

# Badger Butterfly

The e-Newsletter of the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association **APRIL 2009**

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

## 1 ANNUAL SWBA MEETING ON TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2009

TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in Madison at the Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Drive.

At the April meeting, Eric Mader of the Xerces Society will give a presentation on "Native Bee Conservation". We will also have Election of SWBA Officers and then a Butterfly Photo Show and Tell.

**Everyone is welcome to attend this free program.** The meeting will last from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. We will have door prizes, displays, books, handouts and plenty of time afterwards to enjoy refreshments and talk with our speaker Eric Mader and butterfly, photography, and butterfly gardening enthusiasts.

**DIRECTIONS:** On Madison's north side, from the intersection of Sherman Avenue and Northport Drive (= Hwy 113) go west on Northport Drive for about 1/4 mile, then turn south into Warner Park. Turn immediately right into the Community Center parking lot. When you enter the Community Recreation Center, we will be in the meeting room on the left.

### 1A) Speaker: Eric Mader on "Native Bee Conservation"

Pollinators are important to our environment, providing essential services for native wildflowers and the production of more than two-thirds of the world's crop species, including products we grow in our backyard gardens.

But, pollinators are in trouble. Diseases, parasitic mites and Colony Collapse Disorder have created a honey bee crisis. Increasingly farmers, scientists, and conservation professionals are turning their attention to the value of roughly 4,000 native species of bees to fill this void.

In this talk, Eric Mader will provide an overview of native bee biology, the value of insect pollination in Wisconsin, basic

### 1B) Photo Show and Tell

Share some of your favorite butterfly or caterpillar photos at the April meeting and enjoy the photos of others. You are welcome to briefly comment about your photos. Please email up to 8 photos (as TIF or JPG files) to Mike Reese at [mikereese@wisconsinbutterflies.org](mailto:mikereese@wisconsinbutterflies.org). File size preferred is under 3 megabytes and preferably in a format of 1024 x 768 pixels (but if not we may resize the file for you). Or bring digital photos to

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identification of our local native bees, and an overview of pollinator conservation efforts taking place locally by the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, the DNR, and the USDA.

**Eric Mader** is the Xerces Society's National Pollinator Outreach Coordinator. He is an Adjunct Assistant Extension Professor at the University of Minnesota's Department of Entomology, and has authored several books and government management plans for native pollinators. More information about the Xerces Society is available at: [www.xerces.org](http://www.xerces.org)

the meeting either on a CD or USB flash drive. Prints are OK but if you want to show slides let us know ahead of time by contacting Karl Legler at (608) 643-4926 or [karlndot@charter.net](mailto:karlndot@charter.net)

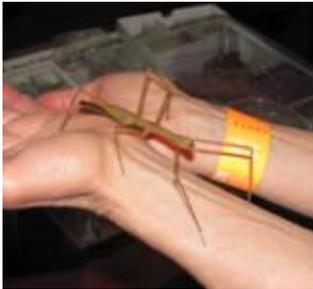
## 1C) Election of Officers

If you are interested in serving as an officer of SWBA for the next year, contact the Nominating Committee Chairperson Tod Highsmith at (608) 242-1168 or at [todhighsmith@sbc.global.net](mailto:todhighsmith@sbc.global.net)

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## 2 SWBA TRIP HIGHLIGHTS: Milwaukee Public Museum

In February, 22 people traveled to the Milwaukee Public Museum to take a special guided tour of the Puelicher Butterfly Wing which had many beautiful live tropical



butterflies. Some of them were

“nectaring” on a nectar-soaked plastic scouring pad used for feeding! Sue Borkin

took us to the room where many chrysalis’ are kept. She explained the strict regulations for keeping live butterflies in an exhibit. In another area there were other live insects on display. Several of us got to hold a giant millipede, “hissing” cockroaches, and walking sticks. Finally, we all rode a huge freight elevator up to the 5th floor to see where the insect collection is located and the research area.

Our thanks to Sue Borkin, the Museum’s Director of Research Support, for so generously taking time to take us “behind the scenes” at the museum. Since many more folks wanted to go on the trip than we could handle, we will try to provide this tour, if possible, again next winter.

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## 3 FIRST MARCH BUTTERFLIES SIGHTED!

The large majority of the 156 butterfly species recorded for Wisconsin are permanent residents that overwinter in the egg-, caterpillar- or pupa-stage. Only about 9 of our species overwinter in the adult butterfly stage. They have found a protective hollow trunk, log, loose bark or even an outbuilding in which to hibernate. These butterflies are the first ones we see in spring, i.e. the first butterflies of 2009 are really the last butterflies of 2008! Our hibernators are listed in the list box. (Two rare northern species, Green Comma and Satyr Comma, also overwinter as adults.)

**Butterflies that Overwinter as Adults in Southern Wisconsin.**

Eastern Comma  
Question Mark  
Gray Comma  
Mourning Cloak  
Milbert’s Tortoiseshell  
Compton Tortoiseshell  
American Lady

The first butterfly of 2009, Eastern Comma, was found in Buffalo Co. on March 16! The next day, March 17 (St. Patrick’s day), the temperature hit 71 degrees which is more than enough to awaken a hibernating butterfly and send it off looking for

some nourishment (e.g. tree sap) or perhaps a mate since none of these hibernators have yet mated.

On that day, Karl and Dorothy Legler, having searched unsuccessfully at several random sites decided to try a site where they saw one of these butterflies in March more than a decade ago. When they got there they found a beautiful Mourning Cloak flitting about, basking in the sunshine within 50 feet of the sighting 10 years or more ago! The dominant feature was a good stand of Norway Spruce trees which may offer a sheltered roosting place.



Several people have reported seeing Eastern Comma and Mourning Cloak. Another butterfly reported in March was the Compton Tortoiseshell.

As our temperatures gradually rise during April, we will start to see more of these left-over hibernators.

## 4 SEE WHAT'S BEING SEEN, AND REPORT YOUR SIGHTINGS TO [www.wisconsinbutterflies.org](http://www.wisconsinbutterflies.org)

SWBA member Mike Reese's award-winning Web site on butterflies is in the process of a face-lift. Check out the site which has, besides butterflies, sections on two other macro-insects (Tiger Beetles and Robber Flies). When you get the home page on this Web site, click on Butterflies to access the sightings page. You can see what others

are finding and photographing, and you can report your own sightings and include a photo if you want. You now can create an account that will keep track of your own sightings! When completed, the upgraded Web site will be able to compare similar species side-by-side.

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## 5 EARTH DAY: PLANT A NATIVE TREE FOR BUTTERFLIES!

By Dorothy Legler

Earth Day is on April 22nd. Celebrate by planting a tree for butterflies! Yes, many trees are host plants (caterpillar food plants) for Lepidoptera (moths and butterflies). According to Douglas W. Tallamy's book, Bringing Nature Home, a study he did in the Mid-Atlantic States showed that oaks were the best hosts among trees, supporting 517 species of Lepidoptera. Some butterflies using oaks are Edward's, Banded, and Striped Hairstreaks and also Sleepy and Juvenal's Duskywings. Some large silkworm moths, such as Cecropia, Polyphemus and Luna utilize oaks. White Oak (*Quercus alba*), Bur Oak (*Q. macrocarpa*), Red Oak (*Q. ruba*), and Black Oak (*Q. velutina*) are native species most frequently cited as host plants.

The second top ranked host trees are native willows. Some common showy butterflies like Viceroy, Mourning Cloak, Red-spotted Purple and Acadian Hairstreak utilize willows. Some native willows used are Pussy Willow (*Salix discolor*), Black Willow (*S. nigra*) and Sand Bar Willow (*S. interior*) and Silky Willow (*S. sericea*). There are many other *Salix* species that may be utilized. Also Polyphemus, Cecropia, Promethea and Luna Moths can use willows as host plants.

The third top host trees are Cherry and Plum in the genus *Prunus*. Butterfly species such as Tiger

Swallowtails, Red-spotted Purple, Coral and Striped Hairstreaks utilize the *Prunus* genus. Some great trees are Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*), Choke Cherry (*P. virginiana*), Pin Cherry (*P. pensylvanica*) and American Plum (*P. americana*). The large silkworm moths also have *Prunus* host plants.

Here are the next 7 top ranked host trees, in order: Birch, Poplar/Cottonwood, Crabapple, Blueberry/Cranberry, Maple/Box Elder, Elm and Pine. Native species are the best host plants and sustain biodiversity. Natives support and produce more insects than alien species and thus we have more individuals and species of other animals, such as birds, that feed on the insects. In a healthy yard with natives there is usually a balance between producers and consumers. You may think that the caterpillars will defoliate your trees. But only some leaves will be eaten; the beauty and health of the tree will not be destroyed. (Alien insects, such as the Gypsy Moth, are the ones most likely to damage a tree.)

To read more on this subject, I highly recommend Bringing Nature Home. An expanded and updated paperback edition is now available (2009).

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## 6 NABA BACKYARD BUTTERFLY COUNT

NABA has designated another NEW count, the NABA Memorial Day Butterfly Count. All you need to do is to observe butterflies on one day during the Memorial weekend, May 23-25, at one or more of your favorite butterflying localities (such as your own backyard) and note what butterflies you've seen. Then go to the NABA Web site, [www.naba.org](http://www.naba.org) and from there to the "Butterflies I've Seen" web pages and enter your report, filling in the location, date, and the butterflies seen. For more information see the NABA Web site: [www.naba.org/memvic.html](http://www.naba.org/memvic.html)

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## 7 SUCCESSFUL DISPLAY TABLE AT MADISON GARDEN EXPO

There were more than 20,000 visitors to the Madison Garden Expo this year. They came from all over the state.

SWBA had a very busy display. All the butterfly photos and books attracted considerable attention. We distributed around 700 brochures and as many butterfly gardening handouts. And we answered numerous butterfly questions and listened

to fascinating butterfly stories from people that stopped at our table. Some of these folks have become new members of SWBA.

Thanks to those that volunteered to help: Karl and Dorothy Legler, Joan Braune and Ann Thering. Dorothy's presentation on butterfly gardening was attended by over 200 people.

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## 8 2009 SWBA FIELD TRIPS

(These trips are free and open to the general public. For more details see the SWBA Web site.)

Saturday, February 28: Live Butterflies at Milwaukee Museum Sue Borkin  
Saturday, June 20: Butterflies and Wildflowers at Pleasant Valley Conservancy Ann Thering, Kathie & Tom Brock  
Saturday, June 27: Butterflies of Cherokee Marsh Kathy Kirk  
Sunday, July 5: Madison Butterfly Count Karl and Dorothy Legler  
Saturday, July 11: Birds, Butterflies and Dragonflies at Lakeshore Preserve Edgar Spalding  
Saturday, July 18: Flowers and Butterflies of Schurch-Thomson Prairie Rich Henderson  
Saturday, July 25: Scuppernong Valley Prairie and Butterflies Rich Henderson, Karl and Dorothy Legler  
Saturday, August 8: Butterflies of Avoca / Blue River Area Mike Reese  
Saturday, September 12: Monarchs and Fall Flowers at Pheasant Branch Conservancy Ann Thering  
& Dreux Watermolen

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## 9 MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

### MONARCH MONITORING HANDBOOK

The Canadian Commission for Environmental Cooperation recently announced that a new 58-page Monarch Monitoring Handbook is now on line. You can download this as a PDF file by following this link:

[http://www.cec.org/files/pdf/BIODIVERSITY/Monarch-Monitoring\\_en.pdf](http://www.cec.org/files/pdf/BIODIVERSITY/Monarch-Monitoring_en.pdf)

This is an excellent resource!

### ANN THERING BUTTERFLY PHOTOS

Ann is exhibiting her butterfly photos at Prairie Cafe and Bakery in Middleton (6720 Frank Lloyd Wright Avenue) entitled "The New Butterfly Collection". The show runs through May 25. (Time: 7 a.m. - 3 p.m. weekdays, 7 a.m. - 2 p.m. on weekends.)

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**The Badger ButterFlyer flits to you every month. The next issue will be in MAY.**

#### Officers of SWBA:

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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. SWBA promotes public awareness, conservation and the enjoyment of butterflies through observation with close-focusing binoculars, chapter field trips, educational meetings, photography, butterfly gardening, monitoring and travel. 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 spring to fall and every other month in winter. Send any news notes to the editor, Karl Legler, at [karlndot@charter.net](mailto:karlndot@charter.net)

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