

COMMON BUTTERFLIES OF SUNFISH LAKE PARK



Painted lady butterflies can be found in almost any type of habitat and are one of the most widespread butterflies in the world. They do not overwinter and have speeds capable of 30 miles per hour during occasional huge migrations. These migrations do not appear to be related to seasonal change. Raising painted lady butterflies is a popular science activity in classrooms.



The **spicebush swallowtail** is a large butterfly. The caterpillar's first few instars look like bird droppings and the last two are green with a large black and yellow eyespot on its sides. As a caterpillar grows it molts and the different stages between each molt are called instars. The caterpillar tightens a leaf around itself for protection during the day and then feeds at night.



Delaware skipper butterflies belong to a family of butterflies that look very similar so it can be difficult to identify the different species. This particular butterfly is a larger skipper that is very brightly colored. It can be found in marshes, prairies, bogs, open woods, fields, gardens and yards.



The **clouded sulphur** can be found over most of North America. It feeds on nectar from plants such as milkweed, coneflower, alfalfa, dandelion, and clover. An adult typically lives two to four weeks. They can often be found at mud puddles seeking moisture and minerals. The caterpillars feed on a wide variety of host plants.



The **little wood-satyr** is a light brown butterfly with yellow rimmed black eyespots on both its forewings and hindwings. It can be seen flying near the ground along forest edges, brush filled openings and grassy areas between forested patches. Two of its legs are smaller and are used to help the butterfly smell and taste its surroundings. They feed primarily on tree sap.



The **eastern tiger swallowtail** is a common swallowtail that feeds on the nectar of flowers from a variety of plants. They tend to fly high above the ground. Males will engage in puddling, a behavior where they gather to extract minerals from mud, damp gravel or puddles. Females may be either yellow or black and are larger than males.



The **mourning cloak** butterfly has a wingspan of 3 to 3.5 inches. It overwinters and is one of the first butterflies to be seen in the spring, often before all the snow has melted. The front legs are small, hairy and 'brushlike.' Adults can live up to a year. They will sit and open their wings, turning their body to absorb the sun to warm themselves before flight.



The **giant swallowtail** is the largest butterfly in North America with an exotic look and a wingspan of 4 to 6 inches. It has yellow filled tails and a striking diagonal yellow bar across the forewings. The coloring is mostly dark brown wings with yellow markings, and the underside and body are mostly yellow. They may glide long distances between wing beats.



The caterpillar of the **eastern-tailed blue** hibernates and pupates the next spring. This butterfly has a short proboscis (mouthpart used for feeding) so it feeds on flowers close to the ground which are short tubed or open. It has a small, thin tail off the end of its hindwings.



The **essex skipper**, along with other skipper butterflies, holds its forewings angled above its hindwings. This is a small butterfly with a darting flight. It prefers tall grasslands. It was accidentally introduced to North America in Canada and spread into several northern states.



The **red-spotted purple** is a beautiful butterfly with iridescent blue on the outer side of the hindwing. It is thought to mimic a nasty tasting swallowtail, thus giving it some protection from predators. They are known to hybridize with the white admiral butterfly. Once it emerges from its chrysalis it takes 2-3 hours for the butterfly to be ready to fly.



The **gray copper** butterfly prefers fairly open areas including fields and prairies. There are no conservation concerns and it adapts to a wide variety of host plants. Males perch and patrol periodically in search of receptive females.



The **red admiral** butterfly can be recognized by its erratic flight pattern. It is common across the United States and is known to often land on and use people as perches. Males hold territory and will chase away other males, then immediately return to their territory. Its main host plants are in the nettle family.



Angle wing butterflies prefer tree sap and decaying fruit to eat. When resting against a tree stump or bark they are almost impossible to see when their wings are closed as they look like a dead leaf or bark. Two angle wings that look very similar to each other are the Comma and the Question mark, each having the identifying marking on the underside of the hindwing.



The **monarch** butterfly is one of the most talked about butterflies due to its infamous migratory behavior in North America, flying thousands of miles from Mexico to Canada over the course of several generations. Male monarchs can be differentiated from females by a black spot on each hindwing. The viceroy butterfly resembles the monarch but is smaller in size.



The young caterpillars of the **silvery checkerspot** butterfly move in groups and will skeletonize the leaves of the plants they eat. This is a small butterfly that is listed as a species of special concern (meaning it is vulnerable and in danger of becoming a threatened species) in some areas. Its wings tend to wear and become plain as it gets older.