

Atala Chapter News

WINTER/SPRING 2004

OFFICERS:

President, Kathy Malone
zlongwing@aol.com
561/798-5099
Vice-President, Jan Everett
Jeverett@mounts.org
561/793-6131
Secretary and Newsletter Editor,
Alana Edwards
edwards_alana@hotmail.com
Treasurer, Lana Edwards
atala@prodigy.net

HOTLINE: 561/706-6732

WEBPAGE: www.naba.org/chapters/nabaac/index.html



Do you know this butterfly??
Answer on Page 6

NABA to Survey Extreme South Florida and the Keys by Alana Edwards & Jeff Glassberg

The North American Butterfly Association (NABA) recently received a small grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Commission to survey the butterfly fauna of extreme south Florida (20 miles in from the coast in all of Dade County) and all of the Keys (Monroe County). The butterfly fauna of these areas may constitute the most endangered suite of species in the continental United States! These butterflies include Schaus' Swallowtail, Florida White, Dina Yellow, Mimosa Yellow, Statira Sulphur, Atala, Amethyst Hairstreak, Fulvous Hairstreak, Martial

Scrub-Hairstreak, Bartram's Scrub-Hairstreak, Miami Blue, Nickerbean Blue, Florida Purplewing, Cuban Crescent, Mangrove Buckeye, Florida Leafwing, Mangrove Skipper, Zestos Skipper, Florida Duskywing, Three-spotted Skipper and Hammock Skipper.

Most of these special butterflies are found in association with either Tropical Hardwood Hammocks or Pine Rockland. All have suffered from the catastrophic loss of habitat caused by converting most of South Florida's natural

(continued on page 7)

Inside this issue:

Upcoming Meetings	3
Upcoming Field Trips	3
Special Events	4
Highlands Hammock State Park, July Count 2003	2
Member Highlight: Spotlight on Laura and Bill Wade	5
Kid's Corner: Coffee Filter Butterflies	8

Lucky Hammock: A Birder's (and butterflyer's?) Paradise

 by Kathy Malone

Dappled sunlight speckles the forest floor...tree snails pop out of the corner of your eye like objects in a 3-D film... songs of the white-eyed vireo accompany the sound of crunching leaves underfoot...wild coffee leaves feel smooth, grooved and satisfying to the touch...musky scents of earth below and green, lush life above freshen the air... Savor these sensations as you make your way through the two-acre Lucky Hammock—so named because it is left standing among vast agricultural fields in south Miami-Dade County.

Located less than 1/2-mile from the main entrance to Everglades National Park 150 yards down Aerojet Road, the hammock is part of the Frog Pond property the South Florida Water Management District acquired in 1996 as part of the Save Our Rivers Act. Like a fresco that needed careful restoration to reveal its true beauty, District land managers Matt Davis and Jason Smith peeled away layers of Brazilian pepper and other exotic plants to uncover a tropical hammock. "We suspect this

(continued on page 7)

Highlands Hammock State Park, July Count 2003

 by Cynthia Plockelman

2003 was my first opportunity to participate in the annual census of the Highlands Hammock Circle. For once, I was free to make the trek to Highlands Hammock State Park (HHSP) outside of Sebring, Fla., with members of our Atala Chapter. We went the evening before, and visited Riverwoods Field Laboratory, prepared with food and water for a long day (likely very hot and humid, due to the rainy season). At 9 AM., we met with other counters just inside the front gate at



Zebra Heliconian

HHSP and split into two teams—one led by Alana Edwards, to do the park proper and the other, led by Buck & Linda Cooper, to take on the rest of

the circle around the park area. Understand, please, that this is a good natured competition, as to which team gets the most leps. I would be with the “insiders”, on a day that promised to be more than just humid and hot, but great for butterflies.

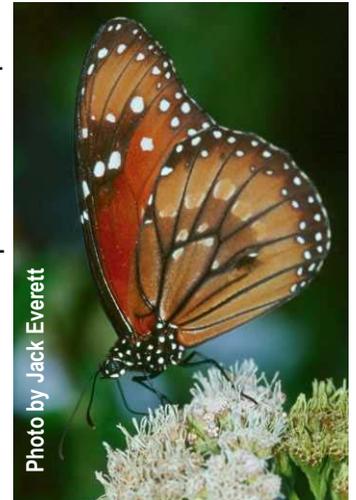
We walked, and walked and walked, along trails, streambanks, berms and the few roads available, in sauna-like conditions, for a lot of hours. Carrying water and snacks, with no breaks till back to the picnic area for lunch (leps don't take breaks!), we had a great time! It was wet underfoot most of the way (we were forewarned!). With the native plants and trees doing their jobs of nectar and larval food supply, our team had the highest inside the HHSP count for the 5 years of record! Wildflowers and wetland plants were displaying, frequently loaded with several species of swallowtails competing for nectar. Our

counts of 105 Tigers, 102 Palamedes and 75 Spicebush were more than I have ever seen at one time. Personally, I added 3 species to my life list, the highlight being the Silver-spotted Skipper.

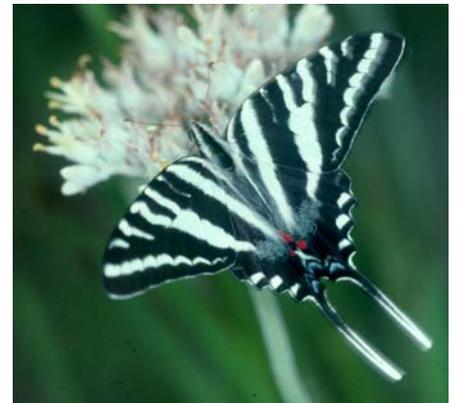
After lunch, we continued to another part of the park, even wetter, and then across the main road to our last stop. Numbers were not as high (different conditions), but still rewarding. Our brief drive through the Sabal Palm Hammock, did not yield much, but we saw other natural history buffs examining large bromeliads for “evil weevil” damage. We headed home, finally, about 4 PM—tired but happy, with 27 species listed and 410 individuals.

Found out later, our team was bested by the “outsiders”, with 48 species and 1372 individuals. High counts of 304 White Peacocks, 89 Fiery Skippers and 45 Dainty Sulphurs were notable. We “insiders” had the only Southern Dogface, Zebra Heliconian and Palmetto Skipper reported and the “outsiders”

had the only Orange-barred Sulphur, Pipevine Swallowtail, Soldier, Northern Cloudywing, Clouded, Eufala and Twin-spot Skippers. 2003 was a great year for lepidoptera at Highlands Hammock Circle. Come join us in 2004.



Soldier



Zebra Swallowtail

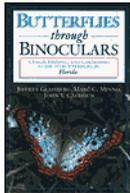
Upcoming Meetings

All meetings are in the B-1 auditorium at the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). Take I-95 to Southern Blvd. Follow the signs on the flyover that point to south on Congress. Go south on Congress then take your first right onto Gun Club Road. Use the first entrance into SFWMD on your right (just past the Guard Armory). This is the security entrance. Tell them you are here for the meeting. Go to B-1 at the rear of the property. Park on the east side and use the east entrance at security (the front entrance is now locked in the evening). The meetings are in the auditorium on the first floor of the building in the back (B-1). **Meetings are at 7 p.m.**

Monday, January 12, 2004—*"The Hairstreaks of Florida."* Don Stillwaugh, Environmental Specialist for Pinellas County and butterfly expert, traveled the state in search of these tailed jewels. He will show his beautiful slides and discuss what he's learned about the ecology and biology of each species.

Monday, April 19, 2004—Speaker to be announced.

Monday, June 21, 2004—At this meeting we will prepare for the 4th of July Butterfly Count. We encourage you to attend this meeting even if you don't plan to count at one of the public sites as there will be an ID Slide show at the end of the meeting.



DON'T FORGET YOUR FIELD GUIDE AND BINOCULARS!!



Upcoming Field Trips

Sunday, February 22, 2004 — Field trip to Wakodahatchee Wetlands. We will meet at 9:00am. Wakodahatchee is located in suburban Delray Beach on the east side of Jog Road between Woolbright Road and Atlantic Avenue. Take I-95 to Atlantic Avenue. Go west on Atlantic Avenue to Jog Road. Turn right, park is on the right.

Sunday, March 21, 2004 — Field trip to Lucky Hammock. We will meet on the road edge in front of the hammock at 9:30am. To get to Lucky Hammock, take Florida's Turnpike south to Florida City (end of turnpike). Follow the signs to the main entrance of Everglades National Park in Homestead. One-half mile before you reach the entrance, go left on Aerojet Road. Lucky Hammock is about 150 yards on the right-hand side. Bring a picnic lunch. Call the butterfly hotline if you are lost or running late: 561/706-6732.

Sunday, April 4, 2004 — Field trip to Jonathan Dickinson State Park. We will meet at the park entrance at **9:00am**. Spend Palm Sunday looking for rare butterflies, like the "Florida" Dusted Skipper. Other beauties like the Palamedes and Zebra Swallowtail, and Southern Dogface Sulphur may also be seen. Take I-95 to Indiantown Rd. East on Indiantown Rd. Take a left on Alt. A1A (just past the RR tracks). Alt. A1A curves to right. Take left onto Federal Hwy. JDSP is about 5-7 miles on left. Bring a picnic lunch. Entrance fee is \$4 per car.

Sunday, May 2, 2004—Field trip to Tree Tops Park. We will meet in the main parking lot at 9:00am. Take I-95 south to Griffin Road. Go west on Griffin. Head north (right) on S.W. 100th Avenue. The park's entrance will be on the east (right). Bring a picnic lunch. Entrance fee is \$1.00 per person.

Sunday, May 16, 2004 —Details for this trip are still being planned. We will meet somewhere in the Key Largo area to survey for rarities such as Schaus Swallowtail and Silver-banded Hairstreak. We may plan to spend the night in Florida City on Saturday. If you're interested in going on this, please contact Alana Edwards at 561/706-6732.

Butterfly Count – We are skipping over the 4th of July holiday this year in hopes that more of you can help us out. **Mark your Calendars! We need your help!**

Central Circle will be conducted on **June 26**.
 North Circle will be conducted on **June 27**.
 South Circle will be conducted on **July 11**.

Sunday, July 18, 2004 - Highlands Hammock Butterfly Count – Take I-95 to Blue Heron. Go West to the Beeline (710). The Beeline through Indiantown to SR70. Go West on SR70 through Okeechobee to SR98. Go North on SR98 to SR27. Go North on SR27 into Sebring. Take a left onto Highlands Hammock Rd. (also called 634. Landmarks: traffic signal and Bar-B-Que Restaurant on SW corner). We will meet at the Ranger Station at **9:00am**. Bring a picnic lunch. ~2 ½ hours from WPB.



Special Events

Remember that in order to represent our organization and butterfly education at these events, we need your help. Meet like-minded people and help others learn more about butterflies.

January 8 - 11, 2004, 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. *Second Annual Native Plant Sale at Blowing Rocks Preserve*—Blowing Rocks Preserve will feature native butterfly and wildlife attracting plants from **Meadow Beauty Nursery** at the preserve's Hawley Education Center at 574 South Beach Road on Jupiter Island. For information or directions, please call Linda Finch at (561) 744-6668. Plants that will be for sale: Beautyberry, Necklace Pod, Partridge Pea, Corky-stem Passionvine, Marlberry, Dahoon Holly, Milkweed, Jamaican Caper, Privet Cassia, White Indigo-berry, Coontie, Scarlet sage, Blue porterweed, and Slash Pine.

Saturday, February 14, 2004, 8:00 a.m. - 4 p.m. *Everglades Day* (sponsored by the Audubon Society) at Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. The day's events include birding, family walks, hands-on activities, music, food, children's activities, exhibits, and live programs. Contact the Visitor Center at 561/734-8303 for more information.

Saturday, April 17, 2004, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. *Naturescaping: An Earth Day Event* at John D. MacArthur Beach State Park. Call 561/624-6950 for more information.

Sunday, April 18, 2004, Earth Day at Jonathan Dickinson State Park. Call (772) 546-2771 for more information.

Saturday, April 24, 2004, 10 a.m.—3 p.m. DuPuis Management Area's *Earth Day* for the Young and Young at Heart. Call (561) 686-8800, ext. 3339.

Events at Mounts Botanical Gardens

Call (561) 233-1757 for more information about the events scheduled for spring:

- Full Moon Stroll, Wednesday, Jan. 7, 6:30 - 9:00 p.m. Live music, \$8 members; \$10 non-members.
- Jazz in the Garden (live music at sunset), Saturday, February 14, \$25 per person.
- Plant Sale, April 24 - 25. 9 - 5, Saturday; 9 - 4 Sunday. \$5 for non-members.
- South Florida Garden Tours for Mother's Day Weekend, May 8-9.
- Garden Get-Together, May 22, 9 - 4. \$1.
- Tropical Fruit Festival, June 26, 10 - 3. No admission charge.

To get to Mounts: Take I-95 and exit at Belvedere Road. Go west about 2.5 miles to Military Trail. Turn left (south) on Military Trail and stay in the right hand lane. Go about 0.2 miles. Turn right onto Golf Road (at the Division for Driver's License) and park at the Hutcheson Agriculture Center. Call 561/233-1757 for more information.





Spotlight on
Laura Wade (pictured)
and her dad, Bill



Laura, age 8, holds a Black Swallowtail



by Bill Wade

When Laura was in daycare at the age of 2, her care provider, Miss Lynn, nicknamed her Laura Bug. We didn't know then that the name would stick and be a predictor of her future hobby.

About two years ago, Laura and I were lying in our hammock when a butterfly flew overhead. Laura was in first grade and studying the life cycle of insects so she asked me where the other stages of the butterfly's life cycle took place. Although I had caught and raised Monarchs in Maine as a kid on the broadleaf form of milkweed that grows there, I had never seen that plant in Florida and had no clue what plants any other species used for hosting their caterpillars. My response to her was "I don't know but we will find out".

We began our search for the answer at the public library and continued the quest via the internet and visits to many nurseries. The first book we found at the library was Pamela Traas's book "Gardening for Florida's Butterflies". From that we learned that there were milkweed species that would grow in Florida. We later found and read Marc and Maria Minno's book "Florida Butterfly Gardening" and others. In May of 2002 we dug up a section of the back yard and began our butterfly garden.

We found Meadow Beauty Nursery on the internet and drove to Boynton Beach for the first of our periodic visits to Carl and Donna. They have lots of plants, lots of butterflies, a swingset and chickens (and butterfly gardening advice). With a combination like that, my kids always look forward to going there. Soon we had Gulf Fritillaries laying eggs on the passionvine in our butterfly garden. To jump start the number of caterpillars for Laura to watch we also went to Home Depot and bought any parsley, dill, or

fennel that had black swallowtail eggs or caterpillars on it. After planting some fennel and dill in the garden, we soon had Black Swallowtails coming to our yard and laying eggs. We live only a few blocks away from a large Atala colony and were thrilled when one day a female came and laid eggs on our coontie.

We have added pipevine, milkweed, butterfly pea, corky stem passionvine, bahama cassia, candlestick cassia, partridge pea, plumbago, wild petunia, false nettle, paw paws and many nectar plants.

To date we have had 14 species lay eggs: Gulf Fritillaries, Monarchs, Queens, Polydamas Swallowtails, Black Swallowtails, Giant Swallowtails, Zebra Longwings, Atalas, Long Tailed Skippers, Southern Whites, Cassius Blues, Cloudless Sulfurs, Orange Barred Sulfurs and Red Admirals.

In January, we attended our first NABA meeting. Laura is quite shy so entering a room full of people she doesn't know is difficult for her but everyone at the meeting was extremely friendly. When she won 2 plants in the raffle she decided that we should definitely return for the next meeting. She was very disappointed that she had to wait 2 months.

This past summer we participated in our first 4th of July Butterfly Count. We met Alana Edwards (a day in the field with Alana is a butterfly education worth several college credit hours) at MacArthur Park in the morning and finished up at FPL/Universe Blvd. in Juno Beach where we were disappointed to not find a single Atala. (They have since returned but not in the numbers of the past). Since we drive down Universe Blvd. next to FPL almost daily we keep a pretty close eye on the Coontie and Atalas there.

This fall, we have expanded the butterfly garden to encompass much of the back yard and some coontie and porterweed have recently found their way into the front yard. We have taken family camping trips to Jonathon Dickinson and Highlands Hammock State Parks and observed many butterflies there. We have been to many county parks and natural areas looking for butterflies as well.

In addition to all that she has learned about butterflies, Laura has also learned a great deal about gardening and plants. She pots up self sown seedlings to give to neighbors, friends, or the raffle at the NABA meetings. Laura's wardrobe has taken on a fair amount of butterfly apparel. She has butterfly jewelry, T-shirts, socks and pants (No butterfly navel rings yet).

(continued on page 7)

Who Am I?? Butterfly Quiz



by Linda and Buck Cooper

You probably guessed that this was a Tropical Checkered Skipper because that is what the range maps say would be most commonly found in our area. However, it is a Common Checkered Skipper. Common Checkered Skipper (*Pyrgus communis*) and a recent immigrant into the state, White Checkered Skipper (*Pyrgus albescens*) cannot be separated in the field. According to research by John Calhoun, White Checkered Skipper "probably occurs statewide". For the sake of identification we will call these skippers Common/White Checkered. You can learn to separate them from Tropical Checkered Skipper (*Pyrgus oileus*) fairly easily. Many times they occupy the same habitat and fly side by side. All use plants in the mallow family as their host plants.

At first glance these skippers look alike but if you look at the outer margin forewing fringes you will notice that Common/White Checkered has evenly checkered fringes all the way to the forewing tip; Tropical Checkered forewing fringes are missing white checks near the forewing tip. The first check on the wingtip is white on Tropical then it has a large black area before resuming white and black checks. Often you can see very faint white spots in the black area but nothing like the large evenly spaced black and white checkered fringes on Common/White Checkered. This holds true for males or females.

The males of checkered skippers in FL have blue hairs on their wings and sometimes appear blue or white in flight. Male Tropicals usually look bluer than Common/White but a lot depends on whether the wings are worn. Females are darker overall but may have faint blue hairs though not as extensive as males.

Another good field mark is the forewing marginal band is incomplete on Common/White so there is a dark area (missing an apical spot) just prior to the forewing apex. On Tropical the marginal band is complete, with a small apical spot just prior to the forewing apex.

On the upperwing you will note there is no large white spot just beyond the cell-end (vertical) white bar on Common/White Checkered. We have seen an occasional Common/White with a very tiny white spot in this area. On Tropical there is a large white spot just beyond the cell-end (vertical)

white bar, larger on males than females but always well-defined. Most of the time the checkered skippers sit with their wings open so you can see all these field marks.

In the event the wings are closed, try to see whether the underwings look clearly defined tan and white on Common/White or smudged tan and white on Tropical. Tropical also has a brown spot or bar in the middle of the hindwing leading margin.

These small skippers offer a perfect opportunity to use your close-focusing binoculars. We think the quickest and easiest way to separate these skippers is by using the checkered fringes on the forewing. Most of these identification points are also covered in "Butterflies Through Binoculars - Florida" on plate 31. Taking photographs, either digital or SLR, is another excellent way to study butterflies.

Photos by Linda Cooper



Common/White Checkered Skipper



Tropical Checkered Skipper

NABA surveys (continued from page 1)

habitat into urban and suburban developments. Unfortunately this process continues.

NABA wants to survey every square mile of these areas if possible! The funding received for the surveys will pay for website development and data organization and entry. Therefore, we will rely solely on volunteers to conduct these surveys.



HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP!

- Plan a butterfly excursion to any location in extreme south Florida and the Keys.
- Document all butterflies that you see. Include larval food plants seen at the location, if you know them.

- Provide NABA with the location that you surveyed. You can do this several ways. If you have a GPS unit, lat/long coordinates would be the preferred method. However, since most of us don't have one, you can use your Delorme Gazetteer: either copy the page and mark the location surveyed OR look for the lat/long on the margins of the page. If you don't have a Delorme, write a detailed description about where you were.



A datasheet with instructions will be emailed out to you in the next few weeks. We will also be doing two Survey Blitzes this spring: one to Lucky Hammock in the Homestead area on March 21st and one to Key Largo area on May 16th. We will need a lot of help so we hope that you will join us!

Member Highlight (continued from page 5)

Laura's butterfly hobby has taught her/given her:

- Nature observation and enjoyment
- Plant propagation and gardening
- Butterfly identification
- Native plants
- Library research
- Internet research
- Learning by networking with others with common interests and expertise
- Scientific field study
- Habitat issues
- Many pleasurable hours together with her father doing all of the above

Few hobbies that I know of can rival that list!



Like a little caterpillar, Laura is devouring leaves of information through reading and observation. When she emerges as an adult (all too soon) I know that she will take with her all the knowledge, memories and experiences gained from her butterfly passion.

Lucky Hammock (continued from page 1)

land used to be pine rockland habitat 50 years ago, but changed into a hammock because of the lack of fire," Smith said. Solution holes in outcroppings of lime rock stand testament to the passage of time.

This small chunk of wonder, landscaped on one side with native butterfly plants, is now popular with nature enthusiasts, especially birders. Joyce and Carn Catherwood of Longview, Texas, are among them. Far from home, Carn says of the hammock: "Oh, it's famous." The site is listed in field guides and and birders post sightings regularly at www.tropicalaudubon.org. One posting last February revealed sightings of a Peregrine Falcon, Least Fly-

catcher and a Yellow-breasted Chat, with numerous Painted Buntings on other days. Robin Diaz of Key Biscayne has listed 154 species at the hammock and immediate surrounding areas in the Southern Glades.

Visit also the 10-acre hammock restoration project less than one mile south of Lucky Hammock along Aerojet Rd. Here Davis and Smith cleared the acreage of a Brazilian pepper monoculture and planted thousands of native plants, 36 species in all.

While the bird life has been assessed, NABA is very interested in knowing the diversity of butterflies. Lucky Hammock will be the site for our March 21st Field trip. Don't miss it!!!

KID'S CORNER

Coffee Filter Butterflies

Hang these butterflies by the antenna with fishing line from a paper plate punched with holes. Paint a sky with clouds on the plate to make your butterflies look like they are flying.

What You Need

Black chenille stem
Paper coffee filter
Water color paints
Paint brush
Water
Wire cutters
Needle nose pliers



How To Make It

1. Cut the black chenille stem in half. (You will only use 1 piece for this project)
2. Using water color paints, paint the coffee filter. Let dry.
3. Fold the black chenille stem in half.
4. Twist the bent end about 1/2" from the bend.
5. Accordion pleat the coffee filter in about 1/2" pleats.
6. Slide the butterfly in-between the black ends of the chenille stem.
7. Twist the black chenille stem above the butterfly to hold it in place.
8. Separate the ends of the black chenille stem.
9. Bend one end of the black chenille stem over about 1/4". Bend again.
10. Repeat with other end. This makes the antennae.
11. Fan out the butterfly's wings.
12. If desired, hang with yarn or fishing line to make a mobile as described above.



ATALA CHAPTER OF THE NORTH AMERICAN BUTTERFLY ASSOCIATION

3206 Palm Drive
Delray Beach, FL 33482

Butterfly Hotline: 561/706-6732

*Send your email address to
atala@prodigy.net for updates on
butterfly related topics and events
throughout the year!*

We're on the WEB!

<http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabaac/index.html>