

Common Blue

Polyommatus icarus

Insects · On the wing May-Sep · two broods



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Our commonest blue butterfly. Males are a bright violet-blue above with a fine white fringe; females are brown, usually with a dusting of blue at the wing bases and a row of orange crescents along the margins, and are frequently mistaken for a different species. Both sexes share a grey-brown underside spotted with black and orange. Found on unimproved grassland, verges and dunes around Dumfries.

BEHAVIOUR

Common blues depend entirely on bird's-foot trefoil and related vetches, so they disappear from over-fertilised or heavily grazed grassland. Adults roost communally, several individuals settling head-down on the same grass stem overnight. The caterpillars secrete a sugary fluid and are attended and protected by ants, a relationship shared with many of the blues.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Blues and coppers (Lycaenidae)
WINGSPAN	3–3.5 cm
STATUS	Native; widespread on unimproved grassland

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