

Badger Butterfly

The e-Newsletter of the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association **MARCH 2010**

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

1 ANNUAL SWBA MEETING ON TUESDAY, APRIL 27, 2010

Meet at 7:00 p.m. in Madison at the Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Drive.

At the April meeting, educator and photographer **Mike Reese** will give a presentation on the **Butterflies of Southern Wisconsin**, including how to recognize them and where to find them. He will also discuss his new butterfly guide application for iPod Touch and iPhone! We will have election of SWBA officers and then our 3rd annual Butterfly Photo Show and Tell.

Everyone is welcome to attend this free program. The meeting will last from 7:00 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. We will have door prizes, displays, books, handouts and plenty of time afterwards to enjoy refreshments and talk with our speaker Mike Reese 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.

Photo Show and Tell

Share some of your favorite butterfly, moth 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. File size preferred is under 3 megabytes and preferably in a

format of 1024 x 768 pixels (but if you prefer, we can crop and resize the file for you). Or bring digital photos to 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

Election of Officers

If you are interested in serving as an officer of SWBA for the next year, or would like to nominate someone else, contact the Nominating Committee Chairperson Tod Highsmith at (608) 242-1168 or at todhighsmith@sbc.global.net

2 RECENT SWBA MEETINGS



October 6, 2009

On Tuesday, October 6, 2009, Ann Swengel gave a presentation on Bog Butterflies of Northern Wisconsin. An audience of 25 people learned about our rare bog butterflies and issues in bog butterfly conservation.

On February 23, 2010 some 32 people enjoyed Mark Evans' presentation on butterflies and moths. He provided a wide-ranging discussion of various biological topics such as extremely rare butterfly mutations that have a male pattern on one side and a female pattern on the other. We learned about rearing caterpillars and heard about some of Mark's adventures in South America.



3 FIRST BUTTERFLY OF 2010 !

The first butterfly of 2010, a Compton Tortoiseshell, was spotted in Wood County by Ron Arnold on March 6! (Ron will be leading one of our field trips this year.) As I survey the snow drifts out my window it is hard to imagine butterflies out there but they do start to appear each year in March. Even so, March 6 is pretty early!



Compton Tortoiseshell

Butterflies that Overwinter as Adults in Southern Wisconsin.

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

Below is a table of first-butterfly-of-year records from Wisconsin for the past 6 years, derived from Mike Reese's Web site www.wisconsinbutterflies.org

(The high temperatures are for Madison and are for comparison.) Apparently the best temperature to have a chance of finding a butterfly is in the 60's.

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
March 28	March 11	March 22	March 26	March 16	March 6
Eastern Comma	Milbert's Tortoiseshell	Mourning Cloak and E. Comma	Mourning Cloak	Eastern Comma	Compton Tortoiseshell
66°	65°	62°	50°	63°	40°

The only butterflies that we see at this early part of spring are the Anglewings and Tortoiseshells, two groups of butterflies that are able to overwinter in the adult, butterfly stage. They obtain shelter in logs, tree cavities, sometimes in out-buildings, etc. They develop an anti-freeze that prevents them from freezing. These species are all ready to go at the first sign of warm sunny weather. All of our other permanent resident species of butterfly overwinter in other life stages, egg, caterpillar, or chrysalis. After the adult hibernators have appeared, next will be butterflies that overwintered in the chrysalis stage; they are the next butterflies ready to go.

4 SWBA FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE FOR 2010

Details will be available on our Web site in the spring.

Butterflies of Bauer-Brockway Barrens (Jackson Co.)	Monday, May 17	Mike Reese
Butterflies of Cherokee Marsh	Saturday, June 19	Kathy Kirk
Madison Butterfly Count	Saturday, July 3	Karl and Dorothy Legler
Butterflies, Dragonflies & Picnic at Swamp-Lovers	Monday, July 5	Leglers, Tod Highsmith
Flowers, Butterflies and Birds of Schurch-Thomson	Saturday, July 10	Rich Henderson & Ann Thering
Moths: Denizens of Darkness	Saturday eve., July 10	Mark Evans
Butterflies and Dragonflies of Sandhill Wildlife Area	Sunday, July 11	Ron Arnold
Pretty Things with Wings (Lakeshore Preserve)	Saturday, July 17	Edgar Spalding
Butterflies at Avoca and Lower Wisconsin Riverway	Saturday, August 14	Mike Reese
Butterflies and Blossoms at Pheasant Branch	Saturday, August 28	Dreux Watermolen
*Magnificent Monarchs at Olbrich Botanical Garden	Sunday, August 29	Karl Legler & Joan Braune
Grasshoppers!	Saturday, September 4	Kathy Kirk

* = new trip, just added

FIND OUT WHAT'S BEING SEEN, AND REPORT YOUR SIGHTINGS TO

www.wisconsinbutterflies.org

SWBA member Mike Reese's award-winning Web site on butterflies 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 can also create an account that will keep track of your own sightings!

5 MONARCHS IN TROUBLE: PLANT MILKWEEDS!!

by Dorothy Legler

Due to record cool conditions and drought in the Midwest last summer, and unusually hot weather in other places, the Monarch population over-wintering in several mountain sites west of Mexico City were at the lowest population level in 16 years of measurements. Then bad storms on January 31-Feb. 4 further reduced Monarch populations. Unprecedented amounts of rain and mudslides occurred burying homes and killing 40 people. Also there have been below normal freezing temperatures. Probably over 50% of the Monarchs died!

Because of this severe loss, people are being encouraged to plant milkweeds to help sustain the Monarch's migration, so that successive generations will have plenty of host and nectar plants. (Milkweeds are the Monarch's only caterpillar food plant.) We can create Monarch "waystations" (Monarch habitats) in home gardens, at schools, parks, businesses, zoos, nature centers, along roadsides and unused land. You can buy milkweed and nectar seed from the Web site www.monarchwatch.org/waystations

In Wisconsin we have at least 12 native milkweeds (and some annual milkweeds that can't overwinter here). Most milkweed seeds would need 4-6 weeks of cold stratification (in the refrigerator). Plants or bare roots would be the best to plant now if you'd like bloom this



season. **Common Milkweed** (*Asclepias syriaca*) is aggressive for small gardens, but would be good for roadsides and large areas. Two milkweed plants that are most available are **Swamp Milkweed** (*Asclepias incarnata*)

which will grow in ordinary soil, and **Butterfly Weed** (*Asclepias tuberosa*). Many local nurseries will carry them. For some native plant nurseries see box.

Native Plant Nurseries

Agrecol (minimum purchase necessary, sold by flats or half flats) www.agrecol.com

Bluestem Farm www.bluestemfarm.com

(608) 356-0179 At Dane Co. Farmer's Market.

Prairie Moon Nursery www.prairiemoon.com

(866)417-8156

Prairie Nursery www.prairienursery.com

(800) 476-9453

Taylor Creek www.appliedeco.com/tcrn

Many of our milkweeds and nectar plants are disappearing because of development, the use of herbicides and frequent roadside mowing, which is affecting Monarch populations and other wildlife. Let's work to preserve the Monarchs and their habitats by planting milkweeds and nectar plants, and using less herbicide and pesticide, so Monarchs can continue their amazing long-distance, 2-way migration.

Here is a short article on the decline in the Monarch population over the past decade:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/monarch-butterfly-count-at-a-record-low/article1435827/>

Here is a short article on the storm that harmed Monarchs:

<http://www.star-telegram.com/2010/03/18/2051354/monarch-butterflies-making-trek.html>

6 NEWS NOTES

1. DISCOVERY OF FIRST AMPHIBIOUS CATERPILLAR!

"University of Hawai'i researchers have discovered Hawaiian moths that can live a part of their life cycle underwater or on land. . . The caterpillars of 12 species of the Hyposmocoma moth have the ability to live submerged or on dry land. They can stay underwater for an indeterminate period of time, or out of the water," said Rubinoff, an entomologist. "There's no other animal that I'm aware of that can do that." See more details at <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/20100323/NEWS14/3230332/Amphibious+caterpillars+found>

2. DRAGONFLY MIGRATION: WANDERING GLIDER

Thanks to Tori Graham for this fascinating and informative link! This is one of the most sophisticated dragonflies in the world! (If you have ever seen an insect striking the top of parked cars it's usually this guy!) "While living and working as a marine biologist in Maldives, Charles Anderson noticed sudden explosions of dragonflies at certain times of year. He explains how he carefully tracked the path of a plain, little dragonfly called the globe skimmer [=Wandering Glider], only to discover that it had the longest migratory journey of any insect in the world!" Watch this interesting video talk.

http://www.ted.com/talks/charles_anderson_discovers_dragonflies_that_cross_oceans.html

3. MIKE REESE OFFERS BUTTERFLY iPhone/iPOD APPLICATION!!

New for 2010: a Wisconsin Butterflies application for iPhone, with images and species descriptions from wisconsinbutterflies.org. Install it on your iPhone or iPod Touch and take wisconsinbutterflies.org with you in your pocket.

The Wisconsin Butterflies iPhone application is a comprehensive butterfly field guide, perfect for everyone from the beginning nature lover to the seasoned butterfly watcher. **Over 150 species** are described, including all butterfly species ever reported from Wisconsin, including strays that only rarely flutter through the state. As most species in Wisconsin are also found in neighboring states, the application is also a useful guide for other areas in the upper Midwest.



The guide includes **600 full-color images** of butterflies in the field, selected to aid in identification. Each species includes a detailed description, including notes on similar species, flight times, and abundance.

Descriptions and photographs are pulled from www.wisconsinbutterflies.org, one of the most detailed state-level resources in the country for butterfly enthusiasts.

4. SEASONAL SUMMARY ON BUTTERFLIES FOR 2009 FROM THE WIS. ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY:

Lepidopterist Les Ferge noted that "The disturbing trend of decreasing Lepidoptera numbers noted the past several years continues." Lepidopterist Jim Ebner said that 2009 was the worst season since 1940! We had a late start to the butterfly season and it continued cool, with unusually cool conditions in July. The fall was rainy and cold with very few butterflies.

Les continued, "[Ottoe Skipper] has declined precipitously, being seen in only one of its traditional sites, and [Regal Fritillary] numbers were below average. Their declines are clearly associated with excessive burning of their prairie preserve habitat, which in conjunction with the other factors affecting Lepidoptera populations in general, is more than they can withstand and survive."

7 NABA and Forest Service provide butterfly checklists for eastern forests.

During the winter of 2009 the Forest Service and North American Butterfly Association (NABA) <http://www.naba.org/> signed a "Memorandum of Understanding" (MOU) which is national in scope. Activities include: assessment; inventory; monitoring; data acquisition, management,

exchange and dissemination; and other scientific and management activities to conserve butterflies, plants, watersheds, and ecological systems critical to sustaining biological diversity.

NABA, is a non profit organization dedicated to the public awareness and conservation of butterflies

and their habitats. (SWBA is the Wisconsin chapter of NABA.) NABA activities include: rare and endangered butterfly surveys; habitat management protocols optimal for butterflies; the NABA Butterfly Count Program; and a large-scale monitoring program and database for long-term research studies. NABA has also developed the Butterflies I've Seen (BIS) Database that contains over 1 million entries.

Via this wonderful MOU, NABA has provided Eastern Region with checklists of the butterflies documented or potential within each Forest. NABA's American Butterflies will also carry a

notice requesting NABA members to, when feasible, inventory within [northeastern] forests and log the information gathered in the NABA database. The Eastern Region of the Forest Service will then share this butterfly information with the public via brochures and Web sites.

Lastly, the butterfly MOU with NABA serves to further implement the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC)

<http://www.nappc.org/> which was developed to encourage the health of resident and migratory pollinating animals in North America. The Forest Service is an affiliated organization within NAPPC.

8 PHOTO EXHIBIT by Ann Thering

Enjoy the magic of butterflies at photographer Ann Thering's "Butterflies and Blooms" exhibit at Olbrich Botanical Gardens (3330 Atwood Ave.) in Madison, Wisconsin. The exhibit is open **through April 4, 2010, on Sundays, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.**, and whenever the Evjue Commons gallery is not in use during Olbrich's regular hours (call before you visit).



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

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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 Web site 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.