

Atala Chapter News

SUMMER/FALL 2003

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**Do you know this butterfly??
 Answer on Page 2**

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Great Southern Whites on the Move

by Teri Jabour

One of the most common questions I hear this time of the year is: What are all those white butterflies? The dispersal of Great Southern Whites (*Ascia monuste*) is an amazing sight in the spring or early summer as you drive along A1A, the beach road along the coast of Southeast Florida. The whites are particularly abundant on Jupiter Island and Singer Island during these dispersals, which occur occasionally in the spring when temperatures rise and rains fall. The butterflies fly south with determination in "flocks" and "flutters" that are hard to miss, sometimes leaving (regrettably for us butterfly enthusiasts) a splat on the windshield. Last May was exceptional and, although not always seen every year, this year hundreds were seen again following the beach road south.

Butterfly dispersal is not the same as migration. Migration is a seasonal, directed, usually long-distance movement, such as commonly seen with the monarch and painted lady species. Dispersals are neither predictable nor seasonal like a migration. Migration and dispersal are both ways that butterflies have adopted to survive during harsh weather and scarcity of food resources. Other methods of surviving unfavorable environmental conditions are diapause (an interruption of growth, usually at an immature stage), hibernation (winter "dormancy" of adults), and aestivation

(summer "dormancy" of adults).

Mass dispersals can occur with a population outbreak caused by the right environmental conditions, such as substantial rainfall after a drought and a low number of predators. The increase or decrease in the abundance of host and/or nectar plants will affect populations. For example, thousands of snouts have been documented on dispersals in Texas. Some species, however, are habitual dispersers and just seem to be "on the move," as Phil Shappert observes in *A World of Butterflies*. The Cabbage White, *Pieris rapae*, is a continuous disperser. Other continuous dispersers are the painted lady and the monarch, which also migrate. Butterfly migration and dispersal are being studied to determine the effects of land management and habitat destruction for development and even roads that can disrupt movement of the butterflies.

In the case of the Great Southern White, a spring generation that is unusually large stimulates them to disperse and search for their host plants, members of the *Brassicaceae* (mustard) family. The native plants, saltwort, sea rocket, and



Great Southern White nectars on a bog sage

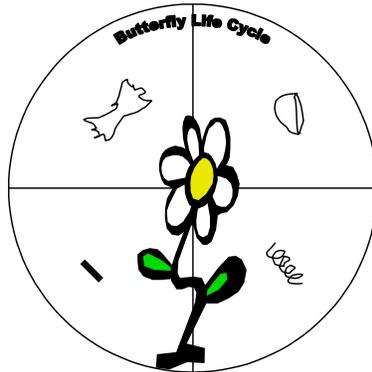
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Bowtie Butterflies! ...and other curiosities by Kathy Malone

And you thought pasta was just for eating...but you can create the entire life cycle of a butterfly by using bowtie, shell and corkscrew pastas, and rice. This hands-on project for children will solidify their understanding of and appreciation for butterflies and help them unravel the mystery of caterpillar-to-butterfly.

Materials:

Markers or water-based poster paints
Brushes
6-inch paper plates
Small shell pasta
Bowtie pasta
Corkscrew pasta
Rice
Liquid glue or hot glue gun



Steps:

1. Color or paint a flower, with leaves, on a paper plate, being sure to make your plant big.
2. Divide the plate visually into four pie pieces by drawing a plus sign so that each line extends to the edge.
3. Label the plate at the top rim, "Butterfly Life Cycle."
4. Label each section on the edge: "butterfly," "egg," caterpillar" and "chrysalis."
5. Color or paint the bowtie pasta the same color as your favorite butterfly (brown, orange, black and

white work well for the monarch).

6. Color or paint the shell pasta (green for a monarch chrysalis).
7. Color or paint the corkscrew pasta to resemble a caterpillar (yellow, black and white for a monarch).
8. Glue each onto the appropriate section. Remember to glue the rice onto a leaf or flower to represent the eggs.
9. Great! Now draw arrows from one section to the next to reflect the order of the cycle from butterfly to egg to caterpillar to chrysalis and back to the butterfly.

Now you know how the butterfly life cycle works!



This young girl investigates the butterfly life cycle at the DuPuis Management Area Earth Day event.

Who Am I?? Butterfly Quiz

The Giant Swallowtail (GS) is a very common butterfly in the urban landscape due to its larval food preference, Citrus. It can be easily confused with the Palamedes Swallowtail (PS), but there are some difference that will help you distinguish between these similar species.

Flight: GS is dark above and pale yellow below. PS has a "flash" of yellow in the hindwings.

Wing Pattern Above: GS is dark brown (almost black) with prominent yellow bands through the fore- and hindwings. Notice the x's the bands form at the apex. PS is dark brown above with wide yellow band in the hindwing.

Tails: GS has a yellow teardrop (not visible in photo). PS is has yellow stripes that continue

from the stripe along the base of their wing.

Habitat: GS's are commonly found near orange groves, urban areas where homeowners grow citrus and hammocks where the native wild lime is found. PS's are more often found in wetland swamps where its larval plant, Red Bay, is commonly found.



Giant Swallowtail

Palamedes Swallowtail

Upcoming Field Trips

Butterfly Count – Mark your Calendars! We need your help!

Central Circle will be conducted on **June 28**.

North Circle will be conducted on **June 29**.

South Circle will be conducted on **July 6**.

Sunday, July 20- Highlands Hammock Butterfly Count

– A chance to see numerous species of swallowtail and always the Little Metalmark. Make sure you bring bug repellent and shoes you don't mind getting wet! Also, bring picnic lunch.

*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). We will meet at the Ranger Station at **9:00am**. ~2 ½ hours from WPB.*

Sunday, Sept 7—Hawk's Hammock and Debbie Dixon's property

—Hawk's Hammock consists of approximately 431 acres, of which 146 are wetlands. It is formerly known as the Bessemer Tract and the land was acquired under the Lands For You program for conservation and passive recreational opportunities. Debbie's property is approximately 5 acres of habitat similar to the hammock but more open. Wear close-toed shoes because pygmy rattlers are commonly seen in the area.

*We'll meet at Debbie's at **9:00am**. Take the Turnpike north to the 714 exit (Stuart/Palm City). Go west on 714 to the first left turn after the traffic light (76A). Continue south over the I95 overpass to Markel Street (the second street, the first street is a private drive). Go 8/10ths of a mile to the green mailbox (5881). Call 772/288-1806 if you get lost. Bring a picnic lunch.*

Sunday, Sept 21 - Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park

— Kissimmee Prairie has the highest diversity of butterflies in the state of Florida. We

did this trip last year and saw 30 species and 156 butterflies!!!

*Take I-95 to Blue Heron. Go west to SR 710 (Bee Line Highway). Take SR 710 to Okeechobee which is approximately 70 miles. At Highway 70, turn left (west) and continue through the city of Okeechobee Turn right onto Hwy.98 and continue about 15 minutes. Turn right (north) on SR 700 and continue for another 15 minutes. Bring a picnic lunch. We will meet at **9:30am** at the main entrance kiosk.*

Saturday, Oct 18 - Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve

- Field trip to Fakahatchee Strand. Guided by park biologist Mike Owens. Bring food and water for the day. This is a butterfly count for the Preserve.

*Take I-95 to Atlantic Blvd. (Exit 37) West. This turns into the Sawgrass Expressway. Take the Sawgrass south to I-75. Go West on I-75 to State Road 29 (mile marker 80). Go South on SR29 about 15 miles to County Road 837 (a/k/a Jane's' Scenic Drive). Turn right onto CR 837 and go about 1/2-3/4 mile (road curves sharply to the right). We will meet at the office (brown) 100m North of the fire tower at **8:15am**. Allow 3 hours driving time from WPB. If you plan to attend, call the hotline so that we can arrange for carpooling and know who to expect: 561/706-6732.*

Sunday, Nov 7– Hypoluxo Scrub Natural Area

—This county-owned property, formerly known as Overlook Natural Area, is approximately 100 acres. This is a good opportunity to see Zebra Swallowtail. There are no real shady areas for a picnic but bring your lunch and we will scout out an area nearby for a picnic after the field trip.

*Take Hypoluxo Road east from I95 to just past Overlook Road. There is a parking lot (unpaved) on the south(right hand) side just past the two story office building. We will meet in the parking lot at **9:00am**.*

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, June 23, 2003—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.

Monday, August 25, 2003 - Phil Weinrich, a well-known naturalist and native plant activist, will speak about plants that attract both butterflies and birds.

Monday, November 17, 2003 - Alana Edwards will give a presentation on recent butterfly conservation efforts in the state of Florida as well as showing slides from her most recent trip.

Special Events

Mounds Botanical Garden has a variety of activities offered this fall so mark your calendars!

Beginning Butterfly Gardening Presentation—Sunday, August 10, 2003. Alana Edwards will give a Powerpoint presentation about butterfly biology and butterfly gardening to be followed by a walk around Mounds. In the Clayton Hutcheson Agricultural center, Exhibit Hall A, at 2:00pm. Tell any friends who might be interested.

Butterflies and Dragonflies—Thursday, August 21, 2003. Jan Everett will give a slide presentation in the Clayton Hutcheson Agricultural center, Exhibit Hall A, at 7:00pm on the butterflies and dragonflies commonly found in South Florida.

Mounds Fall Festival—Sunday, October 19, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Crafts (like Decorate-a-Pumpkin), activities, rides, and exhibits for the whole family. We will need volunteers to work the Atala table!

Mounds Plant Sale — Sat. and Sun., Nov 1 & 2, 9a.m.-4p.m. Over 80 different plant vendors!

To get to Mounds: 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.



Florida Birding Festival and Nature Expo—October 9-12, Thursday-Sunday — This year's conference will be held at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg and will include even more butterfly lectures and field trips than last year. Guest speakers include Marc Minno, Jaret Daniels, Tim Adams, Craig Huegel, Don Stillwaugh and Alana Edwards. The registration kit for this event is still being developed but you can see the entire agenda at: http://www.pcef.org/events-fbf_regkit.html. For more information call 727-827-3326.





MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

Spotlight on Carl Terwilliger and Donna Leone



As transplants, both Carl and I came to Florida and were amazed and fascinated by the local flora, both native and exotic. Our love of the outdoors and natural places, however, soon converted us to native plant enthusiasts. One of the primary benefits of Florida native plantings is the attraction to wildlife. In Ft. Lauderdale, we joined the local chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. We visited the Keys, the Everglades – even a remnant of scrub in Broward County. And we met so many inspiring people – Mark and Maria Minno, Gil McAdams, and Chuck McCartney. At one meeting the society had a young man – Ron Boender’s nephew – speak about butterflies, mostly ones from South and Central America. He spoke about trying to find larval hosts in Costa Rica by following the adults through the brush in the mountains. We visited Butterfly World when it was just a rearing lab in a small house in Oakland Park. The concept was taking hold.

We then moved to Palm Beach County to escape the fast pace and sprawl of Broward County (haha).

Carl started to toy with growing native plants and we discovered our avocation. Through growing natives and selling them at the Mounts Botanical Garden we met more inspiring people. There was Anne Kilmer bringing people by, pointing out larval hosts, and asking us to grow crazy plants. We met wonderful customers like this guy with silly hats that his daughter made for him. The whole family was crazy for butterfly plants – the Edwards. And then the Atala Chapter was born. There was that wonderful yard tour with the National Wildlife Federation. The Edwards’ yard was just aflutter.

When we moved down the street to expand the nursery I was very depressed to leave all my butterflies. Now, ten years later, I feel so lucky to have all the wildlife amidst essentially urban sprawl. At Meadow Beauty Nursery, we try to convert more people to butterfly gardening with natives. We try to give out the correct information but mostly we let the butterflies speak for themselves. “See this plant here.” I might say to a customer. “It is the larval host for the hammock skipper. Oh, here she is now, laying blue eggs on the new growth.” The butterfly is selling the fishfuddle or Jamaican dogwood for us. Plant it and they will come.

Carl: “I love to point out Julias and other butterflies that you don’t see too often. In the future we hope to have the hackberry/elm butterflies and tiger swallowtails. We now have a stable population of atalas on our coonties. You can never know everything about butterflies and plants. There is always the excitement of discovering something new.”

Editor’s Note: Carl and Donna’s nursery is located in Lake Worth and they are open to the public Sat. from 8am-12pm and Tues and Thurs. from 2 to 5pm, or by appointment. Call them at (561)601-9673.

(On the move—continued from page 1)
peppergrass, serve as their host plants in the wild. In our gardens, they will lay eggs on arugula and nasturtiums. Great Southern Whites fly most of the year. In the summer, the female often appears gray or brown. They are easy to distinguish from the Florida White (typically seen in tropical hammocks where its host plant, Jamaica caper, grows) by the blue knobs on their antennae.

According to Jeffrey Glassberg in an interview for the Palm Beach Post last year, the whites undertake these movements every few years when the condi-

tions are just right. Seeing the clouds of Great Southern Whites catches the attention of even casual observers. These fragile looking whites can travel more than twenty miles during their dispersal, which may last several days. It’s one of the wonders and joys of butterfly watching to see thousands of Great Southern Whites on the move.

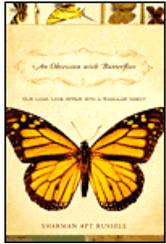


Great Southern White caterpillars on Arugula

Books of Interest.....

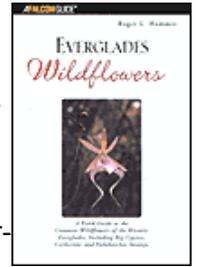
with commentary from Barnes & Noble

An Obsession with Butterflies: Our Long Love Affair with a Singular Insect by Sharman Apt Russell



From the beastly horned caterpillar, whose blood helps it count time, to the peacock butterfly, with wings that hiss like a snake, Russell traces the butterflies through their life cycles, exploring the creatures' own obsessions with eating, mating, and migrating. In this way, she reveals the logic behind our endless fascination with butterflies as well as the driving passion of such legendary collectors as the tragic Eleanor Glanville, whose children declared her mad because of her compulsive butterfly collecting, and the brilliant Henry Walter Bates, whose collections from the Amazon in 1858 helped develop his theory of mimicry in nature. Russell also takes us inside some of the world's most prestigious natural history museums, where scientists painstakingly catalogue and categorize new species of Lepidoptera, hoping to shed light on insect genetics and evolution.

Everglades Wildflowers: A Field Guide to Wildflowers of the Historic Everglades, Including Big Cypress, Corkscrew, and Fakahatchee Swamps by Roger L. Hammer



Everglades Wildflowers is the ultimate field guide to wildflowers of the ecoregion that stretches from Lake Okeechobee south to the Gulf of Mexico, Florida Bay, and Biscayne Bay, encompassing all of the southern Florida mainland. Packed with vivid color photos and informative text, this valuable reference will help you identify and appreciate the varied flora of this vast watershed. Everglades Wildflowers is perfect for the novice and expert wildflower enthusiast alike.

Butterflies of North America

by Jim P. Brock, Kenn Kaufman,



Modeled on the best-selling Birds of North America, the first Kaufman Focus Guide, Butterflies of North America follows the groundbreaking method of field guide illustration pioneered by Kenn Kaufman, using digital images based on photographs for the ultimate in accurate, life-like illustrations.



ATALA CHAPTER OF THE NORTH AMERICAN BUTTERFLY ASSOCIATION

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*Send your email address to
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butterfly related topics and events
throughout the year!*

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