

Bahamian Swallowtails in the United States: First Reports of the Cuban Subspecies

by Paula Cannon

Adrenaline junkies are people addicted to the rush they get from highly stimulating sports such as bungee jumping, skydiving and other blood pumping activities. I personally don't understand why butterflying is never included among those sports. Sure, it may not be as life threatening but then again I've braved walking up on alligators, rattlesnakes and encountered

mosquitoes so thick you could taste them, not to mention poisonwood and poison ivy! One would think that should count for something. But the overwhelming rush that comes over you when you've discovered something so rare that less than a handful of people in the United States have ever seen it, now that's a true adrenaline rush!

Below: A newly eclosed male Bahamian Swallowtail of the Cuban subspecies (Papilio andraemon andraemon) dries its wings on Big Pine Key. The Cuban subspecies has a wider yellow HW postmedian band, a narrower FW black submarginal band, and less pronounced HW "tails" than does the Bahamian subspecies that has been reported sporadically from the northeastern Florida Keys (especially Elliott Key).

Opposite page: Red porterweed is an attractive nectar source on Big Pine Key.

