



On The Wing

Newsletter of the Tennessee Valley Chapter,
North American Butterfly Association

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SEPTEMBER CHAPTER MEETING TUESDAY, SEPT. 23, 7:00PM TENNESSEE AQUARIUM DISCOVERY CLASSROOM

THE ALL-TAXA BIOLOGICAL INVENTORY IN TENNESSEE STATE PARKS

After a couple of months away from the Aquarium, we will return to the Discovery Classroom in the River Journey building, for our September meeting.

Rita Venable, founder of the Middle Tennessee NABA chapter and current seasonal naturalist with the Tennessee State Park system will present the September program. She is well known to many butterfly watchers across the state as well as nationally with NABA. In fact she edited NABA's "Butterfly Gardener" magazine a few years back. We are very happy she has agreed to come speak to our chapter.

Rita will tell us about a current All-Taxa Biological Inventory (ATBI) project she has been working on this year. A big push is on the verify what species can be found in our state parks and she visits different areas around Tennessee to help with biological surveys. Since Rita is a butterfly lover from way back, guess what one of her favorite creatures is to survey? That's right, she gets paid to survey butterflies! She will present a PowerPoint presentation on some of the work she's done and since she is an accomplished photographer, I'm sure she will feature some good butterfly shots too!

We hope you can join us to learn about this worthwhile project, and bring a friend! Rita might even suggest ways our Tennessee Valley NABA chapter could help survey butterflies in state parks in this area. It would provide a good excuse to schedule field trips to Harrison Bay S.P., Booker T. Washington S.P. or Cumberland Trail S.P. next spring!

You will need to enter the Aquarium at the gift shop entrance, which is on the left side of the building as you face the entrance doors. Someone will be stationed there to make sure you can enter. Call Bill Haley (423) 785-4056 or Julia Gregory (423) 785-4054 if you need directions.

IDENTIFY THE ANGLEWING!

Time to get out the butterfly field guide! Pictured at the top of this page is a butterfly belonging to a group of butterflies commonly called the anglewings. Can you identify it?

- (Answer next month).

BIO BLITZ, 2008!

FRI., SEPT. 5 and SAT., SEPT. 6: BIO BLITZ AT REFLECTION RIDING AND THE CHATT. NATURE CENTER!

Help scientists and naturalists from many disciplines document as many different species as they can find within a 24 hour period during the 2nd annual Bio Blitz on the grounds of Reflection Riding and the Chattanooga Nature Center. This event will begin 3:00 Friday afternoon and end 3:00 Saturday afternoon. Several Aquarium staff members will be involved in this effort, and volunteers are appreciated. Bill Haley will need help with butterflies, moths and dragonflies. Contact him if you can help, (423) 785-4056 or wgh@tnaqua.org.

SEPT. FIELD TRIPS:

FRI. SEPT. 5:

BLACKLIGHTING AT REFLECTION RIDING 8:00-11:00PM

As part of the Bio Blitz, we'll have some blacklight (ultraviolet) setups at Reflection Riding from 8pm to at least 11pm to survey insects that are active after dark. This is always an interesting activity! Plan to join us if you can. We will assemble at the Nature Center around 8pm and walk to the blacklight setups on the grounds of Reflection Riding. Bring a flashlight! If you plan to stay awhile, you might also bring a folding chair to carry with you.

SAT., SEPT. 6:

BUTTERFLY WALK AT REFLECTION RIDING 10:30AM

David Trently, a well-known naturalist and ecotourism trip leader from Knoxville, has agreed to lead a butterfly walk during the Bio Blitz at Reflection Riding on Saturday, Sept. 6. Everyone interested in going on this walk should meet at the Chattanooga Nature Center at 10:30am. David is helping survey butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies during the Bio Blitz, so don't be surprised if he stops to check out a dragonfly! This will be a leisurely walk around the Riding, so wear comfortable footwear, bring binoculars if you have them. Don't forget sunscreen and a hat if it is sunny!

What's that medium-sized lemon yellow butterfly? Cloudless Sulphur, *Phoebis sennae*, is a very common late summer resident and fall migrant in this area. You'll probably see some this weekend at the Bio Blitz or in your flower garden.



Broad-winged Skipper, *Poanes viator*



**Lace-winged Roadside Skipper (rare dorsal view)
*Amblyscirtes aesculapius***



Zabulon Skipper, female, *Poanes zabulon*



Golden-banded Skipper, *Autochton cellus*



Left: Ocola Skipper, *Panoquina ocola*
Right: Clouded Skipper, *Lerema accius*



Long-tailed Skipper, *Urbanus proteus*

Around The Puddle

by Bill Haley

A Dizzying Diversity of Skippers!

I urge you to spend a bit of time studying the skippers pictured on page two of this month's issue. Those featured range from quite common (Clouded, Zabulon, Ocola), to hard-to-find (Lace-winged Roadside, Long-tailed), to fairly rare in this area (Broad-winged, Golden-banded).

While most skippers will never win a beauty contest for their colors, this group of butterflies more than makes up for the lack of bright color with a dazzling diversity of species. David and Scott Spicer have amassed so many good photos this summer that I just couldn't resist displaying some of these confusing-to-identify little critters.

I love skippers! And sometimes I hate 'em. Some are a snap to identify, many are a royal pain. Would you believe I had a full head of hair before I began regularly attempting to identify skippers?

Jeff Basham, Stephen Johnson, Carl and Beverly Swafford have found Broad-winged Skippers in Meigs and Polk Counties. On August 3, David Spicer found the one pictured in his front yard in Ooltewah. It was the first documented photo record from Hamilton County and only the third county record in Tennessee. Quite a good find!

The Golden-banded Skipper is always uncommon. Some years go by that I don't find one. David took the pg. 2 photo on the Ocoee Count on July 19. The only one I've seen this year turned up August 4 in the Tennessee River Gorge in Marion County.

When seen in good light, Long-tailed Skippers have a quite unusual (for a butterfly) metallic green sheen on their body and parts of their wings, similar to the green on a Ruby-throated Hummingbird's back. Indeed this distinctive skipper resembles a tiny hummer as it flits among flowers. They are usually seen in mid-to-late summer in the area. The only other butterfly around here with that color is the Juniper Hairstreak.

We had a time with the Lace-winged Roadside skipper I D on the Stevenson count because you see their top side so infrequently. With wings closed, their lacy hindwing pattern gives them away.

Ocola, a late summer species, appears long-winged with a distinctive "squished down" wing profile and a dark stripe along the abdomen. Clouded has a dark bar through the middle of the hindwing. Female Zabulons have a white edge on the hindwing. Easy, right? Well...it takes practice.

Book Review:

Butterflies of the East Coast, An Observer's Guide by Rich Cech and Guy Tudor

During our very pleasant NABA meeting at Lisa Lemza's home in late July, Jeff Basham alerted everyone to a valuable addition to any butterfly watcher's library, *Butterflies of the East Coast, An Observer's Guide*.

This book was co-authored by Rich Cech, a longtime friend of Benton Basham, Jeff's father, and Guy Tudor. Jeff and Benton claimed it should be required reading for anyone searching for butterflies and they were right!

Since that meeting several local members have gotten this very attractive paperback book and it contains a wealth of information for the person who wishes to learn more about butterflies, their identification, life cycle and habitats. It is very affordable, running around \$20 from Amazon.com.

Tennessee is not included in the geographic area covered, but most species in the book are found here. The size, 8 1/2" X 11", is large, so it's probably not a good book to carry into the field. Read and study this one before you go out! It will definitely help your butterfly finding skills.

The meat of the book, the butterfly descriptions themselves, devotes a whole page to each species. Each page has photos of the butterfly, often both dorsal and ventral, as well as caterpillar host plants and sometimes common nectar sources favored by that species. A small range map is included. Tennessee is not displayed, but if the range butts right up against our state, you can probably figure it is found here also. Beside this is a very good essay about the butterfly, including behavioral clues and how it relates to other species within it's family. Next are some great identification tips, listing both dorsal and ventral features to look for. At the bottom of each page is a section for habitat, hostplants, occurrence, ecology and an indication of average wingspread. You will not find another butterfly book that deals with individual species in such depth.

I've really learned a lot from whole page essays sprinkled throughout the book on different topics of interest. A few titles are "Waste Areas: An Overlooked Resource", "The *Celastrina ladon* Complex - Complex Indeed", "Passionflowers and Butterflies: A Tangled Web", "Mountaintop Removal: The Price of Coal?" "Eastern 'Prairies' in Decline: Implications for Grassland Butterflies", "Violets and Fritillaries: A Close Association".

I give this book two thumbs up. Buy it and learn!

- Bill Haley

DID YOU IDENTIFY THE SPIDER AT THE TOP OF PG. 1 IN THE AUGUST ISSUE? The large green spider pictured at the top of last month's newsletter is the Green Lynx Spider.



- Photo by David Spicer

IT'S TOUGH BEING A BUTTERFLY!

Pictured above is a Viceroy that we found on the August 10 field trip to Baylor School. As you can see, this individual is missing the back part of both hindwings. This is proof positive that the Viceroy isn't always immune from attack just because it resembles the distasteful Monarch. A bird or other predator has obviously tried to make a meal of it. Luckily for the Viceroy, when the bird made a grab it missed the body and only got a beakful of scaly hindwing for its trouble. The missing hindwing portions may make flying a bit more challenging for the butterfly, but it lived to fly another day!

Butterflies are much tougher than most people give them credit for. As they age, their wings really take a beating and often appear ragged. These disadvantaged butterflies still manage to flap around, get to flowers, mate and carry on their lives, even with pieces of wing missing.



The photo of the Sleepy Orange to the left clearly shows several chunks missing from both forewing and hindwing edge. this is not the work of a predator, but merely the result of wear and tear on the wings during the butterfly's day-to-day activities.

**The Mystery and Magic of Monarchs
Conservation in Action!
Sunday, September 21
1:30-4:00
Tennessee River Gardens**

Join us at the Tennessee River Gardens to learn about the fascinating life history of the Monarch butterfly and take part in field research for Monarch Watch. Their website is <http://www.monarchwatch.org>. Outdoor educator Wanda DeWaard will talk about how these delicate-appearing insects can migrate thousands of miles each fall to the mountains of Mexico, despite many challenges. Then we will attempt to capture, tag and release Monarchs that we find feeding in flowery meadows in order to track their route and final destination. Learn about the important role that milkweed plays and take home a plant to attract these flying jewels to your yard. *Please bring water and a big-hooped butterfly net if you have one.*

**Adults & ages 8 and over, accompanied by adult
Limited to 20
\$12 Member, \$17 Non-member
Register after Sept. 8, 267-FISH**



NESSUS SPHINX MOTH: Not all day-flying Lepidoptera are butterflies. I recently received this fine photo of a Nessus Sphinx moth. It is somewhat protected from predators as it darts between flowers by the fact it resembles a bumblebee. When at rest, the brown forewings provide camouflage, hiding the bright colors on the abdomen and hindwing that are revealed in flight.

**President's Message:
Important News from the August Meeting!**

Eight NABA members didn't let a little rain keep them from the August meeting at Tennessee River Gardens. Although it wasn't a good evening for butterflies, we discussed some very exciting things in the future for our chapter.

The officers met at 6:00pm. During their meeting they agreed to accept NABA bylaws and finalized some chapter bylaw addendums that had to do specifically with the way the Tennessee Valley chapter will be run. Those bylaw addendums are listed below:

Article III: Meetings and Field Trips

1. Meetings of the Tennessee Valley chapter will be held every month, with the exception of November, December and January. Meetings will be held the fourth Tuesday of each month. A chapter newsletter will be published every month, even months when there is no meeting.
2. Officer elections will be held annually at the June meeting.

Article IX: Nominations and Elections

1. A nominating committee will be selected annually at the March meeting.
2. Nominating committee will propose a slate of officers, preferably in time to be published in the chapter's May newsletter and announced at the May meeting.
3. Officers will be voted on at the June meeting. A ballot will be included in the June newsletter, which goes out to all chapter members near the first of the month. Members who can't make the meeting can mail their votes if they wish.

The second order of business was very exciting! We have been approached by NABA asking if there is a possibility of our chapter, with help from the Middle Tennessee chapter, hosting the NABA national meeting right here in Chattanooga in June 2010! These meetings are held every two years, and we would host between 200 and 250 butterfly lovers from across the country. It is a big venture, but the officers, and later the members, voted to inform NABA we'd like to do this. We won't know for awhile if Chattanooga has been accepted as a meeting site, but I'll keep you posted!

One reason Jeff Glassberg, president and founder of NABA, suggested our area as a national meeting site is the Diana Fritillary, a butterfly with a very limited geographic range. It is a much-sought-after species for butterfly watchers across the country, and we are lucky that it is fairly common around Chattanooga. Of course, we have many other butterflies to offer as well. In addition to the butterflies, Chattanooga has lots to offer our guests in terms of other attractions around town. It is a big production and if our bid is accepted, you will hear much more about this in the coming months.

I hope you will be able to attend our September meeting. The program by Rita Venable about the ATBI in Tennessee State Parks should be quite interesting. We've learned that the Cumberland Trail State Park is looking for people to help with

biological inventories. A couple of our members agreed to attend a meeting of the Friends of the Cumberland Trail to discuss this very topic on Sept. 4 at Northgate Mall. Contact me for particulars if you would like to attend that meeting. It seems a natural fit for our chapter to help with such a project.

The upcoming Bio Blitz at Reflection Riding and the Chattanooga Nature Center is fast approaching! You may be interested in attending one of the programs with visiting scientists or knowledgeable members of different taxon groups. This is part friendly competition, part science and all FUN! It begins Friday, September 5 at 3:00pm and ends Saturday, September 6 at 3:00pm.

A number of Fourth of July butterfly counts and one seasonal count have been completed by chapter members in June, July and August. Thank you to anyone who helped with any of these counts.

As you can see, there is plenty on the plate for our newly emerged chapter. I look forward to meeting all our members and I wish you the best butterflying ever in the coming months!

Bill Haley
President



Diana Fritillary
Speyeria diana
(male, dorsal view)

Top and bottom photo by David Spicer; middle right photo by Bill Hughes.



Right: **Diana Fritillary**
(female, ventral view)



Diana Fritillary
(female, dorsal view)

Tennessee River Gorge, TN

2nd annual fall seasonal count totals:

Ten butterfly counters participated in the second annual Tennessee River Gorge fall seasonal count on Saturday, August 30. It was a real treat to have Ed LeGrand, from Crossville, and David Trently and Audrey Hoff from Knoxville, who came in to help with the count. Local participants were Bill Haley, David Spicer, (his 7th count this summer!), Harold Birch, Susan Schott, Libby Wolfe, Clyde and Claire Blum.

It was a warm, sunny day with temperatures between 81 and 92 degrees. The heavy rains from earlier in the week assured good butterfly numbers and diversity in most areas, with many freshly emerged individuals. Our day's total was 54 species and 1162 individuals.

For the first time this summer, female Diana Fritillaries were very numerous. (Of the 31 counted, only one was a male!) In contrast, it is very uncommon to find a female on counts done in June and July.

As always, some normally expected or common species were not located on count day. Perhaps the biggest surprise were no Cabbage Whites! Bill Haley had scouted the two days previous to the count and found Long-tailed Skipper both days, but none showed up when it counted. Great Purple Hairstreaks, while usually uncommon, were counted last year around this time, but none were located count day.

Bill Haley wishes to thank everyone who helped with this count. It was a very good year for all butterfly counts done in the summer of 2008!

Species and individual totals:

Pipevine Swallowtail 19, Black Sw. 3, Giant Sw. 1, E. Tiger Sw. 20, Spicebush Sw. 9, Clouded Sulphur 1, Orange Su. 3, Cloudless Su. 154, Sleepy Orange 5, Harvester 1, Gray Hairstreak 7, Red-banded Ha. 13, E. Tailed Blue 77, 'Summer' Spring Azure 34, American Snout 6, Gulf Fritillary 16, Variegated Fr. 14, Diana Fr. 31, Great-spangled Fr. 71, Pearl Crescent 16, Question Mark 4, American Lady 1, Painted Lady 3, Red Admiral 2, Common Buckeye 47, Red-spotted Purple 6, Viceroy 1, Hackberry Emperor 22, Tawny Emp. 13, N. Pearly-Eye 1, Gemmed Satyr 3, Carolina Satyr 134, Common Wood Nymph 2, Monarch 3, Silver-spotted Skipper 21, Hoary Edge 3, S. Cloudywing 1, Horace's Duskywing 6, Wild Indigo Duskywing 3, Common Checkered-Sk. 3, Clouded Sk. 31, Least Sk. 1, Fiery Sk. 30, Peck's Sk. 1, Tawny-edged Sk. 5, Crossline Sk. 7, S. Broken-Dash 1, Little Glassywing 5, Sachem 260, Delaware Sk. 2, Zabulon Sk. 15, Dun Sk. 13, Lace-winged Roadside Sk. 1, Ocola Sk. 1.

Total: 54 species, 1162 individuals.

Immatures seen: Spicebush Sw. 1 caterpillar on spicebush, Black Sw., 1 caterpillar on parsley, Pipevine Sw., 1 caterpillar on dutchman's pipevine.



DAVID SPICER FINDS RARE VISITOR TO OUR AREA!

On August 22, David Spicer drove up to the Cherokee Removal Monument area near Blythes Ferry in Meigs County in search of Broad-winged Skippers. He failed to find any of the skippers, but documented a new Meigs County record. It was an even more uncommon visitor, a **Southern Dogface**, *Colias cesonia* (pictured above). This normally more southern species occasionally strays into our area. For a couple of years they were found on the Tennessee River Gorge count at Tennessee River Gardens, but they have not been seen on any butterfly count in our area in the past 3-4 years.



Left: **Pearl Crescent**
Phyciodes tharos

Directly Below:
Top: **Delaware Skipper**
Anatrytone logan
Bottom:
Southern Broken-Dash
Wallengrenia egeremet



Left:
Great-spangled Fritillary
Speyeria cybele



Photos: David Spicer