. I knew almost nothing about Turkey's butterfly fauna at the time, and did not know what to expect. But it turned out to be an unforgettable trip. The butterfly numbers and diversity were astonishing. At some streamsides in mountains of northeastern Anatolia, the densities of butterflies reached several hundred per square meter. I recorded about 90 species

Overleaf: Didem prepares to photograph a Pfeiffer's green hairstreak (Callophrys paulae) (see page 29) at a subalpine slope in Sivas. The slope is covered with a sainfoin (Onobrychis cornuta) that is a caterpillar foodplant for several high altitude species, including the hairstreak. Peak whites (Pontia callidice) are also found here.

in one day around a mountain village, in an area no larger than a single square mile. One small muddy footbridge in another village had about a thousand individuals of at least a couple of dozen species mudpuddling.

As soon as I boarded my plane back home to New Jersey, I was already planning my next trip back. And before reaching the Atlantic Ocean, I had decided to work on a photographic field guide. No field guide to the butterflies of Turkey was available at the time, and it had not taken me long to realize that even the most comprehensive European guides were quite inadequate for Turkey. After nine more equally exhilarating trips to various corners of Turkey, in October 2007 I finally was able to have the English version of the field guide published, which was followed by an expanded Turkish version in May 2008. Looking back, my 1999 trip to Artvin province in the Northeast might

have been the most stunning, the 2004 spring trip to the Mediterranean Coast the most fun (those festoons and orangetips!), and the 2005 trip to Van and Erzurum provinces in the East the most productive, but none was as satisfying as the last one I took in June 2008, just before I attended NABA's Biennial Meeting in California.

I was invited to Turkey by Doğa Koruma Merkezi (DKM), a conservation organization and the Turkish partner of the Butterfly Conservation Europe, to train volunteers in field identification of butterflies so that they could participate in the on-going Anatolian Diagonal Biodiversity Project. DKM is managing this two-year project, which aims to identify the areas representing the whole of the biodiversity of the Anatolian Diagonal and to develop conservation strategies for these priority sites. The biodiversity project is funded by Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline Company, which has

A band of blues. The larger blue with orange HW submarginal lunules is an endangered bavius blue (Pseudophilotes bavius). The blue right above it is an Anatolian green-underside blue (Glaucopsyche astraea). Both species proved to be widespread along the hotspot surveyed.

