

question mark *Polygonia interrogationis*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Insecta

Order: Lepidoptera

Family: Nymphalidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The question mark butterfly has a wingspan of two and one-fourth to three inches. Each hindwing is black and has a short projection from the back edge. The underside of the hindwing has a silver question mark shape on it. The forewing is orange-red with dark markings. There are two seasonal forms, with the one for winter lighter in color than the summer form. The caterpillar is black to yellow with eight silver spots on the back.

BEHAVIORS

The question mark butterfly may be found statewide in Illinois. Its caterpillar eats nettle, false nettle, hackberry, elms and Japanese hops. Two broods are raised each year. This butterfly overwinters as an adult.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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