

Common Buckeye

(*Junonia coenia*)

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As its name suggests, the **Common Buckeye** (*Junonia coenia*) has large, target-shaped eyespots on its wings. These distinctive markings help deflect attack away from the insect's vulnerable body or may startle would-be predators. Adults are fond of open, sunny locations and can be common in fields, pinelands and along roadsides. They frequently land on bare soil or low growing flowers but are extremely wary and difficult to closely approach. The spiny larvae feed on a wide variety of plants including Plantain (*Plantago* sp.), Toadflax (*Nuttallanthus* sp.) and False Foxglove (*Agalinis* sp.).

Adults display noticeably different seasonal forms. Individuals encountered during the summer or wet season are light brown on the wings below. By contrast, the undersides of winter or dry season forms are a rich, reddish-brown coloration. Each fall, individuals from more northern locations migrate back into the Deep South to escape freezing temperatures and overwinter as adults.

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Cover photo by: Jaret Daniels

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