



Spicebush Swallowtail

## WINGED JEWELS OF THE TRAIL



The remarkable patterns and colors of the butterfly serve a practical purpose in its survival. Some butterflies are protectively colored to match their environment. Some brightly colored butterflies are distasteful to birds, which learn to avoid eating them. Other butterflies have evolved to look similar to distasteful species, which wards off would-be predators.



▶ Black Swallowtail



▶ Eastern Tiger Swallowtail



▶ Mourning Cloak



▶ Pearl Crescent



▶ Silver Spotted Skipper



▶ Red Admiral

The brilliant colors of the butterfly are the result of thousands of layered scales that cover their wings. Each scale also has multiple layers that are separated by air. Light that strikes the different layers of the butterfly's wing is reflected numerous times. The combination of all of these reflections causes the very intense colors, or iridescence, that we see from these winged jewels of the trail.

### MIGRATORY MARVELS

Many butterfly species travel north every year during warm months to colonize new areas. They use the sun for navigation as they fly during the day. They can also see polarized light, which allows them to navigate even during cloudy conditions.

The most notable butterfly migration is that of the Monarch butterfly, which travels up to 3,000 miles. Its most visible migration is in the fall from August through October as these remarkable insects travel southward from the Eastern and Central United States and Canada to hibernate in mountainous areas in Central Mexico.

#### The Trail: A Feast for Butterflies

*During the summer and fall, look for butterflies feeding on the nectar from wildflowers. You may also see butterflies "puddling," or gathering in large groups at damp or muddy areas along the trail to collect dissolved minerals and nutrients.*



Monarch

Learn more about the rail-trails at the Mon River Trails Conservancy website: [www.montrails.org](http://www.montrails.org)



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