

Badger Butterfly

The e-Newsletter of the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association **APRIL, 2011**

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

1 NEXT SWBA MEETING: Thursday, May 5

Meet at 7:00 p.m. in Madison at the [Warner Park Community Recreation Center](#), 1625 Northport Drive.

Program: Monarchs, Migration and the Larva Monitoring Project

Speaker: Jessica Miller, Naturalist

The Monarch is one of the most recognized butterflies in the world. Until 35 years ago, scientists knew little about their phenomenal life cycle and migration routes. Now through citizen science monitoring, researchers are gaining deeper understanding of the Monarch. Join Naturalist Jessica Miller as she discusses the fascinating world of Monarch butterflies and how you can become involved in groundbreaking Monarch research.

Jessica Miller is a Naturalist and Education Coordinator at Mosquito Hill Nature Center in New London (Outagamie County). She has been avidly rearing and studying Monarchs for 12 years and most recently made a trip to Mexico to see,



firsthand, Monarchs in their overwintering grounds. In addition, Jessica facilitates several monarch research programs including the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project, Monarch Health, and the Monarch Watch Tagging Program.

Everyone is welcome to attend this free program. The meeting will last from 7:00 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. We will have door prizes, displays, books, handouts and plenty of time afterwards to enjoy snacks and refreshments, and talk

with our speaker and other butterfly enthusiasts.

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.

Photo Show and Tell



At the May meeting, share some of your favorite butterfly, moth, caterpillar or dragonfly photos and enjoy the photos of others. You are welcome to briefly comment about your photos. Please email up to 8 digital photos (as file attachments) to Mike Reese at mikereese@wisconsinbutterflies.org Otherwise you can bring digital photos to the meeting on a CD or USB flash drive.

Election of Officers

If you are interested in serving as an officer of SWBA for the next year, or would like to nominate someone else, contact the Nominating Committee Chairperson Tod Highsmith at (608) 242-1168 or at todhighsmith@me.com

IN THIS ISSUE:

1. **NEXT SWBA MEETING ON THURSDAY, MAY 5**
2. **UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS.**
3. **Butterfly Gardening Class.**
4. **Tracking Lepidoptera.**
5. **Swengel has New Article on Habitat Management.**
6. **Regal Fritillary Monitoring.**
7. **Butterflies and Spies?!**
8. **March Butterflies.**
9. **Photo Exhibit by Ann Thering.**

2 UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS Mark your calendars!

Saturday, May 21: Butterflies of Bauer Brockway Barrens (Jackson Co.)



Gorgone Checkerspot

The best place in the state to look for early butterflies in May is Jackson County. **Mike Reese** will lead us in finding and observing many scarce and unusual species. We expect to find various Elfins, including the very rare (and State Threatened) Frosted Elfin. We should find *Olympia Marble*, *Gorgone Checkerspot*, *Cobweb Skipper*, *Dreamy* and *Sleepy Duskywings*, etc. Bring binoculars if you have them,



Cobweb Skipper

close-focusing ones work best. (A few extra pairs of binoculars are available.) Also, bring a bag lunch and water. A hat, long pants and long sleeves are recommended. This is a joint trip of SWBA with the Madison Audubon Society.

Meet in Jackson Co. at 10:30 a.m. at the corner of West Bauer Road and Brockway Road. We will butterfly until 3:00 p.m. DIRECTIONS: From the intersection of I-94 and Hwy 54 in Black River Falls, go east on Hwy 54 approximately five miles to Brockway Road. Turn right on Brockway and drive 2.5 miles south to West Bauer Road. (This area is about 2 1/4 hours northwest of Madison via I-94.)

Participants must PRE-REGISTER for this trip by either calling Mike at (920) 787-2341, or include your phone number in an email to mikereese@wisconsinbutterflies.org (so we can contact you in case of cancellation due to weather).

Saturday, June 18: Butterflies & Wildflowers at Pleasant Valley Conservancy

This is a joint trip of SWBA with The Prairie Enthusiasts and the Madison Audubon Society. Leaders are Ann Thering and Kathie and Tom Brock.

Pleasant Valley Conservancy is a beautiful state natural area situated in the Driftless Area, with steep goat prairies, oak savanna, and a large high quality marsh. The various habitats are home to numerous butterflies. This time of year we hope to see Baltimore Checkerspots and perhaps some rare wetland skippers. Other possible butterfly species include Black Swallowtail, Tiger Swallowtail, Giant Swallowtail, Red-Spotted Purple, American Lady, fritillaries, blues, and sulphurs. All of these butterflies will have many wonderful native plants to nectar on this time of year. We will be hiking two to three miles, including a very steep hillside. Long pants, a hat,



Baltimore Checkerspot

water, and sturdy hiking shoes are recommended.

Optional: bring along a bag lunch for after the field trip; beverages and dessert will be provided. Bring binoculars -- the closer they focus, the better. (We have a few extra binoculars.) Contact the trip leaders only if you have a question about

the trip:

Tom: (608) 238-5050, tdbrock@charter.net, or Ann, acthering@gmail.com, (608) 836-1097.

Meet at 11 a.m. The trip will last until 1 p.m.

DIRECTIONS: Heading south into downtown Black Earth follow County Hwy F as it turns right (west). After a mile or so, F turns left (south). Continue on F for another 3 3/4 miles turning left onto Pleasant Valley Road. Drive 3/4 mile and stop at the walking trail on the left. Park off the road facing the entrance.

3 CLASS OFFERED AT OLBRICH GARDENS: "WINGS AND PETALS: BUTTERFLY GARDENING IN SOUTHERN WISCONSIN"

Learn how to attract magnificent butterflies to your yard with butterfly enthusiast and Photographer **Ann Thering**. Good nectar sources for butterflies and food plants for their caterpillars will be covered, emphasizing native plants. Some horticultural varieties will also be discussed. You will learn key butterfly gardening design

features, and how to identify common backyard butterflies and their caterpillars. The class fee includes a milkweed plant (plug size) for your garden provided by Agrecol Corporation of Madison, grower of Midwest native plants and seeds.

Wednesday, May 11, 7-8:30 p.m.

Registration Deadline: May 4

Cost: \$15/\$12 Olbrich member | **Course Number:** 10-30

See registration details at Olbrich's web site: www.olbrich.org/education/classes.cfm

4 UPGRADED WEB SITE FOR U.S. BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

(Thanks to Dreux Watermolen for submitting this news item.)

Butterfly and Moth Website Updated

“Why should we care about butterflies and moths? Thanks to butterflies, bees, birds, and other animal pollinators, the world's flowering plants are able to reproduce and bear fruit. That very basic capability is at the root of many of the foods we eat. And, not least, pollination adds to the beauty we see around us. Yet today, there is evidence of alarming pollinator population declines worldwide.”

Scientists can use data in the Butterflies and Moths of North America (BAMONA) database to monitor the health of our butterfly and moth population. It has more than 287,000 verified sighting records and 3,239 images of 4,638 species. BAMONA now has a new web site www.butterfliesandmoths.org developed at Montana State University in cooperation with the U.S. Geological Survey. Users can now submit records online (usually with a photograph). New interactive Google-based maps enable the display of any verified sighting.

Read this article by clicking on:

http://www.eoearth.org/article/Condition_of_U.S._Butterflies_and_Moths?topic=49548

5 ARTICLE ON BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT BY ANN SWENGEL

[Editor's Note: Ann Swengel is an internationally known butterfly expert. She and husband Scott live in Baraboo, WI. SWBA has begun posting Ann's comprehensive article on butterfly conservation management in 7 parts on the SWBA web site www.naba.org/chapters/nabawba/. Parts 1 - 4, and Part 5 are currently available as downloadable PDF files. Just click on the links below. The remaining parts will be filled in as we receive them. Everyone is encouraged to peruse this important article.]

Butterfly Conservation Management in Midwestern Open Habitats

By Ann B. Swengel

Another name for this could be, "How do I proceed when habitat management recommendations are so confusing and contradictory?" Butterfly declines and losses are being documented in the Midwest, and not just in the larger landscape, and not just in small, isolated preserves, but also in large, high-quality nature preserves. Habitat management is a factor that can contribute to declines but can also help secure and recover butterfly populations. Habitat management is also one of the factors most within the control of humans. This is good news, because it gives us an opportunity to make a significant difference in conserving butterflies. Each part below begins with a one-paragraph

summary of its contents. In these sections, I provide an overview of the issues and problems, my views on how science works, what it can and can't do, how seemingly conflicting science can be reconciled, what I've learned from my field work and readings, and how I recommend moving forward based on both what has been documented and what isn't known yet. I encourage you to skip around to the parts applicable to your questions or situation. I hope this is helpful for understanding what the situation is for Midwestern butterflies of open habitats and what you and I can do to help them.

To download the PDF files click on the links below:

Part 1: [What am I writing about, and why?](#) Posted April 2011

Part 2: [This science is controversial, isn't it?](#) Posted April 2011

Part 3: [How does habitat management affect butterflies?](#) Posted April 2011

Part 4: [How do I recommend proceeding forward?](#) Posted April 2011

Part 4b: Brief management recommendations To be posted

Part 5: [Frequent feedbacks](#) Posted April 2011

Part 6: Surveying and monitoring butterflies To be posted

Part 7: Plantings (habitat creation) To be posted

[Acknowledgments](#)

6 VOLUNTEERS REQUESTED FOR REGAL FRITILLARY SURVEYS

Counting Regal Fritillary Butterflies in the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area

By Ruth Kearley

Do you want to contribute to conservation while enjoying nature? Specifically, how about a chance to sweat on sunny, low-wind days in treeless prairie for the sake of scientific inquiry regarding a state endangered species? If not for science, would you do it for love, or beauty, or ethics?

Last summer, with the help of a Citizen-Based Monitoring Grant from the Wisconsin DNR to The Prairie Enthusiasts, 15 volunteers and 7 staff from three agencies started a long-term program to monitor Regal Fritillary presence on remnant and restored prairies in the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area in eastern Iowa Co. and western Dane Co. The Regal Fritillary is listed as a Federal Species of Concern. Once widespread, it has nearly disappeared from east of the Mississippi. In Wisconsin it is listed as Endangered due to low or declining populations and is considered critically imperiled because of its vulnerability to extinction within the state. Occurrences have been documented in 14 counties in Wisconsin through the Natural Heritage Inventory program, but currently there are only 3 or 4 areas where potentially viable populations still persist.

The Regal Fritillary is a striking orange, black and white butterfly slightly smaller than a Monarch. The larvae depend on violets for food, and the adults require open prairie habitat. To prevent overgrowth by brush or the incursion of trees or take over by non-native cool-season grasses, prairies must be managed through controlled burns, mowing, and/or mechanical clearing of woody growth, all of which have the potential to positively or negatively impact Regal Fritillary populations. The monitoring

program seeks to increase our understanding of how Regals respond to management of prairie remnants and to creation of new habitat.

The goal of the program is for consistent long-term monitoring on sites with known or potential Regal Fritillary presence. Last summer 18 sites were monitored. These sites include privately owned lands as well as preserves owned by The Prairie Enthusiasts and The Nature Conservancy. Sixty-two transects were established across the sites for counting observations of Regal Fritillaries, and 23 additional areas were monitored for the presence of the butterfly. Altogether there were 748 sightings of Regal Fritillaries made over 113 volunteer hours.

Because the monitoring program has only one season of data, not much can be said about the results. It will be several years before analysis of the data will start. The significance of the first season was getting an enthusiastic group of volunteers involved and getting them started!

However, more volunteers are still needed.

Would you like to participate? No previous experience is required, just a love of nature and the outdoors and tolerance for warm sunny days. Training will be provided. We are, however, looking for commitment over several seasons. The monitoring program runs June 25-July 31 with each monitoring team making four visits to their site spaced about a week apart. The monitoring training program has an evening and a field component. Training opportunities will start in May. Please join us in this important endeavor! Contact Ruth Kearley (rekearley@gmail.com or 729-4050) to sign up or to learn more.



Regal Fritillary
Photo by Mike Reese

7 BUTTERFLIES AND SPIES?!

Stan Rehm's blog page has a short mention of "Spies Masquerading as Butterfly Enthusiasts" and shows a drawing of a butterfly that contains the outline of a fortress with details on their guns:

<http://tywkiwdbi.blogspot.com/2011/03/spies-masquerading-as-butterfly.html>

Another blog (quoted and cited in Stan's article) by Richard Conniff, has an interesting article on "Species Seekers and Spies" : <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/20/species-seekers-and-spies/>

8 BUTTERFLY SIGHTINGS, MARCH 2011: SEVEN YEARS COMPARED

Here are the data on **March** butterfly sightings reported over the past 7 years on www.wisconsinbutterflies.org

YEAR	REPORTS	BUTTERFLIES	SPECIES	Number of Species	DATES	Number of Days
2005	1	1	Eastern Comma	1	28	1
2006	4	4	Eastern Comma Milbert's Tortoiseshell Compton Tortoiseshell	3	11, 17, 28	3
2007	7	11	Eastern Comma Milbert's Tortoiseshell Compton Tortoiseshell Mourning Cloak	4	22, 25	2
2008	3	3	Mourning Cloak	1	26, 28, 29	3
2009	10	17	Eastern Comma Compton Tortoiseshell Mourning Cloak	3	16, 17, 21, 22	4
2010	28	50	Eastern Comma Milbert's Tortoiseshell Compton Tortoiseshell Mourning Cloak Cabbage White Gray Comma	6	6, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 23, 28, 30, 31	11
2011	4	4	Eastern Comma Milbert's Tortoiseshell	2	19	1

The best March butterfly observations of the last 7 years occurred in 2007 (11), 2009 (17) and 2010 (50). This past March (2011) had 4 reports (about average), of 4 butterflies (about average), of 2 species (a little below average) on only 1 suitable day (reflecting a relatively cold March). We hope April provides better weather for butterflies! Be sure and send in your sightings to Mike Reese's web site www.wisconsinbutterflies.org

9 PHOTO EXHIBIT AT OAKWOOD VILLAGE

From March 1 to April 29, **Ann Thering's** photo exhibit, "Pretty Things with Wings", will be at Oakwood Village West, 6205 Mineral Point Road in Madison. It presents 30 images of bugs you will want to get a closer look at!

The Badger ButterFlyer flits to you every month (every other month in winter). The next issue will be in MAY.

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