



Hot Seens

Fall 2008

by Michael Reese

South Texas had a terrific butterfly autumn with numerous rarities including a new United States record — a Red-sided Swallowtail (*Mimoides phaon*), photographed on October 23 at the entrance road butterfly garden of Santa Ana NWR, Alamo, Hidalgo Co., TX (M. Reid). This butterfly was one of three swallowtails that Jeff Glassberg, in the Fall/Winter 2007 issue of *American Butterflies*, said were likely to stray into the Lower Rio Grande River Valley.

A quintet of butterfly species unusual for south Texas were seen at NABA Butterfly Park in Mission, TX in October and included a Rosita Patch on October 5 (G. Quintanilla), a Gilbert's Flasher and a Brown-banded Skipper seen on October 15 (H. Hoople), an East-Mexican White-Skipper on October 18 (G. Quintanilla), and a Yellow-tipped Flasher on October 28 (C. Traylor and m.o.b.).

On the first NABA Butterfly Park-Bentsen RGV State Park Seasonal Count on October 25, 114 species were observed, a new high count for a United States NABA Butterfly Count. Choice species included White Angled-Sulphur, Marius Hairstreak, Clench's Greenstreak, Banded Peacock, Band-Celled Sister, Mexican Bluewing, Red Rim, Malachite, Ruddy Daggerwing, Paven Emperor, Silver Emperor, Gold-Spotted Aguna, Two-Barred Flasher and Texas Powdered-Skipper.

Farther north, on October 21, a *Polydamas Swallowtail* was seen at Russ Pitman Park, Houston, TX (J. Schneider) and R. Wauer saw a *Hammock Skipper*, yard butterfly 130, in Mission Valley, Victoria Co., TX.

Other southern sightings included a *Cassius Blue*, the first report for Mississippi, observed laying eggs on plumbago in a yard

garden on September 26 in Hattiesburg, MS (D. Lafferty). Forty species were seen at Kissimmee State Park on September 13 including a *Three-spotted Skipper*, a first for this area. Large numbers of *Palamedes Swallowtails* (250), *Gulf Fritillaries* (400), *Long-tailed Skippers* (220) and *Ocola Skippers* (180) were seen on September 18 at Big Bend WMA, Taylor Co., FL (B. Ahern) and farther north on October 5 sightings included 350 *Cloudless Sulphurs*, 75 *Gulf Fritillaries*, 200 *Phaon Crescents*, 150 *Long-tailed Skippers*, and 150 *Ocola Skippers* at Ft. Fisher, New Hanover Co., NC (D. Carter, R. Davis, J. Pippen).

Opposite page top: This male Red-sided Swallowtail (Mimoides phaon) seen at Santa Ana NWR, Hidalgo Co., TX on Oct. 23 by Martin Reid, was the first record of this Mexican species in the United States.

Opposite page bottom left: This Yellow-tipped Flasher, a rare stray to the United States, was seen by many observers, including Cat Traylor, at NABA Butterfly Park in Mission, Hidalgo Co., TX on Oct. 28.

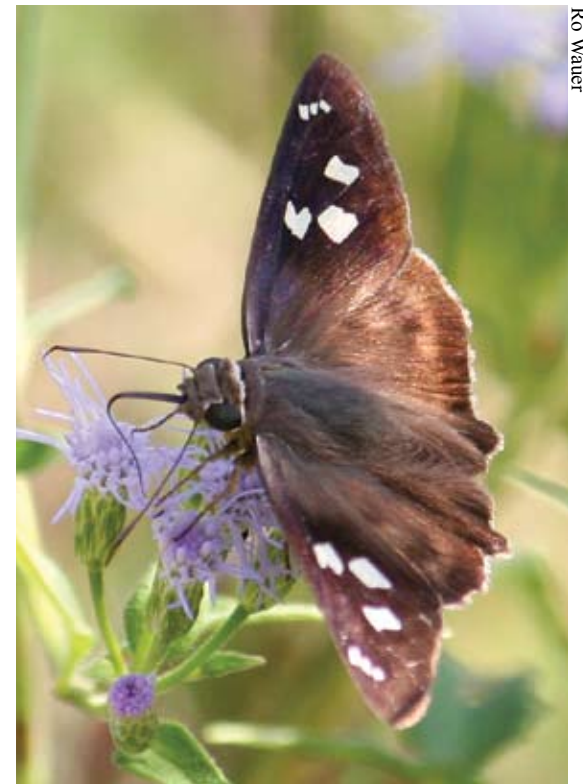
Opposite page bottom right: This Hammock Skipper was seen on Oct. 21, 2008 in Mission Valley, Victoria Co., TX by Ro Wauer. It is one of the few records north of the Lower Rio Grande Valley.



Martin Reid



Cat Traylor



Ro Wauer