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NABA St. Louis

March 2009

Calendar of Events

March 13 th	6:30 pm	Social get together at Sweet Tomatoes buffet restaurant. There is a wide variety of salads, soups, pastas, pizzas and desserts to choose from for about \$10.00 a person. Located in Crestwood on Watson Road between Lindbergh and Sappington Roads, south side of the street. Hope to see lots of you there.
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.

Butterfly Big Year

- Kent Fothergill

Well, it is over. I don't know how many of you followed Robert Michael Pyle and his Butterfly Big Year, but I know I will miss following the adventure on the web. You can read about it at: <http://www.xerces.org/butterflyathon/> and <http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/butterfly/>. Robert Michael Pyle is a very class act and actually helped get me started butterflying with a lengthy response (seven pages!) to a letter I had written him way back in time. Handbook for Butterfly Watchers is the reason I wrote him and is a book I still refer to today. His books are inspiring and should be mandatory reading for everyone (see sidebar). Robert Michael Pyle also has definite insect conservation street cred, as the founder of the Xerces society.

Birders invented the big year. In 1998 Sandy Komito set the current North American birding record of 745 species, a feat chronicled in the book The Big Year by Mark Obmascik. A big year is an extension of activities that most of us already do making lists and keeping notes.

Big years can be done at varying spatial scales: yard, county, state, country, continent, planet, solar system, etc and can be done at any taxon: Kingdoms, families, genera, species, subspecies, individuals, organs, etc. What matters to you will determine where your big year goes and what is counted. That said, as human beings we tend to be competitive, often to the detriment of an activity being pleasurable. Robert Michael Pyle saw 488 species of butterfly during his big year. This is number that quite likely will be able to be beaten by an individual who is willing to spend the time, money, and energy necessary to live at continental scales to see a larger

Books by Robert Michael Pyle:

The Butterflies of Cascadia: A Field Guide to All the Species of Washington, Oregon, and Surrounding Territories.

2002. Seattle Audubon Society.

Nabokov's Butterflies. Edited and annotated by Pyle and Brian Boyd, with new translations from the Russian by Dmitri Nabokov. 2000. Beacon Press.

Walking the High Ridge: Life as a Field Trip. 2000. Milkweed Editions.

Chasing Monarchs: A Migration with the Butterflies of Passage. 1999. Houghton Mifflin.

The Thunder Tree: Lessons from An Urban Wildland. 1998. Lyons Press.

Where Bigfoot Walks: Crossing the Dark Divide. 1995. Houghton Mifflin.

Insects: A Peterson Field Guide Coloring Book. 1993. Houghton Mifflin.

Wintergreen: Listening to the Land's Heart. 1987. Houghton Mifflin.

Handbook for Butterfly Watchers. 1984. Houghton Mifflin.

Butterflies: A Peterson Field Guide Coloring Book. (With Sarah Anne Hughes and Roger Tory Peterson). 1983. Houghton Mifflin.

The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Butterflies. 1981. Knopf

number of butterflies. However, competitive butterfly watching is not where butterfly watchers should head. Mapping, listing, counting, and keeping notes are important activities that can inform conservation activities, but ultimately we watch butterflies for pleasure. Robert Michael Pyle will write a book called Swallowtail Seasons about his big year adventure and it will be a pleasure to read. The following paragraph illustrates the dark side of 'competitive listing'.

A while back I was birding one morning near Portal, Arizona and a man approached me frantic about the whereabouts of Lucy's Warbler. I gave him directions up the creek to where one was on territory singing, but in his state of agitation he could not begin to understand them. Even though I was hungry for breakfast, I took this man to back up Cave Creek to where the bird was singing. The bird was teed up on top of a juniper, the early morning sun was a spotlight, and the canyon was an amphitheater – it was a glorious moment! Binoculars raised I stood transfixed in awe of the spectacle and grateful I had gone back to see it. The man asked me if I was sure the bird was a Lucy's, and in hushed voice I began to rattle off the field marks and song qualities, and when I lowered my binoculars to make sure he understood- he was gone. Basically, he ticked the bird on his list and then quit wasting time and took off. No conservation, no magic, no love, just another species on a list. It isn't about seeing lots of species, it is about watching butterflies. When you read Robert Michael Pyle's blogs (and subsequent book) you will see that during his big year he didn't just see a lot of species, he also watched a lot butterflies.

Bird, Beasts and Butterflies of Brazil

-Mary Eileen Rufkahr

The meeting room at Powder Valley Nature Center was standing room only on Tuesday, February 24th for Torrey Berger's program on Brazil!

An overflow crowd came to hear Torrey's presentation on his and Lee's recent trip to Brazil with the St. Louis Zoo. Torrey shared outstanding photos of his trip including beautiful landscape scenes, unusual insects, exotic flowers, colorful birds, unique mammals and, of course, eye-popping butterflies. Torrey spent three weeks on his trip and was able to give all of the attendees an "arm chair" tour of the vast and varied country of Brazil.

After the program, Torrey was available to talk further with individuals about his travels and provide further commentary on his photos and experiences.



Not from Brazil, but a Hobomok Skipper always seems to add just the right touch to most things...

Beyond Butterflies: Isoptera

-Kelly Tindall and Kent Fothergill

Isoptera

*Some primal termite knocked on wood
And tasted it, and found it good!
And that is why your Cousin May
Fell through the parlor floor today.
-Ogden Nash "The Termite"*

Isoptera, the Termites, share a common ancestor with roaches and Mantids and are ambassadors of more tropical climates. The poem above is most likely what one thinks about when it comes to termites – damage to buildings, or indirectly a dead, but standing, infested tree that is weakened to the point that it falls on a home (see photo). Termites are best known, and hated, for the damage they cause to our homes as well as other structures constructed of wood. In our climate, you won't see many termites running around on the soil surface because most species of termites are subterranean (i.e., live underground), but you may see evidence of their activity. I have found termite colonies associated with buried wood a couple times in the South Sawtooth National Forest in Idaho.

These wild termite experiences were very cool but involved small, white insects that were underground – so they won't ever be the sole reason for a 'watchable wildlife' site. As colonial insects they have some pretty awesome capabilities and an amazing symbiotic relationship with cellulose digesting bacteria.

Termites are often confused with ants. Termites have straight, bead-like antennae and ants have elbowed antennae.

Winged termites have wings of the same size; whereas, ants have hind wings that are smaller than the forewings. Termites do not have a waist, whereas. Ants have a narrow waist. Also, they have different metamorphosis types where baby termites will look like the adults, while ants undergo complete metamorphosis where adults and immatures look quite different. Cool fact: queens live for 25 years or more and will lay as many as 60,000 eggs in her life time!

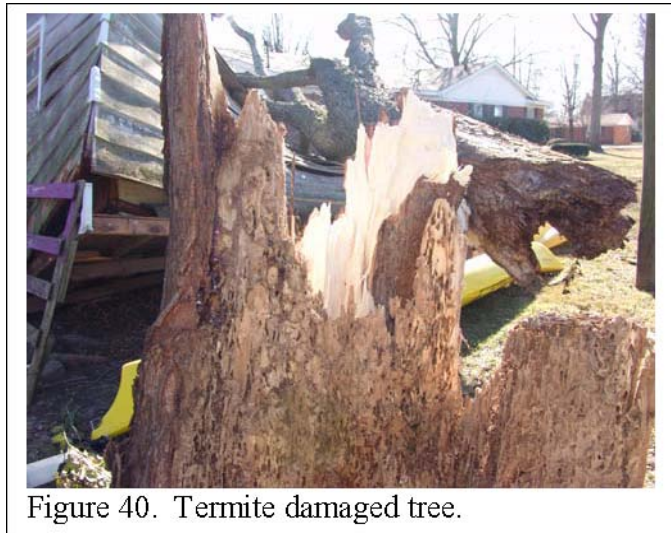


Figure 40. Termite damaged tree.

Still 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. I also wish to point out that this newsletter has had minimal input from the most members of NABA St. Louis – a huge missed opportunity! 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! The more people who contribute, the more fun the newsletter is to read. Please send your submissions to me at: kentatcsr-incdotcom. Thank you – Kent Fothergill.

The Current Board of NABA St. Louis:

Position	Person	Contact
President	Jim Ziebol	(314) 781 7372
Vice-President	Yvonne Homeyer	swampmetalmarkatsbcglobaldotnet
Secretary	Kathleen O'Keefe	
Treasurer	Ann Earley	aee623atprodigydotnet
Butterfly Gardens	Dennis Bozzay	dbozzayatsbcglobaldotnet
Conservation	Ann Earley	aee623atprodigydotnet
Education	Mary-Eileen Rufkahr	merufkahrataoldotcom
Membership	Scott Marshall	scottmarshllatcsdotcom
Newsletter	Kent Fothergill	kentatcsr-incdotcom
Webmaster	Sherry McCowan	nabawebatwaxwingwebsdotcom
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.