

Badger ButterFlyer

The e-Newsletter of the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association **SEPT., 2017**

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

1 NEXT SWBA MEETING

Tuesday, October 10, 2017

Mark your calendar!

The next SWBA meeting will be held on **Tuesday, October 10** at **7:00 p.m.**, in the meeting room of the **Fitchburg Public Library, 5530 Lacy Road, Fitchburg, WI.**



West

East

IN THIS ISSUE:

1. NEXT SWBA MEETING.
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2017
2. HIGHLIGHTS of Avoca Field Trip.
3. Butterfly of the year: Painted Lady.
4. New Treasurer appointed.
5. Monarchs.
6. August Butterfly Reports.
7. Texas Butterfly Festival 2017.
8. NBC Trip to Mexico for Monarchs!

Public Programs:

1) The Year in Butterflies (20 minutes, Karl Legler)

How have butterflies fared in 2017? Which butterflies did especially well and which did poorly? The insight of Mike Reese's website (wisconsinbutterflies.org), NABA Butterfly Count data, and SWBA Field Trips will be summarized. A new display on Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern butterflies will be discussed.



Swamp Metalmark
(Endangered)

2) GENERAL OPEN DISCUSSION: Future Project Ideas for SWBA? (30 minutes)

What should we do? What can we do? What is feasible?

10 minute break

3) NABA EVENTS: 2016-18 (15 minutes, Karl Legler)

A brief presentation on the 2016 Texas Butterfly Festival, NABA's National Butterfly Center and the Wall, the upcoming 2017 TX Butterfly Festival, We Butterfly, and the next NABA Biennial Meeting in 2018.



Long-tailed Skipper

4) REFLECTIONS ON BUTTERFLY ECOLOGY (15 minutes, Douglas Buege)

Everyone is invited to attend this free program. The meeting will last from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. We will have displays, books, handouts and plenty of time afterwards to enjoy *delicious* snacks and refreshments, and talk with our speakers and other butterfly enthusiasts.

DIRECTIONS TO MEETING:

From the Beltline, take Fish Hatchery Road (= County D) south for about 2.4 miles and turn left (east) at Lacy Rd. After 1 block the library is on the left, at the intersection of Lacey Rd. and Research Park Rd. Continue on Lacy and take the entrance road around the far (east) end of the library to access parking near the entrance, (behind the library). **OR** if you prefer to park underground, turn left (north) onto Research Park Rd and then turn right into the ramp leading to the underground parking lot.

2 RECENT FIELD TRIP

HIGHLIGHTS OF AVOCA & BLUE RIVER FIELD TRIP



Viewing and photographing the very rare **Sleepy Orange**.

On August 5 Dan Sonnenberg led our 11th annual field trip to the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway, and added in Frank's Hill. **19 people** attended the field trip on a mostly sunny, very pleasant day to be butterflying.

Two groups observed for a total of 9.5 hours. This data was sent to NABA as the Avoca NABA Count.

The best finds are listed in bold-face type.

The total for the trip was **34 species**, our highest in the 11 years! Outstanding was the presence of immigrants from the South, **Sleepy Oranges**, which are very rare in Wisconsin outside of this location. They can breed here in the summer but to survive winter they would have to fly back south in Fall.

We were encouraged by the fact that the commonest butterfly on the count was **Monarch (37)!** (That's the 2nd highest density in the 11 years!) Next in abundance was Clouded Sulphur. Amazingly, the 3rd most common butterfly was the beautiful **Painted Lady (17)!** We saw a total of **6 immigrant species, marked below in red.**

Black Swallowtail 10
Giant Swallowtail 13
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail 9
Cabbage White 9
Clouded Sulphur 25
Little Yellow 3
Sleepy Orange 3
American Copper 1
Eastern Tailed-Blue 6
Summer Azure 2
Great Spangled Fritillary 5
Aphrodite Fritillary 3

Pearl Crescent 19
Question Mark 3
Eastern Comma 12
Gray Comma 5
Painted Lady 17
Red Admiral 3
Common Buckeye 8
Red-spotted Purple 9
Viceroy 1
Hackberry Emperor 7
Northern Pearly-eye 3
Little Wood-Satyr 3

Common Wood-Nymph 8
Monarch 37
Silver-spotted Skipper 7
Common Sootywing 1
Least Skipper 5
Sachem 3
Northern Broken-Dash 1
Peck's Skipper 8
Tawny-edged Skipper 4
Common Roadside-Skipper 5



Sleepy Orange.
Very rare stray to Wisconsin.
Photo by Mark E. Johnson.

3 BUTTERFLY OF THE YEAR: PAINTED LADY

Wisconsin has two Ladies, the American Lady and the **Painted Lady**. The American Lady is a permanent resident and one of the few butterflies that can overwinter in the adult butterfly stage. The **Painted Lady** is not a permanent resident in Wisconsin. It cannot survive our cold winters. It overwinters in Southwestern U.S. and Mexico. Each year, the Painted Lady migrates northward and can be found in small numbers in Wisconsin. They can breed here in the summer. In Fall they fly back south to escape the freezing temperatures. Although usually uncommon here, they sometimes have an irruption of population and migrate into Wisconsin in large numbers. (Large eruptions may depend on rainfall levels during winter in northern Mexico.) We remember watching Painted Ladies pouring into Wisconsin from the South in 1992 when they



Painted Lady



Painted Lady

became one of the commonest butterflies in the state. Another big year was in 2005. 2017 has been a good year for Painted Ladies! The return flight in the Fall is less obvious because they tend to fly south at a high altitude. The caterpillars have one of the widest palates among butterflies, capable of feeding on 100 different plants, especially on thistles. (Most of our butterflies are restricted to a narrow range of plants due to the co-evolution of caterpillars and their food-plants. The plants develop chemical defenses which cause the caterpillar to evolve counter-measures to detoxify harmful plant chemicals. The result is that most butterflies can effectively detoxify and eat only a limited number of plants.) Painted Ladies are also one of the most widely distributed butterflies in the world, known from North and South America, Eurasia and Africa.

4 DALE BONK APPOINTED NEW TREASURER OF SWBA

Our long-time Treasurer, **Ginny Nelson**, has retired from this position. NABA member **Dale Bonk** has agreed to take over as Treasurer for SWBA. We welcome Dale as an Officer in SWBA and thank Ginny for her 9 years of excellent service for SWBA as Treasurer!

5 HOW IS THE MONARCH POPULATION DOING?

The **Monarch Larva Monitoring Project** (MLMP)* is run out of the University of Minnesota and involves volunteers checking Milkweed for Monarch eggs and caterpillars. This year some 278 MLMP sites have been monitored around the eastern United States by 203 volunteers! The MLMP has summarized their summer results:

"The data this summer suggest that citizen scientists are seeing about 2-3 times more eggs and larvae than last year! This is good news, but we are not seeing quite as many as in the summer of 2015. You may recall that the eastern winter population of 2015-2016 was [9.1 acres], the largest eastern winter population recorded since 2010."

MonarchWatch waxes more optimistic:

"In sum, this looks to be a good year for monarchs – with a stronger migration in most regions and a good prospect that the overwintering population will increase from the [7.2 acres] of last year to [9.9



acres] or better this coming winter." July 20.

Read the full article:

<http://monarchwatch.org/blog/>

In Wisconsin, butterfly observers have been seeing encouraging numbers of Monarchs this year. On the Mud Lake count Monarchs were higher than 5 out of the past 7 years. On the Madison count Monarchs were the 3rd most common butterfly. On the Northern Kettle Moraine count Monarchs had almost the highest numbers of the past 7 years! As we mentioned in Article 2, the commonest butterfly on the Avoca trip was Monarch (37)! (That's the 2nd highest density in the 11 years of that field trip!) Of course all this is counting our chickens before they are hatched! We won't know the final numbers that "count" (overwintering in Mexico) until the middle of winter.

*The MLMP is an important project and you can volunteer to get training and do monitoring for next year. Their website is <https://monarchlab.org/mlmp/about-us>

6 AUGUST BUTTERFLY REPORTS FROM wisconsinbutterflies.org

Mike Reese's web site received 310 reports for August which was a record for August. Reports were received on **71 species of butterfly!**

Green Comma had one sighting in the North on the 12th. **Karner Blue** was reported throughout the month. The highest number for **Monarch** was 47 on Aug. 25 and 26 in different parts of the state. The Avoca Count also had the only late report of **Little Wood Satyr** on the 5th. The Swengel's found 82 **Common Branded Skippers** (a northern species) on the 12th. Avoca saw 5 **Common Roadside Skippers**, the end of the 2nd brood. **Leonard's Skipper** is a late flying butterfly and was seen throughout the month with a high of 43 seen on the 19th. The Swengel's commented that "they have declined at all of our Douglas Co. survey sites" and in Jackson Co. "we have monitored most of these sites for more than 20 years and Leonard's has decreased a great deal compared to the 1990's." **Common Sootywing** had 8 records with a high of 6 on the 21st. Only a single report of **Compton Tortoiseshell**. A scant 4 reports of **Milbert's Tortoiseshells** were received.

IMMIGRANTS: **Common Buckeye** had a high count of 10 at mid-month. Observers often found 1 or 2 **Painted Ladies** but the Avoca NABA Count found 17. **Fiery Skippers** continued to be seen with a high of 7 on Aug. 26. **Sachem** was being seen throughout August. The highest number was 17 on the 22nd in Bayfield County! They keep traveling north until they are blocked by Lake Superior and build up numbers there. There were 5 reports of **American Snout**. The highest was 5 on the 12th at Governor Dodge State Park. Mike Reese found one in Manitowoc County, his first since 2007 (which indicates how scarce they are in Wisconsin!). There were 5 reports of **Little Yellow**, the highest was 7 on 13th and the 30th. There were 2 reports of the very rare **Sleepy Orange**. Only 1 report of **Southern Dogface** on the 1st. The very rare **Cloudless Sulphur** was seen at Governor Dodge on the 12th, by Alex Harman. Giant Swallowtail was seen throughout the month with a high of 27 on the 10th! **Checkered White** was scarce with only 2 reports.



Cloudless Sulphur

IMMIGRANTS SEEN IN JULY BUT NOT IN AUGUST:

Variegated Fritillary
Gray Hairstreak

IMMIGRANTS SEEN IN AUGUST BUT NOT IN JULY:

Common Checkered-Skipper
Cloudless Sulphur

IMMIGRANTS SEEN IN BOTH JULY AND AUGUST

Giant Swallowtail
Red Admiral
Common Buckeye
Painted Lady
Fiery Skipper
American Snout
Little Yellow
Sleepy Orange
Southern Dogface
Checkered White

[Keep sending your reports to wisconsinbutterflies.org](http://wisconsinbutterflies.org)

7 2017 TEXAS BUTTERFLY FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, NOV. 4 - TUESDAY, NOV. 7, 2017



This is the premier butterfly event in the country. It is run by **NABA's National Butterfly Center** in Mission, Texas. The million-dollar building was opened in 2010. NABA's purpose in acquiring the 100 acre property adjacent to the Rio Grande River and Bentsen State Park was to preserve a superlative site for butterflying. It is located in

the southern-most tip of Texas, in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV - an area about 120 miles long by 20 miles wide) which is the most productive butterfly-finding area in the United States. The climate with mild winters results in a rich diversity of



Red-bordered
Pixie

plants and animals with a southern affinity, many of which do not occur farther north. The LRGV is home to more than 1,200 different species of plants, 500 species of birds, 200 vertebrate species, roughly 300 species of butterflies, and over 90 species of dragonflies!

Attendees will spend 3 days exploring renowned public lands and private properties with world-class trip leaders and expert guides. The Festival is taking place during prime butterfly season, when you may reasonably expect to see more than 60 species in a day.

Proceeds from the Butterfly Festival go to NABA's National Butterfly Center.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER, GO TO THE WEBSITE:

<http://www.texasbutterflyfestival.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TexasButterflyFestival>

8 TRIP TO MEXICO FOR MONARCHS!

February 1 - 6, 2018

5 night/6 day guided tour

NABA's National Butterfly Center has announced its first trip to see the Monarchs at their Mexican wintering preserve.

The Tour includes:

- Airfare from Houston IAH
 - Meals
 - Airport transfers
 - Hotel accommodations
 - Entrance fees and
 - All activities listed in the **detailed itinerary** for \$2895 per person (double room occupancy).
- This epic excursion to the overwintering grounds of the Monarch is the trip of a lifetime, and your field guide will be none other than expert birder and butterflyer **Linda Cooper**. Get more information at

<https://www.nationalbutterflycenter.org/anganguero>



The ButterFlyer flits to you every month in summer. The next issue will be in October.

Officers of SWBA:

President: Dr. Douglas Buege
djbuege@gmail.com

Vice-President: Dan Sonnenberg
dsonnenberg60@gmail.com

2nd Vice-President: Karl Legler
karlndot@charter.net

Secretary: Dorothy Legler

Treasurer: Dale Bonk

Other SWBA contributors:

e-Newsletter Editor: Karl Legler
karlndot@charter.net

Webmaster: Dan Sonnenberg
Butterfly Reporting: Mike Reese at
www.wisconsinbutterflies.org

Speaker's Bureau: Dorothy Legler
Dr. Douglas Buege

NABA Liaison: Joan Braune

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. 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.