

# NORTHERN PEARLY EYE — NEW FOR ALBERTA

HAROLD W. PINEL, 1017 - 19 Avenue N.W., Calgary, Alberta. T2M 0Z8

While camping in the Cold Lake area near the end of June 1990, I observed and collected specimens of the Northern Pearly Eye, *Enodia anthedon*. This species of butterfly was not previously known to occur in Alberta.

I first observed the Northern Pearly Eye during mid-morning on 29 June in Cold Lake Provincial Park. It was flying in thick understorey near a hiking trail in open mixed aspen/spruce woods. Now and again, it would land on the trunk of an

aspen tree or on some deadfall. I could approach it closely, and recognized it immediately as a species of Satyrid butterfly with which I was unfamiliar. Its very striking appearance made it easy to identify as a Northern Pearly Eye when I checked my field guide. This butterfly can readily be separated from the Eyed Brown (*Enodia eurydice*) by its larger size, darker coloration, pointed forewings, and scalloped outer margins of its hindwings. The two species also occur in different habitats. The Northern Pearly Eye prefers



Northern Pearly Eye

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damp deciduous woods, whereas the Eyed Brown is a butterfly found in open sedge marshes. Table 1 summarizes my observations of Northern Pearly Eye in 1990.

The distribution of this species in western Canada, particularly in Alberta, has been variably reported to date. Tilden and Smith do not even mention this species as occurring in western Canada.<sup>8</sup> Klots, Howe, and Pyle give Manitoba as the western range limits for this species in Canada.<sup>5 3 6</sup> Hooper records this species in poplar woods in southeastern Saskatchewan, north and west to Meadow Lake Provincial Park.<sup>1 2</sup> Scott, and Klassen *et al.* depict the range of this species as just entering east-central Alberta, but I have not seen substantiating evidence.<sup>7 4</sup> N. Kondla, keeper of the records for Alberta butterflies, says that the records in this article are the first authenticated records to his knowledge (pers. comm.).

The number of individuals observed and the scattered locations indicate that

the Northern Pearly Eye is not accidental in Alberta. It is doubtful that this species was previously overlooked because of its abundance and obvious nature. Furthermore, the habitat in which this species occurs in Alberta is more or less continuous eastward to known collection localities in Saskatchewan, so the occurrence of this species in Alberta was expected. I believe that this species has not been previously reported for Alberta because of a lack of field work in east-central Alberta during July.

The larvae fed on a number of different grass species including False Melick Grass (*Schizachne purpurascens*) and Reed Canary Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*). Adults have been reported feeding on sap, dung, fungi, carrion and mud. The observation dates listed in Table 1 are within the flight period of late June to early August given for Saskatchewan and Manitoba.<sup>1 4</sup> More field work in east-central Alberta needs to be done to determine this species' range and flight period.

Table 1. OBSERVATIONS OF NORTHERN PEARLY EYE IN ALBERTA, 1990.

Date	Location	Number	Remarks
29 June - 2 July inclusive	Cold Lake P.P.	10+ daily	Observed flying in aspen woods and mixed woods with thick understory, especially Beaked Hazelnut ( <i>Corylus cornuta</i> ). Landed on tree trunks, logs and shrubs. Very sluggish in early morning; caught some individuals with my hands.
1 July	Little Bear Lake (w shore) T64-R2-W4	16+	Flying in aspen with dense Beaked Hazelnut understory as well as landing on ground in open moist area at lake's edge. Few specimens collected.
1 July	English Bay Campground	1	Flying at edge of clearing in mixed woods. (Pond w of Cold Lake.)
4 July	Ross Lake Campground Whitney Lakes P.P.	1	Flying in aspen woods with mainly Beaked Hazelnut understory.

## Acknowledgement

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- <sup>1</sup> HOOPER, R.R. 1973. Butterflies of Saskatchewan. Sask. Dept. Natural Resources, Regina. 216 pp.
- <sup>2</sup> HOOPER, R.R. 1986. Revised checklist of Saskatchewan butterflies. *Blue Jay* 44(3):154-163.
- <sup>3</sup> HOWE, W.H. 1975. The butterflies of North America. Doubleday & Co., Inc., Garden City, N.Y. 633 pp.
- <sup>4</sup> KLASSEN, P.L., A.R. WESTWOOD, W.B. PRESTON and W.B. McKILLOP. 1989.

The butterflies of Manitoba. Man. Mus. of Man and Nature, Winnipeg. 290 pp.

- <sup>5</sup> KLOTS, A.B. 1951. A field guide to the butterflies. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. 349 pp.
- <sup>6</sup> PYLE, R.M. 1981. The Audubon Society field guide to North American butterflies. Alfred A. Knopf, N.Y. 924 pp.
- <sup>7</sup> SCOTT, J.A. 1986. The butterflies of North America. Stanford Univ. Press, Stanford, California. 583 pp.
- <sup>8</sup> TILDEN, J.W. and A.C. SMITH. 1986. A field guide to western butterflies. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. 370 pp.



Map of the Cold Lake, Alberta area