



Photo by Susan Schott

On The Wing

Newsletter of the Tennessee Valley Chapter,
North American Butterfly Association

August 2009

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Editor: Bill Haley, wgh@tnaqua.org

AUGUST NABA BUTTERFLY COUNT \$3 NABA FEE FOR ALL COUNTERS

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29:

3RD ANNUAL TENNESSEE RIVER GORGE, TN FALL SEASONAL COUNT

MEET: 9:30AM at Signal Mountain Road Bi-Lo parking lot. 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.

This will be Bill's last scheduled NABA butterfly count of the year. He would like to have several teams covering the 15 mile diameter circle to find as many species as possible. Please let him know if you will be able to take an area. Late summer butterfly numbers and diversity are generally at their peak. Last year we managed to locate 53 species, so lets see if we can beat that mark in 2009! If you can't count all day, plan to come out for at least 2-3 hours. You'll enjoy the time spent with the butterflies *and* the butterfly watchers! There is a \$3 NABA fee for each participant.

Everyone is invited to participate. You don't need to be a butterfly identification expert. An extra set of eyes is *always* appreciated on a count!!!

AUGUST MEETING

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 7:00-11:00PM

Meeting / Field Trip!

REFLECTION RIDING

DRAGONFLY AND DAMSELFLY

PROGRAM BY RICHARD CONNORS,

FOLLOWED BY A WALK ON THE
GROUNDS AND BLACKLIGHTING

AFTER DARK AT REFLECTION RIDING

NOTE: We will meet on a **FRIDAY**, not our regular Tuesday meeting day. We will be blacklighting for moths and other night insects after dark.

We are in for a double treat at our August NABA meeting! First, Richard Connors will present a program on his dragonfly and damselfly surveys in Tennessee state parks. Richard is a very talented photographer and he'll be showcasing some of the dragon and damsel photos he's taken. Plan to come and learn more about these interesting insects at the Humphrey's House, located at Reflection Riding. Since we'll be very near the ponds at Reflection Riding, we'll probably take a stroll after Richard's program to look for dragonflies.

As it gets dark, our focus will shift to night-flying insects. We will set up at least two blacklights (ultra-violet lights) to attract moths and other night insects. Our very own moth expert, James Adams, who teaches at Dalton State, is expected to make an appearance to help with identifications. If you've never been blacklighting, it can be quite interesting. You never know what you might attract! Bring a flashlight and a lawn chair if you plan to stay awhile.

DIRECTIONS FROM CHATTANOOGA:

- Take I -24 West towards Nashville;
- Take the first exit, (Brown's Ferry Rd.);
- Turn left on Brown's Ferry Rd.;
- When road T's at Cummings Hwy., turn left;
- Take first right - after crossing bridge over creek;
- Turn right on Garden Rd. in about 150 yards;
- Go to end of road. When you see gates of Chattanooga Nature Center, take the road to the left and continue until you see a house on the left with a gravel parking area. This is the Humphrey's House.



Photo by Susan Schott

WHAT AM I? *These fearsome-looking beasts were seen in Susan Schott's garden in early July, munching on a vine. What butterfly will they become?*

Around The Puddle

by Bill Haley

The Power of Butterflies

Everyone has different reasons for enjoying butterflies. In June I spent some time on a butterfly count with a woman from Signal Mountain who explained that she always thought of her daughter when she saw a butterfly. She went on to explain that her daughter had passed away at a young age. Shortly after her death, while taking a walk and trying to cope with the loss, the mom was surprised as a cloud of butterflies swirled all around her. She said it was like God had sent the butterflies as a message that her daughter was still with her in spirit. Now butterflies always make her feel better and more hopeful.

Awhile back, I spoke with a man who develops large properties, including all the development around Greenlife Grocery in North Chattanooga. This man has been very successful in his business ventures, but he admitted he is a workaholic. He told me his father, who was "a grizzled old drill sargent", often made this comment when he talked about his many business projects. *"But have you stopped to look at a butterfly today, son?"*

The son never really understood why his dad put such importance on such a mundane thing as slowing down to appreciate the small things in life, nor could he figure out why his father wasn't too impressed with his hectic lifestyle and successful business activities.

A few months later the dad's health worsened and he had to be put in a nursing home. The son went to visit one day and pushed his dad's wheelchair outside. He said a butterfly almost immediately landed nearby and sat there for several minutes. Finally he spent some time with his dad looking at a butterfly, admiring the beautiful patterns and colors. It was a profound experience. Both his dad and he enjoyed this quiet time together with the butterfly.

His dad is now gone, but he admitted that it is a memory of his father that he now cherishes. He told me that he is glad there are people in this world who still take the time to look at butterflies.

When I lead a butterfly walk, I am transported back across the years to when I was a fourth grader with a handmade butterfly net, chasing a Black Swallowtail on the butterflyweed by the railroad. Those were some great times! I never caught it, but I did catch a life-long love of butterflies.

ANOTHER PIECE TO THE FEMALE DIANA PUZZLE?

Sometimes I get feedback from NABA members who enjoy reading my "Around the Puddle" articles. After reading my story "I Wonder....", about female Diana Fritillary abundance-seasonal distribution last month, Alison Siragusa, who lives in Fort Payne, Alabama, sent this note. Perhaps she has added another tidbit to our knowledge about the female Diana. Many books state that it is mostly male butterflies that do the puddling, but she has observed otherwise. Thanks Alison! -Editor

Dear Bill;

Good news! I have your missing Diana females right here in Fort Payne. We live in the woods on Lookout Mountain and always have lots of females hanging around. I have never seen them nectaring on anything but dog poop, damp mortar and concrete and puddles. The males are usually on butterfly weed along our driveway, but they are also on other flowers.

We have had very few swallowtails this summer. In fact so far we have had fewer butterflies.

I really enjoy your newsletter. The pictures are wonderful.

Many thanks,
Alison Siragusa



Hi Bill:

Have you noticed a decreased number of butterflies overall this year? Despite our organic, pesticide-free 21 acres (for the last 4 years), we have at least 50-75% fewer butterflies, except Great Spangled Frits, which were very much increased. Have only seen rare Eastern Black Swallowtails. I walk our dog down our country road each a.m. and only see a rare butterfly in a 1-2 mile walk. Very strange and unlike the last 3 yaers. Also we have no Eastern Black Swallowtail caterpillars yet on our numerous host parsley, dill, etc.

Mike O'Brien

Yes, Mike, I've observed the same thing. We can only hope for more in late summer/early fall. -Editor

You're Invited!

**2nd Regional Florida NABA Meeting
September 25-27, 2009**

Join us in south central Florida September 25-27 for a fantastic weekend of butterflying in rare habitat. *Imagine yourself* surrounded by a sea of wildflowers and an array of butterflies in the "old Florida" of the greater Everglades, Kissimmee River ecosystem, at the Second Florida Regional NABA meeting near Lake Wales, Florida.

We'll stay at River Ranch Resort (one hour south of Orlando) by the Kissimmee River and radiate from there in several directions for premiere butterfly locales. An optional pre-meeting field trip on Friday to an amazing butterfly garden (in the shape of our state butterfly, the Zebra Helliconian) at a wild animal rescue shelter and a trek through the lush palm and scrub habitats of Highlands Hammock State Park will whet your appetite for the Saturday and Sunday haunts.

Weekend field trips, led by expert, fellow NABA members, include: Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park - an international biosphere site with probably the darkest night sky in Florida - welcomes us with a vast, very rare, dry prairie habitat, but also boasts wetter habitats which enrich our quest for a variety of butterflies. Our destinations - Kissimmee Prairie Preserve, Bull Creek Wildlife Management Area and Triple-N Ranch - all offer chances to see rarely seen butterflies, especially skip-pers.

We hope you can join us for this fall adventure, and get to know your fellow NABA members. See old friends and make new ones!

Download the Brochure:

<http://www.naba.org/chapters/florida/NABAStateBrochure2009.pdf>

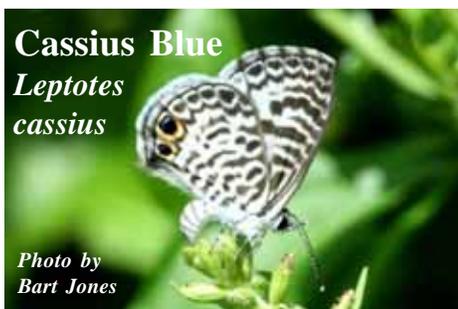
Download the Registration Form:

<http://www.naba.org/chapters/florida/MeetingRegForm2009.pdf>

More details at:

<http://www.naba.org/chapters/florida/meeting.html>

Email Lisa Lewis at lewis.naba.org for more information.



Cassius Blue
Leptotes cassius

Photo by
Bart Jones

A common Florida blue species.

P.S. To get a real taste of the old Florida before you arrive, consider reading "A Land Remembered" by Pulitzer Prize winning author Patrick Smith.

Stork Brings New Lepidopterist!



Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. James Adams on the birth of a daughter, Samantha Ruth Adams, on June 17, 2009. James says "She sleeps pretty well, which allows her parents to be reasonably well rested as well." He goes on to add that "a friend pointed out to us after we had selected a name that if we call her "Sam", then she shares her name with a beer! (Sam Adams)." James, who loves his moths, is already calling her his "little lepidopterist".



Photo by Jeff Basham

IS IT A BUMBLEBEE OR IS IT A MOTH? You may have seen this insect as it buzzes around the flowers in your yard. The Snowberry Clearwing moth is an excellent example of insect mimicry. Many people mistake this day-flying sphinx moth for a bumblebee, due to its convincing coloration. It is interesting that they emerge from the cocoon with complete dark scalling on the wings, but most of the wing scales are quickly lost the first few times the wings are fluttered, making the wings clear like a bee.

Attracting Butterflies with Fruit

Recently on the Tennessee Butterfly listserv, Michael Lee Bierly sent in photos of a neat way to attract butterflies that normally won't visit flowers in your yard. He went on to explain: "

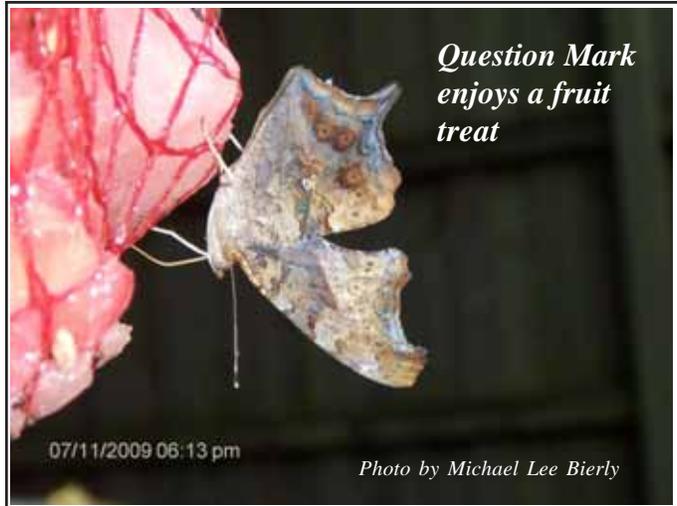
Take a mesh bag, put in some fruit like watermelon, strawberry, pineapple, cantalope, banana (including peel), etc., hang from a tree or pole, preferably where you can easily see it, and wait. Those 'flys who do not feed or seldom feed on nectar are attracted to the sack. The same thing happens when putting it on the ground, like on a deck or in a pan. I expect others on this freelist chum. Fran, a butterfly person from Florida who has property in Tennessee and follows the butterfly activity here thanks to Steve telling her about the site, uses a sock with great success. Some species to expect are Red-spotted Purple, Hackberry Emperor, Tawny Emperor, satyrs, Question Mark and others. Today, not on the sock, but in the watermelon end, a Red-spotted Purple fed six straight hours and then apparently flew up into the tree above it to roost. Without this setup I would not see these butterflies as extensively or as frequently as I do. "

Michael Lee Bierly
Nashville, Davidson County



Photo by Michael Lee Bierly

Michael's photo of a fruit sock butterfly lure containing bananas and other fruits. While many of us attract butterflies into our gardens with nectar and host plants, this is another way to entice some species that never come to flowers.



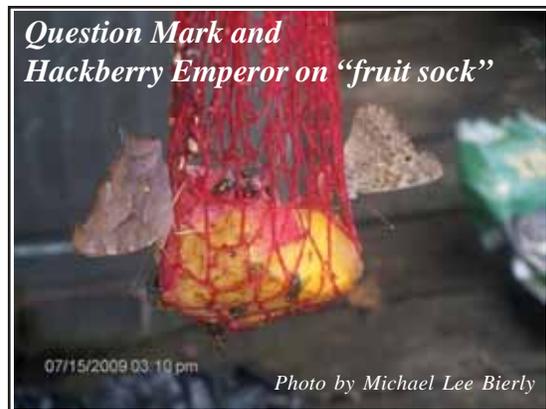
Question Mark enjoys a fruit treat

Photo by Michael Lee Bierly



Red-spotted Purple on Watermelon

Photo by Michael Lee Bierly



Question Mark and Hackberry Emperor on "fruit sock"

Photo by Michael Lee Bierly

Get in on the butterfly news!

Join the Tennessee Butterfly Listserv to find out what other butterfly-lovers around Tennessee are seeing and doing. To subscribe, go to the following web address:
<http://www.freelists.org/list/tn-butterflies>

Once you've joined, you can post messages to the list at
tn-butterflies@freelists.org

7TH ANNUAL CATOOSA-WHITFIELD, GA BUTTERFLY COUNT TOTALS

Tommie Rogers, Susan Schott, Bill Haley, David Hollie, David Spicer, Scott Spicer, Jennifer Taylor and Libby Wolfe conducted the 7th annual Catoosa-Whitfield Co., GA butterfly count on Saturday, July 18. They found 35 species and 395 individuals. Temperatures of 66-83 F were much cooler than previous counts this summer, and a 5-10 MPH breeze kept counters cool. Pink clover and orange butterfly weed were the main nectar sources.

18 Common Wood Nymphs, including 12 seen at one location, was a record high number for this count. Other good finds were Hayhurst's Scallopwing, Common Sootywing and Swarthy Skipper. Swallowtail numbers continue to be low this year.

Totals: Pipevine Swallowtail 2, Black Sw. 3, E. Tiger Sw. 6, Spicebush Sw. 2, swallowtail sp. 2, Cabbage White 1, Orange Sulphur 19, Cloudless Sulphur 24, Sleepy Orange 3, Gray Hairstreak 4, E. Tailed Blue 88, 'Summer' Spring Azure 2, Am. Snout 6, Variegated Fritillary 7, Great Spangled Fr. 2, Silvery Checkerspot 8, Pearl Crescent 16, American Lady 1, Painted Lady 1, Red Admiral 2, Comm. Buckeye 16, Red-spotted Purple 3, Hackberry Emperor 10, Carolina Satyr 57, **Comm. Wood Nymph 18**, Silver-spotted Skipper 6, Southern Cloudywing 7, N. Cloudywing 1, Hayhurst's Scallopwing 1, **Common Sootywing 1**, **Swarthy Sk. 2**, Least Sk. 4, Fiery Sk. 1, Little Glassywing 2, Sachus 63, Dun Sk. 4. **Total: 35 species, 395 individuals**



HIDE AND SEEK!

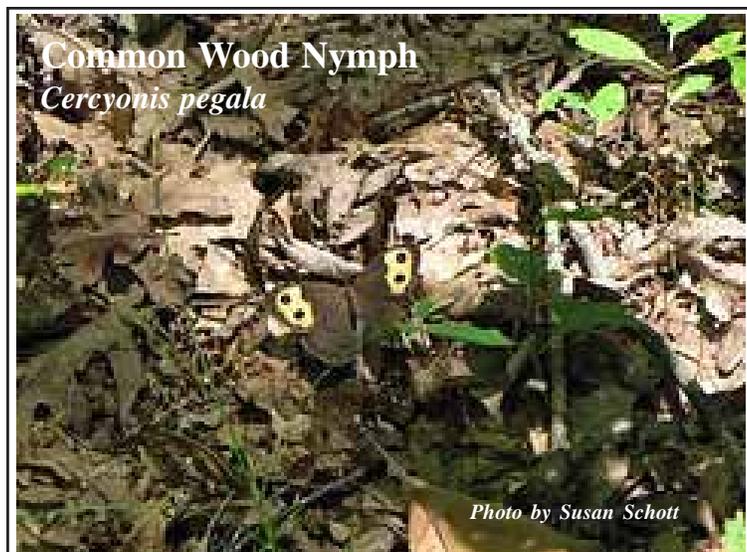
Can you find the butterfly in the above photo by Susan Schott? If not, refer to the photo on the right, taken seconds later. The camouflage markings on many butterflies, such as this **Common Wood Nymph**, are remarkable. They make a habit of landing in leaf litter with wings closed, where they promptly disappear from a predator's view. It is exceedingly difficult to obtain a photo of one with the wings spread, revealing the large, cream-colored forewing patches around the eyespots. *Good one, Susan!*



The **Common Sootywing**, *Pholisora catullus*, is always considered a good find on area counts. This small black spread-winged skipper with white dots uses lambs quarters, a common weed, as its host plant.



Silvery Checkerspot, *Chlosyne nycteis*, uses sunflowers, wingstem, rosinweeds and asters as host plants. Although adaptable, it may be declining.



Other Insects Seen on the Catoosa-Whitfield Butterfly Count

Orange-winged Grasshopper
Pardalophora phoenicoptera



Least Skipper
Ancyloxypha numitor



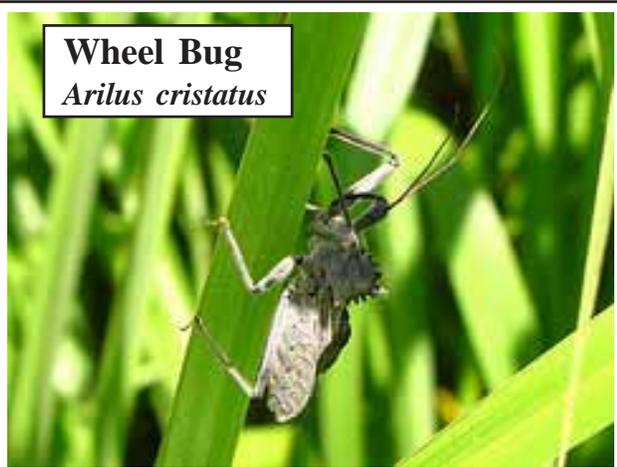
WARNING: When you are in the field with Bill Haley, you will look at more than butterflies! The Orange-winged Grasshoppers were seen in a field full of Common Wood Nymphs. Great Blue Skimmer dragonfly was seen at our last stop of the day, the Wheel Bug was seen at our first stop. Because this is a butterfly newsletter, the Least Skipper is shown. It was found using a "tickle stick" to stir up foliage near a small stream.

All photos by Susan Schott

Great Blue Skimmer
Libellula vibrans



Wheel Bug
Arilus cristatus

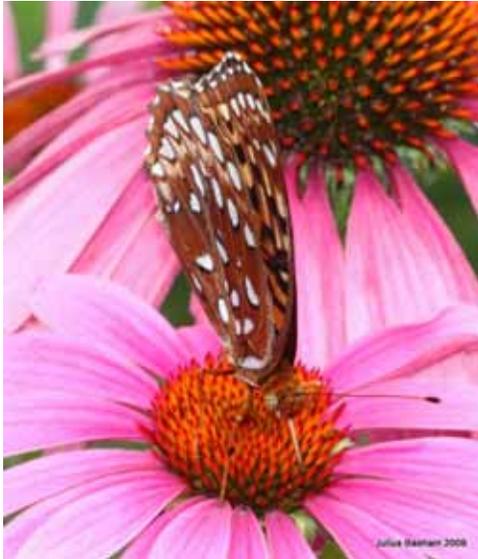


Join NABA, the North American Butterfly Association

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!



Photos, clockwise from upper left: Aphrodite Fritillary-Jeff Basham, Diana-Tommie Rogers, Variegated Fritillary-David Spicer, field full of Butterfly Weed-Susan Schott, Cloudless Sulphur-Tanya Jordan



Two excellent flowers for your home butterfly garden are Purple Coneflower, *Echinacea purpurea*, (top two photos) and Butterfly Weed, *Asclepias tuberosa*. Butterflies love them! Butterfly Weed is a great nectar source and a host plant for the Monarch butterfly. The Native Plant Sale at Reflection Riding is Sept. 19-20.

TOTALS FROM THE STEVENSON, ALABAMA COUNT, SATURDAY, JULY 25, 2009

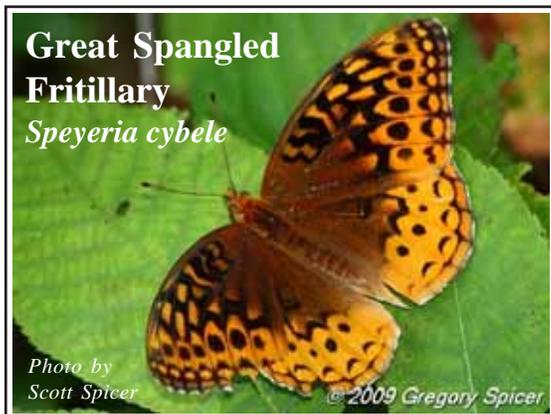
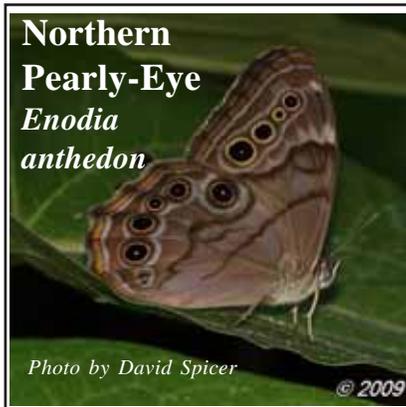
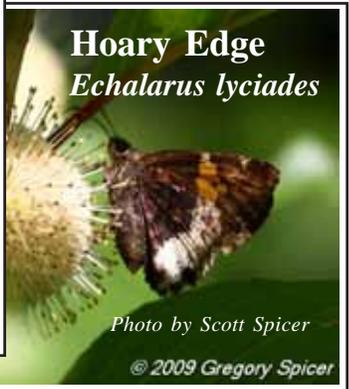
Bill Haley, Jennifer Linger, David Spicer and Scott Spicer conducted the Stevenson, AL butterfly count on Saturday, July 25. Temperatures ranged from 72-94F, with a breeze most of the day. It was a good butterfly day, with **36 species** and **436 individuals**. Totals below: Pipevine Swallowtail 33, Black Sw. 9, Giant Sw. 2, E. Tiger Sw. 5, Spicebush Sw. 8, Cabbage White 4, Orange Sulphur 2, Cloudless Su. 46, Sleepy Orange 82, Gray Hairstreak 1, E. Tailed Blue 30, Am. Snout 16, Gulf Fritillary 4, Variegated Fr. 32, Great Spangled Fr. 16, Pearl Crescent 22, Question Mark 6, Comm. Buckeye 19, Red-spotted Purple 3, Viceroy 2, Goatweed Leafwing 2, Hackberry Emperor 17, N. Pearly-Eye 6, Gemmed Satyr 2, Carolina Satyr 1, Monarch 5, Silver-spotted Skipper 36, Hoary Edge 1, Horace's Duskywing 1, Comm. Checkered Sk. 4, Least Sk. 7, Fiery Sk. 1, Little Glassywing 1, Sachem 1, Zabulon Sk. 7, Dun Sk. 2.



Photo by David Spicer

SHOW AND TELL: Bill Haley shows a Great Spangled Fritillary to Jennifer Linger, a senior at Soddy-Daisy High. She is doing her senior project on butterflies and this was her first introduction to butterfly counts.

Butterflies from the Stevenson, Alabama count



Here is a small sampling of the many beautiful butterflies seen during the Stevenson, Alabama count on July 25.

