The caterpillar is black with tiny white dots and black-branched spines. It has a pair of black filaments at its head and tail. Monarch caterpillars are found only in its smaller size.

This caterpillar is pale green or cream-coloured with a faint white stripe running down its fore- and hindwings. The bluish markings on its wing tips as well as the red spots vary running the length of each side. Hemaris thysbe (Wingspan 35-55 mm.) Often mistaken for a small hummingbird, this moth is regularly spotted with its furry body with bands of red across the abdomen and tufts of feather-like hairs protruding from the tail end of males.

Polyphemus Moth – Arctiidae

Caterpillar: Often mistaken for a small hummingbird, this moth is regularly spotted with its furry body with bands of red across the abdomen and tufts of feather-like hairs protruding from the tail end of males. (Wingspan 90-140 mm.) This large moth is brownish orange with black and white irregular lines running down its forewings. It has two large eyespots on its hindwings, and a row of four or five small eyespots on the underside of its hindwings. Two similar species are the American and the black. Most other swallowtails closely resemble one another, except for the exception of a few species at the end of males.

Isabella Tiger Moth – Psychidae istudella

Caterpillar: The caterpillar of the luna moth is a smooth, translucent pale green with a light yellow line running the length of each side. It has red-orange knobs with protruding fine hairs and a brown or green nettle and wood nettle. (Wingspan 80-115 mm.) This large and beautiful moth is pale green with purple margins and a row of black spots on the underside of its hindwings. Actias luna

Polyphemus Moth – Arctiidae

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Cabbage White – Pieridae

Adult: (Wingspan 30-40 mm.) This small butterfly has white wings with a blue spot at the base of each and a row of four or five white spots across the wing. It is often seen flitting around vegetation in the spring and summer. V. virginiensis

White Admiral – Limenithidae

Caterpillar: This small butterfly has white wings with a blue spot at the base of each and a row of four or five white spots across the wing. It is often seen flitting around vegetation in the spring and summer. V. virginiensis

Monarch – Danaus plexippus

Distribution: Southern Europe, Asia, Australia, and North America. Adults: (Wingspan 100-150 mm.) The monarch is a large butterfly with black, orange and yellow wings. It has a row of black spots on the underside of its hindwings, and a row of small eyespots on the underside of its hindwings.

Chalkhill Blue – Lycaenidae

Adult: (Wingspan 25-30 mm.) This small butterfly is blue with a white band and a row of black spots on the underside of its hindwings. Phengaris nausicaa

Canadian Tiger Swallowtail – Papilionidae

Caterpillar: These caterpillars are green with yellow bands and a red spot on the end. They have a row of black spots on the underside of its hindwings. (Wingspan 70-90 mm.) The wings of this butterfly are mostly black with orange and yellow markings. The caterpillar is green with yellow bands and a red spot on the end. It has a row of black spots on the underside of its hindwings.

Richmond Tiger Moth – Erebidae

Caterpillar: The caterpillar of the luna moth is a smooth, translucent pale green with a light yellow line running the length of each side. It has red-orange knobs with protruding fine hairs and a brown or green nettle and wood nettle. (Wingspan 80-115 mm.) This large and beautiful moth is pale green with purple margins and a row of black spots on the underside of its hindwings. Actias luna

Swallowtails

From British Columbia east to Labrador and Prince Edward Island. Distribution: (Wingspan 90-140 mm.) This large moth is brownish orange with black and white irregular lines running down its forewings. It has two large eyespots on its hindwings, and a row of four or five small eyespots on the underside of its hindwings. Two similar species are the American and the black. Most other swallowtails closely resemble one another, except for the exception of a few species at the end of males.

Northern Pearly Eye – Satyridae

Adult: (Wingspan 35-60 mm.) Milbert’s tortoiseshell is a rather unique butterfly with brown wings, a broad band of blue along its edge and a row of eye-spots on its upper side. (Wingspan 35-60 mm.) This butterfly has brown wings, a broad band of blue along its edge and a row of eye-spots on its upper side. (Wingspan 35-60 mm.) This butterfly has brown wings, a broad band of blue along its edge and a row of eye-spots on its upper side.

Jewelled Nawab – Nymphalidae

Caterpillar: The caterpillar of the luna moth is a smooth, translucent pale green with a light yellow line running the length of each side. It has red-orange knobs with protruding fine hairs and a brown or green nettle and wood nettle. (Wingspan 80-115 mm.) This large and beautiful moth is pale green with purple margins and a row of black spots on the underside of its hindwings. Actias luna

Luna Moth – Actias luna

Adult: (Wingspan 100-150 mm.) The monarch is a large butterfly with black, orange and yellow wings. It has a row of black spots on the underside of its hindwings, and a row of small eyespots on the underside of its hindwings.

Bordered Patch – Lycaenidae

Adult: (Wingspan 15-20 mm.) This small butterfly has orange wings with black spots on the edges and a black band running across the top of its wings. This band is bordered by a narrow edge of white. Melitaea cinxia

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Wanda West, forest conservation manager, is a long-time resident of the Ottawa Valley and an expert on butterflies. She is the author of several books on the subject, including Planting Native Plants for Butterflies and Moths. Wanda is also a dedicated volunteer with the Ottawa Valley Field Naturalists, where she leads regular butterfly-watching tours. Wanda can be contacted at wanda.west@ottawavalegion.org. Wanda has been involved with the Canadian Wildlife Federation for over 20 years and is known for her passion for sharing the beauty of nature with others.