

Peacock

Aglais io

Insects · On the wing Mar-Oct · hibernates as an adult



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Unmistakable: deep wine-red wings each bearing a huge blue-and-yellow eyespot, and an underside so black and finely striated that a closed-winged peacock looks exactly like a dead leaf. Peacocks are common in gardens, woodland edge and rough ground around Dumfries, and are among the most conspicuous butterflies on late-summer buddleia.

BEHAVIOUR

The defence is theatrical. A resting peacock is invisible; disturbed, it snaps its wings open to flash four eyespots at once, and rubs its wings together to produce an audible hiss — enough to startle a probing mouse or bird. Adults hibernate in sheds, hollow trees and outbuildings. Caterpillars are jet black and spiny and feed communally on nettle.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Brush-footed butterflies (Nymphalidae)
WINGSPAN	6–7 cm
STATUS	Native; common and expanding north

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