

John D. MacArthur Beach State Park



John D. MacArthur Beach State Park houses 436 acres of rich subtropical coastal habitat, featuring mangrove estuaries, seagrass meadows, hardwood hammocks, dunes, beaches, and rock reefs. As a result of this variety of ecosystems, over 45 different species of butterflies have been identified in the Park. Only a handful of these are featured in this guide, with the focus of aiding identification. If you are interested in a more comprehensive list, the MacArthur Beach Butterfly Species Checklist is available in the Nature Center.

All animals, plants, and other resources are protected in Florida's State Parks. Please take nothing but pictures and memories. For your protection and that of the resources, please stay on designated trails and obey all Park signs.

John D. MacArthur Beach State Park

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Butterfly Guide



John D. MacArthur Beach State Park



Welcome to MacArthur Beach State Park!

This guide will introduce you to some of the Park’s butterflies. Butterflies are insects in the order Lepidoptera. They go through a complete metamorphosis with a life cycle of 4 stages: 1. Egg (placed on specific caterpillar food “host” plants); 2. Caterpillar (larval stage feeds on “larval host plants”); 3. Chrysalis (pupal stage); and 4. Adult (most feed on flower nectar). Some of these winged wonders are fast-moving high flyers; some are small and quick, flitting among the trees, shrubs, and flowers: and a few are shade-loving gliders, gracefully floating through the hammock or darting along the estuary shoreline. Search high, low, and in-between, watching for the slightest movement as you enjoy your visit through this subtropical coastal habitat.

Zebra Heliconian (*Heliconius charitonius*)



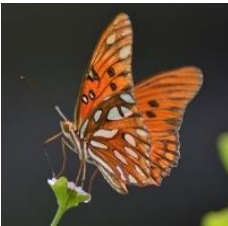
Florida's state butterfly! It's a “longwing” tropical species but strays north. It flies slowly in the shade of maritime hammock trees and lays its eggs on passionflower vines such as the native corky-stemmed passionflower. They roost together in trees at night. It's one of the longest-lived butterflies, living several months, because it feeds on pollen as well as nectar. It's common on the Dune Trail.

Julia Heliconian (*Dryas julia*)

This is a long-winged tropical species. Females are rusty orange and males are bright orange. Passionflower vines like corky-stemmed passionflower are its larval host plant. It is seen around trail



Gulf Fritillary (*Agraulis vanilla*)



It has bright orange above wings like some other local butterflies, but its below wings are silvery. Passionflower vines like corky-stemmed passionflower are also its larval host plant. It's common all year along trails, around the Nature Center, and Butterfly Garden.

Great Southern White (*Ascia monuste*)

Its turquoise antennae tips and dark zigzag wing margins are distinctive. Females can be grayish brown in the summer. It is easy to confuse with Florida White, now rare in Palm Beach County. It lays eggs on plants in the mustard family, like coastal searocket, Jamaica caper-tree, limber caper, and peppergrass. It can be abundant and seen in large numbers along the coast during spring and early summer.



Statira Sulphur (*Aphrissa statira*)



This is a medium-sized light-yellow butterfly. Females are pale yellow. Males are greenish yellow. It's endemic to coastal Florida and sometimes found inland. They are seen most of the year along the estuary where its larval host plant, coinvine, grows among the mangroves. In the summer, they are more numerous. Their favorite nectar plants have red flowers like the firebush.

Large Orange Sulphur (*Phoebis agarithe*)

It's a subtropical endemic species in south Florida and south Texas. It has a diagonal dark line on its folded forewing below. It flies fast in maritime hammocks where blackbead, its larval host plant, grows. They are more commonly seen in summer and fall. It “nectars” (drinks nectar from flowers) in open areas.



Giant Swallowtail (*Papilio cresphontes*)



With a wingspan of 5 inches, it's one of Florida's largest butterflies. It is dark with a yellow stripe above but mostly yellow below. It lays its eggs on its larval host plant, wild lime, that grows in maritime hammocks. It's common most of the year.

White Peacock (*Anartia jatrophae*)

Their showy eyespots make them a photogenic butterfly. It perches close to the ground on its larval host plant, frogfruit. Because it's neotropical, it does not tolerate cold weather. It's common most of the year in open areas laying eggs and sipping nectar.



Ruddy Daggerwing (*Marpesia petreus*)

This is a large colorful butterfly with long “dagger-like” tails, found flying high when it's not on flowers sipping nectar. Its wings are paler underneath and look like a dried leaf when folded. At first glance, it may resemble a Julia butterfly, but its tails and jagged wings are a good ID. It's a subtropical butterfly that flies in hardwood hammocks looking for its larval host plant, strangler fig. It is common most of the year but particularly summer and fall.



Soldier (*Danaus eresimus*)



The soldier is a milkweed butterfly also known as “tropical queen.” It colonized Florida in the 1970s. It resembles monarch and queen butterflies and is hard to ID when it's

flying. It is slightly smaller with faded patches on its hindwing below. Milkweed vine is its larval host plant. There are times when it is common at the Park but scarce other years.

Mangrove Buckeye (*Junonia evarete*)

This is a large butterfly with lots of eyespots on its wings above. The common buckeye looks similar, but the mangrove buckeye has more orange and can be seen in the mangrove habitat, being subtropical along the coast. Its larval host plant is the black mangrove. They like sunny open areas to sip nectar on Spanish needles and other flowers.



Cassius Blue (*Leptotes cassius*)



This is a small butterfly with blue wings above. The white and dark markings below are seen on its folded wings. The larval host plants are variable and include downy milkpea, cowpea and wild plumbago. They can be common most of the year in

open areas sipping nectar on small flowers like scorpion tail and wild sage.

Mangrove Skipper (*Phocides pigmalion*)

This spread-winged skipper is larger and showier than most skippers. They fly along the estuary and often land underneath a leaf. It's limited to coastal, central, and south Florida by its larval host plant, the red mangrove. Its caterpillars use silk to weave a shelter on the red mangrove leaves. They nectar on mangrove flowers, sea lavender, Spanish needles, and wild sage.



Long-tailed Skipper (*Urbanus proteus*)



This is a neotropical, medium-sized skipper, noticeable for its long tails and blue-green furry body. It has many larval host plants in the pea family, including beggar-weed and downy milkpea. Like many skipper caterpillars, they weave a shelter of leaves with their silk. They are more

abundant during the late summer. They fly low and nectar on flowers in sunny areas and in the MacBeach Butterfly Garden.

Horace's Duskywing (*Erynnis horatius*)

It's a large spread-winged skipper that is the most common duskywing seen in this area. Females are lighter brown with more mottled markings above. Its larval host plants are oaks, particularly live oak. It's more commonly seen spring to fall. They stay close to the ground to sip nectar in open sunny areas.



Monk Skipper (*Asbolis capucinus*)



A large brown skipper, they have been established in Florida from Cuba since the 1940s. Its host plants are palm species. They perch on leaves and nectar on wild sage and Spanish needles.