



Photo by
Tommie Rogers

On The Wing

Newsletter of the Tennessee Valley Chapter,
North American Butterfly Association

Sept. 2013

Volume 7, Number 3

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Soddy-Daisy Fall Seasonal Count Totals

The Soddy-Daisy, TN fall seasonal count was conducted on Friday, August 2. Participants were: Bill Haley, Harold Birch, Gary Lanham, Tommie Rogers, Susan Schott, and Nancy Williams. They counted from 10:00-4:00 in one party. Sunshine was abundant all day and temperatures ranged from 67-90 F, with light winds. The summer Soddy-Daisy count was conducted on June 15. It was hoped that diversity and numbers would have improved since that count, but butterflies were still difficult to locate at times and numbers of species found continued low. Totals follow:

Pipevine Swallowtail 3, Black Sw. 1, E. Tiger Sw. 39, Spicebush Sw. 17, dark sw. sp. 8, Cloudless Sulphur 10, Sleepy Orange 1, Gray Hairstreak 3, E. Tailed-Blue 16, Summer Azure 1, American Snout 5, Gulf Fritillary 3, Variegated Fr. 1, Pearl Crescent 7, Question Mark 1, Red Admiral 1, Common Buckeye 4, Red-sp. Purple 2, Hackberry Emperor 2, Carolina Satyr 3, Com. Wood Nymph 1, Silver-sp. Skipper 25, Hoary Edge 2, Wild Indigo Duskywing 4, Fiery Sk. 5, Little Glassywing 1, Sachem 9, Zabulon Sk. 1, Dun Sk. 4, Lace-winged Roadside Sk. 3, Com. Roadside Sk. 1, Ocola Sk. 1. **Total 31 species, 185 individuals.**



Photo by
Nancy
Williams

nancy w williams 2013

Lace-winged Roadside Skipper, *Amblyscirtes aesculapius*, was found on Bakewell Mountain during the Soddy-Daisy, TN fall seasonal count.

Thursday, September 5:

Last Scheduled NABA Count of 2013!

Lookout Mountain, GA Fall Seasonal Count

Meet: 9:30am, Towing and Recovery Museum, on South Broad Street. Leader: Bill Haley

Phone: (423) 326-9248 or (423) 756-4106 (H)

E-mail: wgh@tnaqua.org

Note that this count will be conducted on a weekday, Thursday. Please come and help out if you are available. The Lookout Mountain, GA count was conducted over two months ago, on June 22, so it will be interesting to see how butterfly numbers and diversity has changed in that time span. We'll caravan to many different locations within the 15 mile diameter count circle and cover as many different habitats as possible. If we have enough people, we may split up the group for better coverage of the count circle. Stay with us for the whole day, or just a couple of hours, depending on your schedule. Remember that you do not have to be an identification expert, you just need a pair of eyes to help spot the butterflies!



Photo by
Mike O'Brien

Mike O'Brien took this close-up photo of a female **Sachem**, *Atalopedes campestris*. Many years Sachems are the most abundant butterfly on counts, but that hasn't been the case in 2013. Numbers have been down all summer. Only 9 were found on the Soddy-Daisy count.

Around the Puddle

by Bill Haley

What's Going On?

It has been wonderful to spend time with my butterfly friends on counts this summer. This is my 19th consecutive year of butterfly counting. In 2013 I've compiled counts in 4 different circles: Tennessee River Gorge, TN, Soddy-Daisy, TN, Lookout Mountain, GA and Stevenson, AL. We have also done fall seasonal counts in two of these circles, Tennessee River Gorge and Soddy-Daisy. My 7th and final NABA count this year, the Lookout Mountain, GA fall seasonal count, is scheduled Sept. 5.

I tell people I've counted butterflies for years and many of them ask, "Are butterflies doing as well as they once were?"

You might think that after 19 years and hundreds of butterfly counts, I'd have it figured out by now. If so, you'd be dead wrong. I should have a stock answer for that question, but I don't. The only thing I know for sure is that there is no simple answer.

This year's counts have often left me scratching my head and trying to figure out what exactly is going on. Butterflies that are normally very abundant have been extremely difficult to find, or not located at all, on count day. Some butterflies didn't show up until a month or more past the usual date they are first seen. Some normally "can't miss" species have been missed.

Of all things.....Sachems, our locally most abundant skipper species, were not found until our fourth count of the summer! Ten is the Sachem high count so far in 2013. In years past we often found more than ten Sachems in the first 5 feet of a roadside planting of pink clover.

Over the past few years, we've lamented hot, dry drought-like conditions. Nectar plants often were dried up, but it is interesting that butterfly numbers were actually pretty high during those thirsty years.

This summer has presented a very sharp contrast to that trend. By September we've already had as much rain as we usually receive in an entire year. Plants have benefitted and nectar sources are everywhere. To us, it seems like this wealth of nectar might also help to increase the abundance of butterflies. Not so this year.

Thankfully we saw an upturn in both diversity and numbers on the Tennessee River Gorge fall count. Let's hope that trend continues!

TOTALS FROM THE FALL SEASONAL TENNESSEE RIVER GORGE, TN COUNT

The Tennessee River Gorge fall seasonal count was conducted on Thursday, August 15, 2013. Participants included: Sara Bright, Paulette Haywood Ogard, Harold Birch, Bill Haley, Mike O'Brien, Tommie Rogers, Nancy Williams, Gary Lanham, David Spicer and David Selph. The day began feeling like a real fall day, with overcast skies, wind and cool temperatures. By the time we got to our first stop on Moccasin Bend, the sun had begun to peek through the clouds and conditions improved from there.. It was a partly cloudy day with temperatures from 67-84 F. Counting from 10:00 to 4:15, three parties put in a combined 19.25 total party-hours of effort and it paid off with the biggest species total of any count in 2013. Dave Spicer found a White-M Hairstreak, the first one ever on this count. Also of note, we enjoyed great skipper diversity - finding 21 skipper species. High numbers for Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (110) and Zabulon Skipper (59) were new highs for us too.

Butterflies found: Pipevine Swallowtail 14, Giant Sw. 1, Eastern Tiger Sw. 110, Spicebush Sw. 30, dark sw. species 5, Clouded Sulphur 1, Orange Sulphur 4, Cloudless Su 21, White M Hairstreak 1, Gray Hairstreak 1, Red-banded Hairstreak 5, Eastern Tailed-Blue 26, Summer Azure 43, American Snout 2, Gulf Fritillary 2, Diana Fritillary 1, Great Spangled Fr. 2, Pearl Crescent 14, Question Mark 2, American Lady 1, Common Buckeye 12, Red-spotted Purple 9, Hackberry Emperor 34, Tawny Emperor 1, Carolina Satyr 46, Little Wood Satyr 3, Common Wood Nymph 4, Silver-spotted Skipper 97, Golden-banded Skipper 1, Hoary Edge 6, Southern Cloudywing 6, Northern Cloudywing 1, Horace's Duskywing 1, Wild Indigo Duskywing 1, Clouded Sk. 8, Least Sk. 13, Fiery Sk. 29, Tawny-edged Sk. 1, Crossline Sk. 3, Southern Broken-Dash 2, Northern Broken-Dash 3, Little Glassywing 19, Sachem 7, Delaware Sk. 3, Zabulon Sk. 59, Dun Sk. 7, Eufala Sk. 1, Ocola Sk. 3.

Total: 48 species, 766 individuals

Immatures: Not only was it a good day for adult butterflies, it was great for immatures. The overcast cold morning sent Bill Haley searching for butterfly caterpillars and he'd already found 6 species before the group met, including 3 swallowtail species in his yard. Black Swallowtail 1 caterpillar on parsley, Spicebush Sw., 19 caterpillars on spicebush, Pipevine Sw. 20 caterpillars on dutchman's pipe, Cloudless Sulphur 1 caterpillar on partridge pea, Sleepy Orange 3 caterpillars on partridge pea. Cabbage White 4 caterpillars on ornamental cabbage, Tawny Emperor 25 caterpillars on hackberry, Question Mark 1 caterpillar on hackberry, Silver-spotted Skipper 35 caterpillars on kudzu and black locust, Zabulon Skipper 3 eggs on Bermuda grass.

2014 North American Butterfly Association Biennial Members Meeting Will be Held in Chattanooga, Tennessee on June 12-15, 2014! The biennial NABA members meeting will be held in Chattanooga next year, June 12-15, 2014. Butterfliers from all over the country will converge on our area and this will be a great opportunity to show off our butterflies to a national audience. There will be special pre and post conference field trips. A prime target locally will be the Diana Fritillary. Hosts for this event will be Rita Venable, from Franklin, TN, and Bart Jones from Memphis. We will need local folks to help with this event, so make plans to be here at that time next summer! As we receive more information, it'll be passed along to the members of the Tennessee Valley NABA chapter.



Carolina Satyr
Hermeuptychia sosybius

Photo by
Mike O'Brien

Forty-six Carolina Satyrs were found on Aug. 15.

Photos from the TN River Gorge fall count



Photo by
Mike O'Brien

Bill Haley poses with Sara Bright and Paulette Haywood Ogard, the two authors of "Butterflies of Alabama". It was a real treat to have them along on the count!



Parrbasius m-album

Photo by
David Spicer

The White M Hairstreak is uncommon and not often reported in our area. This is the first individual ever recorded on the Tennessee River Gorge count. It was found by David Spicer.



Photo by
Mike O'Brien

Gary Lanham, helping with only his second butterfly count, enjoys photographing skippers at Moccasin Bend.



Golden-banded Skipper
Autochton cellus

Photo by
Tommie Rogers

Tommie Rogers found this Golden-banded Skipper atop Raccoon Mountain. It is another species that is uncommon and localized in our area.

More photos from the fall counts.....



This is a rare shot! How often do you see two very territorial male **Zabulon Skippers** sitting on a leaf this close together? We saw a record high count of 59 Zabulon Skippers on the Tennessee River Gorge fall count.



Female **Zabulon Skippers**, when seen with wings closed, can be distinguished by the white edging on the hindwing. This is a freshly emerged individual.



Tommie Rogers got this shot of a male **Delaware Skipper** with wings spread. Like Zabulons and many other skipper species, **Delawares** are sexually dimorphic. Males and females look quite different.



A great shot of an **Appalachian Brown**, *Satyrodes appalachia*, found on Jeff Basham's Grindstone Mtn. count.



Ocola Skippers are fairly easy to identify, with a very distinctive profile. The very long and thin forewing is held low and sticks out past the hindwing. They also have a dark horizontal stripe running down the side of the abdomen, which is distinctive.

Southern Pearly-Eye, *Enodia portlandia*, is one of three Pearly-eye species found in this area. This one was seen on the Grindstone Mountain. count.

Photo by Jeff Basham.

