

Firefly Species of Connecticut

Compiled March 2026 by Richard Joyce



Red List refers to the global conservation status on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species: LC= Least Concern; DD= Data Deficient; NE= Not evaluated.

A word of caution—because of taxonomic uncertainties and identification challenges, it is sometimes better to identify a firefly to genus and thoroughly document its appearance and behavior than to assign a species ID.

Species	Common name(s)	Red List	Nat. history & ID Notes	Adult Activity Season
<i>Lucidota atra</i>	Black firefly, Woodland Lucy	LC	Diurnal and non-flashing, with saw-toothed antennae	Jun-Jul, peak in Jun
<i>Lucidota punctata</i>	Dotted firefly, Tiny Lucy	LC	Small, rare and diurnal	June
<i>Photinus consanguineus</i> group*	Double cousin; Paired-flashing <i>Photinus</i>	LC	Complex of dusk double flashers, distinguished by flash timing	Jun-Jul
<i>Photinus ignitus</i>	Ignited firefly	LC	Single flashes at long intervals, active past dusk	June
<i>Photinus corruscus</i>	Winter firefly	LC	Diurnal, non-flashing; found on tree bark nearly year-round, but most noticeable in spring	Aug-Jun, peak in Apr
<i>Photinus marginellus</i>	Little gray firefly	LC	Small, pale, dusk single flasher	Jun-Aug
<i>Photinus obscurellus</i>	Murky flash train firefly	LC	Triple flasher (sometimes double) over wet meadows and fields; active after dusk	Jun-Jul
<i>Photuris fairchildi</i>	Cape Breton firefly; Fairchild's predator	LC	Sets of 3-6 flashes building in brightness, repeated after a short pause	June

<i>Photuris martotooleae</i>	Integrity firefly	NE	Short, single flashes over open and edge habitats	June
<i>Photuris potomaca</i> **	Potomac River firefly	DD	Unconfirmed observation in a forest-old field ecotone Farmington by Dr. J. E. Lloyd	June
<i>Photuris stevensae</i>	Nettie's firefly	NE	Variable, multi-pulse flash pattern	June
<i>Photinus pyralis</i>	Big dipper firefly; Common eastern firefly	LC	J-shaped rising yellow flashes at dusk; resilient to urbanization; at eastern edge of range in CT (mostly in SW part of the state)	Jun-Aug, peak in Jul
<i>Pyractomena angulata</i>	Say's firefly; Candle firefly; Angled firefly	LC	Orange flickers in forested and edge habitats; wide-bodied.	June
<i>Pyractomena borealis</i>	Spring treetop flasher	LC	Single, orange flashes in tree canopy; often first flashers in area. Larvae climb up south sides to tree trunks to pupate in Mar & Apr	May-Jun
<i>Pyractomena dispersa</i>	Marsh flicker	DD	Multi-pulse flickers over open wet habitats	May-Jun
<i>Pyractomena lucifera</i>	Marsh imp	DD	Single flashes low over marshy wetlands.	Jun-Jul
<i>Pyractomena marginalis</i>	Marginal firefly	DD	Poorly understood single-flasher	Jun
<i>Pyractomena sinuata</i>	Notched firefly	DD	2-second greenish glows over wet fields	Jun
<i>Pyropyga decipiens</i>	Sneaky elf	LC	Small, diurnal; often found at flowers	Jun-Aug

*Dusk double-flashers of the *Photinus consanguineus* group include *Photinus macdermotti*, *Photinus consanguineus*, and *Photinus greeni*. These species are distinguished by length of the pause between the first and second flash of the flash pattern.

**Presence in CT is uncertain, based on a single flash pattern observation by Dr. Jim Lloyd.

Species from nearby states that may occur in Connecticut

Species	Red List	Nat. History & ID notes	Nearby states where found
<i>Photinus aquilonius</i>	DD	Single flashes in wet habitats.	MA, ME
<i>Photinus ardens</i>	DD	Multi-pulse (flash-train) in wet habitats.	MA, NY
<i>Photinus jamesi</i>	LC	Paired flashes at dusk	MA, NH
<i>Photinus macdermotti</i>	LC	Paired flashes at dusk	MA, NY
<i>Photuris lucicrescens</i>	LC	Bright, single crescendo flashes	MA, NJ, NY
<i>Photuris tremulans</i>	LC	Green single flashes and flickers	MA?
<i>Pyractomena linearis</i>	DD	Often pale-colored; single flashes over wetlands.	MA, ME, NH, NY

Identifying flashing fireflies to genus in Connecticut



Left to right: *Photinus*, *Pyractomena*, and *Photuris*.

	<i>Photinus</i>	<i>Pyractomena</i>	<i>Photuris</i>
Head shield and head shield markings	Dark bar or oval; pink background spot	Often pentagonal, with a raised line down the middle, a dark central triangle and pink background spots	Dark marking in shape of anchor, mushroom, or arrow; red background spot
Leg length	Short	Short	Long
Typical flash color	Yellow	Orange, amber, sometimes green	Green
Female lanterns	1, central	4, small, triangular, at outer edges	2, oblong
Mnemonic device	Some <i>Photinus</i> are <i>tiny</i> , unlike <i>Photuris</i> .	Their flashes are often orange, like fire. Pyr= fire in Greek	Use the R to remember. <i>Photuris</i> are rounder (more oval), the females are predatory, and the flashes are green.

Want to learn more?

- Check out the Firefly Atlas community science project and learn how you can collect data on firefly species: <https://www.fireflyatlas.org/>.
- Find more identification resources at <https://www.fireflyatlas.org/learn/firefly-publications>
- Email your questions to fireflyatlas@xerces.org
- [Sign up](#) for the Firefly Atlas e-newsletter.
- Read [Fireflies, Glow-worms, and Lightning Bugs: Identification and Natural History of the Fireflies of the Eastern and Central United States and Canada](#) by Lynn Faust.