

Badger ButterFlyer

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

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

1 NEXT SWBA FIELD TRIP. MARK YOUR CALENDAR !!

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

Saturday, June 20: Butterflies & Wildflowers at Pleasant Valley Conservancy

This is a joint trip with The Prairie Enthusiasts and the Madison Audubon Society. Leaders are Ann Thering and Kathie and Tom Brock. Pleasant Valley Conservancy is one of our newest State Natural Areas, and one of the most beautiful. It is situated in the Driftless Area and boasts steep goat prairies on the south-facing hillsides and oak savanna along the ridge top. There is also a large high quality marsh in the adjacent lowland area.



Baltimore Checkerspot

The various habitats are home to numerous butterflies. This time of year we hope to see Baltimore Checkerspots and perhaps some wetland skippers, such as Mulberry Wing. Other possible butterfly species include Black Swallowtail, Tiger Swallowtail, Giant Swallowtail, American Lady, fritillaries, blues, hairstreaks, and sulfurs. All of these

butterflies will have many wonderful native plants to nectar on this time of year.

We will be hiking two to three miles, including a steep hillside. Long pants, a hat, water, and sturdy hiking shoes are recommended. Bring binoculars -- the closer they focus, the better. (We have a few extra binoculars.) Contact the trip leaders only if you have questions: Tom: (608) 238-5050, tdbrock@charter.net, or Ann, therannc@yahoo.com, (608) 836-1097.

Meet at 9:30 a.m. The trip will last until noon. Directions: Heading south into downtown Black Earth follow County Hwy F as it turns right (west). After a mile or so F turns left (south). Continue on F for another 3 3/4 miles turning left onto Pleasant Valley Road. Drive 3/4 mile and stop at the walking trail on the left. Park off the road facing the entrance. (Note: Due to road construction check the June issue of the Badger ButterFlyer for any undated directions.)

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

Saturday, June 27:
Butterflies of Cherokee Marsh

Sunday, July 5:
Madison Butterfly Count

3 NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2009

At this meeting the speaker will be butterfly expert Ann Swengel. Her talk will be on:
Adventures in Muskegs and Kettleholes: A Presentation on Bog Butterflies of Northern Wisconsin.

We will learn about fascinating bog butterflies like Red-disked Alpine and Freija Fritillary, the challenges of finding them and the conservation lessons they teach us. The meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. at Warner Park Community Recreation Center at 1625 Northport Drive in Madison.

4 SWBA APRIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Eric Mader, the Xerces Society's National Pollinator Outreach Coordinator, gave an excellent presentation on **Native Bee Conservation** that was thoroughly enjoyed by some 30 participants. The decline in our bee species poses a significant economic threat. Even people who are not motivated by appreciation of our insects can understand the bottom line of economic loss, and so the "value" of insect conservation. And our "bottom line" is that conservation steps for bees will help butterflies as well.



For more information about conservation of pollinators:

http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/pollinators_in_natural_areas_xerces_society.pdf

Officers were elected: Joan Braune, President; Karl Legler, Vice-President; Ginny Nelson, Treasurer; Dorothy Legler, Secretary.

Several people brought **butterfly photos** to show and added their comments. Some photos were amazing such as Ann Thering's Marine Blue photo and Mike Reese's Giant Swallowtail in flight! A big thanks to the contributors.

5 NABA BACKYARD BUTTERFLY COUNT

Reminder: the new NABA Memorial Day Butterfly Count. All you need to do is 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, 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

6 DOWNLOAD ARTICLES ON FINDING BUTTERFLIES BY ANN SWENDEL

Butterfly expert Ann Swengel has written two articles on finding butterflies in two major areas of Wisconsin:

The Beguiling Butterflies of the Jackson County Pine-Oak Barrens.

The Fascinating Butterflies of Northwestern Wisconsin Bogs.

These articles discuss the various unusual butterflies of these areas, provide locations for finding them and useful information about flight periods and behavior. Both these articles are available on our Web site and can be downloaded as PDF files by going to our Web site then clicking on "Butterfly Watching".

7 APRIL BUTTERFLIES REPORTED TO www.wisconsinbutterflies.org

Observers have continued to see plenty of Mourning Cloaks. They are the most abundant of the 9 butterflies that hibernate over winter as adults. Mourning Cloaks are also our longest lived butterfly, living nearly 11 months! Hibernators do not mate until spring so they are laying eggs as I write. They will die out, the eggs hatch, caterpillars grow, chrysalises form and the new generation will emerge in late June and July, eventually overwintering as adult butterflies so we can, once again, enjoy seeing them in the spring of 2010!

Wisconsinbutterflies.org received reports of 278 individual butterflies around the state in April. During April, 11 species put in their first appearance for the year. Below, those species are listed by date first seen in 2009, then their overwintering stage.

Gray Comma	April 9	hibernates as adult
Cabbage White	April 9	chrysalis
Milbert's Tortoiseshell	April 11	hibernates as adult

Olympia Marble	April 12	chrysalis
Satyr Comma (Bayfield Co.)	April 14	hibernates as adult
Spring Azure	April 15	chrysalis
Brown Elfin	April 18	chrysalis
American Copper	April 21	chrysalis
Monarch	April 24	migrant
Eastern Pine Elfin	April 28	chrysalis
Painted Lady	April 28	migrant



Last month I said that the first butterflies of the year are really the last butterflies (the left-overs) of the previous year since they overwintered as adults. So the first really NEW butterfly of 2009 was the Cabbage White seen on April 9 which emerged from its chrysalis. Second place goes to the Olympia Marble (April 12) and Spring Azure was third, on April 15. The Monarch sighting is unusually early. Unable to tolerate our winters Monarchs famously repopulate our state each year from central Mexico. The Painted Lady is also a migrant reaching Wisconsin from the south. (See also section #10 below.)

8 WHAT WILL WE BE SEEING IN MAY?

During May we should be seeing the first flight period of Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Black Swallowtail and perhaps the (scarce) Juniper Hairstreak. Clouded Sulphurs begin to appear. Our five Elfins only fly in May, but only the Eastern Pine Elfin shows up sparingly in the southern part of the state. Pearl Crescent, American Lady and Juvenal's Duskywing appear in May. Other butterflies also fly in May but are either further north (e.g. Jackson Co.) or less common. See Ann Swengel's articles for ideas on May butterflying! Be sure to send in your sightings (and photos) to www.wisconsinbutterflies.org

9 CHERRY GALL AZURE

In a short article in the Badger ButterFlyer in October we noted that a new species of Azure was described in the journal *The Taxonomic Report*, published in 2005 by The International Lepidoptera Survey. Biologists have studied Azures for many years and have progressively broken Spring Azure into multiple -- but very similar -- species. One of these new Azures, *Celestrina serotina* (usually called the Cherry Gall Azure) is known mainly from eastern Ontario, New England and Pennsylvania. Last year lepidopterist Les Ferge found that one of the specimens he collected in Wisconsin in 1968 (Marathon County) was a Cherry Gall Azure. It is not known whether this alleged species is common or exceedingly rare in Wisconsin. (Currently NABA has not accepted even Summer Azure as a separate species -- let alone Cherry Gall Azure. Instead they are regarded as sub-species of Spring Azure.)

The Cherry Gall Azure is very similar to Spring Azure but on the underside the Cherry Gall Azure is slightly paler with very crisp and distinct black spots. It has more white dusting over the blue color than in the Spring Azure. It flies in May and June, after the flight of Spring Azure but before the flight of the Summer Azure. The larva utilizes Black Cherry. I would suggest that butterflyers obtain photos of Azures from May to July and submit them to www.wisconsinbutterflies.org. Perhaps the photos could help reveal whether Cherry Gall Azure is more than rare in Wisconsin. Specimens and photographs of Cherry Gall Azure may be found at www.butterfliesofamerica.com/celastrina_serotina.htm

10 WANTED: Observations of RED ADMIRAL, AMERICAN LADY, and PAINTED LADY

The [Vanessa Migration Project](#) at Iowa State University (Ames) is similar to Journey North's Monarch tracking. Organizers are **mapping the seasonal distribution and migration** of *Vanessa* butterflies. In Wisconsin they are Red Admiral, American Lady and Painted Lady.



The information being sought is:

1. First sighting of the year. The first date when you see (or have seen) any of

these butterflies in your area, and the numbers seen that day.

2. Noticeable directional migrations.
3. Presence or abundance during the upcoming season.

For more information go to the Red Admiral and Painted Lady Research Site.

<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~mariposa/homepage.html>

11 BUTTERFLYING BASICS

The basic tools we use to enjoy the world of butterflies (and birds and other macro-insects) are listed on the SWBA Web site. But I will summarize them here:

- ✓ Download information on planting a **Butterfly Garden** that helps to attract and conserve our butterflies.
- ✓ We recommend three butterfly identification books, the best of which is Glassberg's **Butterflies through Binoculars (the East)**. (It provides flight period information specific for Wisconsin and is available at the UW Arboretum Visitor Center Bookstore.)
- ✓ **Close-focusing binoculars** of which the Pentax Papilio binoculars are the closest focusing (down to 19") and are available at a very moderate price (\$124 -\$142). Available at www.eagleoptics.com
- ✓ A useful and enjoyable tool is a **digital camera**. Butterflies are VERY photogenic.
- ✓ **Field checklists of the Wisconsin butterflies** that you can use to record what you see, are always available at SWBA meetings and field trips, or just contact the e-newsletter editor.
- ✓ **Quick Index to Wisconsin Species** can be downloaded from our Web site, printed out and pasted in the inside back cover of either Butterflies Through Binoculars (Glassberg) or Butterflies of North America (Kaufman).
- ✓ At the Web site www.wisconsinbutterflies.org you can submit sightings or photos online and see what butterflies are being seen or photographed by observers around the state. Also peruse the online information on each butterfly species.
- ✓ Web sites that list and provide details for **State Parks, Forests, Wildlife Areas and State Natural Areas** with detailed descriptions and maps can be reached by clicking on the appropriate links on SWBA's Web site.

12 SWBA DISPLAY TABLE AT WSO CONVENTION

SWBA will have a display table on May 22-23 at the convention of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, at Siren in the northwest part of the state. We will encourage birders to take a closer look at the beauty of butterflies on their next outing.

**The Badger ButterFlyer flits to you every month (every other month in winter).
The next issue will be in JUNE.**

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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.