

Butterflies of Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge



Giant Swallowtail

Papilio cresphontes

Inviting Butterflies Home

Interested in starting your own butterfly garden? With a little knowledge, patience and enthusiasm, a vibrant garden is within reach. Here are the five main components to a successful butterfly garden:

1. Nectar sources: Butterflies need to eat! Different butterflies prefer different colors of flowers, so don't be shy in bringing a wide array of color into your garden. However when planting, it is best to group like colors.

2. Host plants: Also called larval plants, these are the plants on which butterflies lay their eggs and caterpillars feed. When selecting host plants, it is important to plan for butterfly species common to your area. See the checklist for area-specific butterflies and their host plants.

3. Sunlight: Butterflies need sunlight and warmth to be active. When creating your garden, consider including a couple of flat rocks that would receive direct sunlight so that butterflies can warm themselves.

4. Cover: Butterflies need protection from both predators and the elements. By planting shrubs and trees, butterflies are given a place to hide and rest.

5. Water: Damp ground is a source of both moisture and minerals for many butterflies. Your garden may have a naturally damp area. If not, place a shallow bowl of wet sand outdoors. Refresh when dry.

Use Native Plants! Native plants are those species considered to be *indigenous*, or common to the environment before extensive changes to the landscape. Natives are important to our natural ecosystem. They are also extremely **easy to grow** and require **minimal maintenance** once established.

Consider using these Florida natives and butterflies will be sure to visit:

-  Blanketflower
-  Dotted Horsemint
-  Dune sunflower
-  Firebush
-  Goldenrod
-  Scorpiontail

Do not use pesticides in or near a butterfly garden!

This checklist was created using scientific observation records created by Mark and Holly Salvato. Visiting butterfly enthusiasts are encouraged to enjoy their visit and to submit any *photographed* sightings of species not on the checklist to the refuge.

The refuge extends special thanks to the Salvatos for indexing the diversity and seasonal occurrence of butterflies on the refuge. Also, it extends thanks to Ms. Suzanne Valencia, a refuge volunteer, for spearheading the maintenance of the refuge butterfly garden.

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Source: Traas, Pamela F. *Gardening for Florida's Butterflies*. St. Petersburg, Fla.: Great Outdoors Pub., 2001.

Cover photo credit: Joanna Webb



Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge is home to over 30 species of butterflies. The butterflies on this checklist are organized by Family, Subfamily, and alphabetically by scientific name. The numbers on the right indicate the months during which the butterfly was documented on the refuge. The plants listed under each butterfly are popular host plants for its larval stage.

SWALLOWTAILS AND PARNASSIANS

Family: Papilionidae

Swallowtails:

Black Swallowtail* *Papilio polyxenes* 3-8
Host: Fennel, Parsley ***State butterfly of OK**

Giant Swallowtail *P. cresphontes* 2-3, 7-8
Host: Wild lime, Hercules' club, Citrus

Spicebush Swallowtail* *P. troilus* 4
Host: Sassafras, Spicebush ***State butterfly of MS**

WHITES AND SULPHURS

Family: Pieridae

Whites:

Great Southern White *Ascia monuste* 1-12
Host: Saltwort, Virginia peppergrass

Sulphurs:

Barred Yellow *Eurema daira* 1-12
Host: Herbs in the Pea family (Fabaceae)

Little Yellow *E. lisa* 1-2, 11
Hosts: Partridge pea, Legumes

Sleepy Orange *E. nicippe* 2-4, 6-8
Hosts: Shrubby cassia, Clovers

Dainty Sulphur *Nathalis iole* 1, 3-5, 8
Hosts: Spanish needle (*Bidens alba*)

Large Orange Sulphur *Phoebis agarithe* 2, 7-8
Host: Blackbead, Cassia

Cloudless Sulphur *P. sennae* 1-11
Host: Partridge pea, Sicklepod senna

HAIRSTREAKS AND BLUES

Family Lycaenidae

Hairstreaks:

Gray Hairstreak *Strymon melinus* 5-7, 11
Host: Partridge pea, Marsh mallow

Blues:

Ceraunus Blue *Hemiargus ceraunus* 1-12
Host: Partridge pea, Sensitive pea

Cassius Blue *Leptotes cassius* 3-5, 7-9
Host: Leadwort, Wild plumbago

BRUSHFOOTS AND RELATIVES

Family: Nymphalidae

True Brushfoots:

White Peacock *Anartia jatrophae* 1-12
Host: Smooth water-hyssop, Wild petunia

Mangrove Buckeye *Junonia evarete* 1-12
Host: Black mangrove

Common Buckeye *J. coenia* 1-12
Host: Twin flower, Wild petunia

Phaon Crescent *Phyciodes phaon* 1-12
Host: Carpetweed, Frogfruit

Malachite *Siproeta stelenes* 1
Host: Wild petunia, Green shrimp-plant

Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta* 1-4, 12
Host: Pellitory, False nettle

Painted Lady *V. cardui* 4-10
Host: Yellow thistle, Mallows

Longwings and Fritillaries:

Gulf Fritillary *Agraulis vanillae* 1-12
Host: Corkystem and Purple passionflower

Zebra Longwing* *Heliconius charitonius* 2-4
Host: Corkystem passionflower, Maypop

***State butterfly of FL**

Milkweed Butterflies:

Queen *Danaus gilippus* 1-12
Host: Milkweeds

Monarch *D. plexippus* 1-12
Host: Milkweeds, Strangler vine

SKIPPERS

Family Hesperidae

Spread-wing Skippers:

Mangrove Skipper *Phocides pigmalion* 1-12
Host: Red mangrove

Tropical Checkered Skipper *Pyrgus oilens* 1-12
Host: Broomweed, Poppy mallow

Long Tailed Skipper *Urbanus proteus* 1-4, 6-10
Host: Garden beans, American wisteria

Dorantes Skipper *U. dorantes* 1-12
Host: Beggarweeds, Garden beans

Grass Skippers:

Southern Skipperling *Copaeodes minimus* 1-12
Host: Bermuda grass

Fiery Skipper *Hylephila phyleus* 4-12
Host: Bermuda grass, St. Augustine grass

Clouded Skipper *Lerema accius* 2-3, 11-12
Host: St. Augustine grass, Rustyseed paspalum

Eufala Skipper *Lerodea eufala* 1, 11
Host: Bermuda grass

Ocola Skipper *Panoquina ocola* 1, 5, 10-11
Host: Torpedo grass, Southern cutgrass

Whirlabout *Polites vibex* 4-6, 8-10
Host: Bermuda grass, St. Augustine grass