



# On The Wing

Newsletter of the Tennessee Valley Chapter,  
North American Butterfly Association

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***This month's program has been scheduled twice before, but cancelled both times. Once because of Bill's dad's illness, last month because of travel complications. We'll try it again. WE ARE HOPING THE THIRD TIME WILL BE A CHARM!***

**MARCH CHAPTER MEETING  
TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 7:00PM  
OUTDOOR CHATTANOOGA,  
NORTH CHATTANOOGA NEAR  
COOLIDGE PARK**

## **BUTTERFLY FARMING IN COSTA RICA**

Bill Haley will present a slide presentation on his trip to Costa Rica in February 2004 to visit butterfly farmers. This was 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!

We will meet at Outdoor Chattanooga's facility in North Chattanooga, near Coolidge Park. From Frazier Avenue, turn towards Chattanooga Theater Center. Take the first right (River Road) and continue almost to where the Walnut Street Bridge goes over the roadway. Outdoor Chattanooga is on the left just before reaching the bridge. You'll see a Subway sandwich shop on your right, directly across the road from Outdoor Chattanooga.

**PARKING:** You can park for free along the street at this time of day, but if you park in any of the nearby parking lots, you'll need to pay. They can and do give out tickets at all times of the day for folks who do not pay in advance. The good news is that parking is rel

**No field trips scheduled in March.** We learned last year that March weather is too unpredictable! One day may be 70 degrees, and then 35 degrees the next. *Things will heat up in April.*

**Saturday, April 3, 10:00-5:00  
TENNESSEE RIVER GORGE  
3RD ANNUAL SPRING BUTTERFLY COUNT  
MEET: 10:00am at Bi-Lo parking lot on  
Signal Mountain Road**

You do not need to be an expert, or know anything about butterfly identification to help with a NABA butterfly count! Interested learners are encouraged. Count butterflies all day, or for a couple of hours, your choice. Each participant must pay a \$3 NABA fee.

Do you want to learn more about butterflies in our area? Plan to take part in the first scheduled NABA count in 2010. We welcome **everyone** to participate, from beginner to veteran butterfly watcher. You'll need to dress for the weather and bring snacks and drinks if staying awhile. Another good idea might be sunblock, as we hope it'll be sunny! Sturdy shoes, not flip-flops or sandals, will make it easier to walk through weeds or brush. If you have them, binoculars that can be focused closer than 10 feet come in handy. You will be teamed with a veteran butterfly observer who is comfortable with butterfly identifications.

For the past two years we have conducted a spring seasonal butterfly count. Last year we were blessed with a sunny day. The temperature reached 75 F and butterflies were plentiful. Nine counters found 24 species and 514 individuals. Highlights were Zebra Swallowtails, West Virginia Whites, Falcate Orangetips, Mourning Cloaks and Pepper and Salt Skippers.

**PLEASE READ:** Unlike most counts that have no ending time, this count will end at 5:00pm or earlier. This will allow all those wishing to attend Marty Essen's presentation, **Around the World in 90 Minutes**, plenty of time to get to the 6:30 show at UTC. Everyone is encouraged to attend this event, and bring friends! (See page 2 for details on this very exciting program coming to Chattanooga to kick off the 3rd annual BioBlitz.)

## Around The Puddle

by Bill Haley

Spring is here. Can butterflies (and butterfly counts) be far behind?

It has been an unusually cold winter featuring several snows, something we haven't had to worry about much the past few years. Warm spells have been far less frequent as well, so wintertime sightings of butterflies were lacking.

Finally we've gotten February behind us and to me that means we are now on the short track to springtime. Butterflies will seem to bloom along with the spring flowers.

Our first scheduled butterfly count of the year is less than one month away! Now comes the challenge. Can you identify what you are seeing?

Worst case scenario: You'll undoubtedly see many of those dark, small-to-medium sized spread-winged skippers darting low over the ground. Unfortunately, they are way too hopped-up on spring sunshine, sweet sugary nectar and the promise of butterfly romance to ever sit still for long. If you are very persistent and lucky, one will land on a flower and briefly give you a glimpse of the underside markings (such as they are). This is your big chance! The one you've been waiting on for the past five minutes while you began to wonder if it would ever land. Don't blow it! You have your binoculars ready and you know you only have milliseconds to look for elusive field marks. Oops, not quick enough. Off to the races again. You are pretty sure it is a duskywing, but which one? Oh well.

Next time you'll be ready. Maybe a quick look in the field guide is warranted to brush up on the most important field marks. This in itself is enough to put you off small dark spread-winged skipper identification for good. They all look the same! (Here is a hint: Play the percentages. In earliest spring 99% of them are Juvenal's Duskywing.)

Not all species are that difficult. A small white butterfly with orange tips on the forewings has to be a male Falcate Orangetip. A big swallowtail that is yellow with black stripes is probably a Tiger Swallowtail. A smaller black and white striped swallowtail is a Zebra Swallowtail.

One of the best things about doing a butterfly count is you don't have to do it by yourself. Join a group if you can't tell an azure from a Question Mark. Do it just for the fun of spending a spring day decorated with dazzling butterflies. Do it for the fun of it. You'll be happy you did.

## AROUND THE WORLD IN 90 MINUTES COMES TO CHATTANOOGA!

SATURDAY, APRIL 3RD

2:00 AND 6:30PM SHOWS

BENWOOD AUDITORIUM, ON THE UTC CAMPUS

\$5 ADULTS, \$2.50 CHILDREN AGES 4-11

AGES 3 AND UNDER ARE FREE

On Saturday, April 3rd, award-winning author Marty Essen will present his high-energy digital slide show, *Around the World in 90 Minutes*. This event is presented by the Chattanooga Nature Center, Reflection Riding Arboretum and Botanical Garden, Tennessee Aquarium, UTC and Lookout Mountain Conservancy.

"This will be a great opportunity to learn more about the incredible diversity of life around the world from someone who has seen so much." Dr. Jean Lomino, CNC Executive Director said. "We hope participants will leave with a greater desire to protect our planet."

Marty's show features interesting facts, humorous stories, and the best of **thousands of photos** he took while traveling the world for his book, *Cool Creatures, Hot Planet: Exploring the Seven Continents*. It's the type of show where the audience has fun laughing at the stories, oohing and aahing at the photos, and then, when it's all done, they realize just how much they've learned. **Around the World in 90 Minutes** is great for **wildlife lovers from 7 to 107**.

### Highlights include:

- Amazing animal facts
- Debunking animal myths
- Cuddly wallaroos and spiny walking sticks
- Charging elephants and howling wolves
- Deadly snakes and friendly penguins
- Bizarre creatures and endangered species
- Swimming with piranhas
- Kayaking in the rainforest
- Hiking with the Porcupine caribou migration
- Rafting with humpback whales
- Surviving a hippo attack in Zimbabwe

To learn more about Marty Essen and his book visit <http://www.coolcreatureshotplanet.com/>

**Attendees can pay at the door or reserve seating by calling (423) 821-1160, ext. 0. Books and photographs will be available for purchase.**

"Marty's presentation is the kick-off for the 2010 BioBlitz, and it is intended to bring more attention to this significant undertaking," Lamino said. The 3rd annual BioBlitz will take place from 3:00pm Friday, April 30 to 3:00pm Saturday, May 1 on the grounds of Reflection Riding and the Chattanooga Nature Center.

### Butterfly Time is Here.

Some early records starting to come in!

Allan Trentley writes, "I saw 15 *Polygonia interrogationis* butterflies along four miles of trail at Lucius E. Burch, Jr. State Natural Area, Shelby Farms Park, Shelby County, TN on **March 5, 2010**. I did not have binoculars, but I was able to photograph two individuals both of which were identified by me from the photograph as Question Marks (*P. interrogationis*). One of the photographs is attached. The high temperature for the day was 57 degrees F. Lucius Birch is primarily bottomland forest. The most common species of tree in the area includes hackberry/sugarberry (*Celtis* sp.), winged elm (*Ulmus alata*), numerous oaks and at least two species of hickory."



In a personal conversation with Ralph Brown on March 5, he commented that he had already seen several Mourning Cloaks this year while walking the trails at Reflection Riding Arboretum and Botanical Gardens.

#### Send butterfly sighting reports to:

Bill Haley - e-mail [WGH@tnaqua.org](mailto:WGH@tnaqua.org) or phone (423) 785-4056 (w), (423) 326-9248 (cell) or (423) 756-4106 (h).



March is the time to see **Falcate Orangetip**. Pictured is a female. You'll notice it does **not** have orange tips on the wings. You can, however, see the distinctly hooked, or falcate, tips of the wings. There is one brood each year and they only fly for a little over a month in early spring.

### First 2010 Butterfly Report from Polk County, TN

David Spicer gets credit for the first reports of butterfly activity in Polk County this year. He writes:

"While driving around today we stopped at the Sylco Campground in the Cherokee National Forest (Southeast Polk County) where we found two Mourning Cloaks and an Eastern Comma.

These are the first butterflies I've seen anywhere this year. Sure was good to finally see them."

David sent some very nice photos taken by him and his son Scott, which are shown below.



**Right:** Ventral view of the **Eastern Comma**. Note the comma-shaped mark in the middle of the hindwing.



**Mourning Cloaks**, such as the one pictured to the left, Question Marks and Eastern Commas all overwinter as adults.