

Enjoy these butterflies in flight through summer

BY LINDA KAPPEN

Ochre Ringlet

The Ochre Ringlet (*Coenonympha tullia*), often referred to as the Common Ringlet, is of the Nymphalidae family of butterflies and belongs to the large subfamily of Satyrinae.

There are at least four subspecies and many geographical variations of the ringlet, with colors ranging from yellow-orange with light brown, to creamy white with small eyespots on the wings. Locally, I have seen a few variations with deeper colors of yellow to orange and the softer creamy white. The wingspan can be up to one and a half inches.

The Ochre Ringlet's range covers much of the West, extending toward the East. Ringlets fly in low to high elevations from March to late October and are most likely to have two broods. Larval foods for the ringlet are native grasses, naturalized grasses, and sedges. Larvae will overwinter in mats of dead grasses. Nectar food for the ringlet can be buttercups, dandelions, alyssum, white clover, and a variety of native and garden flowers.

Ringlets have a light or weak flight and can be fragile to handle. They bounce and dance lightly over grasses in open areas looking for nectar or mates. The children at Applegate School never tire of netting ringlets for observation. They enjoy looking at them, even wanting to name them, but are encouraged to quickly let them free because of their fragility.

I observed an Ochre Ringlet of the creamy white variation while it sipped nectar in its quiet way at the school's butterfly habitat. This small butterfly, distinctive in its own way, is a joy to watch as it calmly goes about its day.

Margined White

The Margined White (*Pieris marginalis*) is of the Pieridae family of butterflies. With wings open, it can reach up to two inches across. This white butterfly has an apricot-colored tinge with grayish veins on its wings.

The range of the Margined White is from Canada south to the coastal ranges and mountain ranges of the Rockies, Sierras, and Cascades. It likes to fly among

wooded streambanks, healthy forests, roadsides, and shadier spots with sunlight shining through treetops.

Larval foods of the Margined White are native crucifers or members of the mustard (*Brassicae*) family of plants. The butterflies will use nectar from dandelions, salmonberry, coltsfoot, and mustard flowers. Eggs are laid singly on the underside of host plant leaves. The chrysalis overwinters after a few broods from spring through summer.

The Margined White can be seen in flight from February to October. The butterfly I encountered was at Williams Creek Preserve, a natural area owned by Southern Oregon Land Conservancy that is dappled with sunlight. The butterfly was skittish, but returned multiple times. Sitting very still, waiting by the flower, I was able to photograph this beauty on lunaria (the money plant). It stayed drinking nectar in the woods where the creek courses through in winter.

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Linda earned a naturalist certification from Siskiyou Field Institute and hosts two-day butterfly courses there.



Ochre Ringlet on showy sedum



Margined White on lunaria

Williams Grange Pancake Breakfast

Second Sunday 8:30 to 11 am
Bluegrass Jam 11 am to 1 pm

March 8 (Seed Swap)

April 12

May 10 (Mother's Day)

20100 Williams Highway, Williams • 541-846-6844 • kathybob@oigp.net

Where to find more information about butterflies and moths

- Butterflies and Moths of North America
www.butterfliesandmoths.org
- Butterflies of America
<http://butterfliesofamerica.com>
- Monarch Butterflies in the Pacific Northwest
www.facebook.com/monarchbutterfliesinthepacificnorthwest

Butterfly photos by Linda Kappen.

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