

NYMPHALIS POLYCHLORUS L. (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE) IN THE
MALTESE ISLANDS

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"Pearl", Vjal il-Helsien, Zebbug, MALTA.

BORG (1932) in his list of Maltese Lepidoptera included, among several other 'exotic' species, *Nymphalis polychlorus*, the Large Tortoiseshell Butterfly. Borg's list is considered unreliable by most local entomologist's and therefore this species has up to now been unconfirmed (VALLETTA, 1972; SAMMUT, 1984).

A specimen of *Nymphalis polychlorus* L. was observed by the author resting on dry vegetation on Comino Island, very near the Blue Lagoon. The butterfly which was in good condition, flew for short distances when disturbed.

The species is single brooded, first appearing in June-July, but has a long flight period, being again on the wing in spring after hibernation. Its typical habitat is light woodland and low lands to about 1500 m. The larvae feed on elms, willows and various fruit trees. *Nymphalis polychlorus* occurs in western Europe, including southern Fennoscandia, south England and certain Mediterranean islands (HIGGINS and RILEY, 1973)

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