



On The Wing

Newsletter of the Tennessee Valley Chapter,
North American Butterfly Association

August 2010

Volume 3, Number 4

Editor: Bill Haley, wgh@tnaqua.org

August Meeting Tuesday, August 24, 7:00PM

At the Home of Lisa Lemza
North of Soddy-Daisy

As with the July meeting, bring sandwiches or other finger foods, fruit, cookies, chips, dips or whatever you wish to share.

Lisa Lemza has again invited our NABA chapter to her home in Soddy-Daisy for the August meeting. It will be on Tues., August 24 at 7:00pm. Those of you who have been to Lisa's place know she has wonderful flowers attractive to both people and butterflies. Join us for this very informal meeting and tour Lisa's garden! Bring a finger food, dessert, chips, dips, or whatever you like and we'll have lots of good stuff to eat too.

DIRECTIONS From Chattanooga:

- Take Hwy. 27N towards Dayton;
- After crossing Soddy Lake the highway will split, stay right on Hwy. 27N going towards Dayton;
- After the split, take the 2nd right onto East Highwater Road at the light;
- 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 the hill and as the road Y's, Lisa's house is at the top of the hill on the right just past the Y. It's OK to block the little crossroad at the Y. (We'll try to have someone around to help with parking suggestions.) Please do not park in the neighbor's grass across from Lisa's place.

From Rhea/Bradley County:

- If coming from the east, take Hwy. 60 and turn left onto Hwy. 27 South in Dayton;
- Stay on Hwy. 27S through the Bakewell redlight;
- After the light and at the top of a long hill you'll see another traffic light, turn left onto East Highwater Road. Follow directions above from here.

AUGUST FIELD TRIP/COUNT:

**TUESDAY, AUG. 3: SODDY-DAISY
COUNT CIRCLE AREA**

MEET: 9:30AM at the old Soddy-Daisy WalMart parking lot. **DIRECTIONS:** From Chattanooga, take Hwy. 27N. Take the Sequoyah Road exit and turn right. Road T's into Old Dayton Pike in less than a mile. Continue straight into old WalMart parking lot (you'll see Kentucky Fried Chicken on the right, Subway on the left). We'll park right behind Subway. For more info contact Bill Haley (info below.) We have never done a NABA fall seasonal count in the Soddy-Daisy circle. Whatever we find on this field trip may be turned in to NABA as one. Join us!

Mark Your Calendar!

Last Butterfly Count of 2010

Butterflies of *all levels* are welcome to participate. The Tennessee River Gorge fall seasonal count is our last scheduled NABA count of 2010. Come prepared! Dress for the weather, Bring \$3 NABA fee, hat, sunblock, binoculars, snacks and plenty of fluids. We will likely walk through overgrown, weedy fields. Some briars and poison ivy are almost a certainty, so long pants and bug spray are recommended.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4:

**3RD ANNUAL TENNESSEE RIVER GORGE
FALL SEASONAL BUTTERFLY COUNT**

MEET: 9:30AM at the parking lot of the Blue Blazes Trail on Moccasin Bend Road. **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. We'll start at the area around Blue Blazes Trail and the old radio-control airplane field on Moccasin Bend, then visit several other areas. Bill would love to split up the group for maximum coverage of the count circle, so please let him know if you can survey other areas. The 15 mile diameter count circle extends all the way from Annicola Highway on the circle's eastern edge to Ketner's Mill in the Sequatchie Valley on the western edge, and from Red Bank in the north to Raccoon Mountain and Hwy. 41 in the south.

Around The Puddle

by Bill Haley

Late-Summer Bounty

The summer has flown by! I'm still having trouble wrapping my mind around school registration on August 4th, with the school year close behind. When I was growing up, we still had another month of summer break remaining in early August. Thank goodness the butterfly year hasn't sped up at the same pace. We still have a couple or three good months to enjoy our butterflies.

August is prime time for butterfly watching, featuring plenty of butterflies and enough species variety to please even the casual gardener. Suddenly, it seems butterflies are everywhere you look.

Falcate Orangetips, Spring Azures and West Virginia Whites, early spring dainties that we savored one by one as they emerged from the slowly-greening woods and roadsides in March, are now a distant memory. Those first ephemeral beauties of springtime are eons removed from the blazing hot dog days, lush greenery and rampant explosion of late summer lepidoptera. For me this time of year is characterized by the sunny, fiery hues of Sleepy Oranges, Gulf Fritillaries, American Ladies and yes.....Fiery Skippers.

If you have zinnias, lantana or butterfly bush (to name but a few attractive nectar plants) in your yard, you will have butterflies. If you have planned your butterfly garden properly, you should also have some things that are planted with the idea that they will be devoured by hungry caterpillars. Always remember that favored hostplants are as important for attracting butterflies as plants that provide sweet nectar.

Since the Sleepy Orange and Cloudless Sulphur are two of the most numerous of late summer butterflies, I've provided a couple of different species of sennae in my yard. I know it won't be long before I find their green, well-camouflaged larvae munching away on these plants. At one time late last August I counted 19 Sleepy Orange chrysalids on or around my sennae. In fact, they ate it down to the ground. That's OK. It came back this year to greet this summer's Sleepy Oranges.

Our Tennessee River Gorge fall seasonal butterfly count will be held on Saturday, Sept. 4. If you have been unable to get out and enjoy a day of butterfly counting, this may be your last chance this summer. The butterflies will be waiting, so don't let them down. Join us for a day in the field!

LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN, GA COUNT TOTAL

Bill Haley, count compiler, wants to thank all who helped count butterflies at the 11th annual Lookout Mountain, GA butterfly count on Sat., July 10. We had a good turnout! Participants were: Bill Haley, Harold Birch, Tommie Rogers, Melanie Bergstrom, Libby Wolfe, Julia Gregory, Nancy Williams, David Spicer and Scott Spicer. These folks split up into two parties to help cover the count circle and they found butterflies in good numbers. Temperatures ranged from 81-90 F and scattered clouds provided occasional shade to keep everyone from getting too warm. 15 species of skippers were found, up substantially from the Soddy-Daisy count two weeks before. The 39 Silvery Checkerspots are the most we've ever found on a count in the 16 years we've been doing them in this area. We also had good numbers of Sachems (253), Eastern Tailed-Blues (203), Silver-spotted Skipper (189) and Common Buckeye (117).

SPECIES FOUND AND NUMBERS:

Pipevine Swallowtail 4, Black Sw. 1, E. Tiger Sw. 6, Spicebush Sw. 13, Cabbage White 14, Clouded Sulphur 1, Orange Su. 23, Cloudless Su. 2, Sleepy Orange 7, Gray Hairstreak 17, E. Tailed Blue 209, Summer Azure 9, Am. Snout 8, Variegated Fritillary 10, Great Spangled Fr. 5, Silvery Checkerspot 39, Pearl Crescent 38, Question Mark 1, Am. Lady 2, Red Admiral 2, Common Buckeye 117, Red-sp. Purple 5, Viceroy 1, Hackberry Emperor 16, Southern Pearly-Eye 1, Carolina Satyr 2, Common Wood Nymph 3, Monarch 1 Silver-sp. Skipper 181, Hoary Edge 8, N. Cloudywing 1, S. Cloudywing 3, Hayhurst's Scallopwing 1, Horace's Duskywing 1, Common Checkered Sk. 7, Swarthy Sk. 5, Clouded Sk. 3, Least Skipper 12, Fiery Sk. 6, Sagemaster 253, Hobomok Sk. 1, Crossline Sk. 11, N. Broken-Dash 2, Little Glassywing 5, Sagemaster 253, Dun Sk. 6, Lacewinged Roadside Sk. 1.

Total: 44 species, 1095 individuals

Common Checkered Skipper

Pyrgus communis



Photo by Tommie Rogers

CATOOSA-WHITFIELD CO., GA COUNT TOTAL

Seven people participated in the 8th annual Catoosa-Whitfield Co., GA butterfly count; Melanie Bergstrom, Harold Birch, Bill Haley, Susan Schott, David Spicer, Scott Spicer and Libby Wolfe. Although much of the day was overcast, some sunlight filtered through and temperatures ranged from 79-88 F so butterfly activity was heavy and constant all day long. Good finds were American Copper, Hayhurst's Scallopwing and Common Sootywing. The large numbers of Fiery Skipper (69), Red Admiral (16), Gray Hairstreak (33) and Variegated Fritillary (65) are all noteworthy.

Just so you don't think butterflies are all we see on these counts, the birders in Bill Haley's group were treated to a most extraordinary sighting. We made our first stop, just beginning the butterfly day, and were not "on task" quite yet. Someone pointed out a soaring Red-tailed Hawk not far away. A few seconds later an Eastern Kingbird flew up to the hawk and landed on it's back! The kingbird, obviously with thoughts of "riding the bull the whole eight seconds", held on and actually rode the hawk's back for almost a minute! It was never observed to peck at the hawk and the Red-tail really didn't seem to be overly bothered. After a thrilling bare-back hawk ride, the kingbird flew off and the Red-tail continued to circle, none the worse for wear. Later on we saw a family of Eastern Kingbirds on a nearby tree. The hawk ride was just a way of letting the larger bird know the parent kingbirds were aware it was there and were keeping a sharp lookout for any funny business.

Harold Birch also spotted a Red-headed Woodpecker on a dead tree in a nearby pasture, and Bill saw two Brown-headed Nuthatches in a cedar tree in the same field. A nearby Mockingbird did a great Whiporwill imitation too. A good bird and butterfly day!

SPECIES FOUND AND NUMBERS:

Pipevine Swallowtail 1, Black Sw. 2, E. Tiger Sw. 28, Spicebush Sw. 16, Checkered White 1, Cabbage White 10, Clouded Sulphur 3, Orange Su. 64, Cloudless Su. 9, Little Yellow 11, Sleepy Orange 12, American Copper 2, Gray Hairstreak 33, E. Tailed Blue 153, Summer Azure 3, American Snout 1, Variegated Fritillary 65, Great Spangled Fr. 5, Silvery Checkerspot 14, Pearl Crescent 161, Question Mark 1, Red Admiral 16, Common Buckeye 121, Red-sp. Purple 5, Viceroy 5, Hackberry Emperor 9, Tawny Emp. 1, N. Pearly-Eye 1, Carolina Satyr 58, Common Wood Nymph 3, Silver-sp. Skipper 51, Hoary Edge 4, S. Cloudywing 14, Confused Cloudywing 1, Hayhurst's Scallopwing 2, Comm. Checkered Skipper 10, Comm. Sootywing 6, Swarthy Sk. 12, Clouded Sk. 6, Least Sk. 4, Fiery Sk. 69, N. Broken-Dash 2, Little Glassywing 4, Sachem 239, Delaware Sk. 1, Dun Sk. 8, Ocola Sk. 2.
Total: 47 species, 1249 individuals.



Mr. Eastern Kingbird
 2010 Bareback Hawk
 Riding Champion!



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**Find Out More About Butterflies
 on the Tennessee Butterfly Listserve**

Do you want to know what other butterfly watchers are seeing in the Tennessee area or to learn more about our local butterflies? Join the Tennessee Butterfly listserv!

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**



Join NABA

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.



Gray Hairstreaks have been quite abundant this summer. Their hostplants are extremely varied, so they are a generalist species, not tied to one species of plant to lay their eggs on. Caterpillars eat flowers, fruits/seeds and sometimes young leaves of legumes, mallow and several other plants and are sometimes considered a pest in cotton or bean fields. Of interest, their caterpillars are reported to be ant tended.



Little Butterfly, Big Excitement! Whenever this tiny spread-winged skipper, the Hayhurst's Scallopwing, shows up for a count it causes big excitement. This year the somewhat uncommon little butterfly made appearances at both the Lookout Mountain and Catoosa-Whitfield Co., Ga butterfly counts.

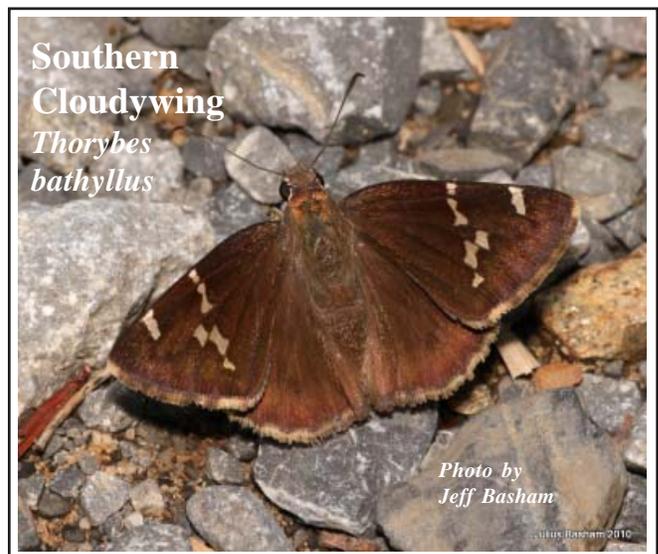


Camouflage Expert. Mike O'Brien spotted this caterpillar on his bee balm recently. This larva of an Emerald Moth uses small bits of dried flowers, which it sticks on it's back as camouflage to make it harder to see. Bill Haley has seen them on zinnia, black-eyed susan and bur marigold blooms as well, so they feed on a variety of garden flowers.



Tiger Swallowtail color forms: Pictured are the two color phases of the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail. The dark phase is always a female, yet some females also come in the light form. On the bottom photo, you can easily see the tiger stripes on the ventral (underside) of the dark form. Mike O'Brien snapped these shots at his place in Valley Head, Alabama.

Cloudywing Conundrum! *Are We Confused Yet?*



Jeff Basham, *tn-butterflies list*, 7/12/10:

“Every now and again we get lucky to see all three species of Eastern cloudywings in a single day in the Chattanooga area. This wonderful occurrence has only happened in three local places that I am aware of, in the past ten years. One cloudywing site is in Hamilton County, the other two in Polk. The only similar conditions that I am smart enough to recognize at all three sites, is the presence of sandy soil and the presence of deciduous forest nearby.”

Following are ID tips from Jeff to sort the cloudywings out.

1. White face, throat and eye-ring (Southern and Confused). Dark face, throat and no eye-ring (Northern).
2. Size of white mid-forewing marks. Large and bold (Southern). Small to absent (Confused and Northern). Somewhat variable.

3. Width and color of fringe. Wide and light (Southern). Brown, tan or buffy (Confused and Northern).

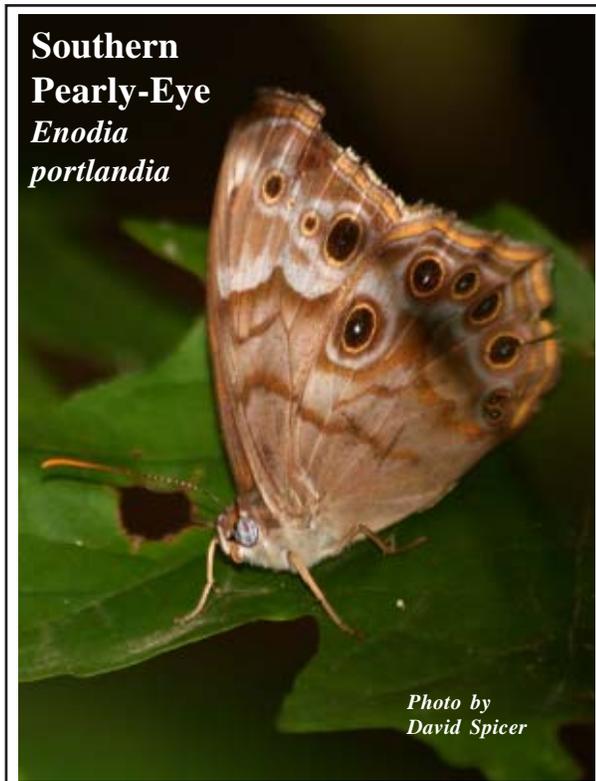
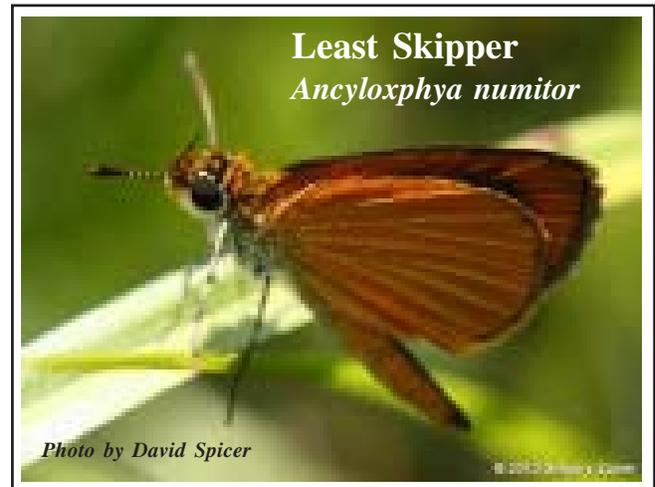
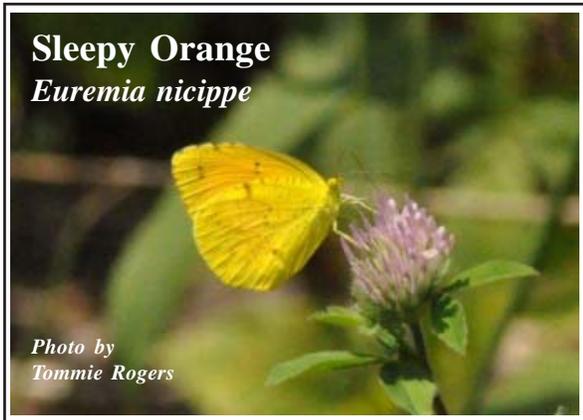
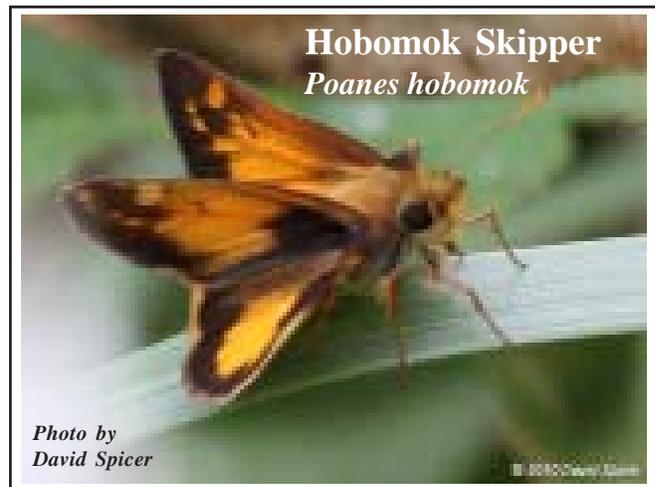
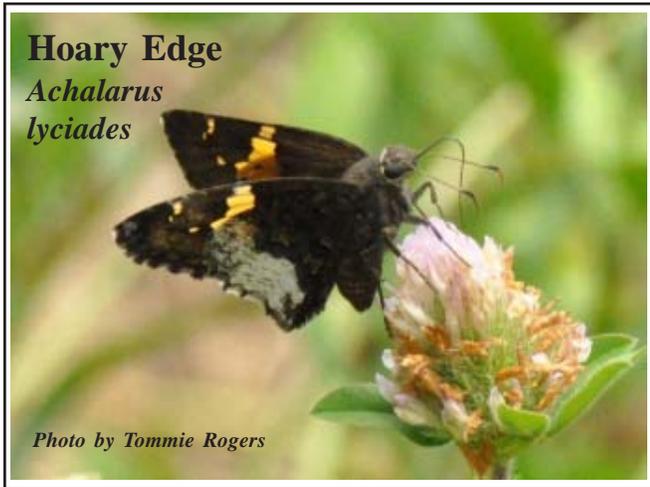
4. Wrist bracelet marks. All four in alignment (Southern and rarely Northern). Fourth mark offset (Southern, Confused and Northern - variable), but to be a Confused, you need the offset.

5. White mark at bend in antenna club (Southern) - somewhat reliable. Absent in (Confused and Northern). Be careful when studying flash photos as the flash can cause this mark when it really wasn't there.

6. Sandy soil in area. Seems more important for Confused.
7. Amount of frosting on wings is an unreliable field mark.

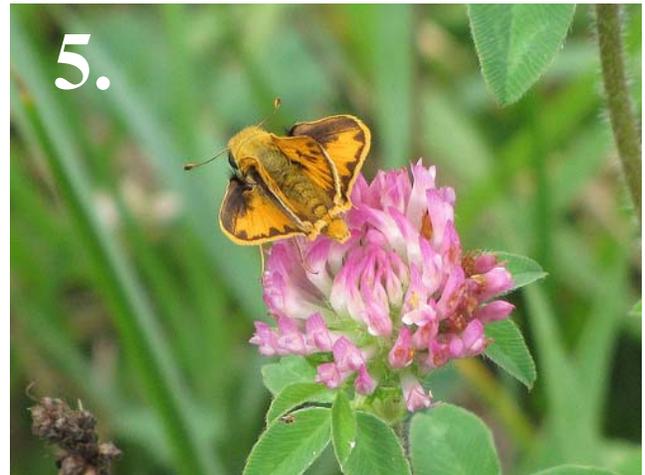
Jeff concludes, “Even with these basic guidelines, individuals are still highly variable, and each successive brood of the season has different characteristics. Good luck.”

Butterfly Photos from the Lookout Mountain, GA Count, Saturday, July 10, 2010



This year's Lookout Mountain count will be remembered as the "Silvery Checkerspot count". We found 39, which is well above any previous count. Butterflies of the East Coast states they "tend to be local and rather sparse", and adds they are "seemingly adaptable, but nonetheless declining."

Butterfly Photos from the Catoosa-Whitfield, GA Count, Saturday, July 17, 2010



All photos this page by Susan Schott

Photo key:

1. **Gray Hairstreak**, *Strymon melinus* (top), **Eastern Tailed-Blue**, *Everes comyntas* (bottom). 2. **Common Sootywing**, *Pholisora catullus*. 3. **Viceroy**, *Limenitis archippus*. 4. **Carolina Satyr**, *Hermeuptychia sosybius*. 5. **Fiery Skipper**, *Hylephila phyleus* (male, dorsal view). 6. **Fiery Skipper**, *Hylephila phyleus* (male, view from side).

Why do all these butterflies look so similar?



It all starts with the Pipevine Swallowtail! Mimicry is common among swallowtails, thus the very similar overall black color with blue edging that you'll note on all these butterflies. The Pipevine Swallowtail's larval hostplant, pipevine, is toxic. Caterpillars save toxic alkaloids and these chemicals persist in the adult body and wings, eggs and pupae, making them very distasteful. This provides some protection from predators for at least six other mimic butterfly species, including two nymphalids, the female Diana and the Red-spotted Purple.

