



Photo by
Mike
O'Brien

On The Wing

Newsletter of the Tennessee Valley Chapter,
North American Butterfly Association

July/August 2015

Volume 9, Number 4

Editor: Bill Haley, wgh@tnaqua.org

BE A COUNTER! I've decided to combine our July and August newsletters. Listed on this page are the remaining NABA counts that I compile. There are still opportunities to get out in the field and enjoy the beautiful butterflies we all love. Butterfly counts are a great way to learn about what habitats butterflies inhabit and pick up identification skills. You'll recall that any count done in June and July is considered by NABA to be a 4th of July count. We can use help with our last 4th of July count, Stevenson, Alabama. Anything from August on is fall seasonal, and Tennessee River Gorge and Soddy-Daisy fit into that category. As always a **\$3.00 fee per counter** goes to NABA to help defray their publication expenses.

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Thursday, July 23

13th Annual Stevenson, AL count

Meet: 10:00 at Stevenson City Park, on Hwy. 117 near Stevenson, AL. Compiler: Bill Haley, (423) 326-9248, or e-mail wgh@tnaqua.org

*Note that this count will be held on a **Thursday**. We can always use your help if you are free during the week. Stevenson usually produces some interesting species. The grass skippers should hopefully be abundant by then too. Bring a cooler with plenty of liquids, some snacks and wear a hat and plenty of sunscreen. We'll be walking through some tall grass, so consider wearing lightweight long pants that can be tucked into your socks to ward off ticks and chiggers.*

Thursday, August 13

Tennessee River Gorge fall seasonal

Meet: 9:30 at Bi-Lo on Signal Mountain Road, Compiler: Bill Haley (see contact info above).

*Note that this will be another **Thursday** count! Please come and help us out if you are able. It'll be hot, so prepare by bringing lots of liquids to stay hydrated! See above for other suggestions on what to bring. Late summer can be the peak of butterfly abundance, so bring some sharp eyes and help us find them!*

Saturday, August 22

Soddy-Daisy, TN fall seasonal

Meet: 9:30 at the Daisy United Methodist Church, 9508 Old Dayton Pike, Soddy-Daisy, TN. Compiler: Bill Haley, (423) 326-9248, wgh@tnaqua.org

Directions from Chattanooga: Take Hwy. 27 N from Chattanooga. Take the Harrison Lane exit and turn left on Harrison Lane. When road T's, turn right. Continue up hill and in less than 1/2 mile the church is on the right at the top of the hill. (Look for all the flowers in the church's yard!)

We are back to a Saturday for this last scheduled count of 2015. Everyone is invited to help with the Soddy-Daisy fall seasonal count. We'll caravan from the church in search of butterflies, and maybe even find some good ones there. Please read suggestions in the Stevenson count write-up on what to wear and things to bring. Remember that one bottle of water is **NOT** enough to last the day!

Tennessee River Gorge count totals, June 6, 2015

The 21st Annual Tennessee River Gorge count was conducted on Saturday, June 6. Participants were Bill Haley, Libby Wolfe and Tommie Rogers. The two parties combined for 15 hours of counting effort and walked approximately 8 miles on a very hot day with temperatures ranging from 77-90 F.

Species and Numbers: Pipevine Swallowtail 3, E. Tiger Sw. 4, Spicebush Sw. 3, Checkered White 1, Cabbage Wh. 7, Clouded Su. 2, Orange Su. 15, Banded Hairstreak 4, Gray Ha. 3, E. Tailed-Blue 74, Summer Azure 10, Am. Snout 24, Gr. Spangled Fritillary 36, Pearl Crescent 17, Question Mark 1, Am. Lady 4, Red Admiral 2, Com. Buckeye 3, Viceroy 1, Hackberry Emp. 5, Tawny Emp. 10, Carlina Satyr 2, Little Wood Sa. 8, Silver-sp. Sk. 11, Golden-banded Sk. 1, Hoary Edge 5, Wild Indigo Duskywing 5, Crossline Sk. 4, N. Broken-Dash 2, Delaware Sk. 1, Dun Sk. 2, Lace-winged Roadside Sk. 1. **Immatures:** 3 Spicebush Sw. caterpillars on spicebush, 2 Silver-sp. Sk. caterpillars on kudzu, 5 Golden-banded Sk. caterpillars on hog peanut. **Total: 33 species**

CAN YOU FIND THE BUTTERFLY?

The interesting photo at top left was snapped by Mike O'Brien on the Soddy-Daisy count. Can you find and identify the butterfly in this "hat shot"?

Around the Puddle

by Bill Haley

A Question of Time

I caught some flak, and some good-natured ribbing before the Lookout Mountain count from a couple of people because I have been lax in getting count totals out to them in what they consider a timely manner. Between work duties, several days at my church's Annual Conference and the time involved in editing two very different newsletters and a conference report for the church newsletter (all of which I've been working on at the same time these past few weeks), somehow I didn't find the time to type and send an e-mail immediately after each count was completed. My apologies. Since the last newsletter I've also spent three entire days out counting butterflies and afterwards gathering everyone's numbers and entering them online to NABA.

Truth is, I am sending out count compilations on a pretty regular basis, and every member of this chapter is getting them. It is called "On the Wing" - the newsletter of the Tennessee Valley NABA chapter, which you are reading this very moment. The June compilations are all contained in this issue for your reading pleasure.

Building a newsletter takes some effort and it takes time - something that I often seem to have in short supply. However, it is something I enjoy immensely and take pride in. Seems like I've put together newsletters for most of my adult life, and those two "complaining" friends have read most of them!

It is all a matter of time, and timing is a funny thing. Take the just-completed Lookout Mountain count. Grass skipper numbers have been extremely low and we had only three usually abundant Sachems on the first two June counts. No such problem this time. It has finally become their time and we counted 134. Common Wood Nymphs and Fiery Skipper also showed up this week.

I'm still waiting to count my first Diana Fritillary this year. I wonder how many I've missed by 30 seconds?

Then there is the "right place at the right time" kind of timing. You are walking down a wooded path and a Clouded Skipper, Banded Hairstreak, Gemmed Satyr or Great-spangled Fritillary happens to fly up just as you approach. Or maybe you're watching a Summer Azure that lands right next to a Harvester, as Tommie Rogers did. You can't beat P.D.L. (Pure Dumb Luck) timing when it comes to finding butterflies!

Soddy-Daisy, TN count, June 13, 2015

The 19th annual Soddy-Daisy butterfly count took place on Saturday, June 13. Counters included Mike O'Brien, Harold Birch, Libby Wolfe, Tommie Rogers, Susan Schott and Bill Haley. They stayed in one party, putting in 9.5 hours of count effort. It was a very hot day, with temperatures from 78-93 F, and despite some occasional cloud cover, there was plentiful sunshine. It proved to be a good day for hairstreaks, with four species found. Grass skippers really haven't been abundant yet, like they are by this time some years. Skipper highlights were a Hobomok Skipper found feeding on butterflyweed nectar on Bakewell Mountain - a first on a S-D summer count, and a very fresh Delaware Skipper found near North Hamilton Co. Elementary school.

Species and numbers: Pipevine Swallowtail 2, E. Tiger Sw. 1, Spicebush Sw. 2, Cabbage White 5, Clouded Sulphur 4, Orange Su. 9, Coral Hairstreak 1, Banded Ha. 3, Striped Ha. 2, Gray Ha. 2, E. Tailed-Blue 36, Summer Azure 6, Am. Snout 3, Gulf Fritillary 1, Variegated Fr. 3, Great Spangled Fr. 41, Pearl Crescent 16, Am. Lady 4, Com. Buckeye 5, Red-sp. Purple 1, Viceroy 1, Hackberry Emp. 3, Tawny Emp. 2, Carolina Satyr 2, Little Wood Sa. 1, Monarch 4, Silver-sp. Sk. 3, Hoary Edge 1, N. Cloudywing 1, Wild Indigo Duskywing 3, Least Skipper 1, Tawny-edged Sk. 1, Sachem 3, Hobomok Sk. 1, Zabulon Sk. 1, Dun Sk. 2. **Immatures:** 1 E. Tiger Sw. caterpillar on sassafras. **Total: 38 species**

Banded Hairstreak

Satyrium calanus

Photo by
Libby Wolfe



The **Banded Hairstreak**, *Satyrium calanus*, is one of the most common and widespread of the hairstreaks. There is a single brood each year. They usually show up in early June and continue into early July. Females lay eggs on oak, hickory or walnut twig ends near buds that will develop the following spring. They overwinter as eggs. Male Banded Hairstreaks are very territorial, perching at various levels in the dappled sunlight along wooded roads. They are reknowned for their swirling aerial "dogfights". The victor usually returns to the same perch, and this is often how we locate them on counts.

Striped Hairstreak
Satyrium liparops



Photo by
Mike O'Brien

This handsome **Striped Hairstreak**, *Satyrium liparops*, was spotted by sharp-eyed Tommie Rogers as it flew to a perch on a roadside maple tree atop Bakewell Mountain. We were lucky enough to find two of them on the Soddy-Daisy count on June 13. They don't engage in territorial dogfights like the Banded Hairstreaks and are usually found as loners, perched quietly in isolation along road edges or sunny forest clearings.

Gray Hairstreak
Strymon melinus
(laying egg)



Photo by
Libby Wolfe

CAUGHT IN THE ACT! When Libby Wolfe took this butterfly's photo, she didn't realize the **Gray Hairstreak**, *strymon melinus*, was laying an egg (ovipositing). They use many different members of the legume family and you can see that this female has chosen a flower bud to lay the egg on. The book Butterflies of the East Coast says, "the *Gray Hairstreak* is by far the most common and widespread scrub-hairstreak in the United States, and arguably the most common hairstreak of any kind." They have been reported to feed on the flowers and seeds of plants in at least 20 families. They are usually not found in great abundance or in large aggregations as Bandeds sometimes are, but have a very large range and are found in a variety of habitats. Their caterpillars are ant-tended. In return for a sweet substance offered the ants by the caterpillar, the ants protect it.

Hobomok Skipper
(male)
Poanes hobomok



Photo by
Tommie
Rogers

This male **Hobomok Skipper**, *Poanes hobomok*, was found sipping nectar from a thistle flower along the road on Bakewell Mountain. This species is uncommon in this area and it is the first time it has been found on a Soddy-Daisy fourth of July count. Bill first identified it as a Peck's Skipper, but the photos showed otherwise. (Thanks for the correction Tommie!) He felt somewhat better when he read in Butterflies of the East Coast that it can be easily confused with Peck's. According to the book, Hobomok was a chief of the Wampanoag tribe who aided the Pilgrims after their landing at Plymouth in 1620. Hobomok Skippers are nearing the southern edge of their range here, occurring from Maine to Virginia and in the mountains to North Georgia. They spread westward all the way to the Great Plains.

Clouded Sulphur
Colias philodice



Photo by
Mike O'Brien

This gorgeous **Clouded Sulphur**, *Colias philodice*, was photographed in the large field full of orange butterfly weed just off Hwy. 27 in Bakewell. Note the clear light yellow color on this individual, without a hint of orange. To the right I've included a photo of an Orange Sulphur, taken by Tommie Rogers on the Lookout Mtn. count, clearly showing the orange tint of the wings.



Lookout Mtn, Georgia count, 6-25-15

The 16th annual Lookout Mountain, Georgia count was conducted on Thursday, June 25. Participants included Harold Birch, Mike O'Brien, Libby Wolfe, Nancy Williams, Susan Schott, Tommie Rogers, Alan Olson and Bill Haley. It was a brutally hot day, with copious sunshine all day and temperatures between 75 and 97F. Counters were in three parties. They walked a total of 7 miles and put in a total of 15 party hours of effort. The Nature Nuts club met from 5:00-7:00pm. Alan Olson, a Nature Nuts father, contributed much to the counting effort, and is listed as a participant. They found 14 species, including four new species for the day - Checkered White, Gray Hairstreak, Hackberry Emperor, and Eastern Comma. A huge thanks to everyone who braved this extremely hot day to help!

Species and numbers: Pipevine Swallowtail 4, E. Tiger Sw. 8, Spicebush Sw. 3, Checkered White 1, Cabbage White 5, Clouded Sulphur 1, Orange Su. 20, Cloudless Su. 2, Sleepy Orange 9, Harvester 1, Banded Hairstreak 1, Gray Ha. 1, E. Tailed-Blue 47, Summer Azure 19, Am. Snout 4, Variegated Fritillary 3, Great Spangled Fr. 1, Pearl Crescent 109, Question Mark 4, E. Comma 1, Am. Lady 3, Red Admiral 1, Common Buckeye 16, Red-sp. Purple 14, Viceroy 1, Hackberry Emp. 1, Tawny Emp. 3, N. Pearly-Eye 1, Gemmed Satyr 1, Carolina Satyr 50, Common Wood Nymph 4, Monarch 2, Silver-sp. Skipper 6, Southern Cloudywing 3, Horaces Duskywing 5, Clouded SK. 2, Least SK. 17, Fiery Sk. 6, Sachem 134, Dun Sk. 1, Ocola Sk. 1. **Immatures:** 14 Goatweed Leafwing caterpillars on prairie tea. **Total: 42 species.**



Goatweed Leafwing caterpillar inside a rolled leaf nest, with head towards the opening. We found 14 caterpillars rolled in the leaves of a small patch of prairie tea, their larval hostplant, on the Lookout Mountain count. We could locate no adults, however.

Photo by Mike O'Brien



Least Skipper, (ventral)
Ancyloxypha numitor

both photos Mike O'Brien



Least Skipper (dorsal)



Common Wood Nymph
Cercyonis pegala

Photo by Mike O'Brien

It is always a treat to see the first **Common Wood Nymph, *Cercyonis pegala***, of the year. This fresh individual showed up at our very first stop of the day near Nick-A-Jack Road. This is the largest of the Satyr species in our area and is readily identified, even in flight, by the large cream-colored patches on the forewing that surround the two eyespots. This one was very patient with us, sitting and allowing leisurely looks and great photo opportunities.



Variegated Fritillary
Euptoieta claudia

Photo by Mike O'Brien

Clouded Skipper

Lerema accius



Photo by
Mike O'Brien

Part of the value of participating in a butterfly count is the opportunity to work out tough identifications with the help of your friends. This somewhat worn **Clouded Skipper, *Lerema accius***, is a good example. After a good amount of speculation and the consulting of phone butterfly apps, field guides, and an initial misidentification (thanks to the white areas in front of the antennal clubs which originally pointed to another species, Little Glassywing), it took us several minutes to reach a verdict. Through such struggles, everyone learns a bit more about butterfly identification. My motto is don't be afraid to make a call and don't be afraid to change your mind if you are wrong the first time. It was one of only two found on the Lookout Mountain count.

Horace's Duskywing

Erynnis horatius



Photo by
Mike
O'Brien



Photo by
Tommie
Rogers

OH, THOSE DUSKYWINGS! Some people say no group of skippers is more difficult to identify than the duskywings. Most look very similar and there can be considerable variation within the species. Both of these are **Horace's Duskywings, *Erynnis horatius***.

They're Not All Hard to Identify!

Fiery Skipper

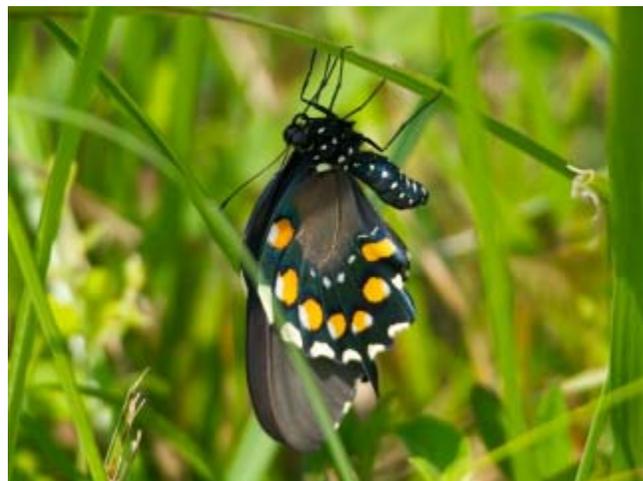
dorsal, male

Hylephila phyleus



All photos
this column by
Mike O'Brien

The male Fiery Skipper's brilliant orange coloration helps it live up to its name.



This newly emerged **Pipevine Swallowtail, *Battus philenor***, was found in a field. Their caterpillars go on long "walk-about" before their last molt into the chrysalis, usually far away from the host plant.

Common

Buckeye

Junonia

coenia



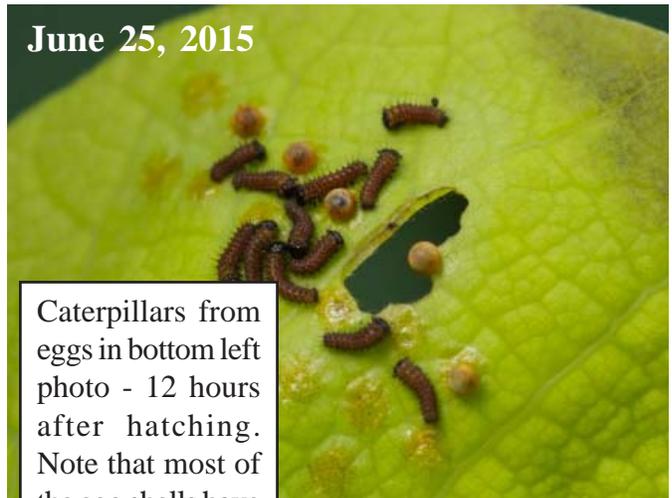
BEAUTIFUL BUTTERFLY PHOTOS!

I would like to take a minute to comment about the magnificent photographs I include in each and every *On the Wing* newsletter. This newsletter would not be half as good as it is without these beautiful images. I can take very little credit myself, unless it is that often I led the photographers to where they had the opportunity to get the shots of the butterflies you see featured in these pages. Please take a look at the photo credits I put on each shot. The people who supply them are the real "rock stars" that help me make this newsletter the best around. Thank you to everyone who contributes these awesome images.

Mike O'Brien has a dutchmans pipevine plant growing right outside his kitchen and he regularly keeps track of the laying of eggs by female Pipevine Swallowtails. Following are a series of photos he's taken over the past couple of weeks that I think you'll find interesting.



In this photo are three new caterpillars. Two are in the process of eating their first meal - their egg shells.



Caterpillars from eggs in bottom left photo - 12 hours after hatching. Note that most of the egg shells have been eaten.

Bring on the veggies! All egg shells have been consumed and they're eating the leaf. Note that one is larger. Must have hatched earlier than the rest!

