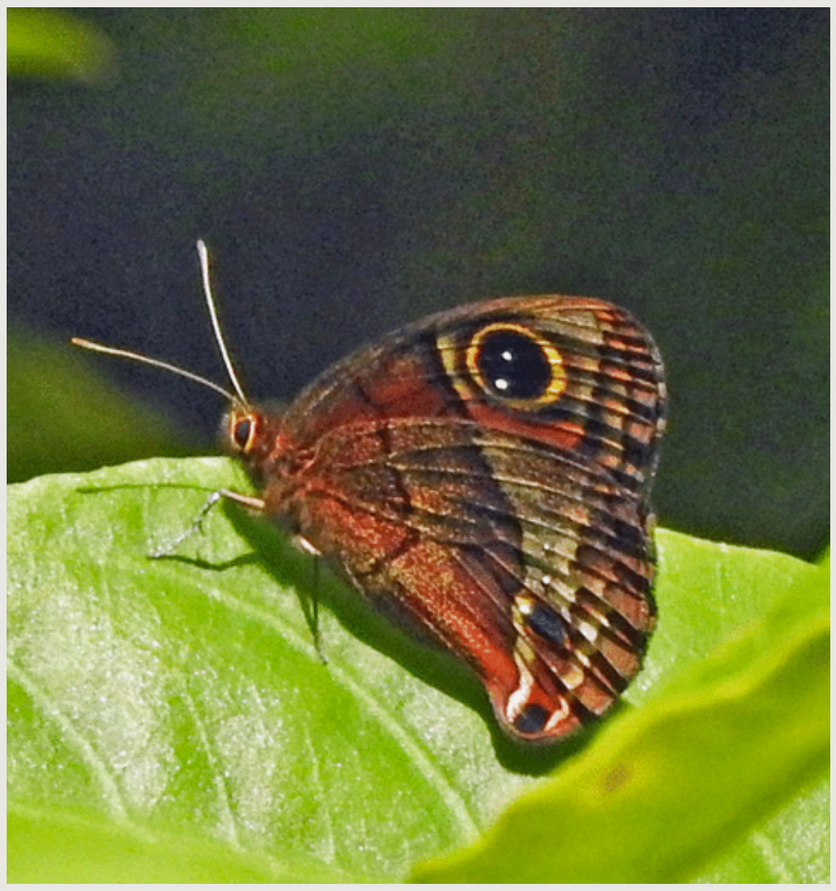
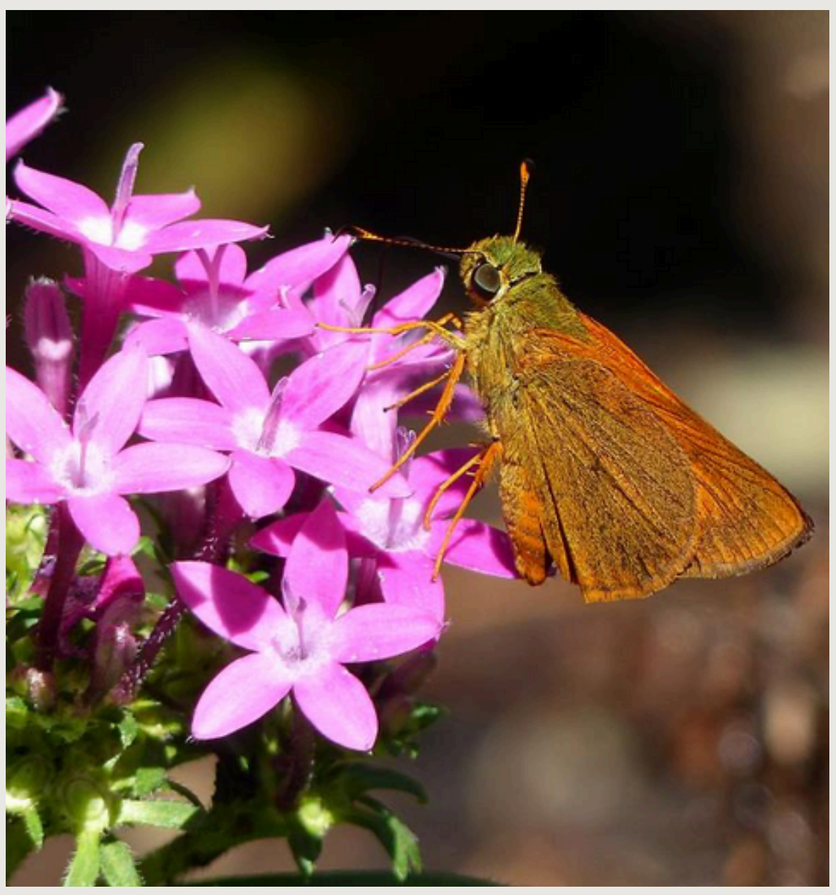
TOP 10 COMMONLY REPORTED BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS OF PUERTO RICO

BY BIANCA CASTRODAD, JANNIELYS GONZALEZ, AND EDGARDO NEGRON

PUERTO RICAN CALISTO - CALISTO NUBILA

- Endemism: It is endemic to Puerto Rico, meaning it is found nowhere else in the world.
- Appearance: It is generally described as a relatively small, dark brown-black butterfly on the upper surface. The wings feature distinctive markings, including eyespots, often ringed with yellow or reddish scaling and containing white pupils, particularly on the underside of the wings.
- Diet: The larvae of Calisto nubila are known to feed on various grasses.
- Distribution: It is considered common and widespread in Puerto Rico, often observed in various areas including state forests like El Yunque and Maricao.





DRURY'S BROKEN-DASH - WALLENGRENIA DRURY

- Classification: It is a skipper butterfly. Is found in regions including Puerto Rico and Pennsylvania.
- Appearance: The underside of the hindwing in both sexes is often a rich orange or red-orange with a band of pale spots.
- Habitat and Host Plants: Like many skippers, the caterpillars are grass feeders. Larvae are known to feed on various grasses, including Paspalum species. The adults are typically found in open, grassy areas, often near wooded rivers or swamps.
- Range: The Wallengrenia otho species is widespread, ranging from the eastern and southern United States south through the West Indies (including Puerto Rico) and Central America to Argentina.

Environmental Science

BUTTERFLY IN PUERTO RICO

October 2026

GULF FRITILLARY - AGRAULIS VANILLAE



- Appearance: It has a vibrant orange upper side with black markings and a distinct brown underside with large silvery-white spots.
- Caterpillar: The larvae are recognizable by their bright orange color with black stripes and numerous branched black spines.
- Host Plant: Its caterpillars feed exclusively on the passionflower vine (Passiflora), which provides them with toxins that make both the larvae and the adults unpalatable to predators.
- Behavior: It is a fast, agile flyer and a migratory species in the northern parts of its range.

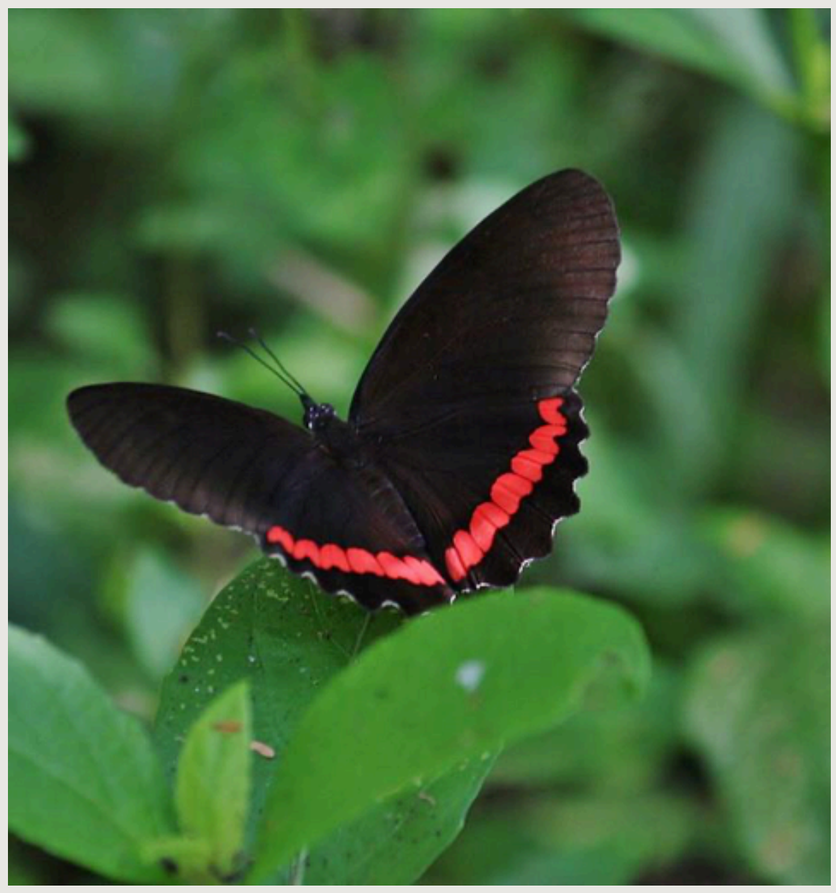


BLACK WITCH - ASCALAPHA ODORATA

- Territory/Range: It is a resident of tropical and subtropical America, with its core breeding range from Brazil north to the southernmost US (Florida and Texas).
- Migration: It is a powerful, long-distance migrant, regularly straying far north into the continental US and Canada, though these northern populations do not typically breed or survive the winter.
- Appearance: Dark brown/black with a distinct comma-shaped eyespot on each forewing. Females have an extra pale, iridescent scalloped band.
- Folklore: In many cultures, it is known as the "Mariposa de la Muerte" (Butterfly of Death), though some folklore views it as a symbol of good luck or money.

RED RIM-BIBLIS HYPERIA

- Common Name: Red Rim or Crimson-banded Black.
- Appearance: Velvety black wings with a striking, broad pinkish-red or crimson band along the edge of the hindwings.
- Size: Medium-sized butterfly.
- Caterpillar Host Plant: Exclusively feeds on Passionflower (Passiflora spp.).
- Adult Diet: Prefers fermenting or rotting fruit over flower nectar.
- Range: Found from the southern United States (Texas) through Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central America, down to Paraguay.



TROPICAL BUCKEYE-JUNONIA EVARETE



- Appearance: Wings are typically brown with a broad, pale creamy-white or orange band across the forewing.
- Size: Wingspan ranges approximately from 1 3/4 to 2 1/4 inches.
- Habitat: Found in open, sunny, tropical lowlands, such as fields, brushy areas, and sandy islands.
- Range: Distributed across the tropical Americas, including South Florida, the West Indies, Mexico, and Central/South America.
- Behavior: Known for flying fast and low to the ground; males are often territorial.
- Caterpillar Host Plants: Larvae feed on plants like porterweed (Stachytarpheta) and members of the plantain and snapdragon families.



DIRCE BEAUTY-COLOBURA DIRCE

- Other Common Names: Mosaic or Zebra Mosaic.
- Appearance: Dark brown/black on the upperside with a distinct broad white band across the forewing. The underside has an intricate, cryptic zebra-like pattern.
- Behavior: Rests on tree trunks, often head-down, blending in with the bark (camouflage).
- Defense: Possesses a "false head" at the back of its hindwings to misdirect predators.
- Host Plant: Caterpillars feed on Cecropia trees.
- Adult Food: Primarily feeds on rotting fruit and tree sap.
- Range: Widespread throughout Central and South America and the Caribbean.

STATIRA SULPHUR-APHRISSA STATIRA

- Color: Medium-sized yellow butterfly.
- Appearance: Males are bright yellow; females are paler with a black spot and dark wing borders.
- Key Behavior: Highly migratory in tropical areas, using the Earth's magnetic field to navigate. Males often gather in large groups at moist sand/riverbanks to drink minerals.
- Adult Diet: Nectar from red or orange flowers (rarely rotting fruit).
- Larval Food: Leaves of plants in the Pea family (Fabaceae).
- Range: Southern United States (Texas, Florida) south through Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, down to northern Argentina.

WHITE PEACOCK-ANARTIA JATROPHAE

- Appearance: Upperside is white/pale with light brown markings, a distinctive double row of crescents along the margin, and a few small black spots.
- Behavior: Known for a fast, erratic flight; males are territorial, aggressively defending host-plant areas.
- Habitat: Open, moist, and disturbed areas like wet ditches, pond edges, and weedy fields.
- Larval Food: Low-growing, semi-aquatic plants like Water Hyssop and Frogfruit.
- Range: Permanent resident of the southeastern US (Florida, Texas), Central America, and South America; strays northward in warmer months.





MEXICAN FRITILLARY-EUPTOIETA HEGESIA

- Color/Pattern: Medium-sized tawny/bright orange butterfly with thick, dark veins and a distinct row of black spots near the wing margins.
- Flight: Characterized by fast, low, and erratic flight close to the ground.
- Caterpillar: Shiny orange-red with black lines, white spots, and rows of long, branched black spines; known for its metallic-looking chrysalis.
- Host Plants: Primarily feeds on plants in the Passion-vine family and some species of Turnera
- Range: Permanent resident of Central America, Mexico, and the West Indies. Strays northward into the southern United States (Arizona, Texas, Florida).
- Habitat: Open, sunny, tropical, and subtropical areas, including fields, roadsides, and weedy habitats.

Reference:

Mexican Fritillary Euptoieta hegesia (Cramer, 1779) | Butterflies and Moths of North America. (n.d.). https://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/species/Euptoieta-hegesia