



Atala Chapter News

WINTER/SPRING 2003

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**Do you know this butterfly??
Answer on Page 7**

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Flitting Through Retirement

by Linda F. Cooper

It was an accident how it all started. Buck and I never meant for it to take over our lives. We were birders. Oh, we would look at other things when there were no birds around, but not seriously. Then we planted a few flowers attractive to butterflies and the next thing you know we were hooked. You all know exactly what I mean.

First you look at the big showy ones and then a small brown one flits into view. You take up the challenge and buy field guides, close focusing binoculars and a camera. Yep, you are hooked. When you have identified the ones in your garden you start looking for more of a challenge.

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Something to Celebrate: State Listing of the Miami Blue

by Alana Edwards

Of course, by now, you've heard the news. On December 10th, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) took emergency action to classify the Miami Blue as an endangered species. This comes after almost two years of petitioning by the North American Butterfly Association.

the FWC to determine population size by mark and recapture. They are also conducting a captive breeding program as was done for the Schaus Swallowtail.

NABA is also conducting research on the Miami Blue. Recently, NABA hired

The following Saturday, December 14th, DEP Ombudsman, Benji Brumberg, invited all parties involved to join him at Bahia Honda for a meeting of the minds. Present at the event were NABA members (including Jeff Glassberg), FWC, USFWS, Florida State Parks staff, University of Florida (UF), and MBBRP.



Butterfly enthusiasts gather in the Keys to learn more about the Miami Blue

Research being conducted
Drs. Tom Emmel and Jaret Daniels from UF are currently working with

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Butterfly Releases: Action You Can Take! By Jeff Glassberg

NABA is often contacted for permission to reproduce the editorial "There's No Need to Release Butterflies -- They're Already Free", and for information about butterfly releases. It is clear that the editorial, and NABA's continuing efforts to educate the public about the potentially devastating effects of butterfly releases has had a significant impact. Many, many individuals have reconsidered their own plans to release butterflies into the environment after reading the information from NABA. The fact that the commercial butterfly breeders who encourage these releases are constantly attacking NABA is a clear measure of the impact that we are achieving.

There is now an opportunity for all NABA members to personally make a contribution. As was mentioned in the earlier editorial, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has taken the position that it is appropriate for the USDA to regulate the interstate shipment of live butterflies, since butterflies are potential agricultural pests.

The USDA is now reconsidering its regulations regarding the interstate shipment of live butterflies. My understanding is that the USDA is likely to propose regulations significantly *weakening* the already unacceptably lax regulation of these shipments. Currently, the interstate shipment of live butterflies requires a permit from the USDA. The USDA will consider issuing permits for shipping nine butterfly species -- Giant Swallowtail, Zebra Heliconian, Gulf Fritillary, Mourning Cloak, American Lady, Painted Lady, Red Admiral and Monarch. The regulations being considered would allow interstate shipments of American Ladies, Painted Ladies and Red Admirals *without any permit*.

What Can You Do? Because the USDA listens to public opinion, it is important that you contact the USDA and express your views regarding this threat to wild butterfly populations. Write to: Wayne F. Wehling, USDA-Aphis, PPQ PRA, Unit 133, 4700 River Rd., Riverdale, MD 20737; or send an email message to him at Wayne.F.Wehling@usda.gov.

In addition, The National Invasive Species Council, in the Dept. of the Interior, has published an Invasive Species Draft Management Plan that is open for public comment. You can comment about this plan, saying that it needs to consider the effects of the interstate shipment of butterflies, by writing to: National Invasive Species Council, U.S. Dept. of the Interior - South, 1951 Constitution Ave. NW, Suite 320, Washington DC 20240; or by sending an email message to invasivespecies@doi.gov. Written letters are more effective than emails.

Please let the USDA and the Dept. of the Interior know that you object to the interstate shipment of commercially-raised butterflies intended for release into the environment. Here are some of the reasons you can provide to them why these shipments and releases should not be provided:

Because butterflies are pollinators, they are an

important component of plant ecosystems, not just potential plant pests. Heretofore, the USDA has viewed their authority to regulate the shipment of butterflies as stemming only from their potential as plant pests. However, butterflies are a major part of the pollination community. Although the efficiency of butterfly-induced pollination is lower than bee-induced pollination, the cumulative importance of butterfly pollination is probably important to many plant communities. From personal observations, I would conclude that for particular plants in particular areas, butterflies are probably the major factor in pollination. Because any threat to butterfly populations is a threat not only to the butterflies themselves, but also to plant communities, the USDA does have the authority to regulate potential threats to butterfly populations.

Releases of commercially-raised butterflies may spread diseases and epidemics to native butterfly populations. This issue is critical. All known biological organisms are affected by diseases and parasites. The spread of diseases from one area to another has decimated populations. For example, American chestnuts almost became extinct due to the introduction of a fungus from Europe. The transmission of measles from European populations of humans to New World populations of humans killed more Native Americans than died in any wars. The lesson here is that not all populations of the same or related species have been exposed to all diseases that may affect that species. Our knowledge of butterfly diseases is rudimentary, but we do know that there are many species of viruses, including many baculoviruses and nuclear polyhedral viruses, many bacteria, and many fungi that cause diseases of butterflies. Such diseases have been found to be prevalent in shipments of commercially-raised butterflies.

Shipping butterflies from California to New York, or from Florida to New York or California and then releasing the butterflies into the environment would allow a California disease to spread to wild butterfly populations in New York, or a Florida disease to spread to California. The fact that Red Admirals can be found in Florida and in California does not preclude the likelihood that some diseases or parasites of Red Admirals and other butterflies are currently limited in their range to, for example, Florida, or to California.

In the late 1940's, House Finches, a bird that until then had been found only in the western United States, were released onto Long Island, New York. These few birds have now spread throughout the entire eastern United States, demonstrating that although a particular species may currently be found in only one section of the United States, there is no guarantee that it will not thrive in a different region if introduced into that region. If this is true of a bird, it can be just as true of a disease-causing organ-

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Upcoming Meetings

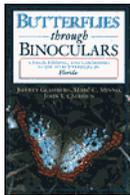
All meetings are held in the B-1 auditorium at the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). Take I-95 to Southern Blvd. Until the construction on the flyover is complete, take Southern Blvd. west to Kirk Road. Left at Kirk to Gun Club. Left at Gun Club to the water management district. Turn left into the first entrance at KinderCare and continue to visitor parking. The meetings are in the auditorium on the first floor of the building in the back (B-1). **Meetings are at 7:00pm.**

Monday, January 13, 2003—Barbara Kuebler, a member of our chapter and excellent nature pho-

tographer will present “Bits & Pieces,” photographs of butterflies taken in Montana and South Dakota, as well as some unusual plants in S. Florida's natural areas.

Monday, March 24, 2003—Learn about the current Miami Blue research that is being conducted. Speaker to be announced.

Monday, June 23, 2002—At this meeting we will prepare for the 4th of July Butterfly Count. We encourage you to attend this meeting even if you don't plan to count at one of the public sites as there will be an ID Slide show at the end of the meeting.



DON'T FORGET YOUR FIELD GUIDE AND BINOCULARS!!



Upcoming Field Trips

Sunday, February 23, 2003 — Field trip to the Deering Estate and other good butterfly locations in the Miami Area. We will meet at the Deering Estate at **10:00am**. Take I-95 south to the end. SW 152nd St. (Coral Reef Drive). Turn Left at traffic light. Travel East ~5-7 minutes toward Biscayne Bay, past Coral Reef Park. Turn Right at traffic light onto Old Cutler Rd. Go South on Old Cutler Rd to the traffic light at SW 168 St. (Richmond Drive). Turn Left. Travel 1/2 block east and turn Right at “Deering Estate” entrance sign. Parking lot is directly in front of the Visitors' Center. Bring a picnic lunch. Entrance fee is \$6.

Sunday, April 13, 2003 — Field trip to Jonathan Dickinson State Park. We will meet at the park entrance at **9:00am**. Spend Palm Sunday looking for rare butterflies, like the “Florida” Dusted Skipper. Other beauties like the Palamedes and Zebra Swallowtail, and Southern Dogface Sulphur may also be seen. Take I-95 to Indiantown Rd. East on Indiantown Rd. Take a left on Alt. A1A (just past the RR tracks). Alt. A1A curves to right. Take left onto Federal Hwy. JDSP is about 5-7 miles on left.

Entrance fee is \$3.25 per car.

Sunday, May 18, 2003 —Field trip to the Okeechobee Ridge Trail at Port Myaca. We will meet in the

parking area east of the bridge at **9:30am**. Take I-95 to Blue Heron Blvd. Go left (west) to the Beeline (710). Take the Beeline to 76 (you will take a right on the junction and a left onto 76). Continue on 76 for ~9 miles. The road will curve to the left. Turn left onto 441 and go over the bridge. Once over the bridge you will take your first left. Take the next left to go under the bridge to the parking area. Bring a picnic lunch which we will eat in the butterfly garden at the DuPuis Visitors' Center

Butterfly Count – We've decided to separate the counts over two weekends this year so that we aren't all spread out so “thinly.” **Mark your Calendars! We need your help!**

Central Circle will be conducted on **June 28**.

North Circle will be conducted on **June 29**.

South Circle will be conducted on **July 6**.

Sunday, July 20 - Highlands Hammock Butterfly Count – Take I-95 to Blue Heron. Go West to the Beeline (710). The Beeline through Indiantown to SR70. Go West on SR70 through Okeechobee to SR98. Go North on SR98 to SR27. Go North on SR27 into Sebring. Take a left onto Highlands Hammock Rd. (also called 634. Landmarks: traffic signal and Bar-B-Que Restaurant on SW corner). We will meet at the Ranger Station at **9:00am**. Bring a picnic lunch. ~2 1/2 hours from WPB.

Special Events

January 8 - 11, 2003, 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. *First Annual Native Plant Sale at Blowing Rocks Preserve*—Blowing Rocks Preserve will feature native butterfly and wildlife attracting plants from **Meadow Beauty Nursery** at the preserve's Hawley Education Center at 574 South Beach Road on Jupiter Island. Get your free copy of the *Guide for Real Florida Gardeners* while supplies last. Stop by the Wild Birds Unlimited booth for the latest in bird feeders, houses, and more! For information or directions, please call Linda Finch at (561) 744-6668. Plants that will be for sale: Beautyberry, Florida privet, Simpson's stopper, Wild plumbago, Wild coffee, Black-eyed Susan, Goldenrod, Coontie, Scarlet sage, Pineland lantana, Blue porterweed, Mist flower, Pennyroyal, Wild Petunia, Firebush, Twinflower and Climbing Aster.

Saturday, February 8, 2003, 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. *Everglades Day* (sponsored by the Audubon Society) at Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. The day's events include birding, family walks, hands-on activities, music, food, children's activities, exhibits, and live programs. Contact the Visitor Center at 561/732-3684 for more information.

Sunday, March 9, 2003, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. *Spring Family Festival* at Mounts Botanical Garden.

Saturday, April 19, 2003, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. *Naturescaping: An Earth Day Event* at John D. MacArthur Beach State Park. Call 561/624-6950 for more information.

Saturday, April 26, 2003, 9 a.m.—1 p.m. *DuPuis Management Area's Earth Day and Grand Opening of the Visitors' Center*. Call Alana at 800/462-2045, ext. 3192 for more information.

Saturday and Sunday, April 26 & 27, 2003, 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. *Mounts Plant Sale*.



Bits & Pieces

By Barbara Kuebler



Every place in nature is special and every moment in nature has its own unique beauty. Being a nature photographer has allowed me to spend time seeing and recording on film the intricacies and inter-relationships of everything, large and small, in the world around us. I photograph for the joy of it - for the feeling that comes when you know you are "freezing in time" a moment that never again will be the same. When others view my images, I want them to feel the need to slow down and listen to nature and reflect on its fragility, as well as its timelessness! Only when



*Photo of Great Spangled Fritillary
by Barbara Kuebler*

the natural world is valued and appreciated can it be saved.

In my program on January 13, 2003, I will show butterflies from South Dakota's Black Hills, including Silvery Blues, Orange Crescents and Weidemeyer's Admirals, and butterflies from NW Montana Great Spangled Fritillaries, Pine Whites, Acmon Blues and other species will be shown. I will also do a segment on unusual and endangered plants from Palm Beach County natural areas, including the celestial lily and Catesby lily.

(Flitting—continued from page 1)

The Florida State Park system is made to order for this challenge. Our state parks and state trails have management plans and species lists of what occurs there but they are sorely lacking in butterfly information. This was an area where we could make a contribution and so can you. If you can identify butterflies, each time you visit a park or any public area, you can leave butterfly information with that park or area. Simply count what you see during your visit, include notes about behavior, nectar sources, etc., the time of your visit, weather information and tally up your sightings. With a simple computer program you can also keep a database of your sightings.

Even before we retired we began surveying butterflies once a month for a year for two private conservation organizations. At the end of the surveys, butterfly checklists were developed. After we retired a friend mentioned a local state trail that had



zero butterfly information and only a few birds on their lists. As the park was developing its management plan we felt this was an area we could be of service. Besides it was fun to get into the field and look at wildlife. When the year was up and a checklist was developed we took on another state trail farther from home. Again, a checklist was developed from the information we gathered. Our primary purpose is not simply to count butterflies but to observe their behavior, note their nectar sources, their habitat requirements and to learn everything we can about them.

With those two surveys done we figured we could relax and enjoy our retirement and watch the butterflies flitting about in our garden. Besides, the NABA counts took up a lot of our summer and we

were retired after all. But there is a special place in Okeechobee County, Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park, and Parks Small, the manager there, needed assistance. His curiosity aroused by numbers of Zebra Swallowtails, he wondered what other butterflies were on park property? Would we be interested in doing a survey there? Since this was one of our NABA count areas we were also curious about what inhabited the prairie those other 364 days of the year.

After we finished our one-year survey, we just couldn't stay away and so began our second year survey in August. To date we have counted 72 species on the prairie, including some of Florida's rarest skippers. Other volunteers have increased our coverage so that now we can usually put two teams in the field. This greatly increases both species and numbers seen.

When we are not doing our monthly survey we find lots of other butterfly activities to fill our time. Early spring finds us in the panhandle looking for butterflies whose ranges barely come into Florida or in south Florida looking for West Indian strays and tropical butterflies barely hanging on in shrinking habitats. Summer finds us involved in a number of NABA counts. Fall brings large numbers of butterflies into Florida and we are usually out counting somewhere. In between, slide programs have to be prepared. We also help out at two wildlife festivals presenting programs and leading field trips. We started a butterfly listserver called LEPSrUS where butterfly enthusiasts can exchange information over the internet. Several years ago we set a goal to see and photograph all 160, give or take a few, of Florida's regular butterflies. As of the end of October 2002 we have tracked down 161 and photographed 155 of them. We will be flitting back to the panhandle and down to south Florida for those that have eluded us.

We urge you to undertake a project of surveying a state or county park for one year. You don't have to be an expert if others are there to help you with identification. You just have to have the enthusiasm and the desire to make a contribution.

After all, butterflies bring so much joy into our lives how can we not want to give something back? So many butterflies...so little time.

To sign up for LEPSrUS, go to: <http://groups.msn.com/LEPSrUS/join>. Members of LEPSrUS are encouraged to post butterfly photos and check out the LINKS to other butterfly web pages.

Member Highlight: Spotlight on Kathy Malone



Becoming interested in butterflies progresses very much like the life cycle of a butterfly...but with one difference: Once **you** become a butterfly, it seems you could live forever!



While in the larval stage, you consume all the information you can about which butterfly likes which host plant... you visit a butterfly house and marvel at

the exotic, wiggling chrysalids under glass. You take home a few plants, then you start a butterfly

garden. You bring the caterpillars into your kitchen in plastic containers to observe the life cycle close up, and you fret, "Do I have enough of that plant in my yard, and should I clump it together with like plants, and what should I do when the caterpillars run out of food?" You become obsessed with details!

During the chrysalis stage, you sit back and relax as you watch butterflies caress your garden. Changes go on inside you...you stop worrying, and you shift from visiting butterfly houses and doting over your yard to getting out in the woods to see the native butterflies in their natural habitat. You purchase close-

focusing binoculars and cannot believe the detail you see in the wings! Then the big day comes...you emerge from the chrysalis, a sure and confident butterfly, migrating to Colorado, Arizona and Oregon to see more butterflies—any butterflies—with other butterflies just like yourself! Once a butterfly, you want to reproduce and make sure others become confident butterflies!

Once a "pretty good birder" as Garrison Keelor would say (he tells "pretty good jokes"), I became interested in butterflies about five years after my son was born. He was too young to use binoculars to look at birds, but I figured he could spot a butterfly nectaring on a plant about his height.



(continued on page 8)

(Miami Blue—continued from page 1)

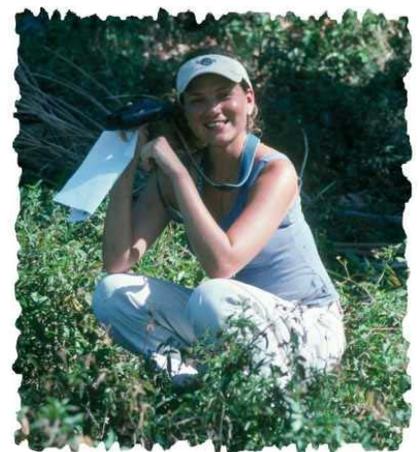
a graduate student, Ingrid Curril, from Florida Atlantic University, to learn about the Miami Blue. Ingrid will be making biweekly trips to the Keys to study the biology and ecology of this rare butterfly, and ability to colonize new areas that contain the butterflies' foodplant. Once the surveying is underway, local docents will be trained to survey the sites using Ingrid's methods.

How can I Help?

The easiest way for you to help is to make a donation to the Miami Blue

Fund. These funds will also help other threatened and endangered species of butterflies in extreme southern Florida, including Florida Leafwing, Bartram's Scrub-Hairstreak, Florida Purplewing and Zestos Skipper. **Your donation will help to conserve the largest cluster of endangered butterflies in North America!**

Send a check, made out to NABA, to: Miami Blue Fund, NABA, 4 Delaware Rd. Morristown, NJ 07960. The butterflies will appreciate your support!



**Ingrid Curril, NABA's
Graduate Student**

(Butterfly Releases—continued from page 2)

ism.

The practice of shipping live butterflies around the country and releasing them into the environment carries with it the possibility of unleashing invasive diseases.

Large-scale commercial operations foster the spread of disease and the generation of new diseases that can devastate butterflies. It is well known that agriculture and animal husbandry, by increasing densities of an organism, create conditions that are extremely favorable for the spread of disease-causing agents of that organism. In addition, these conditions encourage the creation of new disease-causing organisms.

The fitness of local butterfly populations may be decreased by interbreeding with released individuals. A recent report in Nature (Moore, P.D. 2000. "Conservation biology: Seeds of doubt." *Nature* 407: 683-685.) highlights the unexpected finding that, released into the environment, individuals that originate non-locally, will breed with local individuals and decrease the fitness of the local population, by introducing genes that are not optimal for the local environmental conditions.

Scientific studies and observation by butterflyers are confused by butterfly releases. The movements and migrations of butterflies are still very poorly understood. Scientists, trying to track, for example, northward movement in the spring of Painted Ladies, now are confused by Painted Ladies being released into the environment. Butterflyers, who would be thrilled to see a Zebra Heliconian in North Carolina are cheated out of a satisfying experience because now the butterfly may well have occurred there unnaturally.

The commercially-raised and released butterflies often suffer. These butterflies often arrive dead or dying, and then are often released into hostile environments at inappropriate times of the year.

Butterflies are living animals, not toys. There is something ethically wrong with treating butterflies as if they were mere playthings for humans. They are not toys, or to use a Bob Pyle phrase, "living balloons." We do not allow those who like birds to ship chickadees around the country and then to release them into the environment. There is no reason to allow butterflies to be treated any differently.

For all of the above reasons, please make your voice heard. TAKE ACTION AGAINST BUTTERFLY RELEASES TODAY!

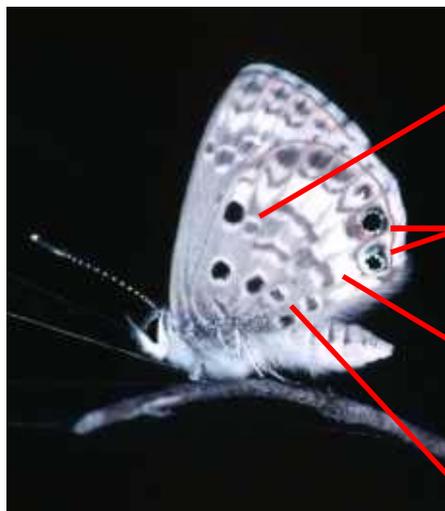


For all of the above reasons, please make your voice heard. TAKE ACTION AGAINST BUTTERFLY RELEASES TODAY!

Who Am I?? Butterfly Quiz

So you probably guessed that it was a blue of some kind. If you guessed Miami Blue, you are correct. If you didn't, don't worry. These blues are so confusing. Just be thankful that you live in South Florida and only really have two blues to learn (four if you live in the middle Keys)! Here are some of the major distinctions:

Miami Blue

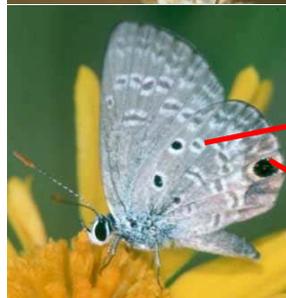


- Gray spot is directly under black leading margin spot
- 2 black eye-spots of similar size
- Broad, white postmedian band
- 4 Black Basal spots



Nickerbean Blue

- Orange is wider than width of black eye-spot
- Black spot missing



Ceraunus Blue

- Gray spot is displaced outwardly from black leading margin spot
- 1 major black eye-spot (visible) above two smaller eyespots (missing in this photo)



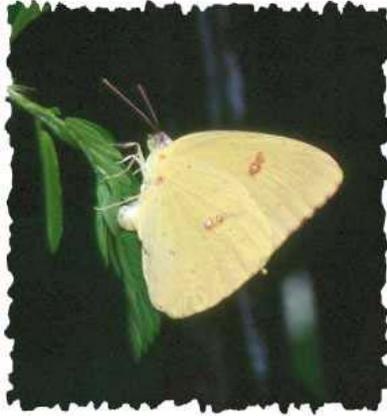
Cassius Blue

- No Basal spots as in the other three
- Overall color on underside is white with gray striping

(Kathy Malone—continued from page 6)

Around this time, I enjoyed the articles in *The Palm Beach Post* by Anne Kilmer who had a butterfly hotline at the Mounts. "Ohhh, thank goodness," I thought, "a 'butterfly hotline.'" It seemed most appropriate while I was in the larval stage--consuming all I could about the butterfly. I had to know then and there what was going on in my garden. I was a maniac. I needed instant gratification for information, and the hotline filled the bill.

As Anne and I talked, we realized we needed to spread the word and feed other caterpillars through a butterfly group. We got a meeting of caterpillars together at Mounts who were consuming all they could. And there, in the front row, sat two innocent caterpillars,



Alana and Lana Edwards, who were so hungry and crazed, they volunteered to do a newsletter and keep track of the money! I said I'd cheer us on as our founding president. Thus, we formed a Butterfly Coalition and our NABA butterfly chapter. The Edwards have been instrumental in keeping things together, feeding other caterpillars along the way, along with our president, Teri Jabour, who became a butterfly a few years later.

As I look back at my stages of development as a butterfly enthusiast, I know the most important stage is the adult butterfly who has the urge to make new butterflies. Once you're hooked, you can't help but share, and that, in a "chrysalis shell" is NABA's mission. As long as I live, I'll be a butterfly, teaching others, no matter their age or stage.

Kathy works for the South Florida Water Management District and lives with her husband, Bill and son, Ryan in Wellington, FL. She just VERY recently received her Master's in Elementary Education from Palm Beach Atlantic University.



**ATALA CHAPTER OF THE
NORTH AMERICAN BUTTERFLY
ASSOCIATION**

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*Send your email address to
atala@prodigy.net for updates on
butterfly related topics and events
throughout the year!*

We're on the WEB!

<http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabaac/index.html>