IBMN’s Top 25

Twenty-five species that should show up on everyone’s site sooner or later
Tiger Swalowtail

*Papilio glaucus*

- Large, typically yellow
- Tiger Stripes
- Tails on hindwings
- A canopy species
Tiger Swallowtail

*Papilio glaucus*

- Some females are dark
- Extensive blue on hindwing
- Tiger striping faintly visible, especially below
- No yellow above
Black Swallowtail
*Papilio polyxenes*

- A meadow species
- Smaller than Tiger Swallowtail
- Males have prominent yellow spots
Black Swallowtail

*Papilio polyxenes*

- A meadow species
- Smaller than Tiger Swallowtail
- Males have prominent yellow spots
- Females lack prominent yellow spots, have more extensive blue areas
Cabbage White

*Pieris rapae*

- Medium Sized
- One of just two common white butterflies
- Black wing tips
Common/Orange Sulphur
*Colias eurytheme/philodice*

- Medium Sized
- Very common yellow or orange species
- Black wing borders above
- Prominent silvery spot below
Common/Orange Sulphur
*Colias eurytheme/philodice*

- We don’t distinguish the 2 species
- Some females are white
- Distinguish from cabbage whites with dark border, bright white spot in center of hindwing
Eastern Tailed Blue
* Cupido comyntas *

- Tiny
- Orange spot on edge of hindwing, visible above and below
- Tail breaks off readily
- When not flying, frequently basks with wings open
- Males bright blue above
Eastern Tailed Blue
*Cupido comyntas*

- Tiny
- Orange spot on edge of hindwing, visible above and below
- Tail breaks off readily
- When not flying, frequently basks with wings open
- Females mouse gray above
Eastern Tailed Blue
*Cupido comyntas*

- Tiny
- Orange spot on edge of hindwing, visible above and below
- Tail breaks off readily
- Both sexes white with black spots below
Spring/Summer Azure

*Celastrina ladon/neglecta*

- No orange spots above or below
- Below white or gray with irregular dark spots, lines, and chevrons
Spring/Summer Azure
*Celastrina ladon/neglecta*

- Females above are white to blue with wide dark border on forewings
- Males are uniform bright blue above
- This species very rarely opens its wings to bask (and even then will do so only part way)
Viceroy
*Limenitis archippus*

- Mimics the monarch
- Feeds on willows, so fairly common in wetlands
- Known to wander away from wetlands
Monarch

*Danaus plexippus*

- A common, widespread species
- Migratory
- Toxic- colors are warning of toxicity
- Found in many habitats
How to tell a Monarch from a Viceroy

Viceroy

Monarch

Line

No Line
Red-spotted Purple

*Limenitis astyanax*

- Neither red spotted nor purple
- Part of a mimicry ring involving lager black butterflies
- Hindwings metallic blue with no yellow, white or orange spots above
Red-spotted Purple
*Limenitis astyanax*

- Below, reddish brown spots
Hackberry Emperor

*Asterocampa celtis*

- Gray/brown
- White spots at apex of forewing
- Found in partly shaded to shaded areas
Question Mark

*Polygonia interrogationis*

- Has seasonal color forms
- Hindwings dark in summer form, orange in spring/fall form
- Very strong hooks at forewing tips, tails on hindwings
Question Mark

*Polygonia interrogationis*

- Silvery spot (the “question mark”) is in two pieces on the underside of the hindwing
Eastern Comma

*Polygonia comma*

- Hooks on forewings less pronounced than question mark
- Hindwing tails stubbier than question mark
- Like the question mark, there are two seasonal forms
- Summer form has dark hindwings
- Spring/fall form has orange hindwings
Eastern Comma

*Polygonia comma*

- Below, the silvery mark (the “comma”) is a single piece with hooked ends.
Anglewing
“Punctuation Marks”

Question Mark
2 Pieces

Eastern Comma
Hooked Ends

Gray Comma
Tapered
Mourning Cloak
*Nymphalis antiopa*

- Irregularly shaped wings
- Yellow marginal band is distinctive
Red Admiral
*Vanessa atalanta*

- Upper side is unmistakable
- Especially common in urban areas
Red Admiral

Vanessa atalanta

• Upper side is unmistakable
• Especially common in urban areas
• Under side is cryptic
American Lady

*Vanessa virginiensis*

- Orange subapical band
- Blue centers in submarginal hindwing dots
- White dot on forewing
American Lady
*Vanessa virginiensis*

- Orange subapical band
- Blue centers in submarginal hindwing dots
- White dot on forewing
- Two large eyespots on hindwing below
Painted Lady
*Vanessa cardui*

- White subapical band
- Submarginal hindwing dots solid or with tiny blue center
- No white dot on forewing
Painted Lady
*Vanessa cardui*

- White subapical band
- Submarginal hindwing dots solid or with tiny blue center
- No white dot on forewing
- Four smaller eyespots on hindwing below
Buckeye

*Junonia coenia*

- Vividly colored
- Pair of red bands on leading edge of forewing
- Large, multi-colored spots
Pearl Crescent
*Phyciodes tharos*

- Small
- Orange with brown lines
- Spots along margin of hindwing are solid
Pearl Crescent

*Phyciodes tharos*

- Small
- Orange with brown lines
- Spots along margin of hindwing are solid
- Below, distinctly bicolored- orange forewings and yellow hindwings
Great Spangled Fritillary
*Speyeria cybele*

- Large- monarch size
- Above, tawny orange with dark lines and spots
Great Spangled Fritillary
*Speyeria cybele*

- Large- monarch size
- Above, tawny orange with dark lines and spots
- Below, buff/brown with prominent silver spots
Little Wood Satyr

*Megisto cymela*

- Medium size
- Rounded wings
- Each wing has a pair of prominent yellow-rimmed spots
Little Wood Satyr

*Megisto cymela*

- Medium size
- Rounded wings
- Each wing has a pair of prominent yellow-rimmed spots
- Spots sometimes expand to double spots, especially below
Northern Pearly Eye
*Lethe anthedon*

- Medium size
- Largest of the satyrs
- Outer edge of hindwing scalloped
- 4 (sometimes 5) eyespots on hind wing-about the same size
Northern Pearly Eye

*Lethe anthedon*

- Medium size
- Largest of the satyrs
- Outer edge of hindwing scalloped
- 4 (sometimes 5) eyespots on hind wing—about the same size
- Prominent dark bands on underside
Eyed Brown

*Lethe eurydice*

- Medium size
- Outer edge of hindwing rounded
- 4 (sometimes 5) eyespots on hind wing-about the same size
- Medium brown
Eyed Brown  
*Lethe eurydice*

- Medium size
- Outer edge of hindwing rounded
- 4 (sometimes 5) eyespots on hind wing—about the same size
- Medium brown
- Thin brown bands on underside—may be difficult to see
Wood Nymph
*Cercyonis pegala*

- Medium size
- Fresh individuals look black
- Two prominent eyespots on forewing
- The orange band shown around the forewing eyespots in some field guides is absent in our populations, though a light patch is visible there in some worn individuals.
Silver-spotted Skipper

*Epargyreus clarus*

- Medium size (large for a skipper)
- Silver spot only visible on underside
- Yellow band on forewings visible both above and below
Generic Skipper (folded wing)

- Small
- Various combinations of brown, orange, yellow
- Bask by opening their hindwings while keeping their forewings closed (paper airplane or fighter jet position)