

Badger ButterFlyer

The e-Newsletter of the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association **JUNE, 2012**

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

1 HIGHLIGHTS OF BUTTERFLIES OF BAUER BROCKWAY BARRENS (JACKSON COUNTY)



Here, 13 of the 18 participants get ready to search for the very rare Frosted Elfin. Leader Mike Reese was temporarily on crutches due to recent surgery for a muscle injury.



The gang discusses the identification of a very worn Elfin. (Photo by Stan Rehm.)

Our annual Jackson County trip was attended by 18 butterflies. Some came from as far away as Minnesota, Illinois and even a group came from the Massachusetts Butterfly Club (another chapter of NABA)! We faced several challenges this year: our leader, Mike Reese, was on crutches. The stretch of 16 days of temperatures in the 70's and 80's in mid-March had caused flight periods to be weeks earlier, making it hard to foresee exactly what would be flying for this trip. And it was a hot day, with a temperature of 91°! (Tod Highsmith reflected that "It hasn't been this hot since . . .uhhh . . . mid-March!")

In an ordinary year we would see scarce spring species, but this year some of these had already completed their flight before the trip. The field trip portion of the day missed Olympia Marble but other spring species were detected such as Indian Skipper and Cobweb Skipper. As usual we had big numbers of the beautiful Gorgone Checkerspot. And fortunately the Frosted Elfin tends to fly in late spring, so we were able to see one laying eggs on the buds of its caterpillar food plant, Lupine. We also report the trip results to the NABA butterfly count program and several people continued recording butterflies, after the field trip, for another 2 hours. All told the trip found a record number of butterflies! 455 butterflies of 42 species! The table shows the number of species seen in each of the 6 years this field trip has been run. This year we had

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YEAR:	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
SPECIES:	26	22	16	25	18	42
INDIVIDUALS:	252	233	180	338	129	455

a very large increase in number of species and individuals found! This is partly a phenomenon of the advanced flight schedule which meant that we saw

not only many of the lingering spring species but also saw many summer species, which were also flying early. The result was a good diversity of butterflies. A second factor was the migration from the south due to the warm winds that had wafted southern butterflies northward in March. It is really amazing to see southern immigrants (Orange Sulphur, Gray Hairstreak, Painted Lady, Common Buckeye and Common Checkered-Skipper) in central Wisconsin in May!

Altogether we found 15 species that had not been seen in the previous 5 years (*)! Below is the list of all the species seen on the Bauer Brockway Barrens field trip/count. **Bold type** indicates the more interesting sightings.

Red-spotted Purple* 1	Frosted Elfin 2	Dreamy Duskywing 1
White Admiral* 2	Silver-bordered Fritillary* 1	Juvenal's Duskywing 16
Viceroy* 2	Gray Hairstreak* 1	Persius Duskywing 12
Question Mark* 3	American Lady 10	Sleepy Duskywing 1
Eastern Tailed-Blue 1	Painted Lady* 1	Arctic Skipper 1
Karner Blue 43	Red Admiral 1	Common Checkered-Skipper* 1
Silvery Blue 8	Monarch 17	Clouded Sulphur 9
Spring Azure 1	Common Ringlet 13	Orange Sulphur* 4
Common Buckeye* 3	Little Wood-Satyr* 3	Black Swallowtail 1
Gorgone Checkerspot 146	Cobweb Skipper 1	Canadian Tiger Swallowtail 56
American Copper 17	Dusted Skipper 47	Milbert's Tortoiseshell* 1
Northern Crescent* 4	Hobomok Skipper 19	Mourning Cloak 4
Eastern Pine Elfin 2	Indian Skipper* 1	Olympia Marble 1
Hoary Elfin 1	Peck's Skipper* 1	
Henry's Elfin 1	Northern Cloudywing 2	

2 NEXT FIELD TRIPS Mark your calendars!

Saturday, June 16–Butterflies & Wildflowers at Pleasant Valley Conservancy

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. This time of year we hope to see Baltimore Checkerspots and perhaps some wetland skippers. Other possible butterfly species include swallowtails, Silvery Checkerspot, fritillaries, and blues. All of these butterflies will have many wonderful native plants to nectar on this time of year. We will be hiking about two miles. Long pants, a hat, water, and sturdy hiking shoes are recommended. Leaders are Ann Thering and Tom and Kathie Brock. This is a joint trip of SWBA with the Madison Audubon Society and The Prairie Enthusiasts. Optional: bring along a bag lunch for after the field trip; beverages and dessert will be



Baltimore Checkerspot

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](tel:6082385050), tdbrock@charter.net, or Ann: acthering@gmail.com, [\(608\) 836-1097](tel:6088361097).

Meet at 11:00 a.m. (Trip will last until 12:30 or so.) **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 (past the buildings on the right) to the state natural area sign. Park off the road. We'll meet near the sign/gate area and then proceed into the wetland.

Saturday, June 30: 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. Karl and Dorothy Legler 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



Great Spangled Fritillary

Audubon Society, and Friends of Cherokee Marsh.

Meet at 10:00 a.m. **DIRECTIONS:** 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 the Leglers at (608) 643-4926, only if you have a question about the trip.

Sunday, July 1: Madison Butterfly Count

This is our **22nd annual butterfly count!** Co-sponsors are Southern Wis. Butterfly Association, UW Arboretum and Madison Audubon Society. Each summer NABA 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



Edward's Hairstreak

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

Saturday, July 7: Butterflies of Sandhill Wildlife Area (Wood Co.)

The Sandhill State Wildlife Area, in Wood County, covers more than 14 square miles. It is managed by the Wisconsin DNR as a living laboratory for wildlife management techniques. Sandhill has large marshes and many flowages, interspersed with low sandy uplands, pine and oak barrens and restored prairies. Butterfly enthusiast **Ron Arnold** has been surveying the butterflies at Sandhill for 21 years. On this trip Ron will lead us in finding such beauties as Acadian and Coral Hairstreaks, Aphrodite Fritillary, the rare Two-spotted Skipper, Bronze Copper, Eyed Brown, Northern Pearly-eye, White Admiral and many others. Skippers will include Black Dash, Broad-winged, Dion, Long Dash and many others. We may see the beautiful Baltimore Checkerspot, Harris' Checkerspot and the **Federally Endangered Karner Blue**. If time permits, we could also visit a nearby spruce/tamarack bog. (If you want to walk in the bog bring boots. Bog Coppers have been seen there.)



Karner Blue (female)

Bring binoculars, the closer they focus the better. (We will have a few extra pairs of binoculars.) Also bring insect repellent to protect against mosquitoes, and ticks. A hat, long sleeves and long pants are recommended. Bring a bag lunch and water. This is a joint trip of SWBA and the Madison Audubon Society.

Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Sandhill Headquarters parking lot. (The tour will last until 3:00 p.m.)

DIRECTIONS: Take I-90/94 up to the New Lisbon area in Juneau Co. and take Hwy 80 north. In Wood County, just 1/3 mile before Babcock, turn left onto County X. Go 1 1/4 mile on X to the Sandhill entrance. (Allow at least 1 hour and 45 minutes for travel.) Call Ron at (715) 424-2996 if you have a question about the trip. On the day of the trip, Ron will have his cell phone on: (715) 741-0052. (If rain threatens, call Ron to see if the trip must be cancelled due to weather.)

3 UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

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

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

Sunday, July 15: Pretty Things with Wings: Birds, Butterflies and Dragonflies of Lakeshore Nature Preserve (Edgar Spalding)

Saturday, July 21: Flowers, Butterflies and Birds of Schurch-Thomson Prairie (Rich Henderson and Dr. Douglas Buege)

Saturday, August 11: Butterflies of the Avoca/Blue River Area (Mike Reese).

Saturday, August 25: Butterflies and Blossoms at Pheasant Branch (Dreux Watermolen)

4 RED ADMIRAL UPDATE



Red Admiral caterpillar.



Caterpillar weaves silk strands between edges of a leaf. The leaf is closed around the caterpillar and it provides protection while it feeds on the leaf.



May 15. Nearly every leaf in a huge nettles patch has been folded into a nest.



June 10. The entire nettles stand has been decimated. All the leaves, and finally the stems were gone. There was nothing left but a large patch of stalks!

In the first half of May Red Admiral populations were high, averaging more than a dozen individuals per report to the butterfly website, wisconsinbutterflies.org. On May 15 we found a very large stand of nettles off of Hwy 78 in Dane County. We checked for evidence of Red Admiral breeding. The caterpillars make a leaf nest for protection while they feed on nettles, which is the caterpillar food plant. In the 2nd photo, after the caterpillar chose the leaf and nibbled it to determine that it was adequately nutritious, it began swaying back and forth weaving silk threads between the opposite edges of the leaf. It didn't take very long (15-20 minutes) to close the leaf, hiding the caterpillar so it could get down to the business of eating the leaf, undisturbed. In the nettles stand, the caterpillars had hatched out from eggs laid by the Red Admirals that invaded Wisconsin this spring. Nearly every leaf had been folded into a nest harboring a caterpillar (3rd photo)!

By May 19, numbers of Red Admirals had declined to not much more than one butterfly per report. We



returned to the nettles 10 days later, on May 25. The nettles patch was literally crawling with caterpillars. Most of the leaves had disappeared with only the stems left. The large nettles patch was not able to sustain such an extreme caterpillar population. At one point we looked down and saw caterpillars crawling across the path. In an area three feet long and two feet wide, we counted 18 Red Admiral caterpillars simultaneously crawling across the path, away from the nettles stand. (We had to tip-toe out of that area!)

Many caterpillars could be seen crossing the path fleeing from the nettles patch. Some were presumably looking for a place to form a chrysalis. Smaller caterpillars were looking for more nettles, since that is the only food they can digest. Probably some of the caterpillars perished due to lack of food. We returned 2 weeks later and found that even the leaf stems were gone! There was nothing left but stalks of nettles (photo 4). The stand had been completely decimated!

We are currently seeing the beginning of the 2nd generation of Red Admirals.

5 AN EARLY CANDIDATE FOR BUTTERFLY OF THE YEAR: PIPEVINE SWALLOWTAIL !

The Pipevine Swallowtail is a remarkable butterfly. It's especially large and beautiful. The caterpillar food plant is a vine, Dutchman's Pipe, a very toxic plant. The caterpillar sequesters the toxins in its body so that it and the adult butterfly are themselves toxic to bird predators. Several other butterflies mimic the appearance of the Pipevine in order to derive some protection from predators (Red-spotted Purple, female Black Swallowtail and the dark form of the female Eastern Tiger Swallowtail). The Pipevine Swallowtail could breed here but could not survive our winter, so any individual seen in Wisconsin had to be an immigrant from Illinois. Moreover, there was a



Eggs laid on leaf stem.
June 1, 2012

very limited amount of Dutchman's Pipe in our state. Although there were a few sightings in Wisconsin of stray Pipevine Swallowtails over the years, there had been no published reports in the 45 years prior to 2001. It was thought that Pipevine Swallowtails were no

longer reaching Wisconsin. Then in 2001, the butterflies were found at Madison and Milwaukee. In 2007 Pipevine Swallowtails were reported from 7 locations in the state! In 2010 they were found at one site and in 2011 they were reported at Ann Thering's garden in Middleton and at Olbrich Gardens in Madison from July 25 to September 12. But 2012 has seen the most reports ever and the earliest reports ever. It began on May 21, with



a report and photo from Wood County in *central Wisconsin!* That's also the earliest record for the state. Then just two days later, Dorothy came in the house to tell me that she had seen a dark swallowtail suspiciously hanging around one of our Pipevine plants! She had planted Pipevine some years ago in the hope that some day-- against all odds -- a very rare Pipevine Swallowtail might somehow find our Pipevine and lay eggs on it. I wrote to the butterfly website "What was the chance such a rare immigrant would ever find

our Pipevine? *There must be a significant population arriving in Wisconsin.*" The Pipevine hung around our yard in Sauk County for 6 days. Then more reports came in from Dane and Iowa counties on May 27, from Waupaca, Ozaukee, Winnebago, Racine, and Crawford counties on May 28, and from Dodge, Portage and Waukesha counties on May 29, from Barron County on June 1 and Taylor County on June 10. Numerous reports reached the butterfly website and Joan Braune (past SWBA President) found 6 Pipevine Swallowtails in her neighborhood! I would conjecture that nearly every Dutchman's Pipe in the southern half of the state has



The eggs hatch!

been visited by a Pipevine Swallowtail! SWBA has been preaching the planting of Dutchman's Pipe for some years and, by golly, it really works! We should see a second generation of Pipevine Swallowtails at the end of June, and in July.

6 BUTTERFLIES REPORTED IN MAY TO www.wisconsinbutterflies.org COMMON BUTTERFLIES:

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail: -- In late May and early June, Tigers were greatly reduced as we await the next generation. **Red Admiral:** undergoing a record invasion of Wisconsin! **Cabbage White:** common and our only butterfly that is a pest. **Clouded Sulphur:** Numbers fell to the point where in late May/early June it was mostly absent. Normally, the Clouded is more common than the Orange Sulphur. **Orange Sulphur:** unusually common for so early in the year. More common than the Clouded Sulphur so far. **American Lady:** common earlier this spring, so expect another good generation soon. **Spring Azure:** Common. **Monarch:** Common but are they common enough to build up the bigger population they need? **Question Mark:** Normally the

Question Mark is noticeably scarcer than Eastern Comma. But the Anglewings do vary in population over the years. But this year it may well be due to an extreme early movement northward in conjunction with warm southerly winds. **Mourning Cloak** and **Juvenal's Duskywing** were also common.

RARITIES:

The winter of 2011/2012 was unusually mild although we did have 4 consecutive nights with below zero temperatures. The spring of 2012 has been unprecedented. We had the warmest spring on record, driven partly by an incredible 16 consecutive days in mid-March with temperatures in the 70s and 80s. The result is that southern species, that barely get into Wisconsin during the summer, have moved northward which builds up their populations in our state. Although not very common, they have been encountered much more frequently than they are in a normal year. Especially being noted around the state are sightings of Painted Lady, Common Buckeye, Variegated Fritillary, Gray Hairstreak, Little Yellow, Fiery Skipper, Common Checkered-Skipper and American Snout. Also see the article in this issue on the Pipevine Swallowtail.

VERY RARE BUTTERFLIES SEEN:

Zebra Swallowtail: An extremely beautiful butterfly, which is seldom seen in Wisconsin, has turned up this spring. It only feeds on various species of Paw Paw (a southern fruit tree) which is virtually non-existent in Wisconsin. The range of Paw Paw in the U. S. does not reach the northern-most part of Illinois. Thus if a second generation shows up later this summer it will have come from Illinois or Iowa rather than from the first generation individuals that made it to Wisconsin this spring. There were 5 sightings: May 28, Iowa and Ozaukee Cos.; May 29, Dane Co.; June 1, Adams Co. and June 11, Brown Co.

White M Hairstreak: An extreme rarity, a stray, was photographed on May 27 in Dane Co.

MIGRANTS FROM THE SOUTH		
SPECIES	FIRST SIGHTING	
	2012	2010
Red Admiral	March 21	April 15
Painted Lady	April 4	May 1
Common Buckeye	April 12	June 19
Orange Sulphur	April 14	May 2
Giant Swallowtail	April 24	May 1
Monarch	May 2	May 4
Variegated Fritillary	May 3	May 23
Gray Hairstreak	May 9	May 2
Little Yellow	May 12	May 29
American Snout	May 13	June 22
Common Checkered-Skipper	May 16	June 24
Pipevine Swallowtail	May 21	August 30
Fiery Skipper	May 22	June 20
White M Hairstreak	May 27	-----
Dainty Sulphur	May 28	July 20
Zebra Swallowtail	May 28	-----

Entries in red type are taken over from the previous table in the May newsletter. The table is updated with additional recent arrivals (in black type)
 Early migrants are due to 2012 having the warmest Spring on record. In this table we compare 2012 with 2010 which was also a warm spring, the 4th warmest on record.
 The AVERAGE amount of earliness of immigrants in 2012 compared to 2010 is: **28 days earlier!**

Keep sending your sightings to Mike Reese's outstanding 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!**

7 DATES OF SOME NABA BUTTERFLY COUNTS

These butterfly counts are conducted exactly like Christmas Bird Counts: Identify butterfly species and count individuals, staying within a 15 mile diameter circle. The data from hundreds of counts is collected and published. Some 17 NABA Butterfly Counts take place in Wisconsin each year. Below are ones that are connected with SWBA.

- ❖ Mud Lake (Columbia County) Monday, June 25, 2012
- ❖ Madison (Dane County) Sunday, July 1, 2012
- ❖ Trempealeau (Trempealeau County) Monday, July 9, 2012

- ❖ Sister Bay (Door County) Thursday, July 12, 2012
- ❖ Northern Kettle Moraine (Fond du Lac County) Monday, July 16, 2012

To join in on these fun counts -- or for more information about SWBA-sponsored NABA counts, please 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.) (For a list of additional Butterfly Counts in Wisconsin and elsewhere, visit NABA's Web site at www.naba.org/counts/us_mx_map.html Contacts are Listed.)

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

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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

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