

MYLITTA CRESCENT *Phycodes mylitta*



Common throughout the western states in both natural and disturbed areas, this dainty butterfly may become more common within the Presidio as riparian habitats are restored. Small and delicate, the sexes vary slightly, but both are mostly orange with fine black undulate markings. Multiple broods occur from spring through fall. Males are territorial and can be found patrolling stream banks or gullies in search of females, often alighting on a low perch with wings spread. Both the native and the exotic, weedy species of thistle are the larval host plants where the female will lay her eggs. Larvae hibernate during the winter and are known to sunbathe on the occasional mild winter day.



WEST COAST LADY *Vanessa annabella*

The West Coast Lady is common in the Presidio and can be found during all seasons in habitats both natural and weedy. Successive broods are produced throughout the year. Late season adults will stay here through the winter and are often active on mild winter days. The West Coast Lady is quite passive during the morning hours as individuals sip flower nectar. However, males become highly territorial during the afternoon, perching in wait for females and defending prime hilltop locations. After mating, females lay their eggs singly on plant leaves of the mallow and nettle families where the larvae will construct silken nests among the leaves and dine on tender foliage. Its similarity to the Painted Lady and the American Painted Lady can make identification challenging.

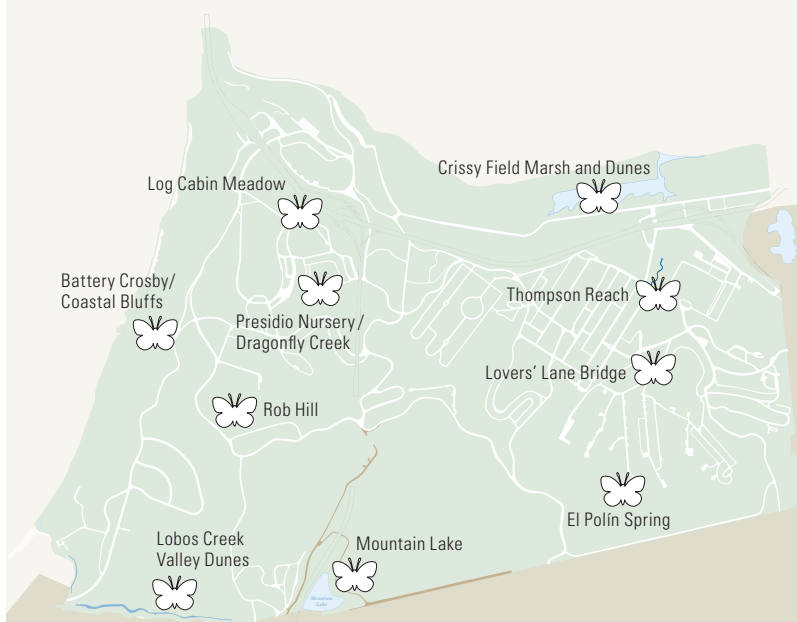


CHECKERBLOOM
(native)

BUTTERFLIES AROUND THE PARK

The varied habitats of the Presidio attract 29 distinct butterfly species, each thriving in a particular niche, from wetlands to grassy meadows. The study of butterflies, their life cycles, and their host plant relationships offers boundless opportunities to connect with the natural world around us.

While butterflies can be seen around the park, ten sites are known “hot spots” where a sighting is far more likely. Grab your binoculars and keep your eyes open for the following species around the Presidio.



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|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| ■ PIPEVINE SWALLOWTAIL | ■ CALIFORNIA TORTOISESHELL |
| ■ ANISE SWALLOWTAIL | ■ MOURNING CLOAK |
| ■ WESTERN TIGER SWALLOWTAIL | ■ AMERICAN PAINTED LADY |
| ■ CABBAGE WHITE | ■ PAINTED LADY |
| ■ SARA ORANGETIP | ■ WEST COAST LADY |
| ■ ORANGE SULPHUR | ■ RED ADMIRAL |
| ■ GRAY HAIRSTREAK | ■ COMMON BUCKEYE |
| ■ GREEN HAIRSTREAK | ■ CALIFORNIA SISTER |
| ■ WESTERN TAILED BLUE | ■ MONARCH |
| ■ WESTERN PYGMY BLUE | ■ FUNERAL DUSKYWING |
| ■ ECHO BLUE | ■ COMMON CHECKERED SKIPPER |
| ■ ACMON BLUE | ■ FIERY SKIPPER |
| ■ FIELD CRESCENT | ■ SANDHILL SKIPPER |
| ■ MYLITTA CRESCENT | ■ UMBER SKIPPER |
| ■ SATYR ANGLEWING | |

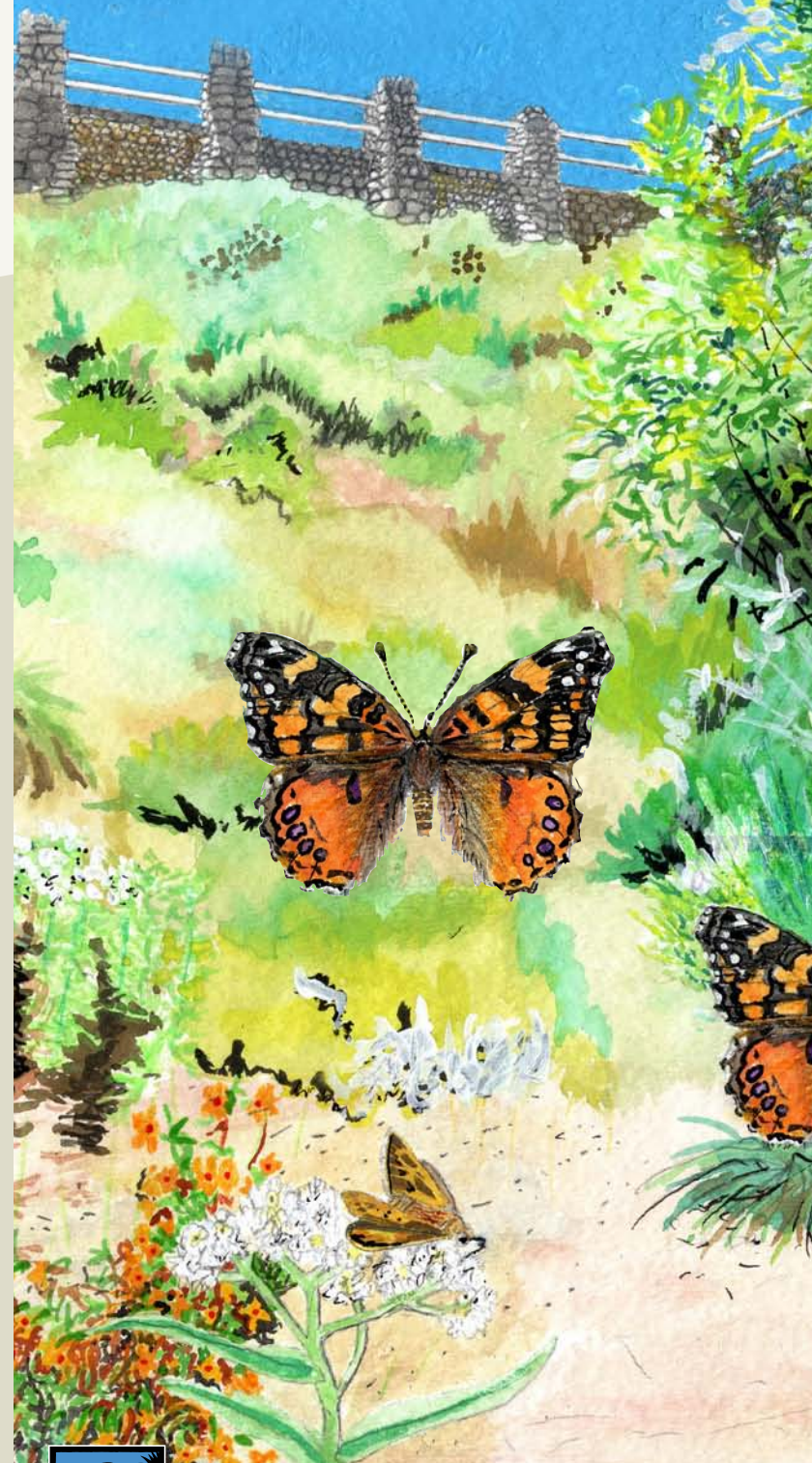
■ = COMMON ■ = UNCOMMON ■ = RARE

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Artwork by Liam O'Brien • Text by Matt Zlatunich

Butterflies of the Presidio

THOMPSON REACH



cm 0 1 2 3 4 5

MOURNING CLOAK *Nymphalis antiopa*

Widely distributed throughout the temperate northern hemisphere though seldom abundant, the Mourning Cloak can be found in a variety of habitats from mature forests to open fields. Among the longest lived of all butterflies (10–11 months), adults hibernate during the winter months with breeding occurring the following spring. Males perch and patrol for females during the afternoon hours along stream courses, in forest clearings, and in valley bottoms. Eggs are laid in clusters, usually on the twigs of trees including willow, poplar and maple. Caterpillars, which live communally feeding on tender foliage, have been known to leave the host plant to pupate under the eaves of nearby buildings. Adults get nutrients from flower nectar, but prefer tree sap, rotting fruit, and mud.

ARROYO WILLOW (native)



COMMON CHECKERED SKIPPER *Pyrgus communis*

As its name indicates, this spread-wing skipper is common and widespread throughout North America, and is fairly common within the Presidio, flying in all but the winter months. The sexes are similarly patterned in brown and white, though males can be distinguished by the bluish sheen of their body hairs.

Males perch and patrol in swales to seek females, who, after mating, lay their eggs singly on both native and exotic plants of the mallow family. Larvae live in rolled-leaf nests and hibernate during the winter.



cm 0 1 2



The OF SAN FRANCISCO
Presidio



MOURNING CLOAK



COMMON CHECKERED SKIPPER



MYLITTA CRESCENT



BUTTERFLY CONDITIONS

Butterflies are most active on warm, sunny days with little wind, but these conditions are not the norm in San Francisco. Though wind and fog can prevail throughout much of the Presidio, Thompson Reach is somewhat sheltered and often accomodating for butterflies.

THOMPSON REACH

Thompson Reach, located in the lower Tennessee Hollow Watershed, connects the Main Post to Crissy Field. In 2005, 77,000 tons of Army-era debris was removed so that 400 feet of creek could be brought above ground (or "daylighted"). Thousands of native plants (representing more than 100 species) now flourish along the re-established streambed. Many species of butterflies have returned to this willow riparian corridor that offers the essential elements they need: host plants, nutrient sources, mating territories, and proper climatic conditions.

WEST COAST LADY



FIERY SKIPPER



Fiery Skippers host on the landscaped lawn above this natural area, but visit the flowers within for nectar (throughout the whole year.)

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