

mourning cloak *Nymphalis antiopa*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Insecta

Order: Lepidoptera

Family: Nymphalidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The mourning cloak butterfly has a wingspan of two and one-half to three and three-fourths inches. It has a dark brown-to-black body. The upperside of the wings is dark brown edged with a yellow band that has a row of blue spots on its inner border. The caterpillar is black with tiny white flecks, a row of dull red spots on the back and black spines.

BEHAVIORS

The mourning cloak butterfly lives in woodlands, swamps and parks although it can be seen wandering in many other areas. This insect may be found statewide in Illinois. The adult probably lives longer than any other butterfly, being active for 10 to 11 months. The adult overwinters and may be seen on any day warm enough for flying. The larva eats the leaves of willow, cottonwood, birch, elm and hackberry.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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