

Badger Butterfly

The e-Newsletter of the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association

SEPTEMBER, 2012

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

1 NEXT MEETING Tuesday, October 23, 2012

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

Program:

2012: An Extraordinary Year in Butterflies!

This presentation will be a retrospective and summary of the amazing sightings, and some of the most remarkable photographs, that **Mike Reese's** wisconsinbutterflies.org website has received during 2012. Some species were unusually abundant while others were scarce. What southern strays turned up along Lake Superior? How did endangered species do this year? How did the unprecedented warm March effect butterflies? How did the severe drought affect our butterflies? What was being seen in butterfly gardens? Was 2012 a very good butterfly year? Mostly yes! Mike Reese will provide the overview.

Mike Reese receives reports on many thousands of butterflies and photos from all over the state at his award-winning website, wisconsinbutterflies.org, and scours the state to find and photograph Wisconsin butterflies.

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.

IN THIS ISSUE:

1. **SWBA MEETING**
Tuesday, October 23.
2. **Highlights of 2 Recent Field Trips.**
3. **Butterfly Gardens: What's Been Seen in 2012?**
4. **Horace's Duskywing!**
5. **Texas Butterfly Festival.**
6. **Butterflies in the News.**

2 HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT FIELD TRIPS

Highlights of Butterflies of the Avoca/Blue River Area

This was the 6th annual field trip of the Southern Wis. Butterfly Association, to the Lower Wis. Riverway. It was ably led by Mike Reese. The 17 participants found 30 species, tying the previous high species total in 2010! This trip is conducted late in the season in order to have the best chance at finding some of



the scarcer strays from the south that usually arrive late in the season. We encountered 12 immigrant species from the south, the highest number of the 6 years (Migrant and Immigrant species cannot survive our cold winters so they are not permanent residents in Wisconsin. Each year, they must replenish their populations in the state by migrating from the South. Most will breed here.) The rarest of the finds was several **Sleepy Oranges**. The migrants/immigrants were Checkered White, Orange Sulphur, Little Yellow, Sleepy Orange, Dainty Sulphur, Gray Hairstreak, Red Admiral, Common Buckeye, Monarch, Common Checkered-Skipper, Fiery Skipper and Sachem. The tiny **Dainty Sulphurs** were particularly numerous (24)! That is a big

improvement over last year when there was not a single Dainty Sulphur seen anywhere in Wisconsin! (That was probably due to freezing temperatures in Texas, the previous winter.)

The immigrants are marked in **bold** in the complete list below:

Black Swallowtail 1	Eastern Tailed-Blue 31	Monarch 10
Checkered White 3	Great Spangled Fritillary 3	Silver-spotted Skipper 2
Cabbage White 2	Aphrodite Fritillary 2	Wild Indigo Duskywing 1
Clouded Sulphur 8	Pearl Crescent 6	Common Checkered-Skipper 3
Orange Sulphur 2	Question Mark 1	Common Sootywing 7
Little Yellow 14	Mourning Cloak 4	Least Skipper 8
Sleepy Orange 4	American Lady 2	Fiery Skipper 8
Dainty Sulphur 24	Red Admiral 3	Tawny-edged Skipper 1
American Copper 16	Common Buckeye 7	Sachem 1
Gray Hairstreak 4	Common Wood-Nymph 5	Dun Skipper 1



Gray Hairstreak



Sleepy Orange. Photo on right by Mike Reese.



Checkered White



Dainty Sulphur

Highlights of Butterflies and Blossoms at Pheasant Branch Conservancy.

By Dreux J. Watermolen

This year's field trip took place the morning of August 25, when a group of 22 people joined me to explore the prairie, oak savanna, and springs in the northern end of Pheasant Branch Conservancy. We observed about 27 individual butterflies of 10 different species. Like much of the summer, the weather during our fieldtrip was clear, sunny, and hot, reaching a high of 92°.

The accompanying table summarizes observations from recent annual outings. These observations illustrate the continually changing character of the butterfly community. Last year, one of the commonest species observed was the stunning yellow and black Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, a species that was relatively rare in 2009 and not seen at all during our 2010 trip. We missed seeing Eastern Tigers again this year, but were treated to a number of similarly impressive **Black Swallowtails**. Several additional species (Bronze Copper, Purplish Copper, Gray Hairstreak, Sachem, Painted Lady, and Variegated Fritillary), which were not seen during our recent fieldtrips, have been observed by others in the conservancy at this time of year. Perhaps,



Learning about Pheasant Branch and its butterflies.



Black Swallowtail

we will encounter them during future outings.

The diversity and abundance of butterflies in the conservancy is testament to the preservation and active management of the high quality habitats found in the area. A complete checklist of Pheasant Branch butterflies is available online at http://dnr.wi.gov/org/es/science/publications/SS_10_12_2005.pdf. To see color photographs of these species, and other butterflies, check out the "Wisconsin Butterflies" website (www.wisconsinbutterflies.org).



Common Buckeye

As with most natural areas, knowledge of Pheasant Branch Conservancy's wildlife is always changing and additional species continue to be added to the list of the area's fauna. Your observations and discoveries can

help fill the gaps in our knowledge. So, please get out and explore this green oasis in our urban

landscape and let us know what you find.

Butterflies Observed in Pheasant Branch Conservancy during Fall Field Trips

<u>Species Observed</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Black Swallowtail	4	13	4	6
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	1		11	
Cabbage White	9	Many	8	4
Little Yellow		1		
Clouded Sulphur	3	Many	1	2?
Orange Sulphur	1	4		1
Bronze Copper	1			
Eastern Tailed-Blue	2	4	1	3
Summer Azure		5	1?	
American Snout		1		
Great Spangled Fritillary		2		1
Meadow Fritillary	1			
Pearl Crescent		Many	6	
Mourning Cloak				1
Red Admiral		4		
Common Buckeye		8	4	3
Viceroy		4	1?	
Monarch	19	17	14	5
Silver-spotted Skipper		3	1	
Least Skipper	1	3	6	1
Fiery Skipper		1		
Peck's Skipper	1	1		
Total species observed	11 species	18 species	12 species	10 species

3 Butterflies Seen in Butterfly / Flower Gardens in Wisconsin 2012

I searched the wisconsinbutterflies.org web site for butterfly sightings in "butterfly gardens" or in "gardens". This included both many private gardens and public ones. Some of the public gardens are large, such as the Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison, Rotary Botanical Gardens in Janesville, and Boerner Botanical Gardens in Milwaukee. But some public gardens are small, such as a city garden or one around a building. **Altogether there were 46 species reported from the various flower gardens.** They are listed below:



Red Admiral

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Viceroy | American Lady | American Snout |
| Eastern Comma | Painted Lady | Clouded Sulphur |
| Question Mark | Red Admiral | Dainty Sulphur |
| Eastern Tailed-Blue | Monarch | Little Yellow |
| Spring Azure | Common Wood-Nymph | Orange Sulphur |
| Summer Azure | Dun Skipper | Black Swallowtail |
| Common Buckeye | Fiery Skipper | Canadian Tiger Swallowtail |
| Northern Crescent | Hobomok Skipper | Eastern Tiger Swallowtail |
| Hackberry Emperor | Least Skipper | Giant Swallowtail |
| Aphrodite Fritillary | Peck's Skipper | Pipevine Swallowtail |
| Great Spangled Fritillary | Sachem | Milbert's Tortoiseshell |
| Meadow Fritillary | Horace's Duskywing | Mourning Cloak |
| Regal Fritillary | Juvenal's Duskywing | Cabbage White |
| Variiegated Fritillary | Common Checkered-Skipper | Mustard White |
| Gray Hairstreak | Common Sootywing | |
| Juniper Hairstreak | Silver-spotted Skipper | |

4 HORACE'S DUSKYWING REPORTED IN AUGUST

Horace's Duskywing Seen in August.



The 23rd immigrant species of 2012, to finally straggle into the state from the south, on August 15, was seen in Dane County by Ann Thering. It fills out the year-long immigrant list at right. It is the first addition to the list, in more than a month! **Horace's Duskywing**, like other species at the bottom of this list, is quite rare. Horace's Duskywing has two broods. If a female of the first brood made it into the state then there would be the possibility of creating a small colony of 2nd brood individuals. But probably it is only the 2nd brood that ever actually reaches the state (later in the year) and their caterpillars cannot survive our winter, so no further individuals are produced. Horace's caterpillar food plant is red oaks.

It is striking that while nearly all of the immigrants have been seen earlier this year than in 2010, the Horace's has appeared in Wisconsin a month later than 2010! Because of its scarcity, this could be due to purely random factors, or might reflect the fact that Illinois has had a more severe drought than Wisconsin, correspondingly slowing caterpillar growth and reducing their population.

KEEP LOOKING FOR BUTTERFLIES! THE SEASON ISN'T OVER YET!

It will be interesting to see if any of our species show signs of an additional brood, or whether any more unusual rarities come into the state in September and October. Before the season ends, other interesting sightings can occur. So stay tuned to your garden, nearby wildlife areas, and the Badger ButterFlyer!

Be sure to report what you see to www.wisconsinbutterflies.org

MIGRANTS/IMMIGRANTS FROM THE SOUTH

SPECIES	FIRST SIGHTING	
	2012	2010
Red Admiral	March 21	April 15
Painted Lady	April 4	May 1
Common Buckeye	April 12	June 19
Orange Sulphur	April 14	May 2
Giant Swallowtail	April 24	May 1
Monarch	May 2	May 4
Variegated Fritillary	May 3	May 23
Gray Hairstreak	May 9	May 2
Little Yellow	May 12	May 29
American Snout	May 13	June 22
Common Checkered-Skipper	May 16	June 24
Pipevine Swallowtail	May 21	August 30
Fiery Skipper	May 22	June 20
White M Hairstreak	May 27	-----
Dainty Sulphur	May 28	July 20
Zebra Swallowtail	May 28	-----
Checkered White	June 1	August 12
Sachem	June 17	October 9
Sleepy Orange	June 29	August 14
Brazilian Skipper*	July 7	-----
Reakirt's Blue	July 8	-----
Southern Dogface	July 10	-----
Horace's Duskywing	Aug 15	July 16

* A butterfly never before observed in Wisconsin! (See the account in the July issue of the Badger ButterFlyer.)

Migrants were early because 2012 had the warmest Spring on record, and a very warm summer. In this table we compare first sightings in 2012 with 2010 which also had a warm spring, the 4th warmest on record.

5 TEXAS BUTTERFLY FESTIVAL

Thursday, October 25 through Sunday, Oct 28, 2012

Brought to you by: The Greater Mission Chamber of Commerce

You're invited to attend the 17th Annual Texas Butterfly Festival in Mission, TX, located in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of South Texas, the most biologically diverse region in the United States. Four ecosystems converge in this four county area; with its sub-tropical climate the area boasts over 300 species of butterflies, some 512 species of birds and approximately 94 species of odonates. Join us this fall, during the peak season of butterfly abundance and diversity, for an unforgettable four days afield. Come and be a part of the excitement as we delight in the butterflies and wonderful biodiversity of the region, catch up with old



Blomfield's Beauty.
Photo by Dave Hanson.

friends and make some new ones. We look forward to seeing you in October!

Here's what you can expect:

Keynote Address by Dr. Robert Michael Pyle to present, "The First Big Butterfly Year," at the "Dinner by the River Reception" held at Riverside Club Restaurant & Bar located on 214 E. Chimney Road, Mission, Texas.

Dr. Robert Michael Pyle, Keynote Speaker, one of the most sought-after butterfly speakers and teachers in the country, is the founder of the Xerces Society and the author of *Mariposa Road*. His seventeen books include several national award-winners, as well as butterfly standards such as the *Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Butterflies*, *The Handbook for Butterfly Watchers*, and *The Butterflies of Cascadia*.

Guest Speakers: Dr. Jeff Glassberg, Dr. Ronald Rutowski, Dr. Paul Opler, Mike Rickard, Bill Supulski and Evi Buckner-Opler

Seminar Topics: Functions of Butterfly Coloration; Searching for Blues in Western North America; The Beetles of Texas; What is Habitat: How the butterfly habitat fits into the larger wildlife habitat; Your Computer is Your Darkroom; Monarch Butterfly Adventures and The First Big Butterfly Year

Guided Tours: Rancho La Lomita Ranch, Santa Ana Refuge, Estero Llano Grande, Laguna Atascosa, Bentsen State Park, River Pontoon Tours and multiple local garden & nature sites.

(Note: The 3 days of all-day field trips costs roughly \$110. You must select your field trips on the Registration form below. Seminars and/or dinners cost extra. See the online Registration form.)

Website: <http://www.texasbutterflyfestival.com/>

Schedule: <http://www.texasbutterflyfestival.com/schedule/>

Registration: <http://www.texasbutterflyfestival.com/registration/>

6 BUTTERFLIES IN THE NEWS

◆ Biologists, volunteers rush to save Florida butterfly species

"In a region saturated with spectacular aquamarine waters and bright coral reefs, the colorful Schaus swallowtail butterfly once was a familiar sight as it flitted over Biscayne National Park in South Florida. But the insect's numbers have declined over the past decade. With only five recent sightings, three confirmed, at the island park, federal wildlife officials are trying to save the species from extinction."

Read the rest of this short article by clicking on:

<http://www.cnn.com/2012/06/13/health/florida-endangered-butterfly/index.html>

◆ Climate-driven changes in northeastern US butterfly communities

(This is an article on climate change and butterflies involving the **Massachusetts Butterfly Club**, a NABA chapter.)

"Climate warming is expected to change the distribution and abundance of many species. Range shifts have been detected in a number of European taxa for which long-term government-initiated or organized-survey data are available. In North America, well-organized long-term data needed to document such shifts are much less common. Opportunistic observations made by citizen scientist groups may be an excellent alternative to systematic surveys. From 1992 to 2010, 19,779 butterfly surveys were made by amateur naturalists in Massachusetts, a geographically small state located at the convergence of northern and southern bioclimatic zones in eastern North America. From these data, we estimated population trends for nearly all butterfly species (100 of 116 species present) using list-length analysis. Population trajectories indicate increases of many species near their northern range limits and declines in nearly all species (17 of 21) near their southern range limits." **Read the article by clicking on the link:**

<http://www.nature.com/nclimate/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nclimate1663.html>

◆ Good Oak's "Save the Monarch" program.

Good Oak Ecological Services says it will, for a fee, install a native garden for Monarchs, doing the work for you. Or they can, for a fee, provide the parts and you can do it yourself. You can get the full details by clicking on their website:

<http://goodoak.com/monarchs.html>

◆ Butterfly Species in England Expands Range With Climate Change



"In the current issue of Science, researchers at the University of York report that the brown argus butterfly has spread its reach in England northward by about 50 miles over 20 years as a warmer climate allows its caterpillars to feed off wild geranium plants, which are widespread in the countryside."

To read the full article, click on the link:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/29/science/butterfly-species-expands-range-with-climate-change.html?ref=science>

◆ Mutant butterflies a result of Fukushima nuclear disaster, researchers say.

"In the first sign that the Fukushima nuclear disaster may be changing life around it, scientists say they've found mutant butterflies." Abnormalities have been seen in legs, antennas, abdomen and eyes. "Researchers also found that some affected butterflies had broken or wrinkled wings, changes in wing size, color pattern changes, and spots disappearing or increasing on the butterflies."

Read the full article by clicking on the link:

<http://news.blogs.cnn.com/2012/08/14/mutant-butterflies-a-result-of-fukushima-nuclear-disaster-researchers-say/>

The Badger ButterFlyer flits to you every month except winter. The next issue will be in OCTOBER.

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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

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