



Description of a New Subspecies of Common Sootywing, 'White-tufted' Common Sootywing, *Pholisora catullus albicirrus*

Here, to be conservative, I describe *Pholisora catullus albicirrus* Glassberg as a new subspecies, however, when better studied, it is possible that it is best treated as a full species.

While looking at as many Common and Mexican Sootywings as I could find, in preparation for my New Mexico trip, I noticed that Common Sootywings from southeastern Arizona had a number of notable differences from other Common Sootywings.

The most obvious difference is that on Common Sootywings in southeastern Arizona, 36 *American Butterflies*, Fall 2023

and northwestern Mexico, there is a white hair-tuft on the underside of the base of the HW. On other Common Sootywings, this hair-tuft is black (see arrow 1). Another difference is that on *albicirrus* white completely encircles the back of the eye while on *P. catullus catullus*, there is a black spot that connects, or almost connects, the black eye to the black thorax (see arrow 2, pages 36-37). Lastly, it appears that fresh *P. c. albicirrus* have gold scales at the base of the FW that *P. c. catullus* lack (see arrow 3, pages 36-37).



Opposite page: A 'White-tufted' Common Sootywing, *Pholisora catullus albicirrus*. July 25, 2018. South of Patagonia, Santa Cruz Co., AZ.

This page: A Common Sootywing, *Pholisora catullus catullus*. Sept. 3, 2022. Embudito Canyon, 6300 ft., Bernallilo Co., NM.

I examined about 100 images of sootywing individuals from the general and closely surrounding area where *albicirrus* is found and I could not find any area where both *albicirrus* and *catullus catullus* occurred together. Which isn't to say that there might not be such an area.

I did see two individuals, in Grant County, New Mexico, that might be hybrids of *albicirrus* and *catullus*. One of these possible hybrids is shown on page 38. Note that the hair-tuft is mainly gray, possibly with some white and that the black spot behind the eye is missing. There are no obvious gold scales at the base of the FW, however the individual is very worn.

'White-tufted' Common Sootywings occur west to at least Aliah, Maricopa County, Arizona; north at least to Cottonwood, Yavapai County, Arizona; east to Portal, Cochise County, Arizona and to road C004, Hidalgo County, New Mexico; and south through the Mexican states of Sonora and western Chihuahua to Mazatlan in the state of Sinaloa.

Individuals examined that are not *albicirrus*, include ones from south of Kanab, UT, near the Arizona state line; ones from the Springerville and Greens Peak areas of the Arizona White Mountains, individuals from just west of Virden, Hidalgo County, New Mexico and from Iron Creek Campground, Grant County, New Mexico.



Courtesy of Smithsonian Institution/Robert Robbins



Courtesy of Smithsonian Institution/Karie Darrow


MADERA CANYON
SANTA RITA MTS., ARIZ.
22 Aug. 1946
S. S. NICOLAY



In Mexico, individuals from Madera, CHH, from Buenos Aires in northern CHH, from Chihuahua, CHH and from Aguascalientes and Jalisco were not *albicirrus*. An approximate range drawing is shown on page 39.

One question arising is whether the type specimen of *Pholisora catullus* might be what I am now describing as *albicirrus*. *Pholisora catullus* was described by Fabricius in 1793 from an illustration on plate 80 of William Jones' *Icones* 6, the only copy of which is located in the Oxford University Museum of Natural History Library, in the U.K. and the type locality given as "in Indiis." The

location of the type specimen upon which the illustration was based, if extant, is unknown. An image, scanned from a photographic slide provided to the Smithsonian Institution by the Oxford University Library, was very kindly made available to me by Bob Robbins and the U.S. National Museum, Smithsonian Institution. It is shown above and it does not appear to be of *albicirrus*.

The holotype specimen of *Pholisora catullus albicirrus* Glassberg, is located in the U.S. National Museum, Smithsonian Institution, and is illustrated on page 39, along with its label. The name *albicirrus* is a non-latinized noun in apposition. 

Opposite page

Top: A 'White-tufted' Common Sootywing. July 28, 2020. Montosa Canyon, Santa Cruz Co., AZ.

Bottom left: A possible hybrid. June 4, 2023. North of Box Canyon Day Use Area, Grant Co., NM.

Bottom right: A drawing of *Pholisora catullus* Fabricius in Jones' *Icones*.

This page

Top: A Common Sootywing. June 15, 2017. Willows, Glenn Co., CA.

Middle: Holotype of *P.c. albicirrus*.

Bottom: A drawing of the approximate range of 'White-tufted' Common Sootywings.