

## APRIL BUTTERFLIES IN TENERIFE

On holiday between 10th and 24th April 1972 I found butterflies few in number, but I succeeded in seeing and obtaining good colour photographs of nine species, including two which are rare migrants to Britain and some which are restricted to the Canary Islands.

On the north coast at Puerto de la Cruz my first find, in the hotel garden, was an Indian Red Admiral (*Vanessa indica* Godart) which was sharing some mauve *Statice* flowers with a couple of ordinary Red Admirals (*V. atalanta* Linn.); this gave me a good opportunity to compare the two species. *V. indica* has a much wider, but broken, red band on the fore wing and the underside pattern is noticeably different. According to Higgins and Riley (1970), who give detailed coverage of the Canary Islands, this species occurs in India and other parts of Asia but not in Europe or Africa apart from the colonies of the *vulcania* variety in the Canary Islands and Madeira.

The local Botanical Gardens proved a good hunting ground and I found a Monarch (*Danaus plexippus* Linn.) with splendid gliding flight, like that of a White Admiral, several Canary Speckled Woods (*Pararge xiphioides* Stand.), the Canary variety of Large White (*Pieris brassicae cheiranthii* Hueb.), a Clouded Yellow (*Colias crocea* Geoff.), Red Admirals and Small Whites (*P. rapae* Linn.). The Canary Speckled Wood closely resembled the European species (*Pararge aegeria* Linn.) on the upperside, but had a distinctive underside pattern; it had the same habit of sitting open on leaves in dappled sunlight, but on two occasions I photographed it sitting on a *Strelitzia* flower, although I do not know whether it was actually feeding. The Canary Large White was a fine variety with much larger spots. It is perhaps worth noting that Higgins and Riley (1970) state that *V. indica* and *P. xiphioides* occur from May onwards, while I observed both on April 14th.

In the second week on the dry west coast near Puerto de Santiago, I found another Monarch, an African Grass Blue (*Zizeeria knysna* Trimen) and a colony of Bath Whites (*Pontia daplidice* Linn.).

According to Higgins and Riley the Monarch colonised the Canary Islands in 1880, but is not resident elsewhere in Europe, although it is, of course, known as a rare migrant. Living on a different food plant with different predators and in a strange habitat of black volcanic rock, one might expect that there would be considerable pressure to adapt by forming a new variety. I have compared my new photographs with some I took (on the same camera, all with magnification 1/4) of a Monarch in the USA. There were no major differences; possibly the orange marks near the apex of the forewings were a little weaker on the Tenerife specimens.

A. G. Gaydon (3198)

## REFERENCE

HIGGINS, L. G. and RILEY, N. D. (1970). *A Field Guide to the Butterflies of Britain and Europe*. Collins, London.

