

Butterflies of Martha's Vineyard (version: January 2, 2023)

This document represents a “checklist in progress” of the butterflies for which there are convincing records from Martha's Vineyard. It is based on a checklist prepared years ago by Allan Keith for the Felix Neck Massachusetts Audubon Society sanctuary but includes additional information from many other sources, including my own observations since August 1997. Extreme dates are expressed either as 1-12 for month and A-D for week, or as month/date/year when specific date is known. Question marks (?) indicate approximate flight dates projected from Massachusetts records, not from Vineyard data. The dates of the flight period for a given species may vary considerably from year to year; abundance likewise varies widely from year to year, and all species can be expected to be uncommon near extreme dates. Also, many butterflies exhibit multiple flight periods each year and may be absent or rare between those periods. Species sequence follows checklists prepared by the Massachusetts Butterfly Club. Synonyms, generally obsolete, are given where I can determine them to assist with reference to older sources.

The information presented here is as accurate as I could get it as of the version date that appears above. Future versions will incorporate changes in status, new species, or refined information. You can help improve this document by reporting interesting butterfly sightings (species described as rare here, species not listed here, sightings near or outside the extreme dates listed below) to Matt Pelikan, PO Box 2272, Oak Bluffs, MA 02557; (774) 521-7795; matt_pelikan@comcast.net

Sources (either of specific records referenced here or of useful background information):

AK = Allan Keith

FN = Felix Neck List

(Compiled by Allan Keith from personal records, LMNV, and other sources)

LMNV = Jones, F.M., and C.P. Kimball. 1943. *The Lepidoptera of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard Islands, Massachusetts*. Nantucket: The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association.

MB = Record listed in *Massachusetts Butterflies*
(issue number and original observer cited)

AKD = Amy Koenig DaSilva

AL = Antone Lima

BC = Brian Cassie

BN = Blair Nikula

DS = Dave Small

EB = Elise Barry

iNat = Data from iNaturalist.org

JH = Judy Holland

LM = Lanny McDowell

LS = Lisa Strachan

MM = Mary Merges

MP = Matt Pelikan

NM = Nate Marchesault

PG = Pete Gilmore

PJ = Paul Jackson

PW = Pam Weatherbee

PM = Paul Miliotis

RB = Rebecca Brown

RC = Rich Couse

RF = Richard Forster

TC = Tom Chase

VL = Vern Laux

WM = Wendy Malpass

RH = Russ Hopping

RW = Robert Woodruff

TH = Tom Hodgson

SM = Sarah Mayhew

SS = Susan Silva

NW = Nancy Weaver

SPECIES	FLIGHT DATES	STATUS
Pipeline Swallowtail (<i>Battus philenor</i> = <i>Papilio p.</i>)	Summer; 6C (FN)-10/9/10 (LM)	Rare but with a well-established pattern of vagrancy; often but not always found near its host plant, pipevine.
Black Swallowtail (<i>Papilio polyxenes</i> = <i>P. ajax</i>)	Spring-late summer; 4/27/12 (MP)-10/23/07 (JH). AL had a dark swallowtail 4/24/21, may have been this sp. or spicebush.	Widespread and fairly common.
Giant Swallowtail (<i>Papilio cresphontes</i>)	Summer vagrant. 5/29/18 (LS); 8/8/18 (SS); 8/17/12 (TH, SM); 8/24/13 (EB); 8/24/19 (MP)	Rare visitor in recent years, mostly in late summer.
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (<i>Papilio glaucus</i>)	Spring-late summer; 4/22/22 (MP); 5/1/13 (MP)-10/2/17 (MP)	Common, widespread.
Spicebush Swallowtail (<i>Papilio troilus</i>)	Summer; 5/17/21 (iNat)-9/25/06 (MP)	Common, especially in morainal woodland.
Cabbage White (<i>Pieris rapae</i>)	Early spring-fall; 2/26/02 (MP)-11/17/00 (AK)	Common and widespread; sometimes abundant on agricultural land in late summer, early fall.
<i>Colias</i> sp.	3/21/12 (MP)	Species not determined but a very early date for this genus.
Clouded Sulphur (<i>Colias philodice</i>)	Spring-late fall; 4/12/02 (MP)-12/7/01 (AK); also 1/1/12 (DS), assuming correct ID (<i>C. eurytheme</i> seems more likely).	Fairly common, especially on agricultural fields.
Orange Sulphur (<i>Colias eurytheme</i>)	Spring-late fall; 4/12/02 (MP)-12/30 (MP); also 1/2/12 (AK). There is one other late Dec. report (BN), exact date unknown.	Once rare, now common, especially on agricultural fields in late summer and early fall, since establishment on M.V. c. 1930 (LNMV).
Cloudless Sulphur (<i>Phoebis sennae</i>)	Summer-early fall; 6/25 (AK) - 12/7 (PI, fide VL)	Rare to, occasionally, common southern stray; LNMV mentions "years of observed abundance."
Little Yellow (<i>Pyrisitia lisa</i> = <i>Eurema l.</i>)	Summer; 6/26 (LNMV)-10/9/93 (RF); 10/15/12 (PW)	Rare southern stray, more common historically (LNMV). Few recent records.
American Copper (<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i> = <i>L. hypophlaeas</i>)	Spring-fall; 4/14 (MP 2010, AKD 2017)-11/20 (MP)	Common and widespread.
Bog Copper (<i>Lycaena epixanthe</i>)	Summer; 6/25 (MP)-8/20 (LNMV)	Local, closely associated with acidic bogs, where it can be plentiful. Historically, "sometimes abundant" (LNMV).
Red-banded Hairstreak (<i>Calycopis cecrops</i>)	8/17/22 (RC)-10/18/22 (MP)	Recently established or in the process of becoming established on MV. Six records with the first in 2016.
Coral Hairstreak (<i>Satyrium titus</i> = <i>Harkenclenus t.</i> = <i>Strymon t.</i>)	Summer; 7/3 (MP)-8D (FN)	Fairly common in old fields, edges.
Edwards' Hairstreak (<i>Satyrium edwardsii</i> = <i>Strymon e.</i>)	Summer; 6/24/12 (MP); 6/24/20 (MP)-8/23 (MP)	Locally common to abundant near <i>Quercus illicifolia</i> .
Banded Hairstreak (<i>Satyrium calanus</i> = <i>Strymon falacer</i>)	Summer; 7/4/11 (MP)-7/24/93 (AK)	Uncommon; LNMV considered it "widely distributed."
Striped Hairstreak (<i>Satyrium liparops</i>)	Summer; 6/29/14 (MP)-8/12 (MB#8 [VL])	Uncommon, often on moist woodland edges.
Oak Hairstreak (<i>Satyrium favionus</i>)	Early summer; 6/22/12 (MP)-7/18 (MP)	Rare to, some years, uncommon.
Juniper Hairstreak (<i>Callophrys gryneus</i>)	Spring-summer; 4/21/02 (MP)-8/7 (MP)	Local, uncommon; strongly associated with its host, <i>Juniperus virginiana</i> .
Brown Elfin (<i>Callophrys augustus</i> = <i>Incisalia a.</i>)	Spring; 4/5/10 (JH)-7/25/92 (AK)	Common in open areas with blueberry.
Hoary Elfin (<i>Callophrys polios</i> = <i>Incisalia p.</i>)	Spring; 4/3/12 (RH)-5/19 (MP)	Locally common on bearberry in open areas. Most records from Correllus State Forest.
Frosted Elfin (<i>Callophrys irus</i> = <i>Incisalia i.</i>)	Spring; 5/9 (MP)-5/31/2019 (MP)	Rare and local. Wild indigo (<i>Baptisia tinctora</i>) is its presumed host plant here. A Species of Special Concern in Massachusetts.
Eastern Pine Elfin (<i>Callophrys niphon</i> = <i>Incisalia n.</i>)	Spring; 4/12 (MP)-6/21 (MP)	Common, usually near pitch pine (<i>Pinus rigida</i>) stands.
Gray Hairstreak (<i>Strymon melinus</i>)	Spring-fall; 4/14/12 (MP)-11/1 (MP)	Fairly common and widespread, often in gardens, or fields with <i>Lespedeza</i> and <i>Desmodium</i> .
White-M Hairstreak (<i>Parrhasius m-album</i>)	Three flight periods, spring through fall; 4/24/21 (PG)-10/28/07 (JH)	Rare. Most records are from the moraine.

SPECIES	FLIGHT DATES	STATUS
Eastern Tailed Blue (<i>Cupido comyntas</i> = <i>Everes c.</i>)	Spring-fall; 4/14/12 (MP)-10/19/17, 10/19/19 (MP)	Common to abundant and widespread; often near <i>Lespedeza</i> or <i>Desmodium</i> , likely host plants.
Spring Azure (<i>Celastrina ladon</i> = <i>Lycaenopsis pseudargiolus</i>)	Early spring; 4/2/10 (MP)-5C?	Common in and near woodland.
Cherry-gall Azure (<i>Celastrina serotina</i>)	Spring; 5/9 (MP)-6/19 (MP)	Common in and near woodland; flight period follows that of <i>C. ladon</i> .
Summer Azure (<i>Celastrina neglecta</i>)	Summer; 6/16/18 (MP)-9/21 (VL)	Uncommon; mostly damp woodland.
American Snout (<i>Libytheana carineneta</i>)	9/6/10 (MP)	Rare vagrant, one record.
Variegated Fritillary (<i>Euptoieta claudia</i>)	Summer; 5/22 (BC)-10/19 (MP)	Uncommon immigrant, mostly in late summer.
Great Spangled Fritillary (<i>Speyeria cybele</i> = <i>Argynnis c.</i>)	Summer; 6D (FN)-9/10 (VL)	Rare, few recent records; probably does not breed on Martha's Vineyard.
Aphrodite (<i>Speyeria aphrodite</i> = <i>Argynnis a.</i>)	Summer; 8/29/36 (LNMV)	A single historic record.
Regal Fritillary (<i>Speyeria idalia</i> = <i>Argynnis i.</i>)	Formerly summer; 7A?-9B?	Extirpated from M.V. c. 1989 (FN); historically, "frequent" (LNMV).
Silver-bordered Fritillary (<i>Boloria selene</i> = <i>Brenthis myrina</i>)	Summer; 7/22 (LNMV)-9/3 (LNMV)	Formerly "regularly present" (LNMV), but no recent records.
Meadow Fritillary (<i>Boloria bellona</i> = <i>Brenthis b.</i>)	Summer; 7/20/34 (LNMV)	A single historical record; presently unlikely even as a vagrant.
Pearl Crescent (<i>Phyciodes tharos</i>)	Spring-early fall; 5/15/10 (MP)-10/22/94 (AK)	Widespread, common to abundant.
Baltimore (<i>Euphydryas phaeton</i>)	Summer; 7/1 (WM)-8C?	Locally common at a few colonies. Appears to be using English plantain (<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>) as a host.
Question Mark (<i>Polygonia interrogationis</i>)	Spring-fall; 1/1/23 (NM); also 4/6 (MP)-11/11/06 (MP)	Uncommon in spring, summer; irregular autumn migrant.
Eastern Comma (<i>Polygonia comma</i>)	Spring-fall; 4/17/2016 (MP)-10/19/22 (LM)	Only two recent records. LNMV lists two older ones, Chilmark (1929) and West Chop (September 1939).
Gray Comma (<i>Polygonia progne</i>)	Late summer; 9/11 (LNMV)-9/14 (LNMV)	No recent records, at best a very rare vagrant to the Vineyard.
Compton Tortoiseshell (<i>Nymphalis vaualbum</i> = <i>N. j-album</i>)	Summer; 7/10 (VL)-9/12/39 (LNMV)	Rare. Adults routinely overwinter in Massachusetts, but there are no early spring M.V. records.
Mourning Cloak (<i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>)	Late winter-fall; 1/29/02 (RW)-11/18 (VL)	Fairly common late winter into spring; uncommon fall migrant. Adults often overwinter.
American Lady (<i>Vanessa virginiensis</i>)	Spring-fall; 3/31/18 (MP)-12/15/15 (NW)	Common and widespread migrant, often breeding during the summer.. Possibly overwinters successfully on MV.
Painted Lady (<i>Vanessa cardui</i>)	Summer; 4/18/09 (MP)-12/10 (MP)	Variable immigrant, occasionally numerous but generally less common than <i>V. virginiensis</i> .
Red Admiral (<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>)	Spring-fall; 3/30 (MB#10 [VL])-12/5 (VL)	Fairly common; very large migratory movements sometimes observed.
Common Buckeye (<i>Junonia coenia</i>)	Late summer; 5/21/19 (MP)-11/7/08 (MP)	Uncommon to fairly common southern immigrant.
Red-spotted Purple (<i>Limentis arthemis</i> = <i>Basilarchia a.</i>)	Summer; 5/23/02 (MP)-9/25/03 (MP)	Common in woodland. White-banded individuals occasionally turn up on MV. (LNMV, MP).
Viceroy (<i>Limentis archippus</i>)	Late summer; 6/20 (LNMV)-9/21/00 (AK)	Though quite common in much of Massachusetts, scarce on MV and apparently does not breed here.
Appalachian Brown (<i>Satyrodes appalachia</i>)	Summer; 7/4 (MP)-8/24/03 (MP)	Uncommon and local on wetland edges. Older records of Eyed Brown, <i>S. eurydice</i> , antedate full acceptance of the "split" of these species, and I find no evidence that <i>eurydice</i> in the strict sense has ever occurred here.
Little Wood Satyr (<i>Megisto cymela</i>)	Late spring-early summer; 5/17/12 (MP)-8/4 (MP)	Abundant in woodland edges and clearings. Often exhibits two peaks of abundance.
Common Ringlet (<i>Coenonympha tullia</i> = <i>C. inornata</i>)	Summer; 5/13/10 (MP)-9/5 (MP)	Uncommon in grassy areas.
Common Wood Nymph (<i>Cercyonis pegala</i> = <i>Minois alope</i>)	Summer; 6/27/21 (MP)-9/25/05 AK (MB#22)	Common to abundant in fields near wooded areas and around salt marsh.
Monarch (<i>Danaus plexippus</i>)	Spring-fall; 4/7/97 (VL et al., per MB 8)-11/23 (MP)	Variable in numbers, occasionally abundant as a fall migrant.
Queen (<i>Danaus gilippus</i>)	Summer 7/8/1934 (LNMV)	Vagrant, one historical record.
Silver-spotted Skipper (<i>Epargyreus clarus</i>)	Summer; 5/28 (MP)-9/11/11 (JH)	Common in gardens, open habitats.
Southern Cloudywing (<i>Thorybes bathyllus</i>)	Late spring-early summer; 6/8/14 (MP)-7/8 (MP)	Uncommon and local, but the more frequent of our two duskywings.
Northern Cloudywing (<i>Thorybes pylades</i>)	Late spring-early summer; 5/25/15 (MP)-7/23 (LNMV)	Uncommon and local.
Dreamy Duskywing (<i>Erynnis icelus</i>)	Spring; 5/13 (BC)-7C? (FN)	Rare and local.

SPECIES	FLIGHT DATES	STATUS
Sleepy Duskywing (<i>Erynnis brizo</i>)	Spring; 4/14/12 (MP)-6/6 (MP)	Common in oak woods, clearings.
Juvenal's Duskywing (<i>Erynnis juvenalis</i>)	Spring; 4/13 (MP, VL)-7/5/03 (MP)	Abundant in or near <i>Quercus</i> woodland. "late July" report in LNMV likely referable to <i>E. horatius</i> .
Horace's Duskywing (<i>Erynnis horatius</i>)	Spring-summer; 5/14 (MP)-8D? (FN)	Rare; may be overlooked in spring because of similarity to <i>E. juvenalis</i> .
Wild Indigo Duskywing (<i>Erynnis baptisiae</i>)	Spring-summer; 5/13 (MP)-8D (FN)	Fairly common, usually near <i>Baptisia</i> .
Common Sootywing (<i>Pholisora catullus</i>)	Summer; 5/22 (MP)-8/31 (MP)	Rare; not clear if this species breeds here or occurs only as a vagrant.
Least Skipper (<i>Ancyloxypha numitor</i>)	Late spring-fall; 5/30/98 (AK)-10/14/95 (AK)	Common, mostly in damp grassy areas.
European Skipper (<i>Thymelicus lineola</i>)	Early summer; 6/4/10 (MP)-7/20/97 (AK)	Common in fields and pastures; this exotic is new to the fauna of Massachusetts since LNMV was published.
Fiery Skipper (<i>Hylephila phyleus</i>)	Late summer; 8/30/99 (MP)-9/12/99 (MP)	Rare stray but with an established pattern of occurrence; about a dozen records, some involving multiple individuals.
Leonard's Skipper (<i>Hesperia leonardus</i>)	Late summer-early fall; 8/23 (MP)-10/6 (MP)	Uncommon, mostly in native grassland.
Cobweb Skipper (<i>Hesperia metea</i>)	Spring; 5/4/10 (TC)-6/18/05 (MP)	Uncommon to locally common in grassy areas.
Indian Skipper (<i>Polites sassacus</i>)	Spring; 5/19/12 (MP)-6/20/04 (MP)-	Uncommon.
Peck's Skipper (<i>Polites peckius</i>)	Spring-fall; 5/17/02 (MP)-10/9/06 (MP)	Common and widespread.
Tawny-edged Skipper (<i>Polites themistocles</i>)	Spring-late summer; 5/16/10 (MP)-10/11/10 (MP)	Locally fairly common, uses a wide range of habitat types.
Crossline Skipper (<i>Polites origenes</i>)	Summer; 6/8/14 (MP)-8B (FN)	Uncommon in old fields.
Long Dash (<i>Polites mystic</i>)	Late spring-late summer; 5/23 (MP)-9/27/05 (MP)	Common in fields; sometimes exhibits second partial flight in late summer.
Northern Broken Dash (<i>Wallengria egeremet</i> = <i>Catia e.</i>)	Summer; 7/2/02 (MP)-8/23/13 (MP)	Fairly common in many open habitats.
Sachem (<i>Atalopedes campestris</i>)	Summer; 7/1/97 (MB#7 [PM])-10/27/13 (MP)	Established in ruderal areas, though variable in numbers. Formerly a rare vagrant.
Hobomok Skipper (<i>Lon hobomok</i> = <i>Poanes h.</i>)	Late spring; 5/23 (MP)-7/12/03 (MP)	Common in damp, brushy areas.
Zabulon Skipper (<i>Lon zabulon</i> = <i>Poanes z.</i>)	5/16/22 (MP)-9/2/22 (MP)	Apparently established and likely to increase in numbers.
Broad-winged Skipper (<i>Poanes viator</i>)	Summer; 7/17/10 (MP)-8/15/03 (MP)	Uncommon, presumed to breed on <i>Phragmites</i> but ranges widely.
Black Dash (<i>Euphyes conspicua</i> = <i>Atrytone c.</i>)	Summer; 7/28 (LNMV)-7/30 (LNMV)	A "swamp butterfly," at best rare and local; no recent and few historical records.
Dun Skipper (<i>Euphyes vestris</i> = <i>Atrytone ruricola</i>)	Summer 6/25/11 (MP)-9/4/95 (AK)	Abundant, probably our most numerous grass skipper.
Dusted Skipper (<i>Atrytonopsis hianna</i>)	Spring 5/15/10 (MP)-7/6 (MB#8 [AK])	Fairly common in native grassland.