



# NEWSLETTER of the Wisconsin Entomological Society

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Volume 18, Number 2

Les Ferge, Editor

June 1991

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## FIELD TRIP TENTATIVELY PLANNED IN NORTHERN WISCONSIN

Arrangements are being worked out for a field trip to northern Wisconsin, most likely in the latter half of July. In view of the small number of participants in our previous trips and increased postage costs, only those members expressing an interest will be mailed details and directions for this and future trips. Members wishing to be included on the field trip mailing list are asked to indicate this by means of the questionnaire included with this Newsletter.

## PRESIDENT'S NOTES

Waldemar E. Kmentt

Tentative plans have been made for a meeting to be held at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay in early September. The Annual Meeting and Photo Salon is usually scheduled in early November, with the location being either Milwaukee or Madison.

The purpose of the enclosed questionnaire is to provide information to enable the planning of events and activities best suited to the needs of the membership. Your comments and suggestions are most welcome. Please return completed questionnaires to: Waldemar E. Kmentt, 3650 Wood Trail, Beloit, WI 53511.

## THE FOURTH OF JULY BUTTERFLY COUNT IN THE MIDWEST Ann Swengel-Midwest Editor

The Midwest Region of the Fourth of July Butterfly Count reaches from Ohio to Iowa and Michigan to Minnesota. In this area of seven states, a total of 126 counters, down from the region high of 155 in 1989, found 15,569 individual butterflies and skippers in the 26 counts held in 1990. Twenty of the 23 counts held in the Midwest in 1989 were repeated the following year. Since Minnesota has made its debut in the program with two new counts in 1990, all states in the Midwest Region were represented in the count program for the first year ever. Although on average slightly fewer species per count were reported (25.0 in 1990 compared to 26.9 in 1989), collectively we Midwesterners found more species (95 in 1990 compared to 91 in 1989) and more individuals per party-hour on average (81.68 in 1990 compared with 78.43 in 1989) than ever before.

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The Newsletter of the Wisconsin Entomological Society is published three times a year, at irregular intervals. It is provided to encourage and facilitate the exchange of information by the membership, and to keep the members informed of the activities of the organization. Members are strongly encouraged to contribute items for inclusion in the Newsletter. Please send all news items, notes, new or interesting insect records, season summaries, research requests etc. to the editor: Les Ferge, 7119 Hubbard Avenue, Middleton, WI 53562.

Several species found in 1990 have never been reported in previous counts, including Lycaena dorcas, L. epixanthe, L. helloides, Calycopis cecrops, Parrhasius m-album, Plebejus saepiolus, Polygonia faunus, Erebia discoidalis and Erynnis lucilius. Unfortunately, some resident species normally in flight when most Midwestern counts are held have not been found in the last several years, including Colias interior (last reported in 1988), Calephelis muticum (last reported in 1987), and Speyeria idalia (last found in 1987).

For some species, only a single individual on one midwestern count was reported for 1990. Some of these species, including Strymon melinus and Euptoieta claudia, are immigrants in much of the Midwest and are highly variable in their occurrence. Other species were barely represented in the 1990 results because few counts occur in their range and habitat, including Calycopis cecrops, Polygonia faunus and Erebia discoidalis. Some of these species are simply hard to find in the Midwest, even when counters seem to be in the right range and habitat for them, such as Lycaena dorcas, Lycaena helloides and Calephelis borealis. Some species are rarely represented because their flight periods largely occur outside the dates when most Midwestern counts are held. Thus it was unusual for Erynnis juvenalis to be recorded at all, even if only once on one count, since most years it is not reported at all. Other species, such as Papilio cressphontes, simply appear to have been low in number during the 1990 count period. Parrhasius m-album and Thorybes bathyllus were also found only once on one Midwestern count in 1990.

The species with the highest numbers seen on a single count were Thymelicus lineola (3,296), Pieris rapae (2,287) and Cercyonis pegala (440). Unlike some years, no species was found on all Midwestern counts, but Vanessa atalanta was found on all but one (96.2%). Other frequently found species were Danaus plexippus and Pieris rapae (92.3%), Colias philodice (88.5%), and Colias eurytheme and Cercyonis pegala (76.9%). Most of these species have usually been found widely in the region's counts. In 1989, however, V. atalanta was found on only 17 of 23 counts (73.9%) with a maximum on a single count of only 12 individuals. In 1990, the one-count high for this species was 200. The previous one-count high in the Midwest was 169 in 1983, and its frequency in the region over the previous four years varied from 5 of 18 counts (27.8%) in 1988 to 7 of 9 counts (77.8%) in 1986.

The picture for immigrant species was still rather poor in 1990. In comparisons of counts held between June 27 and July 24 (when most Midwestern counts are held), counts both in 1989 and 1990 found only six immigrant species, compared to a maximum of 11 species in 1986. Libytheana bachmanii, Euptoieta claudia, Junonia coenia and Vanessa cardui were reported in both 1989 and 1990. The average rate of observation of immigrant species did improve in 1990 (0.35 immigrant individuals/party-hour compared to 0.096 in 1989).

As for Monarchs, they showed only a slight increase in numbers, with the average rate of individuals found per party-hour being 0.9 in 1989 and 1.0 in 1990, for counts held in both years. This is pretty close to the average rate of observation of Monarchs in the Midwest over the last five years.

Swallowtails generally declined in 1990. Although Battus philenor showed a sharp rise in percentage of counts reporting it (from 4.3% in 1989 to 19.2%

in 1990), all other swallowtail species decreased from 1989 to 1990, with the sharpest declines for Papilio glaucus (65.2% to 46.2%) and P. polyxenes (60.9% to 30.8%). For most species, the maximum number found on a single count also declined from 1989 to 1990. In 1990, 17 of 26 counts (65.4%) recorded any swallowtail individuals, compared to 19 of 23 (82.6%) in 1989, 14 of 18 (77.8%) in 1988 and 13 of 14 (92.9%) in 1987.

The weather in the region was rather dramatic prior to and including count time. December 1989 was by far the most frigid in many years, with the cold all the more remarkable further south in the region. But January and February 1990 were unusually mild. Spring was highly variable in temperature, but tended to be on the cool side. Most remarkable about spring and summer, however, was the high rainfall in most of the region. Several counts had to be postponed because of inclement weather, and others were affected by flooding. But since the various species show conflicting trends in comparison to previous years' findings, it is hard to decipher how the weather over the past year has affected butterflies.

FROM THE DIAGNOSTIC LAB

Phil Pellitteri

The warm weather has arrived, everyone is complaining about the ticks and mosquitoes, and most of us "bug chasers" are in heaven. From some of the reports I have seen from my colleagues at the Department of Agriculture, it was a very mild winter on those insects that overwinter here in Wisconsin. We are watching with some fear what will come of the EUROPEAN CORN BORER populations. We went into the winter with populations as high as 400 fifth-instar larvae per 100 stalks. The highest I, or anyone else I know, have ever seen is 150-160 per 100 stalks. It may be an interesting year in the cornfields.

We have found a specimen of the DEER TICK (Ixodes dammini) in Door County, the first confirmed record from there. The number of reported human cases of Lyme disease went down for the first time in Wisconsin last year, which correlated with the general reduction in deer tick numbers since the 1988-89 droughts. There is a definite upswing in adult ticks this spring, which means the trend will not likely continue. I have seen two specimens of the LONE STAR TICK, normally a southern species. The males are easy to identify because they have one well-defined spot on the scutum. Any guess where these are most common?

There was a lovely article on Dr. Allen Young in the Milwaukee Journal Wisconsin magazine of May 12. I can send a photocopy if anyone missed it. The reporter did a nice job of explaining some of the problems in Costa Rica's rain forest, but in true journalistic form identified a long-horned grasshopper as a seed-eating cicada. So much for a free press.

I am not about to make any predictions in writing that can be used to haunt me at some later time, but we are seeing a lot of activity from the overwintering queens of various Vespid wasps and a variety of solitary bees. There were not very many butterflies on the wing by mid-May, but the warm weather later in the month should get everything hopping. I feel like it is going to be a Florida insect year--they will be knee-deep from June through September. It promises to be a very interesting year.

The 17th annual Xerces Society Fourth of July Butterfly Count will be held this summer. Participants select a count area with a 15-mile diameter and conduct a one-day census of all butterflies sighted within the circle.

The published results provide important information about the geographic distribution and population size of the species counted. Comparison of the results over the years enables monitoring of the changes in butterfly populations and the study of the effects of weather and habitat change on the different species throughout the continent.

In some years the butterfly count shows dramatic changes in butterfly populations, while other years indicate little fluctuation in butterfly numbers. Either way, butterfly counters are always curious about what next year's results will be!

No matter how much or how little butterfly watching you've done, the results of butterfly counting can be surprising and fascinating. In 1990, four counts were conducted in Illinois, one in Indiana, three each in Iowa and Michigan, two in Minnesota, five in Ohio and eight in Wisconsin. For more information on how to conduct a count, contact either:

Dr. Paul A. Opler, Count Editor  
5100 Greenview Court  
Fort Collins, Colorado 80525

or Mrs. Ann B. Swengel, Midwest Editor  
909 Birch Street  
Baraboo, Wisconsin 53913

MADISON AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS

Karl Legler, M.A.S. Field Trip Coordinator

**BUTTERFLIES OF BAXTER'S HOLLOW:** Saturday, July 6. Butterfly expert Ann Swengel will lead this walk at Baxter's Hollow in the Baraboo Hills to view butterflies of field and forest (such as the beautiful Compton Tortoiseshell). Use your eyes, binoculars or camera to observe butterfly pattern and behavior.

We will carpool, leaving at 9:00 AM from the bus shelter in the middle of UW-Madison Parking Lot 60, off Walnut Street. You may also meet us at Baxter's Hollow at 10:00. From Sauk City, take Highway 12 northbound for 8 miles, then turn left (west) on County C, then take the next right (Stone's Pocket Road). Continue through a wooded valley and park when you reach a gate where the road turns sharply right. If you have any questions about this trip, call Ann Swengel at (608) 356-9543.

**THE SECRET NIGHT WORLD OF MOTHS:** Friday, July 12. Moth expert Les Ferge will lead this evening trip to Ferry Bluff State Natural Area in Sauk County. Les will use sugar baiting to attract a variety of interesting moths. Since this is now a State Natural Area, we will be observing rather than collecting. Bring a flashlight and mosquito repellent. The Peterson Field Guide to the Moths of Eastern North America by Covell illustrates many of the Underwing Moths (genus Catocala) and others expected to be found.

The trip will last approximately 2½ hours. We will carpool, leaving at 7:30 PM from the UW-Madison Parking Lot 60 bus shelter; or meet us at Ferry Bluff around 8:15 PM. From Sauk City, take Highway 60 westbound for 6 miles, then turn left on Ferry Bluff Road (gravel) and follow it to the parking area at the end. If you have any questions about this trip, call Les Ferge at (608) 231-9251 (days) or (608) 836-9438 (evenings).

WISCONSIN ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete this questionnaire, fold as indicated on other side, tape or staple shut, and drop in the mail. No envelope is needed. Your additional comments and input are most welcome. Please indicate below if you wish to be receive future field trip information.

MEETINGS:

How many per year would you like?

When?

Where?

What sort of programs would most interest you?

Would you like "mini-seminars" on identification, photography, anatomy, specimen collecting and preparation techniques etc.?

Other subjects?

Would you like regional meetings in various parts of Wisconsin?

FIELD TRIPS

How many per year?

Daytime

Night

Both

What areas/habitats?

Your suggestions?

Do you wish to be notified of future field trips? If so, please give your name here or send separate request.

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SOCIETY PROJECTS

If available, would you purchase greeting cards featuring members' insect photographs, suitable for any event (no message printed).

Would you be interested in an automobile window decal of the W.E.S. logo or other symbols?

Your ideas for projects?

SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT: What are you willing to contribute in order that the W.E.S. can continue as a viable organization?

Hold office?

Host meetings?

Speak at meetings?

Host or lead field trips?

Contribute to Newsletter?

Edit Newsletter?

-----fold-----

Please  
Place  
Stamp  
Here

Waldemar E. Kmentt  
3650 Wood Trail  
Beloit, WI 53511

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SECOND ANNUAL MADISON XERCES BUTTERFLY COUNT: Saturday, July 13. The Madison Count, organized by the Xerces Society which publishes results annually, is hosted jointly by the Madison Audubon Society and the University of Wisconsin Arboretum. If you have some familiarity with butterfly identification or if you are just interested in seeing butterflies, join us on this count. Butterflies may be identified by sight or with binoculars. A net is not necessary and we will not be collecting, but if you prefer, you may "net and release." Dress for protection from heat and sun; a hat is helpful. Bring a lunch, as we will be counting until mid-afternoon. Join in for all day or as long as you can. The Xerces Society requires a \$2.50 fee from each count participant (you will receive regional count results). Meet at the McKay Center in the UW Arboretum in Madison at 8:30 AM. If you have any questions, call Karl Legler (Count Compiler) in Sauk City at (608) 643-4926.

#### RESEARCH REQUESTS

URGENTLY WANTED: Luna moths for university research. Eggs or gravid females. Please contact Rob Thiboldeaux, Dept. of Entomology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706. Phone (608) 262-4319.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED: To search for populations of the endangered Northern Blue butterfly in northeastern Wisconsin. The flight usually occurs from the last week of June through early July, but may be advanced due to the unusually warm weather this season. Please contact Amy Wolf, Dept. of Natural and Applied Science, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Green Bay, WI 54301.

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