

Dark Green Fritillary

Speyeria aglaja

Insects · On the wing Jun–Aug · one brood



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A large fritillary, bright orange above with a chequerboard of black spots, and — the feature that names it — an underside hindwing washed with dark green and spangled with large silver spots. Dark green fritillaries live on rough, flowery grassland, coastal dunes and moorland edge, and around Dumfries the Solway coast and unimproved hillsides are the places to look.

BEHAVIOUR

This is a powerful, fast-flying butterfly that covers ground rapidly and can be hard to follow, though it settles readily on thistle and knapweed to nectar. Eggs are laid near violets, the caterpillar's only foodplant, and the tiny larva hatches, eats its own eggshell and immediately hibernates without feeding, waking in spring to find violets.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Brush-footed butterflies (Nymphalidae)
WINGSPAN	5.5–6.5 cm
STATUS	Native; declining nationally, but Scotland remains a stronghold

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