



# On The Wing

Newsletter of the Tennessee Valley Chapter,  
North American Butterfly Association

June 2010

Volume 3, Number 2

Editor: Bill Haley, wgh@tnaqua.org

**June Meeting / Butterfly Count  
Saturday, June 26,  
9:30AM  
Soddy Lake Roadside Park**

**Note: We will NOT meet on the  
4th Tuesday of the month. June  
meeting is Saturday, June 26!**

The June meeting will coincide with the 14th annual Soddy-Daisy, TN butterfly count. Soddy Lake Roadside Park is the the count circle center.

We will try something different and make this meeting a combination meeting / butterfly count. Please meet at the roadside park at 9:30am, (take the outer loop - first gravel road to the right), we'll have a very short meeting / check-in for the count and then will begin looking for butterflies. If you've never participated in a butterfly count, this is your big chance! **Bring \$3.00 for your NABA fee if you plan to participate.** Dress appropriately for the weather, sunscreen and a hat would be a good idea. No sandals, flip-flops or crocs. Binoculars are a big help too, especially if they are close-focus.

We may split up into 2-3 groups to better cover the 15 mile diameter count circle. If you are not comfortable with your identification skills, you will be placed with someone with more experience. Join the fun! If you cannot stay for the whole day, plan to stay for an hour or two.

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Take Hwy. 27N from Chattanooga;
- Go over the causeway at Soddy Lake;
- Take Hwy. 27N towards Dayton (go right at the split);
- Take the first road to the right after the split;
- Continue on this road (Old Dayton Pike) past two small bridges at Soddy Lake;
- Soddy Lake Roadside Park is on the left before the Hwy. 27 overpass. If you go under this overpass, you've gone too far.

## June Butterfly Counts

### **SATURDAY, JUNE 12:**

**16TH ANNUAL TENNESSEE RIVER  
GORGE, TN BUTTERFLY COUNT**

**COMPILER: Bill Haley. (Call (423) 756-4106 (H) or  
(423) 326-9248 (cell) or e-mail wgh@tnaqua.org**

**\$3.00 NABA fee per counter.** Contact Bill to let him know you'll be available to count butterflies. If you have sufficient identification experience and feel confident in going out on your own you may be given a section of the count circle to survey.

Beginning butterflyers are **encouraged** to participate. If you are new and just learning, your help will still be important. Even if you can't identify many butterflies we need your eyes. You may see that rare butterfly everyone else misses! You'll become part of a group of butterfly counters led by a veteran. Every year, part of this count is offered as a Tennessee Aquarium members program. Please read the information below to register:

### **BUTTERFLIES AT TENNESSEE RIVER GARDENS**

**Saturday, June 12, 10:00am-12:30pm**

Learn about our native butterflies as we explore the grounds of the Tennessee River Gardens, which features plantings that attract butterflies. Bill Haley, Aquarium educator and president of the Tennessee Valley chapter of the North American Butterfly Association, will help you identify and collect valuable data for NABA's annual national survey. Add an optional field guide, *Butterflies and Moths* for \$5.00. Meet at the Tennessee River Gardens.

Adults and ages 8 and older, accompanied by an adult Limited to 25

**\$5 Members (\$10 with book)**

**\$10 Non-members (\$15 with book)**

**Register** by calling (423) 267-FISH or online at [www.tnaqua.org/Events/Events\\_travel.asp](http://www.tnaqua.org/Events/Events_travel.asp).

### **SATURDAY, JUNE 26:**

**14TH ANNUAL SODDY-DAISY, TN  
BUTTERFLY COUNT (See June meeting)**

## Around The Puddle

by Bill Haley

### Butterfly Watchers Experience Blizzards in May

Is there anyone out there who has not seen a Banded Hairstreak? Have you been out to look?

Jeff Basham put it well when he stated in a post to the Tennessee Butterflies listserv that "It seems every Banded Hairstreak in the world has emerged at the same time." Suddenly photos of Banded Hairstreaks began showing up on the list from all over Tennessee.

At the time I was stuck in a busy work week with no time for butterfly watching. I hoped the emergence wouldn't be over by the time I got some free time to spend in the field. Turns out I needn't have worried.

I called Susan Schott one morning last week and invited her to come with me in search of Golden-banded Skippers. We had to wait for the sun to reach the area we would hunt, but it wasn't hard to find a few, normally the highlight of the day.

However, another butterfly stole the show that day. We'd been there only a few minutes when I spied a swirling mass of 20-30 small butterflies near a sunlit spot only twenty feet away. A few feet further and there was another swirling vortex of the same size! Butterfly watchers have struggled to find a word for a congregation of butterflies. In this case, it seemed very fitting to call this a **blizzard of hairstreaks!**

If you are familiar with Banded Hairstreaks, they are very fractious, territorial cusses that just can't let anything pass without flying up to chase it around. They are also in a frenzy to find a mate, and this is another reason for this behavior. A typical blizzard includes other Banded Hairstreaks, but might also include other butterfly species that happen to wander by. A couple of days later on Raccoon Mountain, I watched as several Little Wood Satyrs, lazily flap-flopping along over the leafy forest floor were suddenly engulfed in a hairstreak blizzard and swept up for a few seconds. It was almost too much excitement for the laid back Little Wood Satyrs!

I hope you got some good looks at the blizzards of Banded. Now you'll know it when you see a different hairstreak. It was no trouble identifying six Striped Hairstreaks that day on Raccoon. They stood out as **NOT** Banded.

### "Invasion" of Hairstreaks

Here are a few shots taken in May of hairstreaks. While many were found, the most common by far was the Banded Hairstreak.





The photo above is a probable Hickory Hairstreak, but the jury may still be out among some butterfly experts. If it is not a Hickory, it is the most brightly marked Banded imaginable! Your editor votes Hickory.

#### WHAT IS THAT AT THE TOP OF PAGE ONE?

Could you guess what the photo on the upper left of page one is? It is the backside of a hairstreak, as it might be seen by a predator trying to sneak up on a meal. Note that it somewhat resembles two reddish orange eyes and some antennae, making the back of the butterfly look like the front! Thanks to Jeff Basham for this interesting shot!

#### Try the Tennessee Butterfly Listserve!

Want to know what other butterfly watchers are seeing in the Tennessee area? Join the Tennessee Butterfly listserve! To subscribe, go to the following web address and follow the instructions:

<http://www.freelists.org/list/tn-butterflies>  
Once you've joined, you can post messages to the list at: [tn-butterflies@freelists.org](mailto:tn-butterflies@freelists.org)

**Below:** May 7 Butterflies from North Hamilton County, Tennessee, as seen in photos by Jeff Basham.



Jeff visited several choice butterfly spots on Bakewell Mountain and Sale Creek on May 7. More photos follow on page 4, first column.



Hobomok Skipper  
*Poanes hobomok*



Baltimore  
Checkerspot  
*Euphydryas  
phaeton*



Reversed Roadside Skipper  
*Amblyscirtes reversa*

## New Tennessee Valley NABA Website!

<http://naba.org/chapters/nabatv/>

Dave Spicer asks if you have a photo gallery you would like others to see, to please send him the URL for it and he will add it to the Photos page.

We still need lots of help writing about places to go to see butterflies. Several have been put on the Places to Go page as an attempt to get this started. Please send Dave a write-up about places you know about. His e-mail address is: [dspicer@chattanooga.net](mailto:dspicer@chattanooga.net).

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## Join NABA

### the North American Butterfly Association

The North American Butterfly Association, NABA, was started in 1994 to popularize the study of butterflies through observation and identification through the 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 with 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 members 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.

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### BUTTERFLY COUNTS IN JULY

Join a butterfly count and see what all the fun is! You'll have two chances in June. Several more are coming up in July.

**Sat., July 10: Lookout Mountain, GA**

**Sat., July 17: Catoosa / Whitfield, GA**

**Sat., July 31: Stevenson, AL**

Photos from the past two NABA meetings



April plant swap



April plant swap



Tennessee River Gardens  
May meeting



Tennessee River Gardens

Thank you to Mike O'Brien for these wonderful photos from our well-attended April and May meetings.

**MAY SIGHTINGS:**

**April 30/May 1:** Butterfly list for BioBlitz, compiled from Bill Haley's list (4/30) and Carl Swafford's list (5/1), wasn't large, thanks to very windy conditions and cloudy skies. 23 species: Pipevine, Spicebush, Giant & E. Tiger Swallowtails, West Virginia White, Clouded & Orange Sulphur, Red-banded Hairstreak, Spring Azure, E. Tailed Blue, Pearl Crescent, Red Admiral, American Snout, Red-sp. Purple, Goatweed Leafwing, Carolina Satyr, Monarch, Silver-sp. Skipper, Juvenal's Duskywing, Wild Indigo Duskywing, Least Skipper, Zabulon Skipper, Sachem.

**May 3:** Mark Lawrence reported finding at least 20 Monarch caterpillars munching on his common milkweed plants at the Tennessee River Gardens.

**May 7:** J.N. Howard reported a Golden-banded Skipper and a Red Admiral from his property in Fiery Gizzard Cove in Marion County.

**May 18:** Received an e-mail from Jeff Basham stating, "In the last three days I've witnessed the largest emergence of Banded Hairstreaks that I've ever seen. They're everywhere. You go to the mountains and they're twirling through the shadows in their aerial dogfights. You go to Cracker Barrel and they're in the trees in the parking lot. Best of all, they're in my backyard." In the same message, Jeff says, "This may be the year for documenting the Hickory Hairstreak properly for Tennessee. The Hickories will probably be hanging with the Bandeds and of course, look very similar. The marks that we to look for that are subtly different than the Bandeds are:

1. A very large, tall light blue patch, extending a good ways into the hindwing.
  2. The postmedian band will have fairly strong and equal white edges on both sides.
  3. As the postmedian band approaches the leading edge of the forewing it should get a little wider.
  4. The same postmedian band, about 3 or 4 cells in from the leading edge, will be offset about a half a bands-width.
  5. The three median dashes will also have equally white edges and be about twice as wide as the Banded.
- There is so much variation among Bandeds that unless you've got one with at least 4 of the 5 field marks, it is probably not a serious Hickory candidate."

## More May Sightings:

**May 18:** Jeff Basham wrote, "Speaking of my backyard, this Question Mark sat on my van to get his picture taken and I was amazed to see such a rich color assortment"

(See photo below, which I feel is one of the most beautiful I've seen this year. - your Editor).



**May 21:** Jeff Basham noted there has been some talk about whether you will find Crossline Skippers in dry grass or wet, grassy areas. In Hamilton county they seem to be seen in both. There may be something to the theory that the first hatch prefers wet areas with a certain type of sedge, while the rest of the season's hatches, like a dry, grassy meadow. Saw several fresh Crosslines today in a large field nearby that is moist and loaded with the Eastern Rough Sedge, *Carex scabrata*. They were so fresh, it was difficult to see the postmedian spot band under all the golden yellow scales."



**May 23:** David Spicer reported: "Scott, Jon and I spent the afternoon in McMinn County today. The highlight of the day was finding 5 or 6 "Northern" Southern Oak Hairstreaks nectaring on the only privet bush on Starr Mountain. I probably wouldn't have looked very closely since in other areas I've never seen much of anything on privet. Maybe this was a popular place since it was the only nectar source around. The hairstreaks were sharing with azures, a Banded Hairstreak, an American Lady and later on our way out, a Zebra Swallowtail. Seen today: Silver-sp. Skipper, Hoary Edge, N. Cloudywing, Zebra Swallowtail, Spicebush Swallowtail, E. Tiger Swallowtail, Cabbage White, Orange Sulphur, Banded Hairstreak, Striped Hairstreak, N. Oak Hairstreak, azure sp. (most likely Summer), Am. Snout, Great Spangled Fritillary, Variegated Fritillary, E. Comma, Red Admiral, Question Mark, Am. Lady, Hackberry Emperor, Tawny Emperor, Little Wood Satyr, Clouded Skipper, Dun Skipper, Carolina Satyr, Little Glassywing, Southern Broken Dash, Northern Broken Dash.



**May 23:** David Trentley reported on a butterfly trip that he, Audrey Hoff, Mike Nelson, Susan Schott and Tommie Rogers had at Yuchi Wildlife Refuge at Smith Bend, near Watts Bar Dam in Rhea County. They found: Least Skipper, S. Broken-Dash, Sagem, Zabulon Skipper, Dun Skipper, Zebra Swallowtail, E. Tiger Swallowtail, Sleepy Orange, Cabbage White, azure sp., Am. Snout, Red-sp. Purple, Viceroy, Great Spangled Fritillary, Hackberry Emperor, Tawny Emperor, Red Admiral, Mourning Cloak, Question Mark, E. Comma, Pearl Crescent, Little Wood Satyr, Carolina Satyr, one unidentified skipper.

## May 20 Butterfly Outing

by Steve Stedman

I joined Julius Basham and friends (Ben Basham, his father, Stephen Johnson, David Hollie and Celeste Byles) yesterday to do some butterflying in the Greater Chattanooga area. I must say it was an exhilarating and intense seven hours, which saw my state butterfly list increase by 3, something that has not happened in one day in quite some time.

We began the day on Bakewell Mountain, looking for and finding several Reversed Roadside Skippers (lifer #1), along with a couple of nice Gorgone Checkerspots and a Mottled Duskywing (lifer #2) that Julius put us on to; he and David obtained nice photos of this skipper, and I hope one of them will share his photo with me so that this Hamilton County (BAMONA) record can be documented properly. We then headed north a bit and found at least 5 Baltimore Checkerspots. Leaving Hamilton County, we headed to Polk County, Tennessee's butterfly Mecca, and spend a goodly amount of time searching through a wad of 20+ hairstreaks at one site and about 40 at another site in Polk. I haven't done all the math yet, but I think I saw more hairstreaks yesterday than I have seen in my previous 8.5 years of butterflying. Julius has posted photos of the species already, but let me say my personal favorite was the "Northern" Southern (aka Oak) Hairstreak (lifer #3), which I really did not think I would see one of, and I didn't (!) because I saw at least FOUR of these little beauties, along with 8-10 Striped, and 40 or more Banded. "Northern" Southern/Oak Hairstreak has been on the TN butterfly list at BAMONA only a year (although Julius and friends have seen them in earlier years), so my impression before yesterday was that it is quite a rare species, but seeing FOUR in one day (and there were probably more) changed by impression considerably. (Let me hasten to say that my impression about the rarity of this hairstreak was already in the process of evolving because Allan Trentley found one in West Tennessee earlier this year, and David Hollie had one in Georgia close to TN just a week or two ago.)

Yesterday was one of the best days of seekin' 'flies that I have ever experienced, so many thanks and hats off to the five who shared their day with me. Special thanks to Ben Basham for riding with me all day and regaling me with all manner of butterfly (and bird) info.

*Editor's note: In the preceding story, you'll note that Steve Stedman made numerous references to Julius Basham. To clear up any confusion, this is the same person your editor calls Jeff.*

## Notes on the "Northern" Southern Oak Hairstreak

*The following, (and much of the other information for this newsletter) comes from the Tennessee Butterflies list serve. See page 3, top right on how to tap into this very valuable information source. The "Northern" Southern Oak Hairstreak has been discussed a lot. Some insight from Jeff Basham:*

The four subspecies are:

*Satyrium favonius favonius*, "the Southern"  
*Satyrium favonius ontario*, "the Northern"  
*Satyrium favonius autolytus*, "the Texas"  
*Satyrium favonius violae*, "the Colorado"

The classic field marks for "the Southern" are: brown base color, large orange interconnected marks on the outer hindwing, and a very conspicuous white dash up at the leading edge of the hindwing close to the body. Much like White M.

The marks for "the Northern" are: a much more gray brown base color, 1 or 2 small orange hindwing marks, and no white dash.

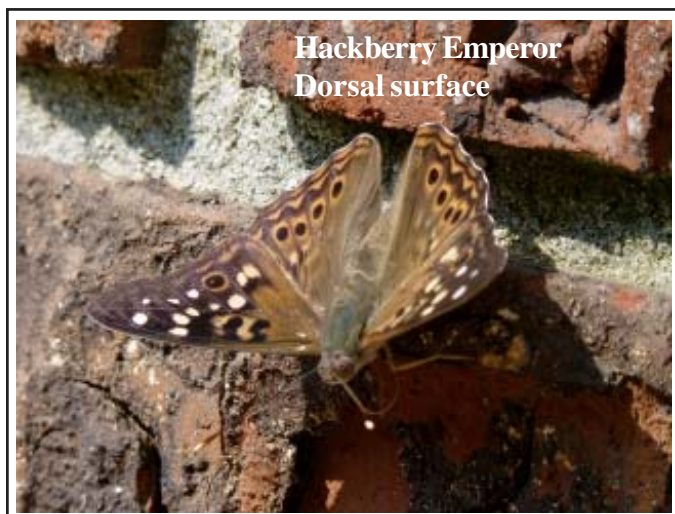
"The Texas" has a brown base color, orange hindwing marks that go all the way up the back of the hindwing and spill over into the forewing, and they DO have the forward White M-ish white dash. For more info on the Texas subspecies, [http://butterfliessofamerica.com/satyrium\\_favonius-autolytus\\_live1.htm](http://butterfliessofamerica.com/satyrium_favonius-autolytus_live1.htm). "The Texas should flash golden yellow on the inner wing when it flies, we'll have to watch for that.

After reviewing all the photos from everyone that has taken pictures of our Tennessee Oak Hairstreaks, I'm starting to get the feeling we may have two favonius subspecies floating around in Tennessee. ("The Northern" and "the Texas".)

What a great hairstreak year so far!

Julius Basham

### The Friendliest Butterfly?



Perhaps not everyone can get out to track down a “Northern” Oak Hairstreak, but luckily, there is one common butterfly that will track YOU down. In fact, the Hackberry Emperor, being a very friendly butterfly, may land on you and stay for awhile. As their name suggests, hackberry trees are the larval hostplant. Thanks to Mike O’Brien for these good shots of a Hackberry Emperor resting on his brickwork.

Speaking of butterflies that love hackberry, this American Snout also uses it for its larval hostplant. Photo by Jeff Basham.



### Masters of Camouflage!



The Eastern Comma has a cryptic pattern with ragged wing edges, so it is very well camouflaged.



This Lace-winged Roadside Skipper was the victim of another master of camouflage. An Ambush Bug hiding in the flower caught and ate the skipper.