

Italian Dolomites

Holiday Report 17 - 24 June 2016

Led by Yiannis Christofides



Cypripedium calceolus © Diane G

Greenwings Wildlife Holidays

Tel: 01473 254658

Web: www.greenwings.co.uk

Email: enquiries@greenwings.co.uk

Introduction

The Dolomites are a distinctive and beautiful area that takes its name from the crystalline magnesium limestone rocks that make up the peaks that tower vertically above the valleys. The shape of these mountains is unique, having risen out of the sea around 250 million years ago. Ice and wind modelled the rocks creating the steep walls, towering spires and pinnacles typical of these mountains which have always been a source of wonder and a favourite destination of rock climbers. The crevices hold a distinctive flora of magnesium loving plants.



The holiday was based in the Val di Fassa, in the village of Campitello, at a very hospitable family run hotel. Valle di Fassa lies in the north-east part of Trentino on the borders of the province of Bolzano and Belluno. The river Avisio flows through the valley and it is surrounded by the most spectacular and famous Dolomite peaks, such as the Sella Group, Sassolungo, and the Catinaccio with the Torri del Vajolet and the Marmolada. The Val di Fassa is one of the places of the area where Ladin, the oldest language in the Alpine region is still spoken.

From our base in pretty Campitello we explored the valleys of the area on day-long but easy walks and visited a number of different habitats to enjoy as wide a range for flora and fauna as possible.

The guests who joined us were Richard & Karen, Bob & Judy, Jon & Pam and Diane. The tour was led by Yiannis Christofides.



Day 1: Friday 17th June

Yiannis arrived early at Venice Treviso airport and waited for the guests, but the Italian air-traffic controllers strike played havoc with air transport and after much worry the flight from Stansted carrying 6 participants arrived with a two hour delay. Two other flights with participants were cancelled. We then set off in our mini-bus towards the Dolomites, arriving there at 8.30, when the hotel provided a good dinner.

Day 2: Saturday 18th June



The morning was bright and sunny, so after an introductory talk we set off towards Canazei through a forest track. We soon found the first meadow with flowers in perfect condition and the flowers there were soon identified as *Thymus serpyllum*, *Campanula glomerata*, *Salvia pratensis*, *Silene vulgaris*, *Tragopogon pratensis*, *Aster alpinus* and *Acinos alpinus*. Due to the low temperatures butterflies were reluctant to fly but as temperatures slowly increased we saw quite a number of a ringlet, Green-veined white, Small blue, Orange tip. Some large white also appeared in the distance, but too far to be identified as Apollo.

We then entered a forested area with different plants and saw *Saponaria ocymoides*, *Corallorhiza trifida*, and in the distance down a slope many Butterfly orchids. One specimen of Birds Nest orchid was also found, as well as several spikes of Fly orchid (*Ophrys insectifera*)

It had clouded over by now and we hurried to get to Canazei to find some shelter. A small hotel provided welcome cover and some coffee to go with our lunch. We then set off to explore the meadows by the river, but slight rain made the process difficult. However we saw several plants typical of this habitat, such as *Viola biflora*, *Moneses uniflora* and finally a few plants of *Cypripedium calceolus*, the Lady's slipper orchid. The rain was threatening again, so we decided to return to the hotel. Birds seen for the day included Magpie, Black Redstart and Fieldfare.



Day 3: Sunday 19th June

Cloudy this morning as we set off for the village of Pian. As we approached we passed several wildflower meadows which were in peak condition with thousands of plants in flower in yellow, blue, pink and red. We passed through the interesting hamlet where time appeared to stay still and entered a forested area beyond the village. We started to see

some new plants such as *Geranium pyrenaicum*, *Polygala chamaebuxus*, *Polygala alpestris*, *Erigeron alpinus* and *Botrychium lunaria*. More *Cypripedium calceolus* was found along a track. We then carried on up the main track to stop for lunch. The sky was now totally overcast and light rain had started. Despite this we carried on to reach our destination to find and see the Black Vanilla orchids, which we did, then turning back quickly for an early return to the hotel. We stopped briefly to see *Potentilla aserina* and *Hornimum pyrenaicum*.

Despite the rain and cold temperatures Ringlet butterflies were on the wing when there was a ray of sun. *Erebia medusa*, Woodland ringlet, Wood white and Berger's Clouded or Pale Clouded yellow were seen.

Day 4: Monday 20th June

The weather forecast was better than for the previous days, but the danger of rain had not passed, so we decided to stay close to the village and explore the area near the river between Campitello and Canazei, which we were forced to abandon the first day due to the weather. The first species to be seen, one that we were hoping to see again was found by Bob, a clump of *Cypripedium calceolus* in perfect condition. We then came across the first specimens of *Pseudorchis albida*, a small orchid with white flowers. Walking across the flowery meadows we found *Geranium sylvaticum*, *Symphytum officinale*, *Gentiana germanica* and *Trollius europaeus*. We were nearing Canazei by now and there was a unanimous decision to go and have coffee, some strudel and our lunch in a cafe.

Fortified now we took the return route following a path nearer the forest looking for different plants now. We found *Viola biflora*, *Moneses uniflora*, *Maianthemum bifolium*, *Antennaria dioica*, *Chrysosplenium alternifolium* (Golden-leaved saxifrage), many *Saxifraga paniculata* on the rocks, growing with *Potentilla crantzii*. The sun was out now and this encouraged the butterflies to appear. A meadow proved particularly fruitful with Green-veined white, Woodland ringlet, Red admiral and Speckled Wood being seen. We then followed the path southwards, finding more *Cypripedium calceolus* and *Corallorhiza trifida*.



Gymnadenia nigra © Diane G



Near Campitello © Diane G



Potentilla crantzii © Diane G

Day 5: Tuesday 21st June

Today we caught the cable car to go up to Col Rodella. At the top the impressive mountain ranges of Sasso Lungo, Marmolada and the Selva mountains towered all around us. We set off to explore an area of igneous rock next to the cable car station. Many interesting plants were also seen here such as *Linaria alpina*, *Draba aizoides*, *Biscutella laevigata* and *Androsace vitaliana*.

Moving up the slope we saw *Primula minima* and more *Androsace vitaliana*. We negotiated the steep slope finding *Soldanella minima* and *S. alpina*. *Pulsatilla alpina* ssp. *apiifolia* was in good flower everywhere. Most of the *Pulsatilla vernalis* had gone over but we found a patch with plants still in good flower. Other plants seen on the slopes included *Gentiana verna*, *G. acaulis*, *Geum montanum*, *Ranunculus montanus*, *R. pyrenaicus*, *Primula farinosa* and *P. halleri*, *Crocus vernus* and *Pulmonaria australis*. Marmots were very common on the slopes and we also saw Snowfinch and Alpine Choughs.



Day 6: Wednesday 22nd June

Short drive to Alba di Canazei and cable car to Ciampac. We slowly ascended through the valley looking at the plants. The meadows were full of *Pulsatilla alpina apiifolia* and *Trollius europaeus*. Higher up we found *Pulsatilla vernalis*, with the flowers initially nodding. *Primula minima* was frequent and there also patches of *Androsace vitaliana*. The meadows were full of *Gentiana verna* and *Gentiana acaulis* in peak condition. Patches of *Crocus vernus* in shades of blue and white were found throughout the day. We also saw *Ranunculus montanus* and the white *Ranunculus pyrenaicus* with the characteristic strap-like leaves. *Soldanella alpina* and *S. pusilla* were also very common everywhere. Moving towards the scree slopes we found the first flowering plants of *Anemone baldensis* and then on the scree *Geum reptans*, *Thlaspi rotundifolium*, *Androsace alpina* and *Draba aizoides*.

We now started on the return journey down the valley, finding the bright green cushions of *Silene acaulis* with a few flowers, *Dryas octopetala* and cushions of *Loiseleuria procumbens* covering the rocks.

Birds seen were Black-eared wheatear, Raven and Black Redstart, butterflies Green-veined white, Red admiral and Clouded yellow



Day 7: Thursday 23rd June

We set off on foot from Campitello to visit some of the meadows above the village. Apart from the usual set of *Salvia pratense*, *Onobrychis montana*, *Campanula glomerata*, *Trifolium pratense* and *T. montanum* other plants and orchids had come into flower since we visited almost a week ago. We saw *Campanula rotundifolia* *Dianthus sylvestris*, *Campanula spicata* and several orange lilies *Lilium bulbiferum*, *Gymnadenia odoratissima*, one plant of *Traunsteinera globosa* and many *Orchis ustulata* (Burnt tip orchid).

Wandering through the meadows we also found several plants of *Anthericum liliago* (*St Bernard's lily*) and also the very beautiful *Orobanche gracilis*. The weather had turned and it was now very hot, so we appreciated the shade of a large tree for our lunch and a rest. We then continued down through the meadows, finding more *Gymnadenia odoratissima* and *Orchis ustulata*. On the verge by the path we found several plants of white swallow-wort *Vincetoxicum hirundinaria*, *Saxifraga paniculata*, whilst the bright pink cushions of *Saponaria ocymoides* were dotted here and there.

As it was very hot we were in need of more refreshments which we took in a cafe in the village before continuing on the road by the stream, where we saw the resident Dipper and also several plants of *Platanthera bifolia* and *Ophrys insectifera*.

Birds for the day included Cuckoo and Green Woodpecker (both heard) and Magpies. Butterflies seen were Red Admirals, Small Tortoiseshell, Green-veined white, Small blue, Clouded yellow and Woodland Ringlet.

Day 8: Friday 24th June

Departure day for our return to Venice for our flights homeward.



Photo Gallery



Cyripedium calceolus © Diane G



Phyteuma orbiculare © Diane G



Plantago media © Diane G



Orchis ustulata © Diane G





Plant hunters at 'work' © Richard & Karen R



Salvia pratensis © Diane G



Crocus vernus © Diane G



Orchis ustulata © Diane G



Gymnadenia albida © Diane G



Geum rivale © Diane G



Soldanella alpina © Diane G



Thlaspi rotundifolium © Diane G



Gentiana punctata © Diane G





Traunsteineria globosa © Richard & Karen R



Bartsia alpina © Richard & Karen R



Enjoying the sun and scenery © Richard & Karen R



Draba aizoides © Richard & Karen R



Loiseleuria procumbens © Richard & Karen R



Lilium bulbiferum © Richard & Karen R



Trifolium alpinum © Richard & Karen R



Polyga chamaebuxus © Richard & Karen R



Snowfinches © Diane G



Alpine Chough © Diane G



Black-eared Wheatear © Diane G



Marmot © Diane G



Landscape view © Richard & Karen R



Erebia medusa © Yiannis Christofides



Draba azoides © Yiannis Christofides



Polygala chamaebuxus © Yiannis Christofides



Group shot © Yiannis Christofides



Cypripedium calceolus © Yiannis Christofides



Soldanella alpina © Yiannis Christofides



Homogyna alpina © Yiannis Christofides



Landscape view © Yiannis Christofides

Holiday Itinerary

Day	Date (June)	Locations & Weather
1	17	Arrival at Treviso airport and transfer to Dolomites
2	18	Weather initially sunny, then showery during the day. From Campitello to Canazei and return
3	19	Campitello to Pian and Val Duron. Fine initially then rain
4	20	Campitello to Canazei and back
5	21	Cable car to Col Rodella. Walk part of the Friedrich Augustus way. Return by cable car. Warm and partially sunny
6	22	Short to Alba di Canazei to take cable to Ciampac. Warm and sunny
7	23	Very hot. Meadows near Campitello.
8	24	Departure for Venice airports

Species checklist

	SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	DAY
	FERNS		
	<i>Asplenium ruta-murale</i>		day 2
	<i>Asplenium serpentrionale</i>		
	<i>Botrychium lunaria</i>	Moonwort	day 3
	GYMNOSPERMS		
	Pinaceae		
	<i>Picea abies</i>		day 2
	ANGIOSPERMS: DICOTYLEDONS		
	Apiaceae		
	<i>Laserpitium latifolium</i>		day 3
		Cow Parsley	
	Apocynaceae		
	<i>Vincetoxicum hirundinaria</i>		day 7
	Asteraceae		
	<i>Achillea atrata</i>		day 3
	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>		common
	<i>Antennaria alpina</i>		day 5
	<i>Antennaria carpatica</i>		day 5
	<i>Aster alpinus</i>		day 2
	<i>Buphthalmum salicifolium</i>		day 2
	<i>Carduus defloratus</i>		day 7
	<i>Centaurea montana</i>		day 7
	<i>Erigeron acer</i>		day 2
	<i>Erigeron alpinus</i>		day 3
	<i>Homogyne alpina</i>		day 4
	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>		day 7
	<i>Petasites paradoxus</i>		day 2
	<i>Pilosella officinarum</i>		day 2
	<i>Taraxacum</i> agg.		day 2-7
	<i>Tragopogon pratense</i>		day 2
	<i>Tussilago farfara</i>		day 5
	Boraginaceae		
	<i>Echium vulgare</i>		day 7
	<i>Myosotis alpestris</i>		day 5
	<i>Myosotis sylvatica</i>		day 2
	<i>Pulmonaria australis</i>		day 5
	<i>Symphytum officinale</i>		day 4
	Brassicaceae		
	<i>Biscutella laevigata</i>		day 2, 5
	<i>Draba aizoides</i>		day 5
	<i>Kernera saxatilis</i>		day 4
	<i>Pritzelago alpina</i>		day 5
	<i>Thlaspi rotundifolium</i>		day 6

Campanulaceae		
Campanula glomerata		day 2
Campanula rotundifolia		day 7
Campanula spicata		day 7
Phyteuma orbiculare		day 2
Caryophyllaceae		
Cerastium uniflorum		common
Dianthus sylvestris		day 7
Saponaria ocymoides		day 2
Silene acaulis		day 5, 6
Silene doica		day 2
Silene vulgare		day 2
Stellaria nemorum		day 4
Cistaceae		
Helianthemum cannum		day 3
Helianthemum nummularium		day 2
Crassulaceae		
Rhodiola rosea		day 6
Dipsacaceae		
Knautia arvensis		day 2
Ericaceae		
Loiseleuria procumbens		day 5
Rhododendron ferrugineum		
Vaccinium myrtillus		
Vaccinium vitis-idea		day 2
Fabaceae		
Anthyllis vulneraria		day 2
Astragalus alpinus		day 2
Lotus corniculatus		day 2
Onobrychis montana		day 2
Trifolium alpinum		day 5
Trifolium badium		
Trifolium montanum		day 4
Trifolium pratense		day 2
Trifolium repens		common
Vicia sepium		day 2
Gentianaceae		
Gentiana acaulis		day 5
Gentiana punctata		day 5
Gentiana verna		day 5
Gentianella germanica		day 4
Geraniaceae		
Geranium pyrenaicum		day 3
Geranium sylvaticum		day 2
Globulariaceae		
Globularia cordifolia		day 2

Lamiaceae		
Acinos alpinus		day 2
Ajuga genevensis		day 3
Ajuga pyramidalis		day 2
Horminum pyrenaicum		day 3
Lamium album		day 2
Salvia pratensis		day 2
Stachys recta		day 2
Teucrium montanum		
Thymus serpyllum		day 2
Lentibulariaceae		
Pinguicula alpinus		day 2
Onagraceae		
Epilobium angustifolium		
Orobanchaceae		
Bartsia alpina		day 5
Melampyrum sylvaticum		
Orobanche gracilis		day 7
Pedicularis elongata		day 7
Pedicularis verticillata		day 3
Rhinanthus minus		day 2
Papaveraceae		
Chelidonium majus		day 4
Plantaginaceae		
Linaria alpina		day 5
Plantago media		day 2
Veronica chamaedrys		day 4
Polygalaceae		
Polygala alpestris		day 3
Polygala chamaebuxus		day 3
Polygala nicaeensis		day 2
Polygonaceae		
Persicaria bistorta		day 2
Persicaria vivipara		day 3
Primulaceae		
Androsace vitaliana		day 5
Androsace alpina		day 6
Primula farinosa		day 5
Primula halleri		day 5
Primula minima		day 5
Primula veris		day 2
Soldanella alpina		day 5
Soldanella minima		day 5
Soldanella pusilla		day 6
Pyrolaceae		
Moneses uniflora		day 2
Orthilia secunda		
Pyrola media		day 4
Pyrola minor		

Ranunculaceae		
Actaea spicata		day 4
Anemone baldensis		day 6
Aquilegia atrata		day 2
Caltha palustris		day 3
Clematis alpina		day 2
Pulsatilla alpina ssp. apiifolia		day 5
Pulsatilla vernalis		day 5
Ranunculus aconitifolius		
Ranunculus montanus		day 5
Ranunculus pyrenaicus		day 5
Trollius europaeus		day 2
Rosaceae		
Alchemilla sp		day 2
Aruncus dioica		
Dryas octopetala		day 6
Geum montanum		day 5
Geum rivale		day 4
Geum reptans		day 6
Potentilla asarina		day 3
Potentilla crantzii		day 4
Potentilla erecta		
Potentilla nitida		
Rosa pendulina		day 7
Rubus idaeus		
Sanguisorba minor agg.		day 3
Santalaceae		
Thesium alpinum		day 2
Salicaceae		
Salix helvetica		day 6
Saxifragaceae		
Chrysosplenium alternifolium		day 4
Saxifraga paniculata		day 2, 7
Saxifraga hederifolia		day 2
Scrophulariaceae		
Scrophularia canina		day 3
Verbascum nigrum		day 7
Valerianaceae		
Valeriana		day 7
Violaceae		
Viola biflora		day 2
Viola tricolor subsp. subalpina		day 7

MONOCOTYLEDONS		
Asparagaceae		
Polygonatum odoratum		day 2
Colchicaceae		
Colchicum autumnale		day 7
Iridaceae		
Crocus vernus		day 5
Liliaceae		
Lilium bulbiferum		day 7
Maianthemum bifolium		day 4
Paradisea liliastrum		day 7
Paris quadrifolia		day 2
Veratrum album		day 3
Orchidaceae		
Corallorhiza trifida		day 2
Cypripedium calceolus		day 2-4
Epipactis atrorubens		day 7
Gymnadenia albida		day 4
Gymnadenia conopsea		day 2
Gymnadenia odoratissima		day 7
Gymnadenia nigra		day 3
Neottia nidus-avis		day 2
Neottia ovata		day 3
Ophrys insectifera		day 7
Orchis militaris		day 3
Orchis ovalis		day 6
Orchis ustulata		day 7
Platanthera bifolia		day 2
Traunsteinera globosa		day 7
Poaceae		
Briza minima		day 7
Tofieldiaceae		
Tofieldia calyculata		day 3

	ENGLISH NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
BIRDS										
Apodidae										
	Common Swift	Apus apus		x		x			x	
Hirundinidae										
	Crag Martin	Ptonoprogne rupestris		x	x		x		x	
	House Martin	Delichon urbica		x	x	x	x		x	
Motacillidae										
	Tree Pipit	Anthus trivialis								
	Grey Wagtail			x	x				x	
	White Wagtail			x		x	x		x	
Turdidae										
	Ring Ouzel	Turdus torquatus								
	Blackbird	Turdus merula		x	x	x			x	
	Fieldfare			x	x	x			x	
Muscicapidae										
	Robin	Erithacus rubecula		x						
	Black Redstart	Phoenicurus ochruros			x	x	x		x	
Family Sylviidae										
	Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla		x		x				
Phylloscopidae										
	Chiffchaff	Phylloscopus collybita				x				
Paridae										
	Great Tit	Parus major				x				
Corvidae										
	Magpie	Pica pica		x					x	
	Jay								x	
	Carrion Crow	Corvus corone				x				
	Raven	Corvus corax					x	x		
	Alpine Chough	Pyrrhocorax graculus					x			
	House Sparrow	Passer domesticus				x	x			
Fringillidae										
	Chaffinch	Fringilla coelebs		x	x	x			x	
	Serlin	Serinus serinus								
	Bullfinch	Pyrrhula pyrrhula				x				
	Snowfinch						x	x		
Emberizidae										
	Yellowhammer	Emberiza citrinella			x					
	Wheatear Black-eared							x		
	Cuckoo							x	x	
	Dipper					x	x	x	x	
	Green Woodpecker								x	
MAMMALS										
	Alpine Marmot Deer	Marmota marmota			x	x				

	ENGLISH NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
BUTTERFLIES										
Papilionidae										
	Apollo	Parnassius apollo							x	
Pieridae										
	Large White	Pieris brassicae			x					
	Clouded Yellow	Colias						x	x	
	Mountain Green-veined					x		x	x	
	Orange tip			x	x	x			x	
	Wood White	Leptidea sinapis			x	x			x	
Lycaenidae										
	Small Blue	Cupido minimus		x						
Nymphalidae										
	Red Admiral				x	x		x	x	
	Painted Lady								x	
	Small Tortoiseshell	Aglais urticae							x	
Satyridae										
	Arran Brown									
	Erebia medusa	Woodland ringlet			x	x			x	
	Small Heath	Coenonympha pamphilus							x	
	Speckled Wood	Pararge aegeria				x			x	
Other										
	Roman Snail	Helix pomatia		x						
	Chrysolina coerulans								x	
	Euclidia glyphica	Burnet companion							x	
	Panorpa								x	
	Pseudopanthera maculata								x	
		Chimney-sweep moth								
	Phyllopertha horticola					x				