

NABA News and Notes

7th NABA Biennial Members Meeting

Plan to join fellow NABA members from points near and far at the seventh Biennial NABA Members' Meeting, to be held June 1-4, 2006 at the Best Western Sovereign Hotel and Conference Center, West Springfield, Massachusetts. Beginners are welcome.

LOCATION The site of this year's Members' Meeting is western Massachusetts, an area of rich natural and human history. We will explore the Berkshire Hills and the Taconic Range as well as the Connecticut and Housatonic River Valleys. In picturesque New England fir-spruce woods, rich mesic woods, black spruce and Atlantic white cedar swamps, grassy meadows, and river floodplains we will find some of the most characteristic — and some of the rarest — butterflies of the region.

ACTIVITIES

Field Trips: Our schedule of field trips covers all of the corners of western Massachusetts, including the state's highest peak, Mt. Greylock. We plan to visit the renowned Harvard Forest, as well as several outstanding federal and state wildlife areas. These spots give us access to multitudes of breeding birds (23 species of wood-warblers nest in western MA), wonderful plantlife, and, of course, great butterflies.

Presentations: Workshops and programs on field photography, butterfly gardening, caterpillar identification, and other topics will appeal to NABA members from all regions and experience levels. In addition, there will be a book signing event, an auction, a raffle, and more.

ATTRACTIONS

Butterflies: Gossamer-winged butterflies may steal the show in western Mass., with good chances of seeing four species of elfins (including the smallest and rarest of the lot, the Bog Elfin), Silvery Blue, the endangered Karner Blue in nearby upstate New York, and what are argu-

ably the region's three handsomest hairstreaks — the brilliant Juniper and Hessel's Hairstreaks and the incomparable Early Hairstreak. Other northern butterflies that can easily whet almost anyone's lepidopteran appetite are Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, West Virginia and Mustard Whites, Compton Tortoiseshell, White Admiral, and Arctic Skipper. All are target species during our meeting.

Cultural Attractions — The Springfield area has many fine restaurants, lots of bookstores, museums (dinosaurs to fine art to professional basketball!), and a wealth of historic sites to visit. If you want to go a couple of hours east you can have a lot more of all of this — plus views of the ocean — in Boston.

NABA Photo Contest

The 6th NABA Photography Contest will be held in 2006. The winners of each of two categories, adults and immatures, will receive \$150 and the 1st runners-up will receive \$50. Winning entries will be published in the Fall 2006 issue of *American Butterflies*. Photographs of adults must be of free-flying, unrestrained butterflies taken in the field, in Canada, the United States, or Mexico.

Photographs of immatures must be of eggs, caterpillars or chrysalids taken in the field, or at a location (e.g., one's house or laboratory) within 20 miles of where the eggs or caterpillars were obtained. In addition the photographer warrants that the eggs, caterpillars, and chrysalids were reared through to adulthood and that the resulting adult was released essentially where the immature stage was found. Submissions, which must be received by May 1, 2006, should be in the

(continued on page 25)

Cover art is the First Prize winner of NABA's Artists Contest, *Butterflies on Manzanita*, by John H. Gerdes. Watercolor on paper. 10 in. x 13 in. See Artists Contest on page 44.

Readers Write

Yard Lists

At the end of the editorial "I Have a Little List" in the Summer, 2005 issue of *American Butterflies*, a short list of people who have passed significant milestones in seeing butterflies in their local areas, be it their state or county, is given. I'd like to add a few more significant(ly) local observations. James Booker and Jan & David Dauphin have both seen over 100 species in their respective backyards in Mission, Texas! Jim has the slightly larger list (and probably the larger yard as well), while the Dauphins (whose yard is surrounded by barren suburbia) probably have more new United States records! Can anyone else out there join the "100 Butterfly Species Yard List Club?"

Mike Quinn, Austin, Texas

Macro-Photography

I've been admiring the macro photography work of Patti Murray and others both in *AMERICAN BUTTERFLIES* and *BUTTERFLY GARDENER*, especially when it comes to eggs and newly-hatched caterpillars. I was wondering if Ms. Murray or any of others could share with us the type of camera equipment they use to take these phenomenal close-ups? Butterfly photography has been one of my main interests in recent years and I'm always looking to improve my technique.

Arlene Ripley, Dunkirk, MD

Patti Murray responds

The egg photos were shot indoors using a Nikon F100 camera and the Nikon PB-6 bellows. I used a 28 mm lens in the reversed position attached to the front of the bellows. In front of the rear of the lens I attached a Nikon Macro Speedlight to the bellows lens panel. All were placed on a tripod with an Arca Swiss B1 Ballhead using an attachment plate from a company in California with quality photo accessories (Really Right Stuff). I also used an AR-10 Double Cable Release that attached to both the camera and the bellows lens panel.

The scale on the PB-6 bellows lets one determine the reproduction ratio of the image. The greatest reproduction ratio that I used was 6X or six times life size on the slide. This was due to the problem of the Nikon Macro Speedlight's low guide number. I use fine grained film, usually Velvia 50, but for the eggs I used Provia 100F. Velvia 50 was too slow. Recently I have used the new Velvia 100F film. Even with ISO 100 film I could only set the F Stop to 11. I prefer to use 16. Recently I have tried Provia 400F, which worked well, allowing the use of aperture F16.

For the background I used a large section of blue cardboard — sometimes I also use green — that I purchased at an art supply store. To light the background, I placed two SB 23 Nikon Speedlights on two SU 4 Slave units. Each was on a small tripod, one placed to the right and the other to the left of the camera and closer to the background than the speedlight. This allowed the sensor on the SU 4 Slaves to read the light from the Macro Speedlight. All speedlights were set to TTL, the camera to Manual Mode.

Once everything was set up, I found the problem of placing and finding the egg in the viewfinder challenging — any slight movement and the egg disappeared and had to be found again, or the egg's placement was off. However, as I do more and more egg shots I am finding this less of a problem.

Now for one last hurdle. I mentioned attaching the Nikon Macro Speedlight to the bellows panel. Nikon has a special tube for this attachment. However, I found that with the tube the speedlight was pushed too far in front of the lens. To get the magnification I wanted the egg would be between the lens and the Nikon Macro Speedlight (!), giving the egg a kind of side-back lighting. I didn't know how to solve this dilemma, so at my husband's urging I called Nikon. Even their top expert came back with, "I see what you mean." "How can I solve the problem?" I asked. "I have no answer for you," was the response. So I solved the problem with duct tape. Instead of using the tube, I taped the Nikon Macro Speedlight to the bellows lens panel — tedious. But it worked. All that sophisticated equipment and duct tape was required.

For egg clusters not needing such extreme magnification I have used both a Nikkor 105mm and 60mm lens with various Kenko extension tubes. With the 60mm lens and an extension of 68 the reproduction ratio on the slide is 2.13, with the 105mm lens, 1.65. The rest of the set-up is the same.