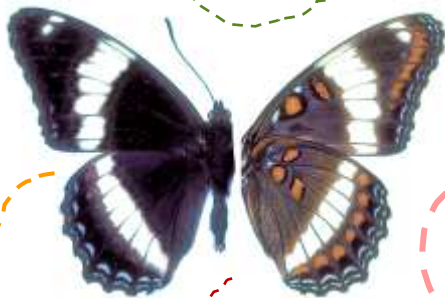


Butterflies of the Northwest Territories



This identification booklet includes all species of butterflies known to be present in the Northwest Territories.

© 2013 Government of the Northwest Territories

Recommended citation : *Environment and Natural Resources. 2012. Butterflies of the Northwest Territories. ENR, GNWT, Yellowknife, NT. 40 p.*

Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) would like to acknowledge the help of many individuals and organizations for their contribution to this booklet. Yukon was the first jurisdiction in northern Canada to produce a booklet for its butterflies. The Yukon Government graciously provided much of the text for the present booklet. Photos of upper and under wings were crafted by John Fowler for the book "*The Butterflies of Canada*" and are reproduced here, with permission. Details on the biology of butterflies not mentioned in the Yukon booklet are from *The Butterflies of Canada* online. All errors remain our own. We would like to thank Chloe Smith for putting together the wonderful layout of this very first booklet on all the butterflies of the NWT. Extra text and maps were provided by Dr. S. Carrière, Wildlife Biologist (Biodiversity), ENR, Yellowknife. Funding for this booklet was provided by GNWT. We would like to acknowledge the efforts of dedicated butterfly enthusiasts in the NWT who contributed to the knowledge of butterfly distribution. GNWT would like to extend special thanks to Ross Layberry. His passion for butterflies is shared by many NWT residents, and his deep knowledge is used every year to identify specimens collected here.

A GUIDE TO THE NWT'S BUTTERFLIES

Where to find them: Butterflies are a common sight in many places around the NWT each summer. They occur in every habitat. Currently, 92 species of butterflies, representing five families, are known to occur in the NWT. We expect to discover more. The official list is available on www.enr.gov.nt.ca; follow the NWT General Status Ranking Program link.

Viewing and Catch-Release tips:

Finding butterflies in the NWT is easy. Just look in any natural, open area on a warm, sunny day. This booklet gives you information on every butterfly found in the NWT. In some cases, you will need a detailed book, such as *The Butterflies of Canada*, to identify the exact species that you have seen. As you will be able to tell by the illustrations later on in the handbook, some species can be very similar in appearance.

Northern Blue—female © L Hargreaves

Some NWT butterflies, such as the large swallowtails, are bright to advertise their presence to mates. Others have earth tones that allow them to hide from bird predators. Many are masters at both advertising and camouflage, with bright uppersides and dull undersides. You can improve your chances by approaching the butterfly from behind or while it is busy feeding or mud-puddling (drinking salt water). Try using binoculars or a camera with a powerful lens to get a closer look without disturbing them. Some species are so similar that to separate species, butterfly specialists must examine them under a microscope.



BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION AND COLLECTION

Habitat conservation is critical for a species to persist. When viewing or catching butterflies, watch where you step. You could be damaging other butterflies or trampling habitat in your pursuit.

Collecting butterflies may require a permit from federal and territorial government agencies. You will require permission to access private lands.



Part of the Sahtu collection .

© R Layberry

If you collect butterflies, consider how your collection might benefit a broader audience. Putting your work to good educational use may help conserve butterfly populations through awareness and understanding.

The *Butterflies of Canada* online can be found at: www.cbif.gc.ca, follow SpeciesBank link.

Report your findings:

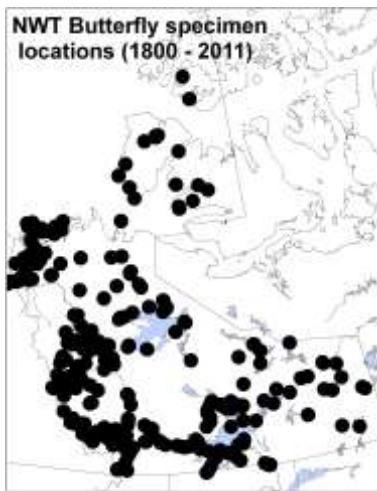
Please report any new species, or new range extension. Send a photograph to NWTBUGS@gov.nt.ca or even share it on the Facebook group “NWT Species”.

Detailed instructions on how to photograph or collect butterflies in a conservation-minded manner are available by also contacting the e-mail above.



Edward Oudzi with butterfly in net—contributing to the knowledge of Sahtu butterflies. Godlin Lake June 2007 .

© GNWT/A Veitch



All known collection locations for butterflies in the NWT. Many specimens are housed at the Canadian National Collection of Insects, Arachnids and Nematodes in Ottawa. Other specimens are in museums across North America, or in private collections. Compilation by R. Layberry based on data on file at GNWT and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Ottawa. Updated to 2011.

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, or the pupa overwinters. As the butterfly ages, its wings become worn and torn, and the colours fade and change.

A few species of brush-footed butterflies (e.g., tortoiseshells, and mourning cloaks) hibernate over the winter as adults; other species spend the winter in one of the other life stages. Caterpillars eat leaves, flowers, fruit or seeds. Each species focuses on only one, or at most, a few, food plants. These larval food plants 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).



Caterpillar of a Canadian tiger swallowtail. They are usually bright green, but turn brown just before they pupate.

The spruce needle provides a scale. The « eyes » are fake.

© C Smith (caterpillar)

© B Fournier (adult)

Mourning Cloaks are often the first butterflies seen in spring in the NWT. They survive winter as adults.

© B Fournier

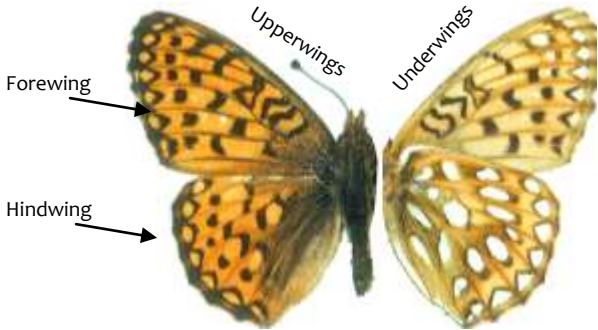


HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

To identify butterflies, it helps to know the colour pattern on both sides of the wings. This is because many will only rest with their wings spread wide open (upperwings visible), yet others with them closed tightly over their backs (underwings visible).

In this book, both have been provided for you. Wings on the left are upperwings, and wings on the right (unattached to the body) are underwings. If only half the butterfly is shown, the orientation of the single wing will allow you to determine whether the upper or under wing is displayed.

All sizes provided are for the wingspan.



Preferred foodplants are described for the larval stage only. Adults are less particular.

None of the information given in this (or any) guide can identify butterflies with 100% confidence. This makes your identification endeavor much like a puzzle - do your best to piece together the information and find a species that fits as many of the criteria as possible. If you are uncertain about a species, ask us how to proceed at NWT-BUGS@gov.nt.ca.

Go forth and IDENTIFY!!!

SKIPPERS (FAMILY HESPERIIDAE)

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

Persius Duskywing - *Erynnis persius*

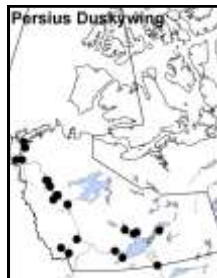


SIZE: Small, 2.8 cm

FLIGHT: Fast, low to the ground.

FOODPLANTS: Willow, lupine and probably poplar.

HABITAT: Open forest, clearings, meadows; below treeline at low elevations.



Grizzled Skipper - *Pyrgus centaureae*

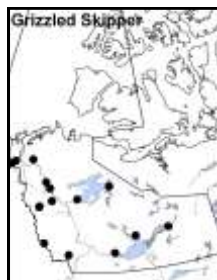


SIZE: Small, 2.8 cm

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

FOODPLANTS: Wild strawberry; cloudberry; cinquefoil.

HABITAT: Bog, roads, meadow, forest clearings.



Arctic Skipper - *Carterocephalus palaemon*

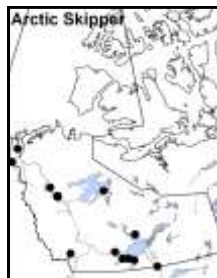


SIZE: Small, 2.8 cm

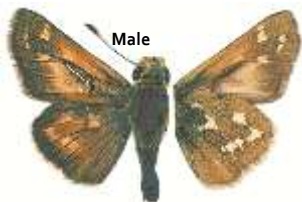
FLIGHT: Fast, low to the ground, tends to return to original perch after flight.

FOODPLANTS: Grass.

HABITAT: Forest trails and clearings, roadsides, moist meadows.



Common Branded Skipper - *Hesperia comma*



Male

SIZE: Small,
3.0 cm.

FLIGHT:
Fast, low to
the ground.

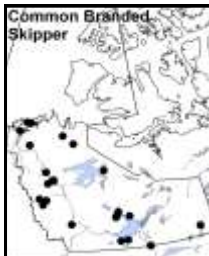
FOOD-

PLANTS: Grasses.

HABITAT: Roads, mead-
ows, bogs, low hilltops.



Female



Long-dash Skipper- *Polites mystic*



Male

SIZE: Small,
2.3 cm.

FOODPLANTS:
Grasses.

HABITAT: Meadows and area



Female



with lush cover of grasses.

Dreamy Duskywing - *Erynnis icelus*

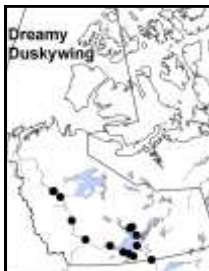


SIZE: Small, 2.5 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Poplar,
aspen, willow, birch.

HABITAT: Wood edges,
clearings, damp areas
where willows are com-

mon; on sand/mud.



Northern Cloudywing - *Thorybes pylades*

SIZE: Medium, 4.0 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Pea family
plants, types of clover.

HABITAT: Boreal woodland/



Peck's Skipper - *Polites peckius*



SIZE: Small, 3.0 cm wing-span

FOODPLANTS: Grasses

HABITAT: Any open grassy areas.

NOTES: Female is darker, the hindwing has a patch of yellow spots surrounded by dark brown (in both sexes).



Common Roadside Skipper—*Amblyscirtes vialis*

Not found yet, but expected to be present in the NWT.

??..... DID YOU KNOW.....??

Skippers are named because of the way they fly. They dart around quickly, skipping from place to place. They can be tricky to net!

There are about 3500 species of skippers worldwide! That is a lot of skippers.

As skippers have large bodies compared to their wings, and can have drab colouring, they can be mistaken for moths.



Ross Layberry with a friend. © GNWT/A Veitch

Males of this family are feisty, and will aggressively defend a territory. The attack of a tiny skipper is not too scary for us humans, but imagine if you were another butterfly, or another insect! This butterfly packs a punch. It is a great group of species to find and study.

SWALLOWTAILS (Family Papilionidae)

Large with bright colours; only a few species in the NWT

Eversmann's Parnassian - *Parnassius eversmanni*



SIZE: Large, 5.0 cm.

FLIGHT: Fast, low to the ground.

FOOD-PLANTS:

Unknown in North Amer-

ica, but probably corydalis. **HABITAT:** Mountainous wil-
low and grass tundra. Taiga Cordillera. **NOTES:** Males:
pale yellow; females: white.

Male



Phoebus Parnassian - *Parnassius phoebus*



SIZE: Large, 5.0 cm.

FLIGHT: Fast, low to the ground.

FOODPLANTS: Stone-
crop

HABITAT: Alpine mead-
ows and grass tundra.

NOTES: Beringian spe-
cies, occurring in Asia,

Alaska, Yukon and NWT. Males: pale yellow; females:
white. May be one generation every two years.



The first Phoebus Parnassian
ever collected in the NWT—
Mackenzie Mountains,
Rabbitkettle Creek, 2004

© R Layberry



Canadian Tiger Swallowtail - *Papilio canadensis*



SIZE: Large, 8.2 cm.

FLIGHT: Moderate speed, various heights.

FOODPLANTS: Aspen, cottonwood, willow.

HABITAT: Roadside, forest clearings, along streams.

NOTES: The less common Old World Swallowtail is similar but has more black, less yellow, and usually flies at higher elevations.



Old World Swallowtail - *Papilio machaon*



Male

SIZE: Large, 7.0 cm.

FOOD-PLANTS: Sagebrushes, Arctic wormwood

HABITAT: Wide variety - commonly found on exposed hills or cliffs. Tundra.

NOTES: Found up to the Arctic coast. Flies from late May until July.



Female



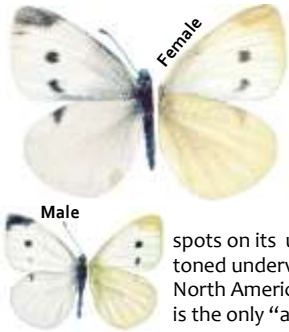
Canadian tiger swallowtail feeding on nectar from a Siberian pea-tree (*Caragana arborescens*), an alien shrub used for landscaping and somewhat spreading along roads and disturbed areas near communities in southern NWT.

© L. Hargreaves

WHITES & SULPHURS (Family Pieridae)

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

Cabbage White - *Pieris rapae*



SIZE: Medium, 4.0 cm.

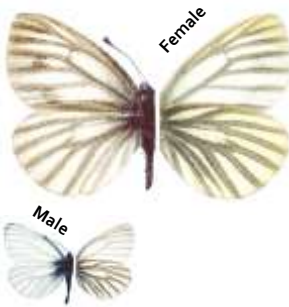
FOODPLANTS: Plants of the mustard family, including cabbage. Considered a pest in gardens.

HABITAT: Can be found in almost any habitat. Likes gardens. **NOTES:** Distinguished by the black

spots on its upperwings and yellow-toned underwings. Introduced into North America in the 1860s, this species is the only “alien” butterfly in the NWT.



Arctic White - *Pieris angelika*



SIZE: Medium, 3.8 cm.

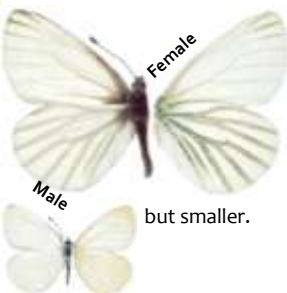
FLIGHT: Slow, up to 2 m above ground.

FOODPLANTS: Leaves of wild mustards, parrya.

HABITAT: Wet riparian areas, willow shrub areas, wet meadows. **NOTES:** Females have grey markings on the upperside.



Mustard White - *Pieris oleracea*

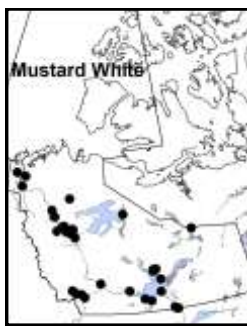


Female

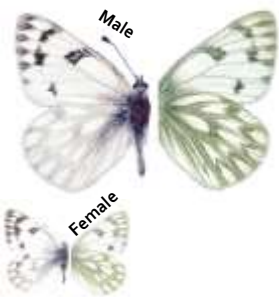
Male

but smaller.

SIZE: Medium, 4.0 cm.
FOODPLANTS: Mustards, especially rock cress. **HABITAT:** Woodlands, or just outside of woodlands, marshes and lakeshores. **NOTES:** Arctic white is similar



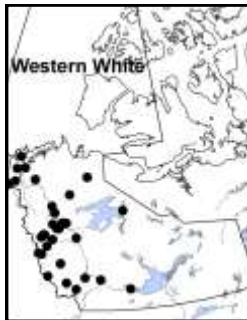
Western White - *Pontia occidentalis*



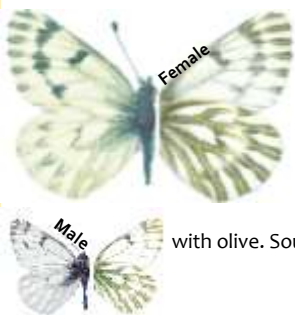
Male

Female

SIZE: Medium, 4.0 cm.
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.



Spring White - *Pontia sisymbrii*



Female

Male

SIZE: Medium, 4.0 cm.
FOODPLANTS: Mustards. **HABITAT:** Dry slopes, rock canyons and outcrops. Open coniferous forests. **NOTES:** Veins of the underside of the hindwing may be edged with olive. South Slave region.



Large Marble - *Euchloe ausonides*



SIZE: Medium, 4.1 cm.

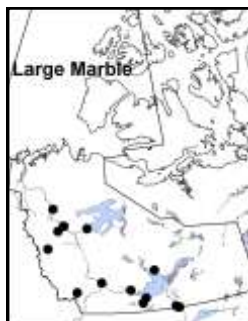
FLIGHT: Moderate, zig-zag.

FOODPLANTS: Flowers and leaves of wild mustards, especially rock cress.

HABITAT: Sandy areas in pine forest or rocky areas.

NOTES: Green Marble

have darker underside, and the Northern Marble are smaller.



Northern Marble - *Euchloe creusa*



SIZE: Small, 3.0 cm.

FOOPLANTS: Uncertain, but possibly mustards.

HABITAT: Dry tundra, rocky outcrops in mountains. Tundra-like habitats in southern NWT.

NOTES: Hindwing underside appear band-

ed—unlike other marbles.



Green Marble - *Euchloe naina*



SIZE: Small, 3.2 cm.

FLIGHT: About 15 cm from surface

FOODPLANTS: Unknown.

HABITAT: Limestone scree mountain slopes.

NOTES: Often confused with the Large Marble.

Look for a duller grey-green in this species. No yellow flecks. So far, found only in the Sahtu. Species was described only recently (1990s). Also found in Yukon and possibly Alaska.



Christina Sulphur - *Colias christina*



SIZE: Medium, 4.7 cm.

FLIGHT:

Fast, zigzag.

FOOD-

PLANTS:

Legumes:
lupines, vetch,
liquorice-root.

HABITAT: Forest
openings or along

roadsides if legumes are present. **NOTES:** There are at least three subspecies, the Yukon one (*C. c. kluanensis*) is shown. In most of Canada, this species is bright yellow at the base of the hindwing.

A Sulphur in a Yellowknife
garden—

Can you identify it?

© B Fournier



Female



Booth's Sulphur - *Colias tyche*

SIZE: Small,

3.0 cm.

FLIGHT:

FOOD-

PLANTS: Leg-

umes. **HABITAT:** Boggy arctic
tundra. Alpine areas. **NOTES:** Variable, a pale green subspecies occurs
on Banks, Melville, Victoria islands.



Male



Canada Sulphur - *Colias canadensis*

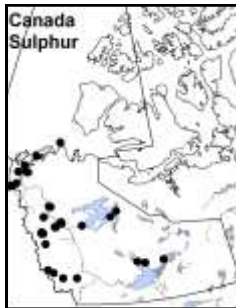


even white.

SIZE: Medium, 4.0 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Legumes. **HABITAT:** Open taiga and wet shrub tundra at the treeline.

NOTES: Can look like a pale version of the Hecla Sulphur. Females are very pale,



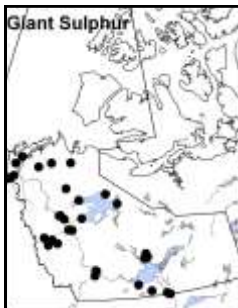
Giant Sulphur - *Colias gigantea*



SIZE: Large, 5.2 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Willows

HABITAT: Northern boreal forest, in moist areas with willows



Giant sulphur visiting from the nearby willow habitat.

© M. Fournier



Hecla Sulphur - *Colias hecla*



Female



Male

SIZE: Medium, 4.0 cm.

FLIGHT: Low and swift.

FOOD-PLANTS: Arctic legumes, Alpine Milk-vetch.

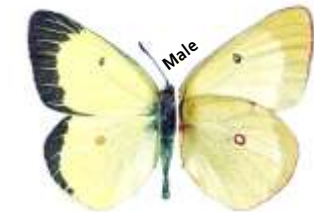
HABITAT: Wet tundra.

NOTES: A true arctic butterfly—very dark orange. Common in northern locations, to the tip of Ellesmere Island in Nunavut, less common in

southern NWT.



Pink-edged Sulphur - *Colias interior*



Male



Female

SIZE: Medium, 4.2 cm.

FOOD-PLANTS: Blueberry

HABITAT: Scrubby openings in forests/bogs. Cleared or burnt areas.

NOTES: Pink edge is very bright. Occurs in the boreal zone, so far seen only in southern NWT, Fort Smith and Little Buffalo River..



You may find a butterfly that is male on one side...and female on the other. These individuals are called “gynandromorphs”. This usually is caused by errors during cell division in early development.



Labrador Sulphur - *Colias nastes*



SIZE: Smaller than most sulphurs, 3.4 cm.

FLIGHT: Low, rapid, moth-like.

FOODPLANTS: Arctic legumes, Alpine Milk-vetch. **HABITAT:** A northern species. Windswept

rocks; dry gravelly hilltops.



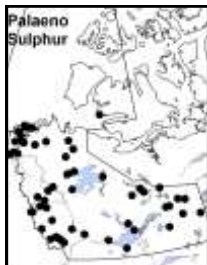
Palaeno Sulphur - *Colias palaeno*



SIZE: 3 to 5 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Blueberries

HABITAT: Taiga and protected stream valleys in open tundra, where blueberries and bilberries are found. **NOTES:** Known also as Heath Sulphur (*Colias chippewa*).



Pelidne Sulphur - *Colias pelidne*

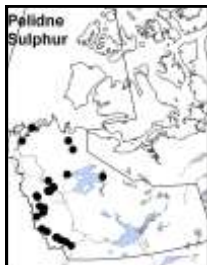


SIZE: Small, 3.9 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Blueberry.

HABITAT: Tundra.

NOTES: Spot in centre of upper hindwings is faint. Pink-edged Sulphur is similar but has an orange spot in the center of the hindwing instead of yellow.



Clouded Sulphur - *Colias philodice*



Female

SIZE: Medium, 4.5 cm.

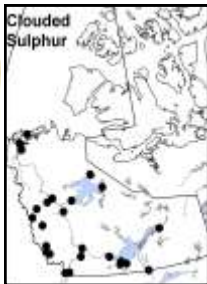
FLIGHT: Fast, zigzag.

FOODPLANTS: Lupines, vetch, liquorice-root.

HABITAT: Dry roadsides, forest openings; low elevation NWT.



Male



GOSSAMER WINGS (Family Lycaenidae)

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

Brown Elfin - *Callophrys augustinus*



SIZE: Small, 2.2 cm.

FLIGHT: Often with other elfins. **FOODPLANTS:** Blueberries, bearberries, leatherleaf, and Labrador tea.

HABITAT: Acidic soils - bogs, barrens, conifer forest. **NOTES:** Generally the most common elfin.



Western Pine Elfin - *Callophrys eryphon*



Male

SIZE: Small, 2.5 cm.

FOODPLANTS:

Young needles of pines and spruce.

HABITAT:

Lodgepole pine or other pine forests,



Female

specially in west **NOTES:** Black v-shaped marks form continuous zigzag line.



Eastern Pine Elfin - *Callophrys niphon*



Male

SIZE: Small, 2.5 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Pines, specially Jack pine.

HABITAT: Sandy areas with pine trees. Males found along the ground and on roads, females sitting on trees. Both sexes at flowers. **NOTES:**

Black v-shaped marks form discontinuous series of black peaks, each capping a brown spot.



Hoary Elfin - *Callophrys polios*



SIZE: Small, 2.5 cm.

FLIGHT: Fast, short flights.

Flies in early spring.

FOODPLANTS: Bearberry (kinnikinnik).

HABITAT: Dry grassy or rocky areas, dry forest openings.



Dorcas Copper - *Lycanena dorcas*



SIZE: Small, 2.3 cm.

FOODPLANTS:

Cinquefoil.

HABITAT: Wet spruce forest, bogs and other wetlands.



Bronze Copper - *Lycaena hyllus*



SIZE: Large, 3.1 cm.

FOODPLANTS:

Docks (*Rumex*) and Knotweed (*Polygonum*).

HABITAT: Wetlands and meadows.



NOTE: Old record in the NWT.

American Copper - *Lycaena phlaeas*



SIZE: Small, 2.5 cm.

FOODPLANTS:

Mostly Mountain Sorrel in our area.

HABITAT: Many subspecies. Defends its territory from other butterflies.



Northern Spring Azure - *Celastrina lucia*



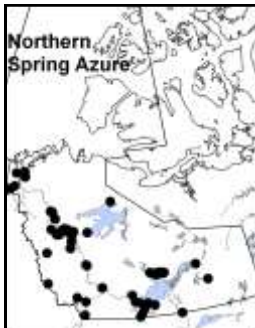
SIZE: 1.8 to 2.8 cm.

FOODPLANTS: White-flowered shrubs, blueberries.

HABITAT: Open woodlands.

NOTES: Was considered a subspecies of Spring Azure (*C. ladon*). Larva may be tended by ants.

Female



Western Tailed Blue - *Cupido amyntula*



SIZE: Small, 2.5 cm.

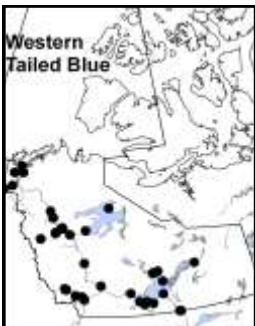
FLIGHT: Slow, low to the ground

FOODPLANTS: Lupine, vetch, wild pea

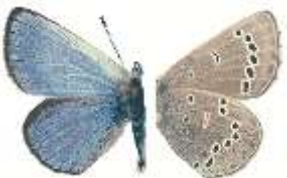
HABITAT: Roadside, meadows, open forest.

NOTES: This is the only blue with "tails" on the hindwing. Males blue above, females brown.

Male



Silvery Blue - *Glaucopsyche lygdamus*



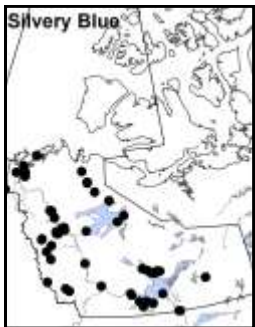
SIZE: Small, 2.6 cm.

FLIGHT: Slow, low to the ground

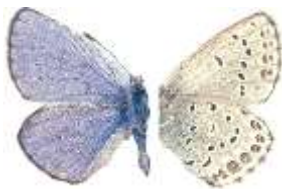
FOODPLANTS: Lupine, vetch, wild pea

HABITAT: Roadside, meadows, open forest.

NOTES: Metallic silvery.



Northern Blue - *Plebejus idas (anna)*



SIZE: Small, 2.6 cm.

FLIGHT: Slow, low to the ground.

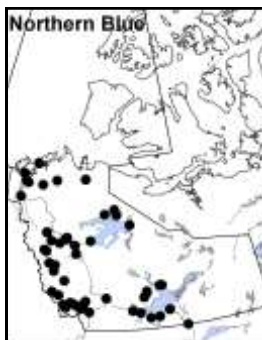
FOODPLANTS: Crowberry, blueberry, bilberry, Labrador

tea. **HABITAT:** Forest clearings.

NOTES: Many subspecies. The only blue with a full row of orange spots on the underside.



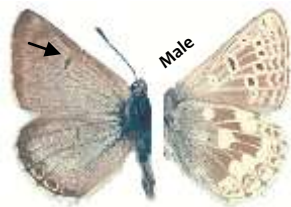
Female



Not all Blues are blue: - females can sport a rich chocolate colour. This is a female Arctic Blue. Do you see the heavy bar on the wing?

© B Fournier

Arctic Blue - *Plebejus glandon*



Male

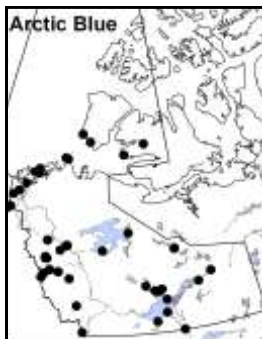
SIZE: Small, 2.0 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Primulaceae, Fabaceae, Saxifragaceae.

HABITAT: Dry open spaces and outcrops in tundra or tundra-like habitats. **NOTES:** Heavy bar on forewings. Also called *Agriades glandon*.



Female



Greenish Blue - *Plebejus saepiolus*



SIZE: Small, 2.7 cm.

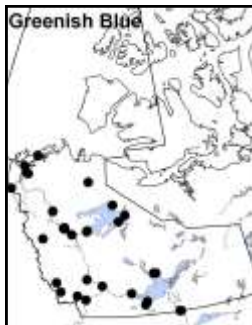
FLIGHT: Slow, low to the ground. **FOOD-**

PLANTS: Clovers.

HABITAT: Roadsides, moist meadows.

NOTES: Similar to the Arctic Blue and Cranberry Blue -

location can help differentiate them. The former lives in bogs, wet open forest and tundra. The latter prefers dry rocky areas.



Cranberry Blue - *Plebejus optilete*



SIZE:

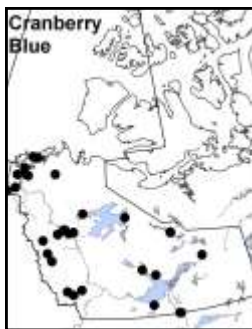
Small, 2.1 cm.

FLIGHT: Weak, near to ground.

FOODPLANTS: Blueberry, Cranberry.

HABITAT: Bogs and wet tundra.

NOTES: Also known as *Vacciniina optilete*. Has a large orange spot on the underside of hindwing.



??... DID YOU KNOW..??

Many species of blues form relationships with ants. The ants nourish the butterfly larvae, and in turn, the ants get sugar rich honey dew from them.

Artwork by Bonnie Fournier



BRUSHFOOTS (Family Nymphalidae)

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

Milbert's Tortoiseshell - *Aglais milberti*

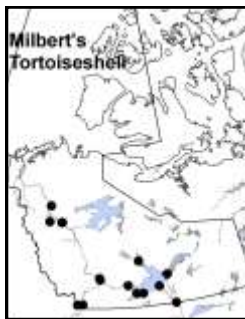


SIZE: Medium, 4.8 cm.

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

FOODPLANTS: Stinging nettle. **HABITAT:** Open forests, meadows, riparian areas. **NOTES:** Can spend the winter in the

adult stage. Also known as *Nymphalis milberti*.



Compton Tortoiseshell - *Nymphalis j-album*



SIZE: Large, 6.0 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Willow, birch and poplar.

HABITAT: Forests.

NOTES: Hibernates in tree cavities, or in cabins, outhouses, where it can. Long adult life: pupates in July, then hibernates as an adult until June.



Mourning Cloak - *Nymphalis antiopa*



SIZE: Large, 6.1 cm.

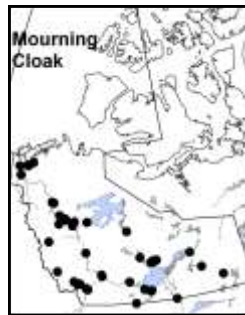
FLIGHT: Fast, frequently patrols a single path.

FOODPLANTS: Willows.

HABITAT: Forest openings, riparian areas.

NOTES: The caterpillars live in large masses. Hibernates as adult.

Usually the very first butterfly seen in early spring.



Hoary Comma - *Polygonia gracilis*



SIZE: Medium, 4.5 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Currants.

HABITAT: Boreal forests.

NOTES: Similar to the Grey Comma, but has sharp contrast on underwings.



Grey Comma - *Polygonia progné*



SIZE: Medium, 4.2 cm.

FLIGHT: Remarkably slow flying.

FOODPLANTS: Currants and gooseberries.

HABITAT: Often seen feeding on sap, carrion or dung.

NOTES: Found south of the tundra.



Satyr Comma - *Polygonia satyrus*



SIZE: Large, 5.0 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Nettles, preferably stinging nettle.

HABITAT: Woodland clearings with streams nearby.

NOTES: Comma on hindwings highly visible.



Green Comma - *Polygonia faunus*

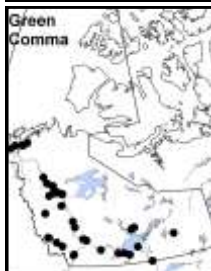


SIZE: Medium, 4.7 cm.

FLIGHT: Fast, erratic.

FOODPLANTS: Birch, willow, alder, blueberries.

HABITAT: Boreal-taiga forest. **NOTES:** Sits on rocks or gravel, will chase intruders from territory.



Red Admiral - *Vanessa atalanta*



SIZE: Large, 5.1 cm.

FLIGHT: Aggressive, fast.

FOODPLANTS: Stinging nettle, wood nettle.

HABITAT: Varied, seen in gardens and any sort of clearing. **NOTES:** Often claims a territory and defends it. Painted Ladies and Red Admirals are rare migrants.



Painted Lady - *Vanessa cardui*



SIZE: Large, 5.5 cm. **FLIGHT:**

Fast. **FOODPLANTS:** Thistles, knapweed, wormwood, burdocks. **HABITAT:** Varied.

NOTES: Does not overwinter in Canada; they are rare migrants to the NWT.



White Admiral - *Limenitis arthemis*

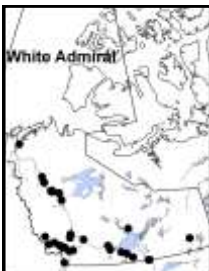


SIZE: Large, 6 to 8 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Willows, aspen, poplar.

HABITAT: Clearings.

NOTES: Overwinters as small larva then builds a rolled-leaf nest on top of a leaf.



Viceroy - *Limenitis archippus*



SIZE: Large, 6.0 cm.

FLIGHT: Flies as "flap and glide".

FOODPLANTS: Willow and poplar. **HABITAT:** Wet willow areas.

NOTES: Mimic of the Monarch, but it is smaller. Monarch itself was collected only in NT: near Fort Simpson.



Mountain Fritillary - *Boloria alaskensis*



Female



Male

SIZE: Small. 3.3 cm.

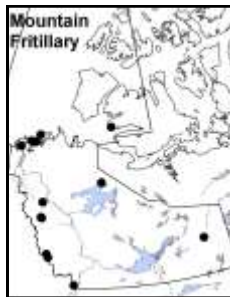
FLIGHT: Males fast and close to the ground. Females slower.

FOODPLANTS: Unknown.

HABITAT: All through the western Arctic.

NOTES: Distinguishable by the white crescent on the hindwing and the

angled hindwing. Females are larger. Also known as *Boloria napaea*



Astarte Fritillary - *Boloria astarte*



SIZE: Medium, 4.5 cm.

FLIGHT: Swift and wary flyer.

FOOD-
PLANTS: Saxifrage.

HABITAT: Windy and rocky ridges, rock-slides. Mostly in the mountains.

NOTES: Beringian species from NE Siberia to NW North America.



Meadow Fritillary - *Boloria bellona*



SIZE: Medium, 4.0 cm.

FLIGHT: Meandering zigzag flight.

FOODPLANTS: Violets.

HABITAT: Wide variety, seems to like yellow flowers.

NOTES: Squared off tip to forewings.



Arctic Fritillary - *Boloria chariclea*



Female

SIZE: Small, 3.8 cm.
FOODPLANTS: Wil-
lows, Western bistort.
HABITAT: Cool and
moist meadows.

NOTES: Taiga forms
(female shown) have
purplish hindwing

undersides; Tundra forms (male
shown) have white band across
mid hindwing underside.



Male



Bog Fritillary - *Boloria eunomia*



Male

SIZE: Small, 3.7 cm.

FLIGHT: Strong and low.

FOODPLANTS: Alpine
bistort, willows, violet.

HABITAT: Bogs, wet
tundra, wet alpine
meadows. **NOTES:** The

← underside hindwings
with margin of pearly
spots with black rim.



Female



Freija Fritillary - *Boloria freija*



Male

SIZE: Medium, 3.7 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Blueberry,
bearberry.

HABITAT: Open pine for-
est, tundra, rocky mead-
ows. **NOTES:** Flies very
early, smaller, lighter.



Female



Frigga Fritillary - *Boloria frigga*

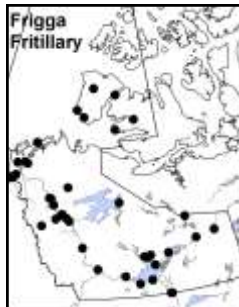


SIZE: Small, 3.6 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Willows, Arctic Avenas.

HABITAT: Wet shrubby tundra, willow swamps.

NOTES: Tundra forms are larger and more yellow than taiga forms. Quite dark at the base.



Dingy Fritillary - *Boloria improba*

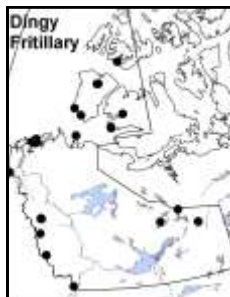


SIZE: Small to medium, 3.5 cm. **FLIGHT:** Moderate, low to the ground. Appears brown in flight.

FOOD-PLANTS: Probably willows.

HABITAT: Moist tundra, with dwarf, prostrate willows.

NOTES: A true tundra butterfly; one of the first to appear in spring in alpine tundra.



Beringian Fritillary - *Boloria natarazhati*



SIZE: Large for a Fritillary, 4.0 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Unknown.

HABITAT: Dry rocky areas on hills. **NOTES:** Larger and darker than the Freija Fritillary, its most similar species. Can appear silky or shiny. The only butterfly in the NWT considered rare in

the world (ranked as G3, NatureServe Canada). Also found in Richardson Mountains in Yukon, in Nunavut, and in northern BC.



Polaris Fritillary - *Boloria polaris*



SIZE: Small to medium, 4.0 cm.

FLIGHT: Moderate, low to the ground.

FOODPLANTS: Probably Mountain-avens, blueberries.

HABITAT: Alpine and arctic tundra. Distinctive hour-glass shaped white spots on the under-margins of the hindwings.



Silver-bordered Fritillary - *Boloria selene*



SIZE: Medium, 4.0 cm.

FLIGHT: Fast, regularly visiting flowers.

FOODPLANTS: Violets.

HABITAT: Wet areas.

NOTES: Distinct underside with silver metallic spots on orangey brown backing.



Common Ringlet - *Coenonympha tullia*



SIZE: Small, 3.2 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Grasses.

HABITAT: Grassy areas, clearings, roadsides, prairies, bogs, tundra, and open areas in taiga forest.

NOTES: Highly variable in colour and number of eye-spots. The *mackenziei*

subspecies mostly present in the NWT is pale ochre with white fringes.



Northwestern Fritillary - *Speyeria hesperis*



SIZE: Medium, 5.0 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Violets.

HABITAT: Dry open meadows or forests.

NOTES: Subspecies *beani* found here. Most similar to *S. atlantis* but smaller and lighter reddish-brown colour under hindwings.



Mormon Fritillary - *Speyeria mormonia*



SIZE: Medium, 4.5 cm.

FLIGHT: Slow to fast, zig-zags.

FOODPLANTS: Violets. **HABITAT:** Open forest and also meadows; all elevations. **NOTES:** Confused with the Northwestern Fritillary and the Atlantis Fritillary, but has larger

silver spots under the hindwings. .



Atlantis Fritillary - *Speyeria atlantis*



SIZE: Large, 5.8 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Violets.

HABITAT: Boreal habitats.

NOTES: Most common fritillary in the north. Often seen on flowers.



Tawny Crescent - *Phyciodes batesii*

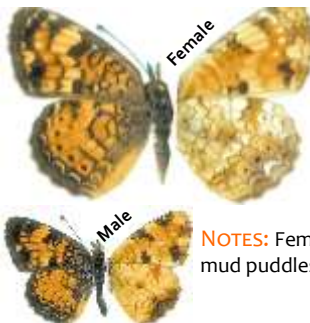


SIZE: Small, 3.0 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Asters.

HABITAT: Dry boreal clearings.

NOTES: Lives in colonies.



Northern Crescent - *Phyciodes cocyta*

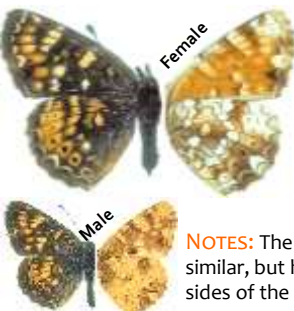
SIZE: Small, 2.9 cm.

FLIGHT: Distinguishing flap-glide pattern.

FOODPLANTS: Asters.

HABITAT: Meadows, disturbed sites, anywhere with asters.

NOTES: Females are larger. Visits mud puddles in large numbers.



Field Crescent - *Phyciodes pulchella*

SIZE: Small to medium, 3.4 cm.

FLIGHT: Moderate, close to the ground.

FOODPLANTS: Asters.

HABITAT: Roadsides, meadows.

NOTES: The Northern Crescent is similar, but has more orange-brown and less black on the upper-sides of the wings.



Disa Alpine - *Erebia disa*



SIZE: Medium, 3.9 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Probably grasses and sedges.

HABITAT: Boggy tundra. **NOTES:** Light grey spots on the hindwing underside, as well as a banded appearance.



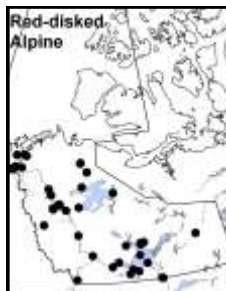
Red-disked Alpine - *Erebia discoidalis*



SIZE: Medium, 4.0 cm.

FLIGHT: Weak and close to the ground.

FOODPLANTS: Grasses, sedges. **HABITAT:** Moist prairies, fens, forest edges. **NOTES:** No eye-spots.



Banded Alpine - *Erebia fasciata*

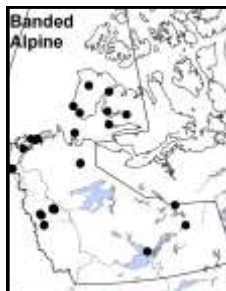


SIZE: Medium, 4.5 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Unknown, but adults are found on cotton-grass.

HABITAT: Arctic and subarctic wet tundra.

NOTES: Beringian species, found also in Nunavut, Yukon, Alaska, and Siberia. Loca-



tion on Great Slave Lake is on an island with tundra-like habitat.

Reddish Alpine - *Erebia lafontainei*



SIZE: Small, 3.5 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Unknown.

HABITAT: Arctic and alpine tundra, shrubby areas.

NOTES: Rests in between patches of wil-
lows to avoid the wind.

Found as far east as Tuktoyuktuk. Only found in Alaska, Yukon and the NWT. It is closely related to the Siberian species *E. kozhantshikovi*



Mt. McKinley Alpine - *Erebia mackinleyensis*



SIZE: Medium, 4.5 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Grasses, sedges, and rushes.

HABITAT: High elevation boulder field or scree slopes.

NOTES: Similar to the Magdalena Alpine, but has pale forewing patches.



Yellow-dotted Alpine - *Erebia pawlowskii*

SIZE: Medium, 3.5 cm.

FLIGHT: Slow and weak. Mostly found sitting on the ground.

FOODPLANTS: Probably grasses, sedges, or rushes.

HABITAT: Grassy ridges of

wet tundra, meadows, lakeshores. **NOTES:** The sub-



Magdalena Alpine - *Erebia magdalena*



SIZE: Medium, 4.2 cm.

FLIGHT: Rapid, in sunshine.

FOODPLANTS: Probably grasses.

HABITAT: High elevation boulder fields, scree slopes.

NOTES: A high elevation species. Habit

of laying eggs on rocks. Range extends south to New Mexico. So far in the NWT found only near Katherine Creek in 2006. This species is globally rare.



Taiga Alpine - *Erebia mancinus*



SIZE: Medium, 3.9 cm.

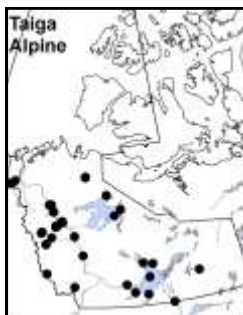
FLIGHT: Slow and leisurely.

FOODPLANTS: Probably grasses or sedges.

HABITAT: Black spruce or tamarack bogs.

NOTES: Distinguishable by the two grey spots on the

hindwing underside.



Scree Alpine - *Erebia occulta*



SIZE: Medium, 3.8 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Unknown.

HABITAT: Dry rocky areas, prefers gravel and smaller rocks, rather than boulders like many similar butterflies.

NOTES: No black pupils in the orange forewing

spots. A Beringian species, occurring in Siberia, and in Alaska, northern Yukon and the Richardson Mountains in the NWT.



Ross's Alpine - *Erebia rossii*



SIZE: Medium, 3.6 cm.

FOODPLANTS: Sedges.

HABITAT: Boggy and shrubby tundra.

NOTES: A northern species. Very dark upper-sides.



Four-dotted Alpine - *Erebia youngi*



SIZE: Small to medium, 4.0 cm.

FLIGHT: Moderate.

FOODPLANTS: Probably grasses or sedges.

HABITAT: Dry tundra with short, dense grass, such as frequently occurs along scree slope

edges). A species found only in Alaska, Yukon, and the NWT.



Eyed Brown - *Lethe eurydice*



SIZE: Medium, 4.5 cm.

FLIGHT: Slow weak flight.

FOODPLANTS: Sedges.

HABITAT: Marshes.

NOTES: Old record south of Great Slave Lake. At its extreme northern limit in the NWT.



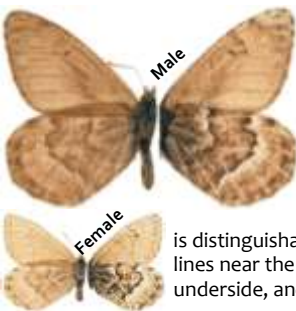
Sentinel Arctic - *Oeneis alpina*



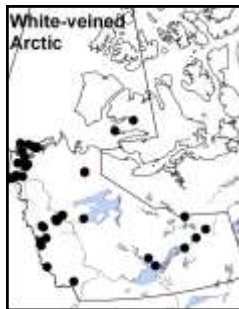
SIZE: Medium, 4.1 cm.
FOODPLANTS: Unknown.
HABITAT: Breeds in grassy tundra. Males seen on dry rocky hilltops. **NOTES:** Distinguishable by the two subtle hindwing eyespots. In general adults are seen every two years: fly in even years (e.g., 2012) from the Mackenzie Delta eastward and in odd years westward. Range from northern Alaska, Yukon and NWT.



White-Veined Arctic - *Oeneis bore*



SIZE: Medium, 4.7 cm.
FLIGHT: Fast, erratic.
FOODPLANTS: Grasses, sedges. **HABITAT:** Wet, hummocky alpine and arctic tundra. **NOTES:** Similar to the Melissa and Polixenes Arctic. The White-veined

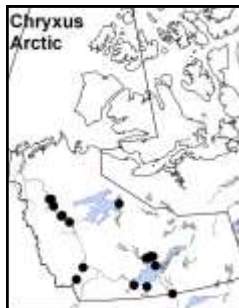


is distinguishable by its dark transverse lines near the middle of the forewing underside, and of course, the white lined veins on the hindwing.

Chryxus Arctic - *Oeneis chryxus*



SIZE: Medium, 4.5 cm.
FLIGHT: Fast, erratic.
FOODPLANTS: Grasses. **HABITAT:** Dry meadows, open pine forest. **NOTES:** Will land then lean sideways to minimize its shadow and “disappear”.



Jutta Arctic - *Oeneis jutta*



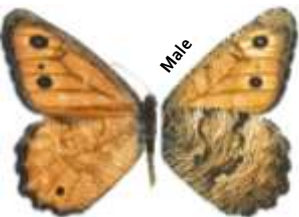
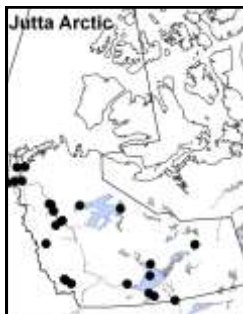
SIZE: Medium, 4.7 cm.

FLIGHT: Fast, erratic; lands on tree trunks.

FOODPLANTS: Sedges, possibly cotton grass.

HABITAT: Black spruce bogs, wet tundra.

NOTES: Orange bordered eye-spots.



Macoun's Arctic - *Oeneis macounii*

SIZE: Large, 5.2 cm.

FLIGHT: Weak, laboured flight.

FOODPLANTS: Un-

known. **HABITAT:** Dry and sandy Jackpine forests. **NOTES:** Flies in odd years in our region.



Uhler's Arctic - *Oeneis uhleri*

SIZE: Medium, 4.0 cm.

FLIGHT: Can be seen hovering; an unusual behavior for a butterfly.

FOODPLANTS: Grasses.

HABITAT: Forest clear-

ings, tundra. **NOTES:** Very similar to the Chryxus Arctic, but flies later in the year. The *nahanni* subspecies is dark grey.



Philip's Arctic - *Oenies rosovi* (*O. philipi*)



SIZE: Medium, 4.6 cm.
FOODPLANTS: Cotton grass.
HABITAT: Black spruce bogs.
NOTES: Male and female are very similar in appearance. Occurs on a few locations in BC, Yukon and NWT. Previously known

as *O. philipi*, but now merged with *P. rosovi* from eastern Siberia.



Polixenes Arctic - *Oenies polixenes*



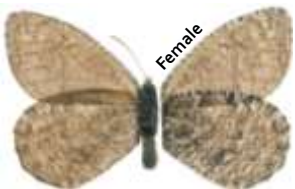
Male



Female

SIZE: Medium, 4.6 cm.
FLIGHT: Fast, erratic.
FOODPLANTS: Uncertain, possibly grasses and/or sedges.
HABITAT: Alpine and arctic tundra.

NOTES: Prefers tundra or tundra-like habitats, whereas the extremely similar Philip's Arctic is found in black spruce bogs.



Female

Melissa Arctic - *Oenies melissa*

SIZE: Medium, 4.8 cm.
FLIGHT: Fast, erratic.
FOOD-PLANTS: Uncertain, possible

grasses or sedges.

HABITAT: Dry alpine and arctic tundra.

NOTES: Can have dark or light forms.



Male





“I have found that everybody love butterflies in the
Northwest Territories!” Ross Layberry

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