



THE COMPLETE
**BUTTERFLY
FIELD GUIDE**

of the Santa Monica Mountains

Santa Monica Mountains
National Recreation Area



TABLE OF CONTENTS

How To Use This Field Guide		2
Basic Lepidoptera Structures		5
Terms and Definitions		6
Family Common Name	Family Scientific Name	
Swallowtails	Papilionidae	7
Whites and Sulphurs	Pieridae	13
Coppers, Hairstreaks, and Blues	Lycaenidae	25
Metalmarks	Riodinidae	49
Brushfoots	Nymphalidae	53
Skippers	Hesperiidae	75
Index		91
Acknowledgments		94

HOW TO USE THIS FIELD GUIDE

The chapters in this guide are divided into scientific families. The beginning of each chapter lists the different subfamilies those butterflies can be divided into, if any. Some of these names are self-explanatory - Blues, Whites, etc. - and others - Admirals, Fritillaries, etc. - are less intuitive.

Each butterfly has the following information: common and scientific name, size, flight time, caterpillar food plant(s), identification information, and a photo. The flight time is a range when you will see the butterflies locally in their adult form. In this guide, butterflies are listed in each chapter from most to least common. Each subfamily should be read as a chapter within a chapter. For example, in Lycaenidae, Coppers will be listed most to least common, then Hairstreaks, then Blues.

The symbols below may be found at the upper, inside corner of each page. They indicate the rarity of the species, both in the Santa Monica Mountains and throughout its entire expanse.

- Uncommon in the Santa Monica Mountains
- ◐ Rare in the Santa Monica Mountains
- ◑ Threatened throughout its range
- Endangered throughout its range

Although some butterflies in the Santa Monica Mountains are on the verge of extinction, none of them are currently protected by the Endangered Species Act.

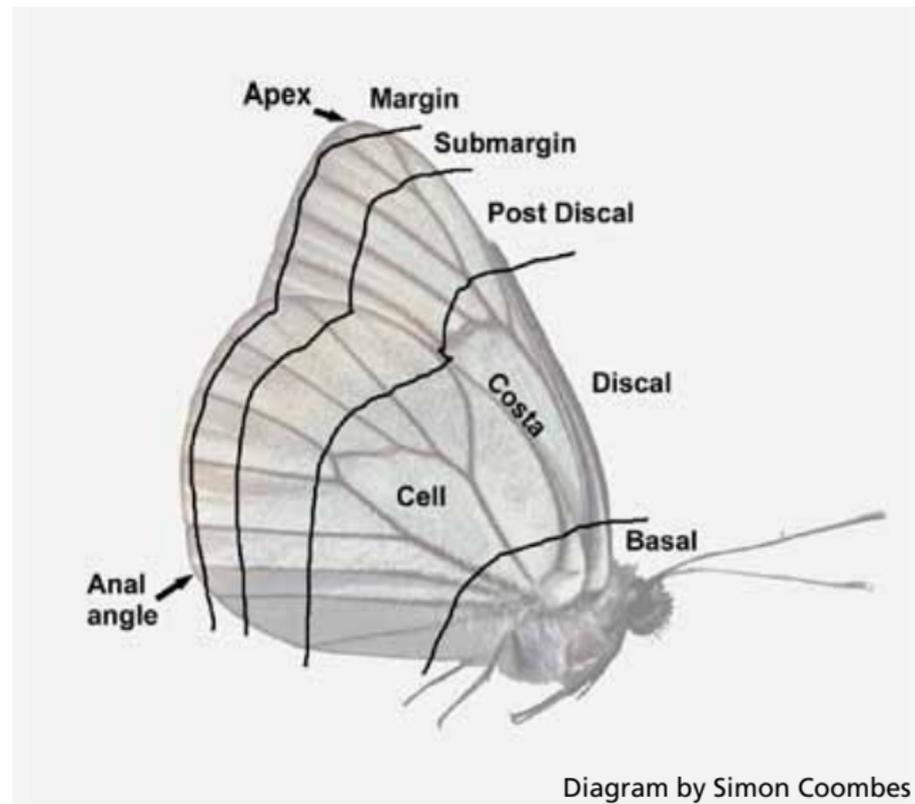
Butterflies are a vital indicator species due to their sensitivity to environmental changes. Because butterflies have been captured by enthusiasts for centuries, scientists are able to study long-term shifts in populations, ranges, and biodiversity. First, areas that are

getting warmer have flowers blooming earlier than previous years. Butterflies in these areas are pressured to adjust to these changes in asynchronization and are, consequently, emerging earlier. Second, butterfly ranges are changing. Recent studies have shown that butterfly ranges are shifting over time - primarily North - due to changes in microclimates. Third, butterfly diversity is decreasing. This is contributed to a variety of factors, including: habitat destruction and/or fragmentation, pollution, and the spread of invasive species that do not support butterfly diversity. Although some species are growing at a rapid pace, other, more specialized ones are declining.

Remember, the mission of the National Park Service is to preserve unimpaired the natural resources of the park system, so we ask that you please do not catch or hurt the butterflies.

Thank you!

Basic Lepidoptera Structures



Terms and Definitions

Eyespot - a pattern on the wings that resembles an eye. May intimidate or distract predators.

False Head - tails and eyespots that mimic the antennae and head of a butterfly. Patterns on wings often draw the eye to the false head.

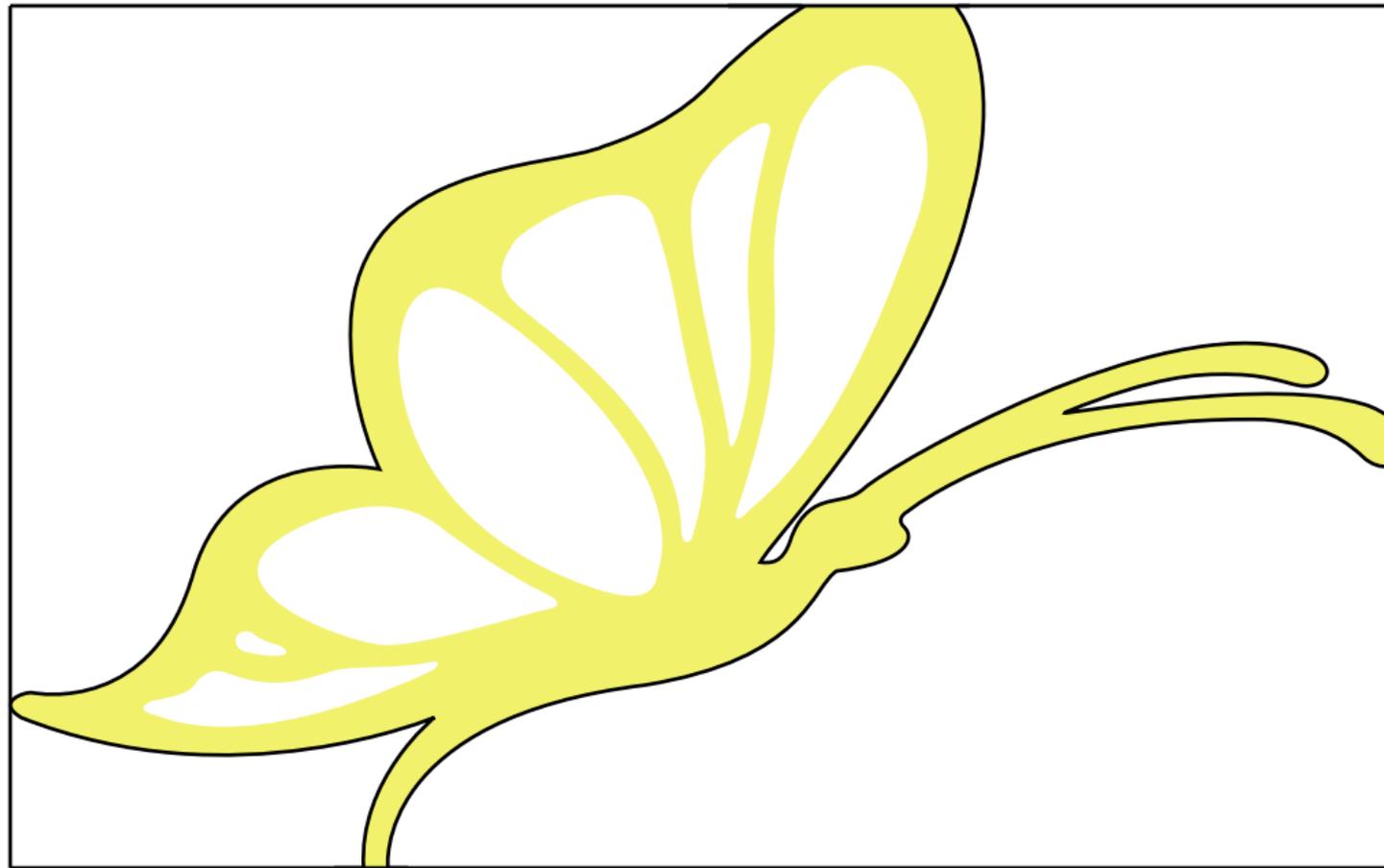
Lepidoptera - the order of insects that includes butterflies and moths. Means "scale wing."

Overscaling - a heavy patch of scales.

Scale - butterfly wings are composed of microscopic scales.

Stigma - a patch of scent scales found on males that are used during courtship. Common characteristic of hairstreaks and skippers.

Tail - part of the wings that sticks out around the anal angle.

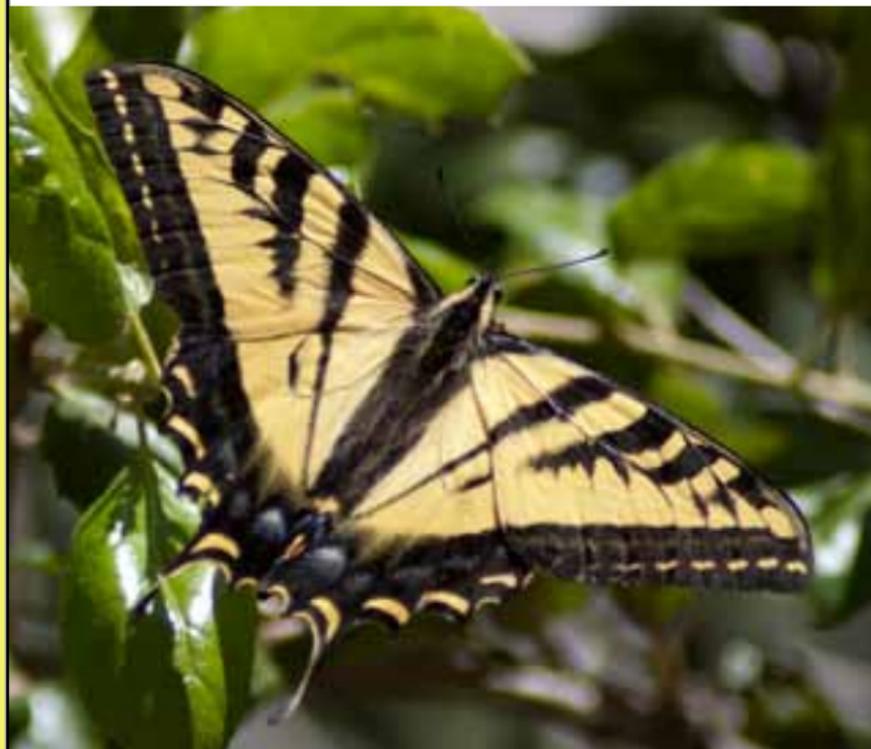


Swallowtails Papilionidae

The Swallowtails are the largest butterflies in the Santa Monica Mountains. They are easily identifiable by their long tails which mimic antennae. There are only four species of Swallowtails found in the Santa Monica Mountains, and their bright colors and size allow for easy identification.

Note: The Family Papilionidae also includes Parnassions; however, none have been found in the Santa Monica Mountains.

Western Tiger Swallowtail
Papilio rutulus



Size: 2 3/4 - 4 inches
Flight Time: year-round
Food Plants: sycamore,
cottonwood, willow,
alder

Yellow with four
vertical, black stripes on
upperside. Underside
has two orange spots
near the end of the
inner margin.

Anise Swallowtail
Papilio zelicaon



Size: 2 3/4 - 3 1/2 inches
Flight Time: year-round
Food Plants: fennel or
other carrot family

Wings have yellow
rectangles outlined by a
wide, black border. Has
an orange eyespot near
the tail with a round,
black center.

Pale Swallowtail
Papilio eurymedon



Photo by Randy Philips

Size: 2 1/2 - 3 1/2 inches
Flight Time: Feb-Oct
Food Plants: *Ceanothus*,
other buckhorn family

Similar to Western Tiger
Swallowtail, but cream
colored instead of
yellow. Narrow, pointed
forewing.

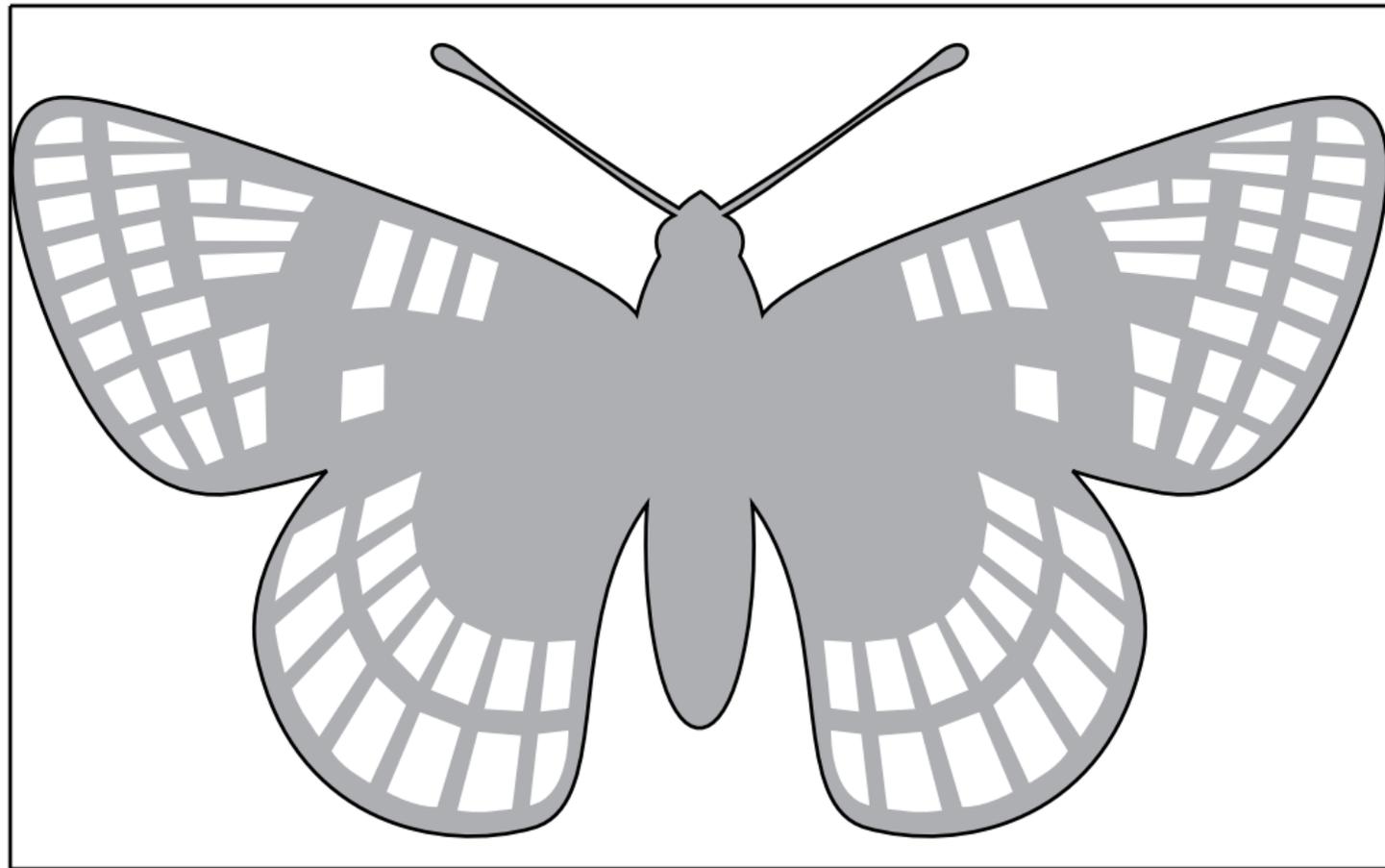
Giant Swallowtail
Papilio cresphontes



Photo by Robert Behrstock

Size: 4 - 6 1/4 inches
Flight Time: Mar-Oct
Food Plants: citrus

Black with yellow spots
spanning wing to wing.
Each tail has a yellow
spot outlined in black.



Whites and Sulphurs Pieridae

Subfamily	Common Name	Subfamily	Scientific Name	
Whites		Pierinae		15
Sulphurs/Yellows		Coliadinae		19

The Whites and Sulphurs are medium to small in size. They are white, yellow, or orange in color and may have black or red markings. Most of the caterpillars feed on plants from the Mustard family. All adults from this family are nectar feeders.

Cabbage White
Pieris rapae



Size: 1 3/4 - 2 1/4 inches
Flight Time: year-round
Food Plants: black mustard, wild radish, nasturtium

Upperside white with gray tips on forewings. Males have one dark, submarginal spot; females have two.

Checkered White
Pontia protodice



Size: 1 1/2 - 2 1/2 inches
Flight Time: year-round
Food Plants: native and non-native mustards

White with brown or black checkered pattern on the front of the pointed wing tip.

Photo by Jeffrey Phippen

Sara Orangetip
Anthocharis sara



Size: 1 1/16 - 1 1/2 inches
Flight Time: Feb-June
Food Plants: native
mustards

Upperside white with
orange tips on the
forewing. Underside has
green marbling on the
hindwing.

Becker's White
Pontia beckerii



Photo by Ron Wolf

Size: 1 5/8 - 2 inches
Flight Time: Feb-Aug
Food Plants: bladderpod

Upperside white
with black spots near
forewing tip. Underside
has green edging along
hindwing veins.

Orange Sulphur (Alfalfa Sulphur)
Colias eurytheme



Photo by Crystal Anderson

Size: 1 3/8 - 2 3/4 inches
Flight Time: year-round
Food Plants: pea family,
lotus, clover, vetch,
alfalfa

Varies white to yellow
to orange with black
border on upperside.
Underside has a silver
spot on the hindwing.

● Harford's Sulphur
Colias harfordii



Photo by Kim Davis and Mike Stangeland

Size: 1 3/4 - 2 inches
Flight Time: Apr-Sept
Food Plants: *Astragalus*
(locoweed or
rattleweed)

Males are vibrant yellow
with a black cell spot
on the forewing. They
have a dark forewing
border and a thinner
hindwing border of the
same color. The borders
on females are reduced
or missing.

Sleepy Orange

Abaeis nicippe



Photo by Jonathan Wright

Size: 1 3/8 - 2 1/4 inches
 Flight Time: Mar-Oct
 Food Plants: cassia

Upperside orange with a small, black cell spot on the forewing. Underside can be a variety of colors, depending on what form it is. Summer forms are orange-yellow. Winter can be shades or red or brown.

Dainty Sulphur (Dwarf Yellow Sulphur)

Nathalis iole



Photo by Kim Davis and Mike Stangeland

Size: 3/4 - 1 1/4 inches
 Flight Time: Mar-Nov
 Food Plants: sunflower family

This butterfly has elongated forewings. Underside forewing has black spots on the edge of the outer wing and a yellow to orange patch near the wing base. Upperside has yellow and black markings.

Cloudless Sulphur *Phoebis sennae*



Photo by Jeffrey Phippen

Size: 2 1/4 - 3 1/8 inches
Flight Time: Mar-Oct
Food Plants: cassia

Upper surface of males is yellow. Females have uneven black borders on the the edges of the wings. Underside of hindwing has two pink spots with silver centers.

California Dogface *Zerene eurydice*

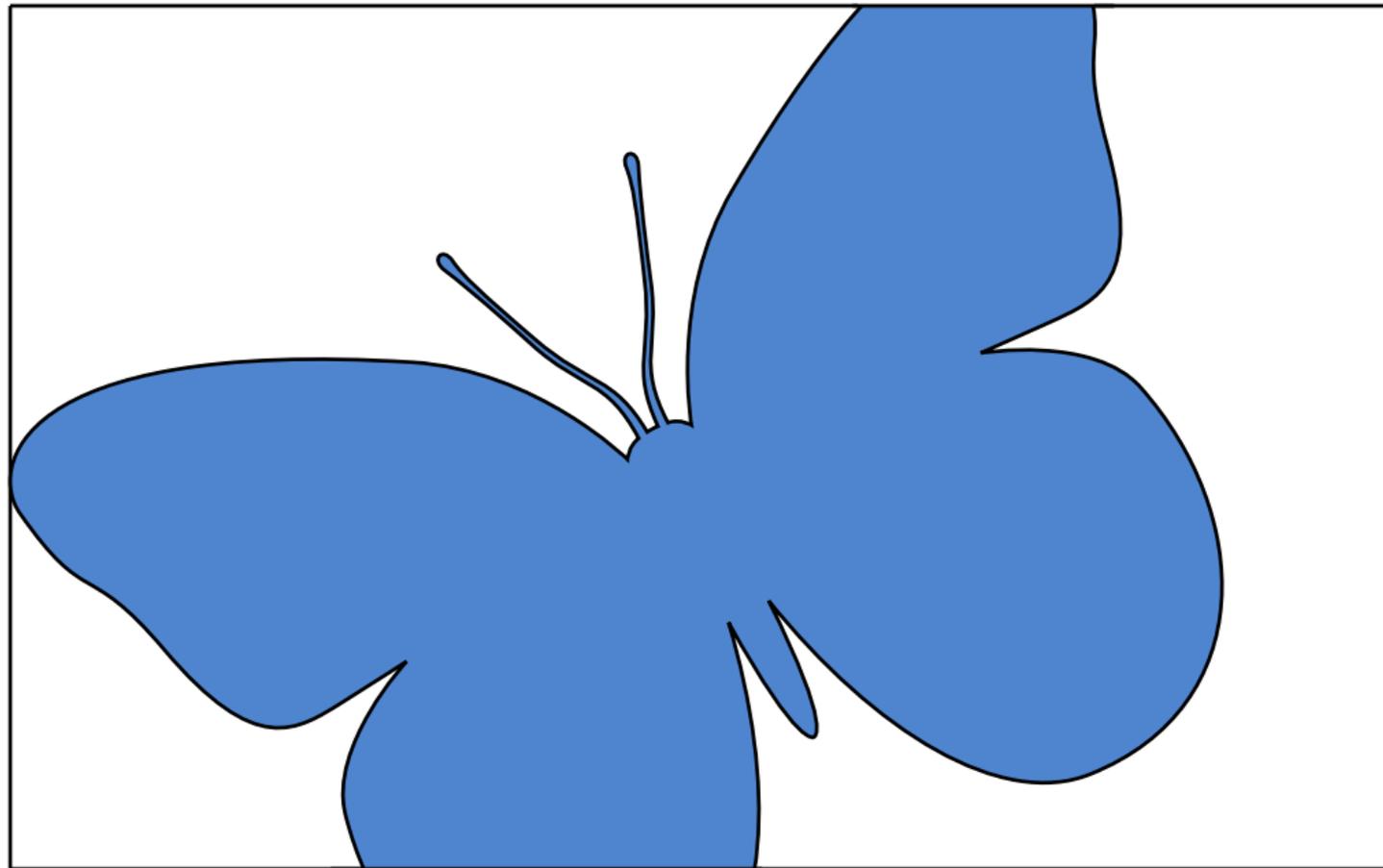


Photo by Kim Davis and Mike Stangeland

Size: 2 - 2 1/2 inches
Flight Time: Mar-Sept
Food Plants: *Amorpha californica* (false indigo)

This is the California State Butterfly.

Vibrant yellow-orange with a purple iridescence. Pattern on male forewings resembles the face of a dog. Females are yellow with a black cell spot on the upper forewing.



Coppers, Hairstreaks, and Blues Lycaenidae

Subfamily	Common Name	Subfamily	Scientific Name	
Coppers		Lycaeninae		27
Hairstreaks		Coliadinae		29
Blues		Polyommatae		39

There are 21 species of Lycaenids in the Santa Monicas - more than any other family. These butterflies typically have vibrant, iridescent blues, reds, and oranges in their coloring. Adults are usually small to very small. Lycaenid caterpillars are commonly slug shaped and many species produce sugary secretions in exchange for protection by ants.

Gorgon Copper

Lycaena gorgon



Photo by Randy Wight

Size: 1 1/4 - 1 1/2 inches
 Flight Time: Apr-July
 Food Plants: *Eriogonum elongatum* (wand buckwheat)

Upperside copper with purple tint on males and dark brown with beige and black spots on females. Both are gray with black spots on underside with a submarginal row of red-orange spots.

Tailed Copper

Lycaena arota

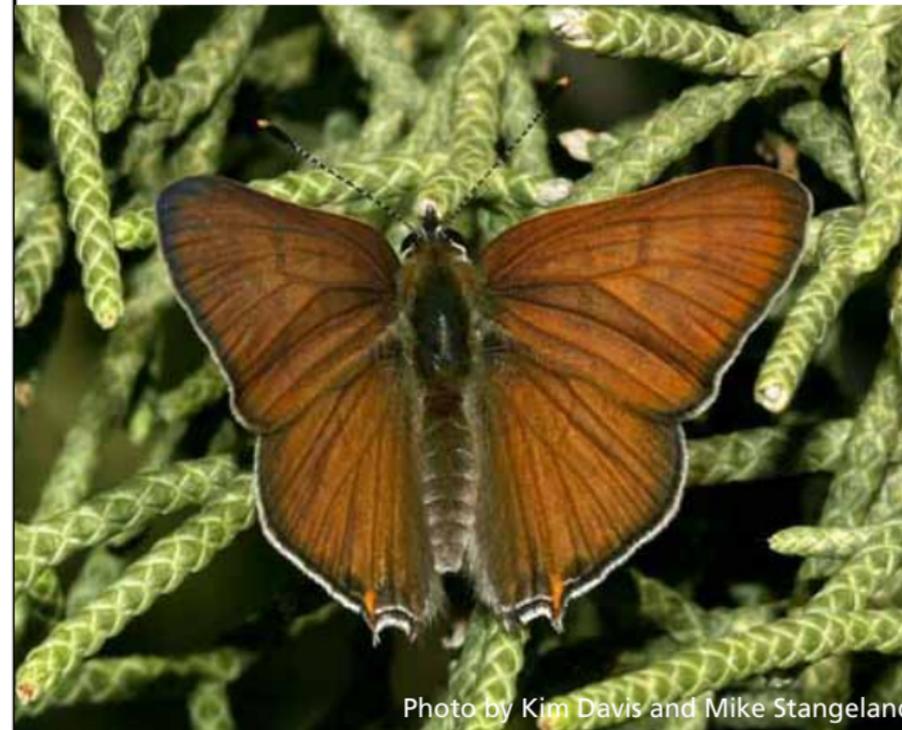


Photo by Kim Davis and Mike Stangeland

Size: 1 1/8 - 1 3/8 inches
 Flight Time: May-July
 Food Plants: wild currant or *Ribes* (gooseberry)

Small tail on hindwing. Upperside of males is copper with a purple tint. Females are orange with brown wing bases and wide, brown borders on the forewing. Underside gray with black spots and submarginal crescents on hindwing.

Gray Hairstreak

Strymon melinus



Photo by Kim Davis and Mike Stangeland

Size: 7/8 - 1 3/8 inches
 Flight Time: Feb-Nov
 Food Plants: mallow,
 buckwheat, coffeeberry,
 pea

Thin tail on hindwing.
 Underside ranges
 from pale to dark
 gray. Irregular, white
 postmedian line
 bordered by orange.
 Upperside is slate with
 red-orange eyespots.

Sylvan Hairstreak

Satyrium sylvinus



Photo by Randy Emmitt

Size: 1 - 1 3/8 inches
 Flight Time: May-July
 Food Plants: willow

Not all have tails.
 Upperside gray-brown or
 red-brown with an orange
 mark on the hindwing
 near the lower edge.
 Males have a blue tint;
 females have a yellow
 one. Underside ranges
 from gray to white with
 a postmarginal series of
 black dots. Red to yellow
 spot near the tail.

Hedgerow Hairstreak *Satyrium saepium*



Photo by Alan Wight

Size: 1 - 1 1/4 inches
Flight Time: May-July
Food Plants: *Ceanothus*
(wild lilac)

Upperside copper with metallic tint. Underside beige to brown with a slate to blue spot near the tail.

Bramble Hairstreak (Coastal Green/Perplexing Hairstreak) *Callophrys dumetorum*



Photo by Sally King

Size: 1 - 1 1/4 inches
Flight Time: Feb-Apr
Food Plants: buckwheat,
Ceanothus, deerweed

No tail. Underside turquoise, sometimes with noticeable postmedian line of white spots on the hindwing. Upperside is gray and females have some yellow in the center of both wings.

Brown Elfin (Western Elfin)
Callophrys augustinus



Photo by Kim Davis and Mike Stangeland

Size: 7/8 - 1 1/8 inches
Flight Time: Feb-July
Food Plants: Mostly
dodder, but also
Ceanothus

No tails, but hindwing
is turned downward.
Upperside ranges from
gray-brown to red-
brown. Underside is
chesnut brown with
iridescence and a
dark, postmedian line.
Hindwing is visibly
darker at the wing base.

Great Purple Hairstreak
Atlides halesus



Photo by Sally King

Size: 1 1/4 - 2 inches
Flight Time: Mar-Oct
Food Plants: mistletoe
in sycamores or
cottonwood

One short and one
long tail on hindwing.
Upperside is black with
vibrant blue iridescence.
Underside is black with
metallic gold markings
near the tail. Abdomen
is blue on top and red-
orange underneath.

California Hairstreak *Satyrium californica*



Size: 1 - 1 1/4 inches
Flight Time: May-Aug
Food Plants: *Ceanothus*
and oak

One long and one short tail on each hindwing. Upperside is brown with an orange spot on the hindwing near the tails. Underside is gray-brown with orange crescents and a blue patch near the tail. It also has a postmedian curve of black spots.

Photo by Christopher Christie

Mountain Mahogany Hairstreak *Satyrium tetra*



Size: 1 - 1 1/4 inches
Flight Time: May-July
Food Plants: mountain
mahogany

Males have short tail; females have a long tail (although it may be missing). Upperside is gray-brown. Underside is a mossy gray color with an ash overtone. There is an irregular, postmedian white line and a slate colored spot near the tail.

Photo by James Hogue

Gold-Hunter's Hairstreak

Satyrium auretorum auretorum



Photo by Harmut Wisch

Size: 1 - 1 1/4 inches
 Flight Time: May-July
 Food Plants: scrub oak

Short tail on hindwing.
 Upperside is red-brown
 with a yellow tint on
 females. Underside has
 an orange spot near the
 tail with a black center.

Santa Monica Mountains Hairstreak

Satyrium auretorum fumosum



This species is endemic to the Santa Monica Mountains. It is highly localized and threatened by urbanization.



Photo by Kim Davis, Mike Stangeland, and Andrew Warren

Size: 1/2 - 5/8 inch
 Flight Time: Apr-June
 Food Plants: scrub oak

Looks nearly identical
 to the Gold-Hunter's
 Hairstreak. The only
 noticeable difference is
 a darker ground color
 on both sides and a
 more prominent series
 of postmedian spots.

Western Pygmy Blue

Brephidium exilis



Photo by Sally King

Size: 1/2 - 3/4 inch
 Flight Time: year-round
 Food Plants: *Atriplex*
 (saltbush) and goosefoot

Very small. Upperside copper with slate blue wing bases and white fringe. Underside copper with white wing bases and markings. Edge of hindwing has a row of black circles. Three small black dots are near the base of the hindwing.

Marine Blue

Leptotes marina



Photo by Sally King

Size: 7/8 - 1 1/8 inches
 Flight Time: year-round
 Food Plants: *Plumbago*
 and various pea family

The underside of the forewing has rows of light brown bands that can be seen from the costa to the margin. Upperside is blue with a purple tint on males and no white on females.

"Bernardino" Dotted Blue
Euphiltoes bernardino



(c) 2007 Ron Hemberger

Size: 11/16 - 13/16 inch
Flight Time: Apr-Aug
Food Plants: California buckwheat

Males have blue upperside with a thin, black border on the outer margin. Females are brown and have an orange, submarginal band on the upper hindwing. Both are off-white on the underside and have black spots and an orange postmedian band on the hindwing.

Acmon Blue
Plebejus acmon



Size: 3/4 - 1 1/8 inches
Flight Time: Feb-Nov
Food Plants: deerweed, buckwheat

Upperside of males blue, females brown. Both sides have an orange-pink submarginal band. Underside white with black spots.

Silvery Blue
Glaucopsyche lygdamus



Size: 7/8 - 1 1/4 inches
Flight Time: Feb-May
Food Plants: *Lotus scoparius* (deerweed)

Upperside of males is silvery blue with thin, black borders and white fringe. Female is darker blue with wide, black borders and white fringe. Underside is gray-brown and hindwing has a crooked row of black dots outlined in white.

Western Tailed Blue
Cupido amyntula



Size: 7/8 - 1 1/8 inches
Flight Time: Feb-Sept
Food Plants: *Astragalus* (locoweed or rattleweed)

Tiny, thin tail. Upperside blue to brown-blue. Upper wings have black edging. Underside white with black markings and an orange spot near the tail.

Spring Azure

Celastrina ladon



Size: 7/8 - 1 3/8 inches
 Flight Time: Feb-July
 Food Plants: *Ceanothus*
 (wild lilac)

Upperside silvery blue with black outer edge on forewing of females. Underside varies from pale gray with faint dots to darker gray with larger, black spots.

Ceraunus Blue

Hemiargus ceraunus



Photo by Edith Smith

Size: 3/4 - 1 1/8 inches
 Flight Time: Mar-Oct
 Food Plants: pea family

Underside is gray with a row of postmedian dashes on each wing. For Southwest species, the hindwing has two submarginal eyespots. Upperside of males is blue; females is dark brown, usually with blue wing bases.

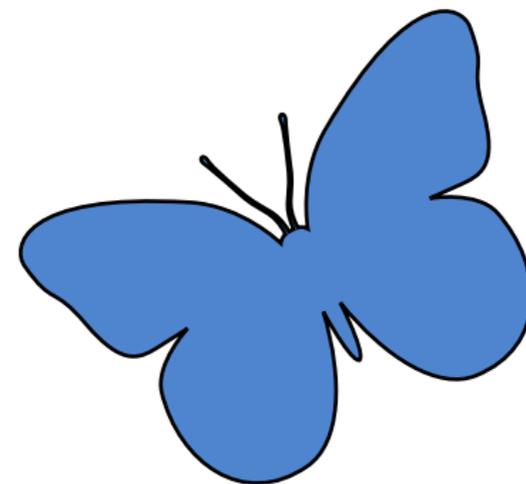
Sonoran Blue
Philotes sonorensis

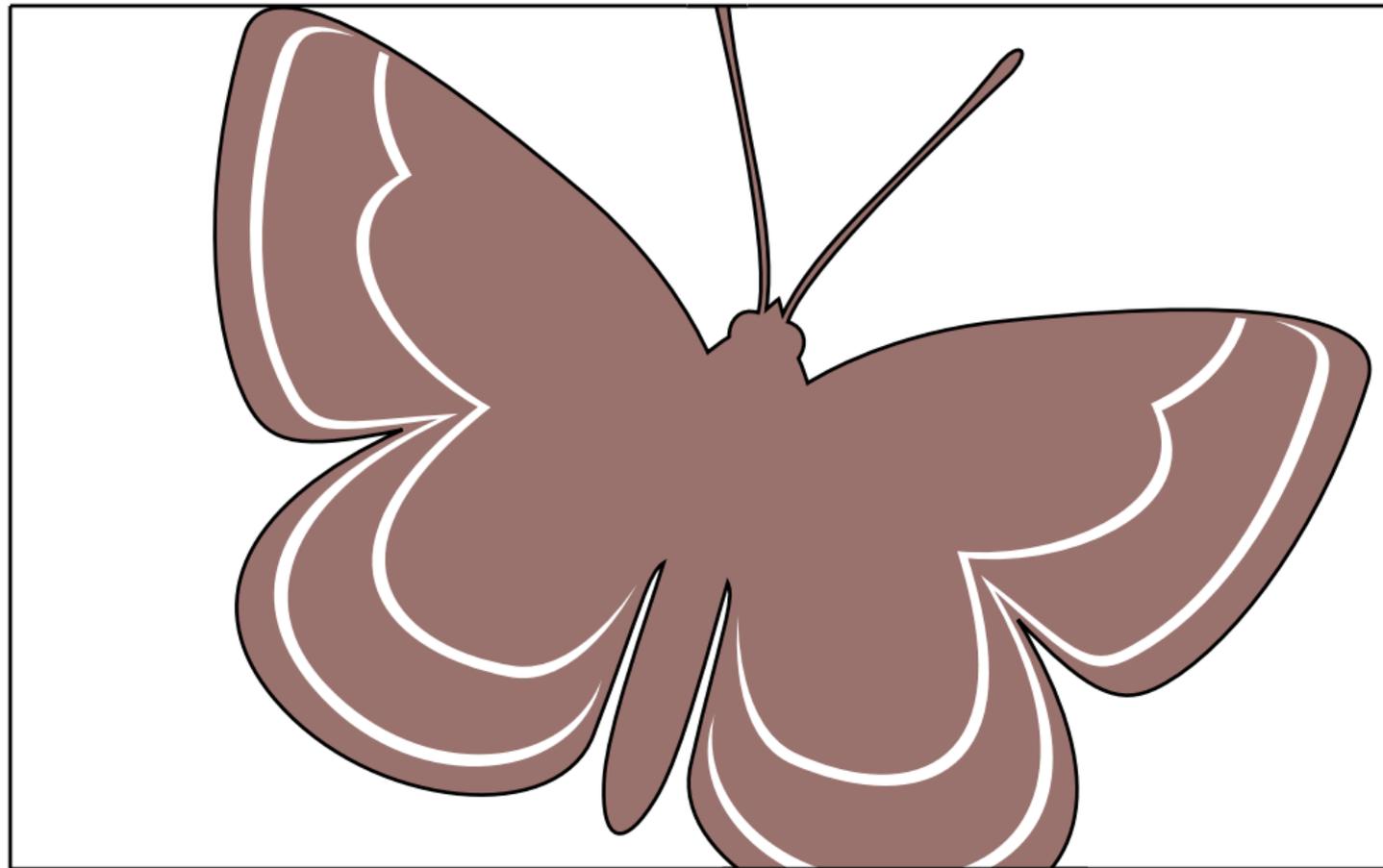


Photo by Jonathan Wright

Size: 7/8 - 1 inch
Flight Time: Mar-Apr
Food Plants: lance-leaved dudleya

The only Blue in North America with red spots on the forewing. Hindwing of female also has red spots. Upperside is silvery blue.





Metalmarks Riodinidae

Metalmarks range from small to medium in size. Species have lots of variation of patterns, posture, and behavior. It is easy to identify sex on Metalmarks because females will have three pairs of walking legs, but males will only have two. Their front legs are reduced.

Note: Unlike the other families, Metalmarks do not have subfamilies. Instead, the Metalmarks are divided into "Tribes." Both of the Santa Monica Mountains species are from the Riodinini Tribe.

Fatal/Dusky Metalmark
Calephelis nemesis



Photo by Stephen Holloway

Size: 3/4 - 1 inch
Flight Time: Feb-Oct
Food Plants: mule fat,
bush sunflower

Forewings on males
are pointed. Upperside
is brown with dark,
irregular median bands
on both wings.

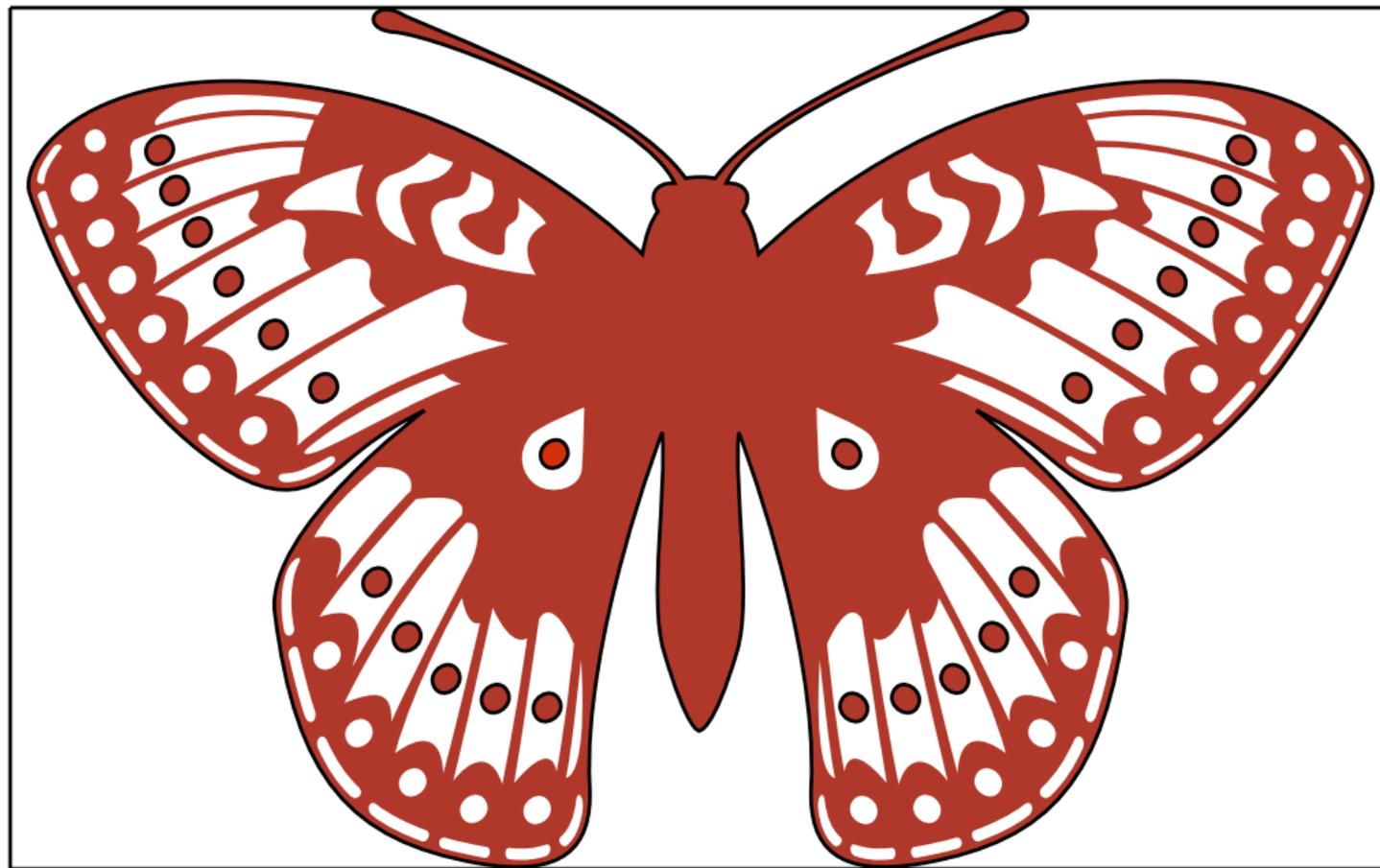
Mormon Metalmark
Apodemia mormo



Photo by Alan Wight

Size: 7/8 - 1 1/4 inches
Flight Time: Mar-Nov
Food Plants: California
buckwheat

Upperside ranges in
color from orange-
brown to black and
has white and black
spots. There is a patch
on the upperside and
underside forewings
that ranges from tan to
red. Underside is gray
and orange with white
spots.



Brushfoots

Nymphalidae

Subfamily	Common Name	Subfamily	Scientific Name	
	Fritillaries and Heliconians	Heliconiinae		55
	Anglewings, Checkerspots, Crescents	Nymphalinae		57
	Admirals and Sisters	Limenitidinae		68
	Nymphs and Ringlets	Satyrinae		70
	Milkweed Butterflies	Danainae		72

There are more species in the Nymphalidae family than any other family. Brushfoots have a lot of variation. Sizes can vary from small to large. All adults have reduced front legs which can not be used for walking. They are commonly orange, yellow, brown, or black. Some adults can live 6-11 months, the most of any butterfly.

Gulf Fritillary
Agraulis vanillae



Copyright Lynette Schimming

Size: 2 1/2 - 3 3/4 inches
Flight Time: year-round
Food Plants: passionvine

Bright orange with black markings and elongated forewings. Three white spots outlined in black on the edge of the forewing. Underside brown with an orange forewing base and large, iridescent silver spots.

● "Comstock's" Callippe Fritillary
Speyeria callippe comstocki



Photo by Kim Davis and Mike Stangeland

Size: 2 - 2 1/2 inches
Flight Time: May-July
Food Plants: violets

Upperside orange to red-brown with evenly spaced, black markings. Underside has silver spots, including three triangular shaped submarginal ones edged in brown.

Variable/Chalcedon Checkerspot *Euphydryas chalcedona*



Photo by Alan Wight

Size: 1 1/4 - 2 1/4 inches
Flight Time: Apr-June
Food Plants: bush
monkeyflower and
other figwort family

Highly variable.
Forewing is narrow.
Upperside ranges from
dark orange-brown to
black and may have
yellow, red, or white
spots. There are yellow
and orange bands
underneath the wings.

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*



Photo by Sally King

Size: 2 - 2 7/8 inches
Flight Time: year-round
Food Plants: thistle, mallow,
lupine, fiddleneck, among
others

Upperside orange and brown
with darker wing bases.
Forewing tips have a black
patch with a white bar on the
leading edge of the wing.
Hindwing on both sides have
four submarginal black spots,
sometimes with blue scaling.
Underside is a gray, brown,
and black pattern.

Common Buckeye
Junonia coenia



Photo by Jonathan Wright

Size: 1 5/8 - 2 3/4 inches
Flight Time: Feb-Nov
Food Plants: plantain,
snapdragon,
monkeyflower

Light brown with two
orange bars on the
front wings and four
eyespots on each side.
The larger hindwing
eyespot is the upper
one, and it contains a
pink-purple crescent.

Mourning Cloak
Nymphalis antiopa



Photo by Alan Wight

Size: 2 1/4 - 4 inches
Flight Time: year-round
Food Plants: willow,
cottonwood

Black with yellow
border on wings. Row
of bright blue spots
above yellow border.
Short projections
on hindwings and
forewings.

West Coast Lady
Vanessa annabella



Photo by Jonathan Wright

Size: 1 1/2 - 2 1/4 inches
Flight Time: year-round
Food Plants: mallows,
especially cheeseweed;
nettle

Upperside orange and brown with an orange bar on the front edge of the forewing. Three to four blue spots on the hindwing.

Red Admiral
Vanessa atalanta



Picture copyright 2006 J.K. Lindsey

Size: 1 3/4 - 3 inches
Flight Time: year-round
Food Plants: nettles

Black with white spots on the wing tips. Red-orange median band on forewing and red-orange marginal band on hindwing.

Note: Despite its name, the Red Admiral is actually considered to be a "True Brushfoot," NOT an "Admiral."

Mylitta/Thistle Crescent
Phyciodes mylitta



Photo by Alan Wight

Size: 1 1/8 - 1 1/2 inches
Flight Time: Mar-Oct
Food Plants: native and non-native thistles

Upperside is vibrant orange with narrow, dark brown markings. Underside is yellow-orange with blurry red-orange markings.

American Lady
Vanessa virginiensis



Photo by Kim Davis and Mike Stangeland

Size: 1 3/4 - 2 5/8 inches
Flight Time: year-round
Food Plants:
Gnaphalium
(everlasting)

Upperside orange with a black apical patch on forewing tip. Below the patch is an orange marking with a white spot. Underside of hindwing has two large eyespots.

Satyr Comma/Satyr Anglewing
Polygonia satyrus



Photo copyright Michelle Brodie

Size: 1 3/4 - 2 1/2 inches
Flight Time: Feb-Sept
Food Plants: stinging nettle

Conspicuous wing edges. Golden-orange with black patches and a dark border on the forewing. Underside resembles a dead leaf when wings are closed.

California Tortoiseshell
Nymphalis californica



Photo by Kim Davis and Mike Stangeland

Size: 1 1/4 - 2 3/4 inches
Flight Time: Apr-Sept
Food Plants: *Ceanothus* (wild lilac)

Jagged wing edges. Orange-brown with dark wing borders and large black patches on the edge of the front wing. Underside resembles a dead leaf and has dark wing bases.

Gabb's Checkerspot

Chlosyne gabbii



Size: 1 1/4 - 1 3/4 inches
 Flight Time: Mar-July
 Food Plants: wooly aster, telegraph weed, other asters

Upperside has an orange-brown and black checkered pattern. The median band is slightly lighter in color. The underside of the hindwing has pearl-white spots.

California Sister

Adelpha bredowii californica



Size: 2 1/2 - 4 inches
 Flight Time: Mar-Oct
 Food Plants: oaks

Upperside is brown-black with large, orange patches near the brown-black wing tips. A white band of spots spans the forewing to the hindwing on either side. Underside has blue bands near the base and the hindwing margin.

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Lorquin's Admiral
Limenitis lorquini



Photo by Jonathan Wright

Size: 2 - 2 5/8 inches
Flight Time: Apr-Oct
Food Plants: willows

Upperside is black-brown with white median bands on forewing and hindwing. The most distinguishable characteristic from the California Sister is the orange wing tips.

"California" Common Ringlet
Coenonympha tullia californica



Size: 1 1/3 - 1 1/2 inches
Flight Time: Feb-Sept
Food Plants: bunch grasses

Cream and beige pattern with tiny black dots on the wings. Underside of hindwing is an ashy-moss coloring with a wavy, white median line.

Great Basin Wood Nymph

Cercyonis sthenele silvestris



Size: 1 3/8 - 1 3/4 inch
 Flight Time: May-Aug
 Food Plants: bunch grasses

Brown upperside with two eyespots - they are small in males, larger in females. Eyespots are equidistant to the outer edge of the wing. On the underside of the hind wing, an irregular dark line separates the lighter, outer half from the darker, basal half.

Monarch

Danaus plexippus



Size: 3 3/8 - 4 7/8 inches
 Flight Time: year-round
 Food Plants: milkweed

Upperside bright orange with black veins and wide, black borders. Upperside of female has blurred black veins and is more orange-brown. White spots are found on the borders and the apex.

Photo by Sally King

Queen
Danaus gilippus

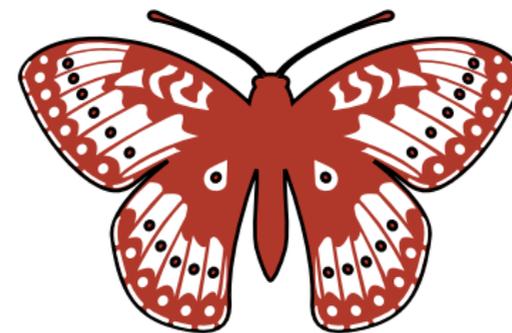


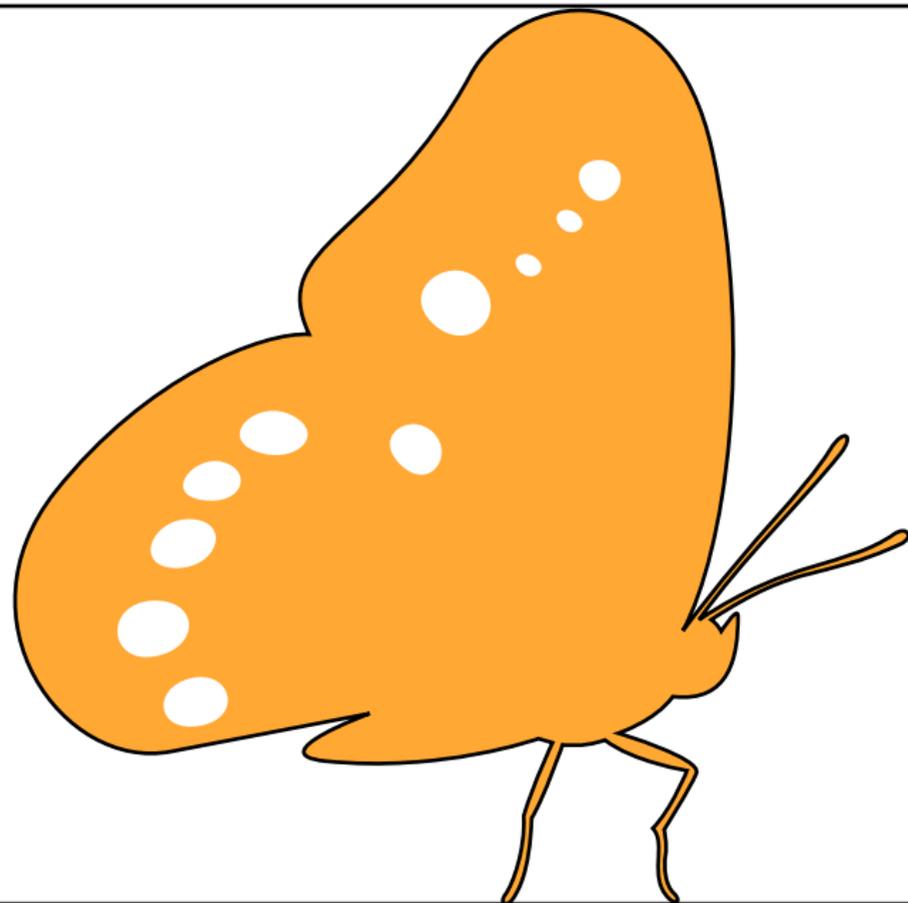
Size: 2 5/8 - 3 7/8 inches
Flight Time: Mar-Nov
Food Plants: milkweed

Upperside is chesnut brown with black borders. There are two rows of white dots on the forewing borders. Underside of hindwing has black veins. Both wings have black borders with two rows of white dots.



Photo by Sally King





Skippers Hesperiidae

Subfamily Common Name	Subfamily Scientific Name	
Spread-wing Skippers	Pyrginae	77
Grass Skippers	Hesperiinae	82

Unlike the other families who are all members of the Superfamily Papilionoidea, Skippers are members of the Superfamily Hesperoidea. Skippers are medium to small in size. Though a few have iridescent colors, most are orange, brown, black, white, or gray. Species from this family are easily identifiable by their large eyes, stout bodies, and short antennae that are often shaped like hooked clubs.

Northern White Skipper *Heliopetes ericetorum*



Photo by Alan Wight

Size: 1 1/4 - 1 1/2 inches
Flight Time: Feb-Oct
Food Plants: mallows,
especially bush mallow

Upperside of males is white with black markings at outer margin. Females are dark at the wing base and have thicker, dark markings. Both have a white underside with beige markings.

Mournful Duskywing *Erynnis tristis*



Photo by Alan Wight

Size: 1 1/4 - 1 15/16 inches
Flight Time: Feb-Sept
Food Plants: oaks

Upperside dark brown with a lighter brown pattern. Hindwing has white fringe. Underside is dark brown with a line of white spots near the margin.

Funereal Duskywing
Erynnis funeralis



Photo by Kim Davis and Mike Stangeland

Size: 1 5/16 - 1 3/4 inches
Flight Time: Feb-Oct
Food Plants: deerweed
and other pea family

Narrow, pointed
forewing and triangular
hindwing. Upperside is
black and forewing has
a dull brown patch at
the cell.

White Checkered Skipper
Pyrgus albescens



Size: 1 - 1 1/2 inches
Flight Time: Mar-Oct
Food Plants: mallows

Upperside ranges from
blue-gray to black
with large, white spots
forming a median band
across both wings.
Underside is dull white
with charcoal bands.

Propertius Duskywing
Erynnis propertius



Photo by Barry Breckling

Size: 1 3/8 - 1 3/4 inches
Flight Time: Mar-June
Food Plants: coast live oak

Upperside brown with gray overscaling. Hindwing has light spots.

Fiery Skipper
Hylephila phyleus



Photo by Alan Wight

Size: 1 1/4 - 1 1/2 inches
Flight Time: year-round
Food Plants: grasses, including crab grass

Very short antennae. Underside of males has small black spots; underside of females light brown with pale checks. Males have black stigma. Upperside of females is dark brown and orange.

Woodland Skipper

Ochlodes sylvanoides



Photo by Alan Wight

Size: 1 - 1 1/4 inches
 Flight Time: July-Oct
 Food Plants: grasses,
 including rye grass

Upperside orange with reddish-brown markings. Males have a large black stigma; females have a black diagonal band. Underside ranges from red to yellow to brown, and hindwing may be completely unmarked or have a band of cream or yellow spots.

Sandhill Skipper

Polites sabuleti



Photo by Kim Davis and Mike Stangeland

Size: 7/8 - 1 1/4 inches
 Flight Time: Apr-Sept
 Food Plants: saltgrasses

Yellow-orange to brown with dark, jagged borders on upperside. Hindwing underside has yellow veins in a cobweb pattern around dark chevrons. Dark spots at outer margin where veins end.

Rural Skipper
Ochlodes agricola



Photo by Kim Davis and Mike Stangeland

Size: 7/8 - 1 1/8 inches
Flight Time: Apr-July
Food Plants: grasses

Upperside is yellow-orange with black borders and a translucent spot near the tip of the upper wing. Underside is rust colored.

Umber Skipper
Poanes melane



Photo by Alan Wight

Size: 1 1/4 - 1 3/8 inches
Flight Time: Jan-Nov
Food Plants: grasses

Upperside is brown with pale spots and a golden band on hindwing. Underside is brown with larger, lighter colored spots. Females are lighter in color.

Orange Skipperling
Copaeodes aurantiaca



Photo by Kim Davis and Mike Stangeland

Size: 3/4 - 1 1/8 inches
Flight Time: Apr-Sept
Food Plants: grasses

Both sides are orange. Males have a thin, black stigma on the forewing below the cell. Females may have black edging on the forewing.

Sachem
Atalopedes campestris



Photo by Greg Lasley

Size: 1 1/4 - 1 5/8 inches
Flight Time: Apr-Nov
Food Plants: grasses

Males are yellow-orange with a large black stigma and brown borders. Females are yellow-brown to dark brown with a square-shaped clear spot at the end of the forewing cell. Underside of females is brown with white spots.

Eufala Skipper

Lerodea eufala



Photo by Kim Davis and Mike Stangeland

Size: 1 - 1 1/4 inches
Flight Time: Jun-Nov
Food Plants: grasses

Upperside is gray brown with 3-5 small, clear spots on the forewing. Underside is brown, with heavy, gray overscaling on the hindwing.

Wandering Skipper

Panoquina errans



Photo by Dennis Walker

Size: 1 - 1 1/4 inches
Flight Time: July-Sept
Food Plants: Saltgrasses

Upperside is mossy-brown with a row of small, transparent spots on the forewing only. The underside of the hindwing is brown with a short curve of 3-5 light spots.

Index

<i>Abaeis nicippe</i>	21	<i>Celastrina ladon</i>	45
Acmon Blue	42	Ceraunus Blue	46
<i>Adelpha bredowii californica</i>	68	<i>Cercyonis sthenele silvestris</i>	71
<i>Agraulis vanillae</i>	55	Chalcedon Checkerspot	57
Alfalfa Sulphur	19	Checkered White	16
American Lady	64	<i>Chlosyne gabii</i>	67
Anise Swallowtail	10	Cloudless Sulphur	23
<i>Anthocharis sara</i>	17	Coastal Green Hairstreak	
<i>Apodemia mormo</i>	52		(see Bramble Hairstreak)
<i>Atalopedes campestris</i>	88	<i>Coenonympha tullia californica</i>	70
<i>Atlides halesus</i>	34	<i>Colias eurytheme</i>	19
Becker's White	18	<i>Colias harfordii</i>	20
Bramble Hairstreak	32	Common Buckeye	59
Bernardino Dotted Blue	41	"Comstock's" Callippe Fritillary	56
<i>Brephidium exilis</i>	39	<i>Copaeodes aurantiaca</i>	87
Brown Elfin	33	<i>Cupido amyntula</i>	44
Cabbage White	15	Dainty Sulphur	22
<i>Calephelis nemesis</i>	51	<i>Danaus gilippus</i>	73
"California" Common Ringlet	70	<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	72
California Dogface	24	Dusky Metalmark	51
California Hairstreak	35	Dwarf Yellow	
California Sister	68		(see Dainty Sulphur)
California Tortoiseshell	66	<i>Erynnis funeralis</i>	79
<i>Callophrys augustinus</i>	33	<i>Erynnis propertius</i>	81
<i>Callophrys dumetorum</i>	32	<i>Erynnis tristis</i>	78

Eufala Skipper	89	<i>Lycaena arota</i>	28
<i>Euphilotes benardino</i>	41	<i>Lycaena gorgon</i>	27
<i>Euphydryas chalcedona</i>	57	Marine Blue	40
Fatal Metalmark	51	Monarch	72
Fiery Skipper	82	Mormon Metalmark	52
Funereal Duskywing	79	Mountain Mahogany Hairstreak	36
Gabb's Checkerspot	67	Mournful Duskywing	78
Giant Swallowtail	12	Mourning Cloak	60
<i>Glaucopsyche lygdamus</i>	43	Mylitta Crescent	63
Gold-Hunters Hairstreak	37	<i>Nathalis iole</i>	22
Gorgon Copper	27	Northern White Skipper	77
Gray Hairstreak	29	<i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>	60
Great Basin Wood Nymph	71	<i>Nymphalis californica</i>	66
Great Purple Hairstreak	34	<i>Ochlodes agricola</i>	85
Gulf Fritillary	55	<i>Ochlodes sylvanoides</i>	83
Harford's Sulphur	20	Orange Skipperling	87
Hedgerow Hairstreak	31	Orange Sulphur	19
<i>Heliopetes ericetorum</i>	77	Painted Lady	58
<i>Hemiargus ceraunus</i>	46	Pale Swallowtail	11
<i>Hylephila phyleus</i>	82	<i>Panoquina errans</i>	90
<i>Junonia coenia</i>	59	<i>Papilio cresphontes</i>	12
<i>Leptotes marina</i>	40	<i>Papilio eurymedon</i>	11
<i>Lerodea eufala</i>	89	<i>Papilio rutulus</i>	9
<i>Limenitis lorquini</i>	69	<i>Papilio zelicaon</i>	10
Lorquin's Admiral	69	Perplexing Hairstreak	
			(see Bramble Hairstreak)

<i>Philotes sonorensis</i>	47	<i>Satyrium tetra</i>	36
<i>Phoebis sennae</i>	23	Silvery Blue	43
<i>Phyciodes mylitta</i>	63	Sleepy Orange	21
<i>Pieris rapae</i>	15	Sonoran Blue	47
<i>Plebejus acmon</i>	42	<i>Speyeria callippe comstocki</i>	56
<i>Poanes melane</i>	86	Spring Azure	45
<i>Polites sabuleti</i>	84	<i>Strymon melinus</i>	29
<i>Polygonia satyrus</i>	65	Sylvan Hairstreak	30
<i>Pontia beckerii</i>	18	Tailed Copper	28
<i>Pontia protodice</i>	16	Thistle Crescent	63
Propertius Duskywing	81	Umber Skipper	86
<i>Pyrgus albescens</i>	80	<i>Vanessa annabella</i>	61
Queen	73	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	62
Red Admiral	62	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	58
Rural Skipper	85	<i>Vanessa virginiensis</i>	64
Sachem	88	Variable Checkerspot	57
Sandhill Skipper	84	Wandering Skipper	90
Santa Monica Mountains Hairstreak	38	West Coast Lady	61
Sara Orangetip	17	Western Elfin	
Satyr Anglewing	65	(see Brown Elfin)	
Satyr Comma	65	Western Pygmy Blue	39
<i>Satyrium auretteum</i>	37	Western Tailed Blue	44
<i>Satyrium auretteum fumosum</i>	38	Western Tiger Swallowtail	9
<i>Satyrium californica</i>	35	White Checkered Skipper	80
<i>Satyrium saepium</i>	31	Woodland Skipper	83
<i>Satyrium sylvinus</i>	30	<i>Zerene eurydice</i>	24

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