

THE BUTTERFLIES OF ALBERT COUNTY

by
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I have been interested in butterflies for a long time and when I moved to Albert County I began to collect them. At first, collecting insects only occasionally, I caught but eight or ten species. Soon I became very keen and started collecting butterflies in almost all my spare time. Although I collected in all areas of New Brunswick, living in Albert County, I naturally did most of my collecting there.

During my research (if you can call it that) I discovered many interesting things about butterflies. Their flying habits, ways of life, and so on, provide a fascinating world for me and for any other people who study them; I am sure. Because this subject interests me so much I am going to ask you to spend a few moments of your time to read this article. In it, I will try to tell you a little about butterflies and hope that because of it you will have a better understanding of these insects. I will be dealing with the butterflies of Albert County, so let's get right to the point.

Albert County does not have as great a variety of butterflies as places farther south, but nevertheless it has a fair number. Of the sixty species I know occur in New Brunswick, I have found thirty-eight in Albert County. These butterflies are divided into two groups. To make this easier to understand I'll explain it this way:

Butterflies and moths belong to an order called Lepidoptera. The butterflies are called Rhopalocera and the moths Heterocera. Butterflies are divided into two groups, Papilionoides (true butterflies) and Hesperioidea (Skippers).

In Albert County there are thirty-two true butterflies and six skippers. As you can see skippers are quite a bit rarer in this area, although farther south there are almost as equally as many. The true butterflies are the ones you most often see. They vary from a large size (Tiger Swallowtail) to quite small ones (Northern Blue). Skippers on the other hand are all quite small and are often seen in fields shooting around as if on lightning bolts.

One of the things that makes Albert County have so many species of butterflies is that there is a great variety of habitats. There are salt marshes, fields, meadows (There is quite a difference between the last two.), sphagnum bogs, hardwoods, softwoods, a few river valleys, etc. When there is a variety of plants the same is usually true for the butterflies. This is because most butterflies, in their larval stage, can eat only one food plant. Now since I am supposed to be talking about the butterflies of Albert County, I will do just that.

The first family is the satyrs. In Albert County there are two species.

Eyed Brown - I have caught it on only one occasion, at Germantown Marsh. This is the sort of habitat it prefers. It occurs through June and July.

Wood Nymph - Common throughout Albert County wherever there are fields with trees closeby. It is found mostly through June, July and August.

The next family is the monarchs. In it, we have only one species, the Monarch.

Monarch - This species has been observed on a few occasions in Fundy Park. It feeds on milkweeds and nightshades, plants with very strong juices. These butterflies migrate south in the winter and are usually seen in this area from late July to late September.

The brush-footed butterflies or nymphalids are next. They have more species of butterflies than any other family.

Greater Fritillaries

Great Spangled Fritillary - Common, appearing from early July to the middle of August.

Atlantis Fritillary - Somewhat like the Great Spangled in appearance, it is common from late June to the middle of August.

Lesser Fritillaries

Silver-bordered Fritillary - Fairly common, between the middle of June and the end of August.

Baltimore - A beautiful butterfly which is unfortunately very local. It is black with an orange border and a few white spots in the middle. The adults are found from the end of June to the middle of July.

Crescents

Pearl Crescent - A small butterfly (wingspan of only 1.1 inches). It is quite common from early July to early August.

Angle Wings

Satyr Angle Wing - Very rare, having been taken on only one occasion in Albert County, at Crooked Creek.

Green Comma - Very common from the end of May until the end of September. It is often seen along wood-roads.

Gray Comma - Moderately common in the spring, from the end of May to the end of June.

Hoary Comma - Completely unknown in Albert County until 1967, when large numbers of them were observed in certain locations in early June.

Tortoise Shells

Compton Tortoise Shell - A beautiful butterfly, not uncommon from September through November.

Mourning Cloak - Quite common through most of the summer. It is dark brown with a yellow border and a row of blue spots on the inside of this. It is abundant from late April to late September.

Thistle Butterflies

Red Admiral - A beautiful, well-known butterfly, abundant from early June to late September. It is black with orange bands and white spots.

Painted Lady - Quite common and widespread. It is found between the end of May and the beginning of September.

American Painted Lady - Sometimes known as Hunter's Butterfly. It is rarer than the previous species, but is frequently found from August through September.

Viceroy

Viceroy - This butterfly mimics the Monarch, which is distasteful to birds, while the Viceroy is not. It is not too common in Albert County, but is occasionally seen through June, July and August.

Banded Purple - Common through July and August. It enjoys visiting mud puddles.

Now that we are through the nymphalids, I will go on to speak about the small, gossamer-winged butterflies.

Elfins

Brown Elfin - A small, inconspicuous, brown butterfly found by the woods edge and near wet places, from the end of May to the middle of June.

Coppers

American Copper - A small, very aggressive butterfly which attacks many things larger than itself. It is not very common, although it occurs all summer.

Bog Copper - Quite rare and local from May till August. It lives in black spruce, sphagnum bogs.

Blues

Northern Blue - Very scarce, only two specimens having been taken in Albert County, on Caledonia Mountain.

Silvery Blue - Quite common in fields where vetch, the food plant of the larva, grows. Adults through June.

Spring Azure - A very common butterfly, coming out early in the spring (May through June). It lives in fields bordered by woods.

All of the family of swallowtails are very beautiful, but we have only two species.

Black Swallowtail - Unfortunately, quite rare in Albert County. It is a beautiful black with rows of yellow spots down the wings. The adults are found from June through the middle of August.

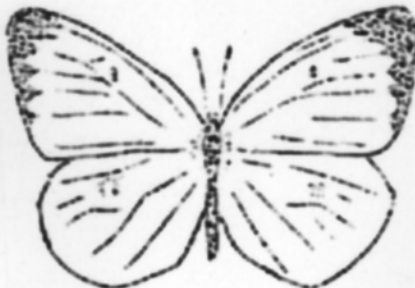
Tiger Swallowtail - Extremely common in Albert County. It is the large yellow butterfly often seen at mud puddles or in fields, from the end of May till the middle of July.

The next family is the sulphurs and whites. It is from the yellow colour of some of these species that the word butterfly was derived.

Sulphurs

Alfalfa Butterfly - Common in fields in the latter part of summer.

Common Sulphur - Quite abundant through most of the summer, it is the commonest sulphur in Albert County.



PINK-EDGED SULPHUR ♀

Pink-edged Sulfur - Fairly common throughout July and August. It is similar to the Common Sulphur and is especially typical of blueberry fields.

Whites

Cabbage Butterfly - Introduced to North America in 1860, it has since spread to become the most common of all whites. The adults fly from May to September.

Mustard White - Not too common in Albert County. It has declined in competition with the Cabbage Butterfly. It is found from June through August.

Now we come to the superfamily of skippers. There are two groups of skippers:

Dusky Wings

Dreamy Dusky Wing - Not too abundant in Albert County. It is often seen flying through the woods from July through August.

Branded Skippers

Leurentian Skipper - Quite common, it is often seen in fields in August.

Hobomok Skipper - Perhaps the commonest skipper in New Brunswick, the same thing holds true for Albert County, where it is found all through June and July.

Long Dash Skipper - I do not know too much about this skipper, although it appears to be quite common during July.

Peck's Skipper - A small skipper occurring in open areas. It often visits flowers and is found in July and August.

Tawny-edged Skipper - Quite widespread in Albert County and frequently seen in fields through July.

This, of course, is not a complete list of all the butterflies that occur in Albert County and, in years to come, more species will undoubtedly be found.

If anyone is interested in finding out more about butterflies, I would be only too willing to help.