

Where Butterflies Go in the Rain: or What We Discovered at the Seventh NABA Biennial Meeting



Sue Cloutier

by Brian Cassie

We NABA members have experienced cloudy weather in New Jersey, wildfires in Oregon, melting humidity in the Rio Grande Valley, and various other meteorological and natural afflictions at NABA Biennial Meetings but the rain and fog that accompanied the West Springfield, Massachusetts meeting may have provided the most lasting memories. For everyone concerned, it was a week to remember.

TUESDAY, MAY 30

The pre-conference trip to southeastern Massachusetts was scheduled, in common with all of the meeting's trips, to try to catch the tail end of the spring flights of various elfins (there are six species in Massachusetts) and the emergence of other butterfly groups, including swallowtails, blues, hairstreaks, admirals, and

skippers. The lucky NABA group that went afield with Bill Benner, Madeline Champagne, and Tom Murray this day was blessed with great weather, great timing, terrific leaders, and wonderful butterflies. Every elfin occurring in eastern Massachusetts was seen — Hoary, Henry's, Eastern Pine, Brown, and Frosted. Now that's elfin hunting! (We like to call it elfin hunting because it sounds like "elephant hunting" and really gets people's attention.) Also found in the pine-oak woodlands and barrens and the wild indigo fields this day were numbers of duskywings, the peskiest identification problems we have in the Northeast. After all the sorting out was through, the group figured they had seen four species, including the state-listed and rarely seen Persius Duskywing.



Rita Venable



Jeffrey Glasberg (2)



Opposite page and top: Butterflies enjoying the fog and rain on Mount Greylock.

Bottom: Once located, Arctic Skippers are cooperative photography subjects when it's cold and cloudy, often eagerly clambering on butterfly outstretched warm hands.