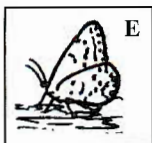


wings. At least the Zabulon is one of the folded-wing skippers with a distinctive pattern.



A female Zabulon basks on the grass. The male approaches her from behind, his wings in a rapid flutter as he bumps her. She flutters her wings in protest, and he flies back to the mints. He's patterned mostly with orange and yellow with a little brown; she's mostly brown with light spots on the forewing.

New birders find sparrows confusing. As their experience grows they find fall warblers a challenge and then really complain about shorebirds. They should try skippers. A few species are so similar it takes microscopic examination of their genitalia for positive identification. I don't do that. I use the "my first guess is" philosophy. At least a butterfly specimen can be collected and sent to an expert for identification. I send mine to Jim Wiker, a field assistant with the Illinois State Museum.

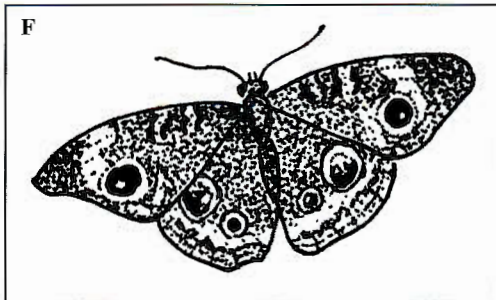
Fifty-two species of skippers occur in Illinois. Skippers aren't true butterflies: Butterflies and moths belong to the Order Lepidoptera. Butterflies are then divided into two superfamilies: the true butterflies (Papilionoidea) and the skippers (Hesperoidea). True butterflies have narrow bodies, long antennae, and brightly colored full wings. Skippers are stockier and more compact like moths, with short triangular wings that are most often dull colored.

The sky remains clear, and a breeze blows. A White-breasted Nuthatch gives "yank" calls as it moves through the woods, and a Summer Tanager repeats "pit-i-tuk-tuk" from perches around camp.

After a glass of iced tea, I walk the road looking for more species. Old roads like this one, with the woods, wet spots, and a roadside mixture of

weeds and native plants provide some of the best butterflying (unless the county mows the roadsides like they did two months ago).

There's a puddle party going on. The moisture from a rainy day before yesterday attracts several species of butterflies. Newly emerged males come to the road for the moisture and for salts and minerals needed for mating.



Sixteen Pearl Crescents fan their wings as they walk around and hold them closed as they sip. They're smaller and have less contrast to their orange and brown pattern than the Silvery Checkerspot. Both species fly now.

The Eastern Tailed-Blue's light blue-gray matches the color of the rocks. Seven flit about, all males. Males are blue above and the females brown. They rub their hindwings back and forth as they sit on the ground. A red area with a black spot makes a false target on the hindwing to attract a predator's attention away from the actual head. The tails become "antennae." The movement increases the attraction.

One of the five common buckeyes lands beside me as I sit on the road, at first fanning its brown wings and then holding them flat. An orange band connects two eye spots on the

hindwing, and a white band wraps part way around the eye spot on the forewing. Buckeyes migrate from the south and return in the fall.

The brown and tan pattern of the three Tawny Emperors matches the color of the wet dirt, until they open their wings and flash the patterned orange above.

A Hackberry Emperor lands on the edge of my sleeveless blouse. I don't feel a thing as it sips sweat from my shoulder. This up-close view shows all the black spots on its brown and cream wings.

A Question Mark walks around on the road, fanning its wings and sipping. Its brown pattern underneath and shape give it the appearance of a dead leaf; fanning the wings shows the brilliant orange with brown markings on the forewing and the deep brown of the hindwing.

I can't see the silver question mark underneath on the hindwing from here. The Eastern Comma has a silver comma. To see these markings requires a cooperative butterfly. Often, I use the tail shape to differentiate the two: The Question Mark has a longer narrower tail and the Comma a shorter wider one.

The Question Mark, Eastern Comma, Mourning Cloak, and Goat-weed Leafwing all overwinter as adults and will emerge from hibernation on warm, sunny winter days. These species seldom visit flowers and instead prefer sap flows, rotting fruit, animal droppings, and carrion.

The nine Red-Spotted Purples either slowly fan their black wings or hold them closed. The purplish blue shines on the upper hindwings when

