

# common wood nymph

## *Cercyonis pegala*

### FEATURES

The common wood nymph butterfly has a wingspan of 2.0 to 3.0 inches. The female is larger than the male. Eyespots are present on both sides of each wing. Size of the eyespots varies, and they may be small. The eyespots are usually black with blue shading in the center. The upperside of the forewing is dark brown. The eyespots here may be enclosed in a yellow patch, especially if the butterfly is in the southern one-half of the state. Common wood nymphs in northern Illinois tend to be darker than those in southern Illinois and lack the yellow patch. The upperside of the hindwing is brown. The lower side of the wings is brown with dark-brown mottling.

### BEHAVIORS

This species is found statewide. In the southern one-half of Illinois, the common wood nymph lives in woodlands and along the edge of woodlands where it feeds on sap, dead animals and rotten fruit. In the northern one-half of Illinois, prairies and open areas are the preferred habitats, and the adult feeds on flower nectar. The larvae eat native grasses. The species overwinters in the larval stage. Adults are active from May through August.

### TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Animalia  
Phylum: Arthropoda  
Class: Insecta  
Order: Lepidoptera  
Family: Nymphalidae

### ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

### ILLINOIS RANGE



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adult

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adult

## **Aquatic Habitats**

bottomland forests

## **Woodland Habitats**

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

## **Prairie and Edge Habitats**

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie