



The **Mylitta Crescent** (above) is a small, cheerfully colored, orange butterfly with fine black lines and pale yellow crescents along the edge of the hind wings. It lays its eggs on thistles.



The **Painted Lady** (above) lays her eggs on over 300 plants including thistle, mallow, nettles, and asters. Painted Ladies migrate and are the most widespread species of butterfly found on the planet. It takes six generations of the Painted Lady to migrate from Mexico to Canada and back. Years of heavy rainfall may create a bumper crop of thistles in Mexico then the butterfly's population booms. You may see hundreds of butterflies migrating north in a single day looking for fresh, new thistles.

The **Common Buckeye** (below) is often our companion on dusty trails and is fond of basking on the warm ground. She lays her eggs on purple owl's clover, common lippia, and other plants.



This brochure covers only the most commonly photographed butterflies that have been uploaded to the iNaturalist.org website. You can contribute as a community scientist by uploading a picture of any wild plant, animal, fungus, or other living thing. iNaturalist's community and image recognition software will help you identify it. Every observation becomes part of a growing record of Earth's biodiversity providing data that contributes to our greater understanding of the complex web of life. iNaturalist is free and available on iOS, Android, and at iNaturalist.org

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and Dr. Dan Levitis. Photos  
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Hibbard, Dr. Dan Levitis,  
and A. Weishaar.*

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## Butterflies of Sugarloaf

*Spot and identify some of the many butterflies of Sugarloaf Ridge State Park.*

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Butterflies provide a gateway into the natural world. Watching butterflies sharpens your observation skills and helps develop your appreciation for their natural beauty and the plants that they pollinate. Butterflies are the best known family of moths because of their bright colors, large size, and active days.

You may see different butterflies at Sugarloaf than you do at home. Butterflies have a very special relationship to their host plants. These are the plants on which they lay their eggs. When the eggs hatch, tiny caterpillars emerge, eat the plant, and grow. The caterpillars can only grow by eating its host plants.

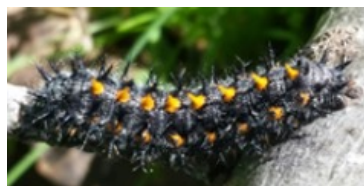


Our most commonly seen and photographed butterfly at Sugarloaf is the **Variable Checkerspot** (below). She lays her eggs on at least 13 native host plants.

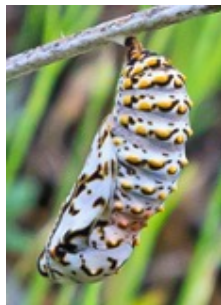
If you are lucky enough to get close to a butterfly, please look closely, but do not touch. Touching butterflies can remove the scales from their wings. Scales are believed to protect butterflies by helping them to break free from spider webs by leaving only some scales behind. Scales also give the butterfly much of its color.

Observe what the butterfly is doing. Is it nectaring? Nectaring is when a butterfly sips flower nectar through its proboscis—which is like a long, flexible straw. Is it basking? Basking is when a butterfly sits still in the sun to warm itself.

When you see a caterpillar on a plant, please do not touch it or remove it. A very still caterpillar may be in the delicate instar phase where it is getting ready



**Checkerspot caterpillar and chrysalis**

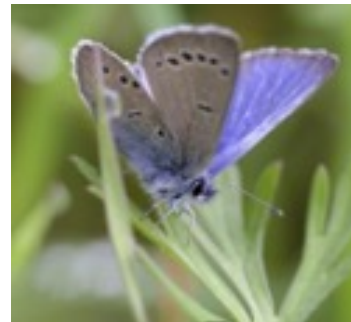


to shed its skin or is just in its tender, new skin. Caterpillars that are obviously eating or resting should not be disturbed as they can fall from their host plant.



The **Pipevine Swallowtail** (above) is a large, dark butterfly that may appear black to dark brown depending on the lighting. The males have a flash of blue or teal that can be seen when the sunlight is reflected off the top of their hindwings and orange spots on the underside. These butterflies lay their eggs on the California Pipevine plant.

A commonly seen butterfly at Sugarloaf is the **Silvery Blue** (right). These small butterflies are famous puddlers. You will find the males congregating in muddy areas sipping minerals from the mud or wet sand. The females lay their eggs on lupines and peas.



The **Acmon Blue** (right) is a small, blue butterfly with some orange on its hindwings. It is a little bigger than the Silvery Blues and lays eggs on a variety of plants, including buckwheats and clovers.



A large butterfly regularly seen here is the **California Sister** (above). The Sister is a strong flyer and is frequently seen perched on oaks. Oak trees provide food for their caterpillars. Another butterfly behavior you may observe are butterflies on scat extracting minerals as shown in the photo above. Can you tell which butterfly survived a bird bite?

If you have the opportunity to take a photo, here are a few tips: do not let your shadow fall on the butterfly, move slowly taking your photos from far away and gradually moving closer in.