

TENDERLOIN TO POTRERO

SPECIES: WESTERN TIGER SWALLOWTAIL



WESTERN TIGER SWALLOWTAIL – *Papilio rutulus*

City slickers!

Western Tiger Swallowtails (*Papilio rutulus*) are becoming quite the urban bug! Their natural habitat are river canyons lined by trees, interspersed with open, sunny glades. Remind you of anything? Market Street perhaps? Think a canyon of tall buildings, sunlight-filled intersections, and London Plane trees (which happen to be the Western Tiger Swallowtail caterpillar's food plant) planted on both sides of the street. This butterfly is built for protection in all life stages. When it first emerges from the egg, it is the spitting image of a bird dropping. In a later stage, the caterpillar grows to two inches, is deep to light green in color, and has a swollen front that accentuates large yellow eyespots with black and blue pupils. All swallowtails have osmeterium, an orange, red, or yellow forked organ behind the head on the back. This foul-smelling organ can be turned inside out, and along with the eyespots, is thought to deter predators. The chrysalids look like streaked bits of wood, slung onto the trunk or a twig, overwintering. As adults, the black tails with nearby blue spots can look like a false head, to fool birds.

RESIDENT OR MIGRATORY

Resident

DIET

Caterpillars feed on a variety of trees including cottonwood, willow, quaking aspen, alder, maple, cherry, sycamore, hoptree, plum and ash. Adults feed on flower nectar from a wide variety of large flowers with landing platforms including thistles, tithonia, sage, zinnia, budleya, and coneflower.

ASSOCIATED PLANTS & ANIMALS

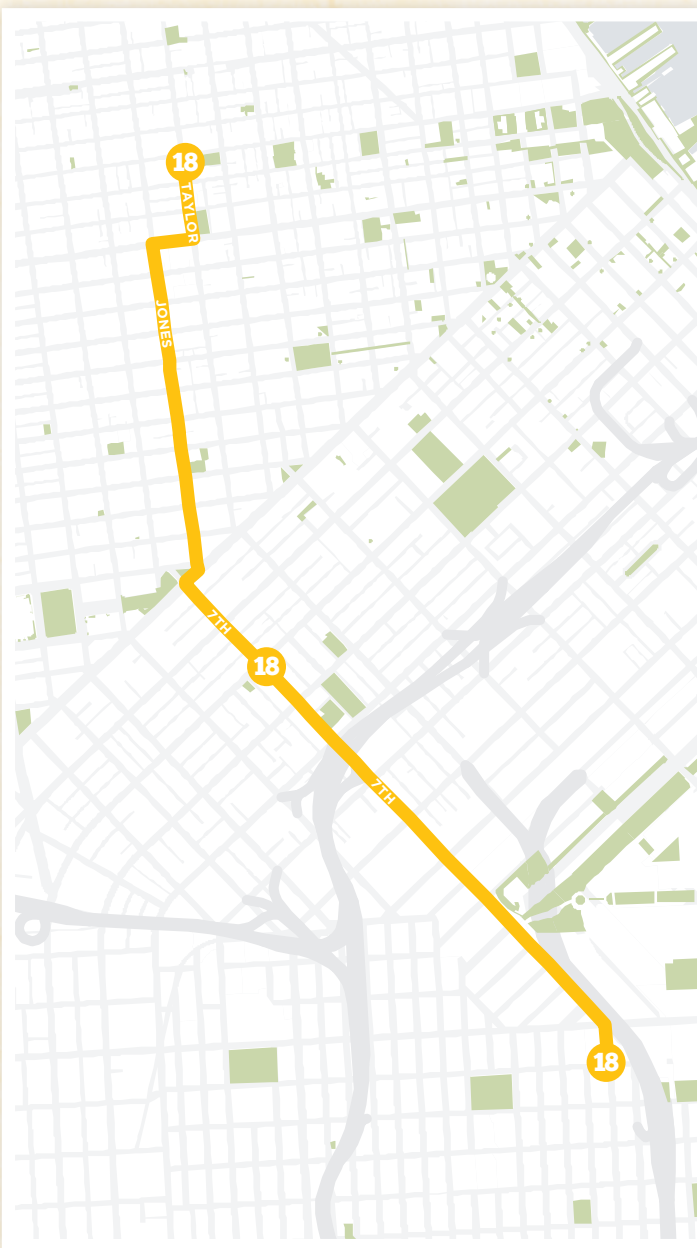
Bigleaf Maple – *Acer macrophyllum*, Shining Willow – *Salix lasiandra*, Holly leaf (Islais) Cherry – *Prunus illicifolia*, California Buckeye – *Aesculus californica*

NESTING INFORMATION

Eggs are laid singly, on the undersides of leaves.

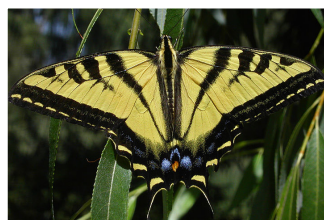
ADDITIONAL HABITAT PLANTS

Apple family; Ash family especially white, green, mountain; Aspen; Basswood family; Bay family especially Sweet; Birch family; Broadleaf; Cherry family especially Wild, Black, Choke; Cottonwood; HopTree; Lilac family; Magnolia family – NOT Magnolia Vine; Plum family; Poplar family especially Yellow; Rose family; Sassafras family; Sycamore family; Tulip family; Willow family



ROUTE FACTS

- » The Tenderloin, SOMA, Boeddeker Park, UN Plaza, Howard & Langton Mini Park, Mission Bay Creek Dog Park



Credit: Wikimedia Commons