

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) **MAY, 2026**

WEBSITE <http://www.naba.org/chapters/SWBA>

## 1 NEXT FIELD TRIP Mirror Lake Marbles

Saturday, May 9, 10am-Noon  
Leaders: Pam Skaar & Tod Highsmith

Many moons have passed since Dan Sonnenberg and the Swengels started exploring Mirror Lake State Park to survey butterflies. Our field trip director, Pam Skaar, found a population of



Olympia Marbles that she claims are easier to

approach and photograph than anywhere else around. These harbingers of spring frequent rockcresses and prove unique butterflies that your friends will never notice. A joint venture with Friends of Mirror Lake State Park and the Southern Wisconsin Birding Alliance, the hike over gentle terrain will require you to have a state

park sticker, available on site, if you bring your car or other large vehicle. Feel free to bike or walk to the site.

**Please register!** Go to SWBA's website and click the link in field trip schedule.

**DIRECTIONS:** Meet at 10 am in the Wild Rice Parking Area on the east side of Mirror Lake Road just south of the right turn onto Turtleville Road. A map is available on the website's write-up.

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## 2 SECOND FIELD TRIP CATHOLIC ECOLOGY CENTER—DODGE COUNTY

Saturday, June 6, 10am-Noon **The date given in the April newsletter was incorrect.**

Leaders: Ethan Brown and Donna Williams-Richter

Visit this 225-acre preserve that includes prairie, forest, gardens and riverine wetlands to find some of our early fliers. Established in 2016 but claiming its current name in 2021, the Center is open to all who can respect the natural world. A great chance to see multiple Harvesters, our only carnivorous butterfly; the larvae feed on Woolly Aphids which may also be seen. Visit their website: [catholicecologycenter.org](http://catholicecologycenter.org)



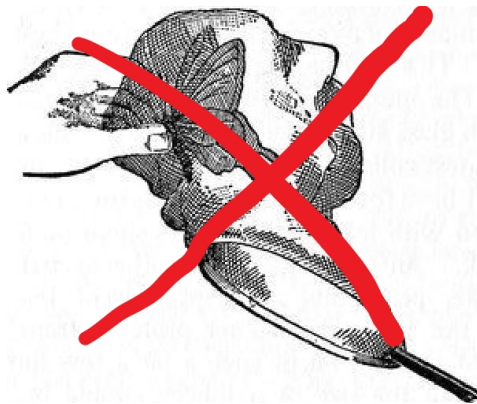
**Think spring!** You might see Commas, Question Marks, Red Admirals, Ladies, Swallowtails, Skippers and Mourning Cloaks.

**Please register!** your plans to attend by emailing Donna Williams-Richter ([dowiri124@gmail.com](mailto:dowiri124@gmail.com)). Registration ensures contact concerning any changes in date, time or location

**DIRECTIONS:** The Catholic Ecology Center is located at W1468 County Road NN Neosho, WI 53059. Visit their website to get customized directions from your location.

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### 3 WHY WE DON'T COLLECT BUTTERFLIES



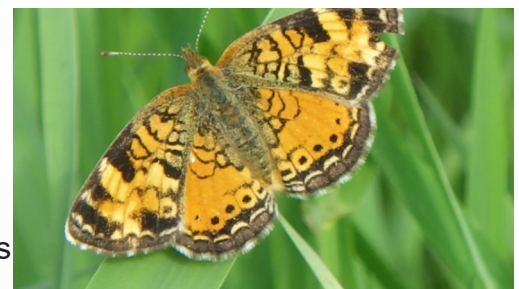
Some of us remember the days when running a net through the grass would garner us a butterfly or moth that we'd add to a collection of specimens. Those days are over, gladly, and we no longer need to euthanize creatures to study and enjoy them. Insect numbers are down globally—worse than many feared. A chance capture, while not likely to wipe out a species or a population, demonstrates to others that butterflies are expendable. That's not the message we wish to offer the public. Like humans, insects have lives rich with pursuits and goals. We can wield cameras and binoculars with minimal disruption to their activities. If you're wise enough to recognize the beauty and importance of butterflies, then you understand why we do what we can to

promote their protection. Likewise, we can offer them gardens and other habitats—chemical-free—to help them navigate a dangerous world.

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### 4 DO YOU COUNT?

Long ago (in the last millenium), the Xerces Society's founders started official butterfly counts in which groups would survey particular areas for butterflies. The North American Butterfly Association adopted these counts with our own Leglers leading the way to establish annual surveys in Wisconsin. If you've never counted, 2026 offers you many chances in many parts of the state. No experience necessary. You can spend as long as you wish. We do recommend contacting the count leader ahead of time to determine logistics and to receive vital information like date and time changes. Counts can be exciting chances to improve your butterflying skills while getting some field time with top-notch leaders.



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### 5 SCHEDULED FIELD TRIPS FOR 2026

	County	Date and Time	Leader(s)
Mirror Lake Marbles	Sauk	May 9, 10am-noon	Pam Skaar and Tod Highsmith

Catholic Ecology Center	Dodge	June 6, 10am-noon	Donna Williams-Richter and Ethan Brown
Pleasant Valley Conservancy	Dane	June 20, 10am-noon Rain date: June 21	Dreux Watermolen, Ethan Brown and Kathie Brock
Cherokee Marsh-North	Dane	June 27, 10am-noon	Fred Dike and Tod Highsmith
Swamplovers Preserve	Dane	July 4, 10 am-noon	Edgar Spalding
Sandhill	Wood	July 11, 10am-3pm	Ron Arnold
Hogback Prairie SNA	Crawford	July 25, 10am-noon with picnic following	Donna Williams-Richter and Ethan Brown
Smith-Reiner Drumlin Prairie	Dane	August 29, 10am-noon	Fred Dike and Bob Kendall
Borah Creek Prairie SNA	Grant	September 12, 10am-noon	TBD

## 6 PLANT SPOTLIGHT: PIPEVINE

Though the Pipevine Swallowtail is a rare visitor to Wisconsin, many avid butterflyers have found it by knowing where to look. Madison's Olbrich Gardens draws this southern species fairly regularly with their wall of Pipevine, easily found next to the bleachers in the parking lot south of the gardens. The caterpillars munch on pipevine leaves while the adults patrol the area for nectar. Pipevine can survive winters in southern Wisconsin and will take over any areas it can climb. It's tough to start pipevine from seed and I've never succeeded at rooting cuttings, so I recommend buying established plants.

## 7 MONARCH GOOD NEWS

For the eastern US population of monarchs, 2026 heralds a bit of good news. In the mountains of central Mexico, where most of the butterflies spend winter, monarchs occupied 2.93 hectares, up 64% from the year before and higher than the recent average of 2.81 hectares. Our labors in Wisconsin to provide milkweed for caterpillars and nectar sources for adults, as well as banding and observations, contribute to the numbers of monarchs making it to Mexico in the autumn, so continue doing what you're doing. Joan Braune and Tod Highsmith reported our first monarch on April 24<sup>th</sup> on Madison's eastside, 20 days earlier than 2025.

## 8 LIST OF 2026 OFFICIAL COUNTS IN WISCONSIN—Dates May Change Based Upon Weather

These are the counts in Wisconsin. Note: the Forest County and Northern Oconto County counts are no longer NABA events. All others listed are NABA counts.

Name	County	Year	Date	Contact
Wazee aka Bauer-Brockway	Jackson	19	May 19	Mike Reese <a href="mailto:mikereese@wisconsinbutterflies.org">mikereese@wisconsinbutterflies.org</a>
Scott and Experimental Road	Forest	3	June 20 & July 21	Douglas Buege <a href="mailto:djbuege@proton.me">djbuege@proton.me</a>

Mud Lake	Columbia	35	June 30	Karl Legler <a href="mailto:karlndot@charter.net">karlndot@charter.net</a>
Madison	Dane	35	July 8	Fred Dike <a href="mailto:freddmadison@aol.com">freddmadison@aol.com</a>
N. Oconto County	Oconto	12	July 7	Douglas Buege
Trempealeau	Trempealeau	33	July 10	Mike Reese
N. Kettle Moraine	Fond du Lac	28	July 13	Mike Reese
Door County	Door	??	July 18	Amanda Matzke <a href="mailto:amatzke16@gmail.com">amatzke16@gmail.com</a>
Avoca	Iowa/Grant	19	August 8	Mike Reese

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

**The next issue will be in JUNE, 2026.**

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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@proton.me](mailto:djbuege@proton.me)  
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