

Oskar Brattström - Nigerian butterflies

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Version 1.0

WEAK BLUES

Family Lycaenidae

Subfamily Polyommatainae

Tribe Polyommatini



Zebra Blue
(*Leptotes* sp.)

Identification of subfamilies and tribes

The subfamily **Polyommatainae** can be separated from the somewhat similar subfamily **Theclinae** by looking at the tornal end of the hindwing. In **Theclinae**, there is always a more or less pronounced tornal lobe (see red arrow on image below on the left), while the hindwing tornus is more evenly rounded in **Polyommatainae**. **Theclinae** species are usually tailed, sometimes with tails as long as the hindwing, but they can also be completely tailless.

THOMAS DESLOGES (ALL PHOTOS IN BOX BELOW)

Theclinae



Polyommatainae



Lycaenesthini
(Ciliate Blues)



Polyommatini
(Weak Blues)

There are two related groups within **Polyommatainae**: the **Ciliate Blues (Tribe Lycaenesthini)** and the **Weak Blues (Tribe Polyommatini)**. They can generally be told apart by looking at the small hindwing tails. In the **Ciliate Blues**, there are usually three short tails on the hindwing, formed by elongated hairs at the wing edge. **Weak Blues** are often completely tailless, or have either one or two tails per wing. When they have tails, these are usually longer than those found in the **Ciliate Blues**.

WEAK BLUES

Family Lycaenidae
Subfamily Polyommatainae
Tribe Polyommataini

Weak Blues (Tribe Polyommataini) are typically small butterflies, and about 70 species are known to occur in Nigeria. Males are frequently blue on the dorsal surface, with some dark markings. Females tend to have more pronounced dark markings than the males of the same species. However, there are many exceptions, and many species are black, white and brown. Their ventral patterns usually have multiple small dark spots, and these can merge together, forming bands. Most Nigerian species can be identified in the field, but some genera are very tricky and not discussed at species level in this version of the field guide. The host-plants are normally from the family Fabaceae, and most Polyommataini species have some links to ants during their early life-stages. In some cases, the larvae mimic the scents used by the ants in order to get adopted by a colony. They will then feed on the ant larvae once they are inside the nest!



IAN LAWSON

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Nadia Van Gordon who proofread all the text sections, Jon Baker who read through the final draft and provided many valuable comments, all the photographers who provided the photos, without whom a project such as this would be almost impossible, all the early field testers who helped me work out technical issues, Steve Collins and the African Butterfly Research Institute (ABRI) for all the support over the years, A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI) for their incredible work to promote biodiversity in Nigeria, the Nigerian Bird Atlas Project for leading the way on Nigerian Citizen Science, and Ulf Ottosson for his constant enthusiasm and dedication to conservation.

This project is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Torben B. Larsen. Without his early support I would probably never have begun my work with Nigerian butterflies.



PHOTOGRAPHERS

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WEAK BLUES

Family Lycaenidae
Subfamily Polyommatainae
Tribe Polyommatini

INCLUDED GENERA (CLICKABLE LINKS)

[Pseudonacaduba](#)

[Thermoniphas](#)

[Lampides](#)

[Oboronia](#)

[Uranothauma](#)

[Azanus](#)

[Cacyreus](#)

[Zizina](#)

[Leptotes](#)

[Zizeeria](#)

[Tuxentius](#)

[Zizula](#)

[Tarucus](#)

[Chilades](#)

[Actizera](#)

[Freyeria](#)

[Eicochrysops](#)

[Cupidopsis](#)

[Euchrysops](#)

[Lepidochrysops](#)

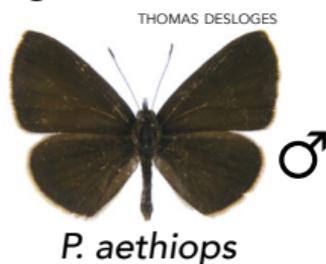


WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)

Pseudonacaduba aethiops (Mabille, 1877)
Dark African Line Blue

Pseudonacaduba sichela sichela (Wallengren, 1857)
African Line Blue

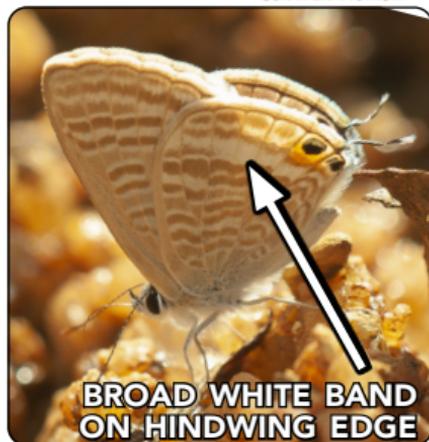
In these two species, the ventral markings are more or less identical and consist of fine light streaks forming irregular bands on a homogeneous grey background. On the hindwing there are two small ternal spots (usually without any orange crown), but no tails. The two species of Line Blues can only be accurately separated by looking at the dorsal surfaces. Both sexes of the **Dark African Line Blue** (*Pseudonacaduba aethiops*) are blackish brown (male are usually slightly darker), while there is always some degree of blue scaling in the **African Line Blue** (*P. sichela*). Females have blue scaling at the base of all four wings, while the smaller males are deep violet all over the dorsal surface of the wings.



WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)*Lampides boeticus* (Linnaeus, 1767)
Pea Blue

The **Pea Blue** (*Lampides boeticus*) is an extremely widespread butterfly found all over Africa, southern Europe, the Middle East, most of the Oriental Region and parts of Australia. The species is highly migratory, constantly tracking suitable breeding conditions, and on most locations it can only be found at specific times of the year. The Jos Plateau has been suggested as one of few places in West Africa where the species could potentially be found all year round. The broad white band close to the ventral margin of the hindwing is a reliable character for identification. Dorsally, the male is almost uniformly violet blue, apart from the ternal spots. The female has a more varied greyish-brown colouring with some blue scales.

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TOSHIMASAIIDA (INATURALIST.ORG USERNAME)



CHARL STRYDOM



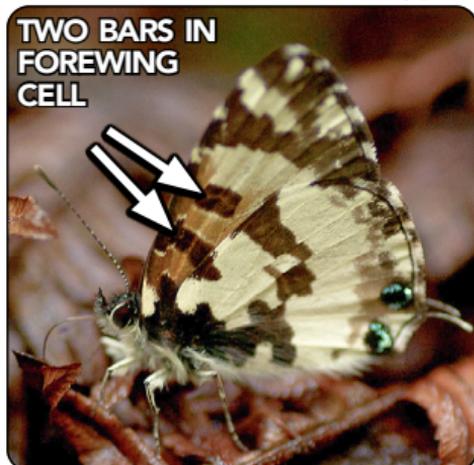
WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)*Uranothauma falkensteini* (Dewitz, 1879)
Lowland Branded Blue

The genus *Uranothauma* has six species in Nigeria, of which four are only found on the Obudu and Mambilla Plateaux. The males of most species have distinctive androconial scales on the dorsal forewings (see image on lower left) that help to separate the species, but females are more similar to each other. The ventral patterns are species-specific and similar in both sexes. In lowland forests, only two species exist; the distinct **Pied Blue** (*U. cyara*) and the appropriately named **Lowland Branded Blue** (*U. falkensteini*). The latter is similar to some of the highland species (and they fly together at intermediate altitudes). Males are often found mudpuddling in large numbers, but females are only seen rarely.



SIMONDENIS142857 (INATURALIST.ORG USERNAME)

BART WURSTEN



WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)

Uranothauma frederikkae frederikkae Libert, 1993
Cameroon Branded Blue

Uranothauma nubifer nubifer (Trimen, 1895)
Black-heart Branded Blue

In Nigeria, these species are only found on the Obudu and Mambilla Plateaux. Males can be told apart by the differently shaped dark forewing androconial patches (see red arrows). The female **Cameroon Branded Blue** (*U. frederikkae*) is similar to the **Lowland Branded Blue** (*U. falkensteini*), but has three (instead of two) dark bars in the ventral forewing cell. The female of the **Black-heart Branded Blue** (*U. nubifer*) lacks the white dorsal patches found in other *Uranothauma* females.

MIKE PLAGENS



TORBEN LARSEN



STEVE WOODHALL



SZABOLCS SÁFIÁN

*U. frederikkae*

SZABOLCS SÁFIÁN

*U. nubifer*

WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)

Uranothauma antinorii bamendanus Libert, 1993
Antinori's Branded Blue

Uranothauma heritsia heritsia (Hewitson, [1876])
Light Branded Blue

In Nigeria, these species are only found on the Obudu Plateau. Both have a pure black and white ventral pattern, while similar *Uranothauma* species also have more lighter brown spots. The male of **Antinori's Branded Blue** (*U. antinorii*) has a shiny blue dorsal colour, without any androconial patches, while the female looks similar dorsally to both *U. falkensteini* and *U. frederikkae*. The Dorsal surface of both sexes of the **Light Branded Blue** (*U. heritsia*) look similar to the **Pied Blue** (*U. cyara*), but the species do not co-occur as the latter is a lowland species.

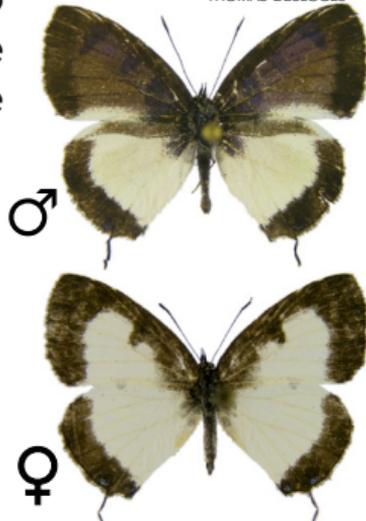
SZABOLCS SÁFIÁN



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*U. antinorii*

THOMAS DESLOGES



SZABOLCS SÁFIÁN

*U. heritsia*

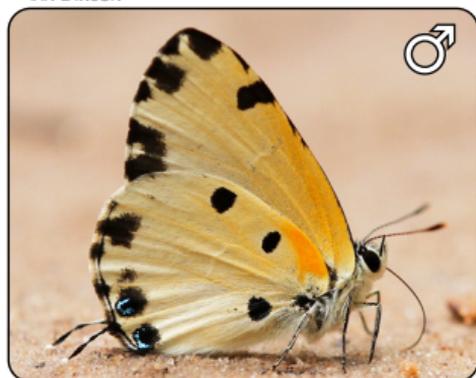
WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)*Uranothauma cyara cyara* (Hewitson, 1876)*Uranothauma cyara stactalla* (Karsch, 1895)**Pied Blue**

The **Pied blue** (*Uranothauma cyara*) is a fairly common lowland species. In Nigeria, the nominate subspecies *cyara* is only found in the Oban Hills area (set specimens show the similar subspecies *tenuimarginata*). Moving west through the forest zone, it gradually transitions into the subspecies *stactalla* (images to the left), with more ventral black markings. Dorsally, the species looks similar to the **Light Branded Blue** (*U. heritsia*), but the ventral pattern is highly distinct because of its orange base. Males have shiny blackish-blue dorsal forewings, while females are purely black and white.

RAINER WENDT



IAN LAWSON



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WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)*Cacyreus lingeus* (Stoll, 1782)
Common Bush Blue

The **Bush Blues** (*Cacyreus*) have three Nigerian representatives, all with a highly distinctive ventral pattern that should make confusion with other genera impossible. As the name implies, the **Common Bush Blue** (*Cacyreus lingeus*) is always the most common of the three, and is normally found in transition habitats between savannah and forests. The **Alternative Bush Blue** (*Cacyreus virilis*) is more of a true savannah species, and the **Bright Bush Blue** (*Cacyreus audeoudi*), is more linked to forests. The species can be separated by the angle of the middle costal spot on the ventral hindwing. In *Cacyreus lingeus*, this spot points towards the tornal end of the wing (upper right image). The male is dull blue on the dorsal side, while the female has a darker border and often pronounced white spotting.

IAN LAWSON



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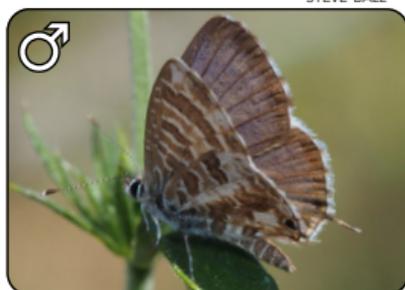
WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)***Cacyreus virilis* (Stempffer, 1936)**
Alternative Bush Blue

LAUREN STEYN

Compared to the **Common Bush Blues** (*C. lineus*), the ventral hindwing costal spot of the **Alternative Bush Blue** (*C. virilis*) is angled inwards, pointing towards the inner wing margin. On the dorsal side males are almost identical, but females of *C. virilis* tend to lack white spots. The species is generally rare in West Africa, but can be common on the Jos Plateau.



STEVE BALL

***Cacyreus audeoudi* (Stempffer, 1936)**
Bright Bush Blue

Amongst Nigerian *Cacyreus*, the **Bright Bush Blue** (*Cacyreus audeoudi*) male has the strongest blue colour, and the female has more pronounced white spotting. The ventral surface is strongly contrasting with a darker base colour than other *Cacyreus*. The ventral hindwing costal spot is angled more outwards. This species is linked to forests.

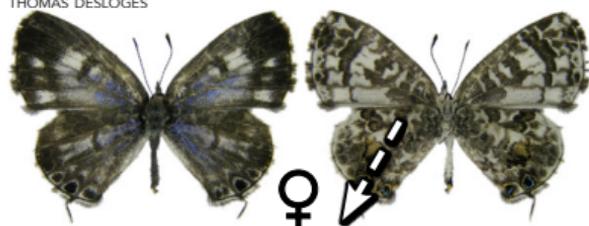
KAREN NICHOLS



KAREN NICHOLS



THOMAS DESLOGES



WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)*Leptotes pirithous* (Linnaeus, 1767)*Leptotes babaulti* (Stempffer, 1935)*Leptotes jeanneli* (Stempffer, 1935)*Leptotes brevidentatus* (Tite, 1958)**Zebra Blues**

The ventral pattern of all *Leptotes* species is distinctive and sets them apart from similar genera. The four species on this page cannot be separated in the field and are called the '***Leptotes pirithous* complex**'. The females can only be separated with genetic data, but males can be identified with genitalia dissections. The distinctive valves are shown below. *L. pirithous* is normally the most common of the species. The **Beautiful Zebra Blue** (*Leptotes pulchra*) is similar, but can be separated from the others by wing patterns.

*L. pirithous**L. jeanneli**L. babaulti**L. brevidentatus*

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CHARACTERISTIC VENTRAL PATTERN

FERRAN PESTAÑA



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WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)

Leptotes pulchra (Murray, 1874)
Beautiful Zebra Blue

In Nigeria this is the only **Zebra Blue** (*Leptotes*) that can be identified by wing patterns alone. Both sexes have a longer band on the ventral forewing that includes a spot that is separated from the band in all of the four species of the *Leptotes pirthous* complex. This spot is also visible on the dorsal side in the females. The **Beautiful Zebra Blue** (*Leptotes pulchra*) is generally linked to swampy habitats, and tends to be both local and rare in West Africa.

STEVE WOODHALL

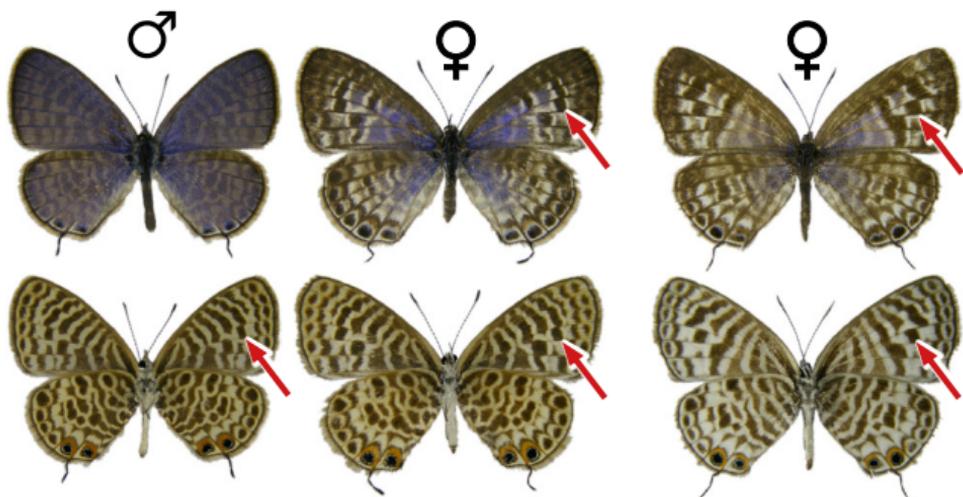


Leptotes pulchra

BART WURSTEN



L. pirthous - complex



Leptotes pulchra
 (Spot merged)

L. pirthous-complex
 (Spot free)

WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)

Tuxentius cretosus nodieri (Oberthür, 1883)
Savannah Pied Pierrot

Tuxentius carana carana (Hewitson, 1876)
Tuxentius carana kontu (Karsch, 1893)
Forest Pied Pierrot

Tuxentius margaritaceus (Sharpe, 1892)
Mountain Pied Pierrot

As the names imply, these species have different habitat choices, and in Nigeria that means they can generally be separated by location alone. The **Savannah Pied Pierrot** (*Tuxentius cretosus*) is normally found in Sudan Savannah and has more merged dark ventral markings. The **Forest Pied Pierrot** (*T. carana*) is a common forest butterfly and has better separated ventral spots. The **Mountain Pied Pierrot** (*T. margaritaceus*) is found on the Obudu and Mambilla Plateaux. It is the only Nigerian *Tuxentius* species with a black spot at the end of the ventral hindwing cell.

MATTIA MENCHETTI

*Tuxentius cretosus*

BART WURSTEN

*Tuxentius margaritaceus*

IAN ANDREAS BENNETSEN BOE

*Tuxentius carana*

WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)**Genus *Tarucus* – Blue Pierrots**

The **Blue Pierrots** (*Tarucus*) is a group of quite similar butterflies, which are hard to accurately identify to species level in the field. They all have a highly distinctive black and white pattern on the ventral side with small greenish metallic-looking marginal spots on the hindwing. Males are light blue on the dorsal side, while females have more varied and spotted markings. They are adapted to very dry habitats and five species can be found in northern Nigeria, often flying in mixed swarms close to their *Zizyphus* hostplants.

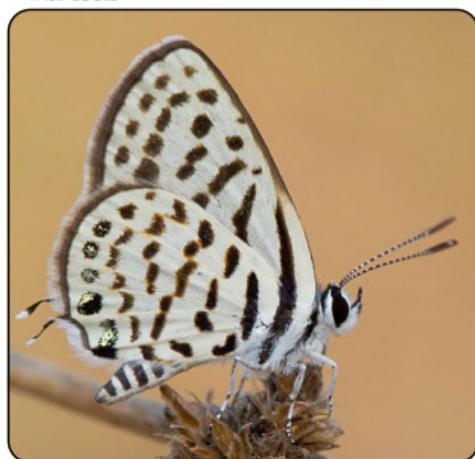
WILLIAM STEPHENS



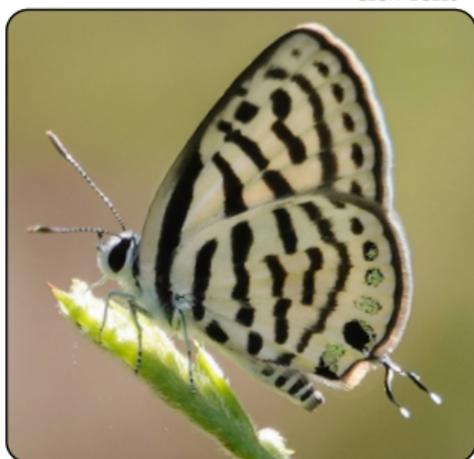
ATILLA STEINER



PAUL COOLS



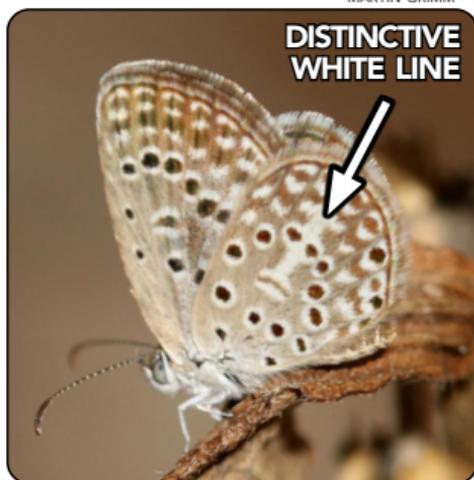
GEOFF DOBBS

*Tarucus theophrastus**Tarucus rosacea*

WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)*Actizera lucida* (Trimen, 1883)
Rayed Blue

Both sexes of the **Rayed Blue** (*Actizera lucida*) have a distinct white line stretching from the end of the cell on the ventral hindwing out to the margin. There is no other species in West Africa with such a line, making identification very easy. The male is dull violet with dark borders on the dorsal side. The hindwing border is sometimes made up of small dots, rather than an intact line. The female is generally brown on the dorsal side, but can sometimes have violet basal scaling. The species is usually linked to wet grasslands and appears to be very rare in West Africa. It most likely has small local populations and there are records from a few sites in southern Nigeria.

MARTIN GRIMM



STEVE WOODHALL



STEVE WOODHALL



WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)

Eicochrysops hippocrates (Fabricius, 1793)
White-tipped Cupid

Eicochrysops dudgeoni Riley, 1929
Dudgeon's Cupid

The male **White-tipped Cupid** (*Eicochrysops hippocrates*) has distinct white tips on the dorsal forewings. The female lacks the white tips, but has steel-blue scaling at the base of both wings. The ventral pattern is light, with just a few markings, making it quite distinctive. Both sexes are tailed.

Dudgeon's Cupid (*E. dudgeoni*) is a tiny species, and lacks any basal markings on the ventral side. It is also untailed. The single toral spot is crowned with red. The male dorsal surface is dark blue, with a broad black margin while the female is dark brown, with a clear red toral spot.

MARTIN GRIMM



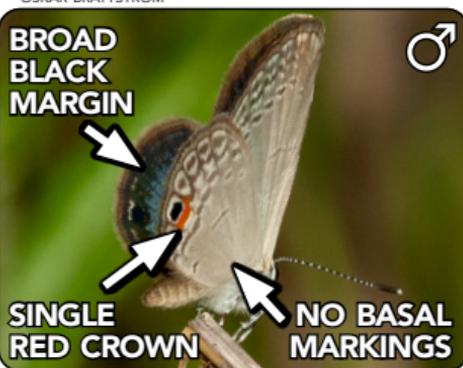
MARTIN GRIMM



KATE BRAUN



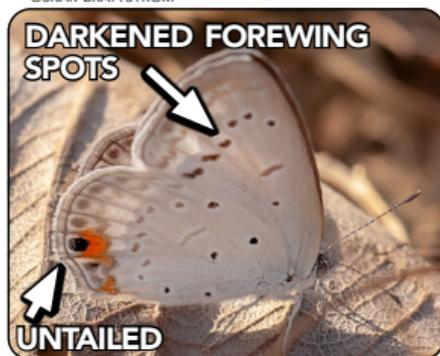
OSKAR BRATTSTRÖM

*Eicochrysops dudgeoni**Eicochrysops hippocrates*

WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)*Cupidopsis cissus cissus* (Godart, 1824)
Meadow Blue*Cupidopsis jobates mauritanica* Riley, 1932
Tailed Meadow Blue

The two species in this small genus are similar to *Euchrysops* and *Lepidochrysops*, but both of the *Cupidopsis* species generally have smaller and darker ventral spots. The two species are similar, but can easily be told apart as *C. jobates* has a tailed hindwing. It is also smaller and has more extensive red markings. Females of both species have more black and red markings compared to the males. *C. cissus* is mainly found in Guinea Savannah, while *C. jobates* is linked to Sudan Savannah, but both species are quite ecologically tolerant and overlap at many locations.

OSKAR BRATTSTRÖM



LOURENS ERASMUS

*Cupidopsis cissus*

BART WURSTEN



BART WURSTEN

*Cupidopsis jobates*

TONY REBELO



WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)*Euchrysops malathana* (Boisduval, 1833)
Smoky Bean Cupid

The **Cupids** (*Euchrysops*) is a genus of medium sized **Weak Blues**, with eleven species known from Nigeria. Just like the much larger **Giant Cupids** (*Lepidochrysops*), only a few of the ventral spots tend to be black, compared to the similar **Meadow Blues** (*Cupidopsis*). The **Smoky Bean Cupid** (*E. malathana*) is the most common member of the genus. The hindwing is untailed and has a single well-developed orange crown above the tornal spot, visible on both sides of the wing. The male is silky brown-grey on the dorsal side, while the female has dark blue basal scaling on all wings. The ventral pattern is similar to that of the much rarer **Ashen Smoky Cupid** (*E. subpallida*), but this species has a much less developed orange tornal crown.

VOTJEK PAVEL



MAHOMED DESAI



STEVE WOODHALL



WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)*Euchrysops subpallida* Bethune-Baker, 1923
Ashen Smoky Cupid

The ventral surface of this rare species is similar to the **Smoky Bean Cupid** (*E. malathana*), but with a less developed orange hindwing crown. The dorsal surface is darker in both sexes compared to similar species. In Nigeria, it is recorded from Kaduna, Jos and Gashaka-Gumti. The closest known population is in eastern DRC!

STEVE WOODHALL

*Euchrysops reducta* Hultstaert, 1924
Jackson's Cupid

This is quite a small species, patchily distributed in mainly Guinea Savannah habitats across West Africa. Compared to similar species, most of the ventral forewing spots are heavily darkened.

TSUCHAN (NATURALIST.ORG USERNAME)



SZABOLCHS SÁFIÁN



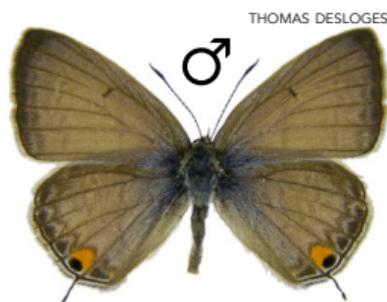
WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)

Euchrysops osiris (Hopffer, 1855)
African Cupid

Euchrysops barkeri (Trimen, 1893)
Barker's Cupid

These two species can be told apart from the similar **Smoky Bean Cupid** (*E. malathana*) as they both have hindwing tails. Both are broadly distributed savannah species, but the **African Cupid** (*E. osiris*) is much more common than **Barker's Cupid** (*E. barkeri*). They can be told apart by the number of black tornal spots on both sides of the hindwing; two in *E. osiris*, but only one in *E. barkeri*.

STEVE WOODHALL (ALL IMAGES BELOW)



THOMAS DESLOGES



STEVE WOODHALL (BOTH IMAGES BELOW)

*Euchrysops osiris**Euchrysops barkeri*

WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)**Genus *Lepidochrysops* – Giant Cupids**

The **Giant Cupids** (*Lepidochrysops*) is one of the most complex of all African butterfly genera with over 130 known species, of which seven occur in Nigeria. Many species are rare and highly localised, but a few are quite widespread and reasonably common. They are similar to the **Cupids** (*Euchrysops*), but as the name implies, the **Giant Cupids** are considerably larger. They are hard to identify without specialist literature and therefore not treated in detail in this guide. The pictures will still give a general idea of their morphology. The species in the lower row do not occur in Nigeria, but are shown to give a better idea of the variation within this genus.

ADRIAN HOSKINS

*Lepidochrysops quassi*

REGINE HAKENBECK

*Lepidochrysops polydialecta*

ALEXEY YAKOVLEV

*Lepidochrysops glauca*

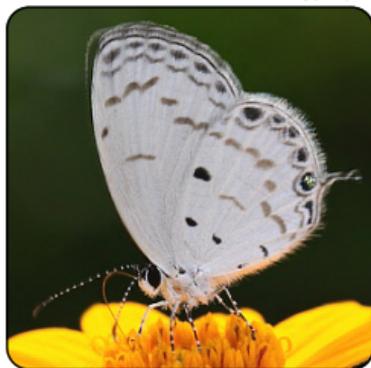
RAINER WENDT

*Lepidochrysops labeensis*

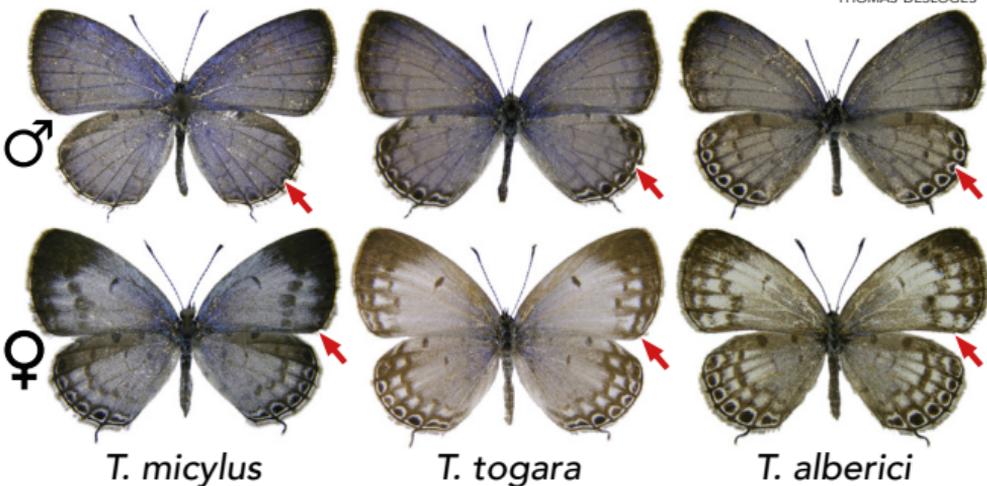
WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)*Thermoniphas micylus* (Cramer, 1780)**Common Chalk Blue***Thermoniphas togara* (Plötz, 1880)**Bright Chalk Blue***Thermoniphas alberici* (Dufrane, 1950)**Alberic's Chalk Blue**

The **Chalk Blues** (*Thermoniphas*) is a small genus of similar looking forest species with lightly coloured ventral wings. *T. micylus* is found all over southern Nigeria, but the other two species are limited to the south-east. Males can be identified to species level by the amount of white around the dorsal hindwing marginal spots. Females are instead told apart by the pattern at the edge of their dorsal forewings. A rare fourth species, the **Smoky Chalk Blue** (*T. fumosa*) is known from the south-east. It differs from the others as the male lacks any blue colouring, and the female is white.

ADRIAN HOSKINS



THOMAS DESLOGES



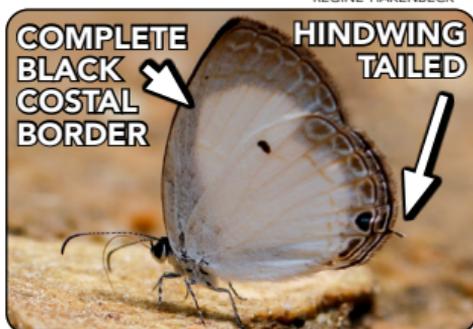
WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)*Oboronia punctatus* (Dewitz, 1879)
Common Ginger White

The **Ginger Whites** (*Oboronia*) are all quite similar, but a few clear characters make it possible to separate them from each other. They are all tightly linked to their foodplants, **Spiral Gingers** (*Costus*), and can be found in small swarms around these plants in forest habitats. The **Common Ginger White** (*O. punctatus*) differs from all other Nigerian species by having a complete black margin along the forewing costa. There is a small hindwing tail.

THOMAS DESLOGES

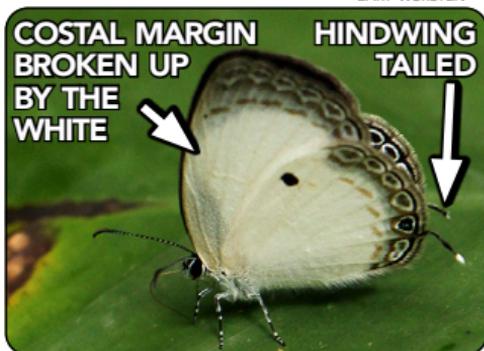


REGINE HAKENBECK

*Oboronia pseudopunctatus* (Strand, 1912)
Light Ginger White

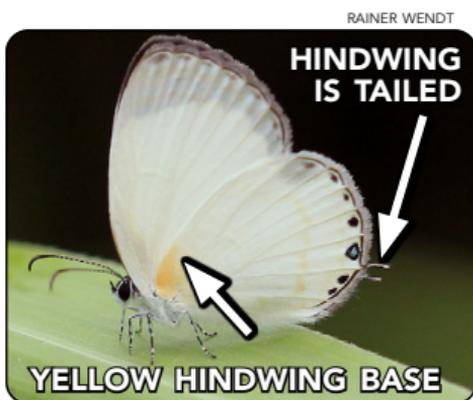
The **Light Ginger White** (*O. pseudopunctatus*) is similar to the **Common Ginger White** (*O. punctatus*), but the dark forewing costal margin is broken up by the white ground-colour. This can even be seen ventrally, as the wings are almost translucent. The **Un-tailed Ginger White** (*O. ornata*) is similar, but lacks the hindwing tail.

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WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)*Oboronia guessfeldti* (Dewitz, 1879)
Güssfeldt's Ginger White

Güssfeldt's Ginger White (*Oboronia guessfeldti*) stands out from all other *Oboronia* species by having a small yellow patch at the base of the ventral hindwing. It also lacks the black spot found on the ventral hindwing costa in all the other species. The hindwing has a small tail.

*Oboronia ornata ornata* (Mabille, 1890)
Untailed Ginger White

As the name implies, the **Untailed Ginger White** (*Oboronia ornata*) lacks a hindwing tail making identification easy. It is usually the most common Nigerian *Oboronia* species and just like the other species it is tightly linked to its hostplants (*Costus*), that can be identified by their distinctive flowers.



ADEDOTUN AJIBADE



PETER BYGATE



WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)

Azanus ubaldus (Cramer, 1782)
Desert Babul Blue

Azanus jesous (Guérin-Ménéville, 1849)
African Babul Blue

Azanus moriqua (Wallengren, 1857)
Black-Bordered Babul Blue

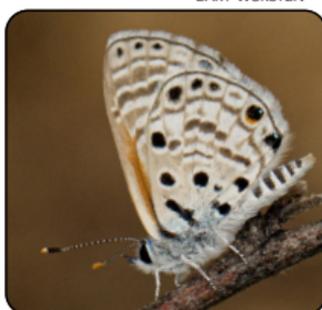
Azanus mirza (Plötz, 1880)
Pale Babul Blue

Azanus natalensis (Trimen & Bowker, 1887)
Natal Babul Blue

The **Babul Blues** (*Azanus*) are all quite small butterflies, and the males can often be found mudpuddling in large numbers. They typically sit with their wings closed, and therefore the identification key uses their ventral patterns, as they are easily seen in the field. Six species occur in Nigeria, but the **White-Banded Babul Blue** (*A. isis*) is treated on a separate page. Most species have broad ecological tolerances, but are generally linked with savannah habitats. *A. ubaldus* is the best adapted to dry areas, while *A. mirza* and *A. isis* are frequently found in open forest habitats.

Scroll down for ID key!

BART WURSTEN



ANDREW DEACON



ELAINE BESTER



Azanus jesous

Identification key for Babul Blues

1. *Azanus ubaldus* has two clear dark spots on the ventral forewing costa (in rare cases only one). These are generally missing in the other species, but sometimes a single tiny spot can be present in those as well.

PAUL COOLS



DARK SPOTS ON FOREWING COSTA

Azanus ubaldus

2. *Azanus jesous* has a darker ground colour on the ventral wing surfaces than the other three species below. Many of the spots and bands are also lighter compared to the other species, where they are almost black.

OSKAR BRATTSTRÖM



MANY SPOTS MERGE INTO BANDS

Azanus jesous

3. In *Azanus natalensis*, a small tooth points out from the dark apical band on the forewing, in the direction of the wing margin. This is not found in any other *Azanus* species.

TILUCHI (INATURALIST.ORG USERNAME)

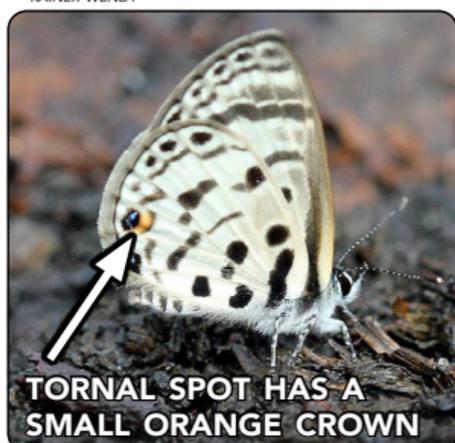


FOREWING BAND HAS A SMALL TOOTH

Azanus natalensis

4. The last two species can be separated by looking at the upper of the two tornal spots on the hindwing. *Azanus mirza* has a small orange crown next to this spot, while *Azanus moriqua* has no such orange marking.

RAINER WENDT



TORNAL SPOT HAS A SMALL ORANGE CROWN

Azanus mirza

JOHN WILKINSON



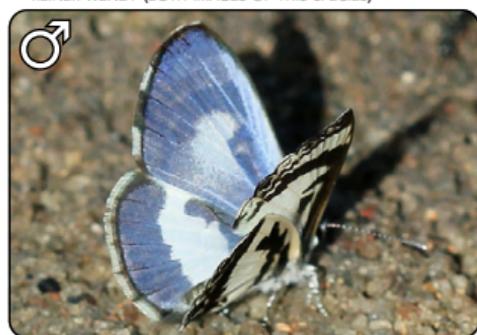
TORNAL SPOT LACKS AN ORANGE CROWN

Azanus moriqua

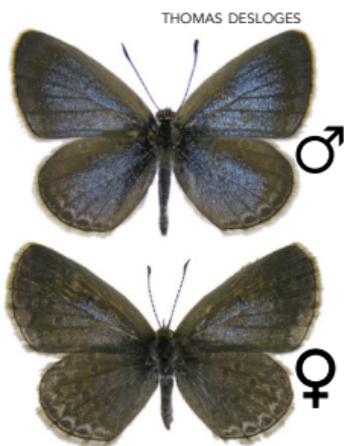
WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)*Azanus isis* (Drury, 1773)**White-Banded Babul Blue**

Ventrally, the **White-banded Babul Blue** (*Azanus isis*) is similar to the **Pied Pierrots** (*Tuxentius*), but the black markings form broader continuous bands. The male has a shiny blue overlay over the dorsal black and white pattern. The female pattern is similar, but lacks any of the blue overlay.

REINER WENDT (BOTH IMAGES OF THIS SPECIES)

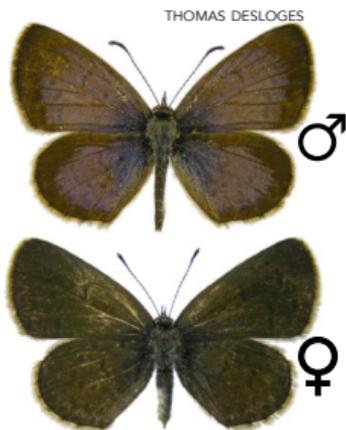
*Zizina otis antanossa* (Mabille, 1877)**Dark Grass Blue**

This is the first of three small, similar, and widely distributed savannah species that all lack any orange spots. They can all be identified by their ventral patterns. Both sexes of the **Dark Grass Blue** (*Zizina otis*) are dark brown, often with basal blue scaling. Compared to **similar species**, the **Dark Grass Blue** (*Z. otis*) has fewer ventral forewing spots.



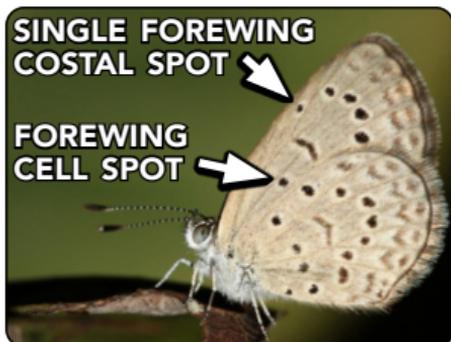
WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)***Zizeeria knysna knysna* (Trimen, 1862)**
African Grass Blue

This small species is found in a range of habitats across Africa. The male has a dull violet-blue dorsal colour, with broad brown margins. In contrast, the female is dark brown, sometimes with blue basal scaling. The ventral pattern helps set it apart from the similar **Dark Grass Blue** (*Zizina otis*) and the **Tiny Grass Blue** (*Zizula hylax*).

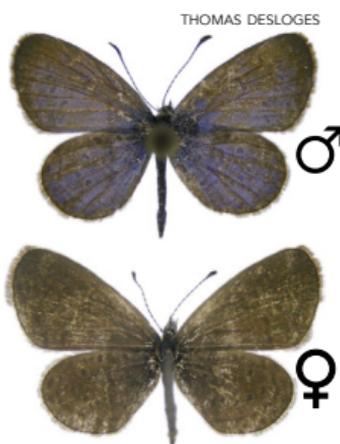


SINGLE FOREWING
COSTAL SPOT

FOREWING
CELL SPOT

***Zizula hylax* (Fabricius, 1775)**
Tiny Grass Blue

This tiny species is often found in small swarms above short grass, together with the two preceding species. The male is blue on the dorsal side, with broad dark margins. The female is dark brown, sometimes with blue basal scaling. As opposed to similar species, both sexes have an additional dark spot on the ventral forewing costa and also lack a spot in the cell.



OSKAR BRATTSTRÖM

TWO COSTAL
SPOTS



WEAK BLUES (POLYOMMATINI – POLYOMMATINAE)

Chilades eleusis (Demaison, 1888)
Sky-blue Cupid

Freyeria trochylus (Freyer, [1844])
Brown Grass Jewel

These two tiny butterflies are easy to identify, but still easy to overlook. The **Sky-blue Cupid** (*Chilades eleusis*) is found in Sahel and Sudan Savannah. The male has a unique light-blue dorsal colour. The female is dark brown with a variable amount of blue basal scaling. The ventral surface is similar to *Euchrysops* species, but these are all larger. The **Brown Grass Jewel** (*Freyeria trochylus*) is found in most types of savannah habitats. It has three small tornal spots on both sides of the hindwing with a large fused orange crown. The dorsal side has a warm brown colour in both sexes.

GEOFF DOBBS



STEVE WOODHALL



YOUSSEF HISHAM ELHAHAS



JOEY BOM

*Chilades eleusis**Freyeria trochylus*