

Badger ButterFlyer

The e-Newsletter of the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association

MAY, 2014

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

Because of a major and prolonged changeover to a new computer system, your editor was unable to produce an April Badger ButterFlyer newsletter. There continue to be unresolved email problems, and we even had to resuscitate the old computer in order to get this issue of Badger ButterFlyer to you!

We expect to get the problems ironed out soon. We (and Microsoft!) apologize for any inconvenience this has caused.

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1 FIRST TWO FIELD TRIPS

Mark your calendar!

Saturday, May 17: 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 all 5 of the state's Elfins, including the very rare (and State Threatened) Frosted Elfin. We should find Olympia Marble, Gorgone Checkerspot, Cobweb Skipper, Dreamy and



Cobweb Skipper

Sleepy Duskywings, etc. Over the past 7 years we have found between 15 and 42 species! 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 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) 647-0196, or include your phone number in an email to mikereese@wisconsinbutterflies.org (so we can contact you in case of cancellation due to weather).

Saturday, June 21: Butterflies & Wildflowers at Pleasant Valley Conservancy

Pleasant Valley Conservancy is a beautiful state natural area situated in the Driftless Area, with steep goat prairies, oak savanna, and a

large high quality marsh. This time of year we hope to see **Baltimore Checkerspots** and perhaps some wetland skippers. Other possible

butterfly species include swallowtails, **Silvery Checkerspot**, fritillaries, and blues. All of these butterflies will have many wonderful native plants to nectar on this time of year. We will be hiking about two miles. Long pants, a hat, water, and sturdy hiking shoes are recommended. Leaders are **Ann Thering and Tom and Kathie Brock**. This is a joint trip of the Southern Wis. Butterfly Assoc., the Madison Audubon Society and The Prairie Enthusiasts. Optional: bring along a bag lunch for after the field trip; beverages and dessert will be provided. Bring binoculars--the closer they focus, the better. We have a few extra binoculars.



Baltimore Checkerspot

Contact the trip leaders only if you have a question about the trip. Tom: (608) 238-5050, tdbrock@charter.net, or Ann: (608) 836-1097 acthering@gmail.com, .

Meet at 11:00 a.m. (Trip will last until 12:30 or so.) **Directions:** Heading south into downtown Black Earth follow County Hwy F as it turns right (west). After a mile or so, F turns left (south). Continue on F for another 3 3/4 miles turning left onto Pleasant Valley Road. Drive 3/4 mile (past the buildings on the right) to the state natural area sign. Park off the road. We'll meet near the sign/gate area and then proceed into the wetland.

2 HIGHLIGHTS OF THE APRIL MEETING



Our speaker, Dr. Sean Schoville explained how the cycle of Ice Ages caused the present isolated distribution of Alpine butterflies.

Twenty-six people attended the April SWBA Meeting. Our speaker, **Dr. Sean Schoville**, explained his California research on the effect of climate changes on the distribution of Alpine butterflies, in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The disjunct distribution, with butterflies on mountains far removed from each other, and no way to have migrated from one mountain to



Butterfly Enthusiasts hobnob and enjoy treats and beverages.

another, and yet they are genetically related, is a puzzling phenomenon. Dr. Schoville showed that the repeated cycles of Ice Ages produced cold climates that allowed the Alpine butterflies to become more wide-spread and then the warmer climate limited the cold Alpine butterfly habitat to higher in the mountains, effectively stranding each of several populations.

In the **Election of Officers**, the previous officers continued for another year. They are:

President: Dr. Douglas Buege
 Vice-President: Karl Legler
 Secretary: Dorothy Legler
 Treasurer: Ginny Nelson

For **Show and Tell**, several photos were submitted by Mike Reese, Mark Johnson, Stan Rehm, Sylvia Edlebeck, Karl Legler, Dorothy Legler, and one contributor whose name we, regrettably, did not get -- (He should please contact SWBA so we can put photos on the SWBA website.)

A special thanks to **Dorothy Legler** for providing the delicious treats.

3 THE 7TH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON BUTTERFLY AND MOTH CONSERVATION

by Ann B. Swengel

Intense, sobering, inspiring: that's how Scott and I found the 7th International Symposium on the Ecology & Conservation of Butterflies & Moths (Southampton, England, April 4-6, 2014). It was also the largest of the five we've participated in, and the most international, from Vietnam to Greenland!

Reports on climate change unfortunately confirmed expected patterns (southern species advancing northward and uphill; northern species declining and retreating). But we also heard about complex and unpredictable responses by individual species, including resilience of **Edith's Checkerspot**, by shifting to different caterpillar food plants. There's also some heartening news: researchers have demonstrated that protected areas are serving as conduits to facilitate range shifts of butterflies, and microhabitat variety in both preserves and the surrounding landscape, do buffer the impacts, of climatic extremes, in butterfly fluctuations.

Changing land uses in the agricultural landscape continue to be globally critical and daunting problems. This is a dichotomy: both intensification (more plowed areas, more pesticides) and abandonment of marginal areas formerly used lightly either for pasturage or haying compatible with diverse native flora. This abandonment leads to the development of scrub, which leads to changes in the butterfly and moth fauna, and loss of open-country species. Both sides of this dichotomy are familiar to us in the Midwest.

Then there's the ever present challenge of getting preserves to succeed at delivering secure populations of butterfly species unable to cope with what's happening outside in the "wider countryside" and human settlements. We heard many reports on butterfly species around the world that have more limiting requirements of plant growth structure or microclimate, in addition to specific caterpillar food plants and nectar requirements.

Deciphering that and figuring out how to get that science to translate into consistently appropriate management in preserves are overwhelming challenges internationally. In that vein, my talk was a bit more technical presentation of my prairie article, just out in *American Butterflies*, covering both the science and the sociology.

When good science exists, and it gets put into practice, butterflies do respond rapidly in a positive way, as reported by our British colleagues. You can read more about that in the landscape-scale conservation report at: [Butterfly Conservation - Landscape-scale Conservation For Butterflies And Moths Report](#)



Edith's Checkerspot, a western butterfly.

Most inspiring is the continued increase in butterfly survey and monitoring programs in more countries. That's the only way to know what's really happening out there, both the problems that need to be fixed and what's working that needs to be expanded. Especially key is the establishment of regular surveys along set routes at the same sites consistently surveyed year after year. This can be targeted to the flight period of specific species (like Scott and I have done for over twenty years) or can be walked weekly throughout the butterfly season. Particularly exciting are efforts to bring together these already existing programs into pooled datasets to facilitate analysis at international and even global scales! Plus efforts are afoot to establish a website to facilitate the establishment of more such programs at the state or chapter level here in the US, with flexibility in type of program. and ease of online reporting afoot. See the North American Butterfly Monitoring Network at

[Welcome to NAB-NET | The North American Butterfly Monitoring Network](#)

I hope all this will be as inspiring to you as it is to me, both to enjoy our butterflies and moths more and find ways to help them more!

4 NORTH AMERICAN BUTTERFLY ASSOCIATION (NABA) BIENNIAL MEETING: TENNESSEE JUNE 12 - 15, 2014

In Chattanooga, Tennessee.

If you are not a member of NABA you can still attend this Members Meeting. (For non-members there is a slightly higher cost -- which includes a 1 year NABA Membership!)

Butterflies include Diana Fritillary, Zebra Swallowtail, Spicebush Swallowtail, Lace-winged Roadside Skipper and possible Hickory Hairstreak, etc.



Diana Fritillary
(female)



Diana Fritillary (male)

Destinations include Cumberland Plateau, a garden tour of Chattanooga homes, May Prairie State Natural Area, Prentice-Cooper State Forest and other natural areas.

Each day will be highlighted by a **series of workshops** on topics such as identification, photography, butterfly gardening, etc.

There will be 7-8 hours of **field trips** for each of 3 days. There will also be **optional pre-meeting field trips**.

You will attend two evenings of **Banquets with speakers**. Bring close-focusing binoculars. (Nets are not permitted.) Cost is \$300 per person,

\$335 for non-members, which covers **3 days of field trips, 2 banquets, and 3 box lunches!**

Brochure: http://www.naba.org/ftp/registration_brochure_2014_Jan_13.pdf

Online Registration: <http://www.naba.org/meeting/online2.html>

5 BUTTERFLY GARDENING: What's Blooming?

By Dorothy Legler

This winter was especially long and cold. But Karl and I managed to stay healthy with no flu or cold. Oops -- I spoke too soon. Now its early May and I have a nasty cold! So, I've been enjoying looking over my yard, rather than working in it.

Besides the usual tulips, daffodils and crocuses, there are many native flowers now blooming. Many of these will provide the needed nectar for butterflies. Some butterflies being seen now are American and Painted Ladies, Red Admiral, Spring Azure, Cabbage White and Milbert's Tortoiseshell. The earliest species are the hibernator's like Mourning Cloak and Eastern Comma, and do not take nectar from flowers. They rely on tree sap, rotting fruit and animal droppings.

As I walk around my yard, I see some early nectar sources: Bloodroot, Virginia Bluebells, Dutchman's-Breeches, Violets, Jacob's Ladder and Pussytoes. Serviceberries will be blooming soon. Plan on planting some early blooming natives for the butterflies and bees, as well as for yourself, to welcome spring and summer. I must mention that by far the most popular nectar source now are dandelions! Try to enjoy their beauty.



Hepatica

Some other early blooming flowers are Marsh Marigold, **Hepatica**, Rue Anemone, False Rue-Anemone, Toothwort, Spring Beauty, Wild Blue Phlox and others. You can check bloom times in the book, Wildflowers of Wisconsin and the Great Lakes Region.

6 BUTTERFLY NEWS

Do butterflies and bees sip crocodile tears?

Click on the following link to see this curious photo with short description.

[Crocodile Tears Hit the Spot for Butterfly and Bee - NYTimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/12/science/crocodile-tears-hit-the-spot-for-butterfly-and-bee.html)

Public Access Lands Atlas of Wisconsin

This was just released in December by the DNR. It consists of a large spiral-bound book of 441 maps showing the lands that are, more or less, open to public access. Another 24 pages cover keys to the maps, a map index, an extensive DNR Properties Index, and Index to Stewardship Grant Land Managers, and other information. It currently costs around \$90. However you can download these maps as a PDF file, for any county, from the website, at no cost: [Public Access Lands Maps - Wisconsin DNR](#) Also I think there is a version available on DVD for about \$8. If your tablet reads PDF files you can put some or all of the counties on your tablet.

Species of Greatest Conservation Need

The Wisconsin Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation updates this list every 10 years. Some of those involved in the consultations are **SWBA members**: Scott Swengel, Mike Reese and Karl Legler. The list will be finalized by October of 2015. The mission is to conserve and sustain species with low or declining populations, and their habitats, for future generations. SWBA has a keen interest in that mission.

7 BUTTERFLIES REPORTED UP TO MAY 5 AT www.wisconsinbutterflies.org A 36 day Comparison: early 2013 and early 2014.

Last spring was the poorest in nearly a decade. It was cold and rainy. 2014 is another cold spring. Are the butterflies worse or better than last spring?

	2013	2014	
Number of reports	60	74	23% more reports than last spring.
Number of butterfly individuals	154	123	But 21% fewer butterflies reported than last spring
Average individuals per report	2.6	1.7	More reporters seeing fewer butterflies than last spring
Number of species	8	12	But 50% more species than last spring.
EXTREMES:			
Compton Tortoiseshell	55	3	Due to a huge one day count by Swengels.
Eastern Comma	1	11	The very low count last spring was peculiar-- see discussion below.
Red Admiral	0	10	Unusual influx of Red Admirals. Is this the early stage of an invasion?

CONCLUSION: Spring of 2014 is showing somewhat lower numbers but higher species diversity.

ANALYSIS:

An extremely interesting pattern can be seen in the **Eastern Comma**. They were pretty common in the spring of 2011, 2012, and 2014. But for some reason, they were very seriously reduced in the spring of 2013. In fact, as we reported in this newsletter last year, the



Eastern Comma

Eastern Comma was not seen until **34 days** past the median date of first sighting for this

species! Why did the Eastern Comma population crash in the spring of 2013? I believe the answer is that the population crashed earlier, in the fall of 2012. 2012 saw the largest invasion of **Red Admirals** into Wisconsin in anyone's memory. We also showed in an article in Badger ButterFlyer (June, 2012) how the Red Admirals catastrophically decimated large stands of their host plant, nettles.

To see that article (#4) click on:

<http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabawba/WBAPDFs/SWBANews2012Jun.pdf>

This was precisely the time period when the summer generation of Eastern Commas was trying to mate, lay eggs, hatch, feed and grow, form a chrysalis, emerge as the fall generation, which would then hibernate over winter as an adult butterfly, and would reappear in the spring of 2013 -- but mysteriously didn't. The mystery is solved when we realize that the principal caterpillar food plant of the Eastern Comma is nettles, *which was being decimated by the huge invasion of Red Admirals*. It appears that



Red Admiral

this seriously impacted the subsequent population of Eastern Comma in late 2012/early 2013. And now in 2014 we notice a welcome increase in Eastern Comma numbers as their population recovers.

The only caveat is that we are also seeing a good number of Red Admirals this spring, at about the same level as 2010 -- an invasion year! But it remains to be seen whether the Red Admiral numbers will mushroom or fizzle out. Stay tuned! [Keep sending reports to wisconsinbutterflies.org](http://www.wisconsinbutterflies.org)

8 DATES FOR SOME 2014 NABA “4TH OF JULY” BUTTERFLY COUNTS

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

- ❖ Mud Lake (Columbia County) Tuesday, July 1, 2014
- ❖ Madison (Dane County) Saturday, July 5, 2014
- ❖ Trempealeau (Trempealeau County) Wednesday, July 9, 2014
- ❖ Dubuque, IA (Wisconsin portion) Sunday, July 13, 2014
- ❖ Northern Kettle Moraine (Fond du Lac County) Tuesday, July 15, 2014
- ❖ Sister Bay (Door County) Thursday, July 17, 2014

To join in on these fun counts -- or for more information about SWBA-sponsored NABA counts, please contact the SWBA count coordinators: Karl and Dorothy Legler, karlndot@charter.net (608) 643-4926. (NABA charges a \$3 fee to participate in a count, to help defray the cost of publication.) (For a list of additional Butterfly Counts in Wisconsin and elsewhere, visit NABA's Web site at www.naba.org/counts/us_mx_map.html Contacts are Listed.)

9 FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE FOR 2014

DAY	DATE	TRIP TITLE	LEADER(S)
Saturday	May 17	Butterflies of Bauer Brockway Barrens (Jackson Co.)	Mike Reese
Saturday	June 21	Butterflies and Wildflowers at Pleasant Valley Conservancy	Ann Thering Kathie and Tom Brock
Saturday	June 28	Butterflies of Cherokee Marsh	Karl & Dorothy Legler
Friday	July 4	Butterflies and Dragonflies of Swamp Lovers Preserve	Tod Highsmith Karl and Dorothy Legler
Saturday	July 5	Madison Butterfly Count	Karl and Dorothy Legler
Sunday	July 6	Butterflies & Dragonflies of Riveredge and Cedarburg Bog State Natural Area	Kate Redmond Mike Reese
Saturday	July 12	Butterflies of Page Creek Marsh and John Muir Park	Dan Sonnenberg
Sunday	July 13	Pretty Things with Wings (Birds, Butterflies and Dragonflies of Lakeshore Nature Preserve)	Edgar Spalding
Saturday	July 19	Flowers and Butterflies of Shea Prairie	Rich Henderson Dr. Douglas Buege
Saturday	August 9	Butterflies of Avoca/Blue River Area	Mike Reese
Saturday	August 23	Butterflies and Blossoms at Pheasant Branch Conservancy	Dreux Watermolen

The Badger ButterFlyer flits to you every month (every other month in winter). The next issue will be in June (Microsoft willing).

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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.