

Badger Butterfly

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

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

1 HIGHLIGHTS OF SWBA'S APRIL MEETING

At the April meeting, educator and photographer **Mike Reese** gave a presentation on the Butterflies of Southern Wisconsin. Seventeen participants enjoyed Mike's fascinating butterfly stories and his very impressive photos. Mike discussed identification of butterflies and shared one of his many secrets for getting outstanding photos: he carries his camera attached to a tripod to achieve excellent image sharpness.



Election of Officers

The SWBA Officers were retained for 2010.

President: Joan Braune
Vice-President: Karl Legler
Secretary: Dorothy Legler
Treasurer: Ginny Nelson.

IN THIS ISSUE:

1. Highlights of April Meeting.
2. Next Field Trips.
3. Very Rare butterfly seen in Wis.
4. Butterfly Gardening.
5. Recent Butterfly Sightings.
6. Send in your Butterfly Sightings.
7. Ann Swengel: Conservation Symposium in England.
8. 2 New Swengel Guides on Website.
9. Dates of some 2010 NABA counts.

Thanks to **Tod Highsmith** for serving as the Nominating Committee Chairperson.

2 NEXT FIELD TRIPS 2010

Monday, May 17: Butterflies of Bauer Brockway Barrens (Jackson Co.)

The best place in the state to look for early butterflies in May is Jackson County. **Mike Reese** will lead us in finding and observing many scarce and unusual species. We expect to find various Elfins including the very rare Frosted Elfin. We should find Olympia Marble, Gorgone Checkerspot, Cobweb Skipper, Dreamy and Sleepy Duskywings, etc. Bring binoculars if you have them, close-focusing ones work best. (A few extra pairs of binoculars are available.) Also, bring a bag lunch and water. A hat, long pants and long sleeves are recommended. This is a joint trip with the Madison Audubon Society.



Cobweb Skipper

Meet in Jackson Co. at 10:30 a.m. at the corner of West Bauer Road and Brockway Road. We will butterfly until 3:00 p.m. DIRECTIONS: From the intersection of I-94 and Hwy 54 in Black River Falls, go east on Hwy 54 approximately five miles to Brockway Road. Turn right on Brockway and drive 2.5 miles south to West Bauer Road. This area is about 2 hours or so northwest of Madison. **Participants must PRE-REGISTER** for this trip by calling Mike at (920) 787-2341 (so we can contact you in case of cancellation due to weather).

Saturday, June 19: Butterflies of Cherokee Marsh

On this morning walk we'll observe and learn about butterflies, those small but exquisitely beautiful creatures that dance about our ankles in summer. Conservation Biologist **Kathy Kirk** will lead this 2 hour walk at Cherokee Marsh on the northeast side of Madison. We will observe a variety of butterflies as they take nectar from wildflowers, and learn about their identification, behavior, and lifestyle. Bring binoculars if you have them — close-focusing ones work best. We have a few extra pairs of binoculars. It's best to wear long pants and a hat for protection from the sun. This is a joint trip with the Madison Audubon Society and the Wis. Wetlands Assn.

Meet at 10:00 a.m. On the north side of Madison take Northport Drive (Highway 113) then turn north on Sherman Ave. Meet at the Cherokee Marsh parking lot at the north end of Sherman Ave. Call Kathy at (608) 442-1642, only if you have a question about the trip.

3 VERY RARE BUTTERFLY SIGHTED AND PHOTOGRAPHED: WHITE M HAIRSTREAK

The **White M Hairstreak** was seen only once previously in Wisconsin (Door County), back in 1930!! Michigan also has only a single record -- from 1964. But on April 26, 2010 Dan Jackson found and photographed Wisconsin's 2nd record, near Onalaska in LaCrosse County. This individual was a rare stray from its southern range. The caterpillar food plant is Oaks. It can be recognized as the White M by 1) the tiny white dot near the leading edge of the hind wing, 2) the pale orange spot that is well in from the rear of the hind wing, 3) the thin white line making an "M" just in front of the hindwing blue patch, and 4) the upper side of the wings are iridescent blue with black borders. Since they hold their wings closed when perching, the blue is only seen when they fly.



White M Hairstreak
Photo by Dan Jackson

4 BUTTERFLY GARDENING: BLACK SWALLOWTAILS

By Dorothy Legler, Master Gardener

As a child helping my mother garden, we unfortunately destroyed the caterpillars on the carrot leaves, not



knowing they would turn out to be beautiful Black Swallowtail butterflies! The caterpillar's food plants are the cultivated, the native, and the wild plants of the carrot family (Apiaceae). Native/wild host plants include Angelica, Queen Anne's Lace, Sweet Cicely, Honewort, Golden Alexanders, Water Parsnip and Cow Parsnip. Cultivated garden plants are fennel, parsley, carrots, dill and caraway. The early instars of the caterpillar look like bird droppings with a white "saddle" (which helps to camouflage them).

The Black Swallowtail normally has two broods in Wisconsin and can be seen flying from mid-May to September. It overwinters in the chrysalis stage of development. This is a butterfly of open areas, fields and suburbs. The female Black Swallowtail has only a single row of yellow spots and derives protection from birds by its resemblance to the dark Pipevine Swallowtail which is poisonous to birds.

So plant some extra host plants in your garden or in containers and watch for Black Swallowtails this summer.



Black Swallowtail (male)

5 RECENT BUTTERFLY SIGHTINGS AT www.wisconsinbutterflies.org

The warm weather in March that made this spring one of the earliest in memory, continued with April being the 4th warmest April on record! Butterflies and plants sprang forth earlier than usual.

Good numbers of the ever-popular **Red Admiral** have shown up, with as many as 50 seen in Milwaukee County! Will this be another big year for them, like 2007 when people were reporting 1,000's in the summer? They will build up their numbers over the summer. This should be a good year for butterflies so Butterfly Gardeners should plant some extra nectar sources and caterpillar food plants! One mystery of this spring is a butterfly that was NOT being seen: **Question Mark!** Apparently they had good populations in 2006 and 2007 but then their population was much lower in 2008 and 2009. Will they make a comeback in 2010? The first **Monarchs** have arrived in Wisconsin!



One was seen on May 4. Favorable weather will help them recover from the loss of population at the overwintering site in Mexico due to severe rain, floods and freezing temperatures. Also, the more milkweed we can plant the better!

Interesting species seen around the state included Perius Duskywing, Silvery Blue, Western-tailed Blue, Henry's Elfin, Mottled Duskywing, Chryxus Arctic, Mustard White, Frosted Elfin, Sleepy Duskywing, Satyr Comma, Frigga and Freija Fritillary, Red-disked Alpine and Columbine Duskywing.

6 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 provides an outstanding photographic guide to butterflies of Wisconsin. When you get the home page on this Web site, click on Sightings to access the sightings page. You can see what others are finding and easily view many excellent photos taken by observers. You can report your own sightings (and include a photo if you want). So be sure to regularly visit this fabulous website to watch the exciting progress of the butterfly season! **The information you provide will help us to better understand Wisconsin butterflies!**

7 ANN SWENGEL: SUMMARY OF CONSERVATION SYMPOSIUM IN ENGLAND

Bad, Good, and Inspiring News

By Ann Swengel

Thank you for being my guinea pigs last fall when I debuted Scott's and my bog butterfly research in a talk at your October meeting. This helped me a lot to prepare my presentation on this for the **6th International Symposium on Conserving Lepidoptera** in Reading, England in late March.

We learned a lot of depressing but amazingly universal trends that must be faced head on if we want to improve future outcomes. Besides the habitat destruction and degradation we can all see around us, changing agricultural practices are also negatively affecting butterflies. It's easy to see how agricultural intensification is unfavorable. But so is abandonment of farming altogether when less intensive or "traditional" farming practices compatible with Lepidoptera become economically unfeasible in marginally productive land. Getting preserve management right (as Leps define it, not humans) is critical but difficult due to the complexity both of the science and of its implementation.

Meanwhile, species' ranges are already changing due to hotter and/or drier climate patterns. More mobile, generalist species are adjusting their ranges

as would be expected, sometimes dramatically. But more localized specialists are contracting because parts of their current range are no longer suitable but they are unable to disperse across largely unsuitable landscapes into potential range elsewhere.

At the forefront of butterfly conservation, the British reported some good news too. The **Large Blue** has been successfully re-introduced at more and more sites, and their "Silver-spotted Skipper" (a subspecies of our Common Branded Skipper *Hesperia comma*) has been recovered and expanded through natural dispersal into rehabilitated sites. The European Union is integrating biodiversity conservation into governmental policy via funding for monitoring and via biodiversity goals in agricultural policy.

Let me close with inspiration from Sir David Attenborough. He noted that love of butterflies brought us to the conference. This places responsibility on us for their well-being, which sends us out into the field (whether backyard or wildland) to discover and monitor, and back into the human arena, to share and advocate.



8 TWO NEW GUIDES TO MAJOR BUTTERFLY AREAS IN WIS.

The Delightful Diversity of Butterflies at Crex Meadows by Ann Swengel

The Bountiful Butterflies and Birds of Buena Vista Grasslands by Ann Swengel

To download these PDF files just go to the SWBA website and click on "Watching Butterflies".

9 DATES FOR SOME NABA “4TH OF JULY” BUTTERFLY COUNTS

These butterfly counts are conducted exactly like Christmas Bird Counts: Identify butterfly species and count individuals within a 15 mile diameter circle. The data of many hundreds of counts is collected and published. Some 17 NABA Butterfly Counts take place in Wisconsin each year. Below are ones that are connected with SWBA.

- ❖ Mud Lake (Columbia County) Wednesday, June 30, 2010
- ❖ Madison, Saturday, July 3, 2010
- ❖ Trempealeau (Trempealeau County) Thursday July 8, 2010
- ❖ Northern Kettle Moraine (Fond du Lac County) Tuesday, July 13, 2010
- ❖ Sister Bay (Door County) Thursday, July 15, 2010

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.

(NABA charges a \$3 fee to participate, in order to defray the cost of publication.)

(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.)

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

Officers of SWBA:

President: Joan Braune

jbraune@sbcglobal.net

Vice-President: Karl Legler

karlndot@charter.net

Secretary: Dorothy Legler

Treasurer: Ginny Nelson

Other SWBA contributors:

e-Newsletter Editor: Karl Legler

karlndot@charter.net

Webmaster: Ann Thering

Butterfly Reporting:

Mike Reese at

www.wisconsinbutterflies.org

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.