

Using the NH-specific Indices to the Field Guides

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The New Hampshire–specific indices for the *Kaufman Field Guide to Butterflies of North America* and *A Swift Guide to Butterflies of North America* were created for those who do most of their butterfly watching in the Granite State. They were designed especially with the novice butterfly enthusiast in mind. When you're new to butterflies, the several hundred species covered in a continent-wide field guide can be quite daunting. Having an index that isolates the approximately 120 species that can potentially be seen in New Hampshire makes the task far more approachable. These indices are also sized to fit neatly within the field guides and are perhaps best used by attaching them to the two blank pages just inside the back covers; instructions for doing so are described below.

Some things to keep in mind as you use these indices:

- **How to attach the index to your field guide:** The intention is to attach these indices to the two blank pages just inside the field guide's back cover. To begin, cut the index along the dashed line—taking care here will make the folding more accurate. Fold the cut piece in half; again, a bit of precision will help it fit neatly into your field guide. Because updates will be issued periodically, I recommend using a [Scotch® repositionable \(restickable\) glue stick](#) to attach it to your field guide. First, apply the glue to the left inside back-cover page, align and attach the left side of the folded index, then apply glue to the inside back cover and fold the index over to attach it there.

Of course, if you'd prefer to dispense with this step (perhaps a bit tedious for some), you can simply fold the index in half and insert it loosely in your field guide, knowing that you can always replace it later—should it be lost or overly tattered.

- **Data source:** All the data that supports the occurrence of these species was obtained completely by looking at research-grade observations in iNaturalist. So when you see the terms *recorded* and *unrecorded* they refer only to iNaturalist observations and do not reflect historical state records.
- **A note on the opportunistic nature of iNaturalist observations:** The observations in iNaturalist are opportunistic, meaning they are made whenever and wherever the observer chooses to make them, rather than through any planned, systematic survey. Although they're opportunistic, New Hampshire now has 40,000+ butterfly records, with skilled observers increasingly covering remote regions—providing an ever clearer picture of what flies where and when. We now have sufficient data to better guide which species occur in the state, and to identify those with distinct regional affinities or notable regional absences.
- **A note on species with *blue italicized* comments:** You'll notice additional information beneath many of the species listings. This is where I note whether a species is rare, describe any distribution specifics, or flag recent changes in classification since the guide's publication. You'll also see a number of species *without* italicized text; these are species that are common and don't have any particular regional affinity.

- **Rare and Very rare:** Admittedly, there is some subjectivity in how I'm using these terms, but for now you can interpret *Rare* to mean a species recorded 20 times or fewer on iNaturalist, and *Very rare* to mean a species recorded only once or twice. Also note that very rare species include the town and year of observation (e.g. *Very rare; Concord '23*). Over time, as observations accumulate, the numbers associated with these classifications will naturally increase.
- **Species included and yet to be observed in New Hampshire:** In the spirit of being comprehensive—and in the hope of encouraging the life listers among you—I've also included a few species that have not yet been recorded in New Hampshire on iNaturalist, but for which observation is plausible, particularly given that they have been documented in adjacent states. These species are the Silvery Checkerspot, Bog Elfin, Hoary Elfin, and West Virginia White.
- **The intent of these indices is to be comprehensive, with one exception:** Essentially, if a butterfly has been credibly observed in New Hampshire, I've included it here—even those recorded only once. That said, there is always the possibility that a butterfly could be artificially transported far from its typical range and subsequently observed here, or be so exceptionally rare that it will likely never be seen again in our lifetimes. If a butterfly has been observed only once in New Hampshire but has also been recorded elsewhere in the region—say, elsewhere in New England or nearby in Canada—I include it here. If not, as in the case of the Marine Blue observed in Hill in 2022, I do not.
- **Updates:** These indices contain information that will change over time. As the climate continues to shift, some species are expected to expand into the southern part of the state, while others may retreat northward and eventually disappear from New Hampshire altogether. You may have noticed that many of the range maps in the field guides no longer accurately represent the ranges of the species we see here in New Hampshire. Taxonomy is also constantly evolving—species may be split into newly recognized species (as recently occurred with the Midsummer Tiger Swallowtail), and common names can change (as with the Sachem becoming the Huron Skipper). In addition, the regional distributions of many species are likely to shift. With this in mind, I will do my best to keep pace with these changes and provide updates as they occur.

For those of you who find these indices helpful, I'd appreciate being alerted to anything you find in error or confusing, and I also welcome suggestions. For readers from other New England states who might like to take on a similar project for their own state, I'd be happy to walk you through how I created these indices.

Best,

George (DeWolf)
bakerpondsbutterflies@gmail.com