



Photo by
Mike O'Brien

On The Wing

Newsletter of the Tennessee Valley Chapter,
North American Butterfly Association

Oct. 2013

Volume 7, Number 4

Editor: Bill Haley, wgh@tnaqua.org

Lookout Mountain, Georgia Fall Seasonal Count Totals

The Lookout Mountain, Georgia fall seasonal count was conducted on Thursday, Sept. 5. Participants were: Bill Haley, Tommie Rogers, Mike O'Brien, and Nancy Williams. They counted from 10:00-5:00 in two parties for a combined 13.5 party hours of effort. Much thanks to Tommie Rogers who was brave enough to split off from the group and cover part of the count circle by herself. Sunshine was abundant all day and temperatures ranged from 69-86 F, with light winds. The summer Lookout Mountain count was conducted on June 22, and this count featured larger numbers and more species than we found then. It was our final NABA count for 2013 and I would like to thank everyone who helped count this summer. In many ways, it was a tough and puzzling year to count butterflies. The wet weather affected butterfly populations and we saw low numbers until late summer, when numbers finally began to reach more normal levels. In terms of species found, our fall counts were the most productive. A Yehl Skipper was a first for this count and we had record numbers of Red-spotted Purple and Carolina Satyr. Best find? 12 large Goatweed Leafwing caterpillars on prairie tea...(which we are all good at finding since we learned their host plant).

Totals follow:

Pipevine Swallowtail 6, E. Tiger Sw. 11, Spicebush Sw. 6, dark sw. sp. 7, Orange Sulphur 10, Cloudless Sulphur 45, Sleepy Orange 18, Gray Hairstreak 3, Red-banded Ha. 1, E. Tailed-Blue 33, Summer Azure 14, American Snout 17, Gulf Fritillary 19, Variegated Fr. 19, Great-spangled Fr. 5, Silvery Checkerspot 7, Pearl Crescent 36, Question Mark 2, American Lady 1, Painted Lady 1, Common Buckeye 39, Red-sp. Purple 67, Hackberry Emperor 75, Tawny Emp. 7, S. Pearly-Eye 2, Appalachian Brown 1, Carolina Satyr 265, Com. Wood Nymph 1, Monarch 3, Silver-sp. Skipper 7, Hoary Edge 1, Zarucco Duskywing 1, Clouded Sk. 2, Least Sk. 17, Fiery Sk. 7, Tawny-Edged Sk. 5, Crossline Sk. 8, N. Broken Dash 2, Little Glassywing 1, Sachem 65, Zabulon Sk. 7, Yehl Sk. 1, Dun Sk. 6, Ocola Sk. 4, unid. sk. species 9.

Total 42 species, 845 individuals.

No More Scheduled NABA Counts, Newsletters or Programs for 2013! See You in the Spring!



Photo by
Nancy Williams

Bill Haley, Nancy Williams and Mike O'Brien were thrilled to find this Appalachian Brown on Lookout Mountain. It was a lifer for Nancy and Mike!



Photo by
Tommie Rogers

We set a new record for Red-spotted Purples with 67 on the Lookout Mountain, GA count. They seemed to be everywhere we went, but Tommie found far more in her part of the count circle. Here is a shot she got of a "puddle party" made up entirely of Red-spotted Purples.

Most times when you see a group of butterflies on the ground, they are male butterflies seeking minerals that help make them more attractive to the females!

Around the Puddle

by Bill Haley

Butterflies Galore!!!

This afternoon, October 3rd, I walked out of my house around 1:30. The sun was shining and the yard absolutely glowed with vibrant blooms. Asters, salvia, marigolds, zinnia, goldenrod and tickseed sunflower all combined for a real treat for the senses. It was like the spectacular grand finale of a fireworks show.

A 3 foot tall clump of red salvia, an annual species that I love and have encouraged for the past several years is growing right alongside the sidewalk near the pitcher plants. I transplanted some tiny seedlings there in April, anticipating how they would look later on in the summer. It is currently loaded with blooms, and is a magnet for the Cloudless Sulphur. As I approached, six Cloudless Sulphurs were nectaring at the brilliant red flowers. It was such a spectacle, I just had to stop for a few moments and admire the activity as they flitted from one bloom to another. I've noticed the Cloudless Sulphurs seem to prefer tubular hummingbird flowers above all others. Next spring I will eagerly await the small, distinctive seedlings in early April to pot up some and share with others.

The New England Aster has done well in 2013. Thanks to plentiful summer rains, it is currently putting on it's best show ever. It forms a royal purple clump 6 feet wide and 5 feet high, and blends beautifully with the slighter lighter purple blooms of the butterfly bush, with which it has merged. Today's butterfly guests include a Gulf Fritillary with very ragged wings, a Common Buckeye, 5-10 Sachems and almost as many Fiery Skippers. Also in attendance at the "nectar bar" is a Clouded Skipper and an Ocola Skipper is thrown in for good measure.

Nearby, a Pipevine Swallowtail flutters among the orange and gold marigold blooms. A male Black Swallowtail zooms in to take a quick look, but doesn't stay long.

I wonder if both of these beautiful swallowtails were raised right here in my yard? The Dutchman's pipevine has certainly hosted enough caterpillars this summer and I've recently found 3-4 Black Swallowtail caterpillars on the clump of Italian parsley out by the front sidewalk.

Butterfly populations have *finally* caught up and are at their peak, laying eggs and assuring there will be butterflies to enjoy next year.

A Few More Photos.....



Mike O'Brien sent some great photos of a brand new butterfly for his yard list, a Southern Dogface, form rosa. This color form shows up in late fall and is considered the winter form. In the bottom photo he was lucky to catch it just as it took wing, for a great look at the rarely seen dorsal (upper) surface. Note the sharp forewing tips and "poodle head" pattern). It showed up at Mike's place on September 3.



Tommie Rogers got this good shot of a Southern Pearly-Eye on the Lookout Mountain count. She found 2 that day.