

# Badger ButterFlyer

The e-Newsletter of the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association

A chapter of NABA (North American Butterfly Association) **JUNE, 2020**

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

## 1 2020 FIELD TRIP SEASON CANCELLED!

**Due to the continuing Corona Virus Pandemic, SWBA has decided to not conduct any Field Trips for the rest of the year. This eliminates the risk of infection for both the trip participants and the leaders.**

Nevertheless, SWBA wants to encourage you to get out and observe butterflies during the summer. There are many interesting **State Parks, State Forests, Wildlife Areas, State Natural Areas** that can be explored. You can walk trails or park your car off of back roads and sample the roadside butterflies, then move on. You can report your sightings to Mike Reese's Wisconsin Butterflies website. You can even submit photos if you have a camera. And if you visit wildlife areas *outside* of Wisconsin you can still submit a report and any photos to NABA's Recent Sightings website *which is also run by Mike Reese!*

<https://sightings.naba.org/>

### IN THIS ISSUE:

1. 2020 Field Trips CANCELLED.
2. Monarch Winter Population.
3. Recent Butterfly Sightings!
4. 2019 Mud Lake NABA Count.
5. In Memory of Peter Fissel.
6. Swengel's Update on Frosted Elfin.

## 2 2019 SUMMER WAS TERRIFIC FOR MONARCHS! DID THEY HAVE A TERRIFIC MEXICAN WINTERING POPULATION?

**NO THEY DID NOT!** Wayne Throgmorton said, "World Wildlife Fund-Mexico just announced a 2.83 ha estimate of overwinter area occupied by the eastern monarch butterfly population in Mexico this winter (2019-2020). This estimate means that the population falls below the 4.0 ha threshold necessary to support the contention that the population has significantly increased since 2013." **Here is an excerpt from the article by Professor Agrawal linked below.**

"A year ago, we reported that the population was huge and the overwintering population in Mexico was the highest in 12 years, higher than predicted by many. Last summer (2019) the number of monarchs in the USA was also huge, leading many of us to predict a great migration and population making it to Mexico. Nonetheless, this points to the critical issue of the migration itself, what happens after the caterpillars feed on milkweed. Chip Taylor has noted that "the two biggest factors that appear to account for the lower numbers this winter are the lateness of the migration and the drought in Texas." As I have previously argued, there is often



a disconnect between summer breeding populations of monarchs and the overwintering population. Indeed, this means that limitation of milkweed host plant was not the driver of this year's halving of the population. Annual fluctuations in spring and summer rains and temperature, coupled with the autumn climate, which dictates the trajectory of the southern migration, have apparently been leading to migratory failure.

Drought, in particular, reduces milkweed quality during the breeding season, and perhaps more importantly, reduces availability of flowers and nectar (of other plant species) during the autumn migration." [emphasis added]

Here is the full article, "Monarch population size over winter 2019-2020 announced by WWF Mexico: not great news!" by Anurag Agrawal (author of the book Monarchs and Milkweed and a Professor at Cornell University) <http://www.eeb.cornell.edu/agrawal/2020/03/14/monarch-population-size-over-winter-2018-2019-announced-and-its-good-news-2/>

### 3 BUTTERFLIES REPORTED ON [wisconsinbutterflies.org](http://wisconsinbutterflies.org) FIRST OF YEAR 2020 SPRING SIGHTINGS

Below are listed the 58 species reported in the 3 months of meteorological spring (March - May). After the number is the date first reported, then the species. Names in bold type are Endangered, Threatened or of Special Concern. If the species has an asterisk (\*), its spring flight is its only flight of the year. (However, species of late May will still be flying in June.) The species without asterisk can be seen again later in the year, in a second generation's flight period, or in a continuous prolonged flight period. (Species with a N (north), or C(Central Wis.) or W(west) indicate that their range does not significantly extend down to Southern Wisconsin.)

|    |          |                           |      |    |        |                             |       |
|----|----------|---------------------------|------|----|--------|-----------------------------|-------|
| 1  | March 1  | Eastern Comma             |      | 30 | May 15 | <b>Gorgone Checkerspot</b>  |       |
| 2  | March 17 | Mourning Cloak            |      | 31 | May 15 | Sleepy Duskywing*           | W     |
| 3  | March 27 | Compton Tortoiseshell     | N, C | 32 | May 15 | <b>Persius Duskywing*</b>   | C     |
| 4  | April 10 | Cabbage White             |      | 33 | May 15 | <b>Mottled Duskywing</b>    | N, C  |
| 5  | April 11 | Spring Azure*             |      | 34 | May 15 | <b>Columbine Duskywing</b>  |       |
| 6  | April 11 | Green Comma               | N    | 35 | May 15 | Wild Indigo Duskywing       |       |
| 7  | April 19 | Olympia Marble*           |      | 36 | May 15 | Silver-spotted Skipper      |       |
| 8  | April 25 | Mustard White             | N, C | 37 | May 15 | Northern Cloudywing*        |       |
| 9  | April 25 | Red Admiral               |      | 38 | May 19 | Pink-edged Sulphur          | N, C  |
| 10 | April 26 | Hoary Elfin*              | N, C | 39 | May 20 | <b>West Virginia White*</b> | N     |
| 11 | April 26 | Henry's Elfin*            | N, C | 40 | May 20 | Monarch                     |       |
| 12 | April 26 | Brown Elfin*              | N, C | 41 | May 20 | Red-disked Alpine*          | N     |
| 13 | April 26 | Juvenal's Duskywing*      |      | 42 | May 20 | Canadian Tiger Swallowtail  | N, C  |
| 14 | April 26 | <b>Painted Lady</b>       |      | 43 | May 20 | Freija Fritillary*          | N     |
| 15 | April 30 | Meadow Fritillary         |      | 44 | May 20 | Jutta Arctic*               | N, C  |
| 16 | April 30 | Pearl Crescent            |      | 45 | May 22 | Frigga Fritillary*          | N     |
| 17 | April 30 | American Lady             |      | 46 | May 24 | Pepper and Salt Skipper     | N, C  |
| 18 | May 1    | Eastern Tiger Swallowtail |      | 47 | May 24 | Western Tailed-Blue*        | N     |
| 19 | May 2    | Question Mark             |      | 48 | May 24 | <b>Karner Blue</b>          | NW, C |
| 20 | May 2    | Black Swallowtail         |      | 49 | May 24 | <b>Dusted Skipper*</b>      | W     |
| 21 | May 2    | Clouded Sulphur           |      | 50 | May 25 | Giant Swallowtail           |       |
| 22 | May 2    | Eastern Tailed-Blue       |      | 51 | May 26 | Tawny-edged Skipper*        |       |
| 23 | May 3    | <b>Frosted Elfin*</b>     | C    | 52 | May 26 | Hobomok Skipper*            |       |
| 24 | May 3    | Eastern Pine Elfin*       | N, C | 53 | May 26 | Northern Crescent*          |       |
| 25 | May 3    | Dreamy Duskywing*         |      | 54 | May 26 | Little Wood Satyr*          |       |
| 26 | May 6    | Silvery Blue*             |      | 55 | May 26 | Common Ringlet*             | N, C  |
| 27 | May 14   | Common Roadside-Skipper   |      | 56 | May 30 | Arctic Skipper*             | N, C  |
| 28 | May 15   | Harvester                 |      | 57 | May 31 | Common Sootywing            |       |
| 29 | May 15   | American Copper           |      | 58 | May 31 | <b>Chryxus Arctic*</b>      | N     |

One of the more striking butterflies of this spring was the **Painted Lady**. They are not permanent residents of Wisconsin (can't survive the winter). But they are two-way migrants that originate in Northern Mexico and the Southwest U.S. and make their way north to Wisconsin in summer, in moderate numbers, breed here, and then return South in the fall. Usually uncommon, they can invade in large numbers in some years. For example, in **2015**, the first reported Painted Lady was as late as June 8 and had only a single report in August. In **2016** I reported that "Painted Lady has been pretty scarce this year." But then in **2017** the first report was early, on April 8, with 60 reports in August, including many sightings of multiple Ladies. But then in **2018**, the population crashed; the first report was as late as July 17 !! But in **2019** Painted Lady was reported as



**Painted Lady. The Fall return flight is at great height.**

early as April 19 and in August there were roughly 180 reports. It became an outstanding year for the Painted Lady, which is one of our more attractive butterflies. Painted Lady caterpillars have the ability to detoxify many plant poisons so it can eat 100 different species of plant. Its range is global and Painted Ladies migrate from Africa to Europe and back in the course of a year, which is a 9,000 mile route. This involves multiple generations of Ladies. Now this year, **2020**, the Painted Lady has been reported on April 26, even earlier than its *resident* sibling species, the American Lady. And in the following 30 days there were another 11 reports. So it may be that the mild winter did not knock them very far south and they are in a good position to have another strong year in Wisconsin!

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

## 4 LEFTOVER FROM 2019: MUD LAKE NABA COUNT

We did not have enough space in last summer's Badger Butterflyer to include the results of this NABA Butterfly Count. On July 1, 2019, Madison Audubon counted butterflies at Goose Pond property and SWBA counted butterflies within the rest of the 15 mile diameter circle. Altogether, 15 counters, in 6 parties, counted for a total of 21 hours of observation and found 651 butterflies of 30 species. We began with light rain but unexpectedly the sky cleared up and became mostly sunny for the rest of the day! We found the highest number of **Least Skippers** ever



**Karner Blue.**

(73) and the **Monarch** was the most abundant butterfly (126)! We found a new species for the 31-year count: a **Karner Blue!** The Karner Blues, Federally Endangered, had been found by Lester Doyle, less than a week before the count. That was a Columbia County record and perhaps the most Southern Karner in Wisconsin. And they were within the count circle! Luckily a Karner Blue was found on the day of the count! The total number of butterfly species found in this circle over the 31 years is 69! Below is the full list of 2019 results:

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail 1  
 Black Swallowtail 4  
 Cabbage White 15  
 Clouded Sulphur 12  
 Orange Sulphur 1  
**Bronze Copper 4**  
 Banded Hairstreak 2  
 Eastern Tailed-Blue 4  
 Summer Azure 9  
**Karner Blue 1**

Great Spangled Fritillary 8  
 Pearl Crescent 34  
 Northern Crescent 100  
**Baltimore Checkerspot 8**  
 Eastern Comma 3  
**Gray Comma 1**  
 American Lady 22  
**Painted Lady 5**  
 Red Admiral 119  
**Common Buckeye 1**

Viceroy 4  
 Hackberry Emperor 13  
**Tawny Emperor 2**  
 Common Wood Nymph 8  
 Eyed Brown 9  
**Appalachian Brown 1**  
**Monarch 126**  
 Silver-spotted Skipper 60  
**Least Skipper 73**  
**Mulberry Wing 1**



**Bronze Copper.**  
Photo by Jim Otto.



**Northern Crescent.** Photo  
Record for Columbia County.  
Photo by Jim Otto.



**Tawny Emperor.** Usually uncommon, but 2019  
was a good year for their population.

## 5 IN MEMORY OF PETER FISSEL



**Peter Fissel.** Photo by  
Madison Audubon  
Society.

Peter Fissel, 63, a longtime member of Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, list administrator for Wisconsin Bird Net (Wisbirdn), field trip coordinator and a trip leader for the Madison Audubon Society, died in Madison on April 23, 2020, after a battle with pancreatic cancer.

Peter regularly attended SWBA meetings, helped to spot butterflies on our field trips, had agreed to become the field trips coordinator for SWBA, and helped on NABA Counts for many years, especially the Madison Count, Mud Lake Count, Dubuque Count and Northern Kettle Moraine Count.

His death is a tragic loss for SWBA and for the many field trip participants that knew him. He will truly be greatly missed.

## 6 AN UPDATE TO ANN SWENDEL'S GUIDES TO WISCONSIN BUTTERFLY HOTSPOTS IS NOW AVAILABLE ON WEBSITE

This three-page guide is an update to "The Beguiling Butterflies of the Jackson County Pine-Oak Barrens" published in 2009. Since then, an underground gas pipeline was installed right through prime habitat in Jackson County for **Frosted Elfin** (state listed as threatened). The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) implemented many measures to mitigate the effects of the pipeline. This update reports on observations of how Frosted Elfin have responded. The Stanton Creek Road area has had a wonderful revival of Frosted Elfin detectability. The conservation measures



**Frosted Elfin**  
(Threatened species)

implemented by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources were particularly effective here. Additional sites in the pipeline right-of-way with good Frosted Elfin detectability are also noted. The pipeline installation didn't work out as well at the South Brockway ATV Trail. We did not find Frosted Elfin here in 2019; we last found it here in 2016, which was since the pipeline was installed. Updates on Frosted Elfin detectability at sites unaffected by the pipeline are also

provided.

This guide is based on years of surveys by Ann and Scott Swengel.

Click on <https://www.naba.org/chapters/nabawba/watching.html#Anchor-Guides-49575>

Find the title: **Update on Finding Frosted Elfin in Jackson County, Wisconsin** and click to download the PDF file.

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**The ButterFlyer flits to you every month in summer. The next issue will be in JULY, 2020.**

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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](mailto:karlndot@charter.net)

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