

Badger Butterfly

The e-Newsletter of the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association **AUGUST, 2008**

WEB SITE: <http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabawba/>

1 NEXT FIELD TRIPS

(For a complete list of SWBA field trips and butterfly counts, visit our web site listed above.)

Saturday, August 9: 10:30 a.m.--5 p.m. Butterflies of the Avoca/Blue River Area

Trip Leader: Mike Reese

Co-Sponsors: SWBA and Madison Audubon Society

This trip will highlight several areas in the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway, including Avoca Prairie and Savanna State Natural Area in Iowa Co. and the Muscoda and Blue River units in Grant Co. We expect to see late butterflies and several southern immigrants. A hat and long pants are recommended. Bring binoculars (the closer they focus the better). A few extra binoculars are available.

Allow 1 1/4 hour travel time from Madison. Take Hwy 14 east to Lone Rock, south on Hwy 130 then turn right on Hwy 133. Go west about 5.5 miles, turn right on Hay Rd, and drive north to the parking lot just before the creek, at **10:30 a.m.** Call Mike at (920) 787-2341 if you have a question about the trip.

Saturday, September 6 10:30 a.m.--noon Fall Butterflies at Olbrich Botanical Gardens

Trip leaders: Ann Thering and Joan Braune

Co-sponsors: SWBA, Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Madison Audubon Society

Last year many beautiful butterfly species that migrate from the south found their way to Wisconsin. Possible immigrant species at Olbrich include Fiery Skipper, Painted Lady, Common Buckeye, Red Admiral, Gray Hairstreak, Pipevine Swallowtail, and Little Yellow, all of which were seen at Olbrich in 2007. The Pipevine is an especially spectacular butterfly, big and black, with an iridescent blue sheen (males). Olbrich has several plantings of the attractive vine, called Pipevine (*Aristolochia tomentosa* or *A. macrophylla*), which the adult butterflies lay their eggs on, and the caterpillars eat. Pipevines don't reach Wisconsin every year, but we might get lucky!

Other butterflies we could see include Eastern-tailed Blue, American Lady, Monarch, Viceroy, Clouded Sulfur, Orange Sulfur, Black Swallowtail, Silver-Spotted Skipper, and Peck's Skipper. Olbrich Gardens are especially beautiful this time of year; many good butterfly nectar sources should be blooming, including asters, milkweeds, verbenas, zinnias, sedums, salvias, butterfly bush, buttonbush, and more.

Dress for protection from the heat, sun and insects. A hat is recommended. Bring binoculars (the closer they can focus the better the view -- a few extra binoculars are available). Stormy weather could cancel the trip. If you have any questions about the field trip contact Ann Thering, (608) 836-1097, therannc@yahoo.com, or Joan Braune, jbraune@sbcglobal.net.

Meet at 10:30 a.m. in the garden, just outside the lobby of Olbrich.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens is located on the East side of Lake Monona at 3330 Atwood Avenue.

2 HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT FIELD TRIPS AND BUTTERFLY COUNTS

Birds, Butterflies and Dragonflies of the Picnic Point Area (July 19)

About a dozen people had a fun time observing and learning about nature at the UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve. There were good numbers of birds, butterflies and dragonflies. Highlights included

Black Swallowtails and Common Buckeye. We observed several showy dragonflies including the Prince Baskettail flying overhead and the Lance-tipped Darner resting in low vegetation. A Bluebird family and a close perching Red-Tail Hawk were enjoyed.

Scuppernong Valley Prairie and Butterflies (July 26)



About 17 people toured this large State Natural Area. We observed Aphrodite Fritillary, 4 Common Buckeyes and the **Endangered Poweshiek Skipperling**, a prairie specialist. This is one of only a few places in the state where the Poweshiek still survives. We hadn't expected that they would still be flying this late but, because of cool conditions and rain, butterflies ran late this year and there was still at least one individual left. We found the Poweshiek at the bottom of some vegetation caught in a spider web but we were able to free it. It showed its gratitude by cooperatively posing for photos before flying off.



Because this is a wet prairie with a nearby stream and pond we were treated to many beautiful dragonflies such as the Eastern Amberwing and Halloween Pennant. We also observed Bobolink, Henslow's Sparrow and Sedge Wren.

Northern Kettle Moraine NABA Butterfly Count (Fond du Lac Co. July 15)

Five butterflyers counted 37 species. This year only 2 of the **Endangered Swamp Metalmarks** were found, probably because this year's cool and rainy weather has slowed down the butterfly season. Other highlights were plenty of Gorgone Checkerspots (147), Silvery Checkerspot, Striped Hairstreak and Harvester.

Sister Bay NABA Butterfly Count (Door Co. July 17).

What a great excuse to visit Door County! Six butterfly counters found 34 species, about average for this count. Highlight was 3 Dorcas Coppers, 4 Baltimore Checkerspots and **Acadian Hairstreak** which was new to the count and is the 51st species seen over the 8 years of the count.

3 2007 WISCONSIN COUNTS WITH HIGH FOR NORTH AMERICA!

Each year over 500 NABA butterfly counts are conducted in North America, about 15 in Wisconsin. In 2007 five Wisconsin counts found a butterfly species in the highest numbers for all of North America!

- Dorcas Copper 22, Sister Bay, WI
- Hickory Hairstreak 44, Trempealeau, WI
- Karner Blue 250, Wazee, WI
- Swamp Metalmark 15, Riveredge, WI

(Only 2 counts in North America reported Swamp Metalmarks! The other count was also in Wisconsin: Northern Kettle Moraine.)
Two-spotted Skipper 7, Sandhill/Seneca, WI



4 NEXT SWBA MEETING

OCTOBER 14, 2008 in Madison. (Location to be announced in September Newsletter.)

Sue Borkin of the Milwaukee Public Museum will talk about the Re-introduction of the Endangered **Swamp Metalmark** (See photo).

5 STILL TIME TO VIEW BUTTERFLY PHOTOGRAPHS AT UW ARBORETUM

SWBA member **Ann Thering's** exhibit of her butterfly photographs, entitled "Butterfly Encounters" at the UW Arboretum Steinhauer Trust Gallery in the Visitor Center at 1207 Seminole Hwy., Madison will run until

August 29. The hours are 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. For more information contact Ann at acthering@gmail.com

6 VERY RARE BUTTERFLY SEEN: MARINE BLUE!

From Ann Thering:

“The leadplant had such a spectacular year at Schurch-Thompson Prairie in Iowa County that a tiny dime-sized visitor from the southwestern United States could not resist. On July 19, my husband and I discovered a beautiful Marine Blue butterfly, which was nectaring on leadplant. Thanks to all the wonderful restoration work, Schurch-Thompson is always a great place to seek butterflies in July, with many Regal Fritillaries, Coral Hairstreaks, and more. But the **Marine Blue** was a special surprise. This was only the fourth record of this butterfly in Wisconsin.”

The Marine Blue uses a variety of legumes as its caterpillar food plant. Because the butterfly we found was so fresh, it’s likely they have established a temporary colony in the preserve or nearby. Alas, none of the eggs will survive Wisconsin’s cold winter. A couple of weeks earlier, a few Marine Blues were found in Toronto. No one knows why, but occasionally these little lepidopterans migrate north, aided by winds.

So next time you see a tiny blue butterfly that doesn’t look quite right, look again, and check your field guide (Jeffery Glassberg’s Butterflies through Binoculars: The East is a good guide for our area.)”

[To paraphrase a well-known commercial: “What’s in your yard?” -- Editor]

REMEMBER TO REPORT BUTTERFLIES YOU SEE TO www.wisconsinbutterflies.org



(Photo by Ann Thering)

7 BUTTERFLY GARDENING: ASTERS

By Dorothy Legler, Master Gardener.

It won’t be long before the Asters will be blooming -- starting in mid-August through October. They add great color for your yard in fall. When many other nectar sources are finished the Asters are in full bloom so nectar-loving butterflies will be attracted to these plants. Asters are also the caterpillar food plant (host plant) for Wisconsin’s Crescents. Silvery, Harris’ and Gorgone Checkerspots also utilize Asters as a caterpillar food plant. New England Aster (*Symphytichum novae-amgliae*) is one of my favorites. It is the parent plant of many cultivated Asters and is easy to grow.



Plant Asters in full sun (some may tolerate partial shade). Plant them 2 feet apart for good air circulation to reduce the risk of disease. Asters like moist, cool, well-drained soils. If they wilt from dryness the bottom leaves will yellow and fall off. Asters are native and grow 4 to 6 feet tall. These can be pinched back to 6 inches throughout June to encourage more branching and compact growth. Plant them with grasses and goldenrod for a great fall display!

Other native Asters such as the Panicked (*Symphytichum lanceolatum*), Smooth (*S. laeve*), Heath (*S. ericoides*), and Calico (*S. lateriflorum*) are some that the Crescent caterpillars would feed on.

Good identification guides for plants are Wildflowers of Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest by Merel R. Black and Emmet J. Judziewicz and Prairie Plants of the University of Wisconsin -- Madison Arboretum by Theodore S. Cochrane, Kandis Elliot and Claudia S. Lipke.

The larval food plant of the uncommon Harris’ Checkerspot is Flat-topped Aster (*Doellingeria umbellata*). All the butterflies mentioned overwinter as caterpillars and will continue to feed in the spring so don’t clear the garden in fall or early spring. Asters will add winter interest to your yard.

8 ARTICLE ON SWBA IN NEXT ISSUE OF BUTTERFLY GARDENING

Look for a short article on the newly formed SWBA chapter with some color photos in the next issue of Butterfly Gardening! (Butterfly Gardening is one of two quarterly publications that NABA/SWBA members receive. To become a member use the membership form on our web site.)

9 BUTTERFLY TRAVEL:

Although this is not a NABA event, the 13th annual Texas Butterfly Festival is great fun and will be held on **October 16th to 19th 2008**, in Mission, Texas, located in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of South Texas, “the most biologically diverse region in the United States”. This is a great event! (Be sure to visit the NABA International Butterfly Park in Mission.) For more information go to www.texasbutterfly.com/

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SWBA

The Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association (SWBA) is a non-profit Wisconsin chapter of the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) which is the largest organization of people interested in butterflies. NABA promotes public awareness, conservation and the enjoyment of butterflies through observation with close-focusing binoculars, chapter field trips, educational meetings, photography, butterfly gardening, monitoring, conservation and travel. Most of SWBA's events are open to the public.

To become a member of SWBA simply join NABA. Membership benefits include 2 color quarterly magazines American Butterflies and Butterfly Gardening. Please use the membership form on the SWBA website at <http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabawba/>

Our e-Newsletter, the Badger ButterFlyer, will be published monthly in summer and every other month in winter. Send any news notes to the editor, Karl Legler, at karlndot@chorus.net

To stop receiving this e-Newsletter simply send an email to the above editor's address.