

# Common South Dakota Butterflies



## Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*)

Bright orange with black veins and black wing margins with white spots. The female has wider black veins than the male and the orange color is less bright.

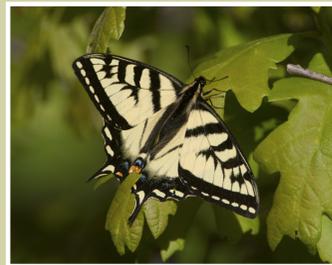
Wingspan:	3.4 – 4.0 inches
Flight period:	mid-May to mid-October
Adult nectar sources:	common and swamp milkweed, gayfeather, thistles, joe-pyeweed, marigold, cosmos, zinnias
Larva food sources:	common, swamp and showy milkweeds



## Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*)

Pinkish orange or orange-brown with dark markings; forewing with a black patch near the tip containing white spots; hindwing edge with a row of black spots without blue centers. The underside of the hindwing edge has four small eyespots.

Wingspan:	2.0 - 2.75 inches
Flight period:	June to August
Adult nectar sources:	thistles, asters, dandelions, coneflowers, wild plum, milkweeds, alfalfa, lilac, dogbane, zinnia
Larva food sources:	thistles, hollyhock, mallow, pearly everlasting, legumes



## Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*)

Yellow with black tiger stripes in both sexes. Underside of wings have a row of yellow spots on the forewing and an orange spot on the hindwing.

Wingspan:	3.25 – 4.5 inches
Flight period:	mid-April to early September
Adult nectar sources:	lilac, dandelion, milkweeds, alfalfa, thistles, zinnias
Larva food sources:	chokecherry, green ash



## Unknown Skipper and Clouded Sulphur (*Colias philodice*)

The male clouded sulphur is yellow with black wing edges; female can be either yellow or white. Undersides of both sexes have several small black or brown spots on both wings.

Wingspan:	1.5 – 2 inches
Flight period:	mid-April to early December
Adult nectar sources:	dandelions, asters, coneflowers, clovers, rabbitbrush
Larva food sources:	alfalfa, white clover, legumes, vetches



## Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta rubria*)

Black with white spots and a red-orange band in the center; hindwing edge with red-orange band. The underside of the hindwing is mottled and lacks the red band.

Wingspan:	1.75 – 2.5 inches
Flight period:	mid-April to early November
Adult nectar sources:	sap, rotten fruit, animal droppings
Larva food sources:	stinging nettles

## South Dakota's Rare Prairie Butterflies

The Dakota Skipper and the Poweshiek Skipperling can be found in northeastern South Dakota. Both of these rare species are candidates for the Endangered Species List.

These species need your help to protect any remaining undisturbed native prairie sites in South Dakota. They cannot survive without high quality prairies with native wildflowers.



## Dakota Skipper (*Hesperia dacotae*)

Body short and stout with rounded wings. The male is bright tawny-orange with a prominent, narrow stigma (a patch of specialized scent scales); underside is yellow-orange with a pale spot band on the hindwings. The female varies from dark brown to almost entirely tawny-orange with a few lighter spots on the upper forewings; underside grayish.

This species has been found in approximately 11 northeast South Dakota counties. They frequent hilltops in rolling pastures. Adults normally fly less than 1/3 mile during their lifetime. Males are territorial and perch on tall plants, awaiting a potential mate.

Wingspan:	1.0 – 1.25 inches
Flight period:	end of June to mid-July
Adult nectar sources:	composite flowers such as purple coneflower, fleabane, black-eyed Susan

Larva food sources: various grasses, particularly little bluestem



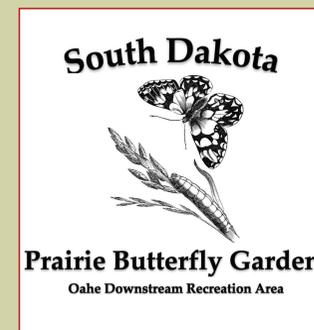
## Poweshiek Skipperling (*Oarisma poweshiek*)

Males and females are dark brown; the forewing's upper edge is orange. The underside of the hindwing is light brown with white veins, except the lower portion, which is brownish black.

Wingspan:	0.9 – 1.25 inches
Flight period:	early July to mid-July
Adult nectar sources:	purple coneflower, black-eyed Susan, prairie coneflower, ox-eye daisy, white clover
Larva food sources:	sedges

## How Skippers Differ From Butterflies

- Usually small to medium-sized
- Usually dull-colored with large heads and stout bodies
- Known for their rapid darting flight, hence the name “skipper”
- Antennae taper to a point at the tip and curve backward to form a hook
- At rest, skippers hold their hindwings straight from their body and the forewings upward at a 45 degree angle
- Butterflies hold their wings up or spread out



Photos by Doug Backlund, Gary Marrone, Erik Runquist and Phil Delphey

## Regal Fritillary (*Speyeria idalia*)

Forewing is reddish orange with black markings. Hindwings are velvety black with two rows of spots; the underside of the hindwing is brown with large silver spots.

Wingspan:	2.9 - 3.8 inches
Flight period:	mid-June to mid-September
Adult nectar sources:	purple coneflower, gayfeather, hoary vervain, thistles, wild bergamot, alfalfa, milkweeds
Larva food sources:	violets



## Eastern Comma (*Polygonia comma*) Question Mark (*Polygonia interrogacionis*)

Both butterflies have dark orange brown wings with distinct black spots and black wing edges with short hindwing projections. Both brown to grey mottled undersides. The Comma has a pearly silver comma on the underside of the hindwing. The Question Mark has a pearly silver question mark in the center of its underwing.

Wingspan:	Comma: 1.75 - 2.5 inches; Question Mark: 2.25 - 3 inches
Flight period:	Comma: late March to mid-October Question Mark: late May to mid-October
Adult nectar sources:	rotting fruit, tree sap, animal droppings, carrion
Larva food sources:	elm, nettles, hackberry



## Melissa Blue (*Lycaeides melissa*)

Male is dark blue with very narrow black wing edges. Females are brown, often dusted with blue. The undersides of both sexes are light gray with black spots and an orange band along the edge of each wing.

Wingspan:	0.9 – 1.2 inches
Flight period:	mid-May to mid-October
Adult nectar sources:	coneflowers, alfalfa, clovers, asters
Larva food sources:	legumes, silvery lupine, white crazy weed, wooly locoweed, American licorice, alfalfa



## Mourning Cloak (*Nymphalis antiopa*)

Dark purplish brown with a wide, creamy yellow border on both wings and a row of bright iridescent blue spots at the inner edge of the border. Undersides are blackish brown with thin, wavy striations. Irregular wing margins.

Wingspan:	2.25 – 3.5 inches
Flight period:	mid-March to late October
Adult nectar sources:	tree sap, rotting fruit, occasionally flower nectar
Larva food sources:	willows, quaking aspen, plains cottonwood, paper birch, elm, hackberry



## Common Wood-nymph (*Cercyonis pegala nephele*)

Brown wings. Males are much smaller than females and slightly darker in color. The male has two black forewing eyespots; female eyespots are large, ringed with light yellow, and surrounded by a pale patch. Undersides are dark to pale brown with darker striations.

Wingspan:	1.75 – 2.75 inches
Flight period:	mid-June to early September
Adult nectar sources:	alfalfa, purple coneflower, wooly vervain
Larva food sources:	grasses, bluestem, porcupine grass

