

NABA St. Louis

February 2009

Calendar of Events

Feb. 24 th	7:00 pm	Tuesday Program Meeting; Birds, Beasts, and Butterflies of Brazil, presented by Torrey Berger at Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center, 11715 Cragwold, Kirkwood, MO63122. Come Join us as we share Birds Beasts and Butterflies of Brazil as Torrey Berger shows photos of his recent trip with the St.Louis Zoo to the Amazon, the Pantanal and Iguassu Falls. The program will concentrate on wildlife with particular emphasis on the magnificent butterflies of the Iguassu area
April 18 th	10:00am	NABA seasonal count at August A. Busch CA Contact Jim Ziebol for more information
April 25 th	10:00am	NABA seasonal count at Trail of Tears SP Contact Kent Fothergill for more information
May 23 rd	10:00am	NABA seasonal count at August A. Busch CA Contact Jim Ziebol for more information
May 31 st	10:00am	NABA seasonal count at Horseshoe Lake S.P Contact Jim Ziebol for more information
June 7 th	10:00am	Butterfly walk at Mark Peter's prairie (Jefferson County, MO) Contact Jim Z. for more information
June 28 th	10:00am	NABA seasonal count at August A. Busch CA Contact Jim Ziebol for more information
July 5 th	10:00am	NABA 4J count at August A. Busch CA Contact Jim Ziebol for more information
July 25 th	9:00am	NABA 4J count at Trail of Tears SP Contact Kent Fothergill for more information
July 26 th	9:00am	NABA 4J count at Big Oak Tree SP Contact Kent Fothergill for more information
August 22 nd	10:00am	NABA seasonal count at Horseshoe Lake S.P Contact Jim Ziebol for more information
September 12 th	10:00 am	NABA seasonal count at August A. Busch CA Contact Jim Ziebol for more information
September 20 th	10:00 am	Butterfly walk at Route 66 SP Contact Jim Ziebol for more information
October 10 th	10:00 am	Butterfly walk at Horseshoe Lake S.P Contact Jim Ziebol for more information

If directions are not included in the Calendar, then they can be found on our web site at: www.nabastl.org. Click on "Activities & Events", then click on "Field Trip Sites & Directions." Members are encouraged to bring guests.

NABA St. Louis Holiday Party

-Mary Eileen Rufkahr

Sunday, January 18th was a cold, gray, dreary day, but inside the Webster Groves Recreation Complex, it was a burst of Spring! The NABA/St. Louis chapter was holding it's annual holiday party and, of course, butterflies were the main topic of conversation.

Members had a variety of delicious potluck appetizers, main dishes and desserts to choose from, cold beverages to quench their thirst and lots of good conversation to begin the afternoon off. Then it was time for the members' showcase, where people had a chance to share photographs and videos of butterflies from both nearby and far away.

Special thanks go to Yvonne Homeyer for coordinating the party; Scott Marshall for securing the meeting room; Tom Krauska for overseeing the audio/visual program; and Tom Krauska and Jeannie Moe for donating plants and seeds for members to take home with them for spring gardening.

Kill Ugly Television

- scammed off of the internet

The long awaited US showing of "The Incredible Journey of the Butterflies" will be aired on Tuesday, January 27, 2009 at 8 pm on PBS. !!! Lots of info at their website:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/butterflies/>

There's a two-minute online segment featuring butterfly research heroes: Chip Taylor, Lincoln Brower and Bill Calvert. Also included are: an online interview with the film-maker (Nick de Pencier), a listing of monarch links, books, and even a service to get an email reminder of its airing date.

For your information, this documentary was originally entitled "Four Wings and a Prayer", after the book with the same title.

Nova purchased the rights to this documentary, shortened it and added new footage. "Four Wings and a Prayer" has won awards in Los Angeles and Houston, and most recently won in June 9, 2008 the Rockie Award for Best Wildlife and Natural History Program at the Banff World Television Festival.

Please note that local PBS stations usually air a NOVA episode at least one more time after the initial airing (i.e. a 12 am viewing a few days later!), so check the viewing times for your local or cable PBS station.

Editors note- if TV isn't your bag; go to the library and check out the book "[Four Wings and a Prayer](#)" it is a very good read and points out that Monarchs need more than just our goodwill and milkweed patches...



A Monarch fueling up on nectar from the non-native *Torilis arvensis* on the way North 4 June 2007 Big Oak Tree SP soon on the way to your TV!!
- kf photo

The Texas Coast is the most

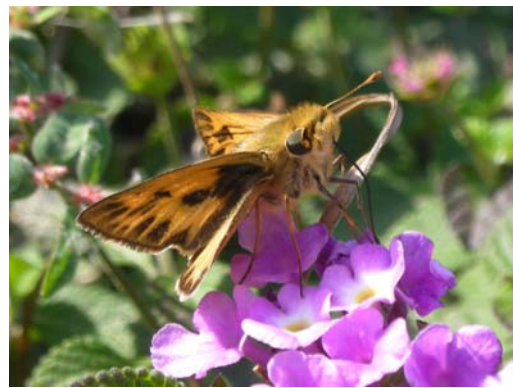
- Kent Fothergill

We packed up the dog and cat went out camping on the Texas coast at Matagorda Bay Nature Park to start the New Year. Even though it was often cold and wet, and one night we actually had to take down the tent because the wind was going to tear it apart, we had a pretty good time.

Butterflying was pretty slow, but they were out. The all-important first butterfly seen in 2009 was a Common Buckeye. We also saw Cloudless Sulphur, White/Common Checkered Skipper, and Fiery Skipper. I actually saw more butterflies than moths and yes, I did look at night for moths.

We did have a couple of days on the beach where we got to meet the Ghost Crab (*Ocypode quadrata*). Ghost Crabs are fast and can bury themselves quite rapidly in the sand above the high tide line. On the edge of the salt marshes we met the Fiddler Crab (*Uca rapax*). While neither of these are butterflies; they are arthropods with jointed legs, exoskeletons and are very cool, beautiful, and important.

The 2008 hurricane season was pretty rough at Matagorda Bay, the campground staff said the campground had debris 4' deep from the hurricanes. The campground was more designed for RV's than tents, but the location was pretty nice and a nearby place had some pretty good fresh seafood! You don't need to go to Texas to find some nature, but I feel pretty lucky that we were able to go.



Fiery Skipper, 4 January 2009 Matagorda Bay Nature Park, TX - kf photo



Ghost Crab, 4 January 2009 Matagorda Bay Nature Park, TX - kf photo

Beyond Butterflies: Dermaptera

-Kelly Tindall and Kent Fothergill

Dermaptera

Earwigs are another primarily tropical group that has some representation in our area. Earwigs are sexually dimorphic, but the large cerci (a.k.a. pinchers) and short elytra are exhibited by both sexes. The introduced European Earwig, *Forficula auricularia*, is the most commonly encountered and often massively abundant earwig in North America and was unknown here before 1900.

Earwigs get along well with people (although this may not be a mutual thing), in fact; the density of earwig infestations is closely related to the level of human activity. Earwigs

are not strong dispersers, and have relied on people to move them around via luggage, cut flowers, produce, crated merchandise, lumber and building supplies, automobiles and even the mail.

The name "earwig" originated in Europe based on the old wive's tale that earwigs enter the ears of sleeping persons and bore into the brain. The European earwig has a discriminating palette and is able to find the best vegetables in the garden, and like all members of the Dermaptera it is essential omnivorous - human brains are probably only rarely utilized for nutritional purposes.

The best way to see earwigs is to be out in your garden at night. Often the damage these insects do to your vegetables is misidentified because of the nocturnal habits of these animals. Hopefully, you will enjoy getting to know the native and non-native members of this interesting order of insects.



A Dermapteran insect –Kelly Tindall Photo

Time for a new New Year's resolution...

As the editor of the Flutterby News I point with pride to the great number of contributors we had during 2008. I would love to see 2009 as the year *every* (this includes you) NABA St. Louis member contributed something to this newsletter. Photos, poems, news clippings, articles, write ups of field trips, garden tips, cartoons, artwork, announcements, and almost anything else that deals with butterflies and their habitats is fair game. You might be surprised at your new level of fame and the more people who contribute, the more fun the newsletter is to read. Please send your submissions to me at kent(at)csr-inc.com. Thank you – Kent Fothergill.

The Carnage: an exploration of cars, people, and insects

-Kent Fothergill

Sometimes insects can kill people in cars: this can happen because roadways have become slick due to the number of dead insects smashed on the road, or because an insect (usually identified as a 'bee') entered a vehicle in motion and the driver panicked and lost control of the car. I have seen Mormon crickets and Sphingid moths killed in numbers great enough to create slick spots on roadways in Utah, Wyoming, and Idaho (Mormon Crickets) and Arizona and Missouri (Sphingid moth caterpillars). As uninvited passengers in my vehicle I have had a great variety of insects, but none has caused me to lose control – even though a few of these passengers have bitten, stung, or startled me.

Anyone who has driven long distances in the summer knows that many more insects die in the automobile – insect – human interaction than people. McKenna et al. (2001) estimated that 20,000,000 Lepidoptera died in vehicle collisions along Illinois roadways in one week during 1998. This number included 500,000 Monarchs. It should also be noted that this sort of study will underestimate actual numbers due to insects that are not found for various reasons. In Eugene, Oregon, a 2002 road project through some of the last remaining habitat of the Fendler's Blue ran into trouble because the roadway would present an unacceptable incidental take of this endangered species via vehicle collisions. In India roadways in nature preserves are also killing large numbers of Lepidoptera.

One of the first Insect collections my daughter and I ever made was entirely road-killed specimens. The secret was to find roads with moderately low traffic and high speed limits that bisected excellent habitat. In Idaho, there are very few species that are not available to the determined collector of road-killed insects. Even the FBI uses road-killed insects:

Collecting road-killed insects

A collection of road-killed insects can be much more pleasing to the eye than one might imagine. Most road-killed insects found alongside a road will be in surprisingly good shape. The major problem will be that often they will be in less than optimum postures. This can be remedied by the microwave relaxation chamber, which rapidly relaxes insects so that they become pliable and poseable, allowing you to make an aesthetically pleasing specimen.

The microwave relaxation chamber can be made from two microwaveable bowls, one of which is cut down, perforated, and flipped over such that water can be boiled and the insect can rest on paper towel high and dry on the flipped over cut down bowl. Choosing to use bowls with a lid makes this an amazingly quick way to relax dried, out road-killed insects.

The specimens obtained in this manner provide useful data just like normally collected specimens, and additionally document mortality. The materials to maintain an insect collection are available through suppliers like: www.bioquip.com. If you do decide to begin this sort of collection consider other no-kill collection techniques, such as stolen from various spider species webs, or prey items of different Asilid fly species. Even though a collection like this will seem somewhat morbid, sometimes a study of mortality factors can be a valuable conservation tool.

In 2003, the radiator of a car was taken to the UC Davis Entomology lab, where entomologist K. Garvey was able to show that the murderer was in the area because of endemic insect fragments present on the radiator.

Vehicle collisions represent only part of this carnage of insect life. With the bulldozer humans have managed to bury untold acres of formerly productive butterfly habitat under concrete, fragment the remaining habitat, and create a roadside verge habitat that may serve as a dispersal corridor for weeds and other noxious species. While some studies show roadside habitats can be managed so as to be good for butterflies (e.g. Saarinen et al. 2005), Reis et al. 2001, caution that more detailed demographic studies may reveal that roadsides are merely a ‘sink habitat’ and do not contribute positively to the butterfly species population. It is also important to keep in mind that development follows roadways: first a road, then a house, more houses, later a gas station, in time a strip mall.... – and rampant development is generally bad for butterfly populations.

Very few people actually consider the insects that they kill as they drive along our Nation’s roadways or consider the habitat destroyed to create the road. As with most conservation issues; people are the cause of and solution to the problem. Advocate for reduced (or no) roadways in natural areas, roadside verges managed as other than pesticide -sprayed, exotic landscapes, plant habitat when and wherever you can, help planners to locate roadways away from sensitive areas, and finally, drive with care- the life you save may be your own!

The Current Board of NABA St. Louis:

Position	Person	Contact
President	Jim Ziebol	(314) 781 7372
Vice-President	Yvonne Homeyer	swampmetalmark(at)sbcglobal.net
Secretary	Kathleen O’Keefe	
Treasurer	Ann Earley	aee623(at)prodigy.net
Butterfly Gardens	Dennis Bozzay	dbozzay(at)sbcglobal.net
Conservation	Ann Earley	aee623(at)prodigy.net
Education	Mary-Eileen Rufkahr	merufkahr(at)aol.com
Membership	Scott Marshall	scottmarshll(at)cs.com
Newsletter	Kent Fothergill	kent(at)csr-inc.com
Webmaster	Sherry McCowan	nabaweb(at)waxwingwebs.com
Walks and Counts	Jim Ziebol	(314) 781 7372

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

If you would like to join NABA, please fill out this application. You will become a member of both NABA and the local St. Louis Chapter, if you live within the St. Louis metropolitan area or nearby Illinois area:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone () _____ E-mail _____

Dues are \$30 (regular) and \$40 (family) per year. Please make check payable to NORTH AMERICAN BUTTERFLY ASSOCIATION. Mail this form with your check to: Scott Marshall, Membership, 609 West Lockwood, St. Louis, MO 63119.