



Photo by Carol Wolf

On The Wing

Newsletter of the Tennessee Valley Chapter,
North American Butterfly Association

July 2009

Volume 2, Number 3

Editor: Bill Haley, wgh@tnaqua.org

JULY MEETING

**TUESDAY, JULY 28, 7:00PM
LISA LEMZA'S HOME & GARDEN
IN OPPOSUM CREEK PINES, NORTH
OF SODDY-DAISY, TN**

Everyone enjoyed the meeting at Lisa Lemza's place so much last July that she has graciously agreed to host our July monthly meeting again on Tuesday, July 28 at 7:00pm. Lisa is a Tennessee Master Gardener who has worked very hard to transform her property into a mecca for all kinds of wildlife, especially butterflies. Her flower gardens will be open for touring and she will be happy to answer questions about her plants and gardening in general. Everyone is encouraged to bring a finger food of some type, such as sandwiches, crackers, chips, etc. or a finger food dessert to share with the group. Lisa's phone number is (423) 332-1780 or you can e-mail her at lemzala@aol.com. (She advises cell phone coverage is sometimes spotty there.)

DIRECTIONS FROM CHATTANOOGA:

- Take Hwy. 27N towards Dayton;
- After crossing Soddy Lake, the highway splits, stay right on Hwy. 27N, heading towards Dayton;
- Turn right at the first traffic light you come to (E. Highwater Road);
- When road T's take a right onto Old Dayton Pike;
- Take first left onto Lee Pike;
- Go about 1.5 miles and turn left onto Arapaho Drive. There's a large red/white sign that says O'Possum Creek Pines;
- Go up hill and as the road Y's, Lisa's house is at the top of the hill on your right, just past the Y. It's OK to block the little crossroad at the Y or park in the island around the lone apple tree. (We'll try to have someone around to help with parking suggestions).

DIRECTIONS FROM RHEA/BRADLEY COUNTY:

- Get on Hwy. 27S from the Hwy. 60 bridge if coming from the east;
- Stay on Hwy. 27S through the Bakewell traffic light (McCallie Ferry Rd. on left, Retro-Hughes Rd. on right);
- After that light, continue on Hwy. 27S to the next traffic light atop a hill and turn left;
- Follow directions above from turn on E. Highwater Rd.

NABA BUTTERFLY COUNTS IN JULY ***\$3 NABA FEE FOR ALL COUNTERS***

SATURDAY, JULY 18:

**6TH ANNUAL CATOOSA/WHITFIELD
CO., GEORGIA COUNT**

MEET: 9:30AM at convenience store at intersection of East Brainerd Rd. and Ooltewah-Ringgold Road. For directions or info call **BILL HALEY (423) 785-4056 (W), (423) 756-4106 (H), (423) 326-9248 (CELL)**, or e-mail him at **WGH@tnaqua.org**.

SATURDAY, JULY 25:

**7TH ANNUAL STEVENSON, ALABAMA
COUNT**

MEET: 9:00AM at the Food Lion on Brown's Ferry Rd. (*First exit off I-24W after Moccasin Bend - turn right off exit. Store is on the left.*) to caravan to Stevenson City Park. Be prompt, we won't wait long after 9:00 before heading to Alabama! Or you can meet us in the first parking lot at 10:00AM Eastern at Stevenson City Park in Stevenson, Alabama.

Compiler: Bill Haley (see contact info above)

Tennessee Valley NABA Brochures Available:
Bill Haley will have a limited number of brochures for our NABA chapter available at the July meeting. If you have a friend you'd like to give one to, or events planned where you might pass out a few, come to the meeting and pick some up!

New Chapter Officers for 2009-2010 Elected!
At our June meeting the officer election was held. Below are the people who will serve as officers for the rest of 2009 and half of 2010.

President - Bill Haley (wgh@tnaqua.org)
Vice-President - David Spicer
Secretary - Lisa Lemza
Treasurer - Jennifer Taylor

Around The Puddle

by Bill Haley

I Wonder....

Occasionally someone will call me a butterfly "expert". I have to laugh when I hear that. I don't consider myself an expert on butterflies. I'm merely someone who began chasing butterflies when I was very young and after 48 years I've learned a few things about them. Pile on enough years and enough observations and perhaps you'll be considered an "expert" too.

The truth is that you never really stop learning about butterflies. There are still MANY things we don't know about these creatures.

At our June meeting at Tennessee River Gardens I was surprised to see several female Dianas nectaring on butterfly bushes....between 8:00 and 8:45pm in the evening.

There were two reasons for my surprise.

1). They were the first females any of us had seen this year. All our sightings to that point had been males.

2). They were seen late in the evening, well after most butterflies call it a day. Jeff Basham said, "I never knew they flew this late in the evening." I didn't either.

We've usually called it a day by then and quit looking for butterflies. Jeff and I often continue counting later than many folks, but I'm not enough of an ironman to keep at it until 8:00pm!

I've always thought that there were few females around in the early part of the summer, because we locate only male Dianas during many butterfly counts. I've made the comment that fifty males for every one female seems to be a very strange, and possibly not very successful, reproductive strategy. Now I wonder.

I wonder if females have always been present in equal numbers, but just aren't active the same time of the day? Could it be that blossoms filled with male Dianas during the day would be loaded with female Dianas if you came back the same evening? I don't know.

I've read that the females are known to "hide" out in the woods, but it seems like we'd have flushed a few from time to time. Right? I wonder.

We'll have to check this out! It will go on the list with other puzzlers such as why is a butterfly abundant one year and almost nonexistent the next, where do they go when it is cloudy, and other questions an "expert" should know.

TENNESSEE RIVER GORGE, TN COUNT RESULTS

The 15th annual Tennessee River Gorge, TN butterfly count was conducted on Saturday, June 13. 15 participants in 4 parties combined for 25 total party hours. Temperatures ranged between 71-91 F. Sunshine ranged between 75-95% all day. Wind was west at 5-10 mph.

This seems to be the year for the Great Spangled Fritillary, which proved to be our most numerous species, with 207 counted. On Raccoon Mountain the parties of Jeff Basham, Stephen Johnson and Carl and Beverly Swafford dubbed it the "Day of the Coral Hairstreak", as these little beauties seemed to be everywhere. All parties together found 66 Coral Hairstreaks and 67 Banded Hairstreaks....both very high totals.

While some species were very abundant, other normally abundant species could not be located. It seems we fell in between broods for some. Of note, satyrs were very difficult to find, with not a single Carolina Satyr found. Even more surprising is that we struck out on Sachems. Some years they have been THE most numerous species on this count!

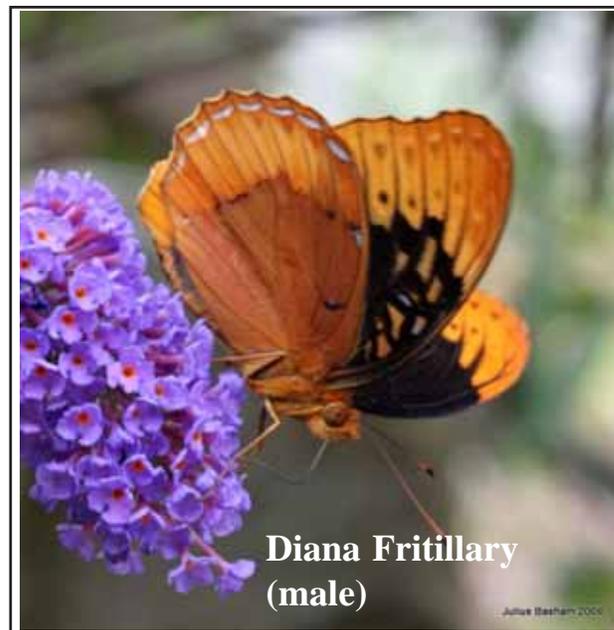
TOTALS: Pipevine Swallowtail 32, Zebra Sw. 4, Black Sw. 1, Spicebush Sw. 7, E. Tiger Sw. 13, Giant Sw. 1, Cabbage White 3, Clouded Sulphur 6, Orange Su. 39, Cloudless Su. 5, Sleepy Orange 13, Coral Hairstreak 66, Banded Ha. 67, Striped Ha. 2, Gray Ha. 5, E. Tailed Blue 86, 'summer' Spring Azure 5, Am. Snout 42, Gulf Fritillary 1, Variegated Fr. 20, Diana Fr. 6, Great Spangled Fr. 207, Pearl Crescent 56, Question Mark 11, E. Comma 2, Mourning Cloak 4, Am. Lady 13, Painted Lady 2, Red Admiral 3, Com. Buckeye 11, Red-spotted Purple 3, Hackberry Emperor 4, Tawny Emp. 3, S. Pearly-Eye 1, Little Wood Satyr 12, Monarch 4, Silver-spotted Skipper 57, Hoary Edge 27, S. Cloudywing 3, N. Cloudywing 24, Wild Indigo Duskywing 63, Swarthy Sk. 1, Tawny-edged Sk. 1, Crossline Sk. 24, Little Glassywing 4, Delaware Sk. 2, Zabulon Sk. 4, Dun Sk. 11. **Total 48 species, 981 individuals.** Immatures: 1 Silver-spotted Skipper caterpillar on kudzu.

Great Spangled Fritillary (left)
Diana Fritillary (right)



Photo by Tommie Rogers

More Butterflies from the
Tennessee River Gorge Count



Butterfly colors range from very drab, as on the Swarthy Skipper.

A highlight of bright orange spots is exciting on the Coral Hairstreak.

Male Dianas offer a stunning contrast.

A fresh Mourning Cloak, when seen in good light, is simply sublime!

All photos this page by Jeff Basham



13TH ANNUAL SODDY-DAISY, TN BUTTERFLY COUNT TOTALS

Participants braved a heat index of near 105 F to complete the 13th annual Soddy-Daisy, TN NABA butterfly count on Saturday, June 20. Sunshine ranged from 90-95% all day and temperatures were between 78-96 F. The weather the week prior to the count was extremely hot and dry. Pink clover, which had been blooming abundantly along Hwy. 27 was cut the week before the count and a large field of butterfly weed in Bakewell had been mown for hay just a few days prior to count day. This took away some very significant nectar sources and normally productive butterfly areas. Luckily, orange butterfly weed was in full bloom on Bakewell Mountain. 10 participants in two parties took part in this count. Thanks to everyone who came out!

Once again, swallowtail, skipper and satyr numbers were extremely low. As with the TN River Gorge count, the Great Spangled Fritillary (158) continued to be our most common butterfly this year. No Gorgone Checkerspots could be located on Bakewell Mountain, possibly due to the dry conditions. Only two Dianas were counted. David and Scott Spicer made the two best finds of the count with a Southern Dogface and Aphrodite Fritillary.

Totals: Pipevine Swallowtail 10, E. Tiger Sw. 4, Spicebush Sw. 6, Clouded Sulphur 1, Orange Sulphur 23, **Southern Dogface 1**, Cloudless Sulphur 1, Sleepy Orange 1, Coral Hairstreak 10, Banded Hairstreak 14, Striped Ha. 1, Gray Ha. 1, E. Tailed Blue 53, 'Summer' Spring Azure 3, Am. Snout 8, Gulf Fritillary 1, Variegated Fr. 22, Diana Fr. 2, **Great Spangled Fr. 158**, **Aphrodite Fr. 1**, Pearl Crescent 28, Question Mark 1, Am. Lady 6, Red Admiral 1, Comm. Buckeye 6, Red-spotted Purple 5, Hackberry Emp. 2, Little Wood Satyr 6, Monarch 8, Wild Indigo Duskywing 15, Clouded Skipper 1, Tawny-edged Sk. 1, Crossline Sk. 3, N. Broken-Dash 1, Sachem 3.

Total: 35 species, 417 individuals.



Photo by Scott Spicer

Aphrodite Fritillary, *Speyeria aphrodite*, nectaring on butterfly weed on Bakewell Mountain, was one of the best finds of the Soddy-Daisy, TN count.



Photo by David Spicer

Southern Dogface, *Colias eurydice*, was found on the Harrison side of the river by Scott and David Spicer. (The Soddy-Daisy count circle extends across the TN River).

YEHL SKIPPER, *Poanes yehl*, in Meigs County, TN, a new BAMONA county record.

Jeff Basham writes that he went for a boat ride up the Tennessee River on Sunday, June 7 in Meigs County. This fresh female Yehl Skipper was feeding and basking until after 7:00pm.

Photos by Jeff Basham.



10TH ANNUAL LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN, GA BUTTERFLY COUNT TOTALS

Tommie Rogers, Susan Schott and Bill Haley conducted the 10th annual Lookout Mountain, GA butterfly count on Saturday, June 27. They found 36 species and 287 individuals. Temperatures ranged from 79-98 F. Wind was 5-10 MPH. The count ended at 6:00pm when it began to rain. We could have used the rain a day or two before the count, as all vegetation was crispy from the continued hot, dry weather for the two weeks prior to count day. If it had rained before there would have probably been more butterflies to emerge by count day. Pink clover and orange butterfly weed were the main nectar sources.

It was good to see the first Common Wood Nymphs of the year and also to find some Carolina Satyrs after missing them on the first couple of counts in June. Schem numbers seem to finally be increasing too.

Totals: Pipevine Swallowtail 7, Black Sw. 1, E. Tiger Sw. 1, Spicebush Sw. 1, **Harvester 1**, Coral Hairstreak 2, Banded Ha. 3, **Striped Ha. 1**, E. Tailed Blue 46, 'Summer' Spring Azure 1, Am. Snout 5, Comm. Buckeye 14, Red-spotted Purple 3, Hackberry Emperor 7, Carolina Satyr 3, Little Wood Satyr 2, **Comm. Wood Nymph 2**, Monarch 3, Silver-spotted Skipper 23, Hoary Edge 1, N. Cloudywing 1, Comm. Checkered Sk. 1, Least Sk. 14, Fiery Sk. 3, Crossline Sk. 2, N. Broken-Dash 2, Schem 64, Dun Sk. 1.

Total: 36 species, 287 individuals



Common Wood Nymph
Cercyonis pegala
is well camouflaged
in dried leaves.
The yellow area
on the forewing
gives it away.

Photo by Susan Schott

UPCOMING AUGUST COUNT

For more information, contact Bill Haley, compiler of these counts, at wgh@tnaqua.org, or you can call him at (423) 756-4106 (H), or (423) 785-4056 (W).

Sat., Aug. 29: Tennessee River Gorge, TN
(3rd annual seasonal fall count)



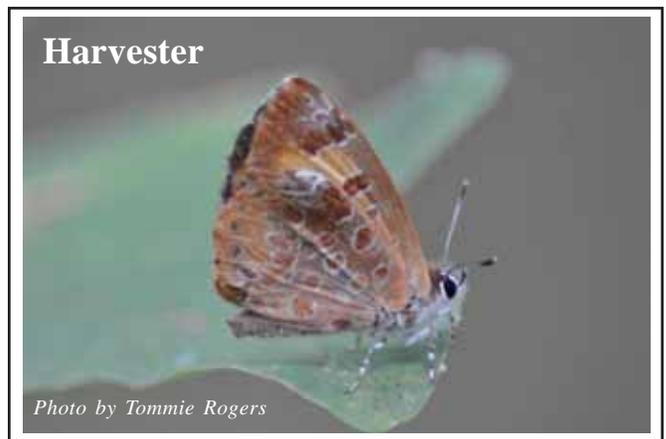
Coral Hairstreak
Satyrium titus

Photo by Susan Schott



Fiery Skipper
Hylephila phyleus

Photo by Tommie Rogers



Harvester

Photo by Tommie Rogers

NEVER SAY NEVER: This Harvester, *Feniseca tarquinius*, was found on a dry, sandy path through the woods atop Lookout Mountain. Earlier when entering the woods, Bill Haley had commented "We'll probably find hairstreaks and Common Wood Nymphs in this area, but not Harvesters. It is not the correct habitat for Harvesters, as there is no water nearby and they are usually found near the water where aspens grow." Guess what flitted up and landed in front of them about 30 minutes later? It goes to show that you never really know what might appear, or where, on a butterfly count! (Note: They also found the hairstreaks and Common Wood Nymph Bill had predicted on this trail.)

HEAD OF SEQUATCHIE BUTTERFLY WALK REPORT, SUNDAY, JUNE 28

Being a well-known butterfly nut sometimes has its rewards. Bill Haley was contacted by a ranger with the Cumberland Trail about the possibility of leading a butterfly walk at an area he'd never heard of before. This area, Head of Sequatchie, is aptly named because the Sequatchie River comes bubbling from a cave right beside the ranger's station. It is literally the head of the Sequatchie River.

Also on the property is one of the most significant underground archaeological sites in all of North America, **Devil Step Hollow Cave**. It contains three types of prehistoric art, pictoglyphs (artwork pecked into the walls of the cave), petroglyphs (artwork drawn on the walls of the cave) and mudglyphs (artwork scratched into muddy walls within the cave).

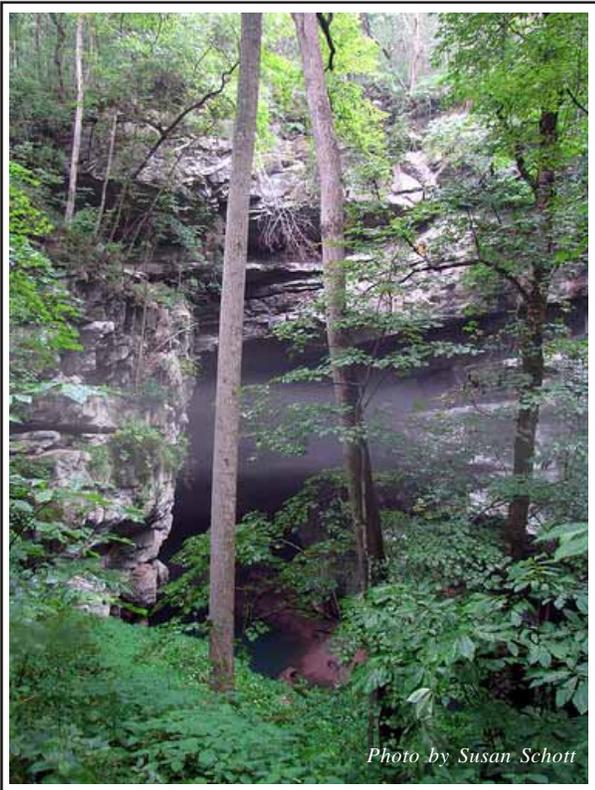


Photo by Susan Schott

Entrance to Devil Step Hollow Cave at Head of Sequatchie in Cumberland County, TN. The cave opening is quite large. Note layers of fog issuing from the cave interior.

The area is usually closed to the public, but is opened for special programs such as this. Bill figured there would only be a few people there, so he invited all members of our NABA chapter. Vaughn Trentham, Jennifer Taylor, Susan Schott, Jeff Basham and Bill all made the trip up from Chattanooga. What a surprise when they arrived and there were 55-60 people waiting to go on the butterfly walk! (It had been publicized in the Crossville paper.)

The outing at Head of Sequatchie proved to be quite exciting on a number of fronts. First, it is an outstandingly beautiful area. Second, about fifteen minutes into our walk, a torrential thunderstorm crested the mountain and within a minute it was pouring, the lightning was flashing and thunder was booming. Some folks ran for the ranger station nearby, while 30-35 others opted for a small covered porch on a nearby building. A couple of lightning bolts hit so near that there was no separation between the flash and the crash of thunder, which means it was a little too close for comfort! Luckily Bill had managed to catch a Question Mark and an Eastern Tailed Blue just before it began to rain and he passed the time showing them around and talking about butterfly nectar sources and host plants, the butterfly life cycle and other butterfly trivia. Everyone weathered the storm quite well, possibly setting a new record for the number of people ever to be on that porch at one time! Bill made the point that our lightning storm experience would make a great story to add to our adventures of the day.

After about 25-30 minutes, the rains passed and blue sky returned. Luckily, the butterflies did too! We ended up finding 19 species.

After the butterfly walk we were treated to a hike up to Devil Step Cave with a ranger talk about the archaeological features that had been discovered there. It was a memorable day in a really splendid setting.

Join NABA, the North American Butterfly Association

The North American Butterfly Association was started in 1994 to popularize the study of butterflies through observation and identification through use of field marks rather than collecting.

The Tennessee Valley NABA chapter was formed in 2008. The chapter's territory is centered around southeastern Tennessee, but also encompasses parts of northwestern Georgia and northeastern Alabama. Anyone who joins the national organization within a zip code area beginning with 374, 373 (with the exception of 37355 which is allocated to the Middle Tennessee NABA chapter), 307, 357 or 359 will automatically become a member of the chapter.

It is also possible for persons living outside this zip code area to become a member of the Tennessee Valley chapter. When you join or renew your NABA membership, be sure to specify that you'd like to be affiliated with the Tennessee Valley chapter. Joining online is easy. Go to their website at <http://www.naba.org> and click on Membership. Individual membership is \$30. Family membership is \$40 and an institution/library can join for \$50. It would make a great birthday gift!

Dun Skipper (male)
Euphyes vestris



Photo by Susan Schott

Silver-spotted Skipper
Epargyreus clarus



Photo by Susan Schott

*Broad-headed Skink on porch of
Head of Sequatchie ranger's cabin*



Eastern Comma
Polytonia comma



Photo by Susan Schott

This Eastern Comma was quite content to sit on Bill's finger and pose for photos before flying away.

Not the Ranger's Cabin!

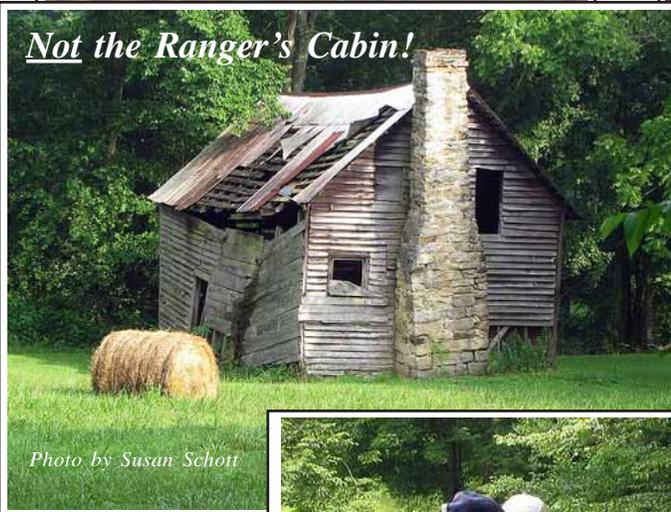


Photo by Susan Schott

Butterfly Show and Tell at Head of Sequatchie butterfly walk.

Everyone was eager to learn and really seemed to enjoy the close looks at butterflies and other insects.



Photo by Susan Schott

Milkweed Longhorn Beetle



Photo by Susan Schott

Another Milkweed Lover:

No Monarch caterpillars were found on the Common Milkweed, but we did find several of these striking bright red with black spots Milkweed Longhorn Beetles.

More Recent Sightings.....



Northern Oak Hairstreak
Satyrium favonius ontario

Photo by Jeff Basham

This **Aphrodite Fritillary**, found by Jeff Basham in Polk County, became the 98th species documented for that county on the Butterflies and Moths of North America (BAMONA) website.



Aphrodite Fritillary
Speyeria aphrodite

Julia Basham 2009

Northern Oak Hairstreak found in Polk County May 31 by Jeff Basham and Stephen Johnson. A new Polk County BAMONA record.



Dion Skipper
Euphyes dion

Photo by Jeff Basham

Dion Skipper found by Jeff Basham on June 16 in a small swamp in Hamilton County.



Broad-winged Skipper
Poanes viator

Julia Basham 2009

Broad-winged Skipper, found on June 12 by Jeff Basham, in both Rhea County and Meigs County. Both BAMONA county records.



2009 J Gentle JS

CAN YOU IDENTIFY the two "mystery butterflies" at the bottom of this page and also the one at the top of page one? Hint: They are all very common in our area.



2009 J Gentle JS

The lovely photos on this page of the two "mystery butterflies" nectaring on zinnia were taken by Jack Gentle.