

harvester *Feniseca tarquinius*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Insecta

Order: Lepidoptera

Family: Lycaenidae

ILLINOIS STATUS: common, native

FEATURES

The harvester's wingspan is one to one and one-third inches. The upperside of its wings has orange and brown areas. The underside of the wings is orange or red-brown with white circles enclosing dark spots.

BEHAVIORS

At least two generations of harvester butterflies are raised annually in Illinois. The female lays a single egg on or close to a woolly aphid (*Eriosoma lanigerum*) colony. The larva of the harvester is carnivorous, feeding on the woolly aphids by piercing an aphid with its mouthparts and sucking out the body liquids. It may then stick the dead aphids on its body hairs as camouflage. The adult feeds on honeydew from aphids, liquids from dead animals, animal feces and wet soil. This species overwinters in the chrysalis stage. The adult is active from April through November.

Aquatic Habitats: bottomland forests; swamps

Woodland Habitats: bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats: none

© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2021. Biodiversity of Illinois.