Flora

Fauna

Painted Lady Butterfly

*Vanessa cardui*

**How to Identify:**

- An orange and black butterfly with a wingspan of 1 3/4–2 1/2 inches.
- Underside of wings is a gray, brown, and black pattern.
- Note white spots on the dark forewing tips
- The orange and black Monarch butterfly is much larger

**Habitat:**

- Lives in a variety of habitats including fields, marshes, forest clearings, prairies, dunes, scrub, deserts, suburbs, gardens, and to above treeline in alpine terrain.
- This is a migratory butterfly; it travels northward in spring and summer through several generations of adults, last flight is to the south in fall.
- Caterpillar stage feeds on more than 100 different types of plants.

Explore Idaho with Scout the Fox!

Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation

parksandrecreation.idaho.gov
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**More Fun Facts!**

- Painted Ladies help to pollinate many types of plants.
- Males perch on hilltop plants, and sometimes patrol looking for passing females.
- Populations can be much larger in years with more spring rains in their overwintering areas.
- The Painted Lady has the widest distribution of any butterfly in the world. It is found on all continents except Australia and Antarctica.
Help Protect the Painted Lady

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

Activity Time

On your next visit to an Idaho State Park, check out the butterflies you see and notice if any are Painted Ladies.

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Imagine you could follow a Painted Lady butterfly on its migration from Mexico to Idaho. What kinds of challenges do you think it might face along the way?

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Thanks to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the State of Montana Field Guide for wildlife information.