

Badger Butterfly

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

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

1 HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MAY SWBA MEETING

On May 5 our speaker, Jessica Miller, gave a fascinating and highly informative program on the amazing life and migration of Monarchs. She gave a detailed picture of Monarch biology and related her experience of seeing the awesome millions of Monarchs at the overwintering grounds in central Mexico! Jessica explained the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project and invited everyone to participate. Her program was enthusiastically received and many questions were asked and discussed. Our thanks to Jessica for an outstanding presentation. (See articles #2 and 3 for details about the “citizen science” Monarch Larva Monitoring Project.)

Election of Officers: A continuing slate of Officers was elected: President Joan Braune, Vice-President Karl Legler, Treasurer Ginny Nelson and Secretary Dorothy Legler.

Show and Tell: Seven people brought sets of digital photos of interesting butterflies for discussion.

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Naturalist Jessica Miller



2 GET INVOLVED:

THE MONARCH LARVA MONITORING PROJECT

Join the MLMP and contribute to Monarch research and conservation.

What is the MLMP? The Monarch Larva Monitoring Project is a citizen science study of Monarch egg and caterpillar densities in North America. Since 1996, many hundreds of students, teachers, naturalists, and other citizens have collected data at sites of their choosing during the Monarch breeding season. The data is sent to the University of Minnesota, and used to aid scientists

in international efforts to conserve and understand Monarchs and their phenomenal annual migration.

How Do I Participate?

1. **Pick a Site.** Any place with milkweed is a place to monitor. This can be at your home, at a nearby park, or wildlife area.
2. **Monitor.** You will visit your site approximately weekly throughout the Monarch season. At the site, record the number of Monarch eggs and caterpillars found on milkweed plants. (You can attend a

training session for MLMP on Saturday, June 25 at Mosquito Hill Nature Center. See Article #3 below.)

3. Collaborate. Data submission, research information, and questions can be communicated to University of Minnesota Monarch scientists through the website: www.mlmp.org.

Involve Kids!

This is a great way to share the learning and joy of nature observation with children, grandchildren, neighbors, or students.

Join the MLMP today at www.mlmp.org and be part of something fun, while helping Monarchs, too!

3 MLMP TRAINING AT MOSQUITO HILL NATURE CENTER

Jessica Miller is a Naturalist and Education Coordinator at Mosquito Hill Nature Center in New London, WI and a regional facilitator for the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project, a program run by the University of Minnesota. Jessica provides expertise in training citizen scientists to identify

Monarch eggs, caterpillars and their stages of growth.

The training session is **FREE** and held from **12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 25, 2011**. Register by June 18. To participate, call Mosquito Hill Nature Center at (920) 779-6433.

4 HIGHLIGHTS OF JACKSON COUNTY FIELD TRIP

This year was the first time that SWBA's annual field trip to the Bauer Brockway Barrens in Jackson County had been offered on a weekend instead of during the week. The trip (lead by Mike Reese) was scheduled for Saturday, May 21. Unfortunately, the weather forecast was stormy so we postponed the trip to Sunday, May 22. Understandably, many of the people that had registered for the trip could not attend on Sunday. Nevertheless we had an enthusiastic group of 7 people. The ground was littered with spring flowers that provided nectar for butterflies. While we ate lunch a



Eastern Pine Elfin on Violet



Enjoying butterflies with binoculars and camera!

thunderstorm passed through, but after lunch the rain stopped and the sun reappeared. We continued butterflying and searched for the very rare and threatened Frosted Elfin. Jeanette Klodzen had come all the way from the Chicago area to see and photograph the Frosted. Fittingly, after a long search, it was Jeanette that finally spotted one, and we all got to enjoy it!

The highlight of the trip: we found all 5 of the state's Elfins -- which mostly only fly in May. In spite of the exceptionally cool spring, we saw 127 butterflies of 18 species. (The most interesting and unusual species are highlighted in bold type.)

Eastern Tailed-Blue 4
Gorgone Checkerspot 4
American Copper 1
Henry's Elfin 3
Hoary Elfin 9
Brown Elfin 1
Eastern Pine Elfin 6

Frosted Elfin 1
Monarch 1
American Lady 1
Cobweb Skipper 4
Dreamy Duskywing 2
Juvenal's Duskywing 39
Persius Duskywing 15

Sleepy Duskywing 5
Clouded Sulphur 1
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail 1
Olympia Marble 29

EPILOGUE: Unbeknownst to us, Ann and Scott Swengel happened to do a Frosted Elfin survey a few miles away on the same day! Since their area is within the 15 mile diameter circle for the Wazee Spring Count we can include all of their results when we submit our sightings to NABA. The combined groups found a total of 26 species! Species added by the Swengels were Black Swallowtail, **Gray Hairstreak**, Spring Azure, **Silvery Blue**, Meadow Fritillary, Northern Crescent, Mourning Cloak and the **Columbine Duskywing**.

5 NEXT FIELD TRIPS

Our field trips are **free** (except July 2) and open to the public.

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



Baltimore Checkerspot

pants, a hat, 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.

Saturday, June 25: Butterflies of Cherokee Marsh

On this morning walk we'll observe and learn about butterflies, those small but exquisitely beautiful creatures that dance about our ankles in summer. Conservation Biologist Kathy Kirk will lead this 2 hour walk at Cherokee Marsh on the northeast side of Madison. We will observe a variety of butterflies as they take nectar from wildflowers, and learn about their identification, behavior, and lifestyle. Bring binoculars if you have them — close-focusing ones work best. We have a

few extra pairs of binoculars. It's best to wear long pants and a hat for protection from the sun. This is a joint trip of SWBA with Madison Audubon Society and Friends of Cherokee Marsh.

Meet at 10:00 a.m. On the north side of Madison take Northport Drive (Highway 113) then turn north on Sherman Ave. Meet at the Cherokee Marsh parking lot at the north end of Sherman Ave. Call Kathy at (608) 442-1642, only if you have a question about the trip.

Saturday, July 2: Madison Butterfly Count

This is our **21st annual butterfly count!** Co-sponsors are the Madison Audubon Society and the UW Arboretum. Each summer butterfly enthusiasts all over North America participate in more than 483 censuses of butterfly species. Each count is similar to a Christmas Bird Count. These censuses help to monitor the health of our butterfly populations and the results are published in an annual report for North America. If you can identify butterflies, or can help spot butterflies, or just want to see and learn about butterflies, join us on this 3 hour count/field trip. Bring binoculars, the closer they focus the better. (We have a few extra binoculars.)

Dress for protection from the heat and sun, a hat

is recommended. The North American Butterfly Association (NABA) requires a **\$3.00 fee** from each participant to help cover publishing costs.

Meet at 9 a.m. at the parking lot for the Grady Tract in the UW Arboretum. We will count until about noon. DIRECTIONS: Heading west on the Beltline (Hwy 12), take the Seminole Hwy exit and then turn left (south) on Seminole Hwy driving across the bridge over the Beltline turning immediately into the parking lot for the Grady Tract. If you have a question about the butterfly count, contact leaders Karl and Dorothy Legler at (608) 643-4926 or karlndot@charter.net

Monday, July 4: Butterflies and Dragonflies of Swamp Lovers Preserve

This preserve is on private land. It consists of remnant wetlands, remnant bluff prairie, restored tall grass prairie, and dry hilly oak-hickory woodland. We will observe and learn about various butterflies and dragonflies as we explore the preserve. Bring binoculars (close-focusing ones work best) -- or just get close! At the top of the ridge we will picnic at a shelter. Bring your own food and drink. Leaders are Tod Highsmith, Karl and Dorothy Legler. This SWBA trip is co-

sponsored by the Madison Audubon Society and Wisconsin Wetlands Association.

Meet at 9:30 a.m. This trip will last until 1:00 p.m. **DIRECTIONS:** Travel west from Cross Plains on Hwy 14. Just outside town take County KP to the right (north), go about 1.3 mile and turn left at the Swamp-Lovers sign. Call Karl Legler at (608) 643-4926 or cell (608) 228-0743 only if you have a question about the trip or the weather is questionable.

6 UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Details in next issue of the Badger ButterflyFlyer, or see the SWBA web site:

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

- ◆ **Sunday, July 17: Pretty Things With Wings: Birds, Butterflies and Dragonflies of Lakeshore Nature Preserve --- (Edgar Spalding)**
- ◆ **Saturday, August 13: Butterflies of the Avoca/Blue River Area --- (Mike Reese)**
- ◆ **Saturday, August 27: Butterflies and Blossoms at Pheasant Branch --- (Dreux Watermolen)**
- ◆ **Saturday, September 3: Grasshoppers!! --- (Kathy Kirk)**

7 BUTTERFLY GARDENING

(This is a reprint of an article published in the newsletter of the Sauk County Master Gardeners in July, 2010.)

Who Was That Lady I Saw You With -- In Your Garden?

By Dorothy Legler

As I was walking through my butterfly garden a while ago, I noticed that the top leaves of my **pearly everlasting** (*Anaphlis margaritacea*) were pulled together. Ah, I know who does that! It's the caterpillar of the **American Lady**. Each caterpillar has its own little web nest with pulled together leaves. I ran into the house for my camera. I gently pulled apart the leaves and there was the beautiful caterpillar. After some photos I carefully tried to put the leaves back in place. Young caterpillars use plant hairs for their nest, and when they are older the leaves are silked together. I have read that they feed



American Lady Caterpillar



American Lady

at night for protection against predators.

Later that day, while working outside, who should appear but an adult **American Lady** butterfly! The adult butterflies hibernate over winter. Host plants that eggs are laid on include everlastings, pussy toes, weedy thistles, cudweeds (*Gnaphalium*) and other plants.

I ordered some **pussytoes** (*Antennaria neglecta*) this year but wasn't successful growing them. They prefer dry (and stony) to mesic prairies and open woodlands. Often they grow in degraded habitats. They would do well in a



Pussy Toes

rock garden. *A. plantaginifolia* is another pussytoes species. Both are available from Prairie Moon Nursery (Winona, Minnesota) <http://www.prairiemoon.com/> *A. neglecta* is sold at The Flower Factory Nursery (Stoughton, WI) <http://www.theflowerfactorynursery.com/index.asp>

Pussytoes can be grown from collected seed. Various methods can be used:

- 1.) The seeds can be planted in flats in the summer or fall and placed in a coldframe over winter, outside. Then in early spring bring in to warmer temperatures (50 degrees at night and no more than 80 degrees during the day) to give them an early start. After they're developed true leaves (first pair are seed leaves) they should be potted up singly.
- 2.) The seeds can be planted directly in the ground in late fall.
- 3.) The seeds can be planted in flats in the spring and will need stratification 1-4 months at 32 - 41 degrees.
- 4.) The plant clumps can be easily divided in the spring or fall and reproduce by rhizomes.

(Prairie Moon Nursery says it is not sure which method works best for seed germination.) **Pearly everlasting** plants are available from The Flower Factory and seed from Prairie Moon Nursery. Enjoy your garden visitors!

2011 UPDATE: This month Dorothy again has found American Lady caterpillars in the leaves of pearly everlasting in her yard!!

8 BUTTERFLIES REPORTED IN MAY TO www.wisconsinbutterflies.org

It was a cool spring this year, producing fewer butterflies than last year. Still, there were plenty of butterflies reported. In the table below we list the species seen in May and give the date it was first seen.

The ones in **bold type** have only a single brood each year and fly only or mostly in May. The others will have one or more additional generations during the summer. The three species marked in **red** are ones that migrated into the state. (The rest are permanent residents in Wisconsin.)



Gray Hairstreak

These new May species bring the total reported for the year to 50 species. And many more to come!!

FIRST SIGHTINGS OF THE YEAR, IN MAY, 2011

| DATE | SPECIES | DATE | SPECIES | DATE | SPECIES |
|-------|---------------------------|------|----------------------------|------|----------------------------|
| May 4 | Silvery Blue | 12 | Eastern Pine Elfin | 20 | Chryxus Arctic |
| 4 | Clouded Sulphur | 12 | Painted Lady | 20 | Common Roadside Skipper |
| 6 | Eastern Tiger Swallowtail | 15 | Meadow Fritillary | 22 | Frosted Elfin |
| 7 | Brown Elfin | 16 | Juniper Hairstreak | 22 | Cobweb Skipper |
| 7 | Hoary Elfin | 16 | Eastern Tailed Blue | 22 | Northern Crescent |
| 7 | Juvenals Duskywing | 17 | Columbine Duskywing | 22 | Silver-spotted Skipper |
| 8 | Black Swallowtail | 17 | White Admiral | 22 | Gray Hairstreak* |
| 10 | Monarch | 18 | Western Tailed Blue | 28 | Dusted Skipper |
| 10 | Orange Sulphur | 18 | Mottled Duskywing | 28 | Northern Cloudywing |
| 10 | Pearl Crescent | 18 | Persius Duskywing | 30 | Silver-bordered Fritillary |
| 11 | Henry's Elfin | 19 | Harvester | 30 | Canadian Tiger Swallowtail |
| 11 | Dreamy Duskywing | 19 | American Copper | | |
| 11 | Sleepy Duskywing | 19 | Gorgone Checkerspot | | |

*Gray Hairstreak was seen but not reported to the website.

WHAT WILL BE FLYING IN JUNE?

Look for these butterflies (and others) in June: Eastern Tailed Blue, Summer Azure, Karner Blue (Central WI), Red-spotted Purple, Viceroy, Hackberry Emperor, Little Wood Satyr, Silver-spotted Skipper, and Hobomok Skipper.

Keep sending your sightings to Mike Reese's outstanding, award-winning, web site:

www.wisconsinbutterflies.org

The database this builds up is crucial to our understanding of Wisconsin butterflies! You can also submit a photo to the site and see what butterflies are being seen around the state, and enjoy the photos that others are taking, as the butterfly season unfolds. **TRY IT!**

9 TWO ART EXHIBITS AT MOSQUITO HILL NATURE CENTER

(Mosquito Hill Nature Center is located at N3880 Rogers Road, New London, WI)

ANITA CARPENTER

Saturday, July 9 - Sunday, July 10

Quilts: by Anita Carpenter

Meet The Artist: Saturday, July 9 & Sunday, July 10 10:00-3:00 PM

First there were birds. Then butterflies. After years of observing birds, insects, animals and plants, Anita was on first-name terms with the flora and fauna of Wisconsin. Anita began taking her years of nature observations and portraying them in nature-related quilts. First butterflies, then whole nature scenes, each depicting a certain ecosystem, always scientifically correct in terms of the plants, animals and insects and their relationship to each other. Anita commits these scenes to fabric, resulting in the beautiful art quilts that she will showcase, with such titles as "Forest Floor Mystery Quilt", "Anita's Amanita", Wisconsin Beetles" and more. (Anita Carpenter is a SWBA member from Oshkosh.)

MIKE REESE

Saturday, July 16 - Sunday, August 28

Wisconsin Butterflies: Photography by Mike Reese

Meet The Artist Reception: Saturday, July 16 12:00-3:00 PM

Mike Reese has been taking photos of butterflies for over two decades. He has had photos of butterflies and other insects published in eight books and several magazines, and has shared his photos with nonprofit groups and governmental groups throughout the United States and Canada. Mike has edited the North American Butterfly Association butterfly sightings page for a decade, and has written a "Hot Seens" column for their quarterly magazine American Butterflies since 2003. In addition, he has maintained a web site on Wisconsin butterflies since 2003, a Wisconsin butterfly sightings page since 2006, and has spent many hours traveling the state and elsewhere to try to obtain photos of all the species that have ever been seen flying in Wisconsin.

(Mike Reese is a SWBA member from Wautoma.)

10 UPCOMING NABA BUTTERFLY COUNTS

- ❖ Mud Lake (Columbia County) Wednesday, June 29, 2011
- ❖ Madison (Dane County) Saturday, July 2, 2011 (See field trip description in article #5)
- ❖ Trempealeau (Trempealeau County) Tuesday, July 12, 2011

To participate, contact the SWBA count coordinators: Karl and Dorothy Legler, karlndot@charter.net (608) 643-4926. (NABA charges a \$3 fee to participate in a count, to help defray the cost of publication of the results.)

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

Officers of SWBA:

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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. 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 Web site at <http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabawba/>

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

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