

In addition to entertaining us with their bright colors and interesting life histories, butterflies serve as easily observed indicators of the biotic diversity and the true degree of unaltered natural environment retained in any local area. This is due to their attachment to an array of specialized host plants and to their sensitivity to environmental disturbances and introduced chemical agents during the larval stage. Thus, the variety of butterfly species recorded from a local survey can contribute to an environmental understanding, and the survey activity can offer a pleasant pastime for sunny spring and summer days. This checklist is provided to aid in this endeavor by summarizing the known diversity and biological data of butterfly species at the county level. This checklist is an update to those provided by Richard. H. Smith (1993, 2000, 2011, 2014, and 2016) and is dedicated to his memory. For identifying features, the user is advised to consult the *Butterflies through Binoculars, the East* by Glassberg, the *Butterflies of the Mid-Atlantic* by Blakney and Gallagher, or the *Butterflies of Indiana* by Belth.

Especially notable butterfly occurrence areas in Howard County include the Howard County Conservancy, Patapsco Valley State Park, many county parks, the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area, and other Middle Patuxent River parkland and open space areas, county garden rental plots, and many local and accessible powerline rights-of-way.

The flight period column in the checklist represents typical rather than absolute appearance times and uses the following abbreviations: E - first 10-day period; M - middle 10-day period; and L - last 10-day period of the month.

The Occurrence Levels (OL) in the checklist generally reflects the number of specimens seen during the first 11 years of the butterfly survey (2014-2024). Butterflies labeled as R/E have not been seen in >15 yrs and E have not been seen in >25 yrs.

A - Abundant >10,000
C - Common >2,500 to <10,000
C/U – Common/Uncommon >1,000 to <2,500
U - Uncommon >400 to <1,000
U/R – Uncommon/Rare >100 to <400
R - Rare 0 to 100 in survey or seen between 2010 and 2013*
R/E – Rare/Extirpated Not seen in the last 15 years*
E - Extirpated Unreported in the last 25 years*

*If rare/extirpated or extirpated species are seen in the county, please contact Kevin Heffernan, kjheff122@gmail.com or the Howard County Bird Club.

SPECIES	OL	FLIGHT PERIOD	HABITAT	TYPICALLY VISITS	LARVAL HOST PLANTS
Spread-winged Skippers					
Silver-spotted Skipper	A	M-April to L-Oct	Open woods, fields & gardens	Variety of flowers	Locusts, tick trefoils, wisteria
Long-tailed Skipper	R	L-Aug to L-Oct	Gardens, open roadsides	Variety of flowers	Beans, legume vines
Hoary Edge	R/E	M-Jun to E-Jul	Fields & forest edges	Red clover, milkweed	Tick trefoils
Southern Cloudywing	U/R	M-May to L-Jun, E-Aug	Dry fields at woods edges	Indian hemp (dogbane)	Tick trefoils, bush clover
Northern Cloudywing	U/R	M-May to E-Jul	Dry fields at woods edges	Indian hemp (dogbane)	Tick trefoils, bush clover
Hayhurst's Scallopwing	R	L-Jul to M-Aug	Woods edges along streams	Burdock	Lamb's quarters
Dreamy Duskywing	R/E	E-May to E-Jun	Dry fields & woods trails	Mud puddles	Willows, poplars, aspens
Sleepy Duskywing	R/E	M-Apr to E-May	Woods trails & edges	Mud puddles	Scrub oak
Juvenal's Duskywing	U	E-Apr to L-May	Woods trails & edges	mud puddles	Red oaks, white oaks
Horace's Duskywing	U	E-Apr to E-Oct	Woods (May), marshes (Jul)	Buttonbush	Red oaks, white oaks
Wild Indigo Duskywing	C	E- Apr to L-Oct	Open areas, powerline cuts	Variety of flowers	Wild indigo & crown vetch
Common Checkered-Skipper	C/U	E-May to L-Nov	Open, weedy areas	White clover	Mallows, hollyhocks
Common Sootywing	R	M-May to E-Sept	Gardens & fields	White sweet clover	Lamb's quarters
Grass Skippers					
Swarthy Skipper	U/R	M-May to L-Sept	Dry fields with broomsedge	Low grassblades	Little bluestem beardgrass
Clouded Skipper	R	E-June to M-Nov	Brushy wet meadows	New York ironweed	Woolly beardgrass
Least Skipper	C	E-May to L-Oct	Grassy stream edges	Broad grass blades	Bluegrass, rice cutgrass
European Skipper	R/E	M to L-Jun	Fields with tall grass	Purple vetch	Timothy grass
Fiery Skipper	C/U	L-May to M-Nov	Marshy areas	Tickseed sunflower	Crabgrass, Bermuda grass
Leonard's Skipper	E	E-Sep	Barrens areas	Blazing star	Bluestem beardgrass
Peck's Skipper	C	E-May to E-Nov	Wet Meadows	New York Ironweed	Rice cutgrass
Tawny-edged Skipper	U	M-May to M-Oct	Wet Meadows	New York Ironweed	Panic grasses
Crossline Skipper	U	L-May to M- Sept	Wet meadows, dry hillsides	Swamp milkweed	Purpletop grass
Southern Broken-Dash	U/R	E-Jun to M-Sept	Weedy fields	Pea vine, composites	Paspalum, large crabgrass
Northern Broken-Dash	U/R	M-Jun to M-Sep	Weedy fields	Indian hemp, milkweed	Panic grasses
Little Glassywing	C	M-May to E-Oct	Wet meadows & woods edges	New York Ironweed	Purpletop grass
Sachem	A	E-May to M-Nov	Lawns, fields, & marshes	Tickseed sunflower	Crabgrass, Bermuda grass
Delaware Skipper	E	M-Jul	Marshes near dry fields	Common milkweed	Little bluestem beardgrass
Mulberry Wing	R	L-Jun to M-Jul	Interiors of sedge marshes	Swamp milkweed	Tussock sedge
Hobomok Skipper	U/R	E-May to L-Jun	Woods trails & edges	Blackberry blossoms	Panic grass, bluegrass
Zabulon Skipper	C	L-Apr to L-Oct	Woods trails & edges	Leaf & branch tips	Purpletop grass, lovegrass
Broad-winged Skipper	R	E-Jun to M-Sep	Near ponds with phragmites	Milkweeds, Can. thistle	Phragmites, wild rice, mrsh millet
Black Dash	E	L-Jun to E-Jul	Interiors of sedge marshes	Swamp milkweed	Tussock sedge
Dun Skipper	U/R	L-May to E-Oct	Marsh edges	Common milkweed	Sedges, grasses
Dusted Skipper	R	M-May to E-Jun	Dry fields with beardgrass	Low grassblades	Little bluestem beardgrass
Common Roadside-Skipper	E	L-May & L-Jul	Dry, grassy woods clearings	Blackberry blossoms	Bluegrass, wild oats, bentgrass
Brazilian Skipper	R	Sept to Oct	Gardens, residential areas	Butterfly bush	Cannas
Ocola Skipper	U	L-Jun to E-Nov	Wet meadows	New York ironweed	Grasses
Swallowtails					
Pipevine Swallowtail	U/R	M-Apr to M-Nov	Fields & marshes near woods	Swamp milkweed	Dutchman's Pipe, Va. snakeroot
Zebra Swallowtail	U/R	L-Mar to L-Sept	River edges	Highbush blueberry	Pawpaw
Black Swallowtail	C/U	M-Apr to L-Oct	Open, weedy fields & marshes	Common milkweed	Queen Anne's lace, parsley
Giant Swallowtail	R	L-Aug to E-Oct	Gardens	Gardens flowers	Common Rue, wafer ash
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	A	E-Apr to M-Oct	Fields & gardens	Joe-Pye weed, thistles	Tulip popular & wild cherry
Spicebush Swallowtail	C	E-Apr to M-Oct	Woods trails, edges & gardens	Joe-Pye weed, thistles	Spicebush & saffras
Whites & Sulphurs					
Checkered White	R	L-Jun to E-Oct	Trails in open weedy areas	White clover	Peppergrass, shepherd's purse
Cabbage White	A	E-Mar to L-Nov	Fields & woods trails	Canada thistle	Crucifers (mustards & cabbage)
Falcate Orangetip	U/R	L-Mar to E-May	Open woods	Mustards	Rock cress
Clouded Sulphur	C	M-Mar to L-Dec	Open woods, clover fields	Clover blossoms	Clovers

Cover: Eastern Tiger Swallowtail by Connie Bockstie

(continued on other side)

SPECIES	OL	FLIGHT PERIOD	HABITAT	TYPICALLY VISITS	LARVAL HOST PLANTS
Orange Sulphur	A	L-Feb to L-Dec	Open fields, alfalfa fields	Red clover	Covers & vetches
Cloudless Sulphur	C/U	L-May to L-Nov	Open fields	Sennas, partridge pea	Sennas
Little Yellow	R	L-Aug-E-Oct	Sandy fields & hillsides	Sennas, partridge pea	Sennas (esp wild wensitive plt)
Sleepy Orange	C	M-Mar to M-Nov	Field edges and weedy areas	Wild senna	Wild senna
Dainty Sulphur	R	M-Sep to L-Oct	Dry weedy fields, powerlines	Low flowers	Green carpetweed
Gossamer-wings					
Harvester	R	E-May to E-Oct	Wet, bushy woods trails	Mud puddles near alders	Larvae feed on woolly aphids
American Copper	U/R	M-Apr to L-Oct	Weedy, grassy fields	White clover	Sheep sorrel
Bronze Copper	R	L-Jul to L-Oct	Marshes & wet meadows	Indian hemp (dogbane)	Water dock & curled dock
Coral Hairstreak	R	M-Jun to M- July	Old fields, powerline cuts	Butterflyweed	Wild cherry, chokeberry
Banded Hairstreak	U/R	E-Jun to M-July	Woods trails & edges	Indian hemp, milkweed	Various oaks
Striped Hairstreak	R	L-Jun	Swamp & marsh edges	Indian hemp, N.J. tea	Blueberry, hawthorn
Red-banded Hairstreak	U	M-Apr to M-Nov	Woods edges, brushy areas	Leaf tips, Indian hemp	Fallen leaves of sumacs & oaks
Juniper Hairstreak	U/R	E-Apr & L-Jul	Mature red cedar groves	Red cedar treetops	Red cedar
Brown Elfin	R/E	L-Apr	Woods trails & edges	Laurel leaves	Huckleberry
Henry's Elfin	R	E-Apr to E-May	Woodland opening, swamps	Phlox, Redbud, puddles	Ea Redbud, American Holly
Eastern Pine Elfin	R	M-Apr to E-Jun	Open scrub pine groves	Pussytoes	Various hard pines
Northern Oak Hairstreak	R	L-May to E-Jun	Oak woodlands & edges	Indian hemp (dogbane)	Scrub oak, post oak
White M Hairstreak	R	E-Apr to M-Oct	Woods clearings & edges	Lance-leaved goldenrod	Oaks
Gray Hairstreak	C/U	M-Apr to M-Nov	Open fields & roadsides	White clover, trefoils	Tick trefoil, vetch, clovers
Eastern Tailed-Blue	A	E-Apr to M-Nov	Open fields & roadsides	White clover, trefoils	Tick trefoils, clovers
Spring Azure	R	E-Apr to E-May	Woods trails & edges	Mud puddles	Dogwood, wild cherry
Summer Azure	C	M-Mar to E-Nov	Woods trails & edges	Mud puddles	Viburnum, wingstem
Appalachian Azure	E	E to M-May	Steep wooded valleys	Mud puddles, leaf tips	Black cohosh
Brushfoots					
American Snout	U/R	L-Mar to L-Oct	Roadsides, woods edges	Mud puddles	Hackberry
Variiegated Fritillary	C	L-May to M-Nov	Dry fields & gardens	Red clover, pansies	Violets & pansies
Great Spangled Fritillary	U	M-May to E-Oct	Fields & gardens	Milkweeds, thistles	Yellow & blue violets
Regal Fritillary	E	L-Jun to L-Jul	Dry, tall grassy meadows	Butterflyweed, thistles	Birdfoot & arrow-leaved violets
Silver-bordered Fritillary	E	Jun & L-Aug	Tall woody wet meadows	Indian hemp, spearmint	Marsh violets
Meadow Fritillary	U	E-Apr to E-Oct	Grassy wet meadows	Indian hemp, spearmint	Wooly blue violets
Silvery Checkerspot	U	M-Apr to M--Sep	Woods trails along rivers	Sunflower	Wingstem & wild sunflower
Pearl Crescent	A	E-Apr to M-Nov	Fields & gardens	Butterflyweed, milkweed	Various asters
Baltimore Checkerspot	R	M-Jun	Interiors of marshes	Grassblades, daisies	Turtlehead
Question Mark	U/R	E-Mar to L-Oct	Woods, roads	Rotting fruit & sap	Nettles, elm, hackberry
Eastern Comma	U	E-Feb to L-Nov	Woods, roads	Rotting fruit & sap	Nettles, elm, hops
Mourning Cloak	U/R	E-Feb to L-Nov	Woods, roads	Rotting fruit & sap	Willow, elm, cottonwood
American Lady	U	E-Apr thru E-Nov	Weedy fields	Milkweed, Indian hemp	Everlasting & pussytoes
Painted Lady	C/U	M-Apr to E-Nov	Weedy fields	Thistles, milkweed	Thistles, mallows
Red Admiral	C/U	L-Apr to L-Oct	Woods trails ;& edges	Joe-Pye weed	Nettles
Common Buckeye	C	M-Apr to L-Nov	Dry weedy fields	Lance-leaved goldenrod	Plantain, foxglove
Red-spotted Purple	C/U	E-May to E-Nov	Wet woods roads	Wet spots, rotting fruit	Wild cherry, poplar, aspen
Viceroy	U/R	M-May to M-Oct	Pond & stream edges	Willow leaves	Willows & poplars
Hackberry Emperor	R	E-Jun & E-Sep	Woods trails & edges	Wet spots	Hackberry
Tawny Emperor	R	M-Jun & M-Sep	Woods trails & edges	Wet spots	Hackberry
Satyr					
Northern Pearly-eye	C/U	M-May to E-Oct	Damp, grassy woods trials	Mud puddles	Jpnse. Stiltgrass, other grasses
Appalachian Brown	U	M-May to E-Sep	Interiors of bushy marshes	Alder leaves	Sedges
Little Wood-Satyr	C/U	M-May to L-Jul	Brushy woods edges	Low shiny leaves	Orchard grass
Common Wood-Nymph	R	M-Jun to M-Oct	Dry grassy fields near woods	Tree trunks	Grasses, including purpletop
Milkweed Butterflies					
Monarch	C	M-Apr to L-Nov	Open meadows	Milkweed & goldenrods	Milkweed

© 5/1993; RHS revisions: 2/2000, 2/2011, 3/2014, 8/2016. Butterfly group revision: 4/2025

THE BUTTERFLIES OF HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND

A Biological Summary and Checklist



Howard County Bird Club,
a chapter of the
Maryland Ornithological Society