

Scotch Argus

Erebia aethiops

Insects · On the wing Jul-Sep · one brood



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A dark chocolate-brown butterfly with a broad rust-orange band across each wing containing a row of small black white-pupilled eyespots. In Britain it is confined almost entirely to Scotland, with a couple of northern English sites, and it lives on damp, tussocky grassland and moorland edge — making the hills of Dumfries and Galloway good country for it.

BEHAVIOUR

The Scotch argus is strictly sun-dependent: the moment cloud crosses the sun the whole colony drops into the grass and vanishes, and it will not fly again until the light returns. The flight is low and bobbing over purple moor-grass, its caterpillar foodplant. Adults nectar on devil's-bit scabious and thistle, and the species needs damp, unimproved, lightly grazed hill ground.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Browns (Nymphalidae, subfamily Satyrinae)
WINGSPAN	4–5 cm
STATUS	Native; in Britain almost entirely confined to Scotland

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