

All the news that's flit to print

# Badger ButterFlyer



The e-newsletter of the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association

A chapter of NABA (North American Butterfly Association)

AUGUST, 2024

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

## 1 NEXT FIELD TRIP/COUNT AVOCA

**Saturday, August 10 10am-3pm**

**Leader: Mike Reese**

Southern immigrants, in certain years, flock to the prairie remnants along the Wisconsin River near the town of Avoca. On this trip and count, you'll meet at the wet prairie east of Avoca and travel to other parcels west of Avoca, potentially visiting locations near Blue River.

**Think yellow!** Little Yellows, Sleepy Oranges, Dainty Sulphurs can sometimes be seen on this trip. Patches of Partridge Pea draw some of these southerners.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take Hwy 14 west to Lone Rock, south on Hwy 130 then turn right on Hwy 133. Go west about 5.0 miles, turn right on Hay Road, and drive north to the first parking area.

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## 2 WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THE MONARCHS (AND FRITS)?

Though our evidence is currently anecdotal, multiple butterflyers are remarking on the scarcity of butterflies starting in early July. Common Milkweed's blossoming and none of our larger butterflies seem to be paying any attention. The same is true of Monarda. I've witnessed skippers on the blooms but in small numbers. We had a very early spring followed by more precipitation than we've seen in years. June had a lot of butterflies, then.... Particularly concerning is the scarcity of Monarchs and Fritillaries. In typical years, I'd see them throughout the day all over the place. Now I'm lucky to see one in a day.

I asked resident Monarch expert Karen Oberhauser to explain the sudden decline. Go to [www.naba.org/chapters/swba](http://www.naba.org/chapters/swba) to read her response which is too lengthy for this newsletter. Also, Butterfly Conservation reports about the loss of UK butterflies which you can find at [tinyurl.com/Butterfly-decline](http://tinyurl.com/Butterfly-decline)



Photo by Douglas Buegg



Photo by Douglas Buegg

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### 3 SWAMP METALMARKS STILL HOLDING ON!

After seeing several reports from Fond du Lac County, our favored home of the Swamp Metalmark, I noticed that this small gem of a butterfly has not been seen this year! I contacted a reliable source who informed me that the butterfly has been flying in another area to which the public is not privy. If you've seen the Swampies, you'll understand my concern. The glory of the Badger State would be diminished if we were to lose this remarkable insect!



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### 4 HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TREMPEALEAU COUNT

On July 12<sup>th</sup>, a group of six butterflies descended upon the wilds of the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge (which opened that day after closure for flooding), Perrot State Park, and Tamarack State Wildlife Area for the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual count in the 15-mile diameter circle. Karl Legler found the **Gray Copper** and **Wild Indigo Duskywing** to be the day's highlights. Other notable highlights include 24 Black Dash, 18 Dion Skippers, 13 Mulberry Wings, one Silver-bordered Fritillary, 2 Hackberry Emperors, and a lone Viceroy.



Gray Copper at the Trempealeau

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### 5 HIGHLIGHTS OF FAIR MEADOW SANCTUARY, ROCK COUNTY

Thirteen enthusiasts joined SWBA and SoWBA to explore this location, rich with flowering plants but a little light in the butterfly department. Butterflies logged were: Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Summer Azure, Great Spangled Fritillary, Question Mark, Eastern Comma, Red Admiral, Red-spotted Purple, Viceroy, Monarch, and Silver-spotted Skipper

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### 6 GETTING A SNOOT FULL

Another southern immigrant seems to be taking the Badger State by storm this year. The hackberry-loving American Snout has shown up in larger numbers that we've seen in years, with reports generated from Dane, Dunn, Iowa, Milwaukee, Dodge, Grant, Kenosha, Columbia, Washington, Lafayette, and Door Counties. First reported on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, near Warner Park in Madison, this odd critter has extended probosces that earn it the "snout" name. Perhaps more people are planting hackberry, a tree species historically limited to the southern and western parts of the state, also the host for Hackberry and Tawny Emperors.

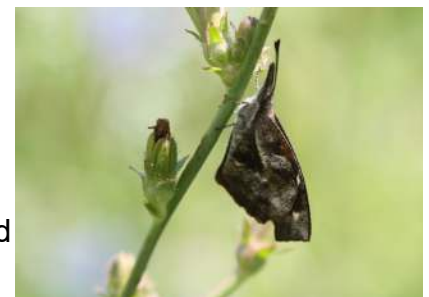


Photo by Douglas Bueae

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## 7 HOSTPLANT—PARTRIDGE PEA (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*)



Every summer by mid-July, I patrol my prairie plantings to see if Partridge Pea survived another year. Today, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, I found it more abundant than ever—and this is in northeastern Wisconsin. If I lived in southern Wisconsin, this prairie legume with its numerous yellow flowers along the stem might draw Little Yellows. For me, those butterflies are a longshot, last seen in Oconto County in 2012. Nonetheless, the plant's here if they need it. That's part of the adventure of planting with butterflies in mind. If you want some Partridge Pea, you can spread the seed over open ground in the fall and you'll likely have plants flowering the next year. Sources of prairie plants include it in many of their mixes as well.

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## 8 FIELD TRIP—RUSSELL HILL—GRANT COUNTY

**Saturday, September 14, 10am-Noon**

**Leader: Donna Williams-Richter, Ethan Brown**

This field trip is still being planned. Check the website—[naba.org/chapters/swba](http://naba.org/chapters/swba)—for updated information.

This DNR property has many native species. Southern migrants often seem to find their way to this property later in the season. Long pants and long shirt sleeves, a hat, insect repellent, and hiking shoes are recommended. Bring binoculars—the closer they focus, the better!

If you would like to be contacted in case of cancellation or other changes, please register your intent to attend with Pam Skaar ([hyndla53704@yahoo.com](mailto:hyndla53704@yahoo.com)).

**ACCESSIBILITY: TBD**

**DIRECTIONS:** Coming from Millville on County C Russell Hill is to the left just as you get to the top of the hill. A sign can be read from the road.

## 9 LIST OF 2024 OFFICIAL NABA COUNTS IN WISCONSIN

<del>Name</del>	<del>County</del>	<del>Years</del>	<del>Tentative</del>	<del>Contact</del>
			Date	
Scott and Experimental Road	Forest	First	June 20	Douglas Buege
Mud Lake	Columbia	35	June 27	Karl Legler
Madison	Dane	33	July 3	Fred Dike
Northern Oconto County	Oconto	10th	July 18	Douglas Buege
Trempealeau	Trempealeau	32	July 12	Mike Reese
Northern Kettle Moraine	Fond du Lac	27	July 16	Mike Reese
Avoca	Iowa/Grant		August 10	Mike Reese

The **Badger ButterFlyer** flits to you every month in summer.

The next issue will be in **APRIL, 2025.**

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

Our e-Newsletter, the Badger ButterFlyer, will be published monthly in summer. Send any news notes to the editor, Dr Douglas Buege, at [djbuege@gmail.com](mailto:djbuege@gmail.com)

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