

Leptotes pirithous Linnaeus, 1767 Sin. *Syntarucus pirithous*

Blaveta del romaní (ca.); Gris estriada (es.); Lang's Short-tailed Blue (en.)

Distribution. North Western Africa, Mediterranean Europe including the Islands, the Iberian Peninsula, South Western France, the South West Balkans. Absent in the Canary Islands.

Description. Adult. 26 mm wingspan. Moderate sexual dimorphism. The obverse of the wings in the male is violet brown in colour with dark edges and a small tail at the anal angle. It has two dark spots on the edge of the hindwings. The reverse is cinnamon coloured with transversal bands alternating between light and dark, and two black spots surrounded by metallic green at the anal angle of the hindwings. The female is similar, slightly bigger and with clear violet coloured areas on the base of the obverse of the hindwings. **Caterpillar.** 9-10 mm. Very tranquil, they stay on the flowers of their foodplants. They can be yellow or greenish in colour, with many clearer dots and short fine hairs. **Chrysalis.** 8-9 mm. Clear brown in colour with dark blotches. They are found exposed on dead leaves. Sometimes attached by a weak silk girdle.

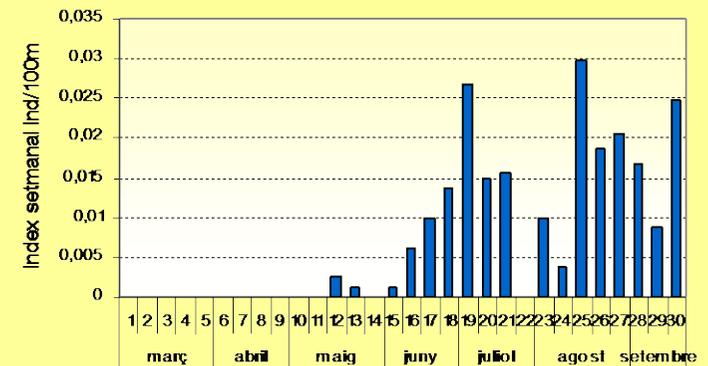
Caterpillar foodplants. They are very polyphagous but because of the antophilic diet of the larvae (they feed off flowers), the females only lay eggs on plants when they begin to flower. They prefer plants such as alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*) and rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*). Other types frequently used are *Melilotus* y *Trifolium* (clovers).

Leptotes pirithous in Menorca

Representation in the BMS (Butterfly Monitoring Scheme) Uncommon species, it represents 0.2% of the BMS observations.

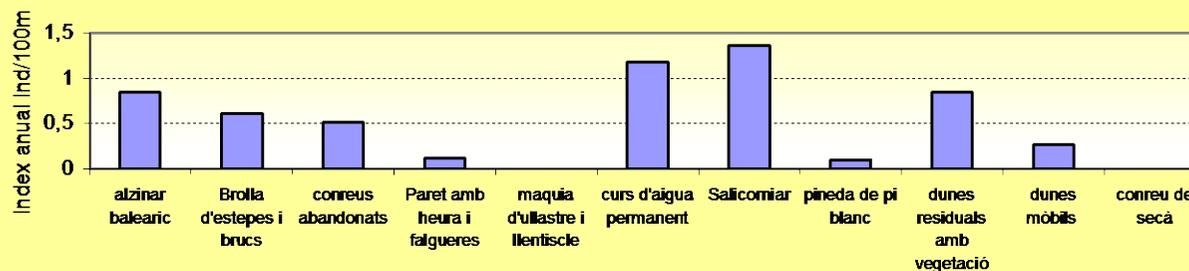
Flight time. A subtropical migratory species, having more than one brood. Annually the majority of the examples come from Africa or from the South of the Iberian Peninsula. The first are usually detected from May to June and there are successive generations until autumn. It is especially abundant in August, September and October.

Habitat and behaviour. Open spaces with predominantly herbaceous vegetation. It is common in coastal areas. The maximum figures in the BMS have been from permanent water courses and in saline



thickets where they have been seen laying eggs on maritime purslane (*Halimione portulacoides*).

Similar species found in Menorca. It can be confused with *Lampides boeticus*, which is slightly bigger and which has a white postdiscal band on the reverse of the hindwings which is not present in the *L.pirithous*. The obverses of the wings of both species are brown with a blue diffusion but *L.pirithous* also has darker brown blotches which are not present on the *L.boeticus*.





Leptotes pirithous

