

SPECKLED WOOD BUTTERFLY

FACTSHEET

Speckled Wood, *Pararge aegeria*

Speckled woods have brown wings with creamy-yellow spots; there is one black and white eyespot on the forewing and three on the hind. The undersides are patterned orange, yellow and brown. This species is common in woods, scrub and tall vegetation throughout southern England and lowland Wales, and appears to be recolonising eastern and northern England and Scotland.



You can often see males perched in pools of sunlight or fluttering upwards in a band of sunshine in an otherwise shady woodland ride. Females lay single, white eggs on a variety of grasses along the sunny edges of woods, rides and hedges.

The caterpillars are bright green with faint, darker green and yellow stripes. They pupate after about 10 days, with the chrysalises suspended beneath grass blades. Unlike any other British butterfly, speckled woods are able to hibernate as either a caterpillar or chrysalis.

What does it eat?

Adults feed on aphid honeydew. They are rarely seen on flowers except early and late in the year when there are few aphids. Caterpillars eat various grasses, including false brome, cock's-foot, Yorkshire fog and common couch.

When will I see it?

Adults between March and October. Caterpillars throughout the year except April.

Where will I see it?

Feeding on aphid honeydew. In areas of dappled shade, perched in the sunlit spots on the ground or on leaves, especially on bramble.

Caterpillars on blades of grass such as Yorkshire fog and common couch. Also in open woods, woodland rides, tall hedgerows and scrub.