

BUTTERFLIES OF CONNEMARA NATIONAL PARK



Orange Tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*)

The Orange Tip is quite common here in Connemara and can be widely seen flying around our gardens. Their wingspan is 3.8-4.8cm, their forewings are white with black tips with the male having a large orange patch. They like to feed on the cuckoo flower (*Cardamine pratensis*) and as this plant is abundant here one can see this butterfly often.

Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*)

The Small Copper's forewings are a shiny copper colour with dark spots and brown edges, the hindwings are dark brown with a copper band around the edges. Wingspan is 3.2-3.5cm. They like to eat dock/sorrel leaves and their natural habitat is woodland, heaths, meadows and coastal areas. The male Small Copper is very territorial and will chase away other insects and butterflies from its area.



Peacock (*Inachis io*)

One of our largest and most colourful butterflies. They are dark reddish brown in colour with yellow and black markings with a large lilac-blue spot on each wing. These spots are called 'peacock eyes', hence its name. It has a wingspan of 5.4-5.8cm. The common nettle plant and butterfly bush (buddleia) are part of their main diet. The Peacock butterfly like frequent gardens and parks.



Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*)

The Small Tortoiseshell is very common and widespread throughout Ireland. Their colour is orange-red with black markings and its edges have a row of blue crescents with the underside almost black. The edges have a row of blue crescents with the underside almost black. Wingspan is 4.5-5cm. Its love of nectar from cultivated and wild plants makes it one of the most widely seen butterflies in our gardens. They also rely on the common nettle for dietary requirements.



Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*)

This striking butterfly is one of the first butterflies seen on the wing here in spring. Their wings are coloured black and red and add a splash of colour in our gardens and woodland from late spring to mid-autumn. It has a wingspan of 6.7-7.2cm and likes to feed on the common daisy, buddleia, sedums and many other flowering shrubs.

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Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*)

There are a number of blue butterflies but this is the most common one. The male is violet blue with a fine black line around the edges; underside brownish/grey with black, white and red spots. Female is dark brown with violet blue at the base of the wings. Wingspan is 2.5–3cm and their habitat varies from coastal regions, grasslands, gardens to meadows where there is an abundance of clover for dietary requirements. The flight season is usually from May to September.

Painted Lady (*Cynthia cardui*)

The Painted Lady is closely related to the Red Admiral. It is pale brown /orange in colour with black spots on all wings, and white on the forewings. Wingspan is 6.4–7.0cm. Their diet consists mainly of nettles and thistle, and their usual habitat is parks, and gardens with lots of flowers.



Large White (*Pieris brassicae*)

Also known as the Cabbage White. The underwings are pale/dusty in colour whilst the upperwings are creamy white with a black tip to the forewing. Their wingspan is 6.4–7.6cm and flight season is roughly from April to October. Diet is mainly cabbage plants and other members of the Brassica family. Habitat is usually gardens, hedgerows and fields.



Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*)

The female in this species is generally larger than the male and its wings are more rounded. Colour is pale yellowish brown with orange-brown markings and dark spots; underside pale orange brown with yellow spots. Wingspan is 4.2–4.8cm. They fly May– June but more active when it's sunny. Their favoured habitat are meadows, bogs, moors and also dry chalk grassland.



Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*)

This is a widespread species associated with woodlands and hedgerows; an easily recognised species having brown wings with a creamy spotted pattern. Wingspan is 4.7–5cm. They have a very long flying season and will fly in overcast conditions. Very territorial, fighting off other butterflies and insects.

