

Badger Butterfly

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

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

1 NEXT FIELD TRIPS

to the public.

Our field trips are free and open

Sunday, July 17: Pretty Things with Wings: Birds, Butterflies and Dragonflies of Lakeshore Nature Preserve

On this two hour walk in the Picnic Point area we expect to see interesting bird species and at least half a dozen species of dragonflies and twice as many different butterflies. The walking route will include the edge of Mendota's University Bay, the woods of Picnic Point, and the Biocore Prairie. Bring your binoculars--the closer they focus the better. This trip is co-sponsored by SWBA, Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve and the Madison Audubon Society. The trip leader is Edgar Spalding.

Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Picnic Point Parking Lot, along University Bay Drive, on the UW campus. Call Edgar at (608) 265-5294 or 831-0616 only if you have a question about the trip or if the weather is questionable.

Saturday, August 13: Butterflies of the Avoca/Blue River Area

This trip will highlight several areas in the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway, including Avoca Prairie and Savanna State Natural Area in Iowa County, Blue River unit in Grant County and along the Wisconsin River north of Blue River. Leader will be Mike Reese. We expect to see late butterflies and several southern immigrants. A hat and long pants are recommended. Bring a lunch and binoculars (the closer they focus the better). A few extra binoculars are available. This is a joint trip of SWBA and the Madison Audubon Society.

Meet at 10:30 a.m. The trip may last until 4 p.m. Allow 50 minute travel time from Middleton. Take Hwy 14 west to Lone Rock, south on Hwy 130 then turn right on Hwy 133. Go west about 5.0 miles, turn right on Hay Rd, and drive north to the parking lot just before the creek. Call Mike at (920) 787-2341 if you have a question about the trip.

IN THIS ISSUE:

1. Next FIELD TRIPS.
2. Highlights of Pleasant Valley.
3. Highlights of Cherokee Marsh.
4. Results of the Madison Count.
5. Highlights of Swamp Lovers.
6. Upcoming Field Trips.
7. Rare Butterflies of June.

2 HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PLEASANT VALLEY FIELD TRIP



Pleasant Valley Conservancy became a State Natural Area in 2007. About 20 people participated in SWBA's Pleasant Valley field trip, led by Ann Thering and the Brocks. We toured savannah, prairie and wetland, over varying topography. Besides butterflies, we found a singing Orchard Oriole!

Here are the 29 species of butterfly seen on the walk. Those marked in **bold** were especially nice finds.

Black Swallowtail 7
Giant Swallowtail 3
 Eastern Tiger Swallowtail 3
 Cabbage White 1
 Clouded Sulphur 1
 Orange Sulphur 1
Bronze Copper 1
 Banded Hairstreak 1
 Eastern Tailed-Blue 1
 Summer Azure 7

Great Spangled Fritillary 5+
Aphrodite Fritillary 1
Meadow Fritillary 5
Silvery Checkerspot 30+
 Pearl Crescent 20+
Baltimore Checkerspot 20+
 Question Mark 1
 American Lady 3
 Red-spotted Purple 1
 Hackberry Emperor 3

Eyed Brown 3
 Little Wood-Satyr 2
 Monarch 4
 Silver-spotted Skipper 6
Northern Cloudywing 2
 Juvenal's Duskywing 2
 Least Skipper 35+
 European Skipper 10
Tawny-edged Skipper 2
 Long Dash 3

3 HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BUTTERFLIES OF CHEROKEE MARSH FIELD TRIP

A large group of **36 people** attended the field trip at Cherokee Marsh! We saw 13 species of butterfly. We also observed a Garter Snake and, once again we encountered the strange larva of the Ragweed leaf beetle (*Zygogramma suturalis*) that uses a ball of fecal matter at the end of its abdomen as a defensive “false head”.



We had good views of the Baltimore Checkerspot, a wetland species that utilizes Turtlehead. Here is what we saw:

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail 1
 Cabbage White 2
 Banded Hairstreak 1
 Summer Azure 12
 Great Spangled Fritillary 2

Pearl Crescent **100**
Baltimore Checkerspot 2
 Mourning Cloak 1
 Viceroy 1
 Hackberry Emperor 5

Eyed Brown 1
 Silver-spotted Skipper 1
 Least Skipper **100**

4 RESULTS OF THE MADISON BUTTERFLY COUNT

Nearly 500 recurring butterfly counts are done each year in North America under the North American Butterfly Association. (SWBA is a Wisconsin chapter of NABA). The Madison Butterfly Count has been conducted for 21 years! **In 2011 a total of 11 counters participated in the survey finding 655 individuals of 34 species.**



Hickory Hairstreak
 Photo by Glenda Denniston



American Snout
 Photo by Edgar Spalding

The most unusual find was a **Hickory Hairstreak**, the first one recorded on this count! It is also the first new species for the count in 4 years. The **cumulative count total** for all years is now 72 species! **Variiegated Fritillary** (a migrant), found by Dave Fallow, is extremely scarce, and was only the 2nd sighting on the count in 21 years! **American Snout** (another migrant) is a rarity, seen on only 4 counts previously. **Aphrodite Fritillary** was a good find. This is only the 2nd time in the past 12 years! **Tawny Emperor** is always a nice find. We see them on an average of about every 3rd year.

The most ominous finding was that the **Monarch** (10) had the lowest number of individuals per hour in the 21 years. This is presumably due to the severe drought in Texas which has reduced the spring brood of migrating Monarchs. They really don't need a bad year since their numbers at the overwintering site in central Mexico have been rather low compared to previous years.



Tawny Emperor.
 Photo: Glenda Denniston

Here are the results. The scarce species are indicated in **bold**.

Black Swallowtail 3	American Snout 1	Tawny Emperor 2
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail 1	Variagated Fritillary 1	Northern Pearly-Eye 3
Cabbage White 110	Great Spangled Fritillary 50	Eyed Brown 6
Clouded Sulphur 14	Aphrodite Fritillary 2	Little Wood-Satyr 3
Bronze Copper 3	Pearl Crescent 96	Monarch 9
Coral Hairstreak 3	Baltimore Checkerspot 14	Silver-spotted Skipper 20
Edward's Hairstreak 13	Question Mark 2	Least Skipper 196
Banded Hairstreak 42	American Lady 1	European Skipper 6
Striped Hairstreak 1	Red-spotted Purple 1	Peck's Skipper 1
Eastern Tailed-Blue 1	Viceroy 2	Long Dash 6
Summer Azure 35	Hackberry Emperor 3	Mulberry Wing 3

The **655 individuals** is the 4th highest count. However, on an individuals per hour basis this count had about an average year. The **34 species** is also about average.

The advantage of doing this count is that it allows us to quantify butterfly populations from year to year so that our vague impressions about the populations can be tested, corrected and sharpened by actual data. The data from this count will be published in the 2011 NABA Butterfly Counts Report.

5 HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SWAMP LOVERS FIELD TRIP

This year we had a nice sunny, warm day for the trip to Swamp Lovers, which is a private preserve of over 600 acres. The owners, Gerry Goth and Lee Swanson, brought coffeecake for everyone and explained the restorations of the past 15 years. The 20+ participants toured sedge meadow, prairie and ponds. We saw an **impressive 28 species of butterfly** including 2 species of Swallowtail, wetland species (Bronze Copper, Meadow Fritillary, Baltimore Checkerspot, Eyed Brown and Mulberry



20+ people watch and learn about butterflies and dragonflies.



Eyed Brown

Wing) plus Gray Comma, Common Buckeye and the uncommon Columbine Duskywing. We also found **11 species of Dragonfly** including Banded Meadowhawk, Eastern Amberwing, Blue Dasher, Twelve-spotted Skimmer and Widow Skimmer. We observed various behaviors such as mating, egg-laying and males “guarding” the females.

We finished with a picnic at the shelter on top of the hill. After the picnic some folks continued butterflying on the hilltop and were rewarded with Coral Hairstreak and other butterflies.

6 UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

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

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

- ◆ Saturday, August 27: Butterflies and Blossoms at Pheasant Branch --- (Dreux Watermolen)
- ◆ Saturday, September 3: Grasshoppers!! --- (Kathy Kirk)

7 BUTTERFLIES REPORTED IN JUNE TO www.wisconsinbutterflies.org

Some 242 reports were received, from around the state, detailing the occurrence of thousands of individual butterflies. Strong southerly winds and drought in the South may send a few rare strays northward to Wisconsin. Several rarities were reported during the month of June:

Greenish Blue
Karner Blue
Reakirt's Blue
Western Tailed-Blue
Harris' Checkerspot

Tawny Crescent
Bog Fritillary
Chryxus Arctic
Two-spotted Skipper
Mottled Duskywing

Persius Duskywing
Zebra Swallowtail
Checkered White

The three species marked in **bold** are not permanent residents. They get to Wisconsin by straying northward from regions to the south. The Reakirt's Blue and Zebra Swallowtail are very rare.

WHAT WILL BE FLYING IN JULY?

Look for these butterflies (and others) in July: the 2nd generation of Swallowtails, Hairstreaks, Eastern Tailed-Blue, Summer Azure, Great Spangled Fritillary, Aphrodite Fritillary, Baltimore Checkerspot, summer generation of Anglewings (Eastern Comma, Question Mark), Mourning Cloak, 2nd generation of the American Lady, a few Red Admirals, Common Wood-Nymph, Monarch, Silver-spotted Skipper and Northern Broken-Dash.

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!**

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

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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.