

# Badger Butterfly

The e-Newsletter of the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association **AUGUST 2009**

WEB SITE: <http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabawba/>

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## 1 NEXT SWBA FIELD TRIPS. MARK YOUR CALENDAR !!

(For a complete list of SWBA field trips and butterfly counts, visit our Web site.)

### **Saturday, August 8: Butterflies of the Avoca/Blue River Area** **10:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

This annual trip will highlight several areas in the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway, including Avoca Prairie and Savanna State Natural Area in Iowa Co. and the Muscoda and Blue River units in Grant Co. Leader will be Mike Reese. We expect to see late butterflies and several southern immigrants. A hat and long pants are recommended. Bring a lunch and binoculars (the closer they focus the better). A few extra binoculars are available. This is a joint trip with the Madison Audubon Society.

Meet at 10:30 a.m. The trip may last until 5 p.m. Allow 1-1/4 hour travel time from Madison. To bypass road construction on Hwy 14, take Hwy 12 to the west instead. Before Sauk City turn left (south) on Hwy 78 which will take you back to Hwy 14. Follow 14 west to Lone Rock. Then go south on Hwy 130, then turn right on Hwy 133. Go west about 5.5 miles, turn right on Hay Rd, and drive north to the parking lot just before the creek. Call Mike at (920) 787-2341 if you have a question about the trip.

### **Saturday, September 12: Monarchs & Fall Flowers at Pheasant Branch Conservancy** **Noon - 3 p.m.**

Join us on a walk through the lovely Pheasant Branch Conservancy in Middleton. The many beautiful asters should be in bloom, and we hope lots of butterflies will be nectaring on these flowers. We can expect several species, including Monarchs, sulfurs, blues, and possibly some southern immigrants, such as Common Buckeye and Painted Lady. You never know what you may find! We will also learn more about restoration efforts at the conservancy. Long pants, a hat, water, and sturdy hiking shoes are recommended. Close-focusing binoculars are also useful. We will hike two or three miles. Leaders are Ann Thering and Dreux Watermolen. Co-sponsors are Friends of the

Pheasant Branch Conservancy and the Madison Audubon Society. Contact the trip leaders only if you have questions: Dreux Watermolen: (608) 266-8931, [dreux.watermolen@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:dreux.watermolen@dnr.state.wi.us), or Ann Thering, [therannc@yahoo.com](mailto:therannc@yahoo.com), (608) 836-1097.

Meet in Middleton at noon. The trip will last until 3 p.m. Directions: At the west end of Lake Mendota take Allen Boulevard north, then turn left on Century Avenue (Co. M). Track your mileage as you turn right onto Old Creek Road and then right on Pheasant Branch Road going north 1.2 miles to the small county parking lot on the right, at the beginning of the gated road.

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NABA Butterfly Park;  
Life Cycles from Janice Stiefel;  
Tough Monarch!

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## 3 HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT SWBA FIELD TRIPS

On July 11, Edgar Spalding led a group of 20 people in search of “**Pretty Things with Wings**” at the Lakeshore Preserve on the UW campus in Madison. We found birds including Bluebirds, Cedar Waxwings, Flicker and 5 species of Swallows. Best butterflies were Eastern Tailed-Blue, a pair of Black Swallowtails and a Mourning Cloak. We also observed dragonflies: Green Darners and Black Saddlebags.

(In the center of the photo, Mark Schwalbe seems to be impatiently checking his watch but he's actually watching a butterfly that landed on his hand to sip needed salts from sweat!)



Lakeshore Preserve

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On July 18 Rich Henderson led the group on a tour of the Prairie Enthusiasts' **Schurch-Thomson Prairie**. We found outstanding grassland birds: Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows and Dickcissel. We also encountered a singing Bell's Vireo! That's a very scarce bird!

The butterfly highlight was a Regal Fritillary that landed in the grass and allowed us to view it. Endangered, they are among our most beautiful butterflies. We also found a Banded Hairstreak, Delaware Skipper and a pair of Dun Skippers which, though common, were a new species for the Schurch-Thomson list. Duns belong to the "folded-wing" Skippers which can fully open the hindwings but the forewings are held at a 45 degree angle making them look like a little jet plane. The Dun is our most drab skipper but that makes them easy to identify! In the photo the female is at the top and the male is at the bottom.



Schurch-Thomson Prairie



Female and Male Dun Skippers

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On July 25 Scott Weber, Scott Sauer and Dorothy Legler led 17 people on a tour of the fabulous **Scuppernong Prairie** in the Southern Kettle Moraine. We enjoyed the White-fringed Orchid and other flowers. It was too windy for good butterflying but highlights included Great Spangled and Aphrodite Fritillaries, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail and Mourning Cloak.

### 3 LOCAL NABA BUTTERFLY COUNTS CONFIRM EFFECTS OF COOL SUMMER!

The summer of 2009 has been much cooler than average. The first half of summer in the Madison area showed the lowest average temperature in the past 17 years. And the average temperature in July was the coldest on record! In fact it was a full degree below the previous record! How does the cool weather impact our butterflies? To find out let's look at the results of 4 all-day NABA butterfly counts conducted around the state during July, 2009. These annual counts are associated with SWBA.

DATE	LOCATION	TOTAL	HOURS	INDIVIDUALS PER HOUR	WAS THIS LOW FOR THIS COUNT?
July 5	Madison	319	13.8	23.12	<b>4th lowest in 19 years!</b>
July 9	Trempealeau	200	10.8	18.5	<b>Lowest in 20 years!</b>
July 15	No. Kettle Moraine	194	7.5	25.9	<b>2nd lowest in 13 years. Only 46% of average year!</b>
July 20	Sister Bay	299	8.2	36.46	<b>Lowest in 9 years!</b>

These counts involved from 4 to 12 counters. The table shows the total number of butterflies seen and the number of hours of counting. The rate of butterflies per hour allows comparison with other years. The result shows that our record cool summer has seriously reduced butterfly populations. Worst was at Trempealeau which also suffered some dryness. At Northern Kettle Moraine less than half an average year's butterflies were present.

Currently Wisconsin is experiencing drought conditions, centered in the northern 1/3 of Wisconsin. The northern 80% of the state is abnormally dry to severe drought. There is also extreme drought in Texas and Mexico. Drought may set butterflies wandering so it is still possible to get some rare migrants during the remainder of August and September.

This data also illustrates the usefulness of NABA butterfly counts in monitoring butterfly populations. We had the best butterfly year (in anyone's memory) in 2007. But that year has been followed by two wet or cool summers that have seriously limited butterfly populations. If things warm up over the next month perhaps our butterflies can recover somewhat. We all hope, and expect, that next summer will be better for butterflies. In the meantime watch out for late summer rarities such as ones mentioned in the next section!

#### **4 JULY BUTTERFLIES REPORTED TO [www.wisconsinbutterflies.org](http://www.wisconsinbutterflies.org)**

Mike Reese's butterfly Web site received 118 reports during July involving thousands of butterflies. Because of the cool summer fewer rarities have been seen. Nevertheless there are still butterflies out there including rarities. The most interesting reports have been two sightings in northwestern Wisconsin of **Reakirt's Blue** which migrates, in small numbers, into the state from its home base in the Southwestern states.

Other scarce butterflies being reported (with number of reports) are Common Buckeye (2), Bog Copper (3), Gray Copper (1), Purplish Copper (3), Purplish Fritillary (1), Regal Fritillary (1), Variegated Fritillary (1), Byssus Skipper (1), Ottoo Skipper (1), Mottled Duskywing (1), and Wild Indigo Duskywing (1)

Be sure to share your observations by submitting your own reports online this summer.

#### **5 LAST CHANCE: LAKE WALES, FLORIDA !! Regional NABA Meeting, September 25-27, 2009 Deadline for registration is Sept 10.**

This is a wonderful opportunity to visit some great butterfly areas with expert leaders! Quoting from the brochure: "The month of September is the best time of year to see some of the rarer butterflies found in central Florida. Join us for field trips to natural areas and to one of the most amazing butterfly gardens in the state. Field trips for beginners and experts alike!"

Field trips will go to Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park, Bull Creek Wildlife Management Area and Triple N Ranch Wildlife Management Area. They have a great list of top-notch leaders, including Jeff Glassberg (Butterflies Through Binoculars), Rick Cech (Butterflies of the East Coast) and many others. Trips run 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Registration is \$120 per person (for NABA members) and includes the Friday Evening Welcome program, Saturday evening Banquet and Program; all tours; field trips and programs, box lunches on Saturday and Sunday; drinks and snacks. For **non-members** the fee is \$150 but it includes NABA membership (you get American Butterflies and Butterfly Gardener quarterly magazines). You can stay at Westgate River Ranch Resort for \$89/night; (Deadline to book the Resort at this price is August 24.) Camping is also available. See you there!!



Download the Brochure: <http://www.naba.org/chapters/florida/NABAStateBrochure2009.pdf>  
Download the Registration Form: <http://www.naba.org/chapters/florida/MeetingRegForm2009.pdf>  
More details at: <http://www.naba.org/chapters/florida/meeting.html>  
Email Lisa Lewis at [lewis@naba.org](mailto:lewis@naba.org) for more information.

## 6 BUTTERFLY NEWS NOTES:

This spring the construction of the **Welcome Center** at the NABA International Butterfly Park in Mission, Texas was delayed owing to the recession. Fortunately NABA has now succeeded in raising additional financial support so construction of the Welcome Center is scheduled to start in November. Construction should be finished by May of 2010.

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Marcie O'Connor has put up links to **82 new life cycles** - mostly moths, but a few butterflies and a few sawflies. They were part of the life work of **Janice Stiefel**, of Door County, Wisconsin. Here's the post Marcie wrote about Janice, and links to all her life cycles. Follow this link and go to the bottom of that page:

[http://www.buglifecycle.com/?page\\_id=110](http://www.buglifecycle.com/?page_id=110)

There's more information about **Janice** on the contributor's page of BugLifeCycles (go to the bottom of the page): [http://www.buglifecycle.com/?page\\_id=90](http://www.buglifecycle.com/?page_id=90)

Thanks to Marcie O'Connor from Buffalo County, Wisconsin

[Editor's Note: Janice and John Stiefel have participated in the Sister Bay NABA Butterfly Count (cited in Section 3 above) during the past 9 years and their property is included in the count. Janice was also the newsletter editor for the Wisconsin Entomological Society.]

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We saw this note recently on WisBirdNet (Wisconsin birding email list) from Kevin Kearns in Neenah: "While hiking the walls at Whitefish dunes State Park (Door County) yesterday, we came across a **Monarch** butterfly feeding on campanula and columbine along a cliff face. Phoebe and I tried to shoo him away from the dangerous area, but to no avail, he remained stubborn. I began videotaping the force of the waves hitting the cliff face next to us, and while taping it, the butterfly decided to fly right down into the waves. I thought he was dead for sure, but he flew out only to fly right back into the next wave. Knowing now that he was dead, I was shocked when he flew out again and after taking a third hit from a wave flew to a cedar tree on top out of range of the water where he dried himself off. I definitely have a new respect for butterflies and their toughness after seeing this."

**The Badger ButterFlyer flits to you every month (every other month in winter).  
The next issue will be in SEPTEMBER.**

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## SWBA

The Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association (SWBA) is a non-profit Wisconsin chapter of the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) which is the largest organization of people interested in butterflies. SWBA promotes public awareness, conservation and the enjoyment of butterflies through observation with close-focusing binoculars, chapter field trips, educational meetings, photography, butterfly gardening, monitoring and travel. SWBA's events are open to the public.

To become a member of SWBA simply join NABA. Membership benefits include 2 color quarterly magazines "American Butterflies" and "Butterfly Gardening". Please use the membership form on the SWBA website at <http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabawba/>

Our e-Newsletter, the Badger ButterFlyer, will be published monthly in spring to fall and every other month in winter. Send any news notes to the editor, Karl Legler, at [karlndot@charter.net](mailto:karlndot@charter.net)

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