

# OBSERVATIONS ON SOME BUTTERFLIES AND SKIPPERS FROM THE LYLETON — GAINSBOROUGH REGION, MANITOBA — SASKATCHEWAN

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During the summers of 1974, 1975 and 1976, whilst I was carrying out research on Clay-colored Sparrows in extreme southwestern Manitoba, I made incidental observations on butterflies and skippers in the area. I did not undertake a large-scale collection of specimens; hence, this list is based mostly on field identification using binoculars, although a few individuals of difficult groups, such as fritillaries and blues, were netted, identified and then released.

The region in question is about 800 km<sup>2</sup>, incorporating the towns of Gainsborough in Saskatchewan and Lyleton and Pierson in Manitoba. The topography of the area is level to gently rolling, at an elevation of 460 to 500 m above sea level. The climate is typically continental, with wide seasonal variation in temperature. The normal mean daily temperature in January is between — 17° and — 20°C, and in July is about 20°C. The average annual precipitation is from 40 to 46 cm.<sup>1 2</sup>

Originally mixed-grass prairie, the vegetation has been greatly changed since the first homesteaders settled in the late 1800's. At present, only a few isolated pockets of native prairie remain. The land is now intensively farmed for cash crops where the land is fertile, with sandy areas used for grazing. Numerous aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) bluffs and extensive stands of shrubs, mainly snowberry (*Symphoricarpos occidentalis*) and silverberry (*Elaeagnus commutata*), are scattered throughout the region.

## SPECIES LIST

This list follows the common and scientific names as used in Dos Passos' 'synonymic list of the Nearctic Rhopalocera'<sup>3</sup> and the order follows Klotz 'A field guide to the butterflies'<sup>4</sup>. The period during which a species was observed is given in terms of months, and unless otherwise specified each species was reported in each year.

**EYED BROWN** *Lethe eurydice* (Johanson). Fairly common in wet grass meadows; July and August.

**PRAIRIE RINGLET** *Coenonympha inornata* Edwards. Fairly common in grass areas; May and June. Ringlets and Eye Browns occurred in much the same type of habitat, but at different times of the summer.

**MONARCH** *Danaus plexippus* (Linnaeus). Widespread: June - August. Milkweeds (*Asclepiadaceae*) are relatively scarce and local in the area, hence it seems more than likely that the majority of Monarchs seen are transients.

**GREAT SPANGLED FRITILLARY** *Speyeria cybele* (Fabricius). Occasional along roadsides and in gardens; June. One netted in a Lyleton town garden on 1 June 1976.

**APHRODITE** *Speyeria aphrodite* (Fabricius). Occasionally seen over wet grassy meadows west of Lyleton; July. Not recorded in 1974. Two were netted on 1 July 1975 near a slough overgrown with willows (*Salix* spp.) in a sandy, gravel pasture 2 km west of Lyleton.

**MEADOW FRITILLARY** *Boloria todia* (Holland). Frequent in pastures, along rights-of-way, and near sloughs and marshes; May - June.

**SILVER-BORDERED FRITILLARY** *Boloria selene* (Denis & Schiffermuller). Only two records; two individuals netted on 24 July 1975 in a marsh one km south of Pierson.



Pearl Crescent

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**SILVERY CHECKERSPOT** *Melitaea nycteis* Doubleday. Frequent in damp pastureland; June - July.

**PEARL CRESCENT** *Phycoides tharos* (Drury). Widespread, in a variety of habitats; June - July.

**POLYGONIA** spp. A ragged individual photographed on 15 May 1974 in a Lyleton garden. Probably either *P. comma* (Harris) or *P. satyrus* (Edwards).

**MILBERT'S TORTOISESHELL** *Nymphalis milberti* (Godart). Widespread in pastures, rights-of-way and gardens; May - June. The first butterfly recorded each spring.

**MOURNING CLOAK** *Nymphalis antiopa* Linnaeus). Widespread and fairly common in open country; May - August.

**RED ADMIRAL** *Vanessa atalanta* (Linnaeus). Widespread, particularly near sloughs, bluffs and gardens; May - July.

**PAINTED LADY** *Vanessa cardui* (Linnaeus). Decidedly uncommon, in ungrazed pasture and along rights-of-way; May - August. Not recorded in 1976.

**VICEROY** *Limenitis arcippus* (Cramer). Frequent along roadsides and in ungrazed pasture; June - July.

**WHITE ADMIRAL** *Limenitis arthemis* (Drury). A common butterfly near bluffs, wooded sloughs and in town gardens; May - July.

**SILVERY BLUE** *Glaucopsyche lygdamus* (Doubleday). Widespread throughout the area; June - July.

**SPRING AZURE** *Celastrina (Lycaenopsis) argiolus* (Linnaeus). Like the Silvery Blue, also widespread throughout the area; May - June. No other 'Blue' identified.

**BLACK SWALLOWTAIL** *Papilio polyxenes* Fabricus. Frequent in pastures, town gardens and rights-of-way; May - July.

**TIGER SWALLOWTAIL** *Papilio glaucus* Linnaeus. Widespread throughout; June - July.

**ALFALFA/Common SULPHUR** *Colias eurytheme* Boisduval/*C. philodice* Godart. Widespread over grassy areas in May and June.

**PINK-EDGED SULPHUR** *Colias interior* Scudder. Only two records; two individuals netted on 29 June 1975, Pierson Wildlife Management Area.

**CABBAGE WHITE** *Pieris rapae* (Linnaeus). Common and widespread; May - August.

**CHECKERED WHITE** *Pieris protodice* Boisduval & LeConte. Frequent along rights-of-way and in pastures; May - July.

**SILVER-SPOTTED SKIPPER** *Epargyreus clarus* (Cramer). Frequent along rights-of-way and in gardens; May - June.

**CHECKERED SKIPPER** *Pyrgus communis* (Grote). Recorded in gardens in Lyleton in May and June, 1975 and 1976.

**LONG DASH** *Polites mystic* (Scudder). Recorded in grassy areas; May - June. No other skipper positively identified.

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<sup>1</sup>RICHARDS, J. H. & K. I. FUNG 1969. Atlas of Saskatchewan. University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon. 236 pp.

<sup>2</sup>WEIR, T. R. 1960. Economic Atlas of Manitoba. Dept. of Industry & Commerce, Prov. of Manitoba. 39 pp.

<sup>3</sup>DOS PASSOS, C. F. 1964. A synonymic list of the Nearctic Ropalocera. Peabody Mus. Nat. Hist., Memoirs of Lepidopterists' Society No. 1. 125 pp.

<sup>4</sup>KLOTS, A. B. 1964. A field guide to the butterflies. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. 349 pp.



Tiger Swallowtail

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