

Polyommatus icarus Rottenburg, 1779

Blaveta d'ugó (ca.), Dos puntos (es.), Common blue (en.)

Distribution. North Western Africa, the Canary Islands and Europe, including all the larger Mediterranean Islands and many of the smaller ones. It is not found in Madeira and the Azores. It is found on all the Balearic Islands.

Description. Adult. 27-30 mm wingspan. Sexual dimorphism. The males are of an electric blue colour with light violet on the obverse of the wings and have a fine black line round the edge. The reverse of the forewings is grey with a series of postdiscal black spots, a marginal line of black spots and one black spot surrounded by a white ring in the discal area. The reverse of the hindwings is grey with a marginal line of black spots, a submarginal one of orange blotches and a postdiscal area of black spots ringed with white. The females have brown colouring on the obverse of their wings, sometimes with a blue diffusion and orange blotches on the edges. They are many different sizes and colours. **Caterpillar.** 12 mm long. Green in colour with green, white and yellow lengthwise lines. The last generation caterpillars hibernate until the next spring. **Chrysalis.** 10-11 mm. They are found on dead leave. Orangey colour on the back and white on the stomach. The adults hatch after two weeks.

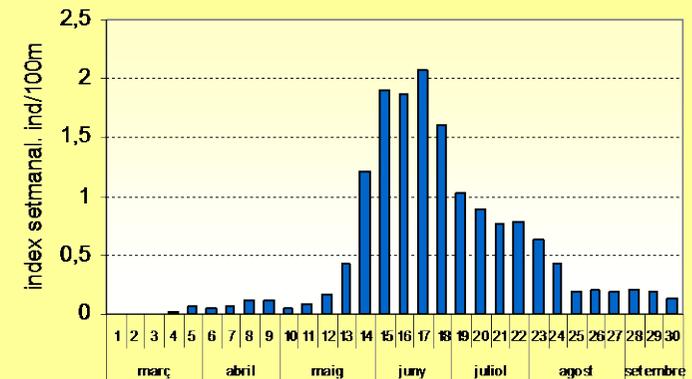
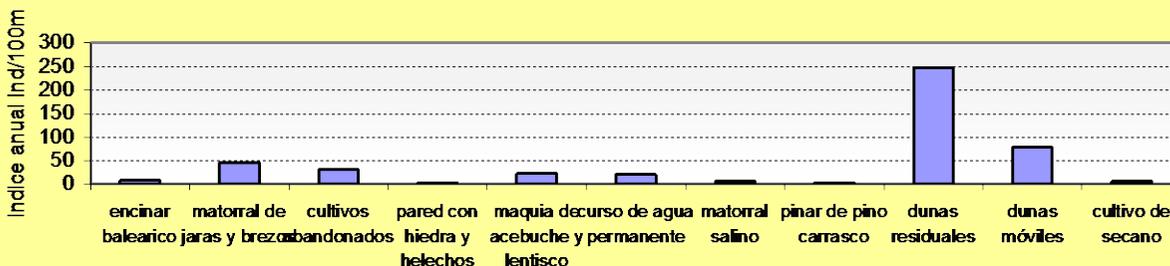
Caterpillar foodplants. Clovers and other legumes. (*Lotus*, *Medicago*, *Astragalus*, *Ononis*, *Trifolium*, etc.).

Polyommatus icarus in Menorca

Representation in the BMS (Butterfly Monitoring Scheme). It is the second most abundant species in Menorca. It represents 15% of the species counted by the BMS.

Flight time. Three or four generations, the first appear at the end of March although they are at their most prolific in the middle of June. They hibernate as larva.

Habitat and behaviour. Open spaces predominately with herbaceous vegetation. Meadows or rudaceous areas. Of the three transects of the BMS in Menorca, they have been found to be most abundant in Es Grau on dunes where there is male clover (*Lotus cytisoides*) and sageleaf rockrose (*Cistus salvifolius*). It can be found in very large groups. The adults feed off (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), *Lotus*, honeysuckle (*Hedysarum*), as well as *Limonium* but prefer composites, especially cardoons (*Eryngium*, *Carlina corymbosa*) and arnica (*Pulicaria*) as well as olive bushes (*Dittrichia viscosa*) or everlasting flower (*Hellychrisum stoechas*).



Similar species present in Menorca. The females of *P. icarus* can be confused with *Aricia cramera* but *P. icarus* has two black spots in the discal area on the reverse of the forewing while the *A. cramera* only has one. Another similar species is *Polyommatus (Lysandra) bellargus* which is much larger, of a more electric blue colour and has more marked white and black cells on the edges of the wings.

Polyommatus icarus



Male (left) and female (right)



Male

Polyommatus icarus

