



Washington Butterfly
Association

Washington Butterfly Association

Founded 1999

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October—December, 2001

Introducing the New WBA Logo!

WBA's new logo, shown at the top of this page, was designed by Mary Maxwell-Young, WBA member from Seattle. The new logo says it all about WBA--showing a white butterfly on a green field in the shape of Washington state. We're very grateful to Mary for the beautiful design.

And Asking You to Help Name the Newsletter

Now that we have an elegant logo, we would like to redesign the newsletter, and give it a name. If you have any suggestions, email them to wabutterflyassoc@earthlink.net, or to maurentxler@aol.com. Be creative; be daring, be silly if that's your mood. We'll consider all your suggestions.

WBA Meeting Programs

WBA meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month. They are held at the UW Center for Urban Horticulture (3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle) and begin at 7:00 p.m. The first fifteen minutes are used for social reception and viewing of displays.

A new feature has been added to the next few WBA meetings—the "Two Three Four Five Book Sale". You can purchase books that have been donated to WBA. You decide what you want to pay: \$2.00, \$3.00, \$4.00 or \$5.00 and the book is yours. There is an interesting selection of books about nature, gardening, and unexpected topics. Check it out! Proceeds of the book sale support WBA.

October 3: Share the Wealth: Butterfly slides from members. Bring your own slides for show and/or identification. Don't miss this one...it's always fun, informal and informative!

November 7: From Prairies to Mountaintops, Jon Pelham. Learning the habitats will help us locate the species we want to see.

December 5: Butterflies of Belize. Bob Hardwick will share superb photos from his recent trip to Belize.

WBA Featured in *Butterfly Gardener*

Washington Butterfly Association is a featured Chapter in *Butterfly Gardener*, a publication of the North American Butterfly Association (NABA). The Summer 2001 issue features a full-page article by WBA's Tom O'Connell and photographs by Martha Robinson. (Those of you who are NABA members should have received a copy.)

Confessions of a Beginning Butterflier: Butterflying While Traveling

by Tom O'Connell

We beginners and semi-beginners can have just as much fun as advanced butterflyers. Certainly while we are traveling and on our own—on vacation, for example—we can make our own searches for new and different butterflies. Except in winter conditions, any trip away from our usual haunts opens up possibilities whenever we can find some time to get out in the field. All we need is a pair of close-focus

possibilities whenever we can find some time to get out in the field. All we need is a pair of close-focus binocs and a field guide (some of us like to take our nets along but that's a personal choice and certainly not essential.)

As to binocs, see the excellent article on page 24 of the Summer issue of "American Butterflies." It is by Gary M. Fellers and is entitled "Binoculars for Butterflying." It tells you just about everything you need to know except how to find the money for this fairly expensive investment.

As to field guides, Jeffrey Glassberg's three books on "Butterflying Through Binoculars" now cover any place you're going in the lower 48. There are also available some fine regional guides for butterflying spots you might be visiting in southeastern Arizona, Florida or California. For our own state and region, Bob Pyle's book, "Butterflies of Cascadia" will soon be out. If you're going further afield than the U. S., there are many country-by-country guides and I recommend searching for them before you go—or, if you're as much of an enthusiast as I am, perhaps before you even decide where to go.

Personally, I don't like to look for butterflies if I'm in a place where there is no good, complete guide. I just get frustrated. For example, Mexico has splendid butterflies but for most regions there is no guide available. There is, though, a fine guide for Baja California which Richard Lindstrom and I used during a trip down there not long ago.

I've found some particularly useful guides for far-off places I've been fortunate enough to visit. For example, there's a super guide for all of Europe, part of the Collins guide series. I've located OK guides for individual provinces and countries from Alberta to Egypt. For a good list of available guides, with descriptions, I use "BioQuip Products," 17803 La Salle Avenue, Gardena, Ca. 90248-3602, phone (310)324-0620, Fax (310)324-7931, e-mail: bioquip@aol.com, web page: www.bioquip.com. They'll ship guides to you. Closer to home, Seattle Audubon Society, 8050 35th Avenue N.E., and Flora and Fauna Books on First Avenue in the Pioneer Square neighborhood in Seattle have many good guides and of course it's often helpful to check out a book in hand before buying it.

If you'd like to discuss your travel plans vis-à-vis butterflying possibilities, give me a call at (206) 860 9569. If I can't help you, I bet I can find another WBA board member who could.

Species Profile:

Nuttall's Sheepmoth – *Hemileuca nuttali*; Family Saturniidae

by David Nunnallee

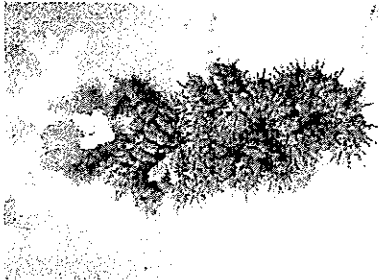
Our species profile for this issue is a large, attractive moth, the Nuttall's Sheepmoth. There are 18 species of Sheepmoths (genus *Hemileuca*) in the United States. Three of these are closely related and widespread in Washington. A fourth species, more distantly related and different in appearance, occurs along our southeast border with Oregon. Sheepmoths are large, attractive Saturnid (Giant Silk) moths, which fly diurnally (during the day). In flight they are easily confused with butterflies, but can be distinguished by their rapid erratic flight, and their "crash landings".

The Nuttall's Sheepmoth occurs in southeastern British Columbia and much of the western United States, east to the Rocky Mountains, south to northern Arizona and west to the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mountains. In Washington, *nuttali* is found only east of the Cascade Mountains. Nuttall's Sheepmoth flies in arid portions of Washington in sagebrush steppe, pinyon-juniper woodland and sagebrush meadows. It may occasionally be found flying with its two closest relatives.

The host plants for Nuttall's Sheepmoth larvae are bitterbrush, snowberry and currant. These host plants are also used by the Western (Elegant) Sheepmoth, *Hemileuca eglanterina*, but its other close relative, the Hera Buckmoth (*Hemileuca hera*) feeds on sagebrush.

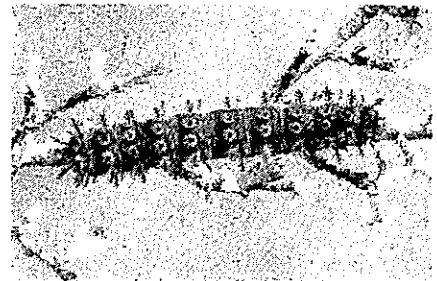
The following life cycle information is taken from the USGS Moth web page:

"Adults emerge in the morning and mate in the early afternoon. Females lay eggs in rings around host plant stems. Eggs overwinter and hatch in May and June. Young caterpillars feed together in groups and when older they feed alone. Fully-grown caterpillars pupate in loose cocoons in the leaf litter or in burrows in soft soil, and adults emerge from July-September. At high elevations and northern latitudes, 2 years are needed to complete development. Cocoons overwinter and in the spring the adults emerge."



Left: Group of *Hemileuca nuttali* larva.

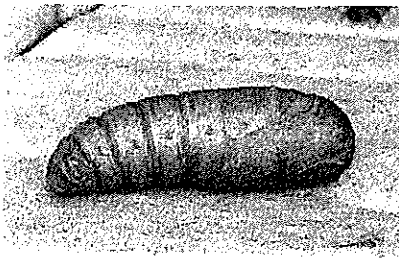
Right: Older larva of *Hemileuca nuttali*.



Photos by David Nunnallee

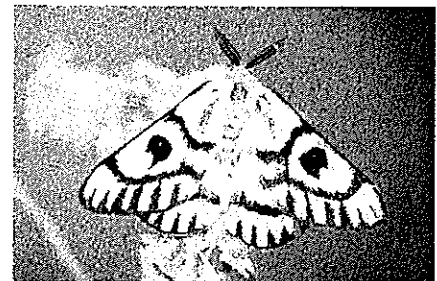
The larvae of all of the *Hemileuca* species are initially black and spiny, and can be found in tight clusters of numerous individuals on the host plants. The older larvae of hera are quite variable, sometimes entirely black, other times bearing bright yellow clusters of dorsal spines, and sometimes with white side stripes. All *Hemileuca* larvae have urticating spines, which means that they sting like nettles if handled roughly. The branched spines make the *Hemileuca* larvae rather similar in appearance to some brushfoot butterfly larvae, but they can be definitively separated by gently rubbing a larva on the tender skin of the back of one's hand. If a stinging (urticating) sensation results, the larva is a *Hemileuca*.

Nuttall's Sheepmoth is single-brooded, with adults flying from July to September, depending on elevation. Adults of all sheepmoths do not feed and thus are short-lived.



Left: *Hemileuca nuttali* pupa.

Right: Adult *Hemileuca nuttali*.



Photos by David Nunnallee

The adults of our three most widespread sheepmoths are quite similar in appearance, and all three are quite variable among their subspecies. Within Washington, the three can be separated fairly reliably by the amount of color on the dorsal (top) wing surfaces. *Hemileuca hera*, the Hera Buckmoth, is entirely black and white and can be reliably identified by its lack of yellow or pink coloration. *Hemileuca nuttali*, the Nuttall's Sheepmoth, has a yellow hindwing and generally a black and white forewing, although the forewing may have a small amount of yellow. *Hemileuca eglanterina*, the Western Sheepmoth, has yellow hindwings and pink forewings. When the colors seem intermediate, *nuttali* and *eglanterina* can always be separated by the shape of the bold black line across the middle of the hindwing. In *nuttali*, this line flares away from the body at the back end, giving a sinuous recurved appearance, but in *eglanterina* this line is always straight at the back end, or even convex, curving slightly toward the body. Occasional hybrids do occur, however, with intermediate characteristics.

2001 Field Trip Report

One of the best activities of WBA is the field trip program. Richard Lindstrom, our talented and hard-working field trip coordinator, has planned an extraordinary slate of trips for WBA each year. This year WBA sponsored close to 20 field trips (including the Annual Conference). Richard gives us an impressive selection of trips in varied habitats and locations throughout the state, including 12 counties.

Highlights of this year's field trips include the "Big Day" trip to Table Mountain in Kittitas County on July 7. The troop of 13 split into four groups, each approaching the ridge top from a different direction. The Big Day ended with dinner and tabulation of the day's action at the Mineral Springs Restaurant. They identified an impressive total of 46 species of adult and larval butterflies, including a huge number of greenish blues, and a great arctic, usually found only in even years.

The last field trip of the season was especially memorable—the group found seven new records for the Mount St. Helen's blast zone. And, as reported in the last issue of this publication, an endangered species, the Mardon skipper, *Polites mardon*, was spotted on the May 12 trip in Thurston County. We hope to see all of you next summer!

An Ode for Autumn's Eve: A Tribute to Trip Leaders

by Anonymous

As the season turns we all look back
 On summer days we spent
 Traipsing through the countryside,
 Close upon the scent
 Of anglewings and hairstreaks and
 Others that we meant
 To find...but we dunno where they went.
 To help us parse the butterflies,
 We relied upon our mentors.
 If their knowledge is a grand old tree
 Then our thoughts are like splinters.
 On the outside, we may tease them bad,
 But we love them in our centers,
 And we'll miss the field trips horribly
 All through the coming winter.
 Mr. Hardwick's idea was just this:
 Call it research and then we can't miss!
 It may sound like work
 That could drive you berserk,
 But we're really just following our bliss.

Mr. Lindstrom looks past our inanities
 And manages to flatter our vanities.
 He can tolerate us so
 That he's planned Mexico
 Now we all are in fear for his sanity.

Mr. Nunnallee exhibits great fortitude
 Faced with no-nothing fools in vast plenitude,
 But, rather than fault us,
 He instead buys us malteds.
 We should write in his name for beatitude.

Mr. Pelham appears to know everything,
 Yet he is patient with us who don't know-a-
 thing.
 He'll tell you a bunch
 If you just give him lunch
 And if you luck out he won't get to sing-a-
 thing.

And now a burning question is at hand.
 We ask in fear:
 Can you stand to do it all again next year?

A Report on the 2001 WBA Conference in the Blue Mountains

by Tom O'Connell

The WBA Conference in the Blue Mountains (in the lower right hand corner of our state) was a triumph! Sixty-two souls participated, roughly double last year's number. Our new logo and T-shirts were everywhere applauded. The weather Saturday turned fine. Even Sunday's overcast cold couldn't put a damper on this intrepid group. Here's why not:

The high point was having Bob and Thea Pyle with us in the field Sunday. So any possible criminal charges against those higher-ups who were responsible for Sunday's weather were nipped in the bud by an absolutely perfect solution to the challenge of structuring the day's chilly outing:

Have just one huge line-up of vehicles (fourteen of them!). Put a walkie-talkie radio in each vehicle. Then—and here's the beauty part—put one of those walkie-talkie radios in the hands of Bob Pyle. So on the road Bob could comment on flora and fauna as we passed and we could all listen in. Everybody got to butterfly with Bob. And there's more!

When we stopped, folks from the entire caravan had the opportunity to gather 'round Bob, or our other star butterflyers, as we roamed through the beautiful mountain territory. At one point I listened in on a twenty-minute lecture by Bob as a dozen or so young and old "students" queried him on all kinds of flora and fauna matters. He is at his very best in that kind of setting, gracious and kind and witty, displaying an astonishing amount of information on every plant or leaf or creature that was thrust at him for comment.

At one point I presumed to get into the discussion briefly myself. The subject was a beautiful butterfly which Bob was identifying for us:

Pyle: (Ever ready to teach us the Latin names): "This is *Boloria epithore*, the Western Meadow Fritillary."

O'Connell (Scrambling with Idie Ulsh's help to find the butterfly in Jeffrey Glassberg's brand new field guide on Western butterflies): "Jeffrey calls it the Pacific Fritillary."

Pyle: "Ah, yes. Names! This butterfly has been called the Western Meadow Fritillary for a century. It's the perfect name since it is so much like the Meadow Fritillary which occurs farther east. Why call it the Pacific Fritillary? I think we should retain a few of these old names where they are uniquely right."

O'Connell (Ever ready to defend his fellow neophytes): "That makes it hard for beginners."

Pyle: "True. And we should help the beginners wherever we can. In our Cascadia butterfly guide we're putting A.K.A. (also known as) after every butterfly name that is known widely by other names. This one will appear as 'Western Meadow Fritillary (AKA Pacific Fritillary.)'"

Just so. We had a grand conference!

Arctic Adventure: One Butterflyer's Journey into Paradise

by Jonathan P. Pelham

Installment 1

Editor's Note: This is the first of several articles about Jon Pelham's trip to the Arctic in 1989. We hope you enjoy them.

PART 1. THE SETTING

It is my sense that most butterflyers would rather visit the tropics than the arctic. The wildly diverse, numerous and incredibly colorful butterflies of the tropical regions beckon those interested in butterflies for all the obvious reasons. I am often asked if I would like to visit the tropics. I must reply...Nope! From the time I was first instar, I have been fascinated by the dull, obscure and frequently poorly-known butterflies that live on the very fringe of livability, at high latitudes. For me, it is in the Arctic that new discoveries bring understanding that sutures with what I know of my temperate home.

Thus it came to pass that I generated an opportunity to visit the Yukon Territory in Canada in 1989. For three months we prepared equipment, supplies and itinerary. Our trip began on the first of June and we returned home on the tenth of July. I will relate various of our experiences in a serial presentation. If I do my job well, you will want to visit the Arctic; I'll see if I can arrange it!

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Lars Crabo. Some of you have heard me speak of Lars, always with great respect. What else can you give someone dedicated to studying Noctuid moths? His journey to the moths is the path oft tread. He began as a butterflyer; to this day he has a good knowledge of butterflies. His special interest, Noctuid moths, are a most numerous and troublesome group of organisms. They seem impossible to identify.

Maybe someday Lars will create a “Field Guide to the Noctuid Moths”. I am not holding my breath. Everyone who looks for caterpillars comes across larvae that they hope are butterflies, only to have me pronounce them “Noctuids”. Lars studies them assiduously. He is “Crazy for Noctuids” as we are “Crazy for Butterflies”.

Jon and Sigrid Shepard. While not a single entity, it is difficult to mention one without the other. Sigrid is an amazing person, lucky to be alive. You have heard the story of the miner taking a canary in a cage down into the mine to alert the miners to undetectable toxic gases. Sigrid is our “canary”, sensitive to very small amounts of toxin in air, food and water. She has been known to become comatose over monosodium glutamate in Chinese food. This seems remarkable in light of the fact that she is so robust in every other way. Pity the fool choosing to argue with her! I have and regret it still; me, Pelham! The list of her accomplishments is too long, so I only mention that she is the author of several cookbooks. She can cook, and I am here to testify that her preparations are wondrous! Many is the time I have feasted on Sigrid’s finest. Her meals are an integral part of our arctic adventure. So are mine, but in an entirely different context. Jon Shepard is the dean of Northwest lepidopterists, and by that I do not mean he is simply the oldest. Whenever Jon and I get together, there are the most intense conversations, complete with blue sparks and ozone. These times are some of the most pleasant I have known; they are full of arcane butterfly references, personal history and hilarity born of the many years we have known each other. He and Sigrid are my good friends.

Kenelm Philip. There is also too much to say about this fellow; I don’t know as much about him as I do Lars and the Shepards. I first met him at a National Lepidopterist’s Society meeting in Corvallis in 1967. Since then he has become the leading authority on arctic butterflies of North America. He is full of information (and other things!). It was our great good fortune to meet him in the Richardson Mountains; it was unplanned. He is “Crazy for Butterflies”.

Glenn Morrel. A friend of Lars’. He is also “Crazy for Butterflies”, and likes a good aperitif. He was good company in the woods.

PART 2. A VIGNETTE

To pique your interest, I relate one particular highlight from our trip. From the ninth to the twentieth of June, in the Ogilvie Mountains we had incredible weather, and sampled butterflies continuously. We were tired! We began at Windy Pass in the Ogilvie Mountains and expanded in several directions, eventually arriving in the Richardson Mountains on the twentieth. Much will be revealed about this period, but one moment stands out.

The journey from the Ogilvies to the Richardsons is long, with few diversions. It seemed we were “driven” to get there, pushing ourselves to the limit of our endurance. We arrived late in the day on the twentieth, and prepared our camp at a “famous” locality on the Dempster Highway.

Kilometer 413 is not especially romantic, either in name or appearance. It is a “locality” primarily because there is a gravel pit supplying the local road maintenance crews, thus it is a good spot to set up camp. The Richardsons are an uplifted range of sedimentary rocks, canted at more than forty degrees from horizontal. They run in a north to south axis, and the Dempster Highway runs parallel for nearly half their length, whereupon it crosses them into the Northwest Territories. They are well eroded, providing spur ridges running east to west, with small streams between them. KM 413 is at a point between two of these ridges as they descend to the arctic wet tundra. The ridges themselves ascend from wet tundra, through dry tundra to a barren, lifeless expanse that resembles the lunar surface in appearance.

Soon after setting up camp, we ran into Ken Philip along the road. What a surprise! He naturally fell in with the good company of souls devoted to the study of butterflies. Sigrid prepared what must be considered an exotic meal in this arctic clime. Ken deferred; he is a “meat-and-potatoes” sort of fellow, at least when it comes to meals. Dinner and conversation appeal to me at any time anywhere, but I cannot think of a time where I enjoyed it more than this evening in a gravel pit at 66° N latitude.

It grew late, and since there was little collecting to be done, a walkabout was definitely in order. The sun, though relatively low on the horizon, still gave us late afternoon illumination. Lars, Glenn and I climbed to the adjacent ridge to take advantage of the view. What a view it was! To the north and south of us were series of ridges, each like the one we stood upon, as far as we could see. To the west, a lowland of boggy tundra, with meandering streams and ten billion mosquitoes. To the east (and up and up) were the Richardsons, a barren landscape amazing to those of us accustomed to a planet so full of life. Our spirits soared!

Glenn, an energetic and ebullient fellow, suggested that no finer place existed to celebrate the summer solstice. The only thing missing was the proper libation, and the twinkle in Glenn's eyes suggested that a solution existed near at hand. After a pell-mell descent, bouncing, sliding and bounding, Glenn frantically disgorged the contents of his pack onto the ground. With an unheard (but clearly visible) "Aha!" he turns again to ascend to us, with Jon and Sigrid trailing (Ken was "somnolent").

With the good fortune and the timing that comes with serendipity, we rejoined near midnight. Glenn plied us with a fine brandy, and we toasted the longest day as well as our company. For all the obvious reasons, this moment lives with me still.

PREPARATION

Our trip was planned well in advance. We prepared all the food, equipment, maps we needed. We spent several months scouring the available literature for information as to where and when we should be. Finally, we sought and received all the advice and insight that Jon Shepard could give us regarding places of special concern. As we began our journey, we realized that many decisions about where to stop along the way would be made according to our own experience and the weather.

Our route was from Seattle to Vancouver, thence north up the Fraser River Valley, passing through Hope, 100 Mile House, Williams Lake, Quesnel, Prince George, until we arrived at the beginning of the Alaska-Canadian Highway at Dawson Creek. The plan was to avoid diversions in the early part of the trip, so that we might spend some time in the Peace River District of British Columbia, in the vicinity of Dawson Creek. From there we expected to stop next in the vicinity of Stone Mountain Provincial Park, where we were to do some exploration for Jon Shepard. After this last site, there were no planned stops, save for rest, until we arrived in the Ogilvie Mountains, on the Dempster Highway. Remarkably, our itinerary fell right into place. We left Seattle at noon, the first of June 1989 and arrived at Windy Pass in the Ogilvie Mountains early on the morning of the sixth of June. There was much between, as I will relate in future articles.

In the next issue: Jon and Lars travel to the Arctic in a Toyota Tercel.

WBA Notice Line Email Service

Don't forget that members can use our e-mail address (wabutterflyassoc@earthlink.net) for several conveniences:

- Reporting local sightings you feel might be of interest to other members. (If you think others might have a chance of seeing the butterflies in the same area please be very clear on locations and directions.)
- Receive notice of local sightings that might be of interest to you.
- Butterfly-related questions. You can submit questions that will answered directly via e-mail, and which may be used in our newsletter (anonymously if you prefer).
- Requesting that your e-mail be placed on a group list to be notified of special sightings, special WBA program events such as book or tee shirt sales, and room or program changes for our monthly meetings. (We guarantee that this will not be overused.)

All you need to do to be on the WBA Notice Line email list is send an e-mail from your email address.

Note: This service is a membership benefit and your name will be removed if your membership expires.

Officers/Board Members

Idie Ulsh	President/Programs	(206) 364-4935	idieu@earthlink.net
Dave Nunnallee	Vice President	(425) 392-2565	davidn@nwlink.com
Richard Youel	Secretary	(206) 282-3758	mmy@accessone.com
Spencer Smith	Treasurer	(425) 672-9539	encrusted_detritus@yahoo.com
Käthe Watanabe	Special Projects	(206) 784-5487	kwatanab@fhcrc.org
Jon Pelham	Science Advisor	(425) 697-6654	jppelham@cs.com
Richard Lindstrom	Field Trip Coordinator	(206) 842- 4817	danausp1@cs.com
Tom O'Connell	Writer/Reporter	(206) 860-9569	toconnell4@earthlink.com
Jo Nunnallee	Hospitality	(425) 392-2565	davidn@nwlink.com
Vivian Gross	Conference Coordinator	(425) 823-6582	vlgross@aol.com
Maureen Traxler	Newsletter/Publicity	(206) 782-5537	maureentraxler@aol.com
NonBoard Position: Bob Hardwick is WBA Research Coordinator, organizing WBA field projects. His phone number is (253) 858-6727			

Membership Application**Washington Butterfly Association**

the Washington State chapter of
North American Butterfly Association (NABA)

Yes! I want to join WBA/NABA and receive *American Butterflies*, *Butterfly Garden News* and *WBA Newsletter*, as well as other member privileges.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Special Interest (circle): Listing, Gardening, Observation, Photography, Conservation, and Other _____

Dues enclosed (circle): Regular \$25 (\$30 outside U.S.)

Family \$35 (\$40 outside U.S.)

Payment must be in U.S. dollars.

Mail application form to: NABA, 4 Delaware Rd., Morristown, NJ 07960

Further information: wabutterflyassoc@earthlink.net or call Idie Ulsh, WBA President, at (206) 364-4935.