

Great Purple Hairstreak

Great Purple Hairstreaks are widespread in Alabama but are not commonly encountered. Most sightings are of single individuals. They are multi-brooded, flying spring, summer, and fall. Habitat is deciduous woodlands that contain mistletoe and nectar sources. Both sexes nectar from a variety of flowers, where they rub their hindwings back and forth. Flight is erratic, but these butterflies are easily approached when nectaring.



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- Alabama's largest hairstreak.
- Sexually dimorphic. Males are smaller. Dorsal wings are iridescent blue with a narrow black border; forewing contains a dark stigma. Ventral wings are charcoal black with iridescent blue dash near base of forewing. Females are larger and have longer tails. Dorsal wings have less blue and a broad dark border; no stigma. Ventral wings are not as dark and lack forewing blue dash.
- Perches and nectars with wings closed. Dorsal surface is rarely seen except as a flash of blue while in flight.
- Ventral base color may fade with age and wear.
- Not typically confused with any other species in Alabama.





Great Purple Hairstreak

Ventral Male

- Charcoal black
- *Metallic blue dash
- *One short and one long tail on each hindwing
- *Metallic green and blue spots
- *Red spots at wing base
- *White spots on head and thorax
- *Blue on top; red-orange beneath

Great Purple Hairstreak *Atlides halesus*

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** Reliable diagnostic markers*

Wingspan 1¼ to 1½ inches (3.2-3.8 cm)



Great Purple Hairstreak

Ventral Female

Dull brownish black

*One short and one long tail on each hindwing

*Metallic green and blue spots near tail

*Red spots at wing base

*White spots on head and thorax

*Blue on top; red-orange beneath

*Reliable diagnostic marker

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