



On The Wing

Newsletter of the Tennessee Valley Chapter,
North American Butterfly Association

August 2011

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Editor: Bill Haley, wgh@tnaqua.org

**August Meeting
Tuesday, August 23
7:00pm**

Nancy Williams' home

1109 Radmoor Lane, in East Brainerd

**Bring sandwiches or other finger foods,
fruit, cookies, chips, dips or whatever
you wish to share and we'll have a feast!**

We have been invited to have our August meeting at the home of Nancy Williams in East Brainerd. She lives on 15 acres bordered by South Chickamauga Creek and the Concord Golf Course. Be sure to bring some goodies to share and we'll have fun eating and exploring Nancy's property. She has a spring-fed pond in case anyone wishes to fish.

DIRECTIONS FROM CHATTANOOGA:

- Take I-75 North;
- Take the East Brainerd Rd. East exit off I-75;
- You will pass the Baskin Robbins Ice Cream shop and Subway on the right, not far from the exit; Turn right at Concord Road, the next street (at Hullco Windows store);
- Follow Concord Rd. and turn right at Radmoor Drive, the second street you'll come to;
- Continue a very short distance and turn left onto Radmoor Lane;

At the end of Radmoor Lane you will come to a cul-de-sac, but keep going straight up the hill past three white houses on the left and Concord Golf Course on the right.

- Go through the gate and down the hill. Nancy's house sits on the right and everyone can park in the yard close to the house.

In the world of butterfly counting, the North American Butterfly Association views any counts done after July as fall seasonal counts. Bill has no August or September Saturdays open, so we are going to do the two August counts on Fridays! Come help us if you can. As always, there is a \$3.00 fee for NABA to help offset publication costs.

Friday, August 5

Soddy-Daisy, TN

Fall Seasonal Count

Meet: 9:30am behind Subway sandwich shop in Soddy-Daisy. **Leader: Bill Haley, (423) 326-9248 (cell), wgh@tnaqua.org.**

The weather will still feel like summer...HOT, so dress accordingly, keeping in mind we may wade through some weedy fields, possibly with some briars. Bring sunblock, hat, plenty of water and snacks. Wear comfortable sneakers or boots. Sandals, flip-flops or crocs are not the best idea. Of course, don't forget your binoculars! This is an all-day count, but participate only as long as you wish. Last year this fall count had the most species of any count in Tennessee. Come out and enjoy the late summer butterflies with Bill. He will have just returned from Arizona, so will have stories to tell.

DIRECTIONS FROM CHATTANOOGA:

- Take Hwy. 27 N to Soddy-Daisy;
- Take the Sequoyah Rd. exit, turn right;
- At second red light, (where road T's into Old Dayton Pike, go straight into the parking lot. You'll see the Subway on the left.

Friday, August 19

Tennessee River Gorge

Fall Seasonal Count

Meet: 9:30am at the parking lot at Blue Blazes Trail on Moccasin Bend. **Leader: Bill Haley (see contact info above.)**

If we have enough people we may split up to better cover the count circle. If only a few, we'll stick together. See above for proper dress and footwear, also for other things to bring.

Around The Puddle

by Bill Haley

**One-Two-Three-Four.
Have You Counted That
Butterfly Before?**

I've been conducting butterfly counts for NABA for the past 17 years. I wish I had a dollar for every time I've had someone stop along a country road asking me what I'm doing. They just aren't used to seeing a group of people with binoculars and cameras, searching not up in a tree like respectable bird watchers, but on the ground. Whoa! Now *that* is a form of insanity they haven't run across before!

A healthy percentage of those folks are Good Samaritan types, asking if we've had car trouble or if there is anything they can do to help us. Some are landowners who wonder what in the world a group of people with binoculars and clip board are doing looking at their property. Are we revenueurs or tax assessors? Many are people who live in the neighborhood that can't contain their curiosity. They have to ask what in the world we are doing, otherwise it would be an unsolved puzzle to them.

Sometimes it turns out to be a person who is genuinely interested in butterflies and routinely watches them in their yard. If your conversation lasts very long, one question will often come up. "How do you know you haven't counted the same butterfly already?"

The simple truth is, we don't. We try to count carefully and conservatively, but we probably don't always succeed. Butterflies have wings. Most individuals look very similar to others of the same species. Some stay put in one area, some are very mobile. By moving to different areas within a count circle throughout the day, you can be pretty sure that double counting doesn't happen if distances between stops are large enough. However, in a large field, an Eastern Tiger Swallowtail can cover a lot of ground. If you don't notice it flying across the field, it may be counted again. There are almost surely a few individuals on any count who are counted more than once.

Butterfly counters are not perfect. Sometimes on those 100+ degree days, we wonder if we are even sane. But we have fun!

**CATOOSA-WHITFIELD, GA COUNT TOTALS
SATURDAY, JULY 9, 2011**

Participants included Harold Birch, Tommie Rogers, Tanya Jordan and Bill Haley. The weather was exceptionally hot, with temperatures between 82 and 95 degrees. However, the heat index topped 105 F. Two separate parties counted for a total of 6.5 party hours. Because of the extreme heat, this count ended early at 2:30pm. Good finds included 12 Checkered Whites, 25 Common Wood Nymphs, both new count records, and 2 Hayhurst's Scallopwings. Surprising misses were Spicebush Swallowtail, Sleepy Orange, Question Mark, Monarch and Silver-spotted Skipper.

Species and Numbers: Pipevine Swallowtail 3, Black Sw. 3, E. Tiger Sw. 1, Giant Sw. 1, Checkered White 12, Clouded Sulphur 11, Orange Su. 26, Cloudless Sulphur 3, Gray Hairstreak 1, E. Tailed-Blue 219, Summer Azure 3, American Snout 3, Variegated Fritillary 3, Silvery checkerspot 10, Pearl Crescent 6, American Lady 3, Common Buckeye 61, Red-sp. Purple 1, Hackberry Emperor 5, Carolina Satyr 12, Common Wood Nymph 25, Southern Cloudywing 1, N. Cloudywing 1, Hayhurst's Scallopwing 2, Clouded Skipper 1, Least Sk. 4, Fiery Sk. 1, Peck's Sk. 1, Sachem 128.

Total: 29 species, 540 individuals.



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.

**STEVENSON, ALABAMA COUNT TOTALS
SATURDAY, JULY 16, 2011**

Bill Haley, Harold Birch, Mike O'Brien, David Spicer, Scott Spicer, Jim Wilkerson and Cynthia Wilkerson took part in the Stevenson, Alabama count, held Saturday, July 16. They counted from 9:30 to 5:00 Central and found 37 species. It was a largely overcast day with 100% cloud cover in the morning and 80% clouds in the afternoon. Temperatures were a bit cooler than they had been, ranging from 78-90 F. Winds were very light. A Zarucco Duskywing was found late in the day, a first for this count.

Bill would like to thank all who helped with one or more of the five 4th of July counts he compiled this year.

Species and Numbers: Pipevine Swallowtail 20, Spicebush Sw. 6, E. Tiger Sw. 5, Swallowtail sp. (dark) 17, Checkered White 4, Cabbage White 1, Clouded Sulphur 4, Orange Sulphur 9, Cloudless Su. 8, Sleepy Orange 32, Gray Hairstreak 5, Red-banded Hairstreak 1, E. Tailed-Blue 29, Am. Snout 4, Variegated Fr. 8, Silvery Checkerspot 1, Pearl Crescent 32, Question Mark 1, E. Comma 2, Am. Lady 1, Common Buckeye 33, Viceroy 3, Southern Pearly-Eye 1, Northern Pearly-Eye 3, Carolina Satyr 3, Monarch 1, Silver-sp. Skipper 31, Zarucco Duskywing 1, Common Checkered Sk. 8, Common Sootywing 1, Clouded Sk. 8, Least Sk. 4, Fiery Sk. 17, Little Glassywing 2, Sachus 27, Zabulon Sk. 2, Dun Sk. 9. **Total: 37 species, 368 individuals.**



The **Common Checkered-Skipper**, *Pyrgus communis*, is at the center of an identification controversy these days. *Butterflies of the East Coast* by Rick Cech states:

"A former race of Common Checkered-Skipper (*P. communis*) was recently split off as the separate White Checkered-Skipper (*P. albescens*) (Burns 2000). At present, these variable species can only be reliably distinguished by dissection.

Formerly unknown in our area, the White Checkered Skipper rapidly colonized the Florida peninsula beginning in the early 1990's., as Common Checkered Skipper nearly vanished (Calhoun, 2002). Such local "replacements" have been seen in other areas where the two species coexist."

The range map for White Checkered-Skipper only extends to South Georgia, so your editor feels we still have the Common Checkered-Skipper, not White Checkered-Skippers in our area.



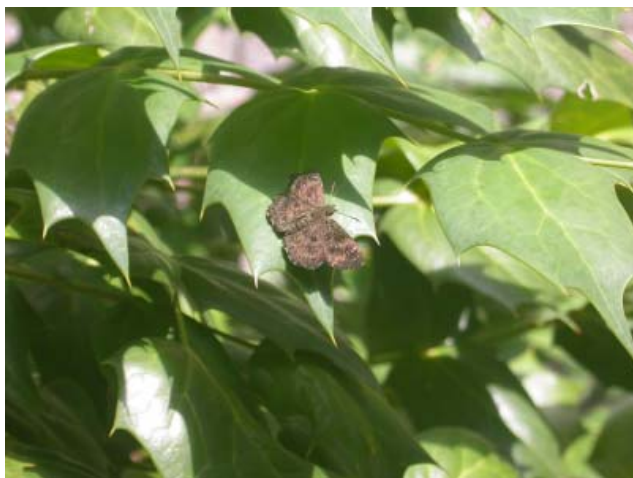
The two butterflies above, **Southern Pearly-Eye**, *Enodia portlandia*, and **Northern Pearly-Eye**, *Enodia anhedon*, were both found in a wooded area of Stevenson Park during the Stevenson, Alabama butterfly count on July 16. This area, containing various grasses and some small cane, usually produces Pearly-Eyes. Of interest, these two individuals were located within 50 feet of each other. The Northern is the generally expected species here, so it was a pleasant surprise to find a Southern shortly after locating the other butterfly. Although difficult to see on these small-scale photos, a distinguishing feature that helps differentiate Pearly-Eyes is the color of the antennal clubs. The Southern Pearly-Eye has clubs that are entirely orange. Northern Pearly-Eye has a club that is black at the base with an orange tip. Although we missed them this year, Gemmed Satyrs are also found reliably in the same area. There was lots of tornado damage, with many, many trees down in the park just to the east of this wooded area. Luckily the section we survey was relatively untouched.

The Butterfly / Dragonfly / Wetlands Garden "Unveiling" at E. G. Fisher Library in Athens, TN, Friday, July 8 had good attendance!

Bill Haley and Vaughn Trentham represented the Tennessee Valley NABA chapter at the grand opening of a new wildlife / wetlands area in Athens, Tennessee the evening of July 8. It was a wonderful opportunity to talk to people about butterflies and to highlight our NABA chapter. This event was very well attended, with a good crowd at the ribbon-cutting. Later on Bill led a group of approximately 25-35 on a general naturalist tour around the new area. Earlier in the evening thousands of flowering black-eyed susans hosted lots of small skippers flitting from one bloom to the next. A big thank you to Vaughn for helping out.

The land was donated by Mayfield Dairy. If you ever visit Athens and go on a tour through the dairy, be sure to check out this wonderful new natural area.

Photos from Stevenson, Alabama



- 1. Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (dark form) on teasel.
- 2. Zarucco Duskywing
- 3. Dun Skipper (male) on thistle
- 4. Eastern Tailed-Blue

All photos this column by Mike O'Brien

Could you identify this small spread-winged skipper? Libby Wolfe sent these photos. She was thrilled to add this species to her yard butterfly list.