

Discover the Fauna of Our Campus

Common blue

Kingdom: Animals (Animalia)

Phylum: Arthropods (Arthropoda)

Class: Insects (Insecta)

Order: Lepidoptera (Butterflies and moths)

Family: Lycaenidae (Gossamer-winged butterflies)

Genus: *Polyommatus*

Species: **Common blue (*Polyommatus icarus*)**

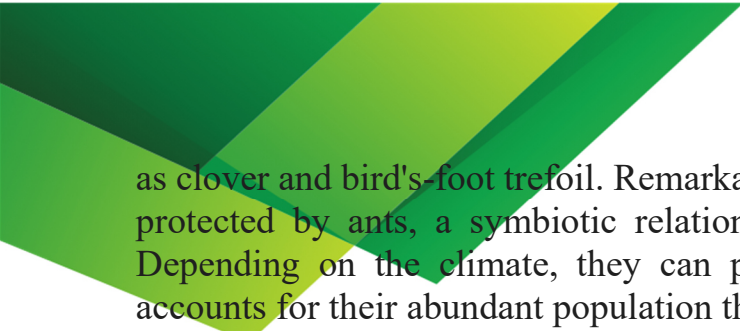
The Common blue (*Polyommatus icarus*) is one of the most widespread and



recognizable butterfly species across Eurasia. Known for its vibrant colors and remarkable adaptability, it is a staple of diverse landscapes, from domestic gardens to high-altitude mountain meadows. In Azerbaijan, its ecological plasticity allows it to thrive everywhere, from sea-level plains to the highest peaks.

This species exhibits striking sexual dimorphism, meaning males and females look quite different. The upper side of the male's wings glows with a brilliant violet-blue metallic sheen. In contrast, the females are primarily dark brown, adorned with a row of bright orange spots along the wing edges. Both sexes share a similar underside: a grayish-beige background decorated with distinct black spots and a characteristic orange border. With a wingspan of 28–35 mm, they are small but highly visible due to their active flight patterns during the day.

The life cycle of the Common blue is particularly fascinating due to its relationship with the environment. The caterpillars primarily feed on legumes, such



as clover and bird's-foot trefoil. Remarkably, these caterpillars are often "tended" or protected by ants, a symbiotic relationship common in the Lycaenidae family. Depending on the climate, they can produce 2–3 generations per year, which accounts for their abundant population throughout the summer months.

Beyond its beauty, the Common blue is an important ecological indicator. It is relatively resilient to environmental pollution compared to other butterflies, yet its presence still signals a healthy, flower-rich habitat. For nature photographers and enthusiasts, it is one of the most accessible models in the wild, often seen in groups among small grassy patches. When the sun hits their wings, the metallic shimmer serves as a reminder of the intricate beauty found in our everyday natural surroundings.

