

# Badger ButterFlyer

The e-Newsletter of the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association      **SEPTEMBER, 2013**

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

## 1 NEXT SWBA PUBLIC MEETING WILL BE HELD IN FITCHBURG!

The next SWBA meeting will be held on

**Wednesday, October 9, 2013 at 7:00 p.m., at a new location,** the meeting room of the **Fitchburg Public Library, 5530 Lacy Road, Fitchburg, WI.** (mark your calendar!)

**(NEW LOCATION! SEE DIRECTIONS BELOW.)**

(Our thanks to Ann Thering for calling our attention to these outstanding facilities!)



West

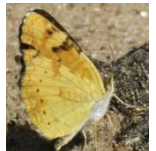
East

### Public

### Programs:

#### The Year in Butterflies (Mike Reese)

Every butterfly year is different and has its own uniqueness and idiosyncrasies. As the 2013 butterfly season winds down, it will be good to sit back and take stock of how butterflies fared this year. In this informative program, educator and butterfly expert, Mike Reese, will show some of the dazzling photos he has taken this year or that have been submitted to his award-winning website, [wisconsinbutterflies.org](http://wisconsinbutterflies.org), and tell about the most fascinating and significant butterfly encounters around the state for 2013. Mike will discuss his observation of Tawny Crescent, one of the rarest resident butterflies in Wisconsin. He will explain how threatened and endangered species did this year, which butterflies were up and which were down. Last year was a record year for immigrants; how did this year compare? Was there a difference between northern and southern Wisconsin butterfly populations? Finally, perhaps we can coax Mike into showing (for sheer variety) a few of the incredible bird photos he recently took at Wisconsin Point, of Parasitic Jaeger and Long-tailed Jaeger!



Tawny  
Crescent

#### Video from the Texas Butterfly Festival 2002 (Karl and Dorothy Legler)

This is a 10-15 minute presentation. Since the Texas Butterfly Festival, at NABA's National Butterfly Center (and other places) in Mission, Texas is coming up on November 2-5, we thought you might be interested in the video we took of some of the butterflies from the Texas Butterfly Festival, back in 2002. We will see some of the butterflies of the Rio Grande Valley as they nectar, mate and -- uh -- fly away.

#### How to Grow Plants from Seed (Dorothy Legler)

Master Gardener Dorothy Legler will explain the methods that can be used to plant seeds that produce the plants you need for your Butterfly Garden (fall sowing, winter sowing, and spring seed starting.)

#### Free Butterfly Garden plants!

#### IN THIS ISSUE:

1. **NEXT MEETING:**  
Weds., Oct. 9, 7:00 p.m.  
**NEW location: Fitchburg Public Library**
2. **HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT FIELD TRIPS**
  - Butterflies of Avoca / Blue River Area.
  - Butterflies and Blossoms of Pheasant Branch
3. Texas Butterfly Festival
4. Book: A guide to Rio Grande Butterflies.
5. Butterfly Reports of August.
6. Butterfly News and Views.
7. White-lined Shpinx.
8. Very rare Cloudless Sulphur.

Ginny Nelson will bring a number of extra plants to give away, for your butterfly garden: **Swamp Milkweed** and **Whorled Milkweed**. These are great food plants for Monarch caterpillars!

**Everyone is welcome to attend this free program.**

The meeting will last from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. We will have displays, books, handouts and plenty of time afterward to enjoy *delicious* snacks and refreshments, and talk with our speakers and other butterfly enthusiasts.

**DIRECTIONS TO MEETING:**

From the Beltline, take Fish Hatchery Road (= county D) south for about 2.4 miles and turn left (east) at Lacy Rd. After 1 block the library is on the left, at the intersection of Lacey Rd. and Research Park Rd. Continue on Lacy and take the entrance road around the far (east) end of the library to access parking near the entrance, (behind the library).

OR if you prefer to park underground, turn left (north) onto Research Park Rd and then turn right into the ramp leading to the underground parking lot.

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## 2 HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT FIELD TRIPS

### Highlights of Butterflies of Avoca/Blue River Area.

This field trip was SWBA's 7th annual Lower Wisconsin Riverway trip, led by Mike Reese. This field trip had a **high turnout of 27 butterflies!** With more eyes, we found 27 species, listed below. The "best" sightings are highlighted in **bold type**:

Red-spotted Purple 1  
Eastern Comma 1  
Eastern Tailed-Blue 29  
Summer Azure 2  
Pearl Crescent 23  
**Aphrodite Fritillary 5**  
Great Spangled Fritillary 16  
**Coral Hairstreak 3**  
**Gray Hairstreak 1**

American Lady 3  
Red Admiral 2  
**Painted Lady 2**  
Common Wood Nymph 8  
**Common Roadside Skipper 7**  
Dun Skipper 1  
Least Skipper 20  
Peck's Skipper 1  
Clouded Sulphur 3

**Little Yellow 7**  
Orange Sulphur 3  
Black Swallowtail 1  
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail 2  
**Giant Swallowtail 2**  
Mourning Cloak 1  
Cabbage White 3  
**Common Buckeye 3**  
Monarch 2

A few days before the trip, SWBA issued a **Rare Butterfly Alert** to all Badger ButterFlyer subscribers, indicating that we would offer an optional additional side-trip after the regular trip. After the field trip, 11 people elected to go on the 2nd trip of about an hour to western Grant County to look for an ultra-rare small colony of **Cloudless Sulphurs**. A very rare stray to Wisconsin from the South, they arrived early enough in the year, to breed and form a small colony of up to 4 individuals. This was the first colony of Cloudless Sulphurs discovered in Wisconsin in 14 years! We had great views and photographs of very cooperative Cloudless Sulphurs! (Also see Article# 8.)

Finally, because this Avoca trip is an important source of butterfly information of special interest,



**Gray Hairstreak**

we keep track of numbers seen for each species and submit the data to the NABA Butterfly Count program for inclusion in their yearly publication. We combined what was seen on the field trip with data from an additional group of counters counting butterflies at other locations, in the morning, before the field trip, and another group of counters that counted butterflies in the afternoon, after the field trip. They added the following species to the day's list:

Viceroy, American Copper, Meadow Fritillary, Variegated Fritillary, Silver-spotted Skipper and Northern Pearly-eye. We found a grand total of 33 species for the day, 259 individuals in all. Our thanks to the extra counters!

# Highlights of Butterflies and Blossoms at Pheasant Branch Conservancy

By Dreux J. Watermolen

Pheasant Branch Conservancy is home to about 60 of the 158 butterfly species that have been documented in Wisconsin. These range in size from the tiny Least Skipper (Wisconsin's smallest butterfly) up to the Eastern Tiger Swallowtails (our largest butterfly).

Observations from these fieldtrips provide an interesting look at the variable nature of the conservancy's butterfly populations.

This year's fieldtrip took place on August 24, when a group of 12 people joined me to explore the prairie, oak savanna, and springs in the northern end of the conservancy. We observed about 55 individual butterflies of 10 different species during our 2.5 hour visit, a total comparable to previous years.

The accompanying table summarizes observations from recent annual outings. These observations illustrate the continually changing character of the butterfly community.

This year we were treated with Eastern Tiger Swallowtails, as well as a number of Black Swallowtails, including one female observed laying eggs. 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, we will encounter them during future outings.



**Black Swallowtail**

Participants on our 2013 fieldtrip also encountered an interesting iridescent blue-black beetle crawling up a blade of grass along the trail. Believed to be a **blister beetle** (family Tenebrionidae), this magnificent creature provided an unexpected treat as we watched it go about its business. Image available at

<http://bugguide.net/node/view/647584>.

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. 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 continue to explore this green oasis in our urban landscape and let us know what you find.

## Butterflies Observed in Pheasant Branch Conservancy during SWBA's Fall Field Trips

Species Observed	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Black Swallowtail	4	13	4	6	12
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	1		11		6
Cabbage White	9	Many	8	4	5
Little Yellow		1			
Clouded Sulphur	3	Many	1	2?	5
Orange Sulphur	1	4		1	
Bronze Copper	1				
Eastern Tailed-Blue	2	4	1	3	8
Summer Azure		5	1?		1
American Snout		1			
Great Spangled Fritillary		2		1	2
Meadow Fritillary	1				
Pearl Crescent		Many	6		7
Mourning Cloak				1	
Red Admiral		4			
Common Buckeye		8	4	3	3
Viceroy		4	1?		
Monarch	19	17	14	5	6
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	10 species

## 3 REMINDER:

**18TH ANNUAL TEXAS BUTTERFLY FESTIVAL!**  
**Join the nation's premier butterflying event!**



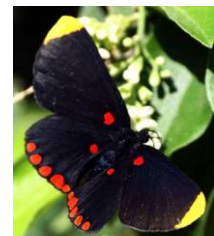
in Mission, Texas

**Saturday, Nov. 2 – Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2013**

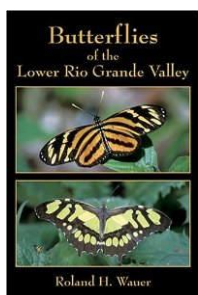
This year, the [National Butterfly Center](http://www.nationalbutterflycenter.org) is honored to host the **18th Annual Texas Butterfly Festival**. Our goal is to provide attendees a fulfilling and rewarding experience. From November 2 - 5, 2013, attendees will spend 3 days exploring renowned public lands and private properties with world-class trip leaders and expert guides. The Festival is taking place during prime butterfly season, when you may reasonably expect to see 60 or more species in a day.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER, GO TO THE WEBSITE:**

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



Red-bordered Pixie



#### **4 A GUIDE TO RIO GRANDE VALLEY BUTTERFLIES**

A book that is useful for butterflying in southern Texas is:

**Butterflies of the Lower Rio Grande Valley**, by Roland H. Wauer (2004) \$19.37 on Amazon.

Another excellent resource for butterflying in southern Texas is Jeffrey Glassberg's **A Swift Guide to Butterflies of North America** (2013) \$29.95 at Amazon.

Also of interest is **Finding Butterflies in Texas: A Guide to the best sites.** by Roland H. Wauer. (2006). \$16.95 on Amazon.

#### **5 HIGHLIGHTS OF BUTTERFLIES REPORTED IN AUGUST AT**

[www.wisconsinbutterflies.org](http://www.wisconsinbutterflies.org)

**RESIDENT BUTTERFLIES:** Second brood **Purplish Coppers** were found at 3 places in NW Wisconsin. **Atlantis Fritillary**, a northern species, had a high count of 34 on the 6th. The Endangered **Regal Fritillary**, was last reported on the 3rd. **Purplish Fritillary**, a rare northern species had 2 reports. **Juniper Hairstreak** was last seen on August 1. An extremely late **Common Ringlet** was seen on the 28th in Wood Co. The **Common Branded Skipper**, a late-flying northern species, peaked at 149 in Bayfield Co. **Leonard's Skipper**, another late-flying species, was seen throughout the state in the 2nd half of August. A high count was 79 (!) in Sauk County.

**IMMIGRANTS:** **Common Buckeye** was seen regularly throughout August. **Variiegated Fritillary** had 6 reports in the western part of the state. **Gray Hairstreak** has been very scarce. The only encounter in August was one on SWBA's Avoca/Blue River field trip! **Painted Lady** had only 4 reports. **Fiery Skipper** had just 2 reports.

**Sachem** had a single report, amazingly from Bayfield Co., where strays from the South are eventually stopped by Lake Superior! **Common Checkered-Skipper** had 2 reports. **American Snout** was last seen on the 15th. **Dainty Sulphur** had 3 reports. **Little Yellow** had several reports throughout the month, with a high of 10 individuals. A few **Cloudless Sulphurs**, a very rare stray from the South, were present throughout the month in Grant Co. **Giant Swallowtails** were regularly seen all month.

**KEEP SENDING YOUR REPORTS TO** [www.wisconsinbutterflies.org](http://www.wisconsinbutterflies.org)

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## 6 BUTTERFLY NEWS AND VIEWS

### Fall 2013 Monarch Population Update of the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project

2013 was a poor year for monarchs. Dr. Karen Oberhauser compares this year to those recent, and shares ways we can help monarchs in the years to come. There is also an article on a phenomenon called "premigration". And at least some good news from Arizona! Read the MLMP newsletter by clicking on

[http://www.mlmp.org/Newsletters/monthly/2013/mlmp\\_update\\_201308-201309.pdf#nameddest=population](http://www.mlmp.org/Newsletters/monthly/2013/mlmp_update_201308-201309.pdf#nameddest=population)

### Where are the Monarchs in 2013? by Pat Sutton, Cape May, New Jersey

In 2012 a large Monarch population migrated along the East Coast but the reduction of the main core population in the Midwest due to drought was too extreme. But this year the East Coast also has a reduced Monarch population.

<http://nativeplantwildlifegarden.com/where-are-monarchs-in-2013/>

### Gorgeous Glasswing Butterflies (42 photos).

Glasswing butterflies range from Mexico through Panama and Columbia.

<http://www.lovethepics.com/2013/03/gorgeous-glasswing-butterflies-42-stunning-photos/#more-9763>

### Battered Butterflies

Thanks to Stan Rehm for this interesting item.

<http://tywkiwdbi.blogspot.com/2013/07/battered-butterflies.html>

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## 7 WHITE-LINED SPHINX

The White-lined Sphinx is a moth. It is especially noted for its relatively large size (about 3" long), hovering with rapid wing beats at flowers as they take nectar, and with such speed, grace and agility of flight that it is often mistaken for a hummingbird.

It's scientific name is *Hyles lineata*. It is one of the many species in the Sphingidae family, and is the most common Sphinx moth. According to the Peterson Guide Eastern Moths, it can be identified by the "even pale tan stripe" on the wing running down the middle of the full length of the forewing, *with several white lines across the stripe*.

This Sphinx lives in a variety of habitats, but is more common in deserts, e.g. the western U.S. Its range extends from Central America north to southern Canada. There may be 2 broods in our area. It flies from April to October. The caterpillar food plants are Evening Primrose family (*Oenothera*), Apple family (*Malus*), and other plants.

Eggs are laid on the leaves of these food plants, and they hatch after a few days. The caterpillar is



variable in appearance but has a defensive horn. Click this link to view the caterpillar.

<http://www.buglifecycle.com/?p=354>

If in danger, the Sphinx caterpillar defends itself by regurgitating a dense, green substance. When the caterpillar is mature it burrows underground to form a pupa. After about 2-3 weeks the transformed insect emerges as an adult moth. This final stage is the reproductive stage of the insect.

Females exude pheromones and that scent at night leads the male to the female, resulting in mating.

White-lined Sphinxes fly primarily during the night and into the morning, but have been observed at any time of the day. It tends to fly more in daytime during the latter part of its flight period. The White-lined Sphinx has a very long proboscis, which is a flexible tube for sipping liquids, primarily nectar from flowers. The proboscis can be up to 10" long! To attract them to your yard, plant food plants, which also serve as nectar sources.

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## 8 THE FIRST COLONY IN WISCONSIN IN 14 YEARS, OF A VERY RARE IMMIGRANT: THE CLOUDLESS (GIANT) SULPHUR

The Cloudless Sulphur is one of the very rare butterflies that migrate to Wisconsin, from the South. The name is easily confused with "Clouded Sulphur", which is the familiar yellow butterfly that frequents fields, especially with alfalfa. The Clouded Sulphur and Orange Sulphur are medium sized butterflies, but Cloudless Sulphurs are nearly 40% larger. They belong to the genus *Phoebis* (Giant Sulphurs).

A colony is formed when 1) butterflies arrive early enough in the year to mate and establish descendents, increasing their numbers, and 2) there is an area of caterpillar food plants that is extensive enough to keep them in that area. The caterpillar food plant for Cloudless Sulphurs is Partridge Pea and Senna. Unfortunately, this Grant County colony was located on private property. However, SWBA got permission to visit after the August 10, Avoca/Blue River field trip. We first discovered a colony of Cloudless Sulphurs in the East Dubuque area in 1991. From then on we have checked for them along the Mississippi every year. The last colony we discovered was in 1999



**Cloudless Sulphur (female)**

and that was the last time that numbers were seen at a single location in Wisconsin. Thirteen years later, at the end of 2012 there were *no reports in that most extremely favorable year for immigrants!* We had little hope of ever seeing another Cloudless Sulphur in Wisconsin again! Nevertheless, on July 29, 2013 while checking on a Partridge Pea site where we had found them years before, we glimpsed a yellow butterfly looking tantalizingly like a Cloudless Sulphur flying across a CRP field. Three days later I decided to try to check out that site again, though it was 2 hours driving time. When we arrived we first went to another nearby site to check if there was any more Partridge Pea. When we got out of the car two Cloudless Sulphurs swirled around the car as they passed through! We were astonished and elated! Cloudless Sulphurs were back in Wisconsin again! We saw 3-4 individuals. By late September we could only find one individual. Cloudless Sulphurs are known to not only migrate north in summer but also migrate back south in fall.

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

### Officers of SWBA:

President: Dr. Douglas Buege  
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Secretary: Dorothy Legler

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Butterfly Reporting:

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Speaker's Bureau: Dorothy Legler

NABA Liaison: Joan Braune

## 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 Butterfly*, 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](mailto:karlndot@charter.net)

**To stop receiving this e-Newsletter simply send an email to the above editor's address.**