

Western Tiger Swallowtail

(*Papilio rutulus*)



Flora
Fauna



How to Identify:

- A yellow and black butterfly with a wingspan of 3 inches.
- Male and female look similar.
- The hindwings have tails at their lower tips that resemble the long tail feathers of a swallow; resulting in the name swallowtail.

Butterflies can see ultra-violet patterns not visible to humans that help guide them to flowers.

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Habitat:

- Lives in a variety of habitats including streamsides, meadows, wetlands, in city gardens, and mountain woodlands.
- Caterpillar stage feeds on cottonwood, ash, willow, alder, aspen, and other trees.
- Eggs are laid on tree leaves.

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More Fun Facts!

- Adults feed on flower nectar from many different types of wildflowers, overripe fruit, and mud.
- Adult butterflies live about one month.
- This butterfly can be seen puddling in the mud, sometimes flocking together in large numbers.
- Puddling, done by male butterflies, describes the sipping of moisture from puddles and also moist manure. The salts in these liquids help increase the fertility of the male butterflies.
- The young caterpillars look like bird droppings.
- Eyespots on older green caterpillars look like the eyes of a snake.
- Mouth is shaped like a tube used to drink nectar (proboscis) that wraps up into a coil when not in use.





Portals to Parks



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Help Protect the Swallowtail

- Minimize use of pesticides and herbicides.
- Support conservation of natural areas for all wildlife.
- Plant native wildflowers in your backyard.
- Reduce your carbon footprint.

ACTIVITY TIME

1. On your next visit to an Idaho State Park, check out the butterflies you see and notice if any are Western Tiger Swallowtails. How many did you see?

2. What are the four stages of metamorphosis for a butterfly?

Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation

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