



Photo by Audrey Hoff

On The Wing

Newsletter of the Tennessee Valley Chapter,
North American Butterfly Association

October 2008

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Editor: Bill Haley, wgh@tnaqua.org

OCTOBER CHAPTER MEETING TUESDAY, OCT. 28, 7:00PM TENNESSEE AQUARIUM DISCOVERY CLASSROOM

BUTTERFLY FARMING IN COSTA RICA

Our October meeting will be in the Discovery Classroom in the Tennessee Aquarium's River Journey building.

Bill Haley will present a slide presentation on his trip to Costa Rica to visit butterfly farmers before the Tennessee Aquarium's Butterfly Garden exhibit opened. He and two other Aquarium staff members were privileged to visit several different Costa Rican butterfly farmers in areas ranging from very urban to almost unbroken rainforest. If you are curious about where the Aquarium's butterflies originate and how they are propagated, this is the program for you!

Afterwards we will visit the Butterfly Garden exhibit in the Ocean Journey building to view the beautiful species on display from tropical areas around the world.

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. Late arrivals will need to enter via the loading dock Security office on the Chestnut Street side of the building. Call Bill Haley (423) 785-4056 or Julia Gregory (423) 785-4054 if you need directions.



Photo by Audrey Hoff

WHAT ARE THESE TWO SUSPICIOUS LOOKING CHARACTERS UP TO? Bill Haley bends down a 10 foot tall ironweed plant during the Tennessee River Gorge fall seasonal count so David Trently can get a photo of a Lace-winged Roadside Skipper. A new county record for Marion County.

OCT. FIELD OPPORTUNITY:

THURS. OCT. 2:

BYOS (BRING YOUR OWN SHOVEL) FALL GARDEN OPEN HOUSE AT LISA LEMZA'S PLACE 3:00 UNTIL DARK

In addition to area Master Gardeners, Lisa has also invited interested NABA members to this event. Lisa writes: As previously threatened, I will have a BYOS open house to showcase a fall garden on Thursday, 2 October from 3:00 until DARK. It's especially lovely up here now, and the backlighting of fall's slanting light creates an entirely different garden. I am also giving away....well, making available for you to dig up....the following:

- hardy ginger
- green eyed coneflower
- ironweed
- several floribunda roses
- one New Dawn climbing rose
- Chrysanthemum 'Sheffield' and 'Clara Curtis'
- assorted other things

REFRESHMENTS: Nancy Ralhan and valiant others are bringing food; I'll have Mike's Sangria and assorted other beverages. (Lisa requested NABA members to possibly bring a few sandwiches).

RAIN PLAN: If there's more than a 50% chance of rain according to Channel 12, I will call this off. I will also put a message on my machine, 332-1780.

DIRECTIONS:

- Take Hwy. 27N out of town. Cross Soddy Lake.
- At the Hwy. 111/Hwy. 27 split, stay on 27N (right) toward Dayton.
- After the split, turn 2nd right onto E. Highwater Rd..
- At T intersection, turn right onto Old Dayton Pike.
- Take 1st left onto Lee Pike.
- Go about 1.5 miles, turn left onto Arapaho Dr. (this is my street). There's a large "Opossum Creek Pines sign there.
- Go up hill and where road splits stay right on Arapaho.
- My house is on the right at this split: **1602 Arapaho Drive.**
- Park in the triangle at the split, but **PLEASE DON'T GET YOUR TIRES ON MY CRANKY NEIGHBOR'S PITIFUL GRASS.**

BUTTERFLY SPECIES FOUND ON AREA COUNTS, JUNE-AUGUST 2008*

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Pipeline Swallowtail | Silver-spotted Skipper |
| Zebra Swallowtail | Golden-banded Skipper |
| Black Swallowtail | Long-tailed Skipper |
| Giant Swallowtail | Hoary Edge |
| Eastern Tiger Swallowtail | Southern Cloudywing |
| Spicebush Swallowtail | Northern Cloudywing |
| Checkered White | Hayhurst's Scallopwing |
| Cabbage White | Horace's Duskywing |
| Clouded Sulphur | Zarucco Duskywing |
| Orange Sulphur | Wild Indigo Duskywing |
| Southern Dogface | Common Checkered Sk. |
| Cloudless Sulphur | Common Sootywing |
| Sleepy Orange | Swarthy Skipper |
| Harvester | Clouded Skipper |
| American Copper | Least Skipper |
| Great Purple Hairstreak | Fiery Skipper |
| Coral Hairstreak | Peck's Skipper |
| Banded Hairstreak | Tawny-edged Skipper |
| Hickory Hairstreak | Crossline Skipper |
| Striped Hairstreak | Southern Broken-Dash |
| Eastern Pine Elfin | Northern Broken-Dash |
| Juniper Hairstreak | Little Glassywing |
| Gray Hairstreak | Sachem |
| Eastern Tailed Blue | Delaware Skipper |
| 'Summer' Spring Azure | Zabulon Skipper |
| American Snout | Yehl Skipper |
| Gulf Fritillary | Dion Skipper |
| Variiegated Fritillary | Dun Skipper |
| Diana Fritillary | Lace-winged Roadside Sk. |
| Great Spangled Fritillary | Eufala Skipper |
| Gorgone Checkerspot | Ocola Skipper |
| Silvery Checkerspot | |
| Pearl Crescent | |
| Question Mark | |
| Eastern Comma | |
| Mourning Cloak | |
| American Lady | |
| Painted Lady | |
| Red Admiral | |
| Common Buckeye | |
| Red-spotted Purple | |
| Viceroy | |
| Goatweed Leafwing | |
| Hackberry Emperor | |
| Tawny Emperor | |
| Southern Pearly-eye | |
| Northern Pearly-eye | |
| Creole Pearly-eye | |
| Appalachian Brown | |
| Gemmed Satyr | |
| Carolina Satyr | |
| Little Wood Satyr | |
| Common Wood-Nymph | |
| Monarch | |

Total: 85 species

***Includes:**
TN River Gorge, TN
Soddy-Daisy, TN
Lookout Mtn., GA
Catoosa/Whitfield, GA
Ocoee, TN
Stevenson, AL
(all 4th of July counts)
TN River Gorge, TN
(fall seasonal count)

Some Finds from BioBlitz 2008



Eastern Garter Snake found by Susan Schott and Bill Haley while looking for butterflies. It was the only one of that species found during the event, so was a welcome addition to the reptile list! *Photo by Susan Schott.*



Handsome Meadow Katydid. Truly a handsome little beast! We tried to identify other insects we came across during the event, and didn't limit ourselves to butterflies, damselflies and dragonflies. *Photo by Audrey Hoff.*



Black Swallowtail caterpillar, also a handsome beast! *Photo by David Trently.*

Around The Puddle

by Bill Haley

How Do They Know?

Sailing towards the heavens on burnished orange and black wings, a female Monarch spiraled up from the valley floor past lofty rock outcroppings of the Cumberland Escarpment. It made an early start today, beginning to rise even before the valley fog cleared.

Gentle northerly winds following a mild September cold front offered a tailwind, helping the determined butterfly as it sailed along. On a ledge near the mountain's crest it paused briefly to nectar at a glowing late summer goldenrod, then continued southward on the early morning breeze.

Having emerged from its chrysalis just a few days earlier, some instinct told the Monarch to begin flying in a southerly direction. There were miles and miles ahead, but how could it know? With a wingspan of barely 4 1/2 inches, it was undertaking an epic journey of almost 2,000 miles to a place it had never been.

And it wasn't alone. As the Monarch soared into the sky this fine morning, there were others of its kind flapping and sailing along in a thinly spread river of butterflies, all flowing to a place not a single one of them have known.

Within these seemingly fragile insects was hardwired a predetermined destination. If they survived their long flight, the Monarchs would overwinter in a patch of oyamel fir trees located over 10,000 feet above sea level in the transvolcanic mountains of Mexico.

A pugnacious Merlin also happened to be migrating south this morning. The Monarch's flight could have ended abruptly in the talons of the terrifically fast and aggressive small falcon. For reasons known only to them, these small birds of prey seem to thrive on pestering other birds they encounter along the way, and they also commonly snag and eat insects in flight, an a la carte snack.

Luckily for our butterfly, it wasn't the first one the Merlin saw. The feathered missile grabbed, crushed, then dropped, a nearby Monarch. The falcon had previously experienced the foul taste of a Monarch and disdained the thought of actually eating another one, however it had no problem using one for a bit of sport.

Did this register with the Monarch? Could it know it had just escaped one of a thousand dangers it would face? It flew on. Towards Mexico.



Monarch, *Danaus plexippus*

Photo by David Spicer

Monarch Program Was Fun!

The Tennessee Aquarium member's program titled "The Mystery and Magic of Monarchs" was held at the Tennessee River Gardens on Sunday, Sept. 21. It was a beautiful sunny, not-too-hot afternoon.

NABA chapter members attending were Jennifer Taylor, Mark Lawrence and Bill Haley.

Outdoor educator Wanda DeWaard started with a very interesting powerpoint presentation on the Monarch's life cycle and migration. She also brought a number of live Monarch caterpillars in every stage from first instar (one day out of the egg) to full-grown fifth instar. At the conclusion of this part of the program, we tagged and released two Monarchs caught before the program. If we are lucky, maybe they will be found at the wintering grounds in Mexico!

The latter part of the program consisted of some time showing participants how to use butterfly nets, and seeing what we could catch in the beautifully blooming zinnia beds of the River Gardens. Unfortunately no Monarchs were around, but we did manage to capture the following: Eastern Tailed Blue, Cloudless Sulphur, Red-banded Hairstreak, Gulf Fritillary, Great Spangled Fritillary, Painted Lady, Sagem and Clouded Skipper. All were viewed briefly in a small container, identified, then set free. A female Diana was seen, but not caught.

We then toured the grounds of the Tennessee River Gardens, and each person received a pot of free plants and an envelope with zinnia and common milkweed seeds to plant in their home gardens.

It was a nice way to spend a Sunday afternoon!

More BioBlitz Finds!



Photo by Audrey Hoff

BEST BUTTERFLY OF BIOBLITZ! Above is a photo of a butterfly that was initially identified as a Leonard's Skipper, a rare species in our area of Tennessee. Unfortunately the pattern of hindwing dots doesn't quite match the pictures in field guides. After several butterfly experts weighed in, it was determined to be a Yehl's Skipperwhich meant it was probably *still* the best butterfly species found!.



Photo by Audrey Hoff



Photo by Scott Spicer

MOST COMMON BUTTERFLIES OF BIOBLITZ: Only 26 species of butterflies were located during the BioBlitz. The two small ones pictured above, Carolina Satyr and Red-banded Hairstreak, were the most numerous.



Photo by Lana Sutton

A big thank you to Lana Sutton, a BioBlitz participant who is interested in all types of creatures. Her nice shot of a Great-spangled Fritillary nectaring on tall ironweed was taken during the BioBlitz. Although Lana was not on our butterfly survey team, she supplied this picture just in case it was a species we didn't find. It turned out they were quite common in the fields along Look-out Creek, which were absolutely brilliant with yellow bur marigold and purple ironweed. I appreciate her contribution and like the composition of the photo so much I decided to include it in this month's newsletter.

The annual BioBlitz is all about citizen science and getting the public involved. The next one is being planned for April 2009.

ONE WE COULDN'T FIND DURING BIOBLITZ: Libby Wolfe and Susan Schott revisited Reflection Riding on Sept. 9 in an attempt to find a Yehl's Skipper. Instead they discovered a Harvester puddling on the road in Millison Field. We sure wish it had shown up a few days before!



Photo by Libby Wolfe

DID YOU IDENTIFY THE ANGLE WING LAST MONTH? Did you identify the butterfly featured at the top of last month's page one? *There are really only two possibilities in our area, the Question Mark and the Eastern Comma.* Both are quite similar. It was an **Eastern Comma**.

THE ALL TAXA BIODIVERSITY INVENTORY IN TENNESSEE STATE PARKS

Much thanks to Rita Venable for presenting a very informative program on her work with the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI) of Tennessee's State Parks at our September meeting.

Tennessee is fortunate to have over fifty state parks. These include natural areas, archaeological sites, historic sites and traditional recreational parks. Due to the large size of most areas and lack of continuous studies and monitoring, many of our state parks are lacking inventories of the many plants, animals and other life forms that call them home. This information is vital to protect our parks from major environmental problems such as invasive non-native species, pollution, increased development and other man-made disturbances.

The ATBI is an on-going project in the Great Smoky Mountains. It was the first comprehensive biological inventory of its type to be undertaken in the United States. With the creation of a new section of Tennessee State Parks, Natural and Cultural Resource Management, a similar program is now underway in all state parks. Tennessee is still the only state in the country to undertake such an ambitious project.

The aim of this project is to monitor the parks using existing park staffs, local universities and schools, community volunteers and others from abroad with expertise or interest in biological topics.

The ATBI will not only provide data to help better protect the creatures that we know reside in our state parks, but it will help us discover those thousands of plants and animals yet to be found in parks or even yet known to science. Hundreds of new species previously unknown to science have already been discovered in the Great Smoky Mountains!

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Rita made the point during her presentation that volunteers with all levels of expertise are needed for this effort. You could help by collecting data, identifying species, data entry, organizing groups or even to recruit new volunteers.

The Tennessee Valley NABA chapter has already contacted park rangers with the Cumberland Trail State Park about the possibility of our helping survey butterflies on the trail this coming year. Look for more info on how you can help in the spring when we can get back in the field to look for butterflies. It'll be important to survey in spring, summer and fall, since you will get a different mix of species depending on the season. This should be a good source for a few field trips next year and a chance to explore some new places! Other nearby possibilities are Red Clay, Booker T. Washington and Harrison Bay State Parks.

President's Message:

As an elementary school student chasing butterflies with a homemade net, I never dreamed of the impact butterflies would have on my life. As I pursued them, I also took note of caterpillars on host plants and noticed that you had to visit varied habitats to find different species. Without realizing it, I had begun a lifelong interest in butterflies.

Building on that early knowledge, for the past 14 years I've conducted butterfly counts in this area. Out of my contact with the North American Butterfly Association (NABA), which oversees those 4th of July counts, came a dream of one day starting a butterfly club right here in Chattanooga. With a gentle nudge from several friends, this year it has finally become a reality!

October 28 will be our last meeting in 2008 and the end of our first season as the Tennessee Valley Chapter of the North American Butterfly Association. We will resume regular monthly meetings on Tuesday, February 24, 2009. The newsletter will still be published even in months we don't meet.

Since our organizational meeting in April, it has been a very busy year for our newly-emerged chapter. Members have enjoyed several field trips, participated in organized butterfly counts, visited home butterfly gardens, taken part in butterfly-oriented programs, blacklighted for night-flying insects and attended meetings such as this past month when Rita Venable came down from Franklin to tell us about the ATBI in Tennessee State Parks.

It has been a real pleasure to get to know many of our members, but there are still a few who I have not met. I'd like to invite you to come out and join us next field season for some butterfly fun. I know it is a bit of a trek for some of you, but part of the fun of belonging to a NABA chapter is getting to know the other members.

We currently have 27 NABA memberships and recently received our first "starter check" from NABA. In the future, any time we get a new membership within our zip code area, renew a membership or have memberships transferred from outside the zip area, the national organization will send our chapter \$5.00. We are on our way!

I am very excited about the coming year. Collecting data for the ATBI in state parks will be an interesting project. We can all help conduct "citizen science" and contribute valuable information about butterfly populations too.

With a start in February next year, we'll be set to monitor the very first butterflies of spring, such as Falcate Orangetips, Mourning Cloaks and West Virginia Whites. But don't forget to look for butterflies in the colder winter months, and if you spot something, please let me know. We have several species in this area that overwinter as adults. Finding one Mourning Cloak flapping through the woods on a sunny December day can cheer you up more quickly than a whole meadow full of butterflies in July.

Thanks for helping make it such a wonderful first season!

Bill Haley, President

Tennessee River Gorge, TN

2nd annual fall seasonal count total addition:

In my haste to get the September newsletter out a couple of days before the BioBlitz on Sept. 5, I neglected to wait for numbers from the Tennessee River Gardens. Mark Lawrence and his wife Kay Belyea surveyed the gardens during the count, and added a species, Southern Dogface, which brought our day's total to **55 species** and **1272 individuals**. Following are the butterflies they found on Sat., August 30:

Pipeline Swallowtail 12, Black Swallowtail 2, Giant Swallowtail 1, E. Tiger Swallowtail 9, Spicebush Swallowtail 11, Cloudless Sulphur 26, Southern Dogface 3, Gulf Fritillary 1, Great Spangled Fritillary 9, Diana Fritillary 20 (13 male, 7 female), Red-spotted Purple 2, Monarch 11, Silver-spotted Skipper 3.



Photo by Libby Wolfe

SHARE YOUR BUTTERFLY PHOTOS!

I have received many nice comments about our chapter newsletter, and there is no way I could put out such a good product without the help of many NABA members. As you have noticed, lots of gorgeous photos of butterflies are featured monthly. If you enjoy butterfly photography, why not send some good shots along for inclusion in a future issue? My e-mail address is WGH@tnaqua.org.

Libby Wolfe took this striking photo of a Gulf Fritillary nectaring on a White Crownbeard flower at Reflection Riding.

You butterfly gardeners out there should note that the caterpillar of this butterfly dines on our official Tennessee state wildflower, the passionflower. Passionflower vines are low-growing, sprawling vines that tend to wander over other plants in your garden, so they are not for the very tidy gardener who wants to keep everything in its place. However, if you can endure a bit of sprawl, in late summer you are almost sure to be the host to multiple orange caterpillars with menacing-looking black spikes arranged all over their bodies. Don't be alarmed. They don't sting. These spikes probably protect them somewhat from curious predators and their bright warning colors further enhance their survival. They often form a chrysalis on or very near the host vine.

ATBI RESULTS FROM RED CLAY STATE PARK: *The day after our September meeting Rita Venable and David Spicer visited Red Clay State Park to do a survey for the ATBI. She is hopeful that our chapter will continue surveys next year at this state park. Rita was kind enough to send a listing of the butterflies they found. Following is their butterfly list and other information she supplies the ATBI:*

Date: 09/24/2008

Number of species: 25

Number of individuals: 136

Location: **Red Clay State Historic Park, Bradley County, TN, USA 37311-8386**

Notes: Observers David Spicer & Rita Venable. 10:30-4:15.

Sunny, 69 deg., RH = 57, BP = 29.37, DP = 53.8, HI = 69, wind 0-3 mph.

Areas visited: Roadside fields, hiking trail to overlook (one leg), barn overgrown field, mowed fields, beaver ponds and small creek.

List of sightings for this Field Trip: Common Name, Scientific Name, Life Stage, Number seen, Notes

Clouded Sulphur, *Colias philodice*, Adult 1

Orange Sulphur, *Colias eurytheme*, Adult 1

Cloudless Sulphur, *Phoebis sennae*, Adult 9

Gray Hairstreak, *Strymon melinus*, Adult 1

Red-banded Hairstreak, *Calycopis cecrops*, Adult 8

Eastern Tailed-Blue, *Everes comyntas*, Adult 2. One very tiny female

Gulf Fritillary, *Agraulis vanillae*, Adult 10

Great Spangled Fritillary, *Speyeria cybele*, Adult 2. Nectaring on thistle.

Pearl Crescent, *Phyciodes tharos*, Adult 14

Question Mark, *Polygonia interrogationis*, Adult 1. Basking near ground.

Common Buckeye, *Junonia coenia*, Adult 11

Red-spotted Purple, *Limenitis aarthemis astyanax*, Adult 1

Viceroy, *Limenitis archippus*, Adult 1

Northern Pearly-Eye, *Enodia anthedon*, Adult 1

Gemmed Satyr, *Gyllopsis gemma*, Adult 1

Carolina Satyr, *Hermeuptychia sosybius*, Adult 27

Common Wood Nymph, *Cercyonis pegala*, Adult 3. All 3 with light yellow markings (almost whitish).

Common Checkered-Skipper, *Pyrgus communis*, Adult 1

Clouded Skipper, *Lerema accius*, Adult 6

Least Skipper, *Ancyloxypha numitor*, Adult 4

Fierly Skipper, *Aylephila phyleus*, Adult 5

Tawny-edged Skipper, *Polites themistocles*, Adult 2.

Little Glassywing, *Pomopieus verna*, Adult 2

Sachem, *Atalopedes campestris*, Adult 15. 5 male, 2 female.

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THE SKIPPER AT THE TOP OF PAGE ONE? Hint: This is a female, and it is one of the most common skipper species in this area.

Answer next month.