

red admiral *Vanessa atalanta*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Insecta

Order: Lepidoptera

Family: Nymphalidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The red admiral butterfly has a wingspan of 1.75 to 3.00 inches. The upperside of its forewing is brown-black with white spots near the tip and an orange-red band. The upperside of the hindwing has an orange band near the edge. The underside of the forewing has blue and white colors and a pink-red bar. The underside of the hindwing is shades of gray and brown with faint spots.

BEHAVIORS

The red admiral may be found statewide. It frequents woodland edges and other edge habitats, bottomland forests, stream banks, roadsides, yards, parks and gardens. The larvae eat nettles. The adults will eat flower nectar but also feed on tree sap and rotten fruit. This species only survives the winter in Illinois if the weather conditions are mild. It may overwinter as an adult or chrysalis but also migrates into the Illinois annually from more southern states. Multiple generations are produced per year. Adults are active from March to early November.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

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