

# EUPTOIETA CLAUDIA IN MANITOBA

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Klots in his *Field Guide to the Butterflies* mentions that *Euptoieta claudia* is scarce even in Minnesota. He was evidently unaware of its occurrence in Manitoba.

Most of my collecting experience is centered at The Pas, Manitoba where I have collected intensively since 1950. I took *Euptoieta claudia* early in my collecting here. Then, as now, it is a sporadic catch dependent on how strong the spring migration of female *Euptoieta claudia* was from the south.

The species evidently cannot overwinter here as an adult and there may well be a return migration southward—yet unrecorded—resembling the monarch in this regard.

*Euptoieta claudia* is evidently widely distributed in Manitoba but its range is yet unknown. It may extend a long way northward as native violets of various species reach tree-line and beyond. The number of frost-free days may be the determining and restricting factor. It has tropical affiliations and its close relative *Euptoieta hegesia*, is common enough in Mexico. This may be an additional clue to the idea that all butterflies were originally tropical and radiated into other areas of the planet with time, food and parasite pressures, and climatic changes allowing for survival of adaptive genes. Summarily it can be said that *Euptoieta claudia* is a migrant into our area from the southern United States. Battered females arrive in the spring on the prevailing south winds in an apparently small migratory phase. They lay eggs on wild violets or evidently, more commonly on garden pansy. The pupal period is

brief (as in the Tropics) and a large Manitoba-produced form emerges in July. A hot summer will produce nice specimens as far north as The Pas. Cool moist summers tend to produce larger and darker forms. I have specimens going back to the mid 1950's that tend to illustrate this.

During the early 1960's I was Park Naturalist at Riding Mountain National Park with headquarters at Wasagaming, Manitoba. In the course of routine work various butterfly observations were made—including positive evidence that *Euptoieta claudia* breeds in Manitoba.

Excerpts from my field notes follow

Wasagaming, Manitoba  
July 20, 1964

"Today at the Forestry Nursery Station I watched a female *Euptoieta claudia* lay eggs on garden pansy plants. Also nearby I found two second instar larvae on very small pansy seedlings. They have two tufted horns at the front and are variegated brownish. They rested parallel to one another. The female, while laying placed the eggs singly one to a pansy seedling. She was rather battered and I did not have the heart to collect her, engaged as she was in motherhood, an American invention. These larvae should produce adults in 3-4 weeks time. This is the first time that I have seen the species laying."

Wasagaming, Manitoba  
July 23, 1964

"Today, near the Information Office in the Park, I saw a very large, fresh and darkish looking specimen of *Euptoieta claudia*. This must have come from the earliest laid eggs—perhaps in early June. There is thus an apparent overlap in the appearance of fresh specimens on the wing."



Wasagaming, Manitoba  
August 7, 1964

"On August 2, 1964 I found an *Euptoieta claudia* like larvae eating pansies in flower window box of the bunk house in town. This was in its last instar. It pupated August 4. I am not certain that this is *Euptoieta claudia*, so am eagerly awaiting its emergence. If it is *Euptoieta claudia* this will confirm my idea that there is a final smallish terminal brood on the wing at the end of August and running into early September. This is the last brood and is characteristically smaller. Some large specimens taken at The Pas in July 1956 indicate the larger summer generation. This small form possibly does not occur at The Pas in the autumn."

Wasagaming, Manitoba  
August 14, 1964

"Emerged in the afternoon a good specimen of *Euptoieta claudia*. The specimen and pupal case preserved. Pupal period: 12 days."

Wasagaming, Manitoba  
August 16, 1964

"Today I saw a large, fresh *Euptoieta claudia* at the window box where the pansies are grown. It moved too swiftly to determine the sex. It flew 30 feet straight up and over the building and was away."

The above data is likely the first on the biology of this butterfly species in Manitoba. Its sporadic appearance and infrequent capture may have precluded previous observations on its biology.



Frost crystals

Fred. W. Lahrman