



J U S T

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# Heavy Metal — Hidden Beauty



**Metalmarks** are a fascinating and enigmatic component of North America's butterfly fauna. The English name reflects the metallic markings that grace many, but by no means all, species. Although NABA's checklist contains 22 species, if you live in the Northeast, as I do, there is only a single species you have any hope of seeing within the area, that is, Northern

Metalmark, *Calephelis borealis*. This is because metalmarks belong to an essentially tropical family of butterflies — the Riodinidae — consequently, most of our species occur in Texas, Arizona and Southern California.

But even in those areas, the metalmark fauna is sparse compared to the New World tropics, where thousands of species are known to occur (there are over 1,300



Above: A Little Metalmark in a southeastern clime. Sept. 27, 2009. Kissimmee Prairie State Preserve, FL.

Opposite: A Northern Metalmark in a northern clime. June 30, 2002. Sussex Co., NJ.