

fiery skipper *Hylephila phyleus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Insecta

Order: Lepidoptera

Family: Hesperiidae

ILLINOIS STATUS: common, native

FEATURES

The wingspan of this species is about one and one-fourth to one and one-half inches. At rest, skippers hold their forewings up, and their hindwings flat. The antennae are short, no longer than the width of the head. The male and female have different coloration. Males have yellow-orange patches on the upperside of the wings with dark patches at the wing edges and prominent dark marks on the forewings. The underside of the wings is more yellow than orange, and dark spots are scattered throughout. The female has much less yellow-orange coverage on the upperside of the wings than the male and shows larger areas of dark marks. The underside of the female's wings is light orange-yellow with green spots on the hindwings.

BEHAVIORS

The fiery skipper lives in open areas, including pastures, fields, gardens and parks. One or two generations are produced each year in Illinois. The species is present only in summer and is most abundant in late summer. In some years it is not commonly seen anywhere in the state. It is a migratory species that cannot survive the winter in Illinois. Larval hosts are grasses. Larvae pull grass blades together to make a horizontal shelter. This structure helps them to avoid mowing in lawns, where they often thrive. Adults obtain nectar from a variety of flowers.

Aquatic Habitats: none

Woodland Habitats: none

Prairie and Edge Habitats: edge

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