

Badger ButterFlyer

The e-Newsletter of the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association **APRIL, 2012**

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

1 NEXT MEETING Wednesday, April 25, 2012

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

Program: Boreal Butterflies of the Northern Great Lakes



Frigga Fritillary

Our speaker, **Kyle Johnson**, will discuss many seldom encountered northern butterflies of the northern Great Lakes region, especially peatland (bog and fen) species. The talk will cover detailed distribution, flight period, habitats, natural history, and good sites to visit.

Join us for the latest insights into some of Wisconsin's most elusive and charismatic butterflies in exotic habitats. Kyle has been

passionate about the natural world his entire life, and has been researching butterflies, moths, and other insects since the age of five. His studies (including his Masters thesis) focus on distributions, habitats, natural history, and conservation of boreal species, especially those of bogs and fens. Kyle is President of the Wisconsin Entomological Society.

Photo Show and Tell



At the April Meeting, share some of your favorite butterfly, moth, caterpillar or dragonfly photos and enjoy the photos of others. You are welcome to briefly comment about your photos. Please email up to 8 digital photos (as file attachments) to Mike Reese at mikereese@wisconsinbutterflies.org

Otherwise you can bring digital photos to the meeting on a CD or USB flash drive.

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@me.com

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 displays, books, handouts and plenty of time afterwards to enjoy snacks and refreshments, and talk with our speakers and other butterfly 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.

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2 MARCH BUTTERFLY REPORTS TO www.wisconsinbutterflies.org IS THE SEASON OUT OF “WHACK”??

Number of Reports Received in March, 2005 - 2012

| 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------------|
| 1 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 10 | 28 | 4 | 110 |

Number of Species Reported in March, 2005 - 2012

| 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|
| 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 16 |

Butterfly Individuals Sighted in March, 2005 - 2012

| 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------------|
| 1 | 4 | 11 | 3 | 17 | 50 | 4 | 303 |

The species shown in **RED**, in the list on the right, are species that had not previously been seen in March (during the previous 7 years).

After an exceptionally warm winter with little snow, March had phenomenal warm weather with a stretch of 16 days of above-average temperatures, 10 of those days in the 70's and 80's! (At Madison and Milwaukee, this March was the warmest ever!) Vegetation is well advanced with Lilacs blooming in March instead of May! Trees are leafing out and people have had to mow their lawns in March! Meteorologist Andrew Feedman said that this heat wave is historic. Never since record keeping began has a weather pattern been so long-lasting, so geographically broad, so early and so extreme! The

result has been an amazingly early butterfly season with

16 species flying in March! Red Admiral is an early migrant into the state. It will be interesting to see whether this foreshadows good populations in the state this year. What will the weather do next? How fortunate we are that there is a state-level website (wisconsinbutterflies.org) to track the details of what's happening in real time, around the state, on a day by day basis, in such an extraordinary season!

List of Species Seen in March, 2012

Eastern Comma
 Gray Comma
 Milbert's Tortoiseshell
 Compton Tortoiseshell
 Mourning Cloak
 Cabbage White
 Spring Azure

Red Admiral
Mustard White
Question Mark
Clouded Sulphur
Eastern Pine Elfin
Brown Elfin
Olympia Marble
American Lady
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail

NEW FEATURE: I mentioned this in the October newsletter but it is worth repeating: A new feature has been added to the Wisconsin Butterflies website. Now reports are marked ★ or ☆ if they are either a county first photo record or a county first sighting record, respectively.

Keep sending your sightings to Mike Reese's outstanding, award-winning, web site:
www.wisconsinbutterflies.org

The database this builds up is a tremendous resource crucial to our understanding of Wisconsin butterflies! You can submit a sighting and have the option of submitting a photo to the site, and you can see what butterflies are being seen around the state, and enjoy the photos that others are taking, as the butterfly season unfolds.

3 START SAVING YOUR PENNIES!! NABA 2012 BIENNIAL MEETING TO BE HELD IN ARIZONA ON SEPTEMBER 6 - 9, 2012!

The North American Butterfly Association (NABA), of which SWBA is a Chapter, holds Meetings somewhere in North America every other year. Join NABA in Arizona's fabulous "sky islands" in Sierra Vista. Beginners are welcome! The Meeting will be held at the Windemere Hotel and Conference Center



Theona Checkerspot

in Sierra Vista, which is located about 90 miles southeast of Tucson. Southeast Arizona boasts **nearly 300 species of butterfly**. "Specialties" (species only found in this part of the country) likely to be encountered include Leda Ministreak, Ares Metalmark, Theona Checkerspot, Nabolov's Satyr, Dull Firetip and Acacia

Skipper.

There will be all-day field trips on Friday, Saturday and Sunday to Garden Canyon, Ramsey Canyon, Box Canyon and the San Pedro River and other natural areas.

There will be workshops and programs on identification, gardening, photography, butterfly counts, etc. There is a Registration fee of \$250 per person for NABA Members (\$280 for non-members

which includes membership in NABA.) This pays for 3 days of field trips, 3 days of box lunches, and a banquet dinner Friday and Saturday evenings. (Registration cost goes up to \$275 after August 1, provided space is available.)

Bring your close-focusing binoculars and cameras, (no nets are permitted). You can visit www.naba.org for more information. Below are links to the brochure and to registration:

Brochure: http://www.naba.org/ftp/registration_brochure_2012_Mar_9.pdf

Registration: http://www.naba.org/meeting_reg.html

4 2012 FIELD TRIPS SCHEDULE Mark these trips on your calendar!

| | | |
|----------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Saturday, May 19: | Butterflies of Bauer Brockway Barrens (Jackson Co.) | Mike Reese |
| Saturday, June 16: | Butterflies of Pleasant Valley | Ann Thering |
| Saturday, June 30: | Butterflies of Cherokee Marsh | Karl and Dorothy Legler |
| Sunday, July 1: | Madison Butterfly Count | Karl and Dorothy Legler |
| Saturday, July 7: | Butterflies of Sandhill Wildlife Area (Wood Co.) | Ron Arnold |
| Sunday, July 15: | Birds, Butterflies and Dragonflies of Lakeshore Preserve | Edgar Spalding |
| Saturday, July 21: | Flowers and Butterflies of Schurch-Thomson Prairie | Rich Henderson |
| Saturday, August 11: | Butterflies of Avoca/Blue River | Mike Reese |
| Saturday, August 25: | Butterflies and Blossoms at Pheasant Branch Conservancy | Dreux Watermolen |

5 NEXT FIELD TRIP Mark your calendar!

Saturday, May 21: Butterflies of Bauer Brockway Barrens (Jackson Co.)



Gorgone Checkerspot

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 (and State Threatened) Frosted Elfin. We should find Olympia Marble, Gorgone Checkerspot, Cobweb Skipper, Dreamy and Sleepy Duskywings, etc. Bring binoculars if you have them,



Cobweb Skipper

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 of SWBA with the Madison Audubon Society.

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 1/4 hours northwest of Madison via I-94.)

Participants must PRE-REGISTER for this trip by either calling Mike at (920) 787-2341, or include your phone number in an email to mikereese@wisconsinbutterflies.org (so we can contact you in case of cancellation due to weather).

6 UPCOMING FIELD TRIP

Saturday, June 16: Butterflies of Pleasant Valley Ann Thering

Details in the next issue of the Badger ButterFlyer.

7 MORE ARTICLES ON BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT -- BY ANN SWENGEL

[Editor's Note: Ann Swengel is an internationally known butterfly expert. She and husband Scott live in Baraboo, WI. SWBA has posted Ann's comprehensive article on butterfly conservation management in 7 parts on the SWBA web site www.naba.org/chapters/nabawba/. Parts 4b, 6 and 7 have now been added and are currently available as downloadable PDF files. Just click on the links below. This completes the series. Everyone is encouraged to peruse these important new installments.]

Butterfly Conservation Management in Midwestern Open Habitats

By Ann B. Swengel

To download the PDF files click on the links below:

Part 4b: [Summary Version](#) Posted March 2012

Part 6: [Surveying and monitoring butterflies](#) Posted March 2012

Part 7: [Plantings \(habitat creation\)](#) Posted March 2012

8 CLASS OFFERED AT OLBRICH GARDENS:

WINGS AND PETALS: HOW TO ATTRACT BUTTERFLIES TO YOUR YARD

Learn how to lure swallowtails and other magnificent butterflies to your yard with butterfly enthusiast and Photographer **Ann Thering**. Good nectar sources for butterflies and food plants for their caterpillars will be covered, emphasizing native plants. Some horticultural varieties will also be discussed. You will learn key butterfly gardening design features, and how to identify common backyard butterflies and their caterpillars.

Tuesday, May 8, 7-8:30 p.m.

Registration Deadline: May 1

Cost: \$15/\$12 Olbrich member | **Course Number:** 10-30

See registration details at Olbrich's web site: www.olbrich.org/education/classes.cfm



Eastern Tailed-Blue

9 PHOTO EXHIBIT BY ANN THERING

“All that Glitters: Swallowtails, Admirals, Blues and Beetles”

This photo exhibit is at the Lowell Center in Madison at 610 Langdon Street. It runs now through April 29, 2012. The images selected for this exhibit bring together a living tapestry of greens, blues, violet and silver. As your angle of view alters, the iridescent scales of butterflies and other insects shimmer and change hues, just like soap bubbles and seashells. The intimate details of these images will capture your imagination and draw you into the world of these tiny creatures. The lobby is open 24 hours a day unless the Center is closed for a holiday.

10 MONARCH UPDATE

The Winter Population: Population estimates from the Mexican overwintering site indicate that Monarchs lost ground. Their population is down by 28% compared to the previous winter.

Big Factor in Decline is Loss of Milkweed: Dr. Karen Oberhauser (MN) co-authored research published in March showing that, in the past decade, there has been a 58% decline in milkweed and an 81% decline in monarch egg production in agricultural fields of the Midwest. Half of Monarchs come from the Midwest where caterpillars feed on common milkweed. The study ties a decade-long decline in monarch populations to the loss of milkweed from the corn and soybean fields that blanket the region. The losses of monarchs coincide with the rise in the use of glyphosate herbicide, which kill milkweed and other weeds, while leaving corn and soybean

crops (genetically engineered to tolerate the herbicides) intact. They conclude that the loss of agricultural milkweeds is a major contributor to the decline in the monarch population. The smaller population makes the species more vulnerable to other conservation threats. Since this situation is unlikely to change, they encourage land managers and individuals to plant and conserve milkweed. Oberhauser said “it underlines the importance of putting milkweed in garden plantings, prairies, and roadsides.”

The Effect of the Texas Drought: The severe drought in Texas diminished in the eastern part of the state. But while your editor was in Texas in March, a retired Entomology Professor told me that, although things were greening up in Texas, he was having a hard time finding milkweeds because the drought had killed some of the plants down to the roots!

Canadian Study: Found that 10% of Monarchs reaching Canada came directly from Mexico. (The rest were progeny of a second or 3rd generation born along the way, in the central U. S.)

11 VOLUNTEERS REQUESTED FOR REGAL FRITILLARY SURVEYS, PRAIRIE VIOLET SURVEYS.

Citizen Science: Monitor a state-endangered butterfly

By Ruth Kearley

Become a Regal Fritillary monitor volunteer – do some science while enjoying nature and supporting an endangered species! The summer of 2012 will be our third season in a long-term program to monitor Regal Fritillary presence on remnant and restored prairies in the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area in eastern Iowa County and western Dane County.

The Regal Fritillary is listed as a Federal Species of Concern. Once widespread, it has nearly disappeared from east of the Mississippi. In Wisconsin it is listed as Endangered due to low or declining populations and is considered critically imperiled because of its vulnerability to extinction within the state. Occurrences have been documented in 14 counties in Wisconsin through the Natural Heritage Inventory program, but currently there are only three or four areas where potentially viable populations still persist.

To maintain the open prairie habitat these butterflies require, the land must be managed through controlled

burns, mowing, and/or mechanical clearing of woody growth, all of which have the potential to positively or negatively impact Regal Fritillary populations. The monitoring program will improve our understanding of how regals respond to management of prairie remnants and creation of new habitat.



Regal Fritillary
Photo by Mike Reese

Would you like to participate? No previous experience is required, just a love of the outdoors and tolerance for hot sunny days. Training is provided. We are, however, looking for commitment over several summers. The monitoring program runs approximately June 25-July 31 with each monitoring team making three visits to their site spaced a week or more apart. The training program has an evening and a field component. Training opportunities will start in May. Please join us in this important endeavor! Contact Ruth Kearley (rekearley@gmail.com or 608.729.4050) to sign up or to learn more.

Citizen Science: Survey prairie violet populations

Enjoy spring on the prairie and do science at the same time! The caterpillars of the state-endangered Regal Fritillary butterfly eat only violet species in open habitat. We need volunteers to help with surveys to find where these violets are located and estimate their abundance on our preserves that host Regal Fritillaries. This information is crucial to determine how the violets (prairie, birds-foot, marsh, and common wood) respond to management such as burning, mowing, and grazing so we know how best to focus our efforts. The surveys will be done in May, when the violets are in bloom, on lands within the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area of western Dane and eastern Iowa counties. If you are interested in becoming a violet monitor trained in quantitative survey methods, contact Ruth Kearley at rekearley@gmail.com or 608.729.4050.

12 BUTTERFLY NEWS NOTES:

New species, Pink-spotted Sulphur discovered in Florida: A short but interesting article appears online at SunSentinel.com about a new butterfly species found in Florida. No one had realized it was there because it looked like some other species. The local NABA chapter played a prominent role in confirming the discovery!

http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2011-12-01/news/fl-new-butterfly-20111201_1_atala-chapter-statira-sulphur-lepidoptera

Monarch butterfly genome sequenced: In a step toward understanding the remarkable navigational prowess of monarch butterflies, scientists from the University of Massachusetts Medical School have decoded the genetic blueprint of a fist-sized insect that each fall flits on gossamer wings from the Eastern United States to a 300-square-mile patch in the mountains of Mexico.

<http://www.boston.com/Boston/whitecoatnotes/2011/11/monarch-butterfly-genome-sequenced/gF1mFBxXCLUOHigi2FOHPM/index.html>

**The Badger ButterFlyer flits to you every month in spring, summer and fall.
The next issue will be in MAY.**

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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.