

Badger ButterFlyer

The e-Newsletter of the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association

SEPTEMBER, 2016

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

1 NEXT SWBA MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2016

at 7:00 p.m., in the meeting room of the **Fitchburg Public Library, 5530 Lacy Road, Fitchburg, WI. (Mark your calendar!)**



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1. **NEXT SWBA MEETING OCT. 12**
2. **HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT TRIPS.**
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 - ◆ Shea Prairie
 - ◆ Walking Iron County Park
 - ◆ Lower Wisconsin Riverway
3. **Recent Butterfly Reports.**
4. **Long-term Butterfly Data**
5. **Butterfly News**
6. **Oberhauser will talk on Monarchs**
7. **NABA Biennial Meeting Oct 29-Nov 1.**

Public Programs:

1) **BAUER BROCKWAY BARRENS PRIDE: Your Butterfly Counting Counts!"**

Internationally known butterfly researcher **Ann Swengel** will give a program on how she and other researchers are using "**4th of July**" **NABA Count data** to find out not just negative but also positive trends, learn about climate change, and also unexpected outcomes--including on Regal Fritillaries in Wisconsin. Ann will also discuss other volunteer-collected butterfly data and touch on Monarch, Frosted Elfin, grass-skippers, etc.

Ann Swengel is an internationally known butterfly researcher from Baraboo, Wisconsin. She and her ornithologist husband, Scott, have extensively surveyed the populations of prairie butterflies in 5 states, and of Wisconsin barrens and bog butterfly species, for more than 25 years. They have published many dozens of scientific articles. Ann serves on the editorial board of the Journal of Insect Conservation, a global journal based in Europe.

2) **PHOTOS FROM DAN SONNENBERG'S BUTTERFLY BIG YEAR!**

A "Big Year" is familiar to birders. It is an attempt to see as many species of birds, or in this case butterflies, as you can, in one year. That is a challenging adventure! So far as your editor knows this is the first Butterfly Big Year ever done in Wisconsin!

Everyone is invited to attend this free program. The meeting will last from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 or so. We will have displays, handouts and plenty of time afterward to enjoy snacks and refreshments, and talk with our speakers and other butterfly enthusiasts.

VOLUNTEER WANTED!: For this meeting we are asking for a volunteer to bring treats and beverage. If you can do this, please call Dorothy Legler at (608) 643-4926. Thanks!

DIRECTIONS TO MEETING:

From the Beltline, take Fish Hatchery Road (= County D) south for about 2.4 miles and turn left (east) at Lacy Rd. After 1 block the library is on the left, at the intersection of Lacey Rd. and Research Park Rd. Continue on Lacy and take the entrance road around the far (east) end of the library to access parking near the entrance, (behind the library). **OR** if you prefer to park underground, turn left (north) onto Research Park Rd and then turn right into the ramp leading to the underground parking lot.

2 HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT FIELD TRIPS

HIGHLIGHTS of Page Creek Field Trip

Dan Sonnenberg led this trip on July 9. We had a smaller group of butterflyers but that was ideal for a field trip! It was a nice area and Dan coaxed a beautiful American Copper onto his hand. (A photo opportunity!) We ate lunch at John Muir County Park.



HIGHLIGHTS of Butterflies of Shea Prairie

Douglas Buege and Eric Preston led this trip to a prairie owned and managed by the Prairie Enthusiasts. This was a good butterfly year and we had ideal weather. About 20 people found 13 species. Highlights include Common Buckeye, and **a dozen of the beautiful endangered Regal Fritillaries**.



Black Swallowtail 6
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail 1
Cabbage White 1
Clouded Sulphur 2
Eastern Tailed-Blue 2

Great Spangled Fritillary 6
Regal Fritillary 12
Meadow Fritillary 1
Pearl Crescent 6
Common Buckeye 1

Common Wood-Nymph 20
Monarch 1
Least Skipper 1

HIGHLIGHTS of Walking Iron County Park

Karl and Dorothy Legler led this trip on July 23. Unfortunately, we had very poor weather: heavy overcast, and then thunder caused us to quit early. It rained about 2 hours earlier than forecast. Nevertheless, 9 of us found 14 species. Highlights were American Copper, Common Roadside Skipper, Giant Swallowtails, and Little Yellow.

Here are the butterflies seen on this trip:

Giant Swallowtail 3
Cabbage White 2
Little Yellow 1
American Copper 3
Banded Hairstreak 1

Eastern Tailed-Blue 4
Great Spangled Fritillary 1
Pearl Crescent 7
Eastern Comma 1
Common Wood-Nymph 5

Monarch 1
Silver-spotted Skipper 2
Northern Broken-Dash 1
Common Roadside-Skipper 1

HIGHLIGHTS of Lower Wisconsin Riverway Field Trip

This trip was held on August 6. 15 participants used binoculars to observe **264 butterflies of 33 species**. 33 ties our previous record from 2013 and 264 is the 2nd highest number of individuals. Led by Mike Reese, we found **6 southern immigrants**: Red Admiral, Common Buckeye, Fiery Skipper, Common Checkered-Skipper, Little Yellow and *the first Sleepy Orange of the year*. Other species of interest were Common Roadside-Skipper, Common Sootywing, Harvester (coaxed onto Dan Sonnenberg's finger),



Common Checkered-Skipper

Tawny-edged Skipper, Aphrodite Fritillary and Gray Comma. A cluster of 16 male Eastern Tailed-Blues were sipping nutrients from moist sand, and **Hackberry Emperors repeatedly landed on us!** Photo of Emperor on car window by Dan Sonnenberg. Species seen are listed below:



Hackberry Emperor resting on windshield.

Black Swallowtail 4
Giant Swallowtail 4
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail 13
Cabbage White 5
Clouded Sulphur 3
Orange Sulphur 2
Little Yellow 25
Sleepy Orange 1
Harvester 1
Eastern Tailed-Blue 48
'Summer' Spring Azure 2

Great Spangled Fritillary 2
Aphrodite Fritillary 1
Pearl Crescent 19
Eastern Comma 9
Gray Comma 4
American Lady 1
Red Admiral 10
Common Buckeye 4
Red-spotted Purple 4
Hackberry Emperor 13
Common Wood-Nymph 19

Monarch 22
Silver-spotted Skipper 1
Common Checkered-Skipper 1
Common Sootywing 18
Least Skipper 14
Fiery Skipper 1
Peck's Skipper 1
Tawny-edged Skipper 5
Northern Broken-Dash 1
Dun Skipper 1
Common Roadside-Skipper 5

3 RECENT BUTTERFLY REPORTS TO wisconsinbutterflies.org

TOTAL REPORTS RECEIVED SO FAR IN 2016: 1,653

(Each report is of numbers for several species.)

SOME COMMONLY SEEN RESIDENTS:

Cabbage White
Clouded Sulphur
Eastern Tailed-Blue

Summer Azure
Pearl Crescent
Orange Sulphur

Eastern Comma
Monarch
Silver-spotted Skipper

(NON-RESIDENT) IMMIGRANTS:

These more southern butterflies expand northward during the season and reach Wisconsin, mostly in late July, August and September. If they find a mate or are females that have already mated, and if they find suitable caterpillar food plants, they can breed here. So early arrivals can produce a 2nd generation. But they cannot tolerate our cold winter and so either don't survive over winter OR, for some species, they will migrate southward to escape the increasing cold.

As I mention in the next article, 2016 is the 4th best year for southern immigrants out of the past 10 or more years. That's probably due to the combination of mild winter, warm weather here and to the south, and especially this has been a rainy year so that food plants have flourished and therefore so have caterpillars. Here is a summary of immigrants this year, up to mid- September.

Common Buckeye One of the outstanding immigrants of the year. It's especially beautiful and this year reports have been numerous. Though most sightings have been of 1-2 individuals, beginning in late August there have been 7 reports of more than 10 individuals. And one lengthy outing by the Swengels produced 43! At this time of year, Common Buckeyes are migrating back south.

Fiery Skipper This has been a good year for Fiery Skipper. Though most sightings are of 1-2 individuals, 4 reports found more than 10 and one report was of 20.



Common Buckeye

Little Yellow There were 27 reports this year and 7 reports of more than 10 individuals, the highest was 31.
Dainty Sulphur 9 reports of a total of 23 individuals. (*Only 2-3 seen in the previous 2 years!*)
Sachem 16 individuals reported. (Only 2 individuals in previous 2 years.)
Painted Lady Down in numbers! Only 16 individuals sighted this year. (FEWER than in each of last 3 years!)
Common Checkered-Skipper Not common up here in Wisconsin! 13 individuals sighted this year. (But only 1 seen in previous two years!)
Reakirt's Blue This was the rare butterfly of the year! 8 individuals were found but that is unusually high for this very rare butterfly! (Only 1 individual in previous 4 years!)
American Snout Found primarily in the riparian habitat of its caterpillar food plant (Hackberry trees), 7 individuals have been reported. (More than in previous 3 years.)
Gray Hairstreak 7 have been reported. (More than the last 2 years.)
Variagated Fritillary Five reports. (More than the last 2 years.)
Sleepy Orange Two reports. (Only 1 in previous 3 years!)
Southern Dogface Just 2 individuals at a single site! (Only 1 in previous 3 years!)



Reakirt's Blue
 Photo by
 Dan Sonnenberg.

[Keep sending reports to wisconsinbutterflies.org](http://wisconsinbutterflies.org)

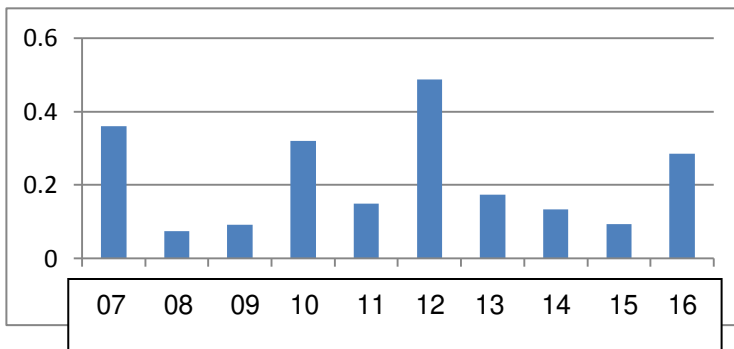
4 USING NABA BUTTERFLY COUNTS TO EXAMINE LONG-TERM TRENDS.

Recently I received an email from a person living in southeast Wisconsin who was concerned about a lack of butterflies on his property compared with years ago and wondered if NABA data could provide information on changes in butterfly populations. It is difficult to evaluate butterfly populations by long-term recollections because butterfly populations are variable and we tend to remember past years with high numbers (e.g. sulphurs) but forget years with low numbers. It is even hard to compare year to year from memory because of seasonal variation. Many factors are involved in local butterfly populations: especially, they vary substantially with weather. In this case eight southeastern counties have had an "abnormally dry" spell since July. Dry conditions

reduce plant growth and so fewer caterpillars are produced. (On the other hand, *southwestern* Wisconsin has had up to double the usual rainfall and flash flooding!)

A better way to evaluate longer-term trends is with a yearly all-day NABA census at various areas around the state. We have put all the data from up to 8 all-day summer counts that we and others have participated in, into a summary of the yearly totals over some 28 years. We plan on showing some of the results in future issues of the Badger ButterFlyer. First we look at **immigrant species** in just the last decade--which is the time frame where we have the best data for immigrants.

Total number of Immigrant species found per hour of observation. The most outstanding year for immigrants was 2012. (But good immigrant years tend to be hot years and in the 2nd half of that year we saw the worst drought in Wisconsin in a quarter century!) By this graph we can make a rough ranking of immigrant years in the past decade as:



- 1) **2012**
- 2) **2007**
- 3) **2010**
- 4) **2016** - the 4th strongest year for immigrant species in the past decade!

5 BUTTERFLY NEWS

NEONICOTINOID PESTICIDES HARM BEES. DO THEY HARM BUTTERFLIES TOO?

Preliminary answer is yes. Read this very short report at University of Washington Conservation website.

<http://conservationmagazine.org/2016/08/neonicotinoids-and-butterflies/>

HOW ONE MAN REPOPULATED A RARE BUTTERFLY SPECIES IN HIS BACKYARD

The California Pipevine Swallowtail is a rare northern California subspecies of the Pipevine Swallowtail.

<http://www.vox.com/2016/7/6/12098122/california-pipevine-swallowtail-butterfly-population>

ANOTHER THREAT TO MONARCHS IN MEXICO?

"A Mine vs. a Million Monarchs" Read this interesting article from New York Times on mining and the Monarch Reserve in Mexico.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/01/opinion/sunday/in-a-poor-mexican-town-saving-butterflies-or-creating-jobs.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&version=Moth-Visible&moduleDetail=inside-nyt-region-3&module=inside-nyt-region®ion=inside-nyt-region&WT.nav=inside-nyt-region&r=0>

NUMBERS PROJECTED FOR THIS WINTER'S MONARCH POPULATION

Here in Wisconsin our NABA counts suggest that the state has produced the 3rd lowest population in the past 28 years, not much above what we saw in the worst Monarch year of 2013. However, the final count in Mexico in December includes Monarch's from all over eastern North America so it will be interesting to see the results. Here are two reports from Monarch Watch discussing what is going on with Monarchs this year. It is worth reading.

<http://monarchwatch.org/blog/>

6 OBERHAUSER TO GIVE TALK ON MONARCHS IN MADISON

Monarch Butterflies: Dwindling Numbers For an Iconic Insect

October 18 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

At the **UW Arboretum Visitor Center**, 1207 Seminole Highway, Madison, WI

(Sponsored by the Madison Audubon Society and the Wisconsin Chapter of the Society for Conservation Biology.)

"Karen Oberhauser, one of the nation's top monarch conservation biologists, will describe the amazing biology of migratory monarch populations, and the work of citizens and scientists in documenting monarch numbers at all stages of their migratory cycle."



7 NABA 12th BIENNIAL MEMBERS' MEETING, Oct. 29 - Nov. 1, 2016

<http://www.naba.org/>

Every other year NABA members get together for outstanding butterflying somewhere in North America. Every 6 years the Biennial Meeting is in Mission, TX at NABA's fabulous 140 acre National Butterfly Center. The Biennial Meeting will coincide with the Texas Butterfly Festival. We will visit spectacular butterfly sites around the Lower Rio Grande River Valley. The 4-day event will be held on October 29 - November 1, 2016. (Non-members can still go to the meeting. There is an additional \$25 charge which pays for one year of NABA membership.) See you at the bottom of Texas!!



Long-tailed Skipper

**The Badger ButterFlyer flits to you every month from spring into fall.
The next issue will be in November.**

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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 Web site at <http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabawba/>

Our e-Newsletter, the Badger ButterFlyer, will be published monthly in spring to fall. Send any news notes to the editor, Karl Legler, at karlndot@charter.net

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