

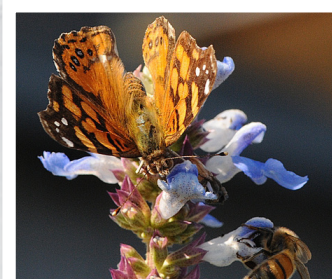
MARINA GREEN TO DOLORES PARK

SPECIES: WEST COAST PAINTED LADY



ROUTE HIGHLIGHTS

» Marina Green, Chesnut Street Commercial District, Lombard Street Commercial District, Alta Plaza, California Pacific Medical Center, Megan Furth Academy, Hamilton Recreation Center Playground and Pool, Raymond Kimbell Playground, Alamo Square Park, The Wiggle, Duboce Park, Sanchez Elementary School, Mission Dolores Park



Credit: ucanredu

WEST COAST PAINTED LADY – *Vanessa annabella*

The Ladies!

The West Coast Painted Lady (*Vanessa annabella*) belongs to the bushfoot family (*Nymphalidae*). This family of butterflies gets its name from its front legs, which are shorter than the other four legs. They don't use them for walking or standing on flowers. These front 'legs' are more like little brushes of hair the butterflies use for smelling and tasting. There are two other butterflies that closely resemble the West Coast Painted Lady: American Painted Lady (*Vanessa virginensis*) and the Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*). Each has slight variations that allow us to tell them apart. The Painted Lady is the most widespread butterfly species in the world, occurring in all continents except Antarctica. It also undertakes epic migrations that can last over six generations! For this reason, it has been called the 'Cosmopolitan' butterfly.

The West Coast Lady, on the other hand, is only found on the (you guessed it!) West Coast, from British Columbia to Baja California. West Coast Painted ladies have several broods throughout the year, and populations fluctuate depending on rainfall for their larval food plants: cheeseweed, mallows, and stinging nettles. All three Painted Ladies spend the winter months as adult butterflies, hiding in dry nooks. West Coast Painted Ladies are often seen basking on bare ground, and fast movements or shadows will cause them to burst into flight. However, they will often return to the same spot, so be patient. Males seek hilltops or territorial sites to look for mates, late in the afternoon.

RESIDENT OR MIGRATORY

Resident

KEY HABITAT FEATURES

Pacific Coast of North America

DIET

Cheeseweed (*Malva parviflora*) and Nettle (*Urtica holosericea*). Caterpillars feed primarily on *Asteraceae* and *Malvaceae*, especially Thistles, Burdock, and Hollyhocks. Many other plants are used occasionally, including Nettle, Alfalfa, Soy Bean, Beet, Borage, and Plantain. Adults feed on nectar from thistles, cosmos, asters, and other plants.

ASSOCIATED PLANTS & ANIMALS

Checkerbloom – *Sidalcea malviflora*, Wild Aster – *Symphotrichum chilense*, Whitetip Clover – *Trifolium variegatum*, Hollyhock – *Alcea rosea*

NESTING INFORMATION

Females lay eggs singly on host plants: herbaceous Mallows, including Cheeseweed (*Malva*), Alkali Mallow (*Malvella*), and Hollyhock (*Alcea*).