

Interview to Raquel Eiró – Serra da Carregueira Transect (Portugal)



1. When did you start your transect?

I started in May 2019, just a few days after the first Portuguese ABLE Workshop which I attended in Almada, on the 4th of May last year.

2. What was the reason for making a butterfly transect?

I really enjoy observing and photographing insects, but I am a little bit lazy, so having the obligation to go out regularly to count butterflies gives me the opportunity to also photograph butterflies and other insects.



3. How did you discover BMS?

Eva Monteiro, the National Coordinator of BMS Portugal and Vice-president of Tagis (Butterfly Conservation Portugal), told me about it and invited me to attend the ABLE Workshop where I got most of the information about the BMS.



Serra da Carregueira Transect. Left picture: Section II - Portuguese Oak open forest; right picture: Section III Shrubland

4. Why do you like butterflies? Have you always liked insects?

I like the diversity of forms and colours of butterflies. They are very attractive! I also like discovering new species, and adding them to my photographic collection. The same with other insects. The first time I noticed them was in 2011 when I was walking my dogs in a little wood near my house. After that I started taking my camera with me every time I went for a walk with my dogs.

I photographed every insect: ants, dragonflies, beetles, wasps, butterflies, then when I arrived home, I would try to identify them using several Facebook groups.

5. What do you learn by counting butterflies?

Most exciting was finding a butterfly that I had never seen before: *Melanargia occitanica*! I also learned the methodology of fixed transects. I had no clue that this was the method to count butterflies. I started to notice the different seasons and the butterfly flight periods, when each species would start and stop flying. May is a wonderful time of the year to count butterflies on my transect. **I am looking forward for the beginning of the spring, this year, to see what new species are there!**

6. Do you think that the effort you make in your transect is important?

Definitely! With my data I hope to contribute to the knowledge of the state of Portuguese butterfly populations and to the understanding of the impacts that climate change, pollution and habitat modifications have on them.



Melanargia occitanica @Albano Soares

7. How do you feel about being part of a large European community of volunteers?

It is always good to be part of something bigger than yourself and to contribute for the great goal of butterfly conservation in Portugal and in Europe. Even better when you can do that while enjoying nature and taking photos, one of my biggest pleasures in life!