



Gulf Fritillary caterpillar

Photo by Susan Schott

On The Wing

Newsletter of the Tennessee Valley Chapter,
North American Butterfly Association

October 2010

Volume 4, Number 5

Editor: Bill Haley, wgh@tnaqua.org

No Monthly NABA Meetings October-January

During the cooler fall and winter months, our club will not have monthly meetings. We will start regular meetings again in February 2011. You will continue to receive monthly newsletters from the Tennessee Valley NABA Chapter, as well as regular publications from the North American Butterfly Association.

.....

1st Annual Lookout Mountain, GA Fall Seasonal Count Totals

Bill Haley, Harold Birch and Susan Schott conducted the first fall seasonal count in the Lookout Mountain, Georgia count circle on Thursday, Sept. 2 from 10:00-4:30. Temperatures ranged from 77-96F, and the sun was out all day. The day's totals follow:

Pipevine Swallowtail 13, Black Sw. 2, Spicebush Sw. 8, E. Tiger Sw. 11, Giant Sw. 1, Orange Sulphur 2, Cloudless Su. 242, Little Yellow 30, Sleepy Orange 34, Gray Hairstreak 2, Red-banded Ha. 2, E. Tailed Blue 102, Summer Azure 8, Am. Snout 4, Gulf Fritillary 27, Variegated Fr. 24, Great Spangled Fr. 5, Silvery Checkerspot 5, Pearl Crescent 83, Question Mark 1, Am. Lady 3, Red Admiral 1, Common Buckeye 427, Red-sp. Purple 12, Hackberry Emperor 6, Tawny Emp. 7, S. Pearly-Eye 1, Carolina Satyr 22, Appalachian Brown 3, Comm. Wood Nymph 2, Monarch 19, Silver-sp. Skipper 1, Comm. Checkered Sk. 7, Comm. Sootywing 1, Clouded Sk. 17, Least Sk. 26, Fiery Sk. 5, Tawny-edged Sk. 1, Crossline Sk. 2, S. Broken-Dash 1, N. Broken-Dash 1, Little Glassywing 1, Sachus 147, Zabulon Sk. 5, Dun Sk. 1. **Immatures:** 1 Question Mark egg (they saw female oviposit on elm leaf); 1 Question Mark caterpillar on elm, 1 Variegated Fritillary caterpillar on kudzu (preparing to pupate), 1 Common Buckeye chrysalis. **46 species, 1325 individuals.**

Lookout Mountain, GA Count Good Finds



Photo by Susan Schott

What appears to be a very plain butterfly generated some excitement when Bill Haley spotted this Appalachian Brown at a site on Lookout Mountain. This is an old strip mine area with a small stream running through the woods. It is a stop that always seems to provide some good species, and the only place within that count circle where Appalachian Brown has been found. Bill, Susan and Harold eventually found 3 individuals there, the only Appalachian Browns located on any of the eight counts Bill conducted this summer.

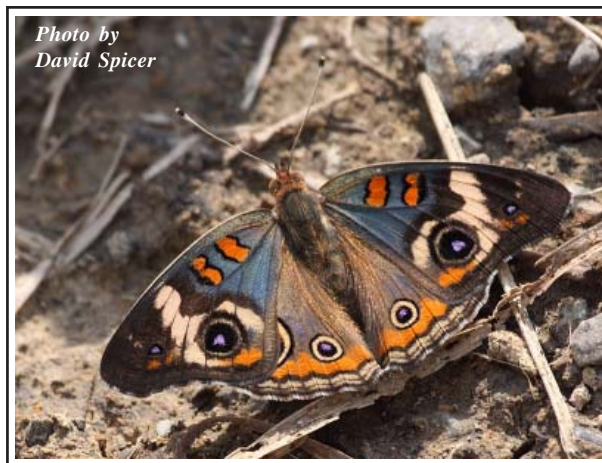


Photo by David Spicer

The summer of 2010 will probably be remembered as the "year of the Common Buckeye". They were the most abundant species on counts late in the season.

Around The Puddle

by Bill Haley

Fairwell Summer!

I am always a little sad to see another summer gone by. Thankfully for us butterfly enthusiasts, it is a gradual change from summer to fall. Despite the advent of cooler weather, we will still have some warm spells into October when the butterflies continue to flit about looking for the last blooms of the year. Enjoy them while you can!

On October first, I had programs at Calvin Donaldson Elementary. It was a warm, sunny day and I had an hour between my 11:00 and 1:00 program, so I decided to walk to Popeye's Chicken on South Broad to get a bite to eat. Now this area isn't exactly what you would envision as a good butterflying locale, but upon spotting my first butterfly I decided to make an impromptu count. I found 1 Orange Sulphur, 3 Cloudless Sulphur, 1 Gray Hairstreak, 1 Pearl Crescent, 1 Variegated Fritillary, 3 Gulf Fritillary, 1 Hackberry Emperor, 1 Red-spotted Purple, 1 Monarch, 1 Common Checkered Skipper, 2 Sachem, and 1 Dun Skipper. Those 12 species, in marginal habitat, proved that butterfly season doesn't end just because the calendar page flips to October.

Spring butterfly watching wasn't quite as productive this year and we got off to a somewhat slow start. The one scheduled spring seasonal count in early April was not held due to very cool, rainy weather. We never did manage to get it in, which means that we missed some spring-only species on our overall 2010 count total of 74 species found. The butterflies finally got going in early summer and we saw a gradual increase to very good numbers. Several times I heard the statement that "they are everywhere!" The very hot, dry dog days of late summer, continuing through September, featured excellent butterfly watching around our area.

For the first time I managed to conduct a fall seasonal count in the Soddy-Daisy count circle. This was done Tuesday, August 3rd. It was a 100% sunny day with a heat index that topped out at 107 F. Despite the heat, we ended with a high season total for all my counts of 53 species. This somewhat made up for our count in this circle on June 26 which tallied only 32 species, our summer's low total.

Because I knew the butterflying would be terrific, I scheduled the first fall seasonal count in the Lookout Mountain, Georgia circle also. It yielded 46 species. If you didn't help with any count this year, there will be opportunities in 2011.

Tennessee River Gorge, TN Fall Seasonal Count Totals

Seven people - David Spicer, Scott Spicer, Harold Birch, Susan Schott, Mary Randles, Tommie Rogers and Bill Haley, conducted the fall seasonal count in the Tennessee River Gorge circle on Saturday, Sept. 4. Temperature was a very comfortable 67-83 F and it was sunny all day, with a 5-10 MPH breeze. Lots of butterflies were in evidence. Totals follow:

SPECIES FOUND AND NUMBERS:

Pipevine Swallowtail 42, Black Sw. 2, Spicebush Sw. 10, E. Tiger Sw. 14, Giant Sw. 3, Orange Sulphur 1, Cloudless Su. 67, Little Yellow 36, Sleepy Orange 31, Gray Hairstreak 25, Red-banded Ha. 10, E. Tailed Blue 122, Summer Azure 6, Gulf Fritillary 43, Variegated Fr. 7, Diana Fr. 2, Gr. Spangled Fr. 9, Pearl Crescent 128, Question Mark 1, E. Comma 1, American Lady 1, Red Admiral 1, Comm. Buckeye 321, Red-spotted Purple 18, Hackberry Emperor 27, Tawny Emp. 6, N. Pearly-Eye 1, Creole Pearly-Eye 1, Gemmed Satyr 1, Carolina Satyr 68, Comm. Wood Nymph 4, Monarch 25, Silver-sp. Skipper 11, S. Cloudywing 1, Horace's Duskywing 1, Wild Indigo Du. 7, Comm. Checkered Sk. 6, Clouded Sk. 9, Least Sk. 1, Fiery Sk. 17, Tawny-edged Sk. 1, Crossline Sk. 4, N. Broken-Dash 2, Sachem 93, Delaware Sk. 1, Dun Sk. 2, Lace-winged Roadside Sk. 6. **Immatures:** Black Swallowtail (1 egg, female observed ovipositing on Queen Ann's Lace), Spicebush Swallowtail (1 caterpillar on spicebush), Pipevine Swallowtail (3 caterpillars on Dutchman's Pipevine), Sleepy Orange (12 caterpillars on 2 species of senna, American and sicklepod), Gulf Fritillary (7 caterpillars on passionvine), Cloudless Sulphur (1 caterpillar on sicklepod senna).

Total: 48 species, 1193 individuals.



FALL MONARCH SIGHTINGS:

While Monarchs had a rough winter in Mexico last year, they seem to have done very well on the breeding grounds in Eastern North America this summer.

Sept. 28: Jim Wilkerson reported many Monarchs flying very high over the Soddy Mountain hawk lookout, near Soddy-Daisy. He also counted 2401 Broad-winged Hawks, 10 Bald Eagles, 1 Peregrine Falcon and several other migrating raptors that day.

Oct. 1: Tommie Rogers reported a steady stream of Monarchs migrating south along the line between the sandy beach and the sea grass dunes at Isle of Palms, South Carolina.

Oct. 8: Mike O'Brien, on a visit to his daughter's home, saw migrating Monarchs by the hundreds at Seagrove Beach, Florida near Panama City.

Brazilian Skipper



Photo by
Jeff Basham

Julius Basham 2010

Jeff Basham, who seems to specialize in discovering unusual species for this area, found this Brazilian Skipper in Polk County on August 29, 2010. These large skippers are usually considered a tropical species, and are uncommon in Tennessee. They use the canna as a host plant, so next summer keep an eye out for them if you have canna in your yard or know someone who has a large planting on their property. It is unclear if the Brazilian Skipper is actually able to reproduce in Tennessee or if eggs, caterpillars or pupae are brought into our state with nursery shipments of cannas from more southern areas. Note the extremely long proboscis on this butterfly! It could certainly feed on very deep trumpet-shaped blooms.

Clouded Skipper
Lerema accius



Photo by
Tommie Rogers

On September 9, Tommie Rogers got this great shot of a mated pair of Clouded Skippers. Note that they both have very distinct markings and appear very fresh.

REPORT YOUR LATE FALL AND WINTER BUTTERFLY RECORDS!


Please remember to send in any butterfly sightings, especially from November into the winter, to your editor, Bill Haley, wgh@tnaqua.org.

.....
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

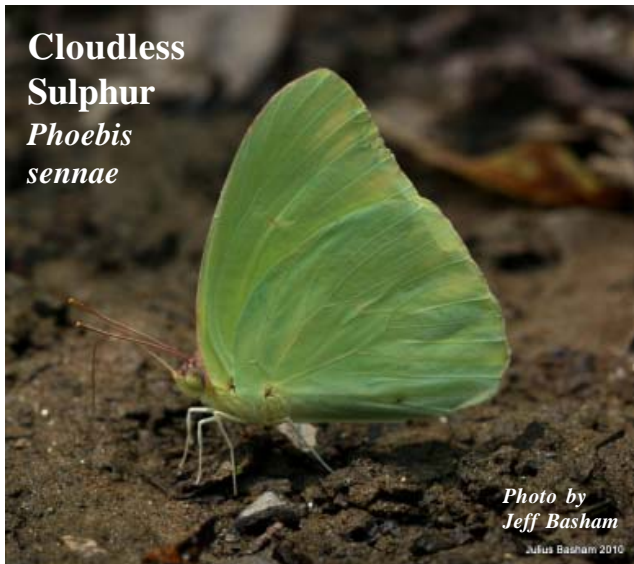


Do You Love Butterflies?
Join NABA
North American Butterfly Association

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.



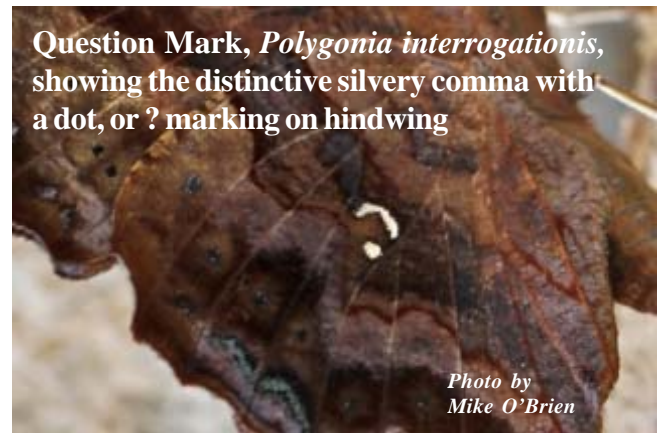
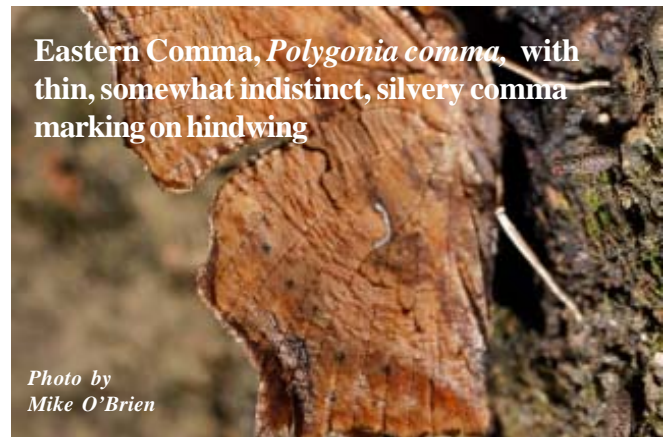
Get out the field guide! Cloudless Sulphur: Which one is male, which one is female?



WHAT SPECIES? In the next column, you can see comparisons between the Eastern Comma and the Question Mark with wings closed. How about when the wings are open? Which one is this? Hint: It lacks a dark punctuation mark (dash) that the other has.

A Question of Punctuation

To reliably identify a couple of familiar Nymphalid butterflies in this area when the wings are closed, (as they are much of the time), you should look for the punctuation marks. Awhile back, Mike O'Brien sent close-up photos of both the Eastern Comma and the Question Mark. Their attractive deeply cut, irregular wing edges make it clear why they are also known as anglewings.



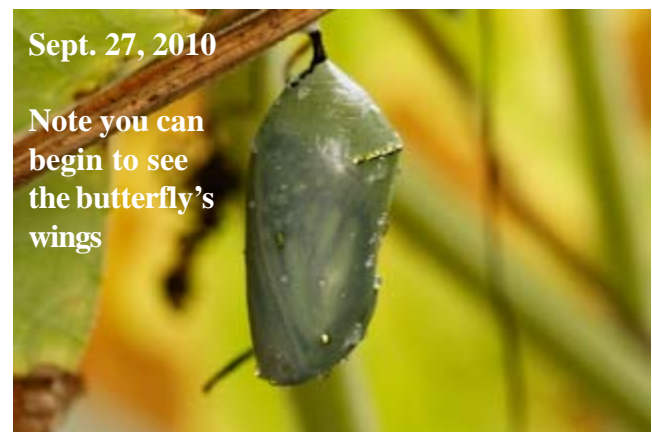
Comparison shot: Back in the spring David Hollie sent in a nice comparison photo he took of an Eastern Comma (left) and Question Mark (right).

Monarch life cycle

Mike O'Brien hosted a number of Monarch caterpillars on milkweed plants at this place near Valley Head, Alabama this year. Following is a photo montage. Thanks for the great series of photos Mike!



Mike took shots of the chrysalis every day, and towards the end, as it became clear that the new adult was due to emerge, Mike tried to get a shot every 10 minutes! Metamorphosis is one of many amazing transformations that take place in the natural world.



Sept. 29, 2010

Butterfly hangs from chrysalis. Body fluids and gravity help unfurl the wings.



Sept. 29, 2010

2 hours after emerging from chrysalis. Wings filled out and starting to harden.



Sept. 29, 2010, 2.5 hours

Sept. 29, 2010
Shortly before first flight.



Butterfly photos from fall seasonal counts

Thanks to Susan Schott for the following three, (and many other) butterfly photos from this season's NABA butterfly counts.

Common Checkered Skipper
Pyrgus communis



Crossline Skipper
Polites origenes



Diana Fritillary (female)
Speyeria diana



Monarch Migration: Tagged Monarch Found in Polk County!



Jeff Basham writes, “While out on a Butterfly Foray in Polk County last Saturday (Oct. 2), I happened upon a tagged Monarch nectaring on Goldenrod at the highest point of Chilhowee Mountain.”

“Evidently the University of Kansas instigated a Monarch tagging program back in the early ‘90’s called MonarchWatch.” He continues, “The purpose seems to be very similar to bird banding, to track migration routes and calculate life spans, etc.. Instead of a band around the leg, the Monarchs get a little round sticker, printed with all the tagging information, placed on the ventral wing. There have been over 11,000 tag recoveries through 2006, so there should be some decent data to mull over. It is available online at <http://www.monarchwatch.org/tagmig/recoveries.htm>.

A quick search of the MonarchWatch website reveals that there have only been three recoveries in Tennessee since the program was initiated, although it looks like several taggers have had their bugs recovered in Mexico. I guess this is a good time of year to check all Monarchs for tags. (Even check the grill of your car.)

I e-mailed all the pertinent information off to monarch@ku.edu and this was their reply:

Hello,

Thank you very much for reporting one of our tags! The purpose of our program is to track monarch butterflies

as they migrate south to Mexico. The tags help us estimate the size of the monarch population and also help scientists learn about the routes the monarchs take to Mexico. We have members that tag monarchs all over the country (east of the Rocky Mountains). Our taggers return their data sheets after they are done tagging and we enter the data in the computer. When a tag is spotted and reported to us, we use the tag code to retrieve the tagging information. Right now many people are still tagging so we cannot tell you where the tag you found was used. However, as soon as that information is available, we will post it in our database. (See earlier web address in this story). We currently have over 11,000 tag recoveries and all of these can be found in the database. You can also print your own reporter certificate from that site. We have included some information about our programs. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Thank you again for reporting a tag!

Sincerely,
MonarchWatch
monarch@ku.edu
<http://www.MonarchWatch.org>

Visit our online community forums at
<http://www.MonarchWatch.org/forums>

What’s involved in the tagging program?

Tag Selection - The purpose of the tagging is to associate the location of capture with the point of recovery for each butterfly. The data from these recaptures are used to determine the pathways taken by migrating monarchs, the influence of weather on the migration, the survival rate of the monarchs, etc. Each tagged butterfly must have a tag code (3 letters and 3 numbers) for this system to work. To insure they do, we create a series of tag numbers using numbers and the alphabet. Each year receives its own unique series. After we decide on a series of tag numbers, we send them to be printed with waterproof ink on polypopylene sheets that have special 3M adhesive on the back. The printed tags are placed on a backing form from which they can be easily removed. They are organized in groups of 25 consecutive numbers on sheets of 25 tags per sheet..

Butterfly Species found on 2010 Chattanooga area NABA counts

Total Species, All Counts - 74

Key to count: #1 TN River Gorge (summer - 50 species); #2 Soddy-Daisy, TN (summer - 32 species); #3 Lookout Mtn., GA (summer - 44 species); #4 Catoosa/Whitfield, GA (summer - 47 species); #5 Stevenson, AL (summer - 48 species); #6 Soddy-Daisy, TN (fall - 53 species); #7 Lookout Mtn., GA (fall - 46 species); #8 TN River Gorge, TN (fall - 48 species)

Species	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8
Pipevine Swallowtail	1	4	1	74	14	13	42	
Zebra Swallowtail	1							
Black Swallowtail		3	1	2	3	5	2	2
Giant Swallowtail					1		1	3
E. Tiger Swallowtail	9	6	28	63	26	11	14	
Spicebush Swallowtail	16	1	13	16	15	32	8	10
Checkered White				1	2	2	1	
Cabbage White	7	3	14	10		1		
Clouded Sulphur	4		1	3	1	6		
Orange Sulphur	19	11	23	64	23	43	2	1
Cloudless Sulphur	1	2	2	9	62	32	242	67
Little Yellow			2	11	2	15	30	36
Sleepy Orange	2	1	7	12	213	19	34	31
American Copper				2				
Coral Hairstreak	14							
Banded Hairstreak	83	2						
Striped Hairstreak	10							
Gray Hairstreak	6	5	17	33	28	4	2	25
Red-banded Hairstreak	1					2	2	10
Eastern Tailed Blue	75	43	209	153	113	68	102	122
'Summer' Spring Azure	13	2	9	3	9	16	8	6
American Snout	22	3	8	1	6	2	4	
Gulf Fritillary					14	2	27	43
Variiegated Fritillary	10		10	65	37	19	24	7
Diana Fritillary	9	3				4		2
Great Spangled Fritillary	115	14	5	5	7	7	5	9
Silvery checkerspot	2		39	14		2	5	
Pearl Crescent	293	125	38	161	116	67	83	128
Question Mark	7		1	1	4	2	1	1
Eastern Comma	1				2	1		1
Mourning Cloak	4							
American Lady	6	3	2			2	3	1
Painted Lady					1	1		
Red Admiral	5		2	16	22	1	1	1
Common Buckeye	7	2	117	121	133	43	427	321
Red-spotted Purple	11	15	5	5	3	10	12	18
Viceroy			1	5	6	2		1
Hackberry Emperor	2	16	9	9	3	6	27	
Tawny Emperor	7			1	3		7	6
Southern Pearly-Eye			1		1		1	
Northern Pearly-Eye				1	17	2		1
Creole Pearly-Eye	5							1
Appalachian Brown						3		
Gemmed Satyr					2	1		1
Carolina Satyr	2	14	43	58	13	4	22	68
Little Wood Satyr	31							
Common Wood Nymph		14	3	3		4	2	4
Monarch	3	8	1		10	13	19	25
Silver-Spotted Skipper	49		181	51	132	23	1	11
Hoary Edge	9		8	4	1	11		
Southern Cloudywing	1	1	3	14		2		1
Northern Cloudywing	14		1					
Confused Cloudywing				1		1		
Hayhurst's Scallopwing			2	2				
Horace's Duskywing		1	2		2	2		1
Wild Indigo Duskywing	12	23				33		7
Comm. Checkered Skipper			7	10	1		7	6
Common Sootywing			6	2		1		
Swarthy Skipper	2		5	12	1	3		
Clouded Skipper	1	2	3	6		1	16	9
Least Skipper	3	5	12	4	25	6	26	1
Fiery Skipper	1		6	69	21	5	5	17
Tawny-edged Skipper	11						1	1
Crossline Skipper	11				2		2	4
Southern Broken-Dash						3	1	
Northern Broken-Dash	2			2		4	1	2
Little Glassywing	5			4	5	2	1	
Sachem	1	146	253	239	11	31	147	93
Delaware Skipper				1	1			1
Hobomok Skipper			1					
Zabulon Skipper					5	4	5	2
Dun Skipper	18	1	6	8	7	14	1	
Lace-winged Roadside Sk.			1		1	2		6
Ocola Skipper				2				