



Photo by Jeff Basham

# On The Wing

Newsletter of the Tennessee Valley Chapter,  
North American Butterfly Association

April 2011

Volume 4, Number 12

Editor: Bill Haley, wgh@tnaqua.org

## April Meeting

Tuesday, April 26 - 7:00pm

Outdoor Chattanooga  
Plant Swap



Our April NABA meeting will be a plant swap. It will be at Outdoor Chattanooga, near Coolidge Park in North Chattanooga. If you have extra plants, seedlings or seeds, bring them to share with everyone!

The plants you bring do not have to be specifically butterfly-attracting flowers. Butterfly host plants or nectar plants are certainly welcome, and there will be some up for grabs, but please bring whatever you have. Begin potting up those extra plants! This is a chance to get new plants for your garden and to get rid of some you no longer have room for. The public is invited and we expect a good turnout, so plan to join us.

**WHERE DO WE MEET?** We will meet at Outdoor Chattanooga, near Coolidge Park on River Street. This is on the north side of the Tennessee River. Turn off Frazier Avenue towards the Chattanooga Theatre Center, then turn right on River Street. Outdoor Chattanooga is on the left just before you go under the Walnut Street Bridge.

You can park for free on the street, or park in one of the pay lots. Please be sure to pay, (only \$1-2), or you run the risk of getting a \$11 parking ticket!

*Mark Your Calendar and Join in the Fun.  
First Butterfly Count of 2011!*

## Saturday, April 16

Tennessee River Gorge

Spring Seasonal Butterfly Count

Meet: 9:30am Eastern at the Blue Blazes trail parking lot on Moccasin Bend. Leader: Bill Haley. For more info call (423) 785-4056 (W), (423) 756-4106 (H), or (423) 326-9248 (cell), or e-mail WGH@tnaqua.org.

Plan to come out and help with the first scheduled butterfly count of 2011. We'll explore the Tennessee River Gorge count circle, seeking whatever butterflies are to be found. This spring seasonal count will be the first of three counts done in this circle in 2011. Help document what is here in mid-April. If we have enough counters, we may split into groups to survey more of the count circle.

**As with all official NABA counts, there is a \$3 fee per counter, which goes to the North American Butterfly Association. Everyone who is taking part, even for a portion of the day, is expected to pay this fee.**

All levels of experience, from novice to veteran are welcome on any count. If you are not familiar enough with the butterflies to be confident about identification, you can still help. You will be accompanied by a more experienced observer who knows the butterflies. Mark your calendar now for a day in the field on Saturday, April 16, 2011. If you can't make it for the whole day, perhaps you can spend 2-3 hours with us. The butterflies seem to have gotten off to a great start this year and we are hoping for a nice, sunny day and lots to count.

Bill Haley will be leading a Tennessee Aquarium members program at the Pot Point Field Station in the Tennessee River Gorge as part of the count. This program will last from 2:00-4:00 and anyone who is already helping with the count is welcome to join him in the River Gorge.

## Spring Butterfly Sightings

*It seems that spring weather has arrived a bit sooner and the season is 2-3 weeks ahead of a year ago. There were so many reports coming in during the month of March and the first few days of April that it was hard to keep track. I am sure I've omitted some of the sightings I received, so I apologize in advance if your butterflies are left out.* - Editor

**3/12/11:** David Spicer walked part of Enterprise South Nature Park and saw: Falcate Orangetip, Spring Azure, American Snout, anglewing species.

**3/12/11:** Mike O'Brien spotted an Eastern Comma on his blooming weeping cherry tree.

**3/12/11:** Jeff Basham and Celeste Byles hiked a section of the Ben MacKaye Trail in Polk County, finding 8 species, including Brown Elfin, E. Pine Elfin, West VA White, Spring Azure and E. Comma.

**3/13/11:** Mike O'Brien saw Falcate Orangetip, E. Comma, Mourning Cloak, Question Mark and Spring Azure in his yard.

**3/13/11:** Spending 2 hours in Polk Co., Jeff Basham saw Zebra Swallowtail 1, E. Tiger Sw. 2, F. Orangetip 25 (all males), W. VA White 14, Sleepy Orange 1, Orange Sulphur 3, Henry's Elfin 23, Brown Elfin 8, Spring Azure 36, Variegated Fritillary 1, E. Comma 2 and Juvenal's Duskywing 1.

**3/13/11:** Tommie Rogers reported from Marion County: E. Tiger Swallowtail, West Virginia White, Spring Azure, E. Comma, Mourning Cloak.

**3/13/11:** Carl Swafford found Orange Sulphur, Spring Azure, Falcate Orangetip, and anglewing sp. in Apison, TN.

**3/14/11:** Mike O'Brien found a cool-season form (darker rust color on underside) Sleepy Orange.

**3/17/11:** David Spicer spent some time in McMinn County and saw: E. Tiger Sw., Clouded Sulphur, Orange Su., Variegated Fritillary (very small), Mourning Cloak, Sleepy Duskywing, Spring Azure, Falcate Orangetip, and Question Mark.

**3/17/11:** Jack Gentle saw several Goatweed Leafwings at Amnicola Marsh.

**3/17/11:** Mike O'Brien found a Henry's Elfin in his weeping cherry tree.

**3/17/11:** On a family trip east of Tellico Plains, TN, David Spicer reported: Zebra Swallowtail, Checkered White, W. VA White, Clouded Sulphur, Spring Azure, Mourning Cloak, E. Tiger Sw., E. Comma, Question Mark and American Snout.

**3/18/11:** Jeff Basham and Stephen Johnson found Common Buckeye 2, Sleepy Duskywing 2, and Brown Elfin 19, in Polk County.

**3/19/11:** Tommie Rogers reported from Hamilton Co.: Sleepy Orange, Falcate Orangetips (14), sulphurs and Spring Azure.

## Field Trip Leaders and Program Presenters Needed

The NABA Tennessee Valley chapter of has begun a new year of meetings and activities. We are looking for some programming ideas throughout the year. If you have thoughts or suggestions, please contact Bill Haley at [wgh@tnaqua.org](mailto:wgh@tnaqua.org) or (423) 326-9248 (cell), (423) 785-4056 (W) or (423) 756-4106 (H).

Last year we experimented with meeting at several member's homes, especially during the summer. This proved to be quite popular. Let Bill know if you'd consider hosting a monthly meeting at your place in 2011.

Any field trip leaders out there? Our members enjoy seeing butterflies "in the wild". If you have a favorite butterfly area, perhaps you could lead a trip. Please let Bill know. Step up and share your special spots!

### BIOBLITZ 2011: HELP NEEDED!

The BioBlitz at Reflection Riding will be held May 20-21, 2011. Someone is needed to survey butterflies both days and help with blacklighting Friday night. A butterfly walk leader on Saturday is needed also. Bill Haley, who usually does this, cannot help that weekend. Contact Julia Gregory, [jmg@tnaqua.org](mailto:jmg@tnaqua.org), or Bill Haley, [wgh@tnaqua.org](mailto:wgh@tnaqua.org).



Photo by Jeff Basham

Joining online is easy. Go to the NABA 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.

Anyone who joins NABA 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 Tennessee Valley 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.

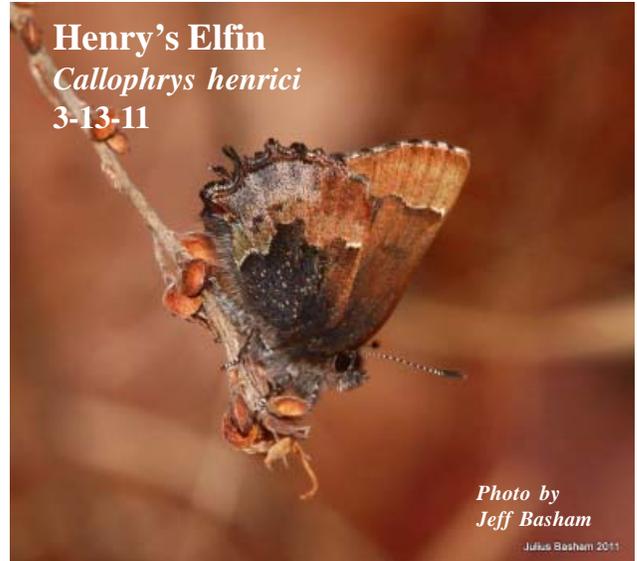
**Photo Gallery of Butterfly Sightings**  
*Thanks to all photographers!*

**American Snout**  
*Libytheana carinenta*  
3-12-11



*Photo by*  
*David Spicer*

**Henry's Elfin**  
*Callophrys henrici*  
3-13-11



*Photo by*  
*Jeff Basham*

Julius Basham 2011

**Brown Elfin**  
*Callophrys augustinus*  
3-13-11



*Photo by*  
*Jeff Basham*

Julius Basham 2011

**Goatweed  
Leafwing**  
*Anaea andria*  
3-17-11



*Photo by*  
*Jack Gentle*

J. Gentle, Jr.

**Falcate  
Orangetip**  
*Anthocharis midea*  
3-17-11



*Photo by*  
*Mike O'Brien*

**Eastern Tiger Swallowtail**  
*Papilio Glaucus*  
3-18-11



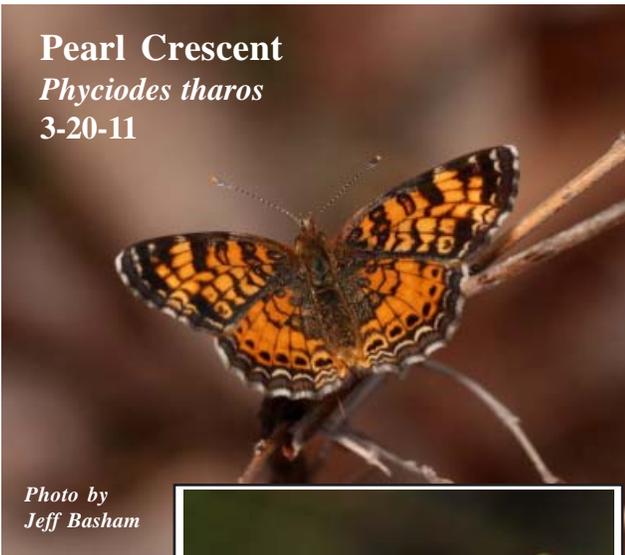
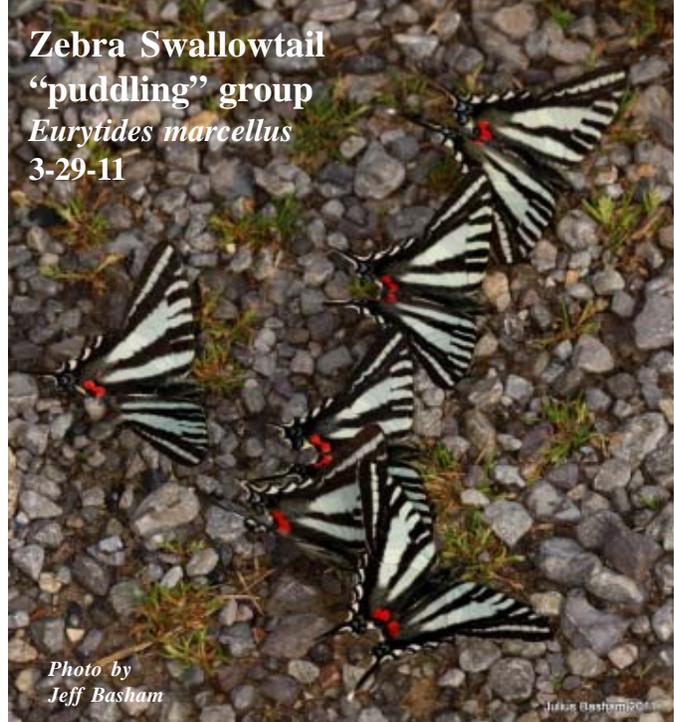
*Photo by*  
*Mike O'Brien*

**Spring Azures  
"puddling"**  
*Celastrina ladon*  
3-17-11



*Photo by*  
*David Spicer*

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**Minutes of March 22, 2011 Meeting, Tennessee Valley Chapter of NABA**

**Location:** Outdoor Chattanooga, near Coolidge Park on River Street.

**Present:**

Harold Birch	Mike O'Brien	Erik Stubsten	Daniella Chappell
Bill Haley	Donna Shelman	Olaf Stubsten	DJ Chappell
Susan Schott	Julius Basham	Lillie Stubsten	
Jennifer Taylor	Stephen Johnson	Dorothy Stubsten	
Nancy Williams			

President Bill Haley opened the meeting at 7:00 pm and announced upcoming trips:

April 16 - First field trip/butterfly count of the year will be at the Tennessee River Gorge count circle. We hope to see 30-40 species.

May 20-21 - There will be a 24-hour BioBlitz at the Chattanooga Nature Center/Reflection Riding. Help is needed.

May 14 - Joint field trip with Middle Tennessee Chapter will be held near Sparta to search for Baltimore Checkerspots.

Bill Haley presented a program using the **Handbook for Butterfly Watchers** by Robert Michael Pyle. Mr. Pyle is the founder of the Xerces Society, a conservation group which started the first butterfly counts. Robert Michael Pyle is also author of *Watching Washington Butterflies* and the Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Butterflies. Bill quoted excerpts from the first chapters of the **Handbook** on topics of: *Why Watch Butterflies?*, *Watching vs. Catching Butterflies*, and *How to Find Butterflies*. Bill included many images of butterflies, birds, flowers, and some familiar faces of the butterfly watchers from our field trips in his presentation. He stated that the **Handbook for Butterfly Watchers**, originally published in 1984, is still relevant for butterfly watchers today and would be a good addition to anyone's butterfly library.

Bill emphasized that we need program ideas for our meetings. The May meeting will feature Rita Venable on her new book, *Butterflies of Tennessee*. Our April meeting will be a plant swap, just like last year.

Following refreshments, the meeting adjourned approximately 8:15pm.

*Susan Schott, Secretary*

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**A Question About Commas:** Jeff Basham took a photo of an Eastern Comma (top) and Question Mark (bottom). When he got a shot of the Eastern Comma's underwing, it showed a comma variation - a comma with a period. (It looked like a question mark). It seems there is some variation in punctuation!



**Butterfly Sightings** (continued from pg. 3):

**3/20/11:** Jeff Basham noted that Henry's and Brown Elfin numbers seemed to be 3-5 times more than usual this year. When seen close up, they are exquisitely beautiful for "little brown jobs". He said the Brown Elfin has purple scales in the basal hindwing area while Henry's has some green flecking on the basal hindwing, which is difficult to see. He also found another beauty, a Juniper Hairstreak.

**3/22/11:** Jeff Basham stopped at a sunny hillside in Polk County and found two new species for 2011, 2 Cobweb Skippers, and 2 Dreamy Duskywings. he also found several very small Wild Indigo Duskywings and Variegated Fritillary (maybe 1/4-1/3 normal size.)

**3/24/11:** Susan Schott hiked the trails at Reflection Riding, finding 6 West Virginia Whites (some mating), both male and female Falcate Orangetips, a Mourning Cloak, and several Tiger Swallowtails, including a dark phase female.

**3/29/11:** Jeff Basham writes: "There was no more sun predicted for East Tennessee for the rest of the month. So with this in mind I took off for Polk at 2:00pm on Tuesday, hoping for some clear skies and warmth. There was exactly three hours of pure sunshine, but the temps stayed in the low 60's. I explored a previously unexplored power line cut near Greasy Creek. The first new bug that I came upon was a female Falcate Orangetip. She was meandering up the access road and had a little tangle with several butterfly species before I could get the first picture. The females usually hatch out a couple of weeks after the males begin to fly. I was reminded of how beautiful and delicate they appear with dark greenish-gray marbling on the underside. The dorsal forewing shows a strong hooked tip and the outer edges of the wing are checkered. And, of course, the forewing has the big black spot.

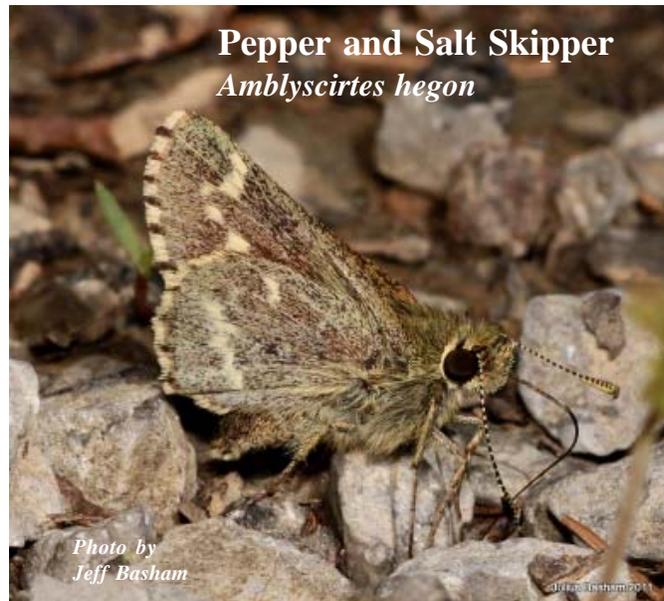
It was a little shocking to find a Mottled Duskywing out in March, but there it was. They definitely seem to be hill-toppers in the spring, and then later in the season can be found in lower areas. They are very fast and compact, and are in the medium size range when compared with outer duskywings. This little male was flying from one wild strawberry bloom to the next. Very fast.

Virtually all south and west-facing power line cut hillsides had large patches of Birdsfoot Violet. Most of those patches of flowers contained one or two Cobweb Skippers. They are small and very flushy.

It was good to see a group of Zebra Swallowtails enjoying a bit of second hand beer. And finally, after seeing many Eastern Tigers, I happened upon this large, pale Appalachian Tiger Swallowtail. It's a bit early, but it seems everything is a bit early this year."

**Eastern Tiger Swallowtail**

dark form female

*Papilio glaucus*Photo by  
Mike O'Brien**Pepper and Salt Skipper***Amblyscirtes hegon*Photo by  
Jeff Basham

The butterfly above, a **Great Purple Hairstreak**, *Atlides halesus*, was photographed by Mike O'Brien in his yard on April 4. It proved to be a new life butterfly for him and a welcome new addition to his growing yard list.