

The Blues

(Lycaenidae, subfamily Polyommatainae)

Long-tailed Blue

Lampides boeticus (Linnaeus)

Status

Scarce immigrant. The Long-tailed Blue is recorded almost annually but usually only as single individuals. Several consecutive years may pass without the species being seen. 1945 and 1990 were the only years of relative abundance, and the first confirmed instance of a 'home-bred' generation occurred in the latter of these two years. There are several reported cases of larvae being imported from continental Europe with vegetable produce such as Mangetout Peas, and many recorded butterflies may originate from such sources. Its superficial resemblance to more common butterflies may have led to the Long-tailed Blue being overlooked by casual observation. The species cannot survive the winter

climate of the British Isles. In western Europe, its main breeding grounds are around the Mediterranean from where it migrates northwards each spring through central Europe as far north as France, Germany and The Netherlands. It is absent from Denmark and Fennoscandia.

Distribution of records

A single specimen was seen at Ardrossan, Ayrshire, in 1881 and this remains the only Scottish record (Thomson, 1980). It has not been reported from Ireland or the Isle of Man. Apart from scattered sightings from as far north as Caernarvonshire, Cheshire and Derbyshire, the Long-tailed Blue is rarely seen away from the southernmost counties of England with



Silver-studded Blue



Fig. 102 Long-tailed Blue male upperside. Spain



Fig. 103 Long-tailed Blue female upperside. Spain