

PEACOCK PANSY BUTTERFLY WITH EYEPOTS

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runs a monthly e-magazine with theme natural biodiversity



The peacock pansy (*Junonia almana*) is a species of butterfly found in South Asia and Southeast Asia, belonging to the family Nymphalidae.

It is known for its striking, eye-catching wing patterns that resemble peacock eyes, giving it its name. The vivid colors and eye spots on the wings serve both as a defense mechanism and a display of beauty.

Taxonomy and Classification

Family: Nymphalidae

Genus: *Junonia*

Species: *Junonia almana*

Description

Wingspan: Approximately 5–6 cm (2–2.5 inches).

Coloration: The upper side of the wings is orange yellow with bold eyespots, one on each forewing and two on each hindwing. The eye spots are ringed with black and blue. The underside is paler and more cryptic, aiding camouflage.

Seasonal Forms: The peacock pansy displays seasonal polyphenism, meaning that it has different forms depending on the time of year.

In the wet season, its colors are more vibrant, while in the dry season, the markings are duller, allowing it to blend into its environment better.

Habitat and Distribution

Range: Found across India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Southeast Asia.

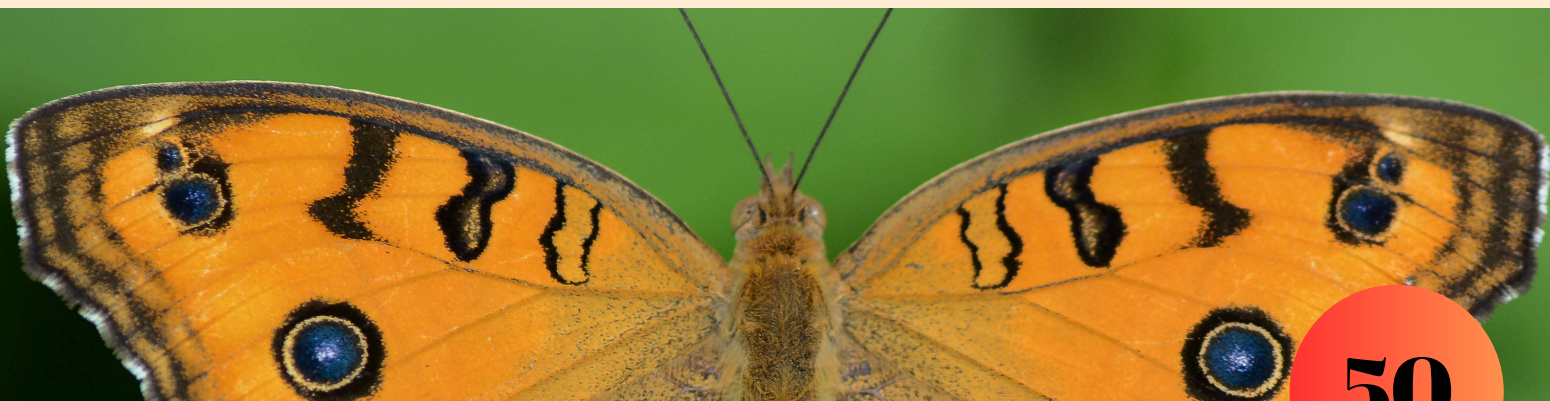
Habitat: Prefers open habitats, such as grasslands, gardens, meadows, and agricultural fields. It is commonly seen in areas with plenty of sunlight and flowering plants.

Behavior and Diet

Diet (Adults): Nectar-feeding, attracted to a variety of flowering plants.

Caterpillar Host Plants: The larvae feed on plants like *Ruellia* species and *Barleria* species.

Flight Pattern: It has a characteristic quick, darting flight. Despite its quick movement, the peacock pansy is often seen basking in the sun with its wings open, displaying the beautiful eyespots.





Reproduction and Life Cycle

Egg: The female lays eggs on host plants where the caterpillars can feed after hatching.

Larva: The caterpillar is spiny and dark in color, with whitish bands running down the length of the body.

Pupa: The chrysalis is brownish and hangs from plants, camouflaging well with its surroundings.

Adult: Emerges from the chrysalis with fresh, vibrant wing patterns. The life cycle is typical of butterflies, involving metamorphosis from egg to larva (caterpillar), then pupa (chrysalis), and finally adult butterfly.

Ecological Role

The peacock pansy plays a role in pollination as it feeds on nectar from various flowers. Its caterpillars help control the populations of the plants they feed on, keeping the ecosystem balanced.

Conservation Status

IUCN Status: Not assessed, but generally considered common and widespread.

Threats: Habitat destruction and pesticide use can affect local populations, but the species is adaptable and found in a variety of environments, including human-modified landscapes.

The peacock pansy is a visually striking butterfly that is both admired for its beauty and important for the ecosystems in which it resides. Its adaptability makes it a common sight in gardens and natural habitats throughout its range.