

BUTTERFLIES OF HIGH PARK



This list includes 84 species and 1 subspecies of butterfly known to have occurred in High Park to the end of July 2021 – nearly half the species listed for Ontario.

All species listed are known to or assumed to breed, or have bred, in High Park unless otherwise noted.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status in High Park	Status in Ontario	Host Plant	Comments
SKIPPERS	HESPERIIDAE				
Silver-spotted Skipper	<i>Epargyreus clarus</i>	fairly common	locally fairly common, mainly in the south	black locust, hog peanut, showy tick trefoil	closely associated with black locust in our area
Long-tailed Skipper	<i>Urbanus proteus</i>	very rare southern immigrant	very rare immigrant in the south; one record each at Point Pelee and Windsor in 1994, and two seen near Hamilton and one in Toronto in 2012	legume family vines, including beans	a striking species from the southern U.S., not known to breed at this latitude; on October 4, 2012 one was photographed by B. Yukich as it nectared on <i>Buddleia</i> at the Hillside Gardens in High Park; this is the most northerly record for Ontario (2012 was a spectacular year for southern immigrants in the province)
Southern Cloudywing	<i>Thorybes bathyllus</i>	historical record (hypothetical)	locally rare to common in the southwest	legumes	one of two old specimens from Toronto in the ROM has been attributed to High Park; likely a rare breeder in our area historically
Northern Cloudywing	<i>Thorybes pylades</i>	common	common and widespread	legumes including tick trefoil and vetch	High Park's population density may be the highest in the province with one-day tallies of 100+ in recent years
Dreamy Duskywing	<i>Erynnis icelus</i>	historical record	common and widespread throughout	poplar, aspen, willow, birch	old specimens from High Park in the ROM
Juvenal's Duskywing	<i>Erynnis juvenalis</i>	uncommon	common and widespread, mainly in the southern part of the province	oaks	previously known only from historical records, but on May 10, 2006 B. Yukich found a fresh male at the north end of Plot 1C; now breeds annually in small numbers throughout the park
Mottled Duskywing	<i>Erynnis martialis</i>	historical record	rare and local	New Jersey tea	old specimens from High Park in the ROM; declining in eastern North America; federally endangered; apparently common in High Park in the early 1900s
Funereal Duskywing	<i>Erynnis funeralis</i>	very rare southern immigrant	very rare immigrant in the south	legumes	a very rare migratory species from the U.S. southwest that is not known to breed in the province; B. Yukich recorded one nectaring on purple loosestrife along the south end of Grenadier Pond on August 12, 1999, first record for High Park and fourth for Ontario and Canada

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SKIPPERS					
HESPERIIDAE					
Wild Indigo Duskywing	<i>Erynnis baptisiae</i>	uncommon	locally uncommon to common in the south	legumes including wild indigo, crown vetch (mainly) and wild lupine	first recorded in Toronto in 1998 after undergoing a northward range extension from the U.S. following plantings of crown vetch, its adopted host plant; B. Yukich recorded a single individual on an open hillside near the High Park Forest School on August 1, 2002; egg-laying on wild lupine was recorded on July 25, 2008; breeds annually in the park in small numbers
Columbine Duskywing	<i>Erynnis lucilius</i>	historical record	locally common, mainly in the south	wild columbine	one old specimen from High Park in the ROM
Least Skipper	<i>Ancyloxypha numitor</i>	uncommon	common in the southern and central regions	wetland grasses including bluegrass, rice cut grass, marsh millet	breeds uncommonly in and near wetlands in High Park
European Skipper	<i>Thymelicus lineola</i>	common	common to abundant throughout	grasses including Timothy and red top	our only non-native grass-skipper; introduced near London, Ontario around 1910 after arriving in an overseas shipment of Timothy
Ocola Skipper	<i>Panoquina ocola</i>	very rare southern immigrant	very rare immigrant in the south, with most records from Point Pelee	grasses	does not breed at this latitude; one was photographed by B. Yukich as it nectared on <i>Sedum</i> in a flowerbed at Colborne Lodge on Sept. 23, 2012, a first for the Toronto region and, at that time, the most northerly record for the province (2012 was a spectacular year for southern immigrants in the province)
Fiery Skipper	<i>Hylephila phyleus</i>	uncommon to common southern immigrant	uncommon to common immigrant in the southern part of the province	various grasses, including turf grass	typically a late summer immigrant in warmer years, breeding after its arrival and producing one or more generations that often persist into October; does not overwinter in the province
Leonard's Skipper	<i>Hesperia leonardus</i>	historical record	locally common, mainly in the southern part of the province	various grasses including bluestem and panic grass	an old specimen from High Park in the ROM
Peck's Skipper	<i>Polites peckius</i>	uncommon	locally uncommon to common throughout	grasses including rice grass	
Tawny-edged Skipper	<i>Polites thermistocles</i>	uncommon	common and widespread	grasses including panic grass	
Crossline Skipper	<i>Polites origenes</i>	common	locally uncommon to common, mainly in the south	grasses including purpletop and little bluestem	once uncommon in the park, this species has become quite common in recent years, likely due to habitat improvement
Long Dash	<i>Polites mystic</i>	rare	common and widespread	grasses including bluegrass, quack, barnyard, Timothy	has bred in the park in small numbers near wetlands; no recent records, but may be overlooked
Northern Broken-Dash	<i>Wallengrenia egeremet</i>	common	locally common, mainly in the south	grasses including panic grass and crab grass	easily confused with other small dark skippers
Little Glassywing	<i>Pompeius verna</i>	uncommon	locally uncommon to common in the south	grasses including purpletop	easily confused with other small dark skippers

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SKIPPERS					
HESPERIIDAE					
Sachem	<i>Atalopedes campestris</i>	very rare southern immigrant	very rare immigrant in the south; in June 1988 several were found in southwestern Ontario, with confirmed breeding at Point Pelee; there was another larger incursion in 2012; otherwise, very few records	grasses including Bermuda grass and crab grass	during the summer of 2012, this species migrated into southern Ontario in unprecedented numbers, breeding as far north as Toronto; on August 13, 2012 B. Yukich photographed a female on the lawn in front of the High Park Training Centre, the first park record (2012 was a spectacular year for southern immigrants in the province)
Hobomok Skipper	<i>Poanes hobomok</i>	common	common and widespread	grasses including panic and bluegrass	one of our earliest-flying skippers; breeds in and near wooded areas
Broad-winged Skipper	<i>Poanes viator</i>	historical records; may now be a rare breeder	locally common, mainly in the south	sedges and phragmites	a wetland species; old specimens from High Park in the ROM; on July 10, 2007, B. Yukich saw a fresh male nectaring on wild bergamot along the east side of Grenadier Pond, and on July 14, 2012, during a butterfly count, A. Adamo and J. Foster photographed one on phragmites at the south end of Grenadier Pond; the closest known colony to High Park is in the Rouge Valley
Delaware Skipper	<i>Anatrytone logan</i>	common	locally uncommon to common in the south; has been expanding its range northward	grasses including bluestem, switch, woolly beard	this species was present in the park in the 1980s but may have been over-looked in subsequent years due to its scarcity; B. Yukich observed a fresh male in a wet meadow along Spring Creek in July 2000; numbers in the park have since increased and it is now quite common
Black Dash	<i>Euphyes conspicua</i>	very rare	locally uncommon in southern Ontario	sedges including tussock sedge	B. Yukich observed a fresh individual of this wetland species, the first record for the city of Toronto, in plot 1D near Grenadier Pond on July 16, 2004; at the time, the most easterly known colony in the province was in Halton Region; it has since colonized wetlands northeast of Toronto, mainly in Durham Region, and there is a 2016 record from Toronto Islands; the remarkable occurrence of this non-migratory species in High Park was likely due to an apparent range extension
Dun Skipper	<i>Euphyes vestris</i>	common	common and widespread	sedges	the most common small dark skipper in High Park; can sometimes be confused with other small dark skippers
SWALLOWTAILS					
PAPILIONIDAE					
Pipevine Swallowtail	<i>Battus philenor</i>	rare southern immigrant	rare immigrant, mainly in the southern part of the province	pipevines (<i>Aristolochia</i>)	occasionally breeds in the province where its host plant occurs as an ornamental; a few fresh individuals were recorded in High Park in 2000 and again in 2001 and 2002; was easily seen in the park in 2012 (a spectacular year for southern immigrants in the province)
Zebra Swallowtail	<i>Eurytides marcellus</i>	historical records; very rare southern immigrant	very rare southern immigrant; rare breeder historically in the southwest	pawpaw	there was an incursion of this species into Ontario in 1896 with records from Toronto, including High Park

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SWALLOWTAILS		PAPILIONIDAE			
Black Swallowtail	<i>Papilio polyxenes</i>	uncommon to fairly common	common, mainly in the south	parsley family, often Queen Anne's lace	our earliest flying swallowtail, typically emerging in early May
Giant Swallowtail	<i>Papilio cresphontes</i>	rare breeder and southern immigrant	uncommon to common in southern and eastern parts of the province where host plants occur; in recent years has colonized areas north of historical range	hoptree, prickly ash, and non-native ornamentals in the citrus family	B. Yukich recorded the first one for High Park on August 28, 2003 following a northward incursion of this species into our area; since 2006 small numbers have been reported almost annually in the park; a female was observed ovipositing on a hoptree in the park in 2011 by J. Paluck; now a rare breeder in the Toronto region, using both native and non-native plants as hosts
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	<i>Papilio glaucus</i>	common	common in the southern part of the province; sporadically distributed north of Toronto	cherry, ash, tulip tree, hoptree	the northern edge of this species' range in the province is not clearly delineated; it overlaps the range of the smaller, more northern, Canadian Tiger Swallowtail <i>P. canadensis</i> which is almost identical in appearance and with which it likely hybridizes
Spicebush Swallowtail	<i>Papilio troilus</i>	uncommon to common resident; occasional immigrant	uncommon to common resident in the southwest, north to Toronto; occasional immigrant	spicebush, sassafras	historically rare in the park, this Carolinian species bred in High Park in 1999 (two broods) and in subsequent years in variable numbers, using abundant sassafras as host; overwinters as a pupa within 30 cm of the ground; small, isolated population makes it vulnerable
WHITES & YELLOWS		PIERIDAE			
Little Yellow	<i>Pyrisitia lisa</i>	rare southern immigrant	rare immigrant, mainly in the south	sennas	does not overwinter in the province; not known to breed in our area
Clouded Sulphur	<i>Colias philodice</i>	common	common and widespread	white clover, alfalfa, vetch	
Orange Sulphur	<i>Colias eurytheme</i>	common southern immigrant	common and widespread immigrant	alfalfa, white clover	breeds after its arrival producing at least two more generations; at times abundant in southern Ontario; not known to overwinter in the province
Cloudless Sulphur	<i>Phoebis sennae</i>	very rare southern immigrant	rare southern immigrant	sennas	on Aug. 6, 2017, B. Yukich observed a slightly worn male in a flowerbed at Colborne Lodge, the first park record
Cabbage White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	common	common and widespread	mustard family	non-native; introduced from Europe around 1860
GOSSAMER-WINGS		LYCAENIDAE			
American Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	historical record	locally common throughout	sheep sorrel, curled dock	an old specimen from High Park in the ROM
Bronze Copper	<i>Lycaena hyllus</i>	historical record; one modern-day sighting; breeding uncertain	locally common, especially in the south	curled dock, water dock, smartweed	old specimens from High Park in the ROM; a species associated with wetlands; B. Yukich saw a very fresh individual in suitable breeding habitat along the east side of Grenadier Pond on July 10, 2007
Acadian Hairstreak	<i>Satyrium acadica</i>	rare to uncommon	widespread, mostly in the south	willows	previously more common in the park, this species is now rarely encountered; in July 2008 B. Yukich observed a freshly emerged individual near the Forest School, and later a worn one near Grenadier Pond
Coral Hairstreak	<i>Satyrium titus</i>	extirpated	locally common in the south	cherry, plum	last reported from High Park in the 1980s

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GOSSAMER-WINGS	LYCAENIDAE				
Edwards' Hairstreak	<i>Satyrium edwardsii</i>	extirpated	locally uncommon to common in the south	oaks, especially saplings	once common, this very local species disappeared from High Park in the mid-1990s, a period when very few young oaks were regenerating
Banded Hairstreak	<i>Satyrium calanus</i>	fairly common	common mainly in the south	oak, walnut, hickory	the most common hairstreak in High Park
Hickory Hairstreak	<i>Satyrium caryaevorus</i>	rare	typically rare to uncommon in the south	hickories, oaks and others	few park records; can be difficult to distinguish from <i>S. calanus</i> ; occasionally undergoes local population explosions
Striped Hairstreak	<i>Satyrium liparops</i>	uncommon	uncommon to fairly common throughout	heath and rose families including hawthorn, cherry, plum	
Gray Hairstreak	<i>Strymon melinus</i>	rare southern immigrant	uncommon immigrant (resident?) in the southwest; a resident population breeds locally in the north	a wide variety including "weedy" plants; sweetfern in the north	a few likely bred in the park in 1999, a banner year for southern immigrants; it bred again in 2012 when B. Yukich observed 2 females, one ovipositing on wild lupine; a single individual was observed by B. Harrison on Aug. 3, 2008
Northern Azure	<i>Celastrina lucia</i>	uncommon	common and widespread	wide variety including cherry, blueberry, viburnums	two broods; one of our earliest emerging butterflies; the azures have recently undergone a revision with early flying individuals being split into 3 species
Spring Azure	<i>Celastrina ladon</i>	not yet recorded; may occur	locally common along Lake Erie shoreline; complete range unknown	dogwoods, viburnums, likely others	one brood; one of our earliest emerging butterflies; separating this southern species from our other azures requires viewing its longer strap-like wing scales under a microscope
Summer Azure	<i>Celastrina neglecta</i>	common	common, mainly in the south	wide variety including dogwoods, viburnums, New Jersey tea and white sweet-clover	multiple broods; flies later than our other azures; however, new information suggests it has an early spring brood when our other "spring" azures are still flying
Silvery Blue	<i>Glaucopsyche lygdamus</i>	fairly common	common, except absent from much of the southwest, where it continues to spread	legumes, mainly cow vetch in our area	this species has been undergoing a southward range extension and was first recorded in Toronto in 1997; the first confirmed breeding in High Park was in plot 1D in June 2003; it now breeds annually in the park
Marine Blue	<i>Leptotes marina</i>	very rare southern immigrant	very rare immigrant in the south; previously reported only from Point Pelee (twice) where it bred in 1993, producing three generations in a single season	various legumes	essentially a tropical species that migrates northward, occasionally reaching the U.S. Midwest; a small colony of freshly emerged individuals was discovered near Marie Curtis Park, Toronto on July 12, 2008. On July 22, 2008, B. Yukich observed a freshly emerged male and female of this species nectaring on blue vervain in a wet meadow at the southeast corner of Grenadier Pond
Eastern Tailed-Blue	<i>Cupido comyntas</i>	common	common, mainly in the south	legumes, including tick trefoil	in recent years has been expanding its range northward
Karner Blue	<i>Plebejus samuelis</i>	historical record	extirpated around 1991	wild lupine	historically common in High Park, it was extirpated around 1926

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GOSSAMER-WINGS LYCAENIDAE					
European Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	recent colonizer	a colony was first observed in August 2017 at a rest stop along Hwy 401 near Ingleside; subsequent sightings in Toronto and Vaughan from 2018 to 2021; locally common and spreading	birdsfoot trefoil and other legumes	this common European species was first detected in North America in 2005 near Montreal's Mirabel Airport; with access to a ubiquitous host plant, its numbers increased dramatically in a relatively short time; it has since expanded its range both in Quebec and into Ontario, first appearing in Toronto in July 2018; a male was photographed in savannah on the east side of High Park on July 10, 2021 during an annual butterfly count; others were found elsewhere in the park shortly after
BRUSHFOOTS NYMPHALIDAE					
American Snout	<i>Libytheana carinenta</i>	rare to uncommon southern immigrant; breeding first noted in 2019	locally rare to uncommon southern immigrant as far north as Ottawa; previously confined mainly to the southwest	hackberries	first recorded in High Park by B. Harrison when one was seen near the Training Centre on July 29, 2007; another was photographed by B. Yukich at the Children's Garden on September 13, 2017; during July 2019, multiple individuals were observed in hackberry trees near the High Park zoo; does not overwinter in the province
Monarch	<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	common southern immigrant	common and widespread, but numbers have been declining in recent years	milkweeds	does not overwinter; southbound migration can be observed over High Park each fall; migratory population threatened; federally endangered
Variegated Fritillary	<i>Euptoieta claudia</i>	rare southern immigrant	uncommon to rare immigrant, mainly in the south	wide variety including violets, flax, stonecrop, plantain	occasionally breeds after its arrival, as in 2012 when it became widespread in southern Ontario
Meadow Fritillary	<i>Boloria bellona</i>	historical record; one or two recent sightings; does not breed	locally common throughout much of the province	violets	old specimens from High Park in the ROM; B. Yukich photographed a fresh female nectaring on boneset in a wet meadow, its preferred habitat, at the southeast corner of Grenadier Pond on August 21, 2006; there are no known colonies in the west end of Toronto, but this species is known to wander
Great Spangled Fritillary	<i>Speyeria cybele</i>	uncommon	common and widespread	violets	
Aphrodite Fritillary	<i>Speyeria aphrodite</i>	historical record	common to uncommon throughout much of the province	violets	old specimens from High Park in the ROM
Atlantis Fritillary	<i>Speyeria atlantis</i>	historical record	common in the north; absent from the southwest	violets	two old specimens from High Park in the ROM
White Admiral	<i>Limenitis arthemis arthemis</i>	uncommon	common in the north, mostly absent from the southwest	willow, aspen, poplar, birch	<i>L. a. arthemis</i> and <i>L. a. astyanax</i> were once considered separate species
Red-spotted Purple	<i>Limenitis arthemis astyanax</i>	uncommon	common in the south, mainly absent from the north	cherries, poplars, oaks	intermediates between <i>astyanax</i> and <i>artemis</i> are often seen in the Toronto region; both forms have sometimes been seen side by side in High Park
Viceroy	<i>Limenitis archippus</i>	rare; not known to breed	common throughout, especially in the south	willows, poplars	mainly associated with wetlands; surprisingly, this species is rarely encountered in High Park

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BRUSHFOOTS					
NYMPHALIDAE					
Hackberry Emperor	<i>Asterocampa celtis</i>	very rare	locally uncommon to common, mainly in the southwest and the east	hackberries	on July 8, 2017, during a butterfly count, one was recorded by A. Adamo at the south end of the park next to the Queensway where hackberries have been planted; first record for the Toronto region
American Lady	<i>Vanessa virginiensis</i>	uncommon to common southern immigrant	uncommon to common immigrant throughout	everlastings, wormwoods, burdocks, ironweed	breeds after its arrival in the spring, producing one or more generations; does not overwinter in the province
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	rare to common southern immigrant	rare to common immigrant throughout	thistles, knapweed, burdock, sunflowers	breeds after its arrival, often later in the season than <i>V. virginiensis</i> , producing one or more generations; does not overwinter in the province
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	uncommon to common southern immigrant	uncommon to common immigrant throughout	nettles	breeds after its arrival in the spring, producing one or more generations; may overwinter rarely, only as an adult
Milbert's Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais milberti</i>	historical records; now rare; breeding uncertain	locally uncommon to fairly common throughout much of the province	nettles	old specimens from High Park in the ROM; a handful of recent sightings, all in summer, nectaring on ornamentals: a few in 2007, one in 2016
Compton Tortoiseshell	<i>Nymphalis l-album</i>	uncommon; may occasionally breed	uncommon to common throughout	willow, birch, poplar	individuals recorded in the park in spring are likely migrants from the north that, having arrived the previous fall, hibernated over the winter; occasional in summer
Mourning Cloak	<i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>	fairly common	common and widespread	wide variety including willows, elms, poplars	like other <i>Nymphalis</i> , hibernates over the winter as an adult butterfly
Question Mark	<i>Polygonia interrogationis</i>	uncommon to common southern immigrant	uncommon to common immigrant throughout	nettles, elms, hops	does not typically overwinter in the province, but recent evidence suggests it may on rare occasions
Eastern Comma	<i>Polygonia comma</i>	uncommon to common	uncommon to common throughout	nettles, elms, hops	like other <i>Polygonia</i> , hibernates over the winter as an adult butterfly
Gray Comma	<i>Polygonia progne</i>	rare	uncommon to fairly common throughout much of the province	currants, gooseberries, birches, elms	old specimens from High Park in the ROM; a few recent sightings by B. Yukich, beginning with a fresh individual photographed on July 27, 2008 at the Children's Garden where there are currant bushes
Common Buckeye	<i>Junonia coenia</i>	rare to uncommon southern immigrant	uncommon to common immigrant, mainly in the south	gerardia, toadflax, plantain	an annual colonizer, not known to overwinter in the province; has become more common in recent years; common in High Park in 2012
Baltimore Checkerspot	<i>Euphydryas phaeton</i>	historical record; bred in 2019	locally common where host plant occurs	turtlehead & others	a species associated with wetlands where it breeds in colonies; previously known in High Park from one old specimen in the ROM; however, on July 15, 2019, B. Yukich observed a small colony not far from the High Park zoo
Silvery Checkerspot	<i>Chlosyne nycteis</i>	rare	locally uncommon to common throughout	composites such as sunflowers and asters	most park records are from the early 1900s; a few recent sightings, all by B. Yukich in July: two in 2000 and singles in 2001, 2002 and 2004; this species appears to be very sensitive to habitat disturbance and even large colonies can sometimes disappear
Pearl Crescent	<i>Phyciodes tharos</i>	uncommon to common	common in the south	asters	similar in appearance to <i>P. cocyta</i> , and can sometimes be confused with that species

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BRUSHFOOTS					
NYMPHALIDAE					
Northern Crescent	<i>Phyciodes cocyta</i>	usually uncommon	common and widespread	asters	similar in appearance to <i>P. tharos</i> , and can sometimes be confused with that species
Tawny Crescent	<i>Phyciodes batesii</i>	historical record	locally uncommon to fairly common	asters	one old specimen from High Park in the ROM
Northern Pearly-Eye	<i>Lethe anthedon</i>	uncommon to rare	locally uncommon to common throughout	various grasses including purple oat and reed canary	a species of shady, light-dappled woodlands; often perches head-down on tree trunks; very few reports from High Park in recent years
Eyed Brown	<i>Lethe eurydice</i>	historical record	locally common, mainly in the south	sedges	old specimens from High Park in the ROM; a wetland species that breeds in sedge marshes
Common Ringlet	<i>Coenonympha tullia</i>	uncommon	common throughout much of the province, less so in the southwest	various grasses including bluegrass and needle grass	has been expanding its range southward
Little Wood-Satyr	<i>Megisto cymela</i>	common to abundant	common to abundant throughout, especially in the south	various grasses including bluegrass and orchard grass	prefers lush, shadier areas with grasses near woodlands
Common Wood-Nymph	<i>Cercyonis pegala</i>	fairly common	common throughout	various grasses including wild oat, bluestem, purpletop	

NOTES:

Common names used in this list are those found in *Checklist & English Names of North American Butterflies, Second Edition* (North American Butterfly Association (NABA), 2001) and *The ROM Field Guide to Butterflies of Ontario* (Peter W. Hall, Colin D. Jones, Antonia E. Guidotti and Brad Hubley, 2014).

Scientific names and taxonomic order follow Jonathan P. Pelham's *A Catalogue of the Butterflies of the United States and Canada*, revised July 1, 2017.

Host plants listed for each species were taken from *The Butterflies of Canada* (R. A. Layberry, P. W. Hall and J. D. Lafontaine, 1998), *The Ontario Butterfly Atlas* (A. M. Holmes, Q. F. Hess, R. R. Tasker and A. J. Hanks, 1991) and *The ROM Field Guide to Butterflies of Ontario* (2014) noted above.

ROM = Royal Ontario Museum.

The species abundance designations are based on a typical year, and a skilled observer being in suitable habitat, in the appropriate season, under favourable weather conditions. It should be noted, however, that the population of any butterfly species can fluctuate dramatically from year to year, or even within a breeding season, due to a variety of environmental factors.

abundant: usually recorded in large numbers on all visits

common: normally recorded on all visits

fairly common: likely to be recorded on most visits

uncommon: present in small numbers; can be missed on most visits

rare: can be less than annual in occurrence

very rare: often several years between sightings; not to be expected