Tennessee River Gorge, Fall Seasonal Totals

The Tennessee River Gorge fall seasonal count was conducted on Saturday, August 4. It was the third 2018 count in this circle. Participants were: Bill Haley, Kim Crossman, Nancy Williams, Mike O’Brien, Tommie Rogers, Libby Wolfe, David Spicer and Scott Spicer. They split into 3 counting parties that contributed a total 21 hours counting time and walked 5 miles. After a week of torrential rains, it was very hot and humid, with temperatures ranging from 74-88 F. It was sunny most of the morning, but we had some welcome clouds to provide shade in the afternoon. Butterflies, both immatures and adults were very plentiful, and we experienced high counts for several species! It was great to see really good numbers of swallowtails after a summer when we haven’t seen many. Also of note was 40 Ocola Skippers, by far the most we’ve ever seen on one count. We usually find a handful at best.

Species and individual totals:
Pipevine Swallowtail 38, Spicebush Sw. 44, E. Tiger Sw. 94, Giant Sw. 2, Cabbage White 3, Orange Sulphur 2, Cloudless Su. 82, Little Yellow 1, Sleepy Orange 3, Gray Hairstreak 1, Red-banded Hairstreak 3, E. Tailed-Blue 52, Summer Azure 30, Am. Snout 13, Gulf Fritillary 8, Variegated Fr. 14, Great Spangled Fr. 1, Silvery Checkerspot 2, Pearl Crescent 39, Question Mark 3, E. Comma 2, Red Admiral 2, Common Buckeye 40, Red-spotted Purple 12, Goatweed Leafwing 1, Hackberry Emperor 15, Tawny Emperor 2, N. Pearly-Eye 1, Gemmed Satyr 4, Carolina Satyr 35, Common Wood Nymph 1, Monarch 2, Silver-spotted Skipper 176, Long-tailed Sk. 1, Hoary Edge 17, S. Cloudywing 1, N. Cloudywing 5, Horace’s Duskywing 4, Wild Indigo Duskywing 1, Common Checkered Sk. 1, Clouded Sk. 20, Least Sk. 5, Fiery Sk. 30, Tawny-edged Sk. 1, Crossline Sk. 3, N. Broken-Dash 1, Little Glassywing 6, Sachem 43, Zabulon Sk. 35, Dun Sk. 17, Ocola Skipper 40. Unid. Dark sw. 10.

Total: 51 species, 971 individuals
Don’t Miss These Sept. Events!

Friday, September 7, 2018
Doug Tallamy, author of the book Bringing Nature Home, is slated to present a talk at the UTC University Center Auditorium on Friday, Sept. 7 from 7:00 -9:00pm. The title of his talk will be “Creating Living Landscapes”. Mr. Tallamy is an advocate for landscaping with native plants to help benefit native animals and promote maximum biodiversity in your yard. If you haven’t read his book, I highly recommend it for anyone who is interested in butterflies and other insect pollinators. Cost is $10 per person, and you can register for his presentation on the Tennessee Valley Wild Ones website, tvvalleywildones.org.

Saturday, September 8, 2018
Bringing Nature Home—a Home Garden Tour will take place Sept. 8 from 10:00-6:00. Cost is $10 per person. With each ticket you may visit one, or all, of four private gardens featuring native plantings, as well as the Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute, which is near the Baylor School campus. The gardens can be visited in any order you wish during the event. Register on the Tennessee Valley Wild Ones website, (see above), or purchase tickets at each venue that day.

Least Skipper, Ancyloxypha numitor. Photographed by Dave Spicer on the TN River Gorge count.

Soddy-Daisy Fall Seasonal Count Totals:
The Soddy-Daisy fall count was held on Thursday, August 16, the third 2018 count in this circle. Participants were Bill Haley, Mike O’Brien, Harold Birch, Tommie Rogers, David and Judee Spicer. They had a combined 16.25 hours of count effort and walked 4.5 miles.

Species and Individuals: Pipevine Sw. 1, Black Sw. 2, Spicebush Sw. 12, E. Tiger Sw. 59, Cabbage White 3, Cloudless Sulphur 101, Little Yellow 1, Sleepy Orange 9, Gray Hairstreak 1, E. Tailed Blue 99, Summer Azure 15, American Snout 1, Gulf Fritillary 8, Variegated Fritillary 2, Diana Fritillary 1, Great Spangled Fritillary 7, Pearl Crescent 37, E. Comma 1, Question Mark 1, Red Admiral 1, Com. Buckeye 23, Red-sp. Purple 25, Hackberry Emperor 7, Tawny Emperor 1, Gemmed Satyr 1, Carolina Satyr 83, Monarch 9, Silver-sp. Skipper 6, Wild Indigo Duskywing 12, Common Checkered Skipper 1, Clouded Skipper 10, Least Skipper 7, Fiery Skipper 1, Crossline Skipper 2, Northern Broken-Dash 1, Little Glassywing 2, Sachem 57, Delaware Skipper 6, Zabulon Skipper 6, Dun Sk. 3.

Unidentified: dark swallowtail sp. 7.

Immatures: Silver-spotted Skipper caterpillars 3 (on black locust), Wild Indigo Duskywing egg 1 (on crown vetch).

Total: 40 species, 632 individuals.

Best Butterfly of the Month, and Bill didn’t get a photo!
On August 10, while looking around his garden for photographic subjects, Bill Haley saw a large skipper, larger than a Silver-spotted Skipper, land near a clump of canna. Base color was brown and it had large white spots on the upper forewings. He realized he was looking at a female Brazilian Skipper, Calpodes ethlius, a species he’d never seen. Unfortunately when he raised his camera, it flew away and didn’t return.

Butterfly of the Day on the Soddy-Daisy count was this very cooperative female Diana Fritillary, Speyeria diana, found by Harold Birch and Bill Haley atop Bakewell Mountain. Why is this a significant find? - (See page 9)
Kim Crossman participated in the TN River Gorge count, her second NABA count. She has been having a blast photographing butterflies we find with her phone camera. Look below to see what species she is stalking.

**Question Mark, Polygonia interrogationis**

These butterflies are usually quite “flighty” and it is often difficult to get one to sit still for a photo. No problem for Kim, who we dubbed the “Butterfly Whisperer”.

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**Join Us!**

North American Butterfly Association

The North American Butterfly Association, NABA, was started in 1994 to popularize the study of butterflies through observation and identification through use of field marks rather than collecting.

The Tennessee Valley NABA chapter was formed in 2008. The chapter’s territory is centered around southeastern Tennessee, but also encompasses areas of northwestern Georgia and northeastern Alabama. Anyone who joins the national organization within a zip code area beginning with 374, 373, 307, 357 or 359 will automatically become a member of the chapter.

It is also possible for people living outside our zip code areas to become members of the Tennessee Valley chapter. When you join or renew your NABA membership, specify that you’d like to be affiliated with the Tennessee Valley NABA chapter.

Joining online is easy. Go to their website at [http://www.naba.org](http://www.naba.org) and click on Membership. Individual $35, Family $45, Institution/Library $60. There also other sponsorship levels if interested.

Members receive quarterly publications from NABA, “American Butterflies” and “Butterfly Gardener”, as well as monthly “On the Wing” newsletters (March-Nov.) from the local Tennessee Valley NABA chapter.
Lookout Mountain, GA fall seasonal count totals

The Lookout Mountain, GA fall count, the third in this count circle in 2018, was held on Saturday, August 25. Participants included: Bill Haley, Libby Wolfe, Mike O’Brien, Dennis Bishop, David Spicer, Scott Spicer, Susan Schott, Phil and Martha Delesterez. The split into 3 counting parties, walked 8 miles total and spent 18.5 hours of count effort. Temperatures ranged between 67-87 F. A mostly clear morning with 60% sunshine, became a mostly cloudy 40% sunshine afternoon. Butterflies were active all day.

**Species and numbers:**
Pipevine Sw. 7, Spicebush Sw. 2, E. Tiger Sw. 58, Giant Sw. 5, Cabbage White 1, Orange Sulphur 1, Cloudless Sulphur 159, Sleepy Orange 37, Gray Hairstreak 2, Red-banded Hairstreak 6, E. Tailed-Blue 60, Summer Azure 26, Am. Snout 4, Gulf Fritillary 9, Variegated Fr. 11, Diana Fr. 2, Gr Spangled Fr. 7, Silvery Checkerspot 12, Pearl Crescent 34, Question Mark 3, E. Comma 3, Am. Lady 1, Painted Lady 1, Red Admiral 2, Com. Buckeye 31, Red-sp. Purple 28, Hackberry Emperor 31, Tawny Emp. 12, S. Pearly-Eye 1, N. Pearly-Eye 6, Gemmed Satyr 1, Carolina Satyr 206, Com. Wood Nymph 12, Monarch 20, Silver-sp. Skipper 7, Long-tailed Sk. 4, Horace’s Duskywing 1, Com. Checkered Sk. 4, Swarthy Sk. 1, Clouded Sk. 19, Least Sk. 5, Fiery Sk. 9, Tawny-edged Sk. 8, Crossline Sk. 10, Little Glassywing 11, Sachem 194, Delaware Sk. 1, Zabulon Sk. 22, Dun Sk. 3, Ocola Sk. 4. Unid: dark sw. sp. 5. Immatures: Goatweed Leafwing caterpillars 2 on Prairie Tea, Silver-spotted Skipper caterpillars 2 on Kudzu.

**Total:** 50 species, 1109 individuals.

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**The 13th Biennial NABA Members Meeting**

will be held in Tallahassee, Florida Sept. 16-19, 2018

**Tentative Schedule:**

**Sunday, Sept. 16:**
3:30-7:30pm  Registration
7:30-9:00pm  Welcome and Program “An Introduction to Butterflies of Northwestern Florida”, Dean Jue

**Monday, Sept. 17:**
8:00-8:45am  Workshops (3 concurrent topics)
9:15am  Field Trips depart
5:00pm  Field Trips return
6:00-7:00pm  Social Hour, Book Signing, Exhibits
7:00-9:00pm  Banquet and Keynote Speaker

**Tuesday, Sept. 18:**
8:00-8:45am  Workshops (3 concurrent topics)
9:15am  Field Trips depart
5:00pm  Field Trips return
6:00-7:00pm  Social Hour, Book Signing, Exhibits
7:00-9:00pm  Banquet and Featured Speaker

**Wednesday, Sept. 19:**
8:00am  Field Trips depart
3:00pm  Field Trips return
3:00-3:30pm  Meeting Finale

**Registration Fees:**
NABA Members: $295 per person
Non-members: $330 per person
You can visit the NABA website, [www.naba.org](http://www.naba.org), to register and pay fees online. Registration fees are payable in full at time of registration. Checks or money orders should be payable to NABA. After August 1, 2018 the registration fee will increase to $320, provided space is available.

**Facilities and Accomodations:**
Host hotel will be Four Points by Sheraton Tallahassee Downtown; Phone (850) 422-0071. A block of rooms with a discounted rate has been reserved for the conference. Mention that you are attending the NABA meeting when registering to obtain the special rate.

**Meals:** Registration fee includes box lunches on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and banquet dinners Monday and Tuesday nights. They will try to accomodate special dietary preferences whenever possible.

**Getting There:** You can fly into Tallahassee International Airport. Another alternative, maybe less expensive, would be to fly to Jacksonville, FL and drive 2.5 hours west to Tallahassee...
Butterflies are masters of their environment. There is really no up and down to a butterfly. They can sip nectar at any odd angle, even upside-down. Bill Haley took this fun shot in his yard. Is it a new nectar source? Nope. The Gray Hairstreak just chose to rest for a moment on a cherry tomato.

Sometimes it’s good to be lucky! While we were looking at the Question Mark pictured on page 3, Bill Haley happened to notice another anglewing land about 6 feet away. It proved to be an Eastern Comma. Not very often will you have both “punctuation marks” on the ground at the same time, and both very cooperative for all the photographers in the group! - Photo by Mike O’Brien

Mike O’Brien took this stunning photo of a Cloudless Sulphur visiting a Cardinal Flower at the Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute (TNACI) during the Tennessee River Gorge fall count on August 4.

Male (bottom) and female (top) Zabulon Skippers. 35 were seen on the TN River Gorge count. - Photo by Dennis Bishop
A female Eastern Tailed-Blue, *E. comyntas*, flew up and perched on a grass blade to bask after a brief shower, and Bill Haley was in the right place at the right time. Kim Crossman took the photo of the more brightly colored male Eastern Tailed-Blue below. Says Kim, “Now I’m always looking for butterflies!”

TNACI has become a good site for butterflies, such as the Fiery Skipper and Ocola Skipper, shown above.

**Left:** Pipevine Swallowtail caterpillar on Dutchman’s Pipevine in Bill Haley’s backyard.

**Above:** While taking photos of the caterpillar, this female Pipevine Swallowtail was laying eggs only 3 feet away!
More Photos From the Butterfly Counts

Sometimes a flower just won’t do. This Eastern Tiger Swallowtail was quite interested in a piece of a black ratsnake that had been run over on River Canyon Road in the gorge.

This little Summer Azure, *Celestrina ladon neglecta*, was photographed by Bill Haley during the fall TN River Gorge count Saturday, August 4.

Mike O’Brien got this shot of a very fresh Little Glassywing, *Pompius verna*, on the TN River Gorge count. In order to have a good species list, you must find a lot of different skippers, many of which would be considered LBJ’s (Little Brown Jobs). We had 19 skipper species on this count, including several LBJ types.

Any day you see a Goatweed Leafwing, *Anaea andria*, is a good day! Especially when it is a very fresh, newly-emerged individual like the one Libby Wolfe and Tommie Rogers found during the River Gorge count.

- Photo by Libby Wolfe
Gulf Fritillary, *Agraulis vanillae*, was very late to show up around Chattanooga this summer! Bill Haley took the photos above and below in his yard on August 10.

Speaking of butterflies that are late to make an appearance in 2018, this Painted Lady, *Vanessa cardui*, was photographed on August 15 in the Tennessee Aquarium butterfly garden near Riverside Drive. It was the first one Bill Haley had seen all year. This is very strange, because last summer we had the best Painted Lady flight in recent memory. They were so numerous that clouds of them showed up on Doppler weather radar in the upper Midwest. They were far more common here than the American Lady, which is the more expected species in our area. Now that one has been spotted, will they show up in numbers this late summer/early fall? Sorry for the fuzziness of the shot, but the butterfly was very nervous and wouldn’t allow a close approach.

### 2018 Butterfly Count Summary

**April 5**: Tennessee River Gorge, TN (spring)  
12 species, 187 adults

**May 4**: Soddy-Daisy, TN (spring)  
29 species, 149 individuals

**May 17**: Lookout Mountain, GA (spring)  
41 species, 420 individuals

**June 2**: Tennessee River Gorge, TN (summer)  
44 species, 425 individuals

**June 9**: Soddy-Daisy, TN (summer)  
35 species, 247 individuals

**June 16**: Williamsburg, KY (summer)  
16 species, 250 individuals

**June 30**: Lookout Mountain, GA (summer)  
34 species, 529 individuals

**July 12**: Stevenson, AL (summer)  
32 species, 412 individuals

**Aug. 4**: Tennessee River Gorge, TN (fall)  
51 species, 971 individuals

**Aug. 16**: Soddy-Daisy, TN (fall)  
40 species, 632 individuals

**Aug. 25**: Lookout Mountain, GA (fall)  
50 species, 1109 individuals
Is it a Snake? Bill Haley pried open a rolled leaf on the spicebush in his front yard and this *Spicebush Swallowtail* caterpillar was inside. The large fake eyespots make it look very much like the head of a green snake.

This Red Admiral caterpillar was found in a leaf nest on a false nettle plant during the Tennessee River Gorge count. Caterpillars have many ways to protect themselves, but hiding within leaves they bind together with silk seems to be a strategy used by many species.

This 1/2" Gulf Fritillary caterpillar hatched from one of the eggs laid by the female shown on page 8. Not only are they covered in spines, but the orange and black color is a warning to predators that they are distasteful if eaten. Despite appearances, they do not sting.

Mike O’Brien got this shot of a male Sachem that was caught by a large crab spider. Butterflies are more numerous in late summer, and their predators are waiting!

A Delaware Skipper, *Anatrytone logan*, shows off its long proboscis as it sips nectar from a thistle flower. A Clouded Skipper is in the background.  

How Uncommon is the Diana Fritillary on NABA Butterfly Counts? In 2017, 404 NABA counts were conducted. The Diana Fritillary, with a very limited range in the southern Appalachians, was found on 7 counts. In 2016, with 401 counts published, it was found on 8 counts. We found them on two counts this year. (See pages 2 & 10).
Phil & Martha Delestrez found this beautiful female Diana in a meadow area at Cloudland Canyon State Park during the Lookout Mtn., GA count. David and Scott Spicer also located another female Diana on the same count. We only found Diana Fritillary on 2 counts in 2018, and they were all female!

Dave Spicer got this exceptional shot of a Common Wood Nymph during the Lookout Mountain count.

First stop for Bill Haley’s party on the count was a field full of Black-eyed Susans. Many skippers were seen there, including this Common Checkered Skipper. Photo by Dennis Bishop.

This friendly Tawny Emperor really liked Susan Schott. (Or maybe it was just her sweaty wrist?)

There are worse ways to spend your day than walking through a field full of beautiful wildflowers and butterflies. Susan Schott and Mike O’Brien pose near where the butterfly above was found.

On August 30, Libby Wolfe photographed this Brazilian Skipper caterpillar, also known as the canna leafroller, in Bill’s yard as it stitched together a canna leaf nest he’d just pulled open.

Proof the Brazilian Skipper (see pg. 2, bottom left) wasn’t a figment of Bill’s imagination!