

Badger Butterfly

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

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

1 NEXT SWBA FIELD TRIPS. MARK YOUR CALENDAR !!

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

Saturday, July 11: Pretty Things with Wings: Birds, Butterflies and Dragonflies at Lakeshore Nature Preserve

10:00 a.m. - Noon

On this trip to the Picnic Point area we expect to see interesting bird species and at least half a dozen species of dragonflies and twice as many different butterflies. The walking route will include the edge of Mendota's University Bay, the woods of Picnic Point, and the Biocore Prairie. Bring your binoculars -- the closer they focus the better. (We will have a few extra binoculars.) This trip is sponsored by SWBA, Madison Audubon Society and Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. Leader is Edgar Spalding.

Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Picnic Point Parking Lot, along University Bay Drive, on the UW campus. The trip will last until noon. Call Edgar Spalding at (608) 265-5294 or 831-0616 only if you have a question about the trip.

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Saturday, July 18: Flowers, Butterflies and Birds of Schurch-Thomson Prairie

9:00 a.m. - Noon

We will visit The Prairie Enthusiasts' Schurch-Thomson Prairie, and the adjacent privately owned Underwood Prairie. The latter is closed to the public, so this is a great opportunity to see it up close. These and adjacent properties form a complex of remnant prairie and CRP grasslands that are rich with grassland birds and other prairie animals. Summer flowers will be in bloom, and we hope to see the rare **Regal Fritillary** and other butterflies. Last year we found five species of fritillaries. Be prepared for a long hike



and bring binoculars for butterfly viewing (the closer they can focus the better). We will have a few extra binoculars. This is a joint trip of Southern Wis. Butterfly Assoc., The Prairie Enthusiasts and the Madison Audubon Society. Leader is Rich Henderson. The trip will last until noon.

Meet at 9:00 a.m. From Hwy 151 at Blue Mounds take F south (note: F makes a right turn). After 5 miles turn right onto Reilly Road. Go to the end and park by the barn. Call Rich at (608) 845-7065 only if you have a question about the trip.

Saturday, July 25: Scuppernong Valley Prairie and Butterflies

10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Come and explore over 1,000 acres of lowland prairie habitat in various stages of recovery. Located in Waukesha Co. this WI DNR owned land has the potential of becoming one of the largest and richest prairie areas in the state. The vegetation

across this level landscape is a mosaic of high-quality remnant prairie, long-abandoned old-fields reverting back to prairie, and everything in between. Three state natural areas are currently designated within the area. The DNR's efforts in recent years

of extensive clearing of trees and brush and reintroducing fire are resulting in the reclamation of large areas of prairie. Many prairie flowers and a variety of butterflies abound. Some late season grassland birds may also still be active in the area as well. This is a joint trip of Southern Wis. Butterfly Assoc., the Madison Audubon Society and The Prairie Enthusiasts. Be prepared for much walking and some wet ground. Bring food and water, sun screen, hat, insect repellent, and binoculars (the closer they focus the better — we will have a few

extra pairs). Leaders are Scott Sauer, Scott Weber, and Karl & Dorothy Legler.

Meet at 10:00 a.m. The trip will last until 2:00 pm.

Directions: Meet at the Scuppernong Prairie State Natural Area parking lot on County N. From Eagle (in SW Waukesha Co.) take US 59 west for 1 mile to County N. Turn right (north) on to N and go for about 1.5 miles. Look for a Scuppernong Prairie sign on the right. The gravel parking lot is on the left.

Contact Scott Sauer (608) 273-0904 if you need more information.

2 UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS (Details will be in the August e-Newsletter. Or see our Web site.)

**Saturday, August 8:
Butterflies of the Avoca / Blue
River Area**

**Saturday, September 12:
Monarchs and Fall Flowers
at Pheasant Branch
Conservancy**

3 HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT SWBA FIELD TRIPS

On June 20 thirteen people visited **Pleasant Valley State Natural Area**. The trip produced a wonderful assortment of butterflies, dragonflies and birds. Here is the trip list of 25 species of butterfly:

Black Swallowtail 1
Giant Swallowtail 2
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail 5
Clouded Sulphur 1
Bronze Copper 1
Banded Hairstreak 2
Summer Azure 15+
Great Spangled Fritillary 10+
Aphrodite Fritillary 2
Meadow Fritillary 5

Silvery Checkerspot 10+
Pearl Crescent 4
Baltimore Checkerspot 15+
Eastern Comma 1
Red-spotted Purple 4
Viceroy 3
Little Wood-Satyr 6
Monarch 2
Silver-spotted Skipper 2
Northern Cloudywing 2



Juvenal's Duskywing 2
Least Skipper 1
European Skipper 12+
Tawny-edged Skipper 1
Long Dash 4

An unexpected highlight was a number of **Ichneumans** with extremely long ovipositors. Some were drilling holes in a dead tree to lay eggs! We also encountered some scarce birds: Red-headed Woodpecker, Orchard Oriole and Cerulean Warbler!



Baltimore Checkerspot

Pleasant Valley Conservancy is a State Natural Area. It is a joint project of Kathie and Tom Brock and the Prairie Enthusiasts.



Ichneumon drills into tree

On June 27 eleven people participated in the **Butterflies of Cherokee Marsh** field trip. Highlights were a pair of courting Bronze Coppers, the tiny but beautiful **Banded Hairstreak**, many Great Spangled Fritillaries, good views of cooperative Viceroy's, Hackberry Emperor, Least Skipper (our smallest butterfly) and both Browns (Eyed and Appalachian). We also found 10 species of dragonfly and a scarce dragonfly, **Jade Clubtail**.



One of the most unusual things we saw was the larva of the **Ragweed Leaf Beetle**, *Zygogramma suturalis*.

We thought it might be some bizarre caterpillar but one of the participants (Stan Rehm) later identified it and summarized its amazing life history, with photos from the Cherokee trip on his incredible blog Website.

<http://tywkiwdbi.blogspot.com/2009/06/ragweed-leaf-beetle-zygogramma-suturalis.html>

For more butterfly articles on this Web site see section 5 below.

On Sunday, July 5, twelve counters conducted the 19th annual **NABA Madison Butterfly Count**. We found 32 species and 319 individuals. We found high numbers of Banded Hairstreak. (See photo above and photos of the life-cycle of this butterfly can be found at links listed in section 7.) We also found record numbers of Coral Hairstreak (17) and Edward's Hairstreak (38)! Though small, they are quite beautiful when seen up close. Other

highlights included cooperative Common Wood Nymphs that sat still for good viewing instead of constantly flying. Red-spotted Purple and Mourning Cloak showed up at the Grady Tract site in the Arboretum. At a couple of other sites around Madison, observers found Red Admiral, Question Mark, Bronze Copper, Eyed Brown, Black Dash, Dion Skipper and Mulberry Wing.

4 SOME UPCOMING NABA BUTTERFLY COUNTS

Some 16 NABA Butterfly Counts take place in Wisconsin each year. Below are ones that are connected with SWBA.

- ❖ Trempealeau (Trempealeau County) Thursday July 9
- ❖ Northern Kettle Moraine (Fond du Lac County) Wednesday, July 15
- ❖ Sister Bay (Door County) Monday, July 20

To join in on these counts or for more information about SWBA-sponsored NABA counts, please contact: Karl and Dorothy Legler, count coordinators: karlndot@charter.net (608) 643-4926 (For a list of additional Butterfly Counts in Wisconsin, visit NABA's Web site at www.naba.org/counts/um_g.html . Contacts are listed.)

5 LEPIDOPTERA PHOTOS AND COMMENTS ON TYWKIWDBI BLOG

The blog name stands for "Things You Wouldn't Know If We Didn't Blog Incessantly"! Blogger Stan Rehm has other photos and articles on various strange aspects of Lepidoptera that are interesting: <http://tywkiwdbi.blogspot.com/search/label/butterflies>

6 JUNE BUTTERFLIES REPORTED TO www.wisconsinbutterflies.org

Mike Reese's butterfly Web site received 144 reports during June with detailed observations of thousands of individual butterflies. Familiar butterflies being seen were Clouded Sulphur, Orange Sulphur, American

Copper, Spring and Summer Azures, Meadow and Great Spangled Fritillaries, Pearl and Northern Crescents, Viceroy, Hackberry Emperor, Little Wood Satyr, Monarch, Silver-spotted Skipper, etc.

Scarce butterflies seen were Purplish Copper, Milbert's Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral (1), Aphrodite Fritillary, Bog Copper, and Painted Lady.

Be sure to share your observations by submitting your own reports online this summer.

7 BUTTERFLY GARDENING: Feeding the Butterflies.

By Dorothy Legler, Master Gardener

We recently visited a native plant nursery. We walked their paths with beautiful blooming plants, but only a single Monarch flew by. Near one of the buildings a worker was hosing down some equipment and created a twenty foot long puddle of water. There on the edge of the puddle, on the moist soil, were three more species of butterflies sipping nutrients from the soil (called "puddling"). This is something you can provide for butterflies in your garden. Just keep an area moist or sink a container in the ground with a mixture of sand, soil and even some composted manure. Keep it moist. The puddling butterflies are males sipping salts and trace minerals dissolved in the water with their flexible, soda-straw-like proboscis. The nutrients are needed for mating. This is a great time to photograph them!

Not all butterflies take nectar at flowers. Some get their nutrients from tree sap, rotten fruit and other decaying organic matter. Watermelon, cantaloupe, overripe bananas, halved grapes and other juicy fruits will attract some butterflies. (You may attract other insects such as hornets so be careful with the placement of this feeder -- away from doors, etc.) A "mung" mixture can be made by mashing an overripe banana and adding molasses and beer. Let the mixture sit in a covered container for a few days. Then spread some on a tree limb or in a shallow dish and watch to see who visits.

There are many nectar plants blooming now such as coneflowers, black-eyed susan, sunflowers, monarda and milkweeds. Some other great cultivated nectar plants are zinnias, cosmos, marigolds, pentas and phlox. So pull up your favorite lawn chair and sip your own favorite drink! Hopefully, a butterfly or two will visit your garden and drink in its beauty!

8 THE LIFE-CYCLE OF BUTTERFLIES AND OTHER INSECTS

Photos of the life-cycle of the **Banded Hairstreak** can be seen at: <http://www.buglifecycle.com/?p=748>

Photos of the life-cycle of Compton Tortoiseshell can be found at: <http://www.buglifecycle.com/?p=753>

These were provided by Marcie O'Connor from Buffalo County, Wisconsin.

These photos are on the interesting Web site **Bug Life Cycles** ("Documenting the life cycles of insects.") It has photos and information on a variety of butterflies and other insects. The home page is: <http://www.buglifecycle.com/>

The Badger ButterFlyer flits to you every month (every other month in winter).

The next issue will be in AUGUST.

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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

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