

Badger Butterfly

The e-Newsletter of the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association **OCTOBER, 2008**

WEB SITE: <http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabawba/>

1 NEXT SWBA MEETING

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in Madison at the Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Drive.

Conservation of the Swamp Metalmark Butterfly

The Swamp Metalmark is listed as an endangered species in Wisconsin. **Susan Borkin of the Milwaukee Public Museum** will present an overview of her research on the natural history of this tiny, beautiful and rare butterfly here in Wisconsin and preliminary efforts to reintroduce it. She will also discuss various elements that are important for the conservation of this species throughout its range.

Everyone is welcome to attend this free program. The meeting will last from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. We will have door prizes, displays, and plenty of time afterwards to enjoy refreshments and talk with Sue and other butterfly, photography, and butterfly gardening enthusiasts. **Sue Borkin** is a butterfly researcher and the Director of Research Support Services and the Puelicher Butterfly Garden at the Milwaukee Public Museum.

DIRECTIONS: On Madison's north side, from the intersection of Sherman Avenue and Northport Drive (= Hwy 113) go west on Northport Drive for about 1/4 mile, then turn south into Warner Park. Turn immediately right into the Community Center parking lot. When you enter the Community Recreation Center we will be in the meeting room on the left.



SWAMP METALMARK

2 FIELD TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

On September 6, SWBA conducted a field trip at Olbrich Botanical Garden. There were so many people attending (38) that we had to split up into two groups! One group was led by Ann Thering and the other by Joan Braune. The most abundant butterfly was the Monarch which was at its peak of migration. More than 60 Monarchs were taking nectar at flowers, preparing for their long journey to the mountains of central Mexico where they will spend the winter until very early in spring when they mate and begin to return northward.

A total of 10 species were seen including a Pipevine Swallowtail! The next best sighting was a Painted Lady. Other butterflies seen were Red Admiral (few of these around this year), Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Eastern Tailed Blue, Summer Azure, Silver-spotted Skipper, Peck's Skipper and many Cabbage Whites.

3 SUMMARY OF SEPTEMBER BUTTERFLIES

(www.wisconsinbutterflies.org)

The ten most common butterflies being reported in the first third of September are shown at right, in descending order of abundance.

Only eight species of migrants from the South have been reported and most of these are in extremely small numbers. Only two of these migrants were much more common than the others: Common Buckeye and Painted Lady. The other migrants were Gray Hairstreak, Fiery Skipper, Sachus, Checkered White, Variegated Fritillary & Leonard's Skipper.

1. Cabbage White
2. Clouded Sulphur
3. Monarch
4. Eastern Tailed Blue
5. Silver-spotted Skipper
6. Northern/Pearl Crescent
7. Eastern Tiger Swallowtail
8. Orange Sulphur
9. Great Spangled Fritillary
10. Black Swallowtail

4 NEW BUTTERFLY RECORDED FOR WISCONSIN

It had been suspected for many years that there was more to the Spring Azure than met the eye. Spring Azures are familiar small blue butterflies seen in spring and it was thought that they also flew in summer. But biologists suspected that the various Azure flights might represent closely related but different species. Eventually the Summer Azure was split off from the Spring Azure, identified as a separate species. Then in 2005 still another Azure species was extracted from the Azure complex and described: The Cherry Gall Azure.

This year, expert Lepidopterist Les Ferge identified a Cherry Gall Azure specimen in his collection, from Marathon County -- dating back to 1968 ! -- a first record for Wisconsin. It is not yet known how common or uncommon this Azure is in Wisconsin. As you might guess, this species poses a significant identification challenge for butterfly watchers! We will have an article on this butterfly in a future issue of the Badger ButterFlyer. The Cherry Gall Azure is the 156th butterfly species recorded for Wisconsin (by my quick count).

5 BUTTERFLY GIFTS FOR CHRISTMAS

Since the next issue of Badger ButterFlyer is not until December, we thought we'd include a list of suggested basic books and equipment that would make great gifts for a butterfly enthusiast.

BINOCULARS

The **Pentax Papilio 8.5X21** is specifically designed for observing butterflies, dragonflies and other insects. They are the closest focusing binoculars available (yes they also focus to infinity so you can observe birds and the moon). They can focus down to about 19 inches which provides spectacular views of butterflies. At six feet you see the butterfly as well as if you were holding it in your hand 10" from your eye. And at the close focus you see the butterfly five times better that if you were holding it up to your eye! They are sharp, very light weight and relatively inexpensive. (A must for the tiny damselflies!) We have used them for years and love them! About \$150 at Eagle Optics in Middleton, www.eagleoptics.com Check them out before you buy.

If intensive birding is the main interest then there are some larger binoculars that are also good for butterflies: **Eagle Optics Ranger SRT 8X32** focuses down to three feet and costs about \$310.

For bigger optics or more power there are the **Ranger SRT 8X42** or **10X42**, both focus to about 5 feet and cost around \$335.

BOOKS

The butterfly field guides that we recommend are:

First, Jeffrey Glassberg's **Butterflies Through Binoculars, the East**. Numerous excellent photographs, range maps, and contains flight period information specific for Wisconsin! (For a downloadable paste-in Quick Index to Wisconsin Species for Glassberg go to the SWBA website and look under "Resources" then "Butterfly Watching in Wisconsin".)

Second, Ken Kaufman's **Butterflies of North America**. (For a downloadable paste-in Quick Index to Wisconsin Species for Kaufman go to the SWBA website and look under "Resources" then "Butterfly Watching in Wisconsin".)

Third, Larry Weber's **Butterflies of the North Woods**. Many of southern Wisconsin's scarce species are not included but the coverage that is provided is very good and specific to Wisconsin. (Ignore the incorrect Hackberry Emperor on page 158.)

Jeffrey Glassberg, **Caterpillars in the Field and Garden**. 900 photographs. The butterfly caterpillars of North America.

David L. Wagner, **Caterpillars of Eastern North America**. 1,200 photographs. 400 butterfly and moth species.

Kurt Mead, **Dragonflies of the North Woods**.

Bob DuBois, **Damselflies of the North Woods**. (Only the Pentax Papilio binoculars described above can do justice to these tiny but exquisitely beautiful creatures.)

David Mizejewski, **Attracting Birds, Butterflies and Other Backyard Wildlife**.

Donald and Lilian Stokes, **Stokes Butterfly Book, The Complete Guide to Butterfly Gardening, Identification, and Behavior**.

Finally, a source of butterfly related items is the **NABA online store** at www.butterflybuzz.com
NABA members receive a 10% discount!

6 BUTTERFLY GARDEN CERTIFICATION

The new NABA Butterfly Garden Certification program offers butterfly gardeners a way to promote the creation and conservation of butterfly habitats through the use of native plants. Just plant three or more species of nectar source, three or more species of caterpillar food plant, and don't use pesticides. Send in an application and you can have your butterfly garden certified (\$15). You will receive a colorful NABA Butterfly Garden certificate (suitable for framing) and also the most recent issue of Butterfly Gardening magazine.



Once certified, you will also be eligible to purchase, if you wish, a 7" X 10" weatherproof Garden Certification sign (\$25) to display in your garden (shown at right). For more details or to download an application form go to this web site: http://www.nababutterfly.com/cert_index.html

NOTE: In Winter the Badger ButterFlyer is sent every two months. The next issue of the Badger ButterFlyer will be in DECEMBER.

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SWBA

The Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association (SWBA) is a non-profit Wisconsin chapter of the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) which is the largest organization of people interested in butterflies. SWBA promotes public awareness, conservation and the enjoyment of butterflies through observation with close-focusing binoculars, chapter field trips, educational meetings, photography, butterfly gardening, monitoring and travel. Most of SWBA's events are open to the public.

To become a member of SWBA simply join NABA. Membership benefits include 2 color quarterly magazines "American Butterflies" and "Butterfly Gardening". Please use the membership form on the SWBA website at <http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabawba/>

Our e-Newsletter, the Badger ButterFlyer, will be published monthly in summer and every other month in winter. Send any news notes to the editor, Karl Legler, at karlndot@chorus.net

To stop receiving this e-Newsletter simply send an email to the above editor's address.