



Atala Chapter News

SUMMER/FALL 2006

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Do you know this butterfly??
Answer on Page 2

Zebra Heliconian: What members are saying about our state butterfly

by Lana Edwards

Most of our members have been saying that they haven't been having the number of Zebras since the hurricanes. Recently, I sent out an email to members and asked them to tell us what they have observed. Below are excerpts from the responses that we received:

- One of our professors at UF (Dr Bill Kern) feels that the roosting habit of the zebras contributed to the apparent crash...when Wilma stormed through she took a lot of the roosts with her, of course. Sandy Koi, NABA Broward, UF Entomology Dept.
- I think that Bill Kern has a good point! Their protection became their downfall. I am not sure what global warming would have to do with it at this point except more dispersal with warmer winters, increasing territory since the p. incarnata and non-native passion vine grows further north (I have seen them along the coast in Georgia late fall probably from northern migration). I wonder if anyone is doing a study. Teri Jabour, N Palm Beach
- Colleen and I were talking about Zebras. They prefer shade and most of the canopy is gone after the hurricanes so this, of course, makes a tremendous impact. We know Mounts lost most of its large trees so we'd assume that there would be less zebras. We still have lots of them but had certain host vines remaining on a fence that survived the storm...even though we lost 21 trees, less shade, etc. We note that taking out the Australian pines along canals, etc. has cleared out vines as well as destroyed habitat. I am wondering about the wisdom of removing them all. Zebras used to hang there by the dozens. Jim Wiggins, Royal Palm Beach
- We have noticed the same thing in our yard after Wilma. Frances and Jeanne did not affect the population much at all but Wilma devastated our Zebras. Pre-Wilma we had in the region of 20-30 Zebras in our yard at all times. Since Wilma, we might see one or two Zebras over an entire weekend. Their old roosting spots were not destroyed by Wilma and we still have plenty of passion vine in the yard. What has changed is the amount of shade in our yard. Wilma took a lot of our trees and the Zebras seem to prefer the shade to the direct sun, as opposed to the fritillaries which love the sun. Maybe this has something to do with the decline. Mike DeLoye, Boynton Beach

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Easter Sunday in the Park by Barbara Alker

Easter was a skipper celebration for about two dozen members of the Atala and Miami Blue Chapters of NABA. In search of the dusted skipper at Jonathan Dickinson State Park in Hobe Sound, we found not only our rare and beautiful quarry, but also Delaware, Eufala and Southern Broken-dash skippers to name a few. A personal highlight was my first photo of a little metalmark, a lapidary vision set in silver and bronze. I also have a new appreciation for thistles, which abounded with small butterflies. Anyone want to come up with a more positive scientific name than *Cirsium horridulum*?



Southern Dusted Skipper on Thistle

After the morning sightings, we had a sumptuous picnic buffet in a pavilion near the river. So many good cooks love butterflies! Many of us took walks later on, several of us were delighted by the antics of an otter defending his stream territory by chattering from several entrances to his burrow.

Throughout the day, we were filmed by a crew from Channel 2's Wild Florida. The episode aired in June.

We certainly enjoyed our day of adventure and each other's company. I heard several people say, "Let's do this again." Thanks to all our NABA leaders who organized the outing.

Editor's Note: If you missed the show on Channel 2, many of us taped it or you will be able to purchase the DVD soon!

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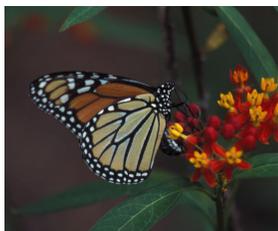
WHO AM I?? BUTTERFLY QUIZ

If you guessed that the butterfly on the front was a Soldier, you're right! If you didn't, read Linda and Buck's descriptions below about how to distinguish the royalty of butterflies.

MILKWEED BUTTERFLIES - WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

By Linda and Buck Cooper

In south Florida we have three milkweed butterflies - Monarch *Danaus plexippus*, Queen *D. gilippus*, and Soldier *D. eresimus*. There is also a mimic - Viceroy *Limenitis archippus*. All of these can be found flying together especially in areas containing both host plants - milkweed *Asclepias*, *Sarcostemma*, *Cynanchum*, *Morrenia spp* and willow *Salix spp*. All of these butterflies are large, brownish-orange, and have black lines and white spots. The three milkweed butterflies also have black and white spotted thoraxes and orange and black abdomens. An interesting recent finding is that Florida Viceroy's are also "nearly as unpalatable as Monarchs, and more so than Queens." (Ritland & Brower, 1991).



Monarch, Ventral



Monarch, Dorsal

Let's look at differences. Monarch is the largest and the most golden, especially on the ventral hindwing surfaces. The wings are heavily veined in black both dorsally and ventrally. It is the only milkweed butterfly with four orange supapical spots towards the wing tip on the dorsal surface. It has a lilted flight and spends a lot of time gliding with wings in a V-shaped dihedral. This gliding flight helps in long-distance migration. Most Monarchs spend the winter in Michoacan, Mexico and California but there is a nonmigratory population in Florida (Cech & Tudor, *Butterflies of the East Coast - An Observer's Guide*).

Queen and Soldier are the two most easily confused. These two are almost the same size and the same rich orange-brown but, overall, Soldier has more golden highlights. Dorsally, Queen wing veins are not outlined in black. It has two interior white spots on the forewing which are usually absent or faint on Soldier. Dorsally, Soldier wing veins are outlined in black but not nearly as heavily as



Queen, Dorsal

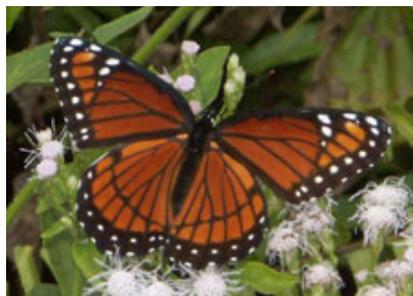


Female Queen, Ventral



Male Soldier, Ventral

Monarch. Ventrally, Queen has hindwing veins outlined in black but forewing veins are not outlined in black. Ventrally, Soldier has wing veins outlined in black but not as heavily as Monarch. Ventrally, the big identification mark to distinguish Soldier is a watermark of pale spots in a 'C' shape in the postmedian area of the hindwing which is lacking in Queen. Soldier also looks 'brighter' than Queen. Even where we live in central Florida it has become fairly common to find Soldier in our yard, drawn to our *Eupatorium odoratum* (*Chromolaena odorata*). This tropical butterfly is a recent colonist to Florida and may be expanding northward due to warmer winters.



Viceroy, Dorsal



Viceroy, Ventral

The milkweed butterfly mimic, Viceroy, is slightly smaller and in south and central Florida is dark mahogany in color. Its caterpillar food plant is the Coastal Plain Willow. Its subspecies, *Limenitis archippus floridensis* is considered to be a Queen mimic. Farther north in Florida, Viceroy is more golden and mimics Monarch rather than Queen. The wing veins both dorsally and ventrally are heavily outlined in black. On the hindwings, it has a dark curved line that looks like a 'parenthesis'. The flight is quite different from the milkweed butterflies. It flies rapidly with a 'flap and glide' pattern with wings held flat during the glide.

Continued on page 4



Upcoming Field Trips—2006

DON'T FORGET YOUR FIELD GUIDE AND BINOCULARS!!

Please verify all directions on a map before you leave home. I make mistakes!

September 10, 2006- FRENCHMAN'S FOREST NATURAL AREA: The Frenchman's Forest Natural Area is located within the City of Palm Beach Gardens on the southern Atlantic coastal strip in Palm Beach County, approximately 0.75 miles north of PGA Boulevard. It is bordered on the east by Prosperity Farms Road, on the south by the Cabana Colony canal, on the west by undeveloped native vegetation and rough pasture, and on the north by the Frenchman's Landing development. In its 148.53 acres, there are a variety of ecosystem types and therefore a possibility of seeing numerous species of butterflies. This is a great place to learn the differences in the checkered skippers.

Directions: From I-95 take PGA Blvd. East to Prosperity Farms Rd. Turn North on Prosperity Farms Rd. The Natural Area is located on the west side of the road. **We will meet in the parking area at 9:00am.**

October 8, 2006—THE RAFAEL SANCHEZ TRAIL: Lake Okeechobee Ridge Park is a cooperative effort between Martin County and the Florida Trail Association. The land was purchased to preserve the last remaining remnant of the original shoreline of Lake Okeechobee. The land for the trail was donated by the Sanchez family who own the sugar cane fields to the east.

The Rafael Sanchez Trail wanders through a thin strip of coastal hammock between US 441 to the west and sugar cane fields to the east. The hammock is dominated by tall cypress trees, cabbage palms, and large cedar trees. Although the hike parallels US 441, you're in a lush tropical oasis recalling Florida's colorful past.

Directions: Take Blue Heron Blvd. west to the Beeline Hwy. (710). Go Northwest on the Beeline towards Indiantown. Just before the bridge to Indiantown, take a right and then a left at the flashing light onto SR 76. Go West on SR 76 to end (~10 miles). Take left onto 441 and go over bridge that you just crossed under. Make first left to go under the bridge again (Envision a pretzel). You can park under the bridge. ~45 minutes from WPB. **We will meet at 9:30am.**

Special Events



October 14 - 15, 2006—The Florida Museum of Natural History, home to the award-winning Butterfly Rainforest exhibit, will host the inaugural Florida Butterfly Festival. In conjunction with community partners, the event will feature:

- Live native butterfly exhibits
- Photography contest
- Lectures by world-renowned naturalists
- Nature walks and field trips
- Vendors selling art, gardening and other butterfly-related merchandise
- A weekend of family-oriented activities

For more information about this festival, go to:
<http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/butterflyfest/> or email: butterflyfest@flmnh.ufl.edu

November 4, 2006 — 6th Annual Southwest Florida Butterfly Conference. Registration begins at 8:15 AM. The conference will be held at the Lee County Extension Office, 3406 Palm Beach Blvd. Cost: \$8.00 per person. To register, download the brochure at: <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/butterflypublication.htm>.

Upcoming Events at Mounts Botanical Garden

October 11, 25, November 1 & 8 – Wednesdays, 6 – 9 p.m.
Workshop: Designing, Creating & Maintaining Your Home Landscape

October 15, 2006 – Sunday, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Fall Family Festival

November 4 & 5 – Saturday 9 – 5, Sunday 9 – 4
Fall Plant Sale & African Violet/Gesneriad Show

Call 561-233-1757 for more information.



Upcoming Meetings

Meetings are held at Pine Jog Environmental Education Center in West Palm Beach. Take I-95 to West Palm Beach (Forest Hill exit). Turn West on Forest Hill Blvd. & go to Jog road. Go North on Jog Rd. to Summit Blvd. Turn East on Summit Blvd. Look for the Pine Jog entrance on the North side of Summit Blvd. **Meetings begin at 7 p.m.**



November 13, 2006—The Homerus Swallowtail of Jamaica. Matthew Lehnert, currently working on his PhD. at the University of Florida, will tell us about his research on the rare and magnificent Homerus Swallowtail. He will also discuss his current research on our local Tiger Swallowtail. This is the last meeting of the year so don't miss it!!!

The Homerus Swallowtail, *Papilio (Pterourus) homerus* in Jamaica

by Matthew S. Lehnert

I always had an interest in zoology, especially with the ecology of Lepidoptera. After graduating from Central Michigan University with a B.S. in Biology, I moved to Florida in 2003 to start my M.S. degree at the Entomology and Nematology Department at the University of Florida. Upon my arrival at Uoff, I was given an opportunity to study the ecology of the Homerus Swallowtail, an endangered flagship species endemic to Jamaica and the largest butterfly in the Western Hemisphere. The purpose of this study was to use mark-recapture protocol to estimate the size of the previously unstudied population of *P. homerus* in the Cockpit Country. Many observations were made regarding the ecology and behavior of the species, as well as the first successful estimate to determine the number of remaining *P. homerus* in this population.



The Homerus Swallowtail, *Papilio (Pterourus) homerus*



Matt measures the forewing length of a Homerus Swallowtail

I successfully completed my M.S. degree in August 2005, and am currently studying tiger swallowtail, *Papilio (Pterourus) glaucus* populations in Florida for my Ph.D. The purpose of my work with tiger swallowtails is to determine if morphological differences between the two local subspecies is environmentally induced or is genetic.

On November 13th, I will give a presentation on my research and experiences working with the rare Homerus Swallowtail in Jamaica. I look forward to discussing my current research and answering any questions regarding tiger swallowtail or Homerus swallowtail ecology.

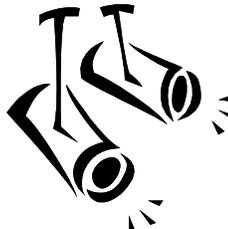
Matt is a PhD candidate in the Department of Entomology and Nematology at the University of Florida.

(Milkweed Butterflies—continued from page 2)

Besides ingesting cardiac glycosides from their host plants, adults of milkweed species collect pyrrolizidine alkaloids (PAs) from dried stalks, roots and flowers of heliotropes, eupatoriums and others. We have seen both Queen and Soldier imbibing chemicals from dead saltbush *Baccharis spp*, dog fennel *Eupatorium spp*, *E. odoratum* and *Crotalaria spp*. To learn more fascinating facts about the milkweed butterflies read a thorough discussion of them in *Butterflies of the East Coast - An Observer's Guide* by Rick Cech and Guy Tudor and *The Butterflies of North America* by James A. Scott.

Most of you have no difficulty attracting Monarch and Queen to your yard by planting Scarlet Milkweed *Asclepias curassavica* or one of the native milkweeds. Try vines such as White Vine *Sarcostemma clausa* or one of the swallowworts *Cynanchum spp* to entice Soldier into your yard where you can become familiar with this tropical butterfly, another bonus of Florida living.

Photos in the article by Linda Cooper and Alana Edwards.



**MEMBER
HIGHLIGHT**

**Spotlight on
Monica
DaSilva**



Humidity, flip-flops and cockroaches?? These are what greeted me upon my arrival to Palm Beach County in 1984 when I was nine. I was not used to Florida at all. I was used to seasons changing; socks with sneakers; and snowball fights - not year-round Florida heat and creepy insects! BUT, luckily, with age *and maturity*, I learned how amazing Florida State really was.... despite my continued dislike for roaches!

My interest in butterflies began only four years ago but the second I was introduced to the notion of butterfly gardening and rearing, I became engulfed in it.

It began one day during a simple lunch date. I went to a friend's house. In her house was a critter cage. In that were these little striped Monarch caterpillars eating and eating and eating. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I was in awe the whole day.

She explained to me the process by which one can create and maintain a habitat for butterfly caterpillars. Then she told me how to attract them

to my home. What did I do next, you ask? I think I did 120 mph to the nearest Home Depot and instantly created a butterfly garden at my house. To date, I see so many butterflies daily when I glance out my back window. I strategically placed an arbor with a Passion Vine (Lavender Lady bloom) in front of my living room window and now I can see everything up and close. It's so amazing.

Recently, I reared my first Zebra longwing – very exciting. Of three caterpillars, only one survived. I've reared Monarchs, Queens, Cloudless and Orange-Barred Sulphurs; Gulf Fritillaries; and Polydamas and Black Swallowtails. I've seen many other butterflies visit my garden. And, I have had a Viceroy take slumber in my garage once – that was really cool!

In my garden, you will find Passion vine; red, white and pink Pentas; Milkweed; Flame vine; Bougainvilleas; Plumbago; Cosmos; Morning Glory; Clematis vines; Lantana; Cassia; Crossandra; Mexican sunflower; red and purple Porterweed (one of which I won at the Atala raffle! Thank you!); and, several others.

I've shared my interest with my brother in New York and sister in Florida, who are now butterfly enthusiasts, and with many friends who now have an understanding and appreciation with respect to their importance and survival. My siblings and I all have excellent guide books by all the wonderful authors we all know (Mark Minno, Guy Tudor/Rich Cech, Thomas Allen, Jeffrey Glassberg to name a few) to assist in identifying them in our respective regions. I've frequented Butterfly World and the Butterfly Conservatory at the American Museum on Natural History. I would love to take a field trip to Mexico to see the Monarch phenomenon of their migration in the fall.

Currently, I'm a member of NABA; World Wildlife Fund; The American Chinese Shar Pei Club of America; Pi Sigma Alpha, Eta Delta Chapter, Political Science Honor Society. I intend on becoming a member of the Florida Native Plant Society; Florida Panther Society; and National Wildlife Federation.

Bottom line, I LOVE BUTTERFLIES!

Zebras continued from page 1

- Following the 2005 hurricanes last fall until this spring 2006, most of the butterflies we saw in our yard were monarchs. However, as soon as the weather started to warm we had an explosion of various butterflies and caterpillars. However, I have only seen one Zebra this year..... and that was in early June. Last year I could count on seeing one almost daily. Pete and Sandra Holmes, Palm Beach Gardens
- Yesterday we saw the first zebra ever for this small area (unit at The Waterford) - and it is still around today. Kenneth Rice, Juno Beach
- I haven't had many Zebras the last two years, but I thought it had to do more with my Passion vine. Most of my vine has died back and I am trying to get it to grow better. I really don't know what caused it to have such problems.... most likely the weather. Anyway, it is very puny. I don't think it would be able to support very many zebras. When the Gulf Fritillary lays her eggs, it is normally just one here and one there. The zebra normally lays 10 to 20 in one spot..... I just figured that the Zebra was looking for a better spot to support the amount of eggs she would lay. Maybe you could find out the status of the host plants for the zebra as well as the butterfly. Maybe others are having the same problem as well. Sharon Chapnick, Lake Worth
- Before Frances and Jeanne I used to be able to count 8 or more Zebras in my yard at one time. In the last couple years I have had hardly any. Recently I have had one (once two at one time) doing the usual rounds from fire bush to fire bush. My old corky passion vine has finally restored itself and is growing all over one of my fire bush plants, plus a few weeks ago I planted a new passion vine in the same area. I see the Zebra looking like it's laying eggs on the new leaves at the ends of the vine, but, when I go to check for eggs, I do not see any, and I am not seeing any larvae. A few years ago in that corner of the yard, I had lots of larvae on the passion vine and, as I said, loads of Zebras. Kristen O. Murtaugh, Delray Beach
- Just wanted to let you that I never seen a Zebra Heliconian in my yard, although I see so many other varieties. Paulette Szlivko, Jupiter
- Hurrah! Hosanna! This morning, delight and renewed hope out enjoying sun and my yard's bounty after way too many rainy days, a flicker of yellow and black caught my eye. I discounted it, having further given up hope after the PB Post article on Alana Edwards finding no Zebras at Mounts and not seeing a single one at my fire bushes and other of their favorites since just after Wilma. But t'was in fact Zebra Heliconian - not just one, but in a few minutes six or seven, seeming extra large and bright and new to me. Elisabeth, Boca Raton
- I, too, since hurricanes Jean and Frances have not seen a Zebra in my yard! Hurricane Wilma just added to the shortage! I used to have a lot, now none. My brother who lives in Loxahatchee used to have hundreds, all the time. Now he has none. My brother and I discussed the disappearance of them after Frances and Jean. We both thought the hurricanes had affected them. My Monarchs are fewer and my Polydamus Swallowtails. Overall I have fewer butterflies of all the species I attract. Kerri Smith-Lake Osborne, Lake Worth

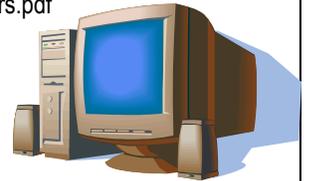
Continued on page 6

Zebras continued from page 5

- Since the hurricanes we have had no zebra h. until very recently. We have five I believe now and it is especially exciting after how long since the hurricanes? Debbie Dixon
- Lots of good theories and observations here. Dr Kern meant that the roosting Zebras were made into confetti *along with* the leaves and branches of their roosts during Wilma; so they were killed by the thousands. I may not have described his thoughts as well as I could have....but the respondees certainly have some valid questions and observations. Sandy Koi
- I had a yard full of Zebra Long Wings until the hurricanes. My son used to tease me that you needed a fly swatter to walk through the back yard. Year before last it wiped them out, they had just started coming back when they were hit with last year's hurricanes. They are much slower coming back this year but I did see three at one time about a week ago in my yard. Until then I had only seen one at a time. I can only hope that they're laying eggs like crazy! I truly miss them. Jeannette Regan
- I agree with Sandy's theory of the entire roosts being obliterated by the hurricanes. I had a roost of 6 Zebra longwings when Hurricanes Frances and Jeanne hit. I wish I had captured them the night before and kept them in my net cage until the hurricane blew over. Also, Hurricanes Frances and Jeanne's wrath on the state was so wide that any surviving populations would be very far away from us in Palm Beach County. It was 8 months before I saw another one in my yard and it just flitted through even though I have the Maypop it likes. After Wilma it was again 7 to 8 months before I saw one. I do have a friend who lives in Hobe Hills off US1 in Hobe Sound who said 2 weeks ago he has loads of them in his yard. I would like to raise a bunch of caterpillars and re-populate my yard. I will call him to see if they are still around his yard. Maybe I could bring caterpillars to the next meeting for members to re-populate their yards! Karen Snyder

Websites of Interest—Here are some websites we've come across with some great butterfly information

- **Online Butterfly Resource Guide** — <http://riverwoods.ces.fau.edu/Education/bflyguide.php>
- **Common Butterflies and their Caterpillars**—<http://riverwoods.ces.fau.edu/Education/ButterfliesandCaterpillars.pdf>
- **Butterfly Gardening in Florida**—<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW057>
- **Getting Started in Butterfly Gardening**— <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IN564>
- **Download a plan for a 6'x6' Butterfly Garden** —http://www.creekgov.net/PDF/6x6_butterfly_garden.pdf
- **Download a plan for an 8'x15' Butterfly Garden** —http://www.creekgov.net/PDF/8x15_butterfly_garden.pdf
- **Channel 2's Wild Florida Butterfly Page**— <http://wildflorida.tv/butterfly/>



**ATALA CHAPTER OF THE
NORTH AMERICAN BUTTERFLY
ASSOCIATION**

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*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>