

Wildlife Viewing

# Yukon butterflies



**Yukon**



Visitors follow  
an old mining road  
to explore the alpine on  
top of Keno Hill.

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All photos by Crispin Guppy except as follows: In the Alpine (p.ii) by Ryan Agar; Cerisy's Sphynx moth (p.2) by Sara Nielsen; Anicia Checkerspot (p.2) by Bruce Bennett; swallowtails (p.3) by Bruce Bennett; Freija Fritillary (p.12) by Sonja Stange; Gallium Sphinx caterpillar (p.19) by William Kleeden ([www.yukonexplorer.com](http://www.yukonexplorer.com)); Butterfly hike at Keno (p.21) by Peter Long; Alpine Interpretive Centre (p.22) by Bruce Bennett.

Illustrations by Keith Wolfe Smarch (p.4); Sara Nielsen (p.19).

Special thanks to Crispin Guppy for his contributions to this project.

#### For more information on butterflies and other Yukon wildlife, contact:

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# A guide to Yukon butterflies

## Where to find them

Currently, about 91 species of butterflies, representing five families, are known from Yukon, but scientists expect to discover more.

Finding butterflies in Yukon is easy. Just look in any natural, open area on a warm, sunny day. Two excellent butterfly viewing spots are Keno Hill and the Blackstone Uplands. Pick up Yukon's *Wildlife Viewing Guide* to find these and other wildlife viewing hotspots.

## Viewing tips

This booklet will help you view and identify some of the more common butterflies, and a few distinctive but less common species. Additional species are mentioned but not illustrated. In some cases, you will need a detailed book, such as *The Butterflies of Canada*, to identify the exact species that you have seen.

Some Yukon butterflies, such as the large swallowtails, are bright to advertise their presence to mates. Others are coloured in dull earth tones that allow them to hide from bird predators. Many are masters at both advertising and camouflage, with bright uppersides and dull undersides.



*Old-world Swallowtail*

To identify butterflies, you will need to know the colour pattern on both sides of the wings. This is because many will only rest with their wings spread wide open, and others with them closed tightly over their backs. You can improve your viewing chances by slowly approaching the butterfly from behind or while it is busy feeding or mud-puddling (drinking water containing salt). Try using binoculars to get a closer look without disturbing them. Some species (notably "arctics") are so similar that butterfly specialists must examine them under a microscope to distinguish specific species. Recent DNA studies indicate that there some species in Yukon that have yet to be classified and named.

# Butterfly conservation and collection

Habitat conservation is critical for a butterfly species to persist. Moderate collecting does not harm butterfly populations, providing their habitat remains intact. When viewing, photographing, or collecting butterflies avoid damaging habitat in your pursuit.

If you decide to collect butterflies, ensure that your collection has scientific or educational value. Label each specimen with the exact location and date, and if you no longer want it, transfer your collection to another collector or a public institution, so that the specimens are not wasted.

Under Section 3 of the Scientists & Explorers Act, non-residents are required to obtain a permit from the territorial government to collect in all areas of Yukon. You can obtain this permit from the Department of Tourism and Culture. Additionally, everyone must have a special permit to collect in any national or territorial park.

If you suspect illegal activity related to butterflies or other wildlife, please call the Turn in Poachers & Polluters (T.I.P.P.) Hotline at 1-800-661-0525. For more on butterfly conservation, contact the Yukon Conservation Data Centre.

## Butterfly or moth?

Butterflies and moths are insects of the order Lepidoptera, meaning scaled wings. The wings are covered with flattened hairs that look like tiny fish scales. Butterflies always fly during the day in Yukon; moths may fly in either day or night, depending on the species.

Butterflies and day-flying moths are usually brightly coloured, while night-flying moths tend to be dull greys and browns. Bright colours usually mean they are distasteful or poisonous to many birds.



*Cerisy's Sphynx*  
with typical  
moth antennae

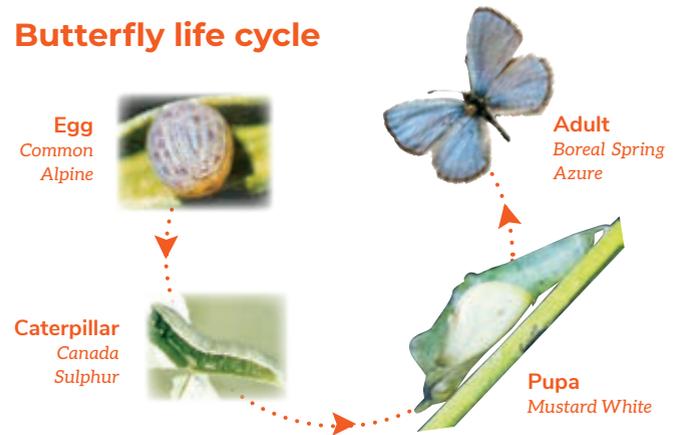
*Anicia Checkerspot*  
with typical  
butterfly antennae

The antennae of moths are usually hair-like or feather-like, while butterflies have straight antennae with distinct knobs at the end. The only characteristics that infallibly separate butterflies from moths are details of the wing veins and other body structures.

# A butterfly's life

A butterfly usually lives 10 to 14 days as an adult, and spends the rest of its one- to two-year life as an egg, caterpillar (larva), or pupa (chrysalis). The egg hatches into a small caterpillar, which typically sheds its skin five times as it grows before becoming a pupa. After about six weeks, the adult butterfly emerges from the pupa.

## Butterfly life cycle



Caterpillars eat leaves, flowers, fruit, or seeds. Each species focuses on only one, or a few, foodplants. These larval foodplants are described in this booklet.

Adult butterflies feed mostly on nectar and sap (for sugar). Some eat less appetizing meals such as carrion and dung (for proteins and amino acids). Others congregate on wet soils to drink water containing salt (for sodium).

As the butterfly ages, its wings become worn and torn and the colours fade. A few species of brushfoot butterflies (tortoiseshells, anglewings) hibernate over the winter as adults; other species spend the winter in one of the other life stages.





Tlingit-style drawing of Swallowtail butterfly

## Myth and legend

“If nothing ever changed, there’d be no butterflies...” – anon

Many people see butterflies and moths as symbols rather than living creatures. Because of their delicate beauty, power of flight, and complete metamorphosis, they appear in myths and legends the world over. Also known as “flying flowers,” they help us appreciate the fragile and ephemeral wonders of nature – like sunny, carefree days.

To some, the spirits of loved ones return to visit as butterflies or moths – physical symbols of the human soul. Many American cultures believe that dreams are brought to us in our sleep by butterflies.

One North American legend says that anyone wanting a wish to come true can capture a butterfly and whisper their wish to it. Since butterflies make no sound; they cannot tell the wish to anyone but the Great Spirit. So by making a wish and releasing the butterfly, their wish will be taken to the heavens and be granted.

## Skippers *Family Hesperidae*

Small; grey, black or brown; caterpillars frequently feed on grass.

### Pyrgine Skippers, *Subfamily Pyrginae*

#### Persius Duskywing

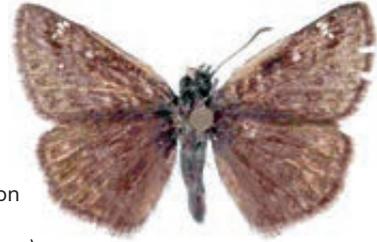
*Erynnis persius*

**Size:** Small, 3.0 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Fast, low to the ground.

**Foodplants:** Leaves of willow, lupine and other legumes.

**Habitat:** Open forest, clearings, meadows; all Yukon at low elevations. **Notes:** One generation each year. Dreamy Duskywing (with no white spots on forewings) is near Watson Lake. Reports of the similar Afranius Duskywing were identification errors.



#### Grizzled Skipper

*Pyrgus centaureae*

**Size:** Small, 2.8 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Moderately fast, with blurred wing-beats; low to the ground.

**Foodplants:** Leaves of wild strawberry; cloudberry; cinquefoil. **Habitat:** Tundra, bog, roadside, meadow, forest clearings;

throughout Yukon. **Notes:** No similar species. One generation every two years.



### Intermediate Skippers, *Subfamily Heteropterinae*

#### Arctic Skipper

*Carterocephalus palaemon*

**Size:** Small, 2.5 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Fast, low to the ground, tends to return to original perch after flight. **Foodplants:** Grass.

**Habitat:** Forest trails and clearings, roadsides, moist meadows, tundra; throughout Yukon. **Notes:** No similar species. One generation each year.



underwings

## Branded Skippers, Subfamily Hesperinae

### Common Branded Skipper

*Hesperia comma*

**Size:** Small, 3.0 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Fast, low to the ground.

**Foodplants:** Grass (bluegrass, fescue, bluestem).

**Habitat:** Roadsides, meadows, bogs, gravel ridges, low hilltops; throughout Yukon. **Notes:** Draco Skipper is similar, but with tan underside spots, one of which is elongated, and occurs north to Dawson. One generation each year.



underwings

Two other skippers occur in Yukon.

## Swallowtails, Subfamily Papilioninae

### Canadian Tiger Swallowtail

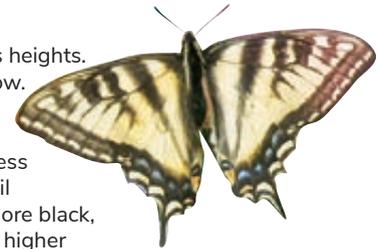
*Papilio canadensis*

**Size:** Large, 8.2 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Moderate speed, various heights.

**Foodplants:** Aspen, poplar, willow.

**Habitat:** Roadside, forest clearings, along streams; throughout Yukon. **Notes:** The less common Old-world Swallowtail (photo p.1) is similar but has more black, less yellow, and usually flies at higher elevations and further north. One generation each year.



## Swallowtails & Apollos Family Papilionidae

Large; brightly coloured; only a few species in Yukon.

## Parnassians, Subfamily Parnassiinae

### Eversmann's Parnassian

*Parnassius eversmanni*

**Size:** Large, 5.0 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Fast, low to the ground.

**Foodplants:** Few-flowered Corydalis or silene.

**Habitat:** Mountainous willow shrub and grass tundra.

**Notes:** Males: pale yellow; females: white. May be one generation every two years.



### Rocky Mountain Parnassian

*Parnassius smintheus*

**Size:** Large, 5.7 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Slow, low to the ground.

**Foodplants:** Lance-leaved Stonecrop. **Habitat:** Dry meadows,

rocky areas; low to mid-elevation in southern Yukon. **Notes:** Phoebus Parnassian is similar. Inhabits tundra meadows in Kluane Park and the north. One generation each year.



## Whites & Sulphurs Family Pieridae

Medium size; white, yellow and orange; many of the caterpillars eat mustards.

## Whites, Marbles & Orangetips, Subfamily Pierinae

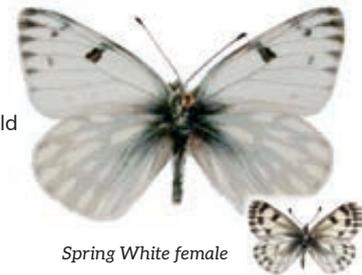
### Western White

*Pontia occidentalis*

**Size:** Medium, 4.0 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Fast, zigzag; flies around hilltops. **Foodplants:** Leaves of wild mustards, especially rock cress.

**Habitat:** Roads, dry rocky areas, hilltops. **Notes:** Spring White is similar but rare. One generation each year.



Spring White female

### Arctic White

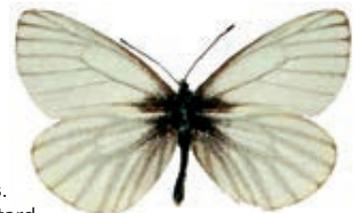
*Pieris angelika*

**Size:** Medium, 3.8 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Slow, up to 2 m above ground. **Foodplants:** Leaves of wild mustards, such as Parrya.

**Habitat:** Wet riparian areas, willow shrub areas, wet meadows.

**Notes:** Margined White and Mustard White are both very similar. Females have grey markings on the upperside. One generation each year.



## Large Marble

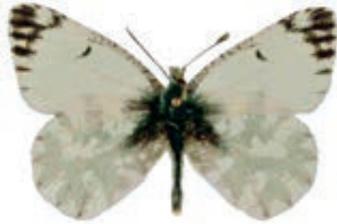
*Euchloe ausonides*

**Size:** Medium, 4.1 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Moderate, zigzag.

**Foodplants:** Flowers and leaves of wild mustards, especially rock cress. **Habitat:** Roadsides, dry rocky areas; most of Yukon.

**Notes:** Similar species are the Green Marble, with a darker underside, and the Northern Marble, which is smaller. Females have cream-colour hindwings. One generation each year.



## Pacific (Sara) Orangetip

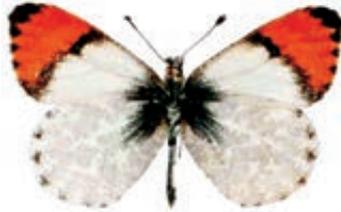
*Anthocharis sara*

**Size:** Small to medium, 3.6 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Slow, fairly straight.

**Foodplants:** Flowers and leaves of wild mustards, especially rock cress. **Habitat:** Roadsides, dry rocky areas, meadows.

**Notes:** Females are pale yellow, with less orange wingtips than males. Only in the Annie Lake and Carcross to Atlin areas. One generation each year.



## Sulphurs, Subfamily Coliadinae

### Clouded Sulphur

*Colias philodice*

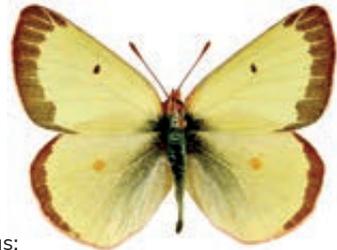
**Size:** Medium, 4.5 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Fast, zigzag.

**Foodplants:** Clover and vetches.

**Habitat:** Roadsides, meadows; throughout Yukon.

**Notes:** There are three other similar sulphurs with yellow wings: the Giant Sulphur, Pelidne Sulphur, and Palaeno Sulphur. The Labrador Sulphur is smaller and a dusky greenish-yellow. One generation each year.



## Christina Sulphur

*Colias christina*

**Size:** Medium, 4.7 cm wingspan. **Flight:** Fast, zigzag.

**Foodplants:** Sweet-vetch.

**Habitat:** Dry roadsides, forest openings; low elevation, Dawson and southward. **Notes:** Subspecies *kluanensis* is on the Yukon Watch List. Three other sulphurs have orange wings: Hecla Sulphur (alpine and north), Booth's Sulphur (north) and Canada Sulphur (all Yukon, early summer). All have one generation each year.



## Gossamer Wings *Family Lycaenidae*

Small; grey, brown, blue, metallic blue or copper.

### Coppers, Subfamily Lycaeninae

#### Dorcas Copper

*Lycaena dorcas*

**Size:** Small, 2.3 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Slow, short flights.

**Foodplants:** Marsh Cinquefoil.

**Habitat:** Wet spruce forest, bogs and other wetlands.

**Notes:** Two other coppers occur: American Copper (in tundra) and Mariposa Copper (southern forests). One generation each year.



underwings

### Hairstreaks, Subfamily Theclinae

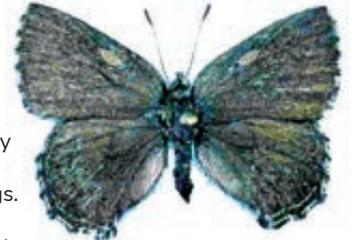
#### Hoary Elfyn

*Callophrys polia*

**Size:** Small, 2.5 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Fast, short flights. Flies in early spring. **Foodplants:** Bearberry (Kinnikinnick). **Habitat:** Dry grassy or rocky areas, dry forest openings.

**Notes:** There are two other elfins: Brown Elfyn (dry pine forests and bogs throughout Yukon) and Western Pine Elfyn (Rancheria to Watson Lake; dry pine forests). One generation each year.



## Blues, Subfamily Polyommatae

### Western Tailed Blue

*Cupido amyntula*

**Size:** Small, 2.5 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Slow, low to the ground.

**Foodplants:** Flowers of lupine, vetch, wild pea. **Habitat:** Roadside, meadows, open forest.

**Notes:** This is the only blue with tails on the hindwing. Males are blue above, females brown. One generation each year.



underwings



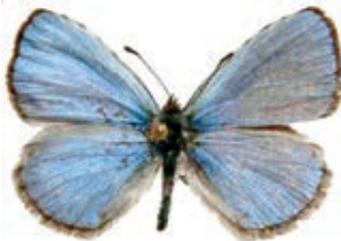
### Boreal Spring Azure

*Celastrina lucia*

**Size:** Small, 2.6 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Slow, among shrubs.

**Foodplants:** Flowers of spring-flowering shrubs, such as Red-osier Dogwood and Bearberry. Populations using Labrado Tea as their foodplant have adults smaller, sootier colour on the underside. **Habitat:** Open forest, riparian areas. **Notes:** This is the first blue to fly in the spring; has a sooty underside. One generation each year.



underwings



### Silvery Blue

*Glaucopsyche lygdamus*

**Size:** Small, 2.6 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Slow, low to the ground.

**Foodplants:** Lupines, vetch, wild peas. **Habitat:** Roadsides, meadows, open forest.

**Notes:** Female shown here; males are entirely blue above, with a metallic silvery shine. One generation each year.



underwings



### Northern Blue

*Plebejus idas*

**Size:** Small, 2.6 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Slow, low to the ground.

**Foodplants:** Lupines and other legumes. **Habitat:** Forest clearings.

**Notes:** The only blue with a full row of orange spots on the underside. One generation each year.



underwings



### Greenish Blue

*Plebejus saepiolus*

**Size:** Small, 2.7 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Slow, low to the ground.

**Foodplants:** Clover and other legumes. **Habitat:** Roadsides, meadows. **Notes:** Cranberry Blue (bogs, wet open forest, tundra) and Arctic Blue (dry rocky areas) are similar. One generation each year.



underwings



## Brushfoots Family Nymphalidae

Small to large; grey, brown, orange-brown or black.

### Fritillaries, Subfamily Argynninae

#### Mormon Fritillary

*Speyeria mormonia*

**Size:** Medium, 4.7 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Slow to fast, zigzags.

**Foodplants:** Violets.

**Habitat:** Open forest, meadows; low to high elevations.

**Notes:** Subspecies *bischoffii* is on the Yukon Watch List. Northwestern Fritillary and Atlantis Fritillary (southeast Yukon only) are similar. One generation each year.



underwings



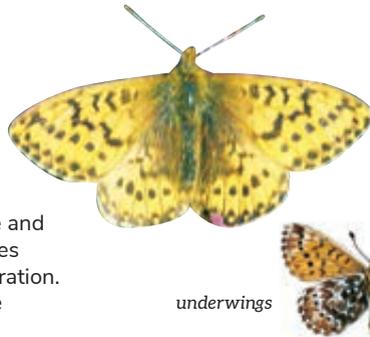
## Polaris Fritillary

*Boloria polaris*

**Size:** Small to medium, 4.0 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Moderate, low to the ground.

**Foodplants:** Mountain Avens, Bog Blueberry. **Habitat:** Alpine and arctic tundra. **Notes:** Often takes two years to complete a generation. Abundant every year in alpine tundra in Yukon.



## Freija Fritillary

*Boloria freija*

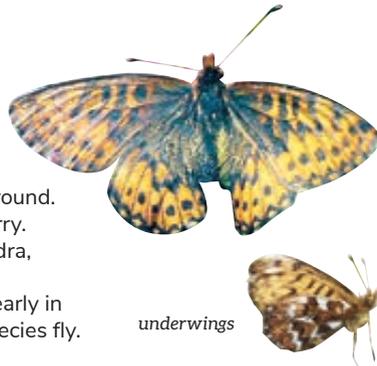
**Size:** Small to medium, 3.7 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Moderate, low to the ground.

**Foodplants:** Blueberry, bearberry.

**Habitat:** Open pine forest, tundra, dry rocky meadows.

**Notes:** This species flies very early in the summer, before similar species fly. One generation each year.



## Dingy Fritillary

*Boloria improba*

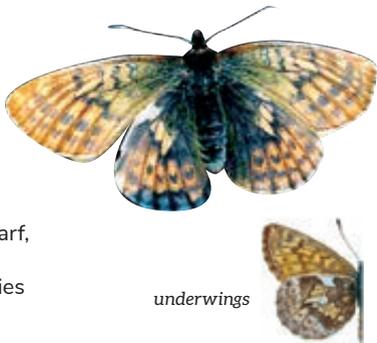
**Size:** Small to medium, 3.5 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Moderate, very low to the ground.

**Foodplants:** Dwarf willows including Net-veined Willow.

**Habitat:** Moist tundra with dwarf, prostrate willows.

**Notes:** One of the first butterflies to fly in alpine tundra. One generation each year.



## Other fritillaries

There are 11 other fritillaries species found in Yukon, distinguished by a combination of the details of pattern on the upperside and underside of the wings. They can be very challenging to correctly identify.

## Checkerspots & Crescents, Subfamily Melitaeinae

### Field Crescent

*Phyciodes pulchellus* (= *P. pratensis*)

**Size:** Small to medium, 3.4 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Moderate, close to the ground.

**Foodplants:** Asters.

**Habitat:** Roadsides, meadows.

**Notes:** The Northern Crescent (very rare in Yukon) is similar, but has more orange-brown and less black on the upperside of the wings. One generation each year.



### Anicia Checkerspot

*Euphydryas anicia*

**Size:** Small to medium, 3.8 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Fast, close to the ground.

**Foodplants:** Apparently Gorman's Penstemon.

**Habitat:** Dry grassland.

**Notes:** A similar species, the Chaldeon Checkerspot, is rarely seen but occurs from the Atlin Road west to Champagne; it has blacker dark markings and whiter pale markings, and the foodplant is apparently Small-flowered Penstemon. One generation each year.



## Anglewings, Tortoiseshells & Thistle Butterflies, Subfamily *Melitaeinae*

### Green Comma

*Polygonia faunus*

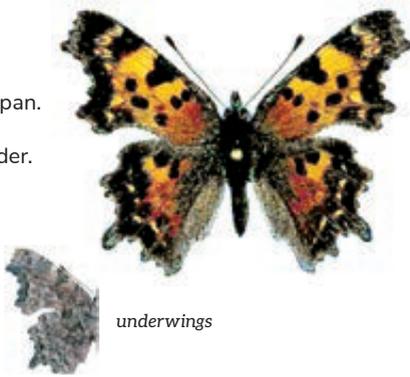
**Size:** Medium, 4.7 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Fast, erratic.

**Foodplants:** Birch, willow, alder.

**Habitat:** Open forests, rests on dirt roads.

**Notes:** One generation each year. The underside of a female is shown above; the undersides of males are more strongly patterned.



### Mourning Cloak

*Nymphalis antiopa*

**Size:** Large, 6.1 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Fast, frequently patrols a path.

**Foodplants:** Willow, poplar.

**Habitat:** Forest openings, riparian areas.

**Notes:** This butterfly is considered to be one of the very few that occur across all of Europe, Asia, and North America. Caterpillars are black with a row of orangish or red spots down the back, are spiny, and live in large masses until nearly mature. They spend the winter as adults. One generation each year.



### Other anglewings

Four other anglewings and commas occur in Yukon. They are distinguished by details of colour on the underside of the wings. Males and females also differ in the patterns on the underside of the wings. The Compton Tortoiseshell is also similar, but larger.

### Milbert's Tortoiseshell

*Aglais milberti*

**Size:** Medium, 4.8 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Fast, frequently on dirt roads and alpine ridges in the south.

**Foodplants:** Stinging Nettle.

**Habitat:** Open forests, meadows, riparian areas; all elevations in southern Yukon. **Notes:** Painted Ladies and Red Admirals are rare migrants from the south whose caterpillars also feed on Stinging Nettle, living in rolled leaves. Tortoiseshells can spend the winter as adults. One generation each year.



### Admirals, Subfamily *Limenitidinae*

### White Admiral

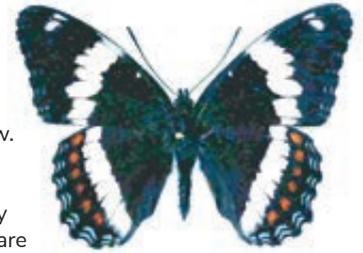
*Limenitis arthemis*

**Size:** Large, 6.2 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Moderate, gliding.

**Foodplants:** Aspen, poplar, willow.

**Habitat:** Open aspen forests, riparian areas. **Notes:** This is one of the largest and most strikingly coloured butterflies. The adults are commonly seen feeding on old bones, animal dung, and fish offal. One generation each year.



### Satyrs & Wood-Nymphs, Subfamily *Satyrinae*

### Banded Alpine

*Erebia fasciata*

**Size:** Medium, 4.3 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Fast, close to the ground.

**Foodplants:** Sedges, perhaps cotton grass. **Habitat:** Wet alpine and arctic tundra. **Notes:** The Mt. McKinley Alpine is the most similar, with the banding on the underside of the wings indistinct. One generation each year.



## Four-dotted Alpine

*Erebia youngi*

**Size:** Small to medium, 4.0 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Moderate.

**Foodplants:** Unknown, probably grasses or sedges.

**Habitat:** Dry tundra with short, dense grass (such as frequently occurs along scree slope edges). **Notes:** Subspecies *herscheli* is on the Yukon Track List. The Scree Alpine and the Reddish Alpine are very similar. One generation each year.



## Common Alpine

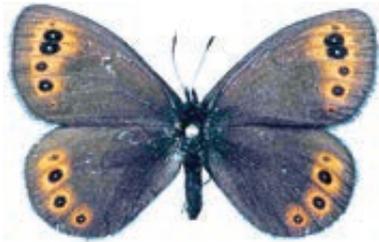
*Erebia epipsodea*

**Size:** Medium, 4.1 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Slow, low to the ground. **Foodplants:** Grass.

**Habitat:** Meadows, roadsides, and forest openings.

**Notes:** There are seven other species of alpinines in Yukon, with distinguishing colour patterns on both sides of the wings. One of these is the Disa Alpine, which is on the Yukon Watch List. One generation each year.



## Common Ringlet

*Coenonympha tullia*

**Size:** Small to medium, 3.3 cm wingspan.

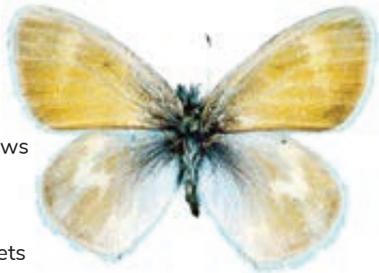
**Flight:** Slow, bouncing.

**Foodplants:** Grass.

**Habitat:** Low-elevation meadows to arctic and alpine tundra.

**Notes:** No similar species.

The Common Ringlet is a distinct species from the ringlets of the rest of North America (see *Butterflies of British Columbia*). One generation each year.



## Chryxus Arctic

*Oeneis chryxus*

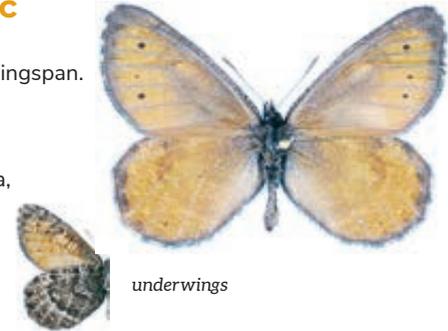
**Size:** Medium, 4.5 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Fast, erratic.

**Foodplants:** Grass.

**Habitat:** Dry meadows, open pine forest; tundra, mostly in south and central Yukon.

**Notes:** One generation every two years.



underwings

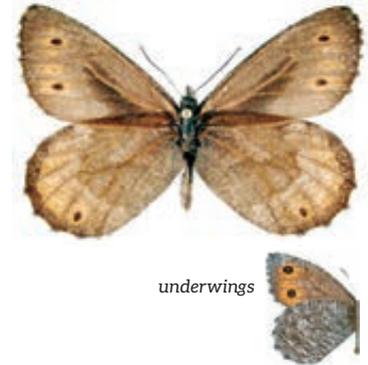
## Jutta Arctic

*Oeneis jutta*

**Size:** Medium, 4.7 cm wingspan. **Flight:** Fast, erratic; lands on tree trunks.

**Foodplants:** Sedges, possibly cotton grass. **Habitat:** Black Spruce bogs, wet tundra.

**Notes:** One generation every two years.



underwings

## Melissa Arctic

*Oeneis melissa*

**Size:** Medium, 4.8 cm wingspan. **Flight:** Fast, erratic.

**Foodplants:** Uncertain, possibly grasses and/or sedges.

**Habitat:** Dry alpine and arctic tundra. **Notes:** Subspecies *atlinensis* is on the Yukon

Watch List, however, recent DNA research indicates that the subspecies is unconfirmed. DNA studies indicate that there are at least three separate species in Yukon currently lumped under the name Melissa Arctic. One generation every two years



underwings

## Polixenes Arctic

*Oeneis polixenes*

**Size:** Medium, 4.6 cm wingspan. **Flight:** Fast, erratic.

**Foodplants:** Uncertain, possibly grasses and/or sedges.

**Habitat:** Alpine and arctic tundra.

**Notes:** Subspecies *yukonensis* is on the Yukon Watch List.

This species prefers tundra, while the extremely similar Philip's Arctic is found in Black Spruce bogs. Recent DNA studies indicate there is more than one species in Yukon lumped under the name Polixenes Arctic. One generation each year.



underwings

## White-Veined Arctic

*Oeneis bore*

**Size:** Medium, 4.7 cm wingspan.

**Flight:** Fast, erratic.

**Foodplants:** Grasses, sedges.

**Habitat:** Wet, hummocky alpine and arctic tundra. Less frequently occurs at low elevations.

**Notes:** One generation every two years.



underwings

## Other arctics

There are three other arctics: Philip's Arctic (very similar to Polixenes Arctic; in wet Black Spruce forest), Sentinel Arctic (similar to the Chryxus Arctic, but only in the high mountains of the north and the north coast) and Uhler's Arctic (similar to the Chryxus Arctic but paler, in dry alpine tundra and the north coast).

## Moths

Most Yukon moths are small and dull-coloured, and fly in dim light at night. Hence, we see few of them even though they are more abundant than butterflies. Here are a few more noticeable examples.

The large Gallium Sphinx flies rapidly and hovers in front of flowers to sip nectar. At first glance, they can be mistaken for hummingbirds. The caterpillars are very large, smooth-skinned, and have a "horn" at the rear end. They come in black or green forms (turning brown just before they pupate), and feed on Fireweed.

Gallium Sphinx,  
*Hyles gallii*



Gallium Sphinx,  
caterpillar



black form



pre-pupal form

Hummingbird Moths, *Hemaris thysbe*, look very much like bumblebees and also hover at flowers to sip nectar.



Sylvan Foresters, *Alpia langtoni*, (family Noctuidae), make a buzzing sound with their wings as the males fly over meadows.



Clear-winged Sessiid, (family Sessiidae), moths imitate wasps to avoid being eaten, and their caterpillars feed on the inside of plant stems.



The Arctic Woolly Bear, caterpillar is possibly the most cold-hardy of all insects. Found in northern Yukon, it survives freezing for up to 14 winters before pupating into a moth.



# Checklist of Yukon Butterflies

## Family Hesperidae

### Skippers

#### Subfamily Pyrginae

##### Pyrgine Skippers

Persius Duskywing	<i>Erynnis persius</i> .....5
Dreamy Duskywing	<i>Erynnis icelus</i>
Grizzled Skipper	<i>Pyrgus centaureae</i> .....5

#### Subfamily Heteropterinae

##### Intermediate Skippers

Arctic Skipper	<i>Carterocephalus palaemon</i> ...5
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#### Subfamily Hesperinae

##### Branded Skippers

Common Branded Skipper	<i>Hesperia comma</i> .....6
Draco Skipper	<i>Polites draco</i>

## Family Papilionidae

### Swallowtails & Appollos

#### Subfamily Parnassiinae

##### Parnassians

Eversmann's Parnassian	<i>Parnassius eversmanni</i> .....6
Phoebus Parnassian	<i>Parnassius phoebus</i> * ..6
Rocky Mountain Parnassian	<i>Parnassius smintheus</i> .....6

#### Subfamily Papilioninae

##### Swallowtails

Old World Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>
Canadian Tiger Swallowtail	<i>Papilio canadensis</i> .....7

## Family Pieridae

### Whites & Sulphurs

#### Subfamily Pierinae

##### Whites, Marbles & Orangetips

Spring White	<i>Pontia sisymbrii</i> * .....7
Western White	<i>Pontia occidentalis</i> .....7
Arctic White	<i>Pieris angelika</i> .....7
Margined White	<i>Pieris marginalis</i> * ..7
Mustard White	<i>Pieris oleracea</i> *

Large Marble	<i>Euchloe ausonides</i> .....8
Green Marble	<i>Euchloe naina</i> *
Northern Marble	<i>Euchloe creusa</i>
Pacific Orangetip	<i>Anthocharis sara</i> * .....8

#### Subfamily Coliadinae

##### Sulphurs

Clouded Sulphur	<i>Colias philodice</i> .....8
Christina Sulphur	<i>Colias christina</i> .....9
Hecla Sulphur	<i>Colias hecla</i>
Booth's Sulphur	<i>Colias tyche</i> *
Canada Sulphur	<i>Colias canadensis</i>
Labrador Sulphur	<i>Colias nastes</i>
Giant Sulphur	<i>Colias gigantea</i>
Pelidne Sulphur	<i>Colias pelidne</i> *
Palaeno Sulphur	<i>Colias palaeno</i>

## Family Lycaenidae

### Gossamer Wings

#### Subfamily Lycaeninae

##### Coppers

American Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>
Dorcas Copper	<i>Lycaena dorcas</i> .....9
Mariposa Copper	<i>Lycaena mariposa</i> *

#### Subfamily Theclinae

##### Hairstreaks

Brown Elf	<i>Callophrys augustinus</i> *
Hoard Elf	<i>Callophrys polia</i> .....9
Western Pine Elf	<i>Callophrys eryphon</i> *

#### Subfamily Polyommatae

##### Blues

Western Tailed Blue	<i>Cupido amyntula</i> ..10
Boreal Spring Azure	<i>Celastrina lucia</i> ....10
Silvery Blue	<i>Glaucopsyche lygdamus</i> .....10
Northern Blue	<i>Plebejus idas</i> .....11
Greenish Blue	<i>Plebejus saepiolus</i> .....11
Cranberry Blue	<i>Vacciniina optilete</i>
Arctic Blue	<i>Agriaades glandon</i>

## Family Nymphalidae

### Brushfoots

#### Subfamily Argynninae

##### Fritillaries

Northwestern Fritillary	<i>Speyeria hesperis</i> *
Atlantis Fritillary	<i>Speyeria atlantis</i> *
Mormon Fritillary	<i>Speyeria mormonia</i> ...11
Mountain Fritillary	<i>Boloria alaskensis</i>
Bog Fritillary	<i>Boloria eunomia</i>
Silver-bordered Fritillary	<i>Boloria selene</i> *
Meadow Fritillary	<i>Boloria bellona</i> *
Frigga Fritillary	<i>Boloria frigga</i>
Dingy Fritillary	<i>Boloria improba</i> .....12
Pacific Fritillary	<i>Boloria epithore</i> *
Polaris Fritillary	<i>Boloria polaris</i> .....12
Freija Fritillary	<i>Boloria freija</i> .....12
Beringian Fritillary	<i>Boloria natazhati</i> *
Astarte Fritillary	<i>Boloria astarte</i>
Arctic Fritillary	<i>Boloria chariclea</i>

#### Subfamily Melitaeinae

##### Checkerspot & Crescents

Northern Crescent	<i>Phyciodes coecyta</i>
Field Crescent	<i>Phyciodes pulchellus</i> * ....13
Anicia Checkerspot	<i>Euphydryas anicia</i> .....13
Chalcedon Checkerspot	<i>Euphydryas chalcedona</i> *

#### Subfamily Nymphalinae

##### Anglewings, Tortoiseshells, & Thistle Butterflies

Satyr Comma	<i>Polygonia satyrus</i> **
Green Comma	<i>Polygonia faunus</i> .....14
Hoary Comma	<i>Polygonia gracilis</i>
Grey Comma	<i>Polygonia progné</i> *

Scientific names generally follow Butterflies of Canada (Layberry et al 1998) for consistency.

\* indicates species of possible conservation concern within Yukon

\*\*reported but unconfirmed

#### Oreas Comma

##### *Polygonia oreas*\*\*

##### Compton Tortoiseshell

##### *Nymphalis l-album*\*

##### Mourning Cloak

##### *Nymphalis antiopa*.....14

##### Milbert's Tortoiseshell

##### *Aglais milberti*\*.....15

##### Painted Lady

##### *Vanessa cardui*

##### [migrate from south]

##### Red Admiral

##### *Vanessa atalanta*

##### [migrate from south]

#### Subfamily Limenitidinae

##### Admirals

##### White Admiral

##### *Limenitis arthemis*.....15

#### Subfamily Satyrinae

##### Satyr & Wood-Nymphs

##### Common Ringlet

##### *Coenonympha tullia*...16

##### Ross's Alpine

##### *Erebia rossii*

##### Disa Alpine

##### *Erebia disa*\*

##### Taiga Alpine

##### *Erebia mancinus*

##### Mt. McKinley Alpine

##### *Erebia mackinleyensis*

##### Banded Alpine

##### *Erebia fasciata* .....15

##### Red-disked Alpine

##### *Erebia discoidalis*

##### Mountain Alpine

##### *Erebia pawloskii*

##### Four-dotted Alpine

##### *Erebia youngi* .....16

##### Scree Alpine

##### *Erebia occulta*\*

##### Reddish Alpine

##### *Erebia lafontainei*

##### Common Alpine

##### *Erebia epirota* .....16

##### Chryxus Arctic

##### *Oeneis chryxus* .....17

##### Uhler's Arctic

##### *Oeneis uhleri*

##### White-Veined Arctic

##### *Oeneis bore*.....18

##### Jutta Arctic

##### *Oeneis jutta* .....17

##### Melissa Arctic

##### *Oeneis melissa* .....17

##### Polixenes Arctic

##### *Oeneis polixenes*.....18

##### Philip's Arctic

##### *Oeneis philipi*\*

##### Sentinel Arctic

##### *Oeneis alpina*\*

Collecting butterflies may require a permit from federal and territorial government agencies. If you suspect illegal activity related to butterflies or other wildlife, please call the Turn in Poachers & Polluters (T.I.P.P.) Hotline at 1-800-661-0525.





## Keno City butterflies

In the late 1990s, residents of Keno City, Yukon noticed an increasing number of visitors using old mining roads to access the alpine and collect butterflies. The mountains around Keno are one of the few places to easily find alpine Beringian butterflies, and collectors were travelling from all over the world to visit the site.

Concerned for the health of the unique butterfly populations, the tiny community rallied and with the support of the Northern Research Institute and Community Development Fund, hired local residents to study the butterflies of Keno and better understand their behaviours.

In 2001 the Alpine Interpretive Centre was opened in Keno City, teaching visitors about butterflies and other alpine wildlife. With this information, visitors are able to appreciate the beauty of the alpine without damaging the fragile habitat or disturbing the plants and animals that live there.

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**Yukon**